

ABSTRACT
of the
MINUTES
for the
WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States



30th Annual Session
March 3-5, 2015

Ebenezer Reformed Church
Shafter, California

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30th ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL*For the Classical Year beginning March 3, 2015*

Minister	Primarius Elder	Secundus Elder	Charge
Vacant	Michael Peery		Faith, Anderson, CA
Tracy Gruggett	Craig Combs	John Guinn	Grace, Bakersfield, CA
Lloyd Gross	(Pastor Emeritus, Bakersfield)		Retired, Mesa, AZ
Gary Mancilas	David Helseth	Jim Gochnauer	Covenant, Chico, CA
Dennis Roe	Matthew Davis	Greg Goehring	Covenant, Grass Valley, CA
Jonathan Merica	(Associate Pastor, Grass Valley)		Calvary Chapel, Stockton, CA
Richard Stetler	Larry Lynch		Grace, Lancaster, CA
Neale Riffert	(Pastor Emeritus, Lancaster)		Retired, Sherman, TX
Douglas Schlegel	Jerry DeYoung	Dean Zoetewey	Providence, Lodi, CA
Michael Voytek	Robert Mettler	Carl Esparza	Rehoboth, Los Angeles, CA
Hank Bowen	Mark Crook	Earl Van Houten	Trinity, Modesto, CA
Paul Treick	(Pastor Emeritus, Modesto)		Trinity, Modesto, CA
Jimmy John Hall	Kurt Snow	Chris Fellersen	Covenant, Sacramento, CA
Frank Walker	(Associate Pastor, Sacramento)		City Seminary, Sacramento, CA
Jim West	(Pastor Emeritus, Sacramento)		Sacramento, CA
Guillermo Baloy	Rodney Saunders	Alfred White	Covenant, San Diego, CA
Paul Henderson	Raymond Williams	Ryan Spitzer	Ebenezer, Shafter, CA
Valentin Alpuche	(Associate Pastor, Shafter)		Valle de Gracia, Shafter, CA
Vernon Pollema	(Pastor Emeritus, Shafter)		Retired, Bakersfield, CA
Eric Bristley	Ken Bowen	Joe Gross	Grace, Willows, CA
Sam Powell	Greg Stewart	Daniel Yeager	First, Yuba City, CA
Gene Sawtelle	(Pastor Emeritus, Yuba City)		Yuba City, CA
Thomas Mayville	(without charge)		Riverbank, CA

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS

President – Rev. Frank Walker
 Vice-President – Rev. Tracy Gruggett
 Stated Clerk – Rev. Hank Bowen
 Treasurer – Mr. Chris Fellersen

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

(per communicant member)

Classis Dues	\$11.00
Benevolences	35.00
Diaconal	5.00
Home Missions	98.00
Publications	0.00
Home Missions Building Fund	0.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	<u>5.00</u>
TOTAL	\$154.00

Treasurer: Mr. Chris Fellersen
 8675 Sleepy Hollow Dr., Elk Grove, CA 95624
 Ph. (916) 423-1741 E-Mail: cfellersen@gmail.com

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Indicates Convener

Executive Committee: F. Walker, H. Bowen, W. Johnson

Candidates and Credentials: D. Schlegel, R. Williams (1 yr); D. Roe, G. Stewart (2 yrs); S. Powell, R. Mettler (3 yrs)

Christian Education in the Church: G. Mancilas, R. Goehring (1 yr); P. Treick, L. Lynch (2 yrs); T. Mayville, K. Combs (3 yrs)

Missions: J. Gross, D. Helseth (1 yr); R. Stetler, P. Henderson (2 yrs); T. Gruggett, L. Lynch (3 yrs)

Interchurch Relations: K. Snow (1 yr); V. Pollema, G. Baloy (2 yrs); D. Schlegel, M. Crook (3 yrs)

Publications: R. Mettler (1 yr); E. Bristley, J. DeYoung (2 yrs); J. Merica (3 yrs)

Diaconal: N. Riffert, Deacon M. Velasquez (1 yr); P. Henderson, J. Gochnauer (2 yrs); M. Voytek, R. Saunders (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: G. Stewart, M. Davis (1 yr); T. Gruggett, V. Alpuche (2 yrs); J.J. Hall, R. Williams (3 yr.)

Two Kingdoms Study Committee: T. Gruggett, E. Bristley, P. Treick, J. West, G. Uttinger.

Special Committee on Child Safety: S. Powell, V. Alpuche, J. DeYoung, D. Yeager

DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS**ANDERSON, CA - Faith Reformed Church**

Church Location: 3291 Rupert Rd. (off Stinky Lane)
Church Mailing Address: PO Box 1973, Cottonwood, CA 96022
Church Phone: (530) 365-6874
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor/Wife:
Home Address:
Home Phone: E-Mail:
Church Web Page: faithrcus.org

BAKERSFIELD, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 420 Columbus Street, Bakersfield (north on Union Ave. to Columbus St., east on Columbus to the church)
Church Mailing Address: 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305
Church Phone: (661) 587-3723
Services: Worship 9:30 AM; Sun. Sch. 11:00 AM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Tracy Gruggett / Michelle / Samantha, Angela, Lydia, Corissa
Home Address: 7016 Rhone Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93308
Home Phone: (661) 587-3723 E-Mail: tmgruggett@att.net
Church Web Page: bakersfieldreformed.org

CHICO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: Meeting at 1877 Hooker Oak Ave. (Adventist Church Building: Turn East on East Ave; there will be two (2) roundabouts to Hooker Oak Ave; East Ave. will turn into Manzanita Ave. before first roundabout; proceed through first roundabout and stay on Manzanita Ave; proceed into second roundabout; turn right on Hooker Oak Ave; proceed through first stop sign; continue on to location at the Adventist Building; turn left into church parking lot.
Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1612, Chico, CA 95927-1612
Church Phone: (530) 345-2732
Service Times: Sunday School 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM
Pastor/Wife: Gary Mancilas / Gloria
Home Address: 2 Woodminster Ct., Chico, CA 95926
Home Phone: (530) 345-2732 E-Mail: gmancilas@sbcglobal.net
Church Web Page: reformedchico.org

GRASS VALLEY, CA - Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley

Church Location: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA
Church Mailing Address: 407 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945
Church Phone/Fax: (530) 273-4673, fax (530) 273-6280
Service Times: Sunday: 9:45 AM - Bible Classes; Worship 11:00 AM.
Pastor/Wife:
Home Address:
Home Ph.: E-Mail:
Assoc. Pastor: Jonathan Merica (See Stockton - Calvary)
Church Web Page: crcgv.org

LANCASTER, CA - Grace Reformed Church (Antelope Valley)

Church Location: 121 Carriage Lane, Suite 111, Lancaster, CA 93534
Church Mailing Address: 121 Carriage Lane, Suite 111, Lancaster, CA 93534
Church Phone: (661) 940-4669
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 10:45 AM
Pastor/Wife: Richard Stetler / Heidi
Home Address: 1535 Sierra Hwy., Acton, CA 93510
Home Phone: (605) 281-0678 E-Mail: hrstetler@yahoo.com
Church Web Page: lancasterreformed.com

LODI, CA - Providence Reformed Church

Church Location: 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi
Church Mailing Address: 245 E. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95240
Church Phone: (209) 367-0552
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:45 AM; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm.
Pastor/Wife: Doug Schlegel / Cheryl
Home Address: 8135 Pixley Way, Sacramento, CA 95828
Home Phone: (916) 690-4555 E-Mail: pastor@prclodi.com
Church Web Page: prclodi.com

LOS ANGELES - Rehoboth Reformed Church

Church Location: 13600 183rd St., Cerritos, CA at the Cerritos Elementary School.
Church Phone: (626) 820-9390
Church Mail Address: 17874 Crimson Ct., Rowland Heights, CA 91748
Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM; Sun. Sch. 11:45 AM; Afternoon 1:30 PM.
Pastor/Wife/Children: Michael Voytek / Rebecca / David, Timothy
Home Address: 17874 Crimson Ct., Rowland Heights, CA 91748
Home Phone: (626) 820-9390 E-Mail: pastorvoytek@gmail.com
Church Web Page: rehobothreformedchurch.org

MODESTO, CA - Trinity Reformed Church

Church Location: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto (Briggsmore east; right on Coffee, right on E. Fairmont 2 blocks.)
Church Mailing Address: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350
Church Phone: (209) 523-3220
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM; Bible Study 5:30 PM – First & Third Sundays; Hymn Sings every fifth Sunday at 5:30 PM.
Pastor/Wife: Hank Bowen / Patty
Home Address: 1909 Kruger Dr., Modesto, CA 95355
Cell Phone: (530) 921-0258 E-mail: rcushank@gmail.com
Church Web Page: trinitymodesto.org

SACRAMENTO, CA – Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 2020 16th Avenue, Sacramento (from Hwy. 99 take 12th Ave./ Sutterville Rd. Exit. Go west to Freeport Blvd., left to 16th Ave. and left to 2020 16th Ave. From I-5 Hwy take Sutterville Exit, go east on Sutterville to Freeport Blvd., left on Freeport and right on 16th Ave. to 2020 16th Ave.

Church Mailing Address: 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822

Church Phone: (916) 451-1190

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM

Pastor/ Wife: Jimmy John Hall / Stefani / Eliana, Adalia, Clara, Jimmy

Home Address: 2267 La Gamma Way, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Home Phone: (916) 451-1190 E-Mail: pastorhall@covenantreformedchurch.org

Assoc. Pastor/Wife/Children: Frank Walker / Christine / Jonathan.

Home Address: 6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758

Home Phone: (916) 320-0548 E-Mail: drfhwalker@gmail.com

SAN DIEGO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 49 3rd Ave., Chula Vista, CA (Take I-805 South. Go west on Hwy. 54. Get off at Highland Ave. Turn left at light on Highland Ave. Turn left on 3rd Ave. We meet at the CVPOA Building on the left hand side.)

Church Mailing Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Church Phone: (619) 460-1321

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 10 AM; Worship 11 AM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Gil Baloy / Maricar / Ezra, Ethan

Home Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Home Phone: (619) 697-0272 E-mail: SDCRC2012@gmail.com

Church Web Page: covenantrcus.org

SHAFTER, CA - Ebenezer Reformed Church

Church Location: 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.)

Church Mailing Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Church Phone: (661) 746-6907

Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM; Fellowship 11:15 AM; Sun. Sch. 11:45 AM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Paul Henderson / Tina / Silas, Melinda, Travis, Amy

Home Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Home Phone: (661) 746-6998 E-Mail: hendohrcus@gmail.com

Assoc. Pastor: Valentin Alpuche (See Valle de Gracia)

SHAFTER, CA - Valle de Gracia

Church Location: 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.)

Church Mailing Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Church Phone: (661) 910-2898

Service Times: Worship 6:00 PM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Valentin / Betty / Moises, Jade, Matias, Grace

Home Address: 424 Mark Ave., Shafter, CA 93263

Home Phone: (661) 910-2898 E-Mail: valpuche@gmail.com

STOCKTON, CA – Calvary Reformed Chapel

Church Location: Clarion Inn, 4219 E. Waterloo Rd., Stockton
Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 692426, Stockton, CA 95269
Church Phone: (209) 470-7174
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM
Mission Pastor/Wife: Jonathan Merica / Marsha
Home Address: 9311 Snow Creek Circle, Stockton, CA 95212
Home Phone: (209) 472-7941 E-Mail: jon_a_merica@yahoo.com
Church Web Page: calvaryreformedchapel.com

WILLOWS, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 148 W. Sycamore St. (corner: Butte & Sycamore – Exit Hwy 162; head east, right on Butte to Sycamore).
Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988
Church Phone: (530) 934-2732
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM (Sept. to June); Worship 10:00 AM;
Sun Bible Study - 6:00 PM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Eric Bristley / Kathleen / Matthew, Nathaniel
Home Address: 544 W. Laurel St., Willows, CA 95988
Home Phone: (530) 591-5382 E-Mail: gracercus@gmail.com
Church Web Page: gracercus.org

YUBA CITY, CA - First Reformed Church

Church Location: From Yuba City head south on Hwy. 99 12 miles. Turn left on Wilson Rd. to Garden Hwy. 1/2 mile north of Wilson Rd. on Garden Hwy.
Church Mailing Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991
Church Phone: (530) 674-8797
Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 11:00 AM
Pastor/Wife/Children: Rev. Sam Powell / Susan / Kaerie, Margaret
Home Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991
Home Phone: (530) 674-8797 E-Mail: sampowell365@gmail.com
Church Web Page: reformedyubacity.org

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States
30th Annual Spring Meeting
March 3-5, 2015
Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, California

The sower sows the word. . . . these are the one's sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred (Mark 4:13, 20).

SERVICES

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States convened its 30th Annual Session at Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, California on Tuesday, March 3, 2015, at 1:00 PM. Rev. Paul Henderson welcomed the body. Scripture was read from 1 John 5:19 and a devotional was presented under the theme “*An Opening Meditation.*” The body then lifted their voices in praise with “*We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought.*”

The Tuesday evening worship service was held at 7:00 PM with Rev. Jim West conducting the service. The Scripture reading was from Mark 16:14-20 and Rev. Jimmy John Hall, of Sacramento Reformed Church, preached a sermon entitled, “*Proclaiming Christ Everywhere.*” Following the service the congregation welcomed the delegates.

The Wednesday morning devotion was led by Mr. Yevgeni Kogay who was being examined for licensure. The body sang, “*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.*” Mr. Kogay then read Nahum 1 and proclaimed God’s Word under the theme, “*Our Lord Pronounces Judgment for Nineveh and Salvation for Judah.*” He closed in prayer.

The Thursday morning devotion was presented by Rev. Eric Bristley who led the body in the singing of “*I Love Thy Kingdom Lord.*” He then read from Psalm 133 and opened God’s Word from Philippians 2:1-4. He finished by closing in prayer.

The closing devotion was given by Elder Raymond Williams who led the body in a devotion from 2 Timothy 2:1-13, 3:14-4:5 and closed in prayer.

Each session was opened and closed with prayer and song to praise God and seek His blessing and guidance for this work of the Church. Following the reading of Parochial Reports, prayer was offered for the particular congregations and their pastors. At other times prayer was called for individuals and the needs of the congregations.

ORGANIZATION

Dr. Frank Walker, President of the Executive Committee of Western Classis, called the meeting to order at 1:25 PM on March 3, 2015.

The initial roll call showed 19 pastors and 11 elder delegates present. The President declared a quorum was present and the meeting was opened for business. The Bar of the House was declared to be the first ten rows of pews. Rev. Valentin Alpuche, Rev. Thomas Mayville, Elder Jerry DeYoung and Elder Joe Gross were appointed as tellers for the meeting.

The following men were nominated and elected to office for this Classical year: Dr. Frank Walker, President; Rev. Tracy Gruggett, Vice President; Rev. Hank Bowen, Stated Clerk; and Elder Chris Fellersen, Treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Michael Voytek as reporter for the Reformed Herald.

The Agenda, Services, and Order of the Day were adopted including a Special Order for Wednesday evening at 8:30 to discuss the state of evangelism and missions in the Western Classis, and a Special Order immediately following the Wednesday morning devotion to examine Mr. Yevgeni Kogay for licensure.

FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

There were no fraternal delegates or visitors present from other bodies.

Visitors included Mr. Caleb Acharya, who is a church planter in Nepal and Southern California, and Mr. Yevgeni Kogay, a licentiate of the OPC who is to be examined at this meeting.

The first time elders introduced were Mr. Kurt Snow from Sacramento Covenant RCUS, Mr. Raymond Williams from Ebenezer RCUS in Shafter, and Mr. Rodney Saunders from Covenant RCUS in San Diego.

RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS

Rev. Jimmy John Hall and Rev. Valentin Alpuche were welcomed as new ministers added to the roll of Classis this past year. Rev. Neale Riffert led the body in a prayer of thankfulness for the Lord's gift of these new ministers.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The President made the following appointments for the Standing Committees:

- A. Benevolence: Merica, Alpuche, Gross
- B. Missions: Gruggett, Stetler, Helseth, Snow
- C. Examination-Licensure: Schlegel, Roe, Mettler, Stewart
- D. Judicial: West, Riffert, Crook, Williams
- E. Nominations: Henderson, Mayville, Stewart
- F. Finances: Voytek, Hall, Lynch, Saunders
- G. Excuses: Powell, Helseth
- H. Minutes: Bristley, Mancilas, Davis, Gross
- I. Special Judicial Committee: Treick, Pollema, Combs, DeYoung

PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES, REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

All pertinent overtures and materials were assigned by the Executive Committee and the Clerk distributed them to the appropriate Standing Committees. Some items from Permanent Reports, Reports of Officers, and Parochial Reports were read and if needed, acted upon or referred to the appropriate Standing Committees. The results of the Classis' actions to the various recommendations concerning these reports are printed in this Abstract as they were adopted.

PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee of Classis

Honorable Western Classis
Reformed Church in the United States

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee accomplished the following work with four circulars in five recommendations.

Recommendation 1: That the Installation for Rev. Jimmy Hall be set for July 13, 2014 during the morning worship service at the Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento with the Installation Committee consisting of Rev. Frank Walker giving the charge to the pastor, the Rev. Paul Treick giving the charge to the congregation, along with the Elders of the Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento.

Item 1: Covenant Reformed Church in Grass Valley requested that Elder Matthew Davis be seated as their Elder Delegate to Synod since both their primarius and secundus are provisionally hindered from attending. Your clerk made the necessary change to the credentials for Grass Valley and notified the clerk of Synod.

Recommendation 2: That the Installation for Rev. Valentin Alpuche be set for Sunday, July 27, 2014, at 5:00 PM at the Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, California with the Installation Committee consisting of Rev. Frank Walker giving the charge to the pastor, the Rev. Tracy Gruggett giving the charge to the congregation, the Rev. Vernon Pollema officiating, along with the Elders of the Ebenezer Reformed Church.

Recommendation 3: That the following schedule for services be approved:

Tues. March 3: Opening Devotion at 1:00 PM -- Rev. Henderson

Tues. March 3: Evening Service at 7:00 PM – Rev. Hall, preaching; Rev. West, conducting.

Wed. March 4: Morning Devotion – Mr. Yevgeni Kogay

Thurs. March 5: Morning Devotion – Rev. Vernon Pollema

Thurs. March 5: Closing Devotion -- Elder from Shafter

Recommendation 4: That the Classis adopt Procedural Changes for the Classis' meeting.

I. Elimination of the Overtures Committee.

Discussion: Your committee recommends the Classis end the practice of erecting a Standing Overtures Committee concluding it is unnecessary and delays the proceedings.

Presently, the Overtures Committee is appointed at the announcement of Standing Committees shortly after the beginning of the Classis' meeting and then meets to

determine where to distribute overtures to the various committees. During that time the rest of the Classis' committees have no work. Once the overtures are distributed the real work of Classis begins. We propose that the President (who is in possession of all the overtures along with the Stated Clerk) predetermine all assignments of Overtures in their possession prior to Classis. Under normal circumstances all of the Permanent Committee Reports and Reports of Officers are finished with their reading by recess for dinner on Tuesday. It is therefore recommended by your Executive Committee that the Classis set the time following the Tuesday evening worship service for the purpose of starting on committee work.

Recommendation 4.1 That the practice of erecting an Overtures Committee be ended.

II. Reading of the Standing Rules.

Discussion: Standing Rule #5 requires the reading of the Standing Rules at each Classis' meeting unless suspended by a two-thirds vote. These should be read prior to the meeting of the Classis. Only eight of the 20 Standing Rules pertains directly to things that take place during the Classis' meeting.

Recommendation 4.2 That Standing Rule 5 be stricken and replaced with the following language: "Any member may move to have the Standing Rules read after the defining of the bar of the house. Passage of the motion shall require a simple majority vote."

III. Rename the Standing Committee on Minutes of Synod to Standing Minutes Committee.

Discussion: A good deal of time is spent on reading and correcting the minutes on the floor of Classis. Even then many mistakes slip through. The Synod has seen a vast improvement in this area by having a special committee that checks the minutes as they are able to be printed off and reviews them in committee before they come to the floor. Currently there is a Minutes of Synod Committee that reviews the Report from the Synod Clerk regarding things that the Classis needs to consider. In most years this amounts to a very minimal work load. This committee would logically take on the duty of proofreading the Classis' Minutes in working with the Classis' Clerk.

Recommendation 4.3 That the Classis' Standing Committee on Minutes of Synod be renamed the Standing Minutes Committee. This Committee shall review the rough minutes of Classis and recommend to the delegates the approval of the Minutes of Classis along with its duty to review the Minutes of Synod Report and present items that require Classis action to the body.

IV. Eliminate the Practice of Considering Partial Reports, Considering Items Seriatim, and Adopting Partial Reports.

Discussion: We propose that, similar to Synod, the President simply recognizes a committee chairman who informs the delegates that the committee has a number of items ready for consideration. The items are read and considered one at a time and, upon conclusion, the chairman sits down. Only when the committee's recommendations are all concluded does the chairman move the adoption of the report. It requires a majority vote or common consent.

Recommendation 4.4 That Classis end the practice of requiring committees to move to receive their reports, consider the items seriatim, and adopt their partial reports.

Recommendation 5 That the Western Classis gather to discuss the topic of missions from 10:00 to noon on Tuesday before Classis begins (*The host congregation raised concerns about this so the Executive opted to move this discussion within the time frame of the Classis' meeting*).

Herein lies an accurate summary of your Executive Committee's activities over this past year.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. F. Walker (president), Rev. H. Bowen (clerk), Elder W. Johnson

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

B. Missions

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

Your committee convened a meeting on November 10, 2014 at Ebenezer Reformed Church (“ERC”), Shafter, CA. Committee members present were: Elder David Helseth, Rev. Paul Henderson, Elder Larry Lynch, Rev. Doug Schlegel, and Rev. Richard Stetler. Elder Joe Gross was unable to attend. Also in attendance were Rev. Valentine Alpuche, Elder Ryan Spitzer of ERC, and Deacon John Warren of ERC. Rev. Richard Stetler was elected chairman by common consent and Rev. Douglas Schlegel was appointed secretary. Alpuche presented a written and verbal report on his labors in the Shafter area toward establishing a Spanish-speaking church. After he presented his report, Warren presented a financial report.

At this meeting Henderson and Lynch were appointed to represent your committee for a visit to Rehoboth Reformed Church (“RRC”), Cerritos, CA. They visited RRC on January 4, 2015, and submitted a report of their findings to the committee which is captured below for your consideration. In December, your committee received an assessment request from Calvary Reformed Chapel (“CRC”), Stockton, CA, to determine its viability for support by Classis and Synod as a mission work. Your committee appointed Stetler and Helseth to go to Stockton to perform an assessment on February 1, 2015. The assessment report is provided below.

Rehoboth Reformed Church

The following is the visitation report submitted by Henderson and Lynch:

We had a wonderful time of worship and fellowship with the congregation of Rehoboth Reformed Church in the city of Cerritos.

Rev. Mike Voytek delivered an excellent sermon on that Lord's Day, transitioning from his study in the book of Luke to the book of Acts, and emphasizing that, “Heaven rules earth now”— a theme which served as a backdrop for our question and answer period with the congregation. Even though there has been some discouragement with visitors coming and staying for a time and then going, the saints at Rehoboth expressed their desire to continue faithfully in the preaching and teaching of God's Word; worshiping the Lord in spirit and in truth; and trusting in our Sovereign Lord for His provisions as He calls His church unto Himself.

The consistory spoke of opportunities to move into other facilities, but were very happy with their present circumstances. The Lord has blessed the congregation with the use of the campus of an elementary school, including the teacher's lounge where they share in weekly meals, and where we had the pleasure of partaking in their wonderful hospitality over lunch. The congregation covets our prayers for their Cerritos College ministry where they have started a club and have been able to give out Bibles and other

literature. They also upload weekly sermons and exhortations on the Canons of Dort to Sermonaudio.

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with these brothers and sisters. We were encouraged with the faithful proclamation of God's Word and the unity of believers amongst the congregants. It is a joy to see the Lord plundering the strong man's house and gathering His people into His kingdom.

In addition to the above report, the budget for Rehoboth submitted to the Committee reflects the finances remaining steady and the Classis should note that the budget reflects a 10% reduction of the support from both Classis and Synod.

Iglesia Biblica Reformada: Valle de Gracia (Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church), Shafter, CA

Rev. Alpuche presented a report of his activities, as of November 10, 2014, summarized as follows:

Outreach activities include the offering of free English lessons in which there is reading from the Bible and prayer, broadcasting a Bible study on radio to the Spanish-speaking community, and personal evangelism.

Advertising includes a radio program, "Reformando tu vida" "Transformando tu vida," ad in the local newspaper, "El Popular," Facebook, distribution of Reformed literature in both English and Spanish, and a Spanish translation of the Heidelberg Catechism (translated by Alpuche and reviewed by Spanish-speaking elders of the RCUS).

There are two meetings each week, Sunday evening worship and a Wednesday evening Bible study.

Further, Rev. Alpuche is involved in several translation projects in addition to the work he did translating the Heidelberg Catechism, he is also working on translating into Spanish the Belgic Confession of Faith, Canons of Dort, and has translated Herman Dooyeweerd's article called, "Analogical Concepts" for Edinburgh Theological Seminary. He next plans to translate other RCUS books and booklets.

The work has not had enough time to develop to the point where it receives any significant tithes and offerings; therefore, it is primarily dependent upon the support from the generous financial support of ERC, Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, in addition to the support from Classis, and Synod.

Calvary Reformed Chapel, Stockton, CA - Assessment Report

A request was made by Calvary Reformed Chapel to the Classis' Home Missions Committee to perform an assessment of the work in Stockton, CA.

On Sunday, February 1, 2015, two members of the Classis' Home Missions Committee, Rev. Richard Stetler, chairman, and Elder David Helseth met with the group. Rev. Hank Bowen was also present representing the Synod Home Missions Committee. Careful attention was given in this assessment to follow the "viability of a proposed work," by the Classis' Home Missions Assessment Committee as specified in the Synod Home Missions Manual. Rev. Jonathan Merica's parochial report in the 2014 Abstract of the Minutes, Western Classis, pages 49-50 was reviewed in preparation for this meeting.

Rev. Stetler and Elder Helseth arrived before the start of the scheduled Sunday school class which begins at 10:00 a.m. Several people arrived early to assist in preparing for the Lord's day service in the two rooms that Calvary Reformed Chapel rents in the Clarion Inn, located on Waterloo Rd. (next to Hwy. 99). When the setup was completed, they gathered for a time of prayer before Sunday school. Rev. Merica is teaching through the Book of Acts at this time. After a brief break the congregation was called to worship.

Lord's Day 5 included the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Rev. Bowen arrived during the service completing the Assessment Committee. After the worship service, we joined the congregation for a meal and fellowship prior to the formal meeting.

Rev. Stetler opened the meeting with prayer and followed with opening comments regarding the procedure that would be followed. The following is a summary of our assessment of that meeting:

For a brief history, the work began as a Bible study in 2005 and the first worship service was held in 2006. They have been under the oversight of the Grass Valley Church since that time.

Rev. Stetler began his questioning as outlined in the Home Missions Manual, pages 4 and 5, starting at #4. The seed families of this work are already members of the Grass Valley Congregation. There are 12 families; six of which have been there from the beginning. One member is an elder of the Grass Valley Spiritual Council. Nine new members were received in 2014; four communicant members by profession of faith, and five by covenant baptism. Rev. Merica reports that there is agreement regarding the Three Forms of Unity as the doctrinal position of the RCUS. Concerning things practical, there seemed to be knowledge of the RCUS Constitution, with hearty agreement of Reformed ecclesiology. In discussing various questions with the members, it was apparent that there is harmony, as was stated, "as much as possible with a group of sinners." No theological aberrations surfaced during the various subjects under consideration. There was discussion of the various translations of the Bible and the position of the RCUS concerning such. No objections were expressed concerning "specific matters of belief and practice of the RCUS" (Home Missions Manual, Section IV, Paragraph 4.i.1), p. 4).

When the group was asked, "Does each family have a commitment to evangelism?" A certain 'yes' was duly noted. Secondly, that of a definite conviction that Stockton should exist as mission church was eagerly responded to in the affirmative.

Concerning the demographics of Stockton, there were two observations made: first, no other "conservative Reformed church" seems to be in the area. Second, Stockton fits the RCUS desire to place mission works in larger metropolitan areas unequivocally. It is the 13th largest city in California with a population within the city limits of nearly 300,000 as of 2012.

Turning to the subject of financial viability, we were presented with a four year budget (only a three year budget is required, per the Home Missions Manual). Subsequent to this meeting a three-year budget was presented and attached to this report. It was noted that the overall giving was good, but not adequate to support the work at this time. Rev. Merica has been doing some additional work to support his family, but that may be changing. The contributions to the dues and guidelines have been substantial, but continued at a decreased rate in 2014. The items under Article IV, Paragraph 4.m., items 1-7 were discussed in appropriate detail. Their current meeting place is adequate and affordable; however, the group is open to moving should a better situation become available.

In closing, the committee comes away with a sense, after spending a full day with these families, that they are eager to be received as a mission work of the RCUS. And yet, there was also a sober realization of the responsibilities that lie ahead in the work of establishing themselves as a self-supporting, organized congregation of the RCUS.

Recommendations:

1. That the request for classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Church in the amount of \$22,525.00 for the 2016 Classical year be approved.
2. That the Western Classis overture the 269th Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Church in the amount of \$22,525.00 for the 2016 Fiscal year.
3. That the request for classical support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2015 Classical year be approved.
4. That the request for classical support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2016 Classical year be approved.
5. That the Western Classis overture the 269th Synod for mission support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2015 Fiscal year.
6. That the Western Classis overture the 269th Synod for mission support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2016 Fiscal year.
7. That Calvary Reformed Chapel, Stockton, CA be approved as a viable home mission work of the Western Classis.
8. That Western Classis inform the Synod Home Mission Committee of the approval of Calvary Reformed Chapel as a viable home mission work of the Western Classis.
9. That support for Calvary Reformed Chapel in the amount of \$15,750.00 (\$1,750.00 per month) be paid beginning April 1 for the remainder of the 2015 calendar year.
10. That support for Calvary Reformed Chapel in the amount of \$21,000.00 (\$1,750.00 per month) for the 2016 calendar year be approved.
11. That Western Classis overture the 268th Synod for mission support for Calvary Reformed Chapel in the amount of \$1,750.00 per month for the 2015 and 2016 fiscal years.
12. That the Western Classis set aside an Annual Day of Prayer for Western Classis Home Missions in the coming year and that the churches of the Western Classis be encouraged to take a special offering on that day for Calvary Reformed Chapel, subject to approval of Recommendation 8, for purposes of increasing their building fund.

Respectfully Submitted in Christ's Service,
*Rev. R. Stetler (chairman), Rev. P. Henderson, Rev. D. Schlegel
 Elder L. Lynch, Elder D. Helseth, Elder J. Gross*

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

C. Christian Education

Esteemed brethren,

Your Christian Education Committee received no instructions or requests from Classis during this past classical year. Therefore, your committee was not convened nor conducted any business.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. P. Treick (chairman), Rev. M. Voytek, Rev. G. Mancilas,
 Elder L. Lynch, Elder R. Goehring, Elder D. Yeager*

Classis Action: The report was taken note of.

D. Candidates and Credentials

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your committee met over the course of the year via conference call and through e-mail correspondence. Currently, the Western Classis has oversight of two students under care. Both of the students are enrolled at City Seminary of Sacramento. Both students are also busy laboring in the church while pursuing their studies.

Regarding Mr. Matthew Davis, he reports that it was a year full of challenges and opportunities. He and his family are now members at Covenant, Grass Valley, and he serves that congregation as an elder. This has given him valuable practical experience. He has had many opportunities to teach in the Sunday School and fill the pulpit both in Grass Valley and other churches of the Western Classis. He has completed 12 courses with a "B" average. Although there have been financial challenges, he makes no request for financial aid at this time.

Regarding Mr. Colin Samul, he reports that he is nearing the completion of his studies. Mr. Samul has been doing very well in his studies and has also had many opportunities for pulpit supply. Mr. Samul has filled the pulpit at Faith Reformed in Anderson once or twice a month since April. He has also had pulpit supply opportunities in Willows and Sacramento. Mr. Samul is anticipating requesting an examination for licensure at the 31st Session of Classis next year. Mr. Samul's employment circumstances have become unstable this past year and this has added to the stresses normally associated with trying to balance work and family while studying for the ministry. He requests prayer that his employment situation will stabilize while he finishes his studies.

At the last meeting of the Classis, the delegates were introduced to Mr. Yevgeny Kogay. Mr. Kogay is a licentiate in the OPC and has requested to be examined by the Western Classis in fulfillment of the requirements of Article 26 of the RCUS constitution. Mr. Kogay has a unique skill set and it is the judgment of the committee that he would be an asset. One congregation in the Classis has expressed interest in calling him. Therefore, the Executive Committee, at the request of the Candidates and Credentials Committee, extended an invitation to him to attend this meeting with the intent of examining him. Your committee has sustained his written examinations in the biblical languages, theological and exegetical papers, and a written sermon. It is anticipated that he will be preaching before the Classis.

One other matter came to the attention of your committee this year. One of our students under care had unanticipated book expenses related to his education, and requested help. The matter was time-sensitive, but your committee did not discern that it had the authority to seek the funds from the treasurer apart from an Executive Circular. Another means of help was eventually found, but this caused some anxiety on the part of the student as well as your committee. To our knowledge, this had not ever happened, and there was no precedent for it. Therefore, your committee will be making a recommendation regarding this rare occurrence.

Recommendation 1: That Mr. Yevgeny Kogay be examined for licensure 1: as follows:

Prolegomena –	20 minutes (Schlegel)
Theology Proper –	20 minutes (Schlegel)
Anthropology –	20 minutes (Powell)
Questions from the floor	
Christology –	20 minutes (West)

Soteriology –	20 minutes (West)
Ecclesiology –	20 minutes (Roe)
Eschatology –	20 minutes (Roe)
Questions from the floor	
Apologetics –	20 minutes (Bowen)
Historical Philosophy –	20 minutes (Roe)
Church History –	20 minutes (Spitzer)
Questions from the floor	
English Bible –	20 minutes (Schlegel)
Hermeneutics –	20 minutes (West)
RCUS Standards –	20 minutes (Henderson)
Practica –	20 minutes (Powell)
Questions from the floor	

Recommendation 2: That the Classis' designate a fund of \$500.00 that the Candidates and Credentials committee may access in the event of unanticipated, though ordinary, student expenses related to his theological education.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. D. Schlegel (chairman), Rev. D. Roe, Rev. J. West
 Elder R. Spitzer, Elder B. Williams, Elder G. Stewart*

Classis Action: The Report was adopted.

E. Interchurch Relations

The Apostles' Creed to which we subscribe confesses, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church." We are bound to other Reformed churches by virtue of our God-given common faith. The Interchurch Relations Committee of Western Classis has the responsibility to seek to extend, strengthen and enhance its ties to those with whom we have established fraternal relations. This can be accomplished in several ways such as developing personal relationships with individual pastors and elders, maintaining periodic communications, supplying their pulpits, attending their church conferences, family camps and other events, and worshipping at their churches when on vacation.

But the primary way our Classis does this is by sending delegates to attend their classis and presbytery meetings, bringing them our greetings and conveying their greetings to our Classis, enjoying fellowship in hearty conversation around a meal or two, and sharing our mutual cares in a season of prayer. And this is precisely how we fulfill that injunction of Scripture, "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1).

In God's kind providence, our Committee represented our Classis in at least one stated meeting for four of the six Reformed presbyteries and classes with whom we have to do. Fraternal greetings were sent to the clerks of the remaining two classes (in this case) which were read and warmly received by their delegates.

The meetings and greetings are as follows:

1. Rev. Jonathan Merica attended the Spring Stated Meeting, March 21-22, 2014, of the Presbytery of Northern California (OPC), that took place at Sovereign Grace Community Church (OPC), Hughson, CA.

2. Rev. Gil Baloy visited the Presbytery of Southern California (OPC) during its Fall Stated Meeting, October 17-18, 2014, held at Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church, La Mirada, CA.
3. A greeting was sent to the Classis Pacific Northwest U.S. (URCNA) for its Fall Meeting on October 14-15, 2014, which was held at Immanuel's Reformed Church (URCNA), Salem, OR.
4. Rev. Gil Baloy went to the Fall Meeting, September 9, 2014, of the Classis Southwest U.S. (URCNA), held at First United Reformed Church (URCNA), Chino, CA.
5. Rev. Michael Voytek attended the Fall Stated Meeting, October 16-17, 2014, of the Pacific Coast Presbytery (RPCNA), which took place at Reformed Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles, CA.
6. A greeting was sent to Rev. Abel Pol, who is the present liaison to the Western Classis for the Canadian Reformed Churches. He ministers in Chilliwack Canadian Reformed Church, Ontario, a member of Classis Pacific East. This was anticipating a Fall meeting of their Classis. We did not send a delegate last year. Also, note that Rev. Abel Pol, their delegate to the 29th Annual Western Classis, did not make it owing to his wife's miscarriage as he was enroute to Sacramento.

In the Lord's will, I hope to attend one of the Classis' meetings of Classis Pacific East this year (2015) on behalf of Western Classis. As a point of interest, our congregation was blessed to have Rev. Rodney Vermeulen attend our Sunday School and worship service on October 5, 2014. Rodney is a minister of the Trinity Canadian Reformed Church of Glanbrook, Ontario, a member of Classis Ontario West. He came to San Diego to attend a Reformed Counseling Conference.

Finally, invitations to our 30th Annual Meeting of Western Classis were sent out to the stated clerks of each of the above fraternal denominations and federations.

Respectfully Submitted,
*Rev. G. Baloy, (chairman), Rev. J. Merica, Rev. V. Pollema
 Elder E. Van Houten, Elder A. White, Elder M. Crook*

Classis Action: The report was taken note of.

F. Publications

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

We have received one item of business:

“That the delegates of the Western Classis be advised to submit a history of their respective congregation to the Permanent Publications Committee by May 19, 2014. And that the publications Committee be advised to publish the history of the Western Classis with the information provided to them by May 19th. Congregations that have not submitted a history to the Publications Committee will have a published history by the committee drawn from available resources.”

After much cajoling, we have received histories from every congregation with the exception of Sacramento and Anderson. The Publications Committee copied the history of Covenant Reformed Sacramento from their website, but was unable to do a history of Anderson.

The chairman of the committee has pictures of several of the congregations in his possession but is unclear what is to be done with them.

Attached is the history of the Western Classis as instructed, published on Adobe Acrobat. The Committee was unclear as to how this report was to be published. If electronically, there will need to be a budget set and someone assigned to do it, as this is an immense amount of work. If this is to be published in book form, a budget would need to be set for a graphic designer and layout artist.

The Publications Committee awaits further instructions from Classis.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. S. Powell (chairman), Rev. E. Bristley,
 Elder J. DeYoung, Elder R. Mettler*

Classis Action: The report was recommitted to the Permanent Committee for a more definitive solution of what to do with the History of the Western Classis project.

G. Diaconal Ministries

Esteemed Brothers and Fellow Servants in Jesus Christ,

Your committee received one inquiry from Grace Reformed Church at Lancaster, but as there were not sufficient funds in the Diaconal Fund to cover their inquiry, therefore they sought resources elsewhere.

Still yet, it was our pleasure to serve the brethren throughout this past year. May our gracious Lord continue to extend His blessings upon us as we seek to labor for His kingdom and His glory, and for the spiritual and physical well-being of the families of the Western Classis, Reformed Church United States!

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. N. Riffert (chairman), Rev. D. Roe, Rev. P. Henderson,
 Elder M. Peery,, Elder J. Gochmauer, Deacon Scott McAfee*

Classis Action: The report was taken note of. It was moved that the Standing Finance Committee take up the need for a Diaconal fund and a guideline for it.

H. Heidelberg West Camp

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

This year's camp was the first for our new camp director, Rev. Tracy Gruggett, who was given the reigns from Rev. Paul Henderson, who with excellence and success led the camp for several years. Overall Camp 2014 went well. We had about ten or so less campers than normal. However, the youth that came had a good time by all reports and were instructed in God's holy Word. We had a good number of staff volunteers. Mr. Chris Hekman did a good and thorough job as Activities Director (thank you Chris). Where we were lacking, relatively speaking, was in ministers. For a variety of reasons, we had fewer ministers attend than normal. Consequently, the ministers that did come doubled up on the lessons. It is the committee's hope that we will see a normal quota for ministers in 2015.

The theme of Camp 2015 will be "Defending the Faith." We will explore the charge given to the church in 1 Peter 3:13 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,*

with meekness and fear. Here we will teach our covenant youth the meaning of the call to defend the faith. We will consider what is this “faith” that we are to defend. Our youth need to be convinced of the faith and own it for themselves. We will consider topics like the Calvinist/Arminian controversy and others, especially for the older youth. We will teach on the manner in which we are to defend our faith, that is, with meekness and respect under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Financially, the camp year ended in the red. Even though both the guideline and camp fee were raised, the increase came short of camp cost by \$1,043.39. Adding this to the deficit from last year puts the camp fund in arrears at \$3,464.25. Here are the financials:

Beginning balance: 1-01-14 (\$2,420.86) Bracketed numbers refer to a negative amount.

<u>Income:</u>	2014	2013
Guidelines received through 12-31-2014	\$2,755.00	\$1,887.00
Camp Fee 2014	<u>\$4,799.00</u>	<u>\$5,320.00</u>
Total income:	\$7,554.00	\$7,207.00
<u>Expenses:</u>		
Sierra Christian Camp	\$4,410.00	\$5,590.00
Food	\$2,095.62	\$1,777.58
Rev. Tracy Gruggett camp items	\$275.62	\$769.15
Rev. Paul Henderson camp items	\$80.00	
Chris Hekman –archery equipment	\$986.15	
Sierra Christian Camp deposit 2015	<u>\$750.00</u>	<u>\$750.00</u>
Total expenses:	\$8,597.39	\$8,886.73
Ending Balance for as 12/31/2014	(\$3,464.25)	(\$2,020.86)

A couple of observations about these numbers.

1. Overall, we generated about the same amount of income in 2014 as in 2013. The guideline income was higher. However the fee income was down from 2013 by \$521.00.
2. The camp guideline for 2014 was \$5.00. The total received was \$2,755.00. However, the amount that should have been received was \$3,315.00 (5.00 X 663). Thus Classis fell short \$880.00.
3. Camp Fee income was down because there were fewer campers than the previous year. We budgeted on an average of 55 campers. However, the actual number was 44 campers. Ten more campers and we would have made the budget.
4. Overall expenses for 2014 were largely the same as 2013 (2013=\$8,886.73 vs. 2014=\$8,597.39), even with the outlay for archery equipment. It should be noted that the 2015 expenses should be lower because there will not be an expenditure for archery equipment.

Options for Classis to consider:

A. In light of the overall deficit (\$3,464.25), we may need to consider whether to have the camp at all for a year or two and keep the guideline going in order to pay back the debt.

B. Go ahead with camp for 2015, keeping the same guideline at \$5.00. We should however raise the fee again. We raised it last year from \$100.00 to \$110.00 based on 55 prospective campers. Our actual was 42. We do not know what the number of campers will be like this year, but our sense is that 2014 was an off year. Our numbers in the past

few years have been around 55. So maybe we can shoot for 50 prospective campers. If we set the fee to \$125.00, it will amount to \$6,250.00. With this amount we will break even for the year, given that we should spend less for equipment and so.

C. There is also the question of the camp fund being in deficit. It should be understood that camp 2014 has been paid for, partly by guidelines and fees, and the rest out of the Classis' general fund. Therefore the camp fund owes the general fund \$3,464.25. This amount is the accumulation of several years of over budget spending. We can begin to pay off the deficit through an increase in guidelines and camp fees but this does not seem wise. The guideline is high as it is. And raising the fee may have a negative effect, i.e., less campers. Therefore, it may be wise to allocate money from the general fund to the camp fund. This would zero out the deficit.

Recommendations:

1. That guidelines for Heidelberg West Youth Camp 2015 be set at \$5.00 per communicant member.
2. That the camper fee for Heidelberg West Youth Camp 2014 be set at \$125.00 per camper only.
3. **[Defeated]** That Classis allocate from the general funds to eliminate the camp deficit of \$3,464.25 (This amount may be lowered to \$2,659.00 by the time of Classis 2015 due to a special offering from one of the churches).

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. T. Gruggett (chairman), Rev. V. Alpuche,
Elder C. Case, Elder K. Bowen, Elder G. Stewart, Elder R. Wegis*

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

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

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

The purpose of the President's Report, according to Article 81 of the Constitution, is to summarize and assess "the state of the Church." In previous years, these reports have commented individually on each parochial report, but this year I have decided instead to make general observations drawn from your parochial reports, the reports of the various permanent and special committees, the Treasurer's Report, and the statistics of Classis. Even this is no small task considering that the Western Classis includes 22 of the 57 ministers of Synod (39%).

So, what do your parochial reports and the other reports reveal? Let me answer this by focusing on several very specific areas.

The Preaching of the Gospel

All of your reports affirm that the pulpits of the Western Classis are ringing with the pure doctrines of the gospel. In addition to regular Lord's Day services in which the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed, most of our congregations also provide Sunday school instruction, Bible studies, and discipleship training. Even the Anderson church, the only congregation in the Western Classis currently without a pastor, has regular preaching provided by various seminary students and RCUS pastors.

A particular cause of celebration is the fact that our youth are regularly catechized in the doctrines explained in the Heidelberg Catechism, as both our Constitution (Art. 192) and our Standing Rules (Rule 4) require. I believe that this is one of the unique strengths of the RCUS. In a day when almost 70 percent of youth leave the church between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, the Lord has been pleased to use our catechetical program to strengthen our young people's faith against an onslaught of humanistic ideas and lifestyles. For that, we must render to God our unfeigned and sincerest praise!

Furthermore, many of our pastors continue to serve on the board and/or faculty of City Seminary or Heidelberg Seminary. Three are also involved in the ministry of Westminster Biblical Missions, which has a record of promoting the gospel in central and eastern Europe, Korea, Mexico and Pakistan.

The Sacramento and Modesto churches have a special reason to rejoice in that their pulpits, which were vacant a year ago, have been filled. Rev. Bowen accepted the call to Modesto, and Rev. Hall (whom we now welcome to the Western Classis) assumed his pastoral duties in Sacramento last June. Both men have zealously proclaimed and taught the Word of God both publicly and privately.

The report of the Candidates and Credentials Committee states that we currently have two students under care: Mr. Matthew Davis and Mr. Colin Samul. Lord willing, Mr. Samul will have completed his theological training and internships by our next annual meeting, at which time he plans to pursue licensure and a call. The Anderson church has already expressed an interest in having him as its next pastor. As a point of interest, neither student is requesting tuition assistance thanks to the generosity of City Seminary. City Seminary offers free theological education to all RCUS students under care. This is one way in which City Seminary hopes to ease the financial burden of Synod. According to last year's Synodical Abstract, tuition for full-time students at other RCUS-approved seminaries varies between \$5,200.00 and \$8,925.00 per year. This amounts to a guideline of \$2.00 per communicant member per student.

But declaring the gospel within the local church only partly fulfills the preaching mandate. The Great Commission instructs us to "go ... and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19), i.e., to summon unbelievers to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of our churches approach evangelism in an organized and systematic way. The Shafter congregation, for example, called Rev. Alpuche to serve as a missionary pastor to reach its Spanish-language community. Rev. Alpuche's report shows how much the Lord has already blessed his labors. Similarly, Rev. Bowen is busy in Modesto instructing the people in Evangelism Explosion.

After several years as a missionary outpost, the Permanent Home Missions Committee is recommending that the Calvary Reformed Chapel of Stockton be approved "as a viable home mission work of the Western Classis." The assessors noted that the members of this work are committed to evangelism and have "a definite conviction" that they should continue as a conservative Reformed witness in the Stockton area.

While our church websites may make our churches accessible to people who happen to be looking specifically for a Reformed church, the concern I raised last year is far more fundamental than that. Our job is not to wait for Reformed people to find us. Rather, we need to develop strategies to reach unbelievers, so that we might call them out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel. Jesus instructed us to "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). Paul did this not only by preaching in the synagogues, but also by going out into

the marketplace. He challenged unbelievers to come to Christ wherever and whenever he found them.

In the RCUS we have a strong and necessary emphasis on systematic theology and apologetics. I would never want to see that changed. On the other hand, I would like to see a much greater emphasis on plain, old evangelism. Remember, we have to summon lost sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ before we can explain the gospel to them in depth or defend it against calumnious charges.

The Sacraments

Your reports indicate that the sacraments are properly and regularly administered in the churches of the Western Classis. The Lord's Supper is celebrated four times per year in some of our churches, while others prefer twelve. The frequency of baptism, of course, is determined by need, as the Lord brings new converts and covenant children into our fellowships.

The statistics that the clerk distributed by email show that there were only four adult baptisms in the Western Classis last year. Although I realize that many people join the church having already been baptized (in a lot of churches baptism is more sentimental than religious), this number is far too low. It highlights again the fact that every congregation of Classis needs to focus more on evangelism and outreach.

One of the questions we ask our elders every year is, "2. Is careful attention given to ... the reception of members into the Church...?" (Art. 81). In all the years I've been in the RCUS, I don't think I've ever heard anyone answer it in the negative. I suspect that's because we have adopted a narrow view of what it means. We think that we have given attention to the reception of members if we offer membership instruction to visitors who express an interest in joining the church. But would we have to answer the question differently if we viewed it through the grid of evangelism, adult conversions and adult baptisms? Whether that's really the point of this question or not, we should nonetheless ask ourselves whether we're giving necessary attention to evangelizing the lost so that we can get them into the church in the first place.

Wouldn't it be great if we saw fifty or a hundred adult baptisms every year?

Christian Discipline

Ecclesiastical discipline, while considered one of the least pleasant aspects of the ministry, is nonetheless necessary for the church's continuance. It glorifies God and maintains the purity of our Savior's bride. Although we tend to think of discipline in a formal sense (i.e., written charges brought before a Spiritual Council), the truth is that the primary discipline of every congregation is simply the preaching of the Word of God. As Jesus addresses His people through His ordained servants, His commands and promises summon us to serve Him with our whole hearts. In that sense, we can affirm that discipline is always exercised wherever and whenever the Word is proclaimed.

Church discipline also takes place behind the scenes, so to speak, as believers mutually admonish and exhort one another in the Lord. When private admonition is encouraged and regularly practiced, there is rarely a need for the courts of the church to act.

But let us remember that we are sinful pastors of sinful sheep. Once in a while, therefore, formal discipline cannot be avoided. With much sadness I note that such discipline was necessary in some of our congregations in 2014, and yet with great joy I see that our elders have been faithful and willing to carry it out, even though it often hurts.

Membership

Some of our congregations report that they gained more members than they lost in 2014. Ebenezer in Shafter added nine communicant members in 2014. Calvary Chapel in Stockton added four communicants and five covenant children. Lancaster, Willows, Yuba City and San Diego also report increases. Altogether, this year's statistics show an increase of eight communicant members. This is the third increase we've seen since 2003.

Others churches report an overall loss. The membership of Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield declined by 22 (12 communicants and 10 baptized members). The Modesto church also saw a significant decline, losing almost a third of its members in a year. As you know, that's only part of the picture since many of its former members left before the beginning of 2014. But by God's grace, the hemorrhaging there seems to have come to an end. Those who remain are faithful and committed to the work. The Modesto congregation can now concentrate on healing and building.

The reports of frequent visitors in our congregations is encouraging. However, the sad reality is that visitors do not always stay. Rev. Gruggett, for example, laments the fact that the last time a young family joined the Bakersfield church was 2010. He says that most of those who have visited his church want a church of the "New Calvinist" variety. With competition from many Calvinistic Baptist groups that claim to be the true heirs of sovereign grace and covenant theology, it might be wise on our part to develop a strategy to counter this misunderstanding.

In preparation for our discussion of evangelism and missions, I compared the statistics of the RCUS to a few other small Reformed denominations. Although I'll flesh this out more for you later, one point of comparison was particularly shocking to me. Between 1960 and the present, the OPC has grown from 9,615 to 30,224 members (an increase of 214 percent), and the Protestant Reformed Churches have grown from 2,822 to 8,187 members (an increase of 190 percent). Even the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, which experienced some major setbacks in the 1960s and early 70s, grew from 5,306 members in 1975 to 6,786 today (an increase of 28 percent). But over the last fifty-five years, the RCUS has added only 305 members (a total increase of nine percent — an average of 0.165 percent per year).

Our lack of growth has changed the dynamics of how the RCUS operates and has created a number of issues that we'll have to face sooner or later. Nowhere is this more evident than in our finances. We have more churches, but our churches are significantly smaller on average and therefore simply don't have the resources to support the broader work of the church.

Finances

In his report to Classis, Rev. Henderson wrote that the Shafter congregation continues "to be encouraged and challenged from our Lord" to trust him to out-give them as they give him his due. What a wonderful way to express the Biblical principle of joyful and generous giving! It reflects an attitude that all of our churches, and particularly our pastors and elders, should embrace.

A few of our churches continue to struggle financially. Rev. Roe reports that the Grass Valley congregation, by the mercy of God, suffered a smaller shortfall than expected, due to the addition of new members and the generosity of its people. Although not a church that usually struggles to make ends meet, the Bakersfield church, as reported by its pastor, ended the year \$40,000.00 in the red. Its deficit came as a result of repaying

Synod and Classis, giving to the new Spanish-language ministry in Shafter and upgrading some of its classrooms. Thankfully, Rev. Gruggett does not expect this trend to continue, at least not to the same degree.

The Western Classis currently provides missions support to Rehoboth Reformed Church in LA and the Valle de Gracia of Shafter, as well as benevolent aid to Covenant Reformed Church in Chico, Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto, and Covenant Reformed Church in San Diego. Funds have also been set aside for Faith Reformed Church in Anderson, which will be made available once it calls a new pastor. In addition, direct diaconal support was provided to Pastor Mayville to help with his insurance needs. Overall, half of the churches in the Western Classis are receiving aid from Classis in one form or another. If we approve the Stockton work, more than half of our churches will be receiving aid, increasing the Classis' guideline for Home Missions by \$17.00 per communicant for 2015 and \$21.00 per communicant for 2016.

According to the Treasurer's Report, only six of the fourteen churches in the Western Classis paid their guidelines in full. One church paid approximately 25 percent, another about 11 percent, and a third paid nothing at all. This resulted in all of our guidelines (except dues) being funded at 90 percent or less. The Heidelberg Camp fund received only 83 percent of its expected income, increasing its deficit from \$2,420.86 to \$3,464.25. The other funds ended 2014 in the black, although a good share of their income came at the end of the year.

All of this is to say that the guidelines are becoming an increasing burden to the churches that pay them. Is the fact that less than half of our churches paid their full guidelines a sign that we need to rethink our approach to the whole subject? I don't know, but it does take me back to my original concern. Our churches need to grow. While we beg the Lord to bring his people in, we must also go out and fetch them!

Retired Ministers

The retired pastors of the Western Classis continue to preach and teach insofar as they are able, and serve on various committees of Classis and Synod. In some instances, the infirmity of age has prevented even regular attendance at Lord's Day services. Please pray privately and publicly for these brethren, who have served the Lord faithfully and have given a worthy example for those of us still in the trenches to follow (viz., Gross, Pollema, Riffert, Sawtelle, Treick, West, and — soon to be added to the list — Roe).

Although Rev. Mayville is not retired, he is not currently pastoring a church. I would be remiss not to ask for your prayers for him and his dear wife Carolyn, that the Lord would guide them concerning their future service.

All in all, I am not only thankful, but overjoyed, to be part of the RCUS. We're not perfect by any stretch of the imagination. We know many of our faults; perhaps we're blind to others. Yet, the one strength that towers above all our weaknesses is our firm commitment to the inerrant, infallible Word of the living God and the Savior it reveals!

Like the rest of our denomination, the Western Classis must face the challenges of each new generation. By the grace of God, we will continue in the faith that we have clung to heretofore. May God make us strong and stout-hearted to do his will!

Christ's servant and yours,
Frank H. Walker
President, Western Classis RCUS

Classis Action: The report was adopted. A motion was made to have it spread upon the Abstract of the Minutes of Classis, and to submit it to the *Reformed Herald* for publication

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Honorable Western Classis
Reformed Church in the United States

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The minutes of the 29th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder along with all reports, overtures, and pertinent information. According to the Synod's Committee on the Minutes of Classis, the minutes were corrected as needed. The Abstract of the minutes was sent to the RCUS Website.

There were 250 copies of the Classis' Abstract printed and bound. All of the congregations of the RCUS were delivered the required number of copies at the Synod meeting or to their church. The cost of printing the Abstract and having copies shipped to Synod was \$816.46 or \$3.27 a copy.

In early May, before printing, the draft of the Abstract was sent out to all of the delegates for a final proof. There were a couple of corrections sent to me. Again, I cannot emphasize how helpful it is for you to look at those items you were directly connected with to catch any possible corrections to the Abstract that need to be made before printing.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the Abstract and in the *Reformed Herald*. There were ten overtures from the Western Classis along with copies of the supporting documents for information sent to Synod for consideration. They were acted upon and reported in the Synodical Abstract of the 268th Annual Session. The other required information regarding delegate's credentials, church directory and changes to the roll of ministers was sent to the Synod Clerk. A summary of all financial matters approved by the Classis was sent to the Treasurer.

A letter was sent to United Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines inviting Yevgeni Kogay to our Classis meeting for the purpose to be examined for licensure. Apparently this was needed for legal purposes of allowing him into the country.

There were two changes to the roll of the Western Classis. The Rev. Jimmy John Hall was received by the Western Classis and installed as pastor of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church. His dismissal from the Northern Plains Classis was received and his reception communicated to them. The Rev. Valentin Alpuche was also received by this Classis and installed as the Associate Pastor of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter.

The majority of our churches, as usual, sent their statistics and credentials in by the prescribed deadline. However, there are still a few churches who fail to do so in a timely manner each year. This delays the compiling of the statistics table for your President to integrate into his consideration of the President's report more difficult, and for the Clerk to compile the necessary forms for Classis in a timely manner.

Your Clerk sought to go an extra mile, proverbially speaking, in an effort to enhance the appearance of the Classis' Minutes book this year. Our statistics and credential forms are returned each year in many varieties of appearance. Some are very well done and neat, others not so much. I began going back over those that needed some enhancement and redo them with cleaned up formatting. The enhanced version was then sent back to

the pastor of the charge. In a perfect world, these will be stored in a file under documents for the Classis' Clerk and then used the next year by simply updating the numbers and relevant information.

This year your Executive Committee, after speaking with a few of the clerks in the other Classes, recommended adopting some new procedures, which have been implemented by the Synod, for the Classis' meeting. Your clerk has high hopes that this will result in immaculate minutes to be presented at Synod.

Just a reminder that it is important for you to have all of your signed reports, electronic documents, etc. to your Clerk by the end of this Classis. Your Clerk each year seeks to prepare as much of the contents for the Minutes Book and the Abstract as possible before the Classis meets so that within the next weeks immediately following Classis he can publish those records of the Annual meeting. As such, your Clerk again wants to express his great thankfulness to all the consistories that seek to get their documents submitted in a timely way and in an electronic format.

Your Clerk can think of nothing further to report.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Hank Bowen

Stated Clerk, Western Classis, RCUS

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

C. Executive Committee of Synod

RE: Minutes of Synod Report

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 268th Synod, there are some items that the Classes should take note of:

1. Classes should take note of the corrections that should be made to their minutes as adopted by the Synod (268th Abstract, pp. 95-96).
2. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the *calendar* year.
3. 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."
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. The Treasurer's request that the 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.
7. Concerning recommendation #1 of Standing Judicial (268th Abstract, page 92), that paragraph 49 of the Rules of Order be amended by inserting the sentence, "Moving the

question requires two-thirds of the votes cast in the affirmative to be sustained,” I made the recommended change to the Rules of Order. I am sending you the amended Rules in a pdf file.

8. The Classes are reminded that the 269th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 18-21, 2015, at Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD.

Respectfully submitted,
David Fagrey
 Stated Clerk, RCUS

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Minutes Committee.

D. Treasurer’s Report

BALANCE SHEET

As of December 31, 2014

	12-31-14	12-31-13	CHANGE
ASSETS:			
Cash	<u>183,111.11</u>	<u>177,075.80</u>	<u>6,035.31</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	183,111.11	177,075.80	6,035.31
LIABILITIES:			
Accounts Payable	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0.00	0.00	0.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	<u>183,111.11</u>	<u>177,075.80</u>	<u>6,035.31</u>
TOTAL LIAB & SURPLUS	<u>183,111.11</u>	<u>177,075.80</u>	<u>6,035.31</u>
FUND BALANCES:			
General	8,233.76	9,596.45	(1,362.69)
Missions Building Fund	148,743.88	148,606.84	137.04
Missions	13,215.34	12,814.57	400.77
Benevolence	16,382.38	4,879.17	11,503.21
Publications	0.00	3,599.63	(3,599.63)
Heidelberg Camp	<u>(3,464.25)</u>	<u>(2,420.86)</u>	<u>(1,043.39)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>183,111.11</u>	<u>177,075.80</u>	<u>6,035.31</u>

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014

INCOME	1-01-14	Dues	Bldg	Missions	Benev	Camp	Total
Faith -Anderson	21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grace-Bakersfield	131	1,032.00	0.00	9,675.00	13,212.50	825.00	24,745.00
Covenant-Chico	15	90.00	0.00	439.00	534.00	0.00	1,063.00
Covenant-Grass Valley	37	222.00	0.00	250.00	200.00	0.00	672.00
Grace-Lancaster	32	480.00	0.00	2,048.00	4,424.00	160.00	7,112.00
Providence-Lodi	24	156.00	0.00	128.00	698.50	0.00	982.50
Rehoboth-Los Angeles	33	198.00	0.00	2,112.00	3,003.00	165.00	5,478.00
Trinity-Modesto	30	180.00	0.00	1,920.00	2,730.00	150.00	4,980.00
Covenant-Sacramento	147	882.00	0.00	9,408.00	13,377.00	735.00	24,402.00
Covenant-San Diego	30	90.00	0.00	960.00	1,365.00	75.00	2,490.00
Ebenezer-Shafter	65	390.00	0.00	4,160.00	5,915.00	325.00	10,790.00
Grace-Willows	34	204.00	0.00	2,176.00	3,094.00	0.00	5,474.00
First -Yuba City	64	384.00	0.00	4,096.00	5,824.00	320.00	10,624.00
F&M Bank-int Alloc		<u>8.85</u>	<u>137.04</u>	<u>11.82</u>	<u>5.58</u>	<u>(0.00)</u>	<u>163.29</u>
TOTAL INCOME	663	<u>\$4,316.85</u>	<u>\$137.04</u>	<u>\$37,384.32</u>	<u>\$54,382.58</u>	<u>\$2,755.00</u>	<u>\$98,975.79</u>

EXPENSES STATEMENT

Stated Clerk Expenses:			
Gratuity 2014-15 Clerk	\$1,000.00		
Abstract and Mailing	816.46	\$1,816.46	
Executive Committee Expenses:			
Classis Meeting-March 2014	3,593.65		
Executive Committee Travel	141.30		
Executive Committee Expense	128.13	3,863.08	
Benevolences:			
Faith - Anderson	1,500.00		
Covenant-Chico	10,044.00		
Grace-Lancaster	17,250.00		
Trinity Modesto	9,000.00		
Covenant-San Diego	5,850.00		
Diaconal - Thomas Mayville	2,835.00	46,479.00	
Home Missions:			
Rehoboth – Los Angeles	26,389.55		
Valle de Grace - Shafter	10,360.00		
Committee Expense	234.00	36,983.55	
Heidelberg Camp:			
Camp Expenses	8,597.39		
Camp Fees Received	(4,799.00)	3,798.39	
Publications:	<u>0.00</u>		
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>\$92,940.48</u>	
INCOME FOR YEAR			<u>6,035.31</u>
CASH ON HAND 12-31-13			\$177,075.80
CASH ON HAND 12-31-14			<u>\$183,111.11</u>

INCOME STATEMENT BY FUND

FUND:	General	Missions Bldg Fund	Missions	Benevolence	Heidelberg Camp	Total
INCOME:						
Giving	\$4,308.00	\$0.00	\$37,372.50	\$54,377.00	2,755.00	\$98,812.50
Allocated Interest	<u>8.85</u>	<u>137.04</u>	<u>11.82</u>	<u>5.58</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>163.29</u>
Total Income	\$4,316.85	\$137.04	\$37,384.32	\$54,382.58	\$2,755.00	\$98,975.79
EXPENSE:						
Stated Clerk	1,816.46					1,816.46
Exec. Committee	3,863.08					3,863.08
Inter Church	0.00					0.00
Benevolences				46,479.00		46,479.00
Home Missions			36,983.55			36,983.55
Homes Missions Bldg						0.00
Heidelberg Camp-Net					<u>3,798.39</u>	<u>3,798.39</u>
Total Expense	<u>5,679.54</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>36,983.55</u>	<u>46,479.00</u>	<u>3,798.39</u>	<u>92,940.48</u>
Income (Loss) Yr.	<u>(\$1,362.69)</u>	<u>\$137.04</u>	<u>\$400.77</u>	<u>\$7,903.58</u>	<u>(\$1,043.39)</u>	<u>\$6,035.31</u>
Balance 12-31-13	\$9,596.45	\$148,606.84	\$12,814.57	\$4,879.17	(\$2,420.86)	\$177,075.80
Balance 12-31-14	\$8,233.76	\$148,743.88	\$13,215.34	\$16,382.38	(\$3,464.25)	\$183,111.11

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Fellersen

Classis Action: The Treasurer, Elder Chris Fellersen, was thanked for his faithful labor and the report was referred to the Standing Finances Committee.

PARCOCHIAL REPORTS

A. Rev. Valentin Alpuche

Fathers in the faith, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1:7),

Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! (Psalm 105:1).

2014 was a significant year for my family and ministry! We left our URC Spanish mission work in Chicago Heights, IL, in order to accept a new call into the RCUS. We moved from Indiana at the end of June, 2014, to Shafter, CA. By God's grace we found a loving and caring church to worship the Lord and hear His Word faithfully proclaimed. Ebenezer RCUS has been a special blessing to all my family. On July 27, I was installed as the missionary pastor of Ebenezer RCUS in order to plant a Spanish-speaking congregation. This is a completely new mission work since there was no core group to begin working with. But our Lord is always faithful and He has given us the strength to endure and communicate the Gospel in different ways to the Hispanic community in Shafter.

As we began to work, Ebenezer Spiritual Council and Consistory have always been a great encouragement to me and my family. We have been praying for the Lord to bless our work, and also for wisdom in order to make ourselves known in the community. Here are some of the ways in which we are trying to reach out to the Spanish-speaking community in Shafter, and beyond:

1. Radio Bible Study. We had the blessing to have a Spanish radio program on Radio Manantial 1100 AM and 100.3 FM every Sunday at 9:00 am. You can also listen to our radio program online at: www.manantialbakersfield.com. The name of our radio program is: "Reformando Tu Vida" (Reforming Your Life). We began to broadcast on the radio in the month of September, 2014.
2. English lessons. I was teaching English lessons at the Shafter Learning Center across the street from Ebenezer RCUS. I taught for the month of September 2014. After that I began to teach free English lessons in our church facility. I am teaching three times a week, one hour for each class. All of the students are Roman Catholics which presents such an opportunity to communicate the gospel. We conduct the lessons thus: we begin with prayer, and then I teach and close with prayer. Our English lessons are also a time to fellowship and time for prayer. The students always ask questions about our faith, and also express their own experiences in the Roman church.
3. Business Card, Flyers and literature. Often I prepare flyers to hand out in Shafter. We also have Spanish reformed literature to give away to people every time there is an opportunity.
4. Soccer coaching. I coached a soccer team in Shafter from October to November for eight year-old boys and girls. There I was able to meet a good number of Hispanics.
5. Day-to-day evangelism and meeting people.
6. Facebook: Iglesia Bíblica Reformada "Valle de Gracia"
7. Meeting people through members of Ebenezer RCUS.
8. Office sign.

9. Heidelberg Catechism. We have a Spanish translation of the catechism based on the English modern version of the RCUS Heidelberg Catechism.

10. The name of our mission work is “Valle de Gracia”.

By God’s grace, through our English lessons one of the students showed interest in the gospel, and on October 26, 2014, we began to meet on Sundays at 6:00 PM for a Bible study/worship service. All her family is faithfully attending now. I taught them the Apostles’ Creed as an introduction to the Christian Faith. A few months later, another lady with her two children began to worship with us. And recently there is a new lady from our English lessons who is also attending our services.

All these few families come from a Roman Catholic background, and they are excited about learning the gospel. They have many questions, and still have many customs and traditions from their previous faith, but I can see how the sound doctrine is liberating them from teachings and doctrines that are not biblical.

We are so happy and thankful to our good Lord for His many blessings upon our mission work. We know this work will take a few years to become more stable and fruitful, but we are already seeing the fruits of our labor.

Thank you for your prayers on our behalf, and special thanks to the Consistory of Ebenezer RCUS.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Valentín Alpuche

Classis Action: Take note

B. Faith Reformed Church, Anderson.

Esteemed Brothers in Christ:

Proverbs 3:5 states, “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*” This last year at Faith RCUS began with Rev. Bowen announcing he would be taking a call to proclaim God’s Word from the pulpit of Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto during our annual congregational meeting. With Rev. Bowen and Patty moving to Modesto, this brought an opening to our pulpit at a time when ministers in the RCUS are hard to come by.

The congregation at Faith RCUS felt the need to conduct an evaluation of itself and the ministry in Anderson. This congregation has been small in number for many years, but we have always had a large love of the Lord. This has always been evident through our desire to do the Lord’s will, our hospitality and the gracious giving to the church for our size. During several contacts with the congregation I was repeatedly reminded, “*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*” Philippians 4:6.

With the pulpit being empty and the congregation believing the Lord was not ready to give up the foot hold held in Anderson, we decided to begin the search for a new minister, but we knew we needed assistance. Our prayers led us to Rev. Sam Powell, his consistory and the congregation of First Reformed Church, Yuba City. Rev. Powell has gone above and beyond in his love and care of our congregation. Even though he had his own church to run, medical issues with both he and his lovely wife Susan, he never hesitated to assist us. To steal a common saying, “He jumped in with both feet.” In no time at all we were conversing through E-mails and telephone conversations.

Rev. Powell was quickly able to put together a list of seminary students and ministers to fill Faith's pulpit. We had the great pleasure of having students; Colin Samul, Steven Carr, Tim Curtis, Matthew Davis, and Ministers; Rev. Sam Powell and Rev. Denis Roe proclaim God's Word to our congregation. With the assistance of these men, there were only three vacancies left, which I was able to fill. While the congregation listened and learned from these men, both our consistory and the First RCUS consistory evaluated them. This was done to assist them in their abilities and for us to see if any of them would be a good fit with our congregation.

Since Patty Bowen was now blessing the Modesto congregation with her incredible piano playing talent, we knew we needed to find someone to fill this need. We were informed by a member of our congregation of a young man who had been playing the piano for several years and that his family was currently looking for a new church. The Lord once again answered our prayers and brought Kevin, his father and his brother to our church. As many of you know, playing hymns is a difficult task, but one Kevin eagerly took on. Kevin is still learning, but his talent grows every week.

During our visitations to the homes of each family in the church, we were inspired, humbled and encouraged by what we gleaned from each and every household. "*Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (James 5:16). Deacon Fred Peery and I received great feedback and a bit of loving admonishment. During these visits we asked each household to give us their impression of the men who had been filling the pulpit. We also wanted them to tell us what they thought were each person's best and worst qualities and why.

Fred and I had already talked at length about each man and I had talked to several Ministers and Elders from other churches about them. We were pleased that the response we received mirrored our own opinions. It was very clear to us and the congregation that once everything was sorted out, Colin Samul was the man we believed the Lord was leading to our pulpit. With this information in hand, I met with Colin to find out if he and his wife Shanna had even thought about taking a call to Faith once he finished his studies. It was a great feeling to find out that they had already discussed the possibility as well. Our church family has bonded very well with the Samul family and we are praying for the Lord to guide both us and the Samul family as Colin continues his studies.

During this past year the congregation of Faith experienced both sorrow and joy. Two very godly and lovely ladies of Faith RCUS went to be with the Lord, "*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*" (Luke 23:43). Marion Uttinger and Mary Anderson were both founding members of Faith RCUS and will be greatly missed during our time here on earth, but we delight in the knowledge that we will be reunited with them in Heaven.

This past year we had several visitors to the morning worship service and we have two new families in continuous attendance. Both of these families have children, ranging from infants to around ten years of age. With these four children and the three and a half children of the Samul family, the church is once again alive with little people, "*And all thy children [shall be] taught of the LORD; and great [shall be] the peace of thy children*" (Isaiah 54:13). This is something we have not had in several years.

The finances of the church are a concern of ours. One of the questions we talked about with the congregation was the ability to adequately pay for a minister. To this end we have been frugal in our spending and are attempting to raise a nest egg in a savings

account. Since Classis last year we have not needed any funding from the Classis or Synod and it is our prayer that once we have a minister in the pulpit, if there is a need from Classis and Synod it will not be for an extended period of time.

If I may, I would like to take a moment of personal privilege. My dear wife, Jenny was diagnosed with a rare nerve disease over three years ago. It is called Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, or (RSD). It is a progressive disease of the Autonomic Nervous System that is completely debilitating. My beloved is in constant pain throughout her whole body and to date there is no known cure. I would ask that you remember her in your prayers and that she receive some relief if it be the will of the Lord.

In closing, I would like to personally thank the congregation of Faith RCUS for their continued prayers and support of the work in Anderson. Rev, Sam Powell, Susan, the consistory and the congregation of First RCUS, for their tireless prayer, work and dedication in assisting us during this process. To Colin Samul, Steven Carr, Tim Curtis and Matthew Davis for their dedication to faithfully proclaiming the Lord's Word while studying, working, traveling and in their free time trying to enjoy their families.

I would ask each and every body represented here at Classis for continued prayer for Faith RCUS. For growth, knowledge, guidance and most of all that the stronghold we have in the Anderson area not give way, but increase steadily by His grace, through prayer and our daily walk with Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,
Elder Michael Peery

Classis Action: Read by Rev. Gruggett. Take note.

C. Rev. Gil Baloy.

Dear Brothers,

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: Tell the towers thereof” (Psalm 48:12).

Let us start with the Lord's Day. One brother, and then later another brother, assumed the responsibility each week of teaching the residents of Vista Convalescent Center in nearby San Diego. I have not taught there now for about a year, as I did for the past 15 years. We continue to hold Sunday School classes prior to the worship service. In 2014, I have preached in 44 morning services, four evening services and at the Thanksgiving Day Service. The last joint worship service with San Diego Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCNA) took place September 28, 2014. I completed a series on the “Heroes of the Faith” based on Hebrews chapter 11, followed by an exposition of the books of Romans and 2 Timothy.

The following men exhorted and preached in my absence: Alfred White, Rodney Saunders, OPC Licentiate Yevgeni Kogay, Gary Davenport, Rev. Tom Mayville and Rev. Hank Bowen. Early in the year, a “pulpit exchange” was conducted with Rehoboth Reformed Church. In the Fall, Ebenezer Reformed Church invited me to speak at their Missionfest Day, to which I obliged by proclaiming to them the gospel and doing a presentation at lunchtime of the RCUS Missions in the Philippines. A Sunday evening Bible study in the gospel of John was conducted over the first half of the year. Every Wednesday, with the exception of the first Wednesday of each month when we would hold our government meetings, a healthy number attend a Bible study of the Psalms followed by a prayer meeting.

With the assistance of the elders, I served the Lord's Supper twelve times last year. Our two elders are reading Biblical Counseling by John MacArthur, Wayne Mack and the Master's College Faculty, and are involved with me in handling a few church counseling cases. We had no disciplinary cases last year. Four new members were received by certificate of dismission. Two of them came from other RCUS churches and the other two from a local OPC church. We received one adult into full communion by baptism and profession of faith. We have a total of 36 communicant members and seven unconfirmed members. Recently, the Consistory nominated Mr. Gary Davenport for the office of elder and Mr. Abel Medeles Sr. for the office of deacon. Presently, we have one minister, two elders and two deacons.

Let fellowship of the brethren continue (Hebrews 13:1). The year started off with a bang with our annual New Year's Celebration. As always, it is packed with fellowship, food and fun, which includes a talent show, which is quite revealing especially in the entertainment field. The highlight of the night is the opening of our "prayer capsule." Last year's prayer requests are read to see how the Lord has answered and blessed us. Fresh requests replace them before closing the capsule again until next year. Last September, we enjoyed a 3-day, fun-in-the-sun campout up the coast on a stretch of campground along the high rim of South Carlsbad Beach. In December, I was privileged to officiate the wedding of our two newest members Gary and Cathy Davenport in scenic Coronado. A gentleman who attended our church for several months tragically committed suicide. His christian son, who originally directed his dad to our church, requested that I conduct the memorial service, which was held in our meeting facility. It was one of the most challenging funeral sermons I had ever preached.

We are back to a monthly open air ministry at Balboa Park. In the year before, we attempted alternating the Open Air with our "Oikos" or house ministry. At least two ongoing home Bible studies developed from the latter outreach, which continue to meet weekly. Two members of one study in El Cajon have started attending the morning worship service! In addition, we started up a "free book" table at San Diego State with Bibles and apologetic and evangelistic literature. Our sister Rehoboth Reformed Church inspired it, along with the "Need Prayer?" signboard, which has been curiously effective in drawing students to the table.

In January, Rev. Michael Voytek and I were sent by the RCUS to the Philippines to help out in the relief effort at "ground zero" of Typhoon Yolanda in the provinces of Leyte and Samar. Also, I accompanied Yevgeni Kogay as a foreign missionary to the Philippines in the beginning of August. A couple in our church devised a blessing bag to be donated to the Silent Voices Pregnancy Center to give to women seeking counseling help (This is similar to one we gave to homeless people in the previous year). As a result of this, the director invited me and others who are able and willing to counsel to volunteer at the center. We hope to have a new, more visitor-friendly website which should be up and running before long. For the Classis, I served a second year as chairman of the Interchurch Relations Committee. For the Synod, I am a member of the Foreign Ministries Committee.

Finally, while our sinful tendency is to put our lamp under a basket, and not on the lampstand, thank God for working in more and more of us to want to let our light so shine before men, that men would see our good works and glorify our heavenly Father.

With Calvary love,
Pastor Gil Baloy

Classis Action: Read by Gruggett. Take note. Elder Greg Stewart led the body in prayer.

D. Rev. Hank Bowen

Beloved Brothers,

Our gracious God, the Lord of His church, has sent me to Modesto to preach the gospel of salvation. My pastoral ministry began in Modesto on April 1 of 2014. It took most of the remainder of the year to complete the transition of selling a house in Palo Cedro, packing, moving, setting up a study in the church, searching for a new home, moving again, becoming acquainted with the community and the congregation, and just generally settling into the ministry of Christ at Trinity Reformed Church.

In terms of my pastoral activities, I ended my tenure in Anderson finishing up a study in the book of 1 Corinthians. I began pastoral responsibilities in Modesto by preaching a series on the Lord's Prayer; two series from Ephesians 4, the Worthy Walk of the Christian, and the Walk of the New Man; and an Advent series on the Promise of the Seed. I taught the Sunday morning class that is working through the Heidelberg Catechism. On the first and third Sunday evenings a focused study on evangelism has been pursued. On the first Sunday evenings a hymn sing is held and this year surrounding RCUS churches were invited to join us with several from Stockton and Lodi adding to a time of making a joyful noise unto the Lord.

My activities also included the duties associated with being the clerk of the Western Classis, attention spent as a member of the Synod Home Missions Committee, and writing an article and a bio for the Reformed Herald. It was also a great thrill for me to preach one Lord's Day at the Covenant Reformed Church in San Diego. The Lord called me by his grace while I was attending San Diego State University in 1975. The Lord had called a number of young men to a church there and formed a bond between many of us. Over thirty years later many of those, including the one the Lord used to bring me the gospel came and heard me preach for the first time. It was a time of sweet fellowship and reflection upon all that God has done in our lives.

In reporting on the current condition of Trinity Reformed, the church has come through a tough time. It is still in tough times. After years of hard work, the congregation had reached a point of self-sufficiency only to see all that erode away over the past few years. At the beginning of 2014 the membership was at 30 communicants and 34 baptized members. In the first quarter of the year, before my arrival, there continued to be a migration by some of the younger families and members to larger congregations. In total this year ten members were dismissed or erased and two of our senior members were called home to be with the Lord, but there was also the addition of two families and a covenant baptism. So often it seems to be the case that the Lord calls one home and brings another in their place. At the end of the year our membership seems to have stabilized at 22 communicants and 24 baptized members. Our average church attendance hovers between 25 to 30 souls on any given Lord's Day.

In many ways those who remain have the anxiety of Gideon when God thinned the ranks of his army. They do not know the future, but they do know that God calls them to remain faithful. Their desire is to see the doors of Trinity Reformed Church remain open. They are faithful in attendance and give generously to the work of the ministry. They are also keenly aware that the future of Trinity Reformed Church depends on God bringing fruit to the labor and are calling upon our Lord Jesus to build His church.

While the situation may seem dire, the reality is that God has provided in 2014 during this year of transition. I cannot express my gratitude deeply enough to Rev. Treick for stepping in during the congregation's time of need until a new pastor could be called and settle in. With a new year it is now time to move past the period of transition and move to the work of building up the ministry of Christ here at Trinity Reformed Church.

In an effort to reverse this period of decline, the ministry is moving toward a focus in two areas. The first is the maintenance of the preaching and teaching ministry. Biblical preaching remains the primary emphasis as faith comes by the hearing of the Word. This area of ministry has been expanded through making the sermons available through the website, sermonaudio, and being heard on graceradio.net on Saturdays. Since April 120 sermons have been made available online. This has generated over 6,000 looks at our webpage and over 2,000 sermons downloaded by people to listen to.

The second area of emphasis is the need to reach out to connect with as many as we can in our community. The congregation is working on being active in the area of traditional evangelism. Furthermore, in an effort to become more conscious in living evangelistically the flock has been working through Evangelism Explosion as a step in the training of themselves to fulfill this need.

Another avenue that is being explored and developed is reaching out through social media. The trinitymodesto.org website is under continual development as the fundamental basis for getting the ministry of Trinity Reformed Church into the community. Social Media, however, goes beyond that and so steps have been taken to become more visible through Facebook and Twitter style media.

A new avenue of reaching those in the neighborhood around the church is in the planning stages and will include canvassing the homes around the church with an invitation to a pancake breakfast on Easter Sunday. This event oriented approach to a friendship style of reaching into the community is something that is being developed to be held on a regular basis.

Another outreach that is in the organizing phase is a School of Theology targeting younger adults from outside our congregation who desire a deeper study of Reformed Theology. A couple of men have signed on and efforts are being made to stir interest in more. Our hope is that God will give us wisdom in pursuing these and other avenues of how to get people to come and visit the church.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing our small congregation is the financial burden being borne by so few. The members are to be commended for their faithfulness to the ministry here, but things are at a critical point in terms of the budget. God is able to supply our every need, and for this reason the members continue to actively pray for God to continue to fund the ministry of Trinity Reformed Church. We are very thankful for the support of the Western Classis this past year, but also find ourselves in need to call upon the Classis for an even greater level of help for the coming year.

One very positive note is that the building loan from Synod has now been paid in full. Because of the generosity of one of our senior members who was called home, the church was able to upgrade the sound system. This provided a marked improvement that enabled us to offer a higher quality recording for the website.

The congregation is to be commended for their labor of love in keeping the building and grounds looking immaculate. Many have stepped up to the plate and given much of their time, talents and treasures. They are doing everything they can think of to make the church look attractive for visitors.

Several members have opened their homes for Ladies' Fellowship, and there is a good spirit of fellowship that is being enhanced by regularly planned as well as spontaneous gatherings for fellowship.

The officers of this congregation are to be highly commended for their leadership through some very difficult and unpleasant times. In particular, Deacon Will DeBoard is to be commended, who retired this year, having served faithfully as the treasurer for many years.

In closing, this coming year is critical to the future of Trinity Reformed Church, but we look to our gracious God to supply our every need in the building of His church.

In Christ's service,
Rev. Hank Bowen

Classis Action: Take note.

E. Rev. Eric Bristley

Our covenant God has been faithful and gracious to Grace Reformed Church this past year. He continues His work among us through the ministry of His Word and Spirit and in exercise of spiritual gifts among our members. Our fellowship in the things of Christ every Lord's Day morning and evening has been central to our congregational life with the elders very active in helping to lead in worship, prayer, and the reading of Scripture. Special services were held on Good Friday, Easter, Reformation Sunday, and Christmas, as well as our monthly celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the teaching ministry Sunday mornings, I completed a series on the book of Colossians, preached on selected Psalms, and began a new series on the book of Hebrews. I also preached at Rock Springs, WY, for Reformation Day. One of our new covenant children received baptism, and four of our young people made public profession of their faith. These are always occasions of great joy as we witness God's covenant faithfulness. We also have regular services at a local nursing home.

Our Sunday evening fellowship continued to be a rich time of singing, corporate prayer, and meditation on God's Word. I taught a study on the book of Jonah in the spring; then in the summer and fall commenced a longer study from Genesis 4–11 dealing with the life of Noah, the historicity of the worldwide flood and its aftermath, and the development of the nations descending from Noah. We advertised this series in a number of ways and welcomed some visitors. In the late fall we began an evening series on the book of Job examining the biblical view of suffering and ways to comfort those who suffer. Elder Bowen led us in song and ministered to the saints with wise exhortations while Elder Gross led our time of extended prayer. We are deeply thankful to the Lord for so many answered prayers in many areas of need.

Our Sunday morning education program has progressed with the addition of a Primary Class this year for our growing number of little ones taught by Angela Gross. I taught a class in the spring for six young people in preparation for church membership, Elder Bowen continued to teach a catechetical class, and Elder Gross taught an adult class study on the book of Acts. The adult class is now studying Proverbs. These classes continue to be well attended. A new development this year has been the start of a monthly men's fellowship breakfast, under the leadership of Elder Gross, where the

attributes of God are being studied. This has already proved to be a great blessing for the men.

The elders and deacons continue to seek the peace, purity, and unity of the church as they serve in the Consistory, and I thank the Lord for each of them—elders Ken Bowen and Joe Gross, and deacons John Benningfield, John van Tol, and Jonathan van Tol. Their faith, spiritual gifts, steadfast service, and love for God’s people are a gift of God to this congregation. In addition the Spiritual Counsel meets monthly to promote the health of the church. On a sad note, it became necessary this year to exercise discipline in the excommunication of one of our members.

In other areas of ministry I have served on the special committee of Western Classis to examine the place and use of instruments in worship, and serve on the two-kingdom committee. As RCUS Archivist, I oversee the denominational records and look forward to the constructing of a separate room to house the archives. Our building renovation plan has stalled a bit due to some variance of opinion on how to proceed. I continued to teach at City Seminary in Sacramento this year, with two courses on apologetics—Christian Worldview and Christian Evidences.

Evangelism and the growth of the church continues to be a vital emphasis in our times of corporate prayer, teaching, and finding ways to communicate the gospel. I continue to encourage support of RCUS Missions, Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF), and Westminster Biblical Missions.

God has blessed our members with love for His Word, and deepening spiritual maturity. We look forward to how He will teach us and lead us in the year to come to be a faithful witness to the gospel in our communities.

For Christ’s glorious kingdom,
Eric D. Bristley, Pastor

Classis Action: Take note.

F. Rev. Lloyd Gross,

I respectfully petition the Western Classis to request the 269th Synod of the RCUS for \$1,200.00 per month for ministerial aid for my wife and myself. This request is due to increasing medical expenses. My medical condition is one of increasing pain, sometimes intensely so, due to my stroke. I also fractured an ankle, necessitating hospitalization and a stay in a rehab facility.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request.

Respectfully in Christ our Lord and Savior,
Rev. Lloyd Gross

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Jerry DeYoung led the body in prayer.

G. Rev. Gruggett

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

I thank our Lord Jesus Christ that out of the abundance of his victory he has given gifts to his church for her edification. Our Lord has seen fit to call us to serve his people as shepherd-teachers of his flock. By His grace I am the tenth minister at Grace Reformed Church, and October of 2014 marked my seventh year as minister of the congregation. Below is my account of the main features of my ministry in the last year as well as observations about the current state of the congregation.

I ministered God's Word in two primary ways, first by the regular preaching in the worship services and, secondly, by regularly teaching the adult Sunday School. I preached through about half of Titus, continuing a series started the previous year. I preached a short series on Matthew 24-25 and expounded on the first six chapters of the book of Judges, and began a series on the book of Philippians near the end of the year. In addition, I preached at three funerals and two weddings. Rev. Vern Pollema filled the pulpit on a couple of occasions, and Rev. Valentin Alpuche was our mission-fest speaker. In Sunday School I taught on sundry topics and taught a series on evangelism, heaven, and answering objections to the Old Testament depiction of God. I also began leading a women's Bible study in the fall. I led a men's reading club in which we are reading through all of John's Frames' *Systematic Theology*. It was a full year as far as instruction went. Feedback from the congregation is mostly positive. I am grateful to our Lord that the congregation is eager for the Lord's Word.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered four times. Concern that the number of those partaking was low prompted the Spiritual Council to more closely monitor those who partook using a spread sheet. We found that most members were indeed partaking. Those that were consistently absent were out of town due to college, had relocated, or were too feeble to come to church. There are three or four members that need to be pursued. There were no baptisms administered during the year.

Church discipline was enacted in the case of four persons. Three of these were judicially erased, and one is under suspension of the Lord's Supper. One of these cases was especially difficult as we were threatened that legal counsel would be consulted if we pursued discipline. In the end, we chose to judicially erase this individual and the erasure was announced to the congregation with prayer being made.

All told we lost 22 members in 2014 (12 communicant / 10 non-communicant). Three of these were due to death. We saw two families move away. Another member transferred to the Shafter congregation, and another family left for another church. The rest we lost by church discipline. We did receive, near the end of the year, a couple by profession of faith. This was a blessing, however, by the time of this Classis they will have moved away to Michigan. Seeing so many people leave has been discouraging to me. I think other members have also felt the pain of losing friends and seeing fewer children.

Catechesis was carried out during the school year. I met with the students on Wednesday evenings for one hour. The youth are interactive and enjoy the instruction. One covenant youth was confirmed in May. Sunday School classes were held for all age levels. These classes go throughout the year with a month long break in June. As far as teachers go, we alternate them every quarter. We do have a little difficulty in securing additional teachers. In some instances, a husband and wife simply switch off. Yet we

have seen some of our older members step up. We presently use a Great Commissions Publications curriculum. We also had a youth group led by a couple in our church who have done a fine job. The youth group met each month and engaged in a few projects. There needs to be improvements in our educational goals for our Sunday Schools, and more pastoral interaction with the youth group. Our current high school class, in my opinion, needs more interaction with the leadership. There was no Vacation Bible School held in 2014.

We have come through a tense and sad time at GRC. Many have left the church. Sin has destroyed some of our families. It is hard to know the toll that sin and discipline has on a church. We are in a time of healing and moving on. In this regard the congregation is doing well. Overall, I think the folks genuinely enjoy each other on Sunday mornings. They are by God's grace committed to each other and show their dedication in many ways. Having said that, it is a little disconcerting seeing that participation in our Sunday meal isn't larger. Only about a third of the congregation actually comes to these twice a month meal times. It seems that some come to church but quickly return to their private lives. Some of this is due to busy lives as well as family habits and traditions. We also have had small group Bible studies in member's homes. These are reasonably well attended and very much appreciated by those who attend.

The members of the Consistory do their work with diligence. We currently have three Elders and three Deacons, the number in each office being reduced from previous years. Consistory meetings were held each month and we held Spiritual Council meetings eleven times during the year. Our comradery is good. The brothers attend to their offices with maturity and integrity.

We have found a piece of land in Bakersfield, a potential spot for a future home. As has been known, the congregation has been looking to relocate. The land is in a residential area of town yet situated on a major road. We have made an offer on the property, but the owner is slow in making a decision.

During the summer we added a classroom to our Sunday School Annex by converting the garage into a classroom. In addition we had to replace the ceiling in one of the other rooms because much of the drywall had rotted out. We also converted the backyard into a little playground for the younger children.

Financially, Grace Reformed Church ended the year nearly \$40,000.00 in the red. This was due to several factors: we had to back pay both Synod and Classis, we gave a significant amount to Shafter for the Hispanic mission work, we spent a good amount upgrading our classrooms, and we had an increased outlay towards Classis guidelines. Needless to say this cannot continue. We will spend less in 2015 because we will not need to back pay Synod or Classis, and, Lord willing, there will be no significant capital expenditures. Our contribution toward Shafter, however, will increase per our commitment. I am very thankful to the Lord for the congregation's generosity. Over a third of our overall income was given toward various individuals, churches, and ministries (including guidelines). In this regard the congregation has done very well and I trust such sacrifices have been well pleasing to our Lord. Nevertheless, I am also concerned about finances. With the increased expenses we have less to spend for starting a new work which we would like to pursue. Right now, however, it is unlikely that we could get a second work in Bakersfield. It is not even certain that we can make payments on loans for a new building. Yet I am confident in the Lord that we will work these matters out.

The growth of our church worries me a great deal. We have seen several families leave over the past three years. There has been a significant reduction in the number of children. Conversely we have not seen a young family come to our church in several years, the last being in 2010. This is not to say none have visited us. Several have but they do not stay for long. What is disconcerting is that these visitor desire solid teaching, but they opt for other churches instead, usually of the New Calvinist variety. Nevertheless, we continue to see a few visitors.

The congregation provides for the material needs of me and my family. In the summer I came down with a case of appendicitis and had to have an emergency surgery. The congregation showed great sympathy and gave the financial support that was needed. My wife served as one of the accompanists, as well as sang in the choir. She regularly sends thank you cards and sympathy notes to members. She faithfully attends the “Ladies of Grace” at their monthly meeting. She is a faithful and caring helpmeet, worthy of all honor as a fellow heir of life eternal.

During the year I enjoyed times of fellowship with Rev. Paul Henderson and Rev. Valentin Alpuche, who I count as dear friends in the Lord.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Classis Action: Take note.

H. Rev. Jimmy John Hall

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the Belgic Confession of Faith, the superscript of the Second Article reads, By What Means God is Made Known Unto Us. We learn several things, namely, that God reveals Himself to man by creation, by preservation, and by the government of the entire universe. Additionally, God is pleased to reveal Himself to man by the written Word.

After the Lord Jesus Christ suffered death and was raised from the dead, the disciples went here and there preaching the Gospel to all. But not by or in or with or through the strength of man. Mark 16:20 explains just who is working and confirming the work of preaching. Scripture says, “And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” The preaching of the disciples was only possible by the strength of another, the Lord.

By the grace of God, Rev. Hall has been busy preaching, teaching, and involved in discipline by the sufficiency of Christ.

Preaching: Since arriving in Sacramento in June of 2014, Rev. Hall has been preaching from several different places in the Holy Scriptures, a total of 49 sermons since arriving in June. It has been challenging, but Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church has been hearing sermons from the Gospel of Luke, the Epistle of James, the Book of Judges, Proverbs, and the Psalms. Currently, Rev. Hall is preaching through the Gospel of Luke and the Psalms during the morning and evening worship services, for the most part.

Another aspect of preaching is bringing others under the authority of the Word of God. Currently, there are several people from outside of the Church with whom a relationship is being built to that end. The Lord willing, they will join themselves to a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since June, Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church has baptized at least thirteen individuals; one adult, and twelve children. Furthermore, at least eighteen people have joined this fellowship of believers, children included.

In order to grow and develop, Rev. Hall is also slowly auditing an on-line class focused upon Christ-centered development and preaching of the Word of God.

Teaching: In addition to the call to preach stands the responsibility to teach. Upon several requests, topical studies were begun. The first of which was concerning the subject of Two Kingdoms Natural Law. The second of which was concerning the subject of marriage. Another study began in Napa, CA, with the hopes that it would begin a core group of believers toward a possible Church plant. These studies have ended with a good conclusion and building up in the faith. Now, a new study will begin in March on the Book of Romans utilizing a publication called The 17:18 Series.

Another part of the responsibility to teach is the catechizing of the young people in the faith. The young people are enthusiastic and sharp. What a blessing to have young people who want to learn - such an example was set to them by their parents. The only issue was settling upon the best time of instruction to meet for the parents and the young people.

Discipline: Rev. Hall has been involved in several situations needing the attention of the application of the Gospel. The Elders and Ministers at Covenant Reformed Church have been closely working together for the sake of the reputation of Christ in the lives of those who confess in His name.

Other issues of personal discipline and devotion to the Lord were brought to Rev. Hall's attention. This has resulted in a group of men committed to daily devotions and accountability to each other for spiritual edification and growth.

Lastly, the Elders and Rev. Hall were able to visit nearly all the members of the Church. Even though formal visitations were finished, fellowship continues either at coffee shops, restaurants, homes, wine tasting events, beer making events, or home school activities.

Conclusion: Preaching, teaching, and Church disciple each, no doubt, have their struggles. But, they are effected with blessing only from the Lord. Since arriving in Sacramento at the call of Covenant Reformed Church the blessings of the Lord working with the word seems to be abundant, full of grace, and received by the congregation who have been so generous. The congregation is eager to learn and grow in the Lord. May the Lord God continue to bless the preaching, the teaching, and the building up of His Church here and there and everywhere by working with us by His Spirit word.

Respectfully,
In Christ, My Lord and My God,
Rev. Jimmy John Hall

Classis Action: Take note.

I. Rev. Paul Henderson

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from

the south. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! (Ps. 107:1-3, 8).

Yes brethren, who could have planned, reasoned, or “dreamed” that in one short year or so, our LORD would bring about so many different changes within our church family- Ebenezer Reformed Church; That throughout this one year we would see, know or experience so much goodness and mercy from His hand, but we did.

To give you all an idea of what I am talking about, and to account for the temporal as well as the spiritual well-being of the congregation, here is a sampling: Who would have known that we would have one of our oldest & dearest members, Mrs. Laura Vaux go home to be with her precious Lord soon after her 93rd birthday to dwell with Him forever in His heavenly home, but she did! Who would have thought that we would have one dear 91 year old, (Mrs. Dorothy Holland, residing in our local Rest Home Facility), join with us in membership as she made profession of her faith in Jesus Christ? But she did! Who would have guessed God’s beautiful purpose to have two of our dear older members (80 plus years and counting), Mr. Robert Merz and Mrs. Vivian Baze, join together in holy matrimony? But they did! Yes, and who would have thought that we would have one of our dear sweet sisters in the faith, fall and break a vertebrae in her neck, but at 79, Mrs. Dolly Kirschenmann did, and thankfully, her heavenly Father is still proving His goodness and mercy to her, in the midst of this affliction! And that’s just with our 79 year olds and counting folk!

For also dear delegates, in God’s good providence, we also had four of our young men join together in marriage with their sweethearts! Mr. Aaron Merz to Leandra; (end of 2013); Mr. Matthew Velasquez to Erin in March; Mr. Elliott Kirschenmann to Amanda in May and Mr. Brent Kirschenmann to Carol in September! Yes, who would have or could have planned all of this goodness! But, our Lord was not finished, for we also had two of our young men become engaged to their sweethearts: Mr. Zane Velasquez to Miss Jenna and Mr. Clint Kirschenmann to Miss Stacy!

Then as our Lord would have it, in His remarkable providence and goodness, He also gave two new little additions to our church family; one by way of adoption, and another by way of birth. Mr. Caleb Ryan Spitzer, son of Jake and Cheri Spitzer; was welcomed into the Ebenezer family this year as his adoption was finalized in August; and little Miss Payton Marie Parsons, daughter of Jeff and Shelby Parsons, was born into this world and welcomed into our church on December 29th!

Moreover, as the year unfolded, in God’s beautiful timing, we had the blessed privilege and joy of seeing three of our covenant youth confirmed in the faith once delivered unto the saints; Mr. Tim Bender, son of John and Debbie Bender; Mr. Silas Henderson, son of Paul and Tina Henderson; and Miss Emma Spitzer, daughter of Jake and Cheri Spitzer! All of them made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, as they became communicant members of Ebenezer Reformed Church! Yes, and on that same Sunday, we also had the wonderful privilege and joy to witness a public profession of faith in Christ by our newest member, Mrs. Chris Ash, (Pamela Spitzer’s mother, and Emma’s grandma) at the beautiful age of 78! Even now we are blessed to have four covenant children in Catechism Classes.

Finally then, we were privileged to receive the wonder, power and absolute goodness that our Lord showered upon our congregation, when He stirred up this 95 year old Ebenezer Reformed Church to seek out and call a Missionary Pastor to begin (plant, establish, start) a Hispanic reformed church here in Shafter, California! And what a blessing it was and is for the Lord to bring to us the Rev. and Mrs. Valentin (Betty)

Alpuche, and their children, Moises, Jade, Matias, and sweet little Grace! WOW! How can we begin to comprehend the enduring goodness and mercy of our LORD to the children of men!

Rev. Alpuche was examined and sustained in our March 2014 Classis meeting; they arrived in June; Rev. Alpuche was installed in July, and the rest, as we say, shall be the Lord's glorious history!

For as Valle de Gracia begins to take shape, and His sheep are drawn together, we acknowledge and confess our humble gratitude to our sovereign God for the encouragement and strength that we have received thus far from our brothers and sisters throughout the RCUS, and especially from our brethren in Bakersfield. The Rev. Tracy Gruggett, the Consistory, and the members of Grace have been a source of immense joy and strength!

Indeed dear brothers, there were many other providential happenings throughout this past year, wherein this church family has experienced the goodness and mercy of the LORD; Yes, even in all of the surgeries, illnesses, trials and afflictions, deaths of loved ones, as well as all of the other joyful and new things which made up a part of this past year, it is truly comforting to know, and also proper that we acknowledge and confess openly that our Lord truly worked out all things for our good, and all according to His loving purposes! What a blessing it is to be able, and enabled to confess that our Lord is sure and faithful, trustworthy and very merciful, long-suffering and full of grace. Indeed dear delegates of the 30th Classis meeting, what a year it has been for Ebenezer!

Specifically in regards to the temporal condition: As the treasurer and other officers will attest, the Lord once again has been faithful and very good to us, and His people here have responded in kindness and generosity toward the works, both in regards to Ebenezer and Valle de Gracia, and unto the many calls for help financially through the USA and the world [*Los Angeles, Lancaster, Philippines, Africa, Pakistan, Estonia, and other places I'm sure*]. We continue to be encouraged and challenged from our Lord, in regards to our giving, that we might always keep in mind that we will never out give God, if we continue to give to Him, His due! Malachi 3:1 "*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house and try Me now in this, says the LORD of Hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'*"

In regards to the spiritual condition of Ebenezer, that is, as far as the work of the Holy Spirit continues here, it has been expressed to me more than once how grateful everyone is for the Lord's grace and mercy as He has seen us all through another year. We have cried both tears of joy and sorrow, laughed, argued, and perhaps 'fought' a little over certain things, but in all of these times, the Lord continues to work out His own particular purposes that He might receive all of the praise, honor, and glory, and beloved, might continue also His work of reforming and conforming our lives more and more into the glorious image of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is with a grateful heart that yours truly gives thanks to our God for all who have continued to uphold in prayer this church family, her pastors and families, her officers and families, as well as all of the saints and their families, as we all "pilgrimed" through 2014. The faithful prayers and praying of God's people, by His design, is bringing forth much good fruit! As noted in the statistical reporting, we have gained nine communicant members, and we are seeking for the Lord to add more to our family as 2015 unfolds before us.

On a personal note this year, after hearing a personal story told by Elder Larry Lynch of Grace Reformed Church at Lancaster, CA., (*a north L.A. County Sheriff*), while he and I were visiting our mission work, Rehoboth, in Cerritos, CA, I was challenged to ask myself (and our congregation) a very simple, yet profound “faith check.” “Is our ‘faith’ this real? Is this important to us on a day to day basis?”

For you see folks, the ‘faith,’ the doctrines or teachings and the truth that we have been given by God’s sovereign grace in His Word, and as formulated into Creeds and Confessions, is a treasured faith, a priceless faith, a beautiful and powerful faith; a faith worth fighting for; a faith worth living for; a faith worth dying for; and yes, a faith that really means something, and has meaning as well as much comfort, strength and hope for us, for our families, and for this very needy world which God declares, *still lies under the sway of the wicked one!* *1 John 5:19.*

Yes, our faith means something and is something because the author and finisher of our faith is the Sovereign Lord and Savior who is calling the shots, (literally for Larry), and for us also! He is likewise serious about receiving the honor and glory due His name; And He will use whom He will use, and do what He will do, whether folks are on board with His plans or not.

So I encourage us to continually and entirely be dependent upon His power and might, His goodness and mercy, and trust His Word, for He who has spoken is trustworthy. Wherefore, as we move ahead with all of the projects, plans, and hopes or ‘dreams’ we have, within our families, within our various church families, as well as within our beloved denomination, the Reformed Church in the United States! And yes, I love to say and confess with a denominational bias or loyalty, which it seems, is so religiously incorrect these days, let us, as humble soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, be found faithful and truly thankful for all of His abundant goodness and mercy to us, yes, even in the midst of trial and affliction, as well as when things seem to be going abundantly well and ever smoothly. Keep our eyes, O’ Lord, focused on the Prize!

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Paul H. Henderson

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Joe Gorss led the body in prayer.

J. Rev. Gary Mancilas

Esteemed Brethren,

To recount the faithfulness of God, I reflect on year 2014 with the assurance that the Apostle Paul gave to the Philippian Church, “*And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ*” Philippians 1:6. Because God is faithful, He gives the assurance to His church, “*I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, says the LORD*” Jeremiah 23:4. As a result, the congregation at Chico possesses the richest blessings in Christ. We have the assurance that God keeps His congregation faithful through the officers appointed by Him. In this way, the church remains sound in doctrine and life, having the knowledge that “the almighty, everywhere-present power of God still upholds heaven and earth with all creatures, and so governs ...[our] health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things come not by chance,

but by His fatherly hand.” *The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all* Proverbs 22:2.

FINANCES: Proceeding from a short fall in temporal resources, we are constrained from greater “good works;” even though it is our desire to achieve a broader outreach in evangelism and a presence of our good works in our community. But what God’s promise reminds us is that He has begun a good work in us, and it is with this confidence that we continue until He has completed His work. The congregation has been exemplary by financially supporting the work in Chico. Because of the number in membership, the church remains dependent upon the financial support of our denomination and is currently requesting benevolent aid from both Classis and Synod. In order to continue the work in Chico, it was necessary to make adjustments to balance the 2015 budget, including the necessary requested financial aid. The two significant financial adjustments were the relocation to the smaller chapel area at the Adventist building, which yielded an annual savings of \$3,000 and to my family’s health insurance. The congregation recognizes that the viability of the church falls on the members; however, until the Lord adds the adequate resources to His church, it remains dependent upon the financial support of our denomination.

PASTOR’S LABORS: Without doubt, the grace of God has enabled me to serve in His church all these years, while faithfully teaching and preaching the principles of the Reformed Faith. With all humility, I have considered the dignity and responsibility of the office of “Minister of the Word;” and once again, I enter upon my pastoral charge with the expectations of God’s blessings for His church. Endeavoring to discharge my pastoral duties, careful attention has been given to the adult Sunday school class, to men’s Bible studies, to personal visitations, to counseling sessions, and to catechism class for one covenant youth. In my forty-seven Lord’s Days sermons, the preaching of the Gospel focused mainly on the Law/Gospel and the Ten Commandments. Regarding the Sacraments, the Lord’s Supper was administered on the first Lord’s Day of each month, and Holy Baptism was administered once. Denominationally, I am on the Classis’ Christian Education in the Church Committee and on the Synod Archives Committee. My personal ministry continues in providing Reformed theological instructions to a young man by way of online, email, and phone. During my family’s vacation in Oklahoma visiting family, I spent time with my wife’s nephew, Blain Blaylock, who is interested in Reformed theology. At the time, Blain, his wife, and two children were attending the AG church. Blain requested that I enter into formal studies with him. During the course of our studies, I located Covenant Presbyterian Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The pastor, Rev. John Clayton, is a Doctor of Ministry candidate at New Geneva Theological Seminary in Colorado Springs, CO. I spoke with his professor at New Geneva, who commended Rev. Clayton for his commitment to the Reformed tradition. After my recommendation, Blain and his family began attending Covenant Presbyterian and subsequently obtained church membership. With my counsel, Blain is currently influencing his family and friends with the Reformed faith, and some are now attending the church.

SPIRITUAL COUNCIL/CONSISTORY: The Spiritual Council and Consistory continue to serve faithfully. Currently, the Consistory is organized with two elders and one deacon serving. Elders Helseth and Gochnauer watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation, and Deacon Scott McAfee has attended to the temporal affairs of the congregation. Mr. Chris Hekman was elected to the office of deacon

February 8, 2015. At this writing, we are looking forward to his ordination and installation.

CONGREGATION: The congregation's faithfulness is recognized in the observance of the sacraments and ordinances of the visible church. It is this pastor's observation that the members have fulfilled their duty as Church members. Reformation at its highest expression is realized through our true worship of God and in attendance each Lord's Day, wherein the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is preached. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is faithfully observed. The members have received their pastor and officers and have highly esteemed them in love, for their work's sake.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES: Church activities include the Men's Bible Studies, which were held twice monthly at my home. A few visitors who were excited about hearing the Reformed faith attended the study and worship. Morning Prayer Meetings were held twice monthly, giving the men the opportunity to pray for the needs of the congregation and denomination and to provide devotions. The special event of the year was the Reformation Sunday Program. The congregation continues to observe the RCUS Day of Pray and Fasting in January; the Annual Day of Prayer for Home and Foreign Missions in September; and the Western Classis Annual Day of Prayer for Western Classis home missions in November; and responds to encouragement to have regular special prayer meetings for home and foreign mission works, including all the work of the church, which is scheduled in June.

EVANGELISM: In reference to evangelism and advertisement, *with a view toward improving our ministry*, the Consistory set meetings to evaluate the work in Chico and to consider the questions posed in the "President's Report" presented at the 29th Session of Western Classis. Question: "Are we making the best use of our resources?" Using the church's limited resources, every effort is targeted to raise awareness of our Reformed presence in the community. As in every church outreach, our Consistory anticipates a certain measure of results. It is true that what Chico has expended through donated funds pledged for advertisement has not yielded the desired results. Of recent, I read a RCUS minister's 2014 Parochial Report informing, "*I have distributed a thousand or so invitations to the church, about 500 brochures, with no contacts from these efforts.... We did ads with the local paper for a short time, but the best resource has been the website, as most have come through this.*" This leads to answering the questions, "Are we using modern technology to its fullest potential in promoting the gospel of salvation and does our church have plans to improve our outreach?" It is our experience that the church website has been the best resource for exposure of our Reformed presence. The Consistory concluded that the website is the technology that reaches the community through a broader advertising medium, targeting individuals and families seeking churches that promote Reformed worship, and providing information for individuals who are disillusioned with postmodern evangelical Christianity. For our website project, I was appointed to add and update the site with articles, which is time consuming. As I improve in my website skills, eventually the sermons will be placed on the site. In addition to the website, each Saturday in the Religious Section of the local newspaper we continue to post the *Heidelberg Catechism* question and answer for that Lord's Day, at no cost. Recently added is an advertisement that appears weekly at the bottom of the Religious Sponsorship section in bold print, which contains our church name, address, pastor's name, phone number, location of worship, and the church website. In relation to the same, the question: "What about the social media?" We are utilizing social media, including text, audio, video, images, and other multimedia communications. To this end,

again, the website is our on-going project. Further exposure of our Reformed presence included excerpts from the Sunday Worship sermons broadcast on our radio program, “The Hour of Reformation,” including advertising spots. The worship service sermons were video recorded and submitted to the Access Cable T.V. for production. Addressed was the question, “Are we equipping our members to engage in personal evangelism?” Over the years Evangelism Outreach courses have been provided, along with a promotion packet for each family containing *Reformed Herald* and *Leben* magazines, CRC church information cards, and *The Marks of the True Church* tract cards, to be stuffed in the magazines to be distributed to businesses or professional business offices for their magazine tables. One member reported that while in a casual restaurant she and another member overheard a customer’s conversation about his interest in religion and the Reformed Faith. She went to her car to obtain the evangelism material to give to the man. Waiting, the opportunity did not present itself to follow through. However, she was thankful that she was equipped. The final question addressed was “How much is the economy to blame for our losses?” To some degree over the years we have lost members who relocated for job related reasons.

CONCLUSION: In closing, it is with the greatest confidence that I report that the saints of Covenant Reformed Church have kept the strong vision and hope that the Lord would grant the resources to continue our work in Chico by increasing our membership and becoming financially dependent. Until then, as a small congregation the church continues to demonstrate its effectiveness by a Reformed presence in the Chico area. In appreciation, the Consistory conveys to the denomination that we are most grateful to those who have offered their love, support, concern, and prayers. In the providence of God, the financial status of the church continues to be in God’s hands; and we wait upon God to bless the church with the needed resources.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,
Rev. Gary Mancilas

Classis Action: Take note.

K. Rev. Thomas Mayville

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.... Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-18).

Beloved Brothers of the Western Classis,

I am so very thankful for and will always remember the love you, your wives and your congregations have shown to me and Carolyn these last 12 months. We thank you for your encouragement and prayers for finding work and regarding our future. Via this report, we also want to express our deep gratitude for providing funds for our health insurance (Samaritan's Ministries) these last 12 months.

As you know, having consulted with the Executive Committee last year, for the last 12 months I observed a sabbatical from the normal process of accepting a call to relocate. My hopes and plans I reported to you last year, to labor in some sort of full time ministerial work for the church of Christ either full or part time, while continuing to live near Modesto until then 2014, did not come to pass in our Father's wise and perfect providence. Sixteen months have passed since my resignation at Trinity, Modesto mid-October 2013. My generous severance pay from that beloved congregation ended thirteen months ago.

Since then the Head of our Church has given me the following opportunities to continue in the service of the Church with direct denominational work. I have provided pulpit supply at Providence, Lodi several times, including administering the Lord's Supper, also at Calvary, Stockton, once and Hughson, OPC for two services. Because of work commitments I had to regrettably decline pulpit supply at Grace, Lancaster once and because of a commitment to visit my 83 year old father, had to decline a second invitation for pulpit supply at Stockton. I have had several opportunities to counsel and have been asked to perform two weddings this summer and fall. I did dialog with the Grass Valley Consistory recently offering my services as an interim pastor for one year at half time and half salary. At Calvary Reformed Stockton, I have sought to be a blessing to the congregation under the oversight of Rev. Merica and Elder Goehring.

For Classis I served on the Special Committee re: Instruments in Worship. For the Synod, I served on the Kenya Subcommittee of the FMC, including planning a one month mission trip in which I will join Rev. Roe in July to minister to the Reformed Fellowship Church of Kenya Churches.

My job search since last February has included many applications and half a dozen interviews, but no job offer. I applied for Prison Chaplain at Tracy, Jamestown, and Stockton Youth Facility. I interviewed at Tracy with five other candidates, but was not selected. However, they did say that it was difficult for them to choose one out of the five candidates. My primary income has been driving for the ride sharing companies Uber and Lyft, with some income as a marketing executive for Melaleuca products.

Last month, at my request, I met with three Western Classis Pastors and three Elders for advice and counsel about my future since a minister of Classis shall not remain on the roll of Classis for more than three consecutive years without being engaged in the service of the Church. As a result of that meeting, I am praying that our Lord and Savior will open a door for me so that I may continue in the pastoral ministry of the RCUS in California. I have also discussed with a few Pastors and Elders my heart's desire to be used by our Lord to plant an RCUS church in either the Turlock or Tracy area, perhaps as a missionary at large, perhaps half time and half salary. Both have populations of about 150,000 including nearby cities and towns. Please pray with us about these matters; and as always your advice and counsel are most welcome. In the meantime, I would like to offer my services to Western Classis Consistories for pulpit supply whenever needed.

Dear brothers, our income is about 50 percent of our 2013 income, and so I humbly request, that Classis continue to help us with \$315 per month in diaconal aid to pay our

health insurance for the Classical year unless I obtain full time pastoral work with health insurance before March 2016.

May the will of Christ Jesus be done in and through your servant.

In His service,
Rev. Thomas Mayville

Classis Action: The report was referred to Standing Benevolence.

L. Rev. Jonathan Merica

There is no more important task for the church than to arise in the power of God's Spirit to proclaim the Gospel for the glory of God. It is the desire of Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton, CA to arise to the challenge to "rise up and build" the church as the Lord commanded in Nehemiah 2:18 where Nehemiah said, *"Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work."*

Calvary Reformed Chapel offers gratitude to our gracious Lord for the new members and visitors brought to our congregation this year. The visitors who attend find out about our congregation mainly from the internet and our web site. This year we are very grateful for the labors of Steve Mason in recording the sermons and uploading the messages at Calvary Reformed Chapel to Sermon Audio. The sermons are also linked to our website at www.calvaryreformedchapel.com and are heard by many in our country and in several foreign countries. Pray that the Word of God will be useful in bringing many souls to salvation. We received an encouraging letter from a local 24 year old man from Stockton who is married and has two small children. He said, "we live in Stockton and are looking for a church home that is reformed in theology and gospel centered. For a husband my greatest desire is for my wife to be in fellowship with other women who can disciple her. And for me to have the same, with men who are able to pour into me to be a godly man. I have been a believer for two years now and have a desire to evangelism and make disciples." No doubt there are many others just like this young man in Stockton, CA.

Our attendance at CRC has been encouraging in 2014. We long to see more growth in 2015. When visitors attend, we follow up with either a telephone call or letter or both. As visitors attend we endeavor to give them literature (especially, the Three Forms of Unity) so that they may be more familiar with the Reformed faith.

In the morning worship services I have been preaching through the book of Hebrews. In the Sunday School Class I have been teaching through the book of Acts. The ministry from the book of Acts gives believers a greater understanding of the redemptive work of Christ for our salvation. This study helps us to be more energized and enthusiastic to do the work of the evangelism.

It has been a blessing to have Rev. Thomas Mayville and Carolyn, his wife, join with us in church membership on March 9, 2014. Thank the Lord, Carlos Marquez and his four daughters Alana, Kiley, Hanna and Carly were received into membership at CRC Stockton, CA on June 22, 2014. The four daughters received covenant baptism on the day of their reception into membership. Iona Liberty Goehring was born on October 10, 2014, and received her covenant baptism on November 23, 2014. Mark Williams was

received into church membership by profession of faith. Recently, on January 25, 2015, we were blessed to receive Mrs. Coleen Arroyo as a new church member. We thank the Lord for giving Calvary Reformed Chapel nine new members which included five covenant baptisms in 2014.

The Western Classis Interchurch Relations Committee sent me as a delegate to the Spring meeting of the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada. Also, upon the request of the RCUS Synod Interchurch Relations committee, I served as a delegate to the URCNA Synod on June 2-6, 2014. The meeting was held in Visalia, CA.

Calvary Reformed Chapel has applied to the Western Classis for a viability study as a mission work of the RCUS. The assessment committee graciously made their assessment on February 1, 2015. The support of the Western Classis and home missions will greatly augment our “arising and building” the congregation at Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton. It is my desire in 2015 to focus upon a city-wide outreach effort in spreading the gospel throughout the Stockton metropolitan area.

At Calvary Reformed Chapel we endeavor to faithfully administer the sacraments of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism. We receive the Lord’s Supper each first Lord’s Day of the month. Truly it has been a means of grace as we are edified in the faith knowing as we receive the elements of bread and wine, through faith our sins are washed away and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us for our salvation. The sacrament of holy Baptism was exercised five times at Calvary Reformed Chapel in the year of 2014. To God be all the glory for the great things, he has done.

In closing, I ask that you please pray that our Lord Jesus Christ will be pleased to pour out His grace and Spirit upon our labors for His kingdom and glory that we may bring forth fruit pleasing to God. I offer heartfelt thanksgiving to God for giving us love and unity that bonds us together with Him and with each other. May God be praised in our labors for His glory and the furtherance of His kingdom. May the Lord’s blessings be with us as we labor in His kingdom. Brethren, *“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ . . .”* (Col 4:2-3).

In Christ’s service for God’s glory,
Rev. Jonathan Merica

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Kurt Snow led the body in prayer.

M. Rev. Vernon Pollema

Esteemed Brethren:

As I reflect upon the past year, retirement becomes more real in the sense that my ministerial labors were significantly diminished. My labors were pretty much confined to filling the pulpits and teaching adult Sunday School for the vacationing or ailing ministers of the three area congregations (Grace of Lancaster, Grace of Bakersfield, Ebenezer of Shafter) and devotionals for Women of Grace, Bakersfield.

A highlight of the past year was officiating at the installation of the Rev. Valentin Alpuche as the new Associate/Missionary Pastor of the Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, for the purpose of establishing a Hispanic Reformed Church.

For the large majority of Sundays I enjoy sitting in the pew with my wife worshipping together with our three daughters, son, their spouses and ten grandchildren. What a covenant blessing!

I continue to serve on permanent and special committees of Classis and Synod as well as an adjunct professor and board member of Heidelberg Theological Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD. Student Cody Schwichtenberg is completing his fourth year and will graduate this May. He has been able to do a considerable amount of pulpit supply in the area and is looking forward to the full-time ministry.

I have not attended Synod the last two years due to the dates conflicting with the graduations of grandchildren, events both important and precious to my wife and myself. It appears that the same conflict will again exist this year. Most denominations hold their major assemblies at later times, thus avoiding such conflicts. That does not seem to be a consideration in the RCUS.

With regard to my health, my PSA number remains nearly unmeasurable, indicating no residual prostate cancer. My diabetic condition remains under control through oral medication, but could be improved through more consistent exercise and diet.

The Lord remains faithful in His provision for me and my wife through the supplemental ministerial aid we receive. We praise God for the generosity and care of His people in this provision for us.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Vernon Pollema

Classis Action: Take note.

N. Rev. Sam Powell

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Eph 6:10-13 KJV)

We sometimes forget that building the church is plundering the kingdom of the Devil. I praise our God that He has given us the tremendous privilege of crushing Satan's head under our feet, even though the conflict leaves our heels bruised.

The word was preached each Lord's Day in 2014. I preached 45 times, Rev. Gene Sawtelle preached 4 times, and student intern Steve Carr preached three times.

In addition, I preached every other Sunday evening until May at Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento and twice at Faith Reformed Church in Anderson. These times were a great joy to me, greeting old friends and making new.

At First Reformed, I completed a series of sermons through the Psalms of Ascents. One of those sermons, "Dealing with Abusive Men" was linked by a popular website, *cryingoutforjustice.com*, and has been downloaded from Sermonaudio over 2,000 times. Our online sermons, available on Sermon Audio, continue to receive traffic from all over the world. I will sometimes receive a note or even a phone call of appreciation from the far corners of the world. After completing this series, I began a series through the book of Colossians.

For adult Sunday School, I have continued to teach through the Minor Prophets, completing Zephaniah and Haggai, and beginning Zechariah. It has been a challenging and rewarding study.

Membership classes were held on Thursday evenings, and catechism classes held Friday afternoons. It is a tremendous blessing to me to spend Friday afternoons with our young people speaking of the gospel.

We were tremendously blessed this past summer with the work of Mr. Steve Carr. Steve is a student for the ministry at Mid America Reformed Seminary. He and his wife Crystal arrived with three children and left at the end of the summer with four. We were privileged to know them. Steve sat in on Consistory meetings, taught the adult Sunday School and preached most Sundays, either here or at Faith Reformed in Anderson.

Our numbers grew with the addition of new families, and new additions to families. The spring of 2014 was lambing season here with the birth and baptism of five infants. Rev. J. Gangar of the URCNA came up from Walnut Creek, CA to baptize his grandson, Luke Rainwater. Rev. Dennis Roe baptized his twin grandsons, Oliver and Marshall Johnson, and I had the joy of baptizing Wyatt Opie (my grandson) and Anna Reardon. I also baptized Gage Wilson, after hearing his profession of faith. The Lord's Supper was celebrated 12 times.

In addition to my regular duties, I continue to serve as the adjunct professor of Hebrew at City Seminary. I also continue as the chairman of the Permanent Publications and Promotions Committee for the denomination.

Through the faithfulness of our deacons and the generosity of the congregation, we were able to do some improvements on the property. Susan and I are very thankful for the new carpeting in the parsonage. We installed a cry room for those with small children and we upgraded our nursery with a private room for nursing mothers. We were able to purchase chairs and upgrade the sound system.

Our elders were diligent, as always, in their duties. Over the summer months, each elder and his family made the trip to Faith Reformed Church in Anderson several times to support the work there and oversee the work of Mr. Carr. They have been a tremendous support for me, offering me counsel and help in so many areas. I am so thankful to God for faithful elders and deacons.

I began by saying that the work of the church is warfare against the devil. Then I listed a bunch of numbers. What is missing in this report are the triumphs, as well as the tears and loss and pain that come in this vale of tears. Some struggle with continuous, unrelenting pain with no cure in sight. Some struggle with their bodies falling apart. Some struggle with caring for elderly parents. Some struggle as elderly parents. Some have experienced the loss of long-time friends for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus promised that it is with much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven.

But He also promised that he has overcome the world. So we can joyfully lift our eyes to heaven where Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father! Our life is not here, but hid with Christ in God, so we can confidently live and love and trust even in the storms of life. As we continue to grow, not just in numbers, but also in faith, we remember that the devil doesn't relinquish his kingdom easily. We are very thankful to God that we do not walk alone, but He has placed us with the saints here in Yuba City and we laugh and cry and hurt together.

There are more battles to be fought and more victories to achieve, and I am blessed to fight alongside of each member at First Reformed Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Sam Powell

Classis Action: Take note.

O. Rev. Neale Riffert

Esteemed Brothers:

There is that wonderful Psalm (92), that begins, *“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High. To declare Your loving-kindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night.”*

Yes, it is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to His name, and I want to sing praise to His name for the goodness shown to myself and family in the past year. Actually, I want sing praise to My Lord for all the blessings through all the years. For my wonderful wife, my children, my grandchildren, and all my brothers and sisters in the faith, those in the churches we have had the privilege of serving, and especially for the men of the Western Classis, and those of the Synod. What a blessing it is and has been to live and labor among and with you for the last 45 years. And I want to sing praises to the Lord for the new mercies I see morning by morning.

There is a Proverb that says, *“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth”* (Proverbs 27:1). I don't boast about tomorrows, and I certainly don't know what a day may bring forth, but I soon found that a day can make a big difference in your life. One did last year in my life. It was the day after Synod. We left Nebraska on a beautiful sunny morning, and along the way I noticed that the sun was bothering my eyes. Now I had been having a mild problem for a few weeks with my right eye and thought I needed a stronger lens, but that morning, I had to take my glasses off and keep my right eye closed in order to see. As the sun got higher in the sky, I got some relief, and things went pretty well until later in the day as we neared Oklahoma City. There the clouds got darker and it began to rain. Off came my glasses and again I kept my right eye closed. I thought I'd try something. I pulled into the right lane about 150 feet behind a big semi, and briefly put my hand over my left eye. What I saw sent a shudder through my bones. I couldn't see the truck in front of me.

Through the course of the next two months if I didn't keep my left eye closed and my glasses off I couldn't see too far, and if I had my glasses off I couldn't read anything. I had an eye exam scheduled for August which I anxiously awaited. When I entered their facility it was like entering a mall of gadgets. Unbelievable! During the exam I could see my eyeballs inside and out projected on a screen.

A few more eye drops and onto the next station until meeting with the doctor who greeted me with, “I've got good news and bad news for you.” Before I could ask him what the news was, he said, “You have really healthy eyes. But you have a really nasty cataract on your right eye, and one that could be equally as nasty developing on the left eye.” He then added, “But with surgery, I believe we can remove your astigmatism, and bring you back to 20/20 vision.” I said, “Praise the Lord! Let's do it.”

I had surgery on the right eye in September, and the on the left eye in October. After the surgery on the left eye, I was like a kid looking through a telescope. I could see things I hadn't noticed for a long time. I had the doctor pop the right lens from my glasses, and a couple of days later we headed off to South Carolina to visit our daughter and family. When we returned in late October, I had surgery on the left eye. After that surgery I

annoyed Mary Elizabeth and Jr. by singing “I can see clearly now.” I truly praise the Lord that he has given men such wisdom and skill to perform such marvels in our times. The surgeries, not counting the hour or so for preparation, took about 15 minutes. After the surgery post op was about 20 minutes relaxing with a cup of coffee, and then out the door with a small plastic opaque patch over the eye that was kept on for about an hour, and then *voilà*, unbelievable vision. Mary Elizabeth became my nurse for each month following each surgery keeping track of drops to be administered some four times a day, some once a day, another three times a day.

So here I am among you “*Giving thanks to the Lord, praising His name, and declaring His loving-kindness in the morning and His faithfulness every night.*”

As to the work in Texas, that will be drawing to an end at the end of this month. We haven't been able to make any further progress in the past three years, and the SCC Home Missions Committee suggests that it be put on hold for at least five years, and that our present funds be placed in escrow. Should further development take place those funds would be available. That, I believe is reasonable. In reality, I recognize that my part in the labor is pretty much over. In five years, should the Lord be so gracious, I will be 80. I'm struggling at 75 (nearly 75) to maintain my sanity in a world far, far different than the one I entered. I am no longer sure as to where I fit in this world. I am not a Millennial. I am not part of Generation X. I am not even a Baby Boomer. Thankfully, I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mary Elizabeth, Neale Jr., and myself want to express thankfulness to the RCUS for the support we receive from Synod, and ask the Western Classis to petition the Synod for continued support the Synodical year 2015-2016.

We thank the Lord for you all.

Respectfully submitted
Rev. Neale R. Riffert

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Matthew Davis led the body in prayer.

P. Rev. Dennis Roe

Dear Mr. President and Beloved Co-laborers in Christ:

I thank God for giving me the honor of serving Him and you over the past thirty-five years in the pastoral ministry. I am especially grateful that thirty-two of those years of service have been in the Reformed Church in the United States. As the expression asks, “Where has the time gone?”

Brothers, I believe the time has come for me to step down from pastoral ministry at the end of June this year. This has been one of the most difficult and painful decisions that I have ever made. I love serving Christ by shepherding the flock of God in the pastoral ministry. Of late, it has become apparent to me that due to several chronic health issues, my ability to provide pastoral care for the congregation at Covenant RCUS at Grass Valley is not what it should be. Therefore, in consideration of this, I have made the decision to resign from the pastoral ministry. This decision was not made in haste. I have sought counsel from my consistory, fellow ministers, and family during the past year. I notified the congregation at our annual business meeting in January.

I want to emphasize that I am not retiring from serving our blessed God and only Saviour Jesus Christ. As long as I have breath, I desire to continue to herald Christ and

Him crucified. However, it has become apparent providentially, that I need to cut back on my labors for Christ and focus on an area where I think I can utilize the energy and gifts He has given me. In other words, this does not mean I'm going to retire on a sandy beach somewhere, sipping margaritas, and collecting retirement checks. On the contrary, I plan to continue to serve Christ and labor for the advancement of His everlasting Kingdom.

In pressing on in my calling as a Minister of the Word, I plan to focus my labors on the Lord's work in foreign missions. As many of you know, I was involved in the work of foreign missions even before I came into the RCUS in 1983. Primarily this mission work has been with Westminster Biblical Missions since 1982, with its fields in Central and Eastern Europe, Korea, Mexico, and Pakistan. Over the last thirty five years my responsibilities have expanded to include working with Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) and its labors to bring the Gospel of Christ to the Muslim world. I also have had the privilege to serve on our Synod's Foreign Missions Committee and in particular its fields in Africa. Furthermore, it has been a tremendous personal encouragement to me to see our Synod approve support, not only for MERF, but also for Westminster Biblical Missions.

In recent years I have rejoiced in the opportunity to serve City Seminary at Sacramento as its Dean of Students and as an Adjunct Professor. The Seminary board has very kindly granted me a sabbatical from my labors with them for the past year. I hope to once again take up this service in the near future.

In summary, because of my health concerns and waning energy level, I've made the decision to resign as pastor at Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley. I am looking forward to devoting myself to serving Christ in the work of the broader Church in the United States and overseas.

I ask for your prayers for the congregation at Grass Valley. Please pray for its leadership to have wisdom in providing for its oversight and care during this time of transition. Please pray that God will continue to build His church at Grass Valley by adding to it and building up these dear saints in the faith.

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD: The year of 2014 was a year filled with much travel for me as I preached the Word in pulpits throughout the United States and abroad. This was possible because the church at Grass Valley graciously allowed me to be away one Sunday per month for the purpose of missions. This congregation has always been very enthusiastic and supportive of my labors for foreign mission work.

In January and February of 2014, I traveled to Kenya on behalf of MERF, the RCUS, and Westminster Biblical Missions. This included teaching for MERF's students in Lokichoggio, as well as preaching in the local church there and evangelizing in the village. I also preached for the six RFCK churches in Kisii, Kenya and taught for a week at the Gusii Reformed Theological College on behalf of the RFCK and the RCUS.

Throughout the spring and summer, God gave me more opportunities to minister the Word in Russia, Romania, and Philadelphia. In addition, I preached and visited our RCUS congregations in Manitowoc, Kansas City, Minot, Anderson, Lodi, Willows, Yuba City, and Colorado Springs.

During my absence, the congregation was very happy to have the Rev. Jim West provide the ministry of the Word, as well as Elder Matthew Davis who exhorted on a regular basis, and Elder Christopher Case who also exhorted. I am very thankful that the Lord has provided faithful elders for us.

On Sunday mornings, I continued a series of expository sermons in the Gospel of Matthew on the “Teachings of Christ.” I also gave various messages for special occasions and seasons during the year as appropriate.

Our Sunday morning worship service averaged thirty to forty in attendance. I thank God for the visitors we have seen through the year.

In my service as military chaplain, I conducted and preached at the memorial service for the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Association in San Antonio, Texas. There were over five hundred people in attendance and the Word was well received by many. I praise God for these opportunities to declare His truth to our veterans. I plan to continue to serve as the Association’s chaplain. The next memorial service is scheduled for August of 2016 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Additional pastoral duties included membership classes, personal counseling sessions, and calling upon members and non-members in their homes, in the hospital, and in nursing homes. Sadly, we have not had any catechism aged young people this past year, although the Westminster Catechism for very young children is taught to our preschoolers in our Sunday School.

Our membership saw some encouraging changes in 2014. We lost four communicant members, three by transfer and one by being translated to the church victorious. However, we received seven communicant members, three by profession of faith and four by letter of transfer, and we received three non-communicant members, two of which were by baptism.

Our Spiritual Council and Consistory installed Mr. Matthew Davis, a former elder at Rehoboth RCUS and presently a student at City Seminary Sacramento, as an elder for our congregation.

We continue to work with Pastor Jonathan Merica in his church planting efforts in the Stockton area. We are very happy that the work is progressing. Please pray that the Lord will provide the necessary funds that Pastor Merica needs for him to continue at Calvary Reformed Chapel at Stockton.

II. CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT: From a human perspective things looked bleak at the start of 2014, but the Lord in His tender mercy brought signs of encouragement. Compared to recent years, we gained more members this year than we lost. In addition, we have had a few new families visiting of late. They are taking part in Sunday School, church luncheons, and are coming to fellowship meetings in our home.

Also, contrary to a suffering severe budget deficit, we finished the year with a much smaller shortage than we had anticipated. We praise God for the faithful and generous giving from our members as well as several gifts from our sister congregations.

It has been an honor to serve Christ as an under-shepherd to the flock of God at Grass Valley for almost 20 years. It is not without concern for the future of the church that I have given my resignation as their pastor. It weighs heavily on my heart. Yet my confidence is that the Lord will provide guidance and wisdom through the days ahead.

The Lord knows I have never wanted the church to be solely dependent upon me, and I do not believe that it is. It has been my desire to lay no other foundation than Jesus Christ. However, whenever a long term pastorate comes to an end, there are particular issues that give cause for concern. This is especially true when a congregation is as small as ours. So again, I implore you to pray for Covenant Reformed Church and her leaders to stay *strong in the Lord and the power of His might* that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will continue to be heralded from the pulpit here and lived out in the lives of the saints.

I thank you all, my dear brothers, for your faithful prayers for me personally throughout the years and for your words of encouragement to press on in the high calling of the ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May we all continue to be faithful in the work of the Lord knowing that we are fellow workers in God's field, remembering ... *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase* – 1 Corinthians 3:5-7.

“Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far and Grace will lead me home.”

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dennis E. Roe

Classis Action: Take note.

Q. Rev. Gene Sawtelle

Rev. Sam Powell gave an oral update on the declining health of Rev. Gene Sawtelle. In spite of debilitating physical pain, Rev. Sawtelle still proclaims the gospel of grace in Christ when he has opportunity.

Classis Action: Take note.

R. Rev. Doug Schlegel

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

When I served as an elder in our sister church in Sacramento, it was customary to present a beautiful, leather-bound Bible to the catechumens who made a public profession of faith. The elders and pastors would sign the flyleaf of the Bible and usually quote a verse. I would always quote Deuteronomy 7:9 which says, "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations..." I wanted the young man or woman to see that verse from time to time and remember how faithful God is. I wanted them to see it and remember it in times of rejoicing and times of sorrow.

I wanted them to remember that the circumstances of the day, the week, or even the year, do not define how faithful God is. He is always faithful, and as our confession says regarding God's providence, it is, "The almighty, everywhere present power of God, whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds heaven and earth with all creatures, and so governs them that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, all things come not by chance, but by His Fatherly hand." And "that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation." And this glorious truth means that, "... we may be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and for what is future have good confidence in our faithful God and Father..." (*Heidelberg Catechism*, #27, 1, 28). There has been much in the last year which I could account for as either rain or drought, health or sickness, and riches or poverty. There has been much of both, but above it all I know that, "... the LORD [our] God, he is God, the faithful

God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations...."

In my ministry, the year began on a somber note. On the 4th of January, the Lord took my mother to be with Himself. It was not a surprise and it was a mercy to her. Ordinarily, I would not include this in a parochial report, but before my mother died, she asked for me to officiate at her funeral and committal. I must confess that those were the greatest challenges I have ever had in my (relatively) short ministry. I am confident that the experience will further equip me to minister to the congregation in the future. The other reason I make reference to this is that the love and close bonds of the congregation were evident during that time. In my judgment, it was an indication of how close and strong the bonds of love are in the Lord's little flock at Providence Reformed. I fervently believe that the cords which bind us together are strong and not easily broken. Sometimes the most immediate sense of the faithfulness of the Lord is in the ministry we have to one another during the ups and especially the downs of life.

In April, my regular visits to Mule Creek State Prison came to a joyful end with the parole of Joey Serapiglia. It was a delight to have Joey with us for one Lord's Day before my wife and I took him to report to his parole officer in Los Angeles County. It was difficult as I came to the realization that they were not going to allow him to parole locally after the Consistory had made many preparations to find housing and work for him locally. Nevertheless, the Consistory sought to help him as much as we could and I was able to introduce him to a local congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. It was with much personal heartache that the relationship with Joey began to fray as he continued to make choices which were not God-honoring and it was heartbreaking to hear that he eventually violated his parole, became a fugitive, and was eventually arrested. He is currently incarcerated in the Los Angeles county jail and I suspect that he will spend the rest of his life behind bars. I relate these matters because you should know that this hurt me deeply. I think that I was given a glimpse into the anguish which the Apostle Paul endured as he saw those whom he loved, and who began well, begin to drift away. It is my prayer that the Lord will use me to help him in the future, though I doubt that I will ever see him again in this life. It is also my prayer that this experience will make me a better pastor.

It is common in these reports to address the life of the church in relation to the three marks of the church: "If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in chastening of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church" – *Belgic Confession*, art. XXIX. It is this pastor's judgment that the three marks of the church are evident in the life of Providence Reformed Church.

During the course of the year, I preached 45 times at Providence, seven times at our sister church in Sacramento, and twice in Szék, Romania. I completed an exegetical series through the Book of Philippians, and preached a seven part series on the doctrine of prayer as requested by my elders. I preached through II John, III John, and Jude, and I ended the year by preaching through the Book of Ruth. Along the way there were other sermons suitable to various occasions. It has been, and by God's mercy will continue to be, my conviction that I must preach the text. I do not perceive that I have the liberty to use (or rather abuse) the Word by using it merely as a foil to express my own opinions or to comment on the news of the day. At the same time, I am compelled to "[Cast] down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and

bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ..." (II Corinthians 10:5). If I am faithful in my calling, the world and sin will be confronted, the church will be comforted, and Christ will be exalted. I have striven to be faithful, so help me God. It is apparent to me that the congregation receives the Word gladly each Lord's Day.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was faithfully administered throughout the year. The elders are to be commended for their diligence in guarding the table. The fact that there were no baptisms is an indication of a growing burden I sense. It is no secret that we are a small congregation and our members are spread over a wide geographical area. Our outreach is primarily via *Sermon Audio* and our website. These are tremendous tools, but that outreach is not concentrated locally. Some months there are hundreds of sermons downloaded, but the downloads are scattered across the globe. For this I am grateful, but I am becoming more convinced that we must somehow reach out in our community and town. There are many practical obstacles to this, such as language and culture, but I also firmly believe that if I, and the congregation, prayerfully engage with the community, the Lord will present opportunity. To this end, I prepared a handout to distribute in the community. It is too early to see if this is an effective method. This burden has also led me to set aside a time each Lord's Day during Sunday School to pray regarding this matter in particular. We know and confess that it is the Lord's doing but both the congregation and I are also to be busy about the work of reaching others. As I read at the beginning, the Lord is always faithful.

Regarding the matter of, "church discipline [being] exercised in chastening of sin," from time to time I remind the congregation that the most common form of chastising is the weekly ministry of the Word and the first step of discipline is almost always private admonition. It is good and proper that all of us be reminded of the imperative of acting according to Matthew 18. Private sins and offenses are to be dealt with, at least initially, in private. Brotherly admonition and forgiveness ought to be part of the fabric of the church. I do not sense that there is a widespread deficiency in the matter of private admonition at Providence, but I, and the elders, are concerned that there may be a deficiency in the matter of understanding biblical forgiveness. Thus, the elders have asked me to preach on the subject of forgiveness. The topic is a very large topic, and not without some pitfalls, but I agree with them that it ought to be addressed. The implications of the biblical doctrine are immense. They touch family, work relationships, relationships with unbelievers, etc. It is my intent to preach on the subject once or twice a month at least through 2015 and often in conjunction with the Lord's Supper or the preparation Lord's Day before.

It is also widely known that there was a very painful matter of discipline in the church this past year. I know that for many, maybe for all in the congregation, the pain is still very fresh. It is painful for the elders and for me. I see the empty places each Lord's Day and I am constantly reminded. It is easy to wonder if there was some failure on my part, on the part of the elders, or maybe the matter was dealt with too harshly. But I can attest to you that the Spiritual Council was not eager to administer the extremity of excommunication and every effort was made to reconcile the offending party to the rule and law of Christ. Alas, the spirit of humility and repentance was not found, but the spirit of rebellion and defiance was found, and the Spiritual Council was *compelled* to act. Please be assured that every courtesy and opportunity was extended and the offender had access to counsel as well as the higher and broader courts of the church. She refused to avail herself of them. Nevertheless, the act of excommunication is intended to drive a

person back to the fold by depriving them of every blessing of Christian fellowship. It is our continuing prayer that the intended effect will be the actual effect, and the offending one restored. Nevertheless, the just act of excommunication had the effect of the loss of at least four other members and even some regular visitors who had expressed interest in becoming members. Though the circumstances are sad, I can report that the turmoil of the first half of the year has been replaced with an irenic calm. God is indeed faithful.

Lastly, even as I write this report, I am planning to return to Transylvania in a few days on behalf of Westminster Biblical Missions. If the Lord wills, this may become a semi-regular occurrence and I am grateful to the Consistory and congregation for permitting this as part of my call. My travel there this past year, during April and May, placed a burden upon me for the Hungarian-speaking people of northwest Romania. There is such a great Reformed heritage in that part of the world, but it is losing its potency. There are also many who simply do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is my hope and prayer that in some small way I can help to further the advance of the Kingdom there. Therefore, I accepted the position as Field-Chairman for Eastern Europe. It is a grand-sounding title, but the work is small and fledgling. I consider my first and primary calling to be pastor of Providence Reformed Church, but you should know of my work with Westminster Biblical Missions as well as my service on the board of City Seminary of Sacramento.

When I wrote that reference from Deuteronomy in the Bibles of the catechumens, I also had another hope. I hoped that they would turn to the passage and read the rest of it.

Verse 9 stops in the middle of the sentence. The entire portion through verse 11 reads, "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them." I hoped that they would learn and be warned not to be presumptuous of the faithfulness of God. I thought, and still think, that this is a warning that catechumens and covenant children need to hear and heed. Likewise we, the pastors and elders, should also hear and heed. We have been blessed with such great spiritual and temporal blessings, and we have inherited such a rich spiritual inheritance, that it could be very easy to presume upon the faithfulness of our covenant God. Each generation, each congregation, and each denomination must seek to do the will of God as revealed in His Word and not presume that the Lord will bless it even if we reject His Word or become slack in doctrine and life. Each member, each deacon, each elder, and each pastor has this same duty even if their callings are different. The Lord has indeed been faithful to us at Providence this past year, through both the rejoicing and the weeping. I am happy to report that at Providence, through rain and drought, health and sickness, riches and poverty, our zeal is undiminished, our faith is strong and we continue to trust in the faithfulness of our covenant God. We stand firm upon the Word of God and in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Douglas Schlegel

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Larry Lynch led the body in prayer.

S. Rev. Richard Stetler

“A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). During 2014, this verse had real application for me. It was a constant reminder to me as the year progressed, especially on a personal level, which I will discuss at the end of this report. For now I just want to make a brief comment concerning the truth that the Lord has graciously revealed in this very short verse. The verse served as a reminder of how easy it is to fall into the trap of self-confidence and self-assurance. We can have all the well intended plans, but it is the Lord who directs our steps. Let us all be reminded of the many blessings that come to all who by faith submit their will to God's will though His will may mean a dramatic change in plans, which is what it meant for Heidi and me.

When I began my ministry at Grace Reformed Church (“GRC”), they were enduring many trials that had the potential to threaten its very existence, but God was gracious and provided in many different ways what was necessary, both materially and spiritually. He gave the Consistory, together with members of the congregation, the grace and wisdom to work through the issues at hand, guiding and leading them in the way they should go to His glory. This past year shined forth God's continued faithfulness to the congregation and to me and my wife. The Lord has not only blessed the congregation, He has blessed me in many ways as their pastor. He has also blessed Heidi and I on the personal level though it meant some material losses on our part. Thus, my report will begin with a brief report on my labors at GRC this last year as its pastor, and then I would like to report briefly concerning some matters on a personal level.

With regards to my pastoral labors at GRC, I have strived to remain faithful in the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, expounding, by the grace of God, His word every Lord's day, except during my vacation time. I began in 2014 preaching through a series of messages on prayer, which included expounding the Lord's Prayer, utilizing the Heidelberg Catechism as an outline for the series. This series was followed by a series of messages on the Song of Moses, expounding upon Exodus 15:1-19; and then in June, I began a series on 1 John, which will be completed the first or second of month of 2015, Lord willing. Notwithstanding, from time to time these series were interrupted by messages for special occasions: two messages were delivered concerning the Lord's Supper, two messages related to Resurrection Day, and four messages related to Christmas. The four Christmas messages were an in depth look at the Incarnation of Christ; the Biblical support, its meaning, its necessity, and the necessity of the virgin birth in the Incarnation of Christ. All of these messages can be heard on SermonAudio, which has links to the church website and facebook page. Toward the end of the year I began to upload the sermon outlines to the website.

In addition to my regular duties on the Lord's day, I preached four times at the Lancaster State Prison facility. I began a series of messages on Ephesians; however, this outreach work came to an abrupt end when the chaplain overseeing me no longer worked at the facility. Though I have made several attempts to get back on their schedule, it seems that for the moment the door to that ministry opportunity has closed. In the meantime, there may be an opportunity to begin preaching at the Tehachapi State Prison, which is being explored.

Since I began serving at GRC I have also been, from time-to-time, contributing articles or columns to the Antelope Valley Press for their “Religion” section of the Saturday edition of the newspaper. During 2014 I contributed about 18 articles that have been published. Many of those articles centered around the attributes of the God of the

Bible with a pastoral emphasis to the doctrine that was being taught in each article. I want to thank Idellette Lynch for proofreading my articles for without her help I am sure that the clarity of the articles would not have been - well - so clear. These articles have been uploaded to the GRC SermonAudio website and may be accessed through a link found on the church website.

In addition, as part of my labors at GRC, I taught the adult Sunday school class. After completing the study of the five points of Calvinism, using *"Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still"* by Rev. Paul Treick, I taught a series of lessons on the principles and practice of presuppositional apologetics using, Rev. Robert Grossmann's booklet entitled, *"What you Think before you Think – A Presuppositional Approach to Apologetics."* After this study, I began to teach the confirmation class during the Sunday school time, while the adult Sunday school class began a Old Testament series of lessons using Rev. Treick's workbook, *"Our God and His People in the Old Testament,"* which is being lead by Elder Larry Lynch.

This year the Lord brought a number of new members, including three families. A five-week new members' class was held on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings for seven new communicant members; two were received in May and six in June. In the last quarter of 2014, there were a number of visitors interested in becoming members of Grace and it was decided by the Spiritual Council to have me go through a five week new members curriculum for them. While teaching the new members class, elder Mike Frias filled in for me teaching the confirmation class. Since we have two more people interested in becoming members of the church, this arrangement will continue for another five weeks beginning January 11, 2015 (one more person has joined the class since that time).

I have made several visitations with members of the congregation, both on a formal and informal basis. Visitations were primarily for the purpose getting to know better the members of this congregation, which I hope to continue to do so, as the Lord provides the opportunity. I also met with members and non-members for counseling on several occasions and made hospital visits to both members and non-members.

For 2014, we have seen both spiritual growth of the members of GRC and growth in terms of the number of members on the rolls. We began the year with 32 communicant members; the Lord added seven more souls to the rolls, six by profession of faith, and one by adult baptism; there were five children baptized with six children added to the baptized rolls. We lost one member who was dismissed to the Covenant Reformed Church, San Diego. Though Christian discipline was faithfully exercised during the year no members were removed from the rolls and there were no other losses. Thus, the number of communicant members at the end of the year is 38, a 19% net increase – Praise the Lord for blessing us in this way and we are truly grateful to the Lord to have all of the new members in our midst.

On a personal note, both Heidi and I continue to be excited to be here and remain confident of God calling me to serve God's flock at GRC. I pray the Lord will grant me His grace as I minister to His flock there and I am committed to labor in the Lord together with them in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the Antelope Valley. Your support of Heidi and me during 2014 has been a real blessing from the Lord. And especially, we want to thank you for your generous benevolent support and prayers for both Heidi and me during this very trying year, especially for her. Not only did she have trouble securing a job as a nurse, we also learned in August that she had a non-malignant brain tumor. At the time it was thought that her health problems, which had become more and more severe during the course of the year, were related to

the brain tumor, especially her cognitive abilities. However, this was proved to not be the case; as it turned out she was suffering adverse side effects from some medications she was taking, one of which she had been taking for a number of years. The combination of recently prescribed medication and the medication she had been taking for some years were seriously affecting her memory and cognitive abilities, which kept her from getting work. At this time, the tumor has had only minimal affects on her health, but if it grows it will begin to seriously affect her eyesight. Because of this possibility we are seeking treatment of her tumor, which will include radiation treatment in the near future.

As Heidi's health declined it became apparent that we would not be able to sustain our current living arrangements and drastic measures would have to be made, assuming Heidi would not be able to work in the foreseeable future, if at all. At the end of September, we decided to sell all of our stock holdings in the stock market at a substantial loss. The proceeds from the sale of the stocks went to pay off debt. I then sold my Avalanche and with the proceeds from its sale together with the proceeds from the stocks we were able to pay off most of our debt. We also listed our rental condo in Colorado Springs at the same time, which has still not sold. We hope to pay off the remaining debt with the proceeds from its sale.

Having paid off much of our debt, it was determined by a lender that we could qualify for a house. So we found a house I qualified for on my wages and entered into escrow. However, because of the never ending questions, which were so intrusive and totally unrelated to my ability to repay the loan, and the seller unwilling to extend the escrow we gave up on buying a house at this time. So instead of buying a house at a fixed location, we bought a fifth wheel RV; it is what is called a "toy hauler." In addition to the living quarters, there is what is called a "garage" area – this is where I have set up my office. The space rent at the RV Park is pretty reasonable considering it includes all of the utilities, except phone. Our furniture and other belongings are in two storage units in Lancaster, which we hope to be sold off over the next couple of months and cut it down to one unit. There are no plans to get into a regular house in the near future, though the Lord may plan otherwise – blessed be the name of the Lord.

In the meantime, the grace of the Lord abounds toward us even more. Since stopping some and changing other medications, Heidi's health has improved greatly. So much so, Heidi began work the week of Christmas, a sort of Christmas present from our Sovereign God. She is working as a contract nurse through an agency on a temporary assignment at Kaiser Permanente in Lancaster – until March 20. We hope it will turn into a permanent position, but we will wait upon the Lord to see if that comes about and trust Him for whatever He has planned for us in the future. What a blessing it is to see the Lord at work in our lives – great is His faithfulness and it is His abounding grace and faithfulness that has brought us to this point in our lives and it will be His faithfulness and grace that will get us through whatever He has planned for us in the future – Praise the Lord.

I am excited about what the Lord is doing and what He will be doing, as we remain steadfast in the Lord laboring in His love, knowing that as we do, He will do great things to His glory.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Richard Stetler

Classis Action: Take note.

T. Rev. Paul Trieck

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

How phenomenally bold is the Psalmist in extolling the greatness of our God when he says in Psalm 96:4, “*For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.*” It is precisely because of the *greatness* of God in all His attributes that the Psalmist says in the second verse, “*Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.*” The very basis and impetus for us proclaiming the Gospel of His salvation revealed in Jesus Christ is based singularly and squarely on the greatness of God who will fulfill all His holy counsel. He alone is great. In a world of New Perspective egalitarianism where everything is true and thus nothing is true, where the greatness of God is equated and overshadowed by the supposed greatness of man and man’s gods, it is tempting to forget how great a God we serve and proclaim! Without it, we have nothing to say, no Gospel to preach, no comfort or hope to proclaim to the saints or the lost. It is my fervent hope and prayer that the unique glory and greatness of God will be the daily impetus for each of us in our office and calling and at this Classis meeting.

Retirement during the past year has caused me to be less active in the pulpit – preaching eleven times and conducting one baptism and one funeral as we awaited Rev. Bowen’s arrival. January and February was a time of healing for my back injury which is a work in progress. I was able to attend the services, Sunday School, and Bible Studies regularly for most of the year. Typing is increasingly difficult these days as my fingers are pretty obstinate to go in the right direction. While the spirit is willing, the flesh is weakening. I am thankful for my faithful wife in keeping me going and substitute teaching when possible.

I will allow Rev. Bowen to report on the state of the church, but I would like to say a few words. First, it was discouraging to see some of our young families and individuals transfer their membership this year. I cannot explain any good reason why they chose to do so, but it appears that the bleeding has stopped and that the membership rolls include only those who are active members. The result has been an increased fellowship among the remaining members and good commitment in their giving. Secondly, I am thankful to my pastor, Rev. Bowen, for accepting the pastoral call to Trinity and for the energy and faithfulness he exhibits when it would be easy to become disheartened. A good part of the year was spent by Rev. Bowen in educating the people in the subject of evangelism and making efforts for a greater outreach. Only the Lord can build His Church, but He requires laborers in His kingdom. What God requires of us is faithfulness in the work He calls us to.

I continue to serve on committees for Classis and Synod, especially the French radio ministry with the relocation of Rev. Kayayan to France. I served as the editor of the *Reformed Herald* for six months last year, and gladly turned this task over to Rev. Sorenson.

Through the consistory. I have requested Ministerial Aid, as last year, and am so thankful that the RCUS, through its synodical giving, does not forget the needs of its retired ministers and widows.

May it please God to bless the Western Classis and the RCUS with a united fervor in gathering in and ministering to His redeemed children. Never forgetting the greatness of our sovereign covenant God, let me close with the words of the Psalmist again, “*For You*

are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God. Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore” (86:10-12).

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Paul Treick

Classis Action: Take note.

U. Rev. Michael Voytek

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

The Apostle Peter opened his second letter with the following; *“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”* (2 Peter 1:2-8) and ended his letter by expressing his desire that his readers would *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* Since the beginning of 2015 we have been asking the Lord to grant this growth. Last Sunday, while preaching from Acts 2, I was reminded that the Lord’s blessing of growth in the church at Jerusalem was not simply in terms of the number of believers added to the church, but that it was a multifaceted growth. This included growth in the understanding of biblical truth (apostles doctrine), in fellowship and the breaking of bread together, in prayers, in the exercise of the gifts that God has given to each member (ministry), and in the worship of God both in the corporate as well as in the home setting (see verses 42-47). Please pray with us for this multifaceted growth to be evident in our congregation and in all the churches to the glory of God.

As I reviewed what God has wrought in the year 2014 concerning your mission church here in the Los Angeles Basin, I noted a variety of ways in which He has richly blessed us. Consider the following:

We completed another year as a self-governing church. We have been blessed by the faithful service of elders Clarence Goehring, Robert Mettler, and Carl Esparza, and deacon Frank Krall. The Spiritual Council and Consistory continue to grow in wisdom and experience as they faithfully serve the Lord and His beloved people. Please pray for these men and their families. Also pray that the Lord will raise up more officers to serve His beloved church.

We have settled into our new meeting location at the Cerritos Elementary School. The school building has served us well and we have a good testimony among the staff and the community as a whole. Many of the members come early to help prepare for the day’s activities. The major drawback of our current meeting place is the lack of a permanent presence in the community (we are only there for six hours on Sunday). I am pleased to report that the Lord has answered our prayers concerning this need. The pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, which is located right across the street from the school, approached me and offered the opportunity to rent one of their offices (seven days a week) as well as use of one classroom as well as other rooms in their facility for a very reasonable price. Please pray for wisdom and the Lord’s blessing as we continue to grow in the ability to reach the community with the gospel.

Another encouraging blessing from the Lord was the participation in activities and ministries beyond the gathering for public worship on the Lord's Day. These include the Sunday afternoon Bible study and the weekly fellowship meal (one elder has repeatedly stated that this gathering is essential for fellowship and the unity of members who are scattered across the metro area). Furthermore, a number of the officers and members are to be commended for their faithful teaching during the Sunday school hour. I am especially grateful to the Lord for raising up elder Carl Esparza to assist in leading the worship service and to teach the Heidelberg Catechism last year and the Canons of Dort this new year. We have been richly blessed. Please pray for continued growth in the exercise of gifts and talents by the members of the congregation.

Through our church website, the use of advertising through Google and sermonaudio.com as well as the services of a couple other web companies, our visibility as a church has greatly increased. This is evident in the increase in first time visitors. Please pray that the Lord will continue to bring in new visitors and to incorporate them into the membership of the church.

I reminded the congregation in our annual congregation meeting that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has called us to be His witnesses throughout the whole world (Acts 1:8). Not only so, but as a mission congregation financially supported by the churches of the Western Classis and the RCUS Synod, it is our responsibility to promote the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the great mission field that has been entrusted into our care (i.e. the Los Angeles Basin). I believe that the members of the church fully realize and attempt to fulfill this responsibility. For example, besides the website, sermonaudio.com (approx. 4,600 sermons were downloaded last year from individuals scattered all over the world) and invitation cards, we have attempted to shine the light of Christ at Cerritos College and various parks in Cerritos and surrounding areas. We have distributed over 300 English and Spanish language Bibles as well as many Heidelberg Catechisms, gospel pamphlets, invitation cards, etc. We have also helped establish a Christian club on the Cerritos College campus called "Living Well Bible Club" and the Lord is greatly blessing this effort. At the same time we have been running into opposition from the enemy, so please keep this outreach in prayer. It is my hope and prayer that we will continue to look for opportunities to reach our community with the gospel.

Part of the purposes of the parochial report is to answer the question of whether the church maintains the three marks of the true church as delineated in the Belgic Confession (Article 29). I am happy to report and the elders can confirm that those marks are faithfully maintained at Rehoboth Reformed Church. Concerning the first mark (the preaching of the pure doctrine of the Gospel), it has been my desire and goal to be faithful in the proclamation of the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. By God's grace, I was able to complete a two year sermon series focusing on our calling as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Luke and recently began a series on the book of Acts. During the Sunday school hour, besides the faithful labor of two members who teach the younger children and youth, elder Carl Esparza is working through the Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians. During the Sunday afternoon Bible study we completed a study on biblical covenants and the implication to our lives today and began to work through the book of Exodus.

Furthermore, it is my joy to report that we are preparing to graduate the last student of our current confirmation class and we are looking forward to begin a new class with three young people in the near future. Concerning the second and third marks of the true church, I am pleased to report that they are being faithfully maintained as well. The

Lord's Supper was celebrated six times last year. The elders faithfully guard the Lord's Table through the interview of those visitors who request to join with us and will follow that up by sending a notice of participation to the visitor's church. They function as shepherds among the flock and guardians of the gospel.

There are a number of other areas that I could mention in which we can discern the Lord's hand of blessing during the past year, but instead I would like to turn our attention to the challenges that we face. Our greatest need, desire, and goal is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. One of the most critical ways that we as a church can fulfill this purpose is through continued spiritual and numerical growth. We have grown in many important ways and we thank the Lord and ask that He would continue to bless His flock. The area that we have not seen growth is in the overall addition of new members to the church. Last year's membership statistics reveal a net loss of one communicant member. We have enjoyed the presence of a number of regular and first time visitors but have not seen them commit to church membership or are drawn away to larger churches. Please pray that the Lord would grant us success in guiding these visitors into joining us as covenant members of Christ's church.

On a personal note, our youngest son Timothy graduated from high school last year and is attending a community college. With his graduation, my wife Rebecca officially retired from home schooling after over 25 years of teaching. She decided to go back to school to learn how to be a medical assistant. Please pray for God's grace as she faces a whole new set of challenges. Besides reaching out to students on the campus of Cerritos College, I have had the privilege of training with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department as part of a clergy council. The purpose of the council is to assist the sheriff's department in matters that require the involvement of religious community leaders. These include death notification, community interactions, scheduled ride along with deputies, etc. It has been an interesting experience and I have made a number of helpful contacts with leaders in the community. Furthermore, I have enjoyed teaching two Old Testament courses for Heidelberg Theological Seminary. I serve as chairman of the Philippine Subcommittee of the RCUS Foreign Ministries Committee and had the privilege to travel with Rev. Gil Baloy to the Philippines in January and February of last year to assist in disaster relief and to work with a number of ministers and elders in various projects while there.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation for the faithful support and prayers of the members and officers of the churches of the Western Classis. As you well know, the mission work in Los Angeles has been struggling to establish itself as a church for a number of years. It is because of the Lord's blessing and the patience and faithful support and encouragement of the churches and individual members of the RCUS that have made it possible to enable us to keep preaching, praying, and plugging away.

Your fellow bondservant in Christ,
Rev. Michael Voytek

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Rodney Saunders led the body in prayer.

V. Rev. Frank Walker

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

Psalm 90 begins with these words: *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God* (vv. 1–2). We often quote these verses to show that God is unchangeable, but they just as certainly teach His faithfulness to the church. Throughout all the vicissitudes of life, the Lord is always our dwelling place. He is forever our God.

Over the past year, the Lord has demonstrated His faithfulness to Covenant Reformed Church in many ways. We began the year without a pastor, after Pastor West retired the previous year. Since then, Pastor Hall preached two trial sermons and was called to be the next pastor. He assumed the duties of the pastoral office in June and was installed in July.

Although it's not uncommon for churches to lose members when one pastor steps down or after the new minister arrives, that was not our experience in Sacramento. Here, again, we see God's faithfulness. Our congregation remains strong, united and dedicated to serving the Lord as one body of believers.

In the interim between pastors, the work of the ministry continued by yours truly. I proclaimed the Word each Lord's Day morning and on special occasions, administered the Lord's Supper once a month and baptism as necessary. I also worked with the elders in the government of the church. This was a very busy time, as I often had multiple responsibilities to fulfill on a given day — for example, catechism class, membership instruction and/or counseling, and one or two seminary classes all on the same night. I was glad to do it. As I mentioned last year, I especially enjoyed teaching the catechumens. The fact that we had guest preachers (Pastor Sam Powell, Pastor Doug Schlegel and various seminary students) fill the pulpit in the evening made it doable. But I was really glad when it came to an end.

I praise God for Pastor Hall's ministry. He has a lot of enthusiasm and obviously loves the work. I look forward to seeing how the Lord will use him to advance the kingdom of our Lord and Savior in years to come. I believe he's the right man for the job.

Since Pastor Hall's arrival, I have returned more or less to my pre-Pastor-West-retirement duties. As you know, I was called to Sacramento mostly to work in the seminary, where I taught six courses in 2014 (Modern Church History, New Testament Introduction, Evangelism, Exegesis of Romans, Greek I and Theology Proper), mentored four classes taken by independent study, and oversaw the seminary's chapel and preaching practicum programs. Students remain enthusiastic and I believe that our program supplies an important need. I remain hopeful that City Seminary's influence will grow far beyond its modest size and financial means. On the other hand, preaching also remains a major focus. I preached a total of forty-three sermons last year. Most of these were at Covenant Reformed Church, although I was also blessed to preach in Shafter twice (once was at the installation of Rev. Alpuche); once at Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Modesto for the installation of Pastor Johnnie Sloan, a graduate of City Seminary; and once at Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, Ohio, for its annual Missionfest celebration. It was quite a blessing both for me and my wife to renew our fellowship with those dear saints. I also taught Sunday school on thirty-two Lord's Days.

The Western Classis elected me to serve as its President for a second term last year. Although I'm honored to serve, this is not a position in which I am particularly comfortable. In addition, the Synod has also elected me to be its Vice President for the last two or three years. I also serve on the Synod's Website Committee.

There's only one other thing I want to add to my report this year. The apostle Paul, aware of his own weaknesses and needs, often encouraged the churches to whom he wrote to pray for him. As pastors and elders, you no doubt understand this. We have weaknesses and needs which may not always be apparent to our congregations, and the work that we're called to do is often demanding and trying. That makes it all the more important that we uphold one another in prayer. Let's also pray for future pastors and elders, that they might have a heart and vision for the ministry that is bold, courageous, and above all, Biblical.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Frank Walker

Classis Action: Take note.

W. Rev. Jim West

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

When I reminded myself that Classis might expect me to submit a pastoral report this year, I winced and even considered not to send it in, as it has been 'all quiet on the Jim West Front,' as my preaching and counseling assignments this past year have been intermittent at best.

I preached about nine times in 2014, conducted one wedding in my retirement, and preached at Pastor Hank Bowen's installation in Modesto. Even though my preaching activities have been spotty, I have taught several classes at City Seminary, including Worship and Preaching and Anthropology this semester. Currently, the Worship and Preaching class is my biggest challenge as it is only the second time this course has been offered, and the first time for me. This means that for the first time since teaching the Greek of Ephesians, I have had to compose a new course. This involved reading several books on Christian worship and liturgy, as well as writing new lectures (which I am still doing).

I am also serving on the Classis' Candidates and Credentials Committee, and the special committee to study *The Doctrine of the Two-Kingdoms*. As of this writing, the report is still unfinished, as the material on the Cultural Mandate has not been completed. Your servant also serves on the Synodical Committee that is considering, among other things, that we revise Articles 40-42 of the RCUS Constitution.

Since retiring I have thrown myself into reading like never before. Most of the books are theological, although a few have been biographical. To accomplish the latter, a friend and myself have started a book club that reads a biography once a month. When we all come together we wine and dine, and then break to discuss. This has been a most profitable exercise of reading about prominent people, everyone from Queen Elizabeth II to Selderhuis' wonderful biography of John Calvin. The Christian fellowship has been animating and refreshing.

A great deal of my time throughout the year is spent on grand-parenting, as we help my son-in-law and daughter care for our wonderful grandson. There is nothing like having a three year old run into your house at 7:00 AM each morning, seeking you out, and running into your arms!

I begin each day singing from the hymnal, reading Scripture, and taking a prayer-walk in the neighborhood. Recently, I have been memorizing Scripture, particularly Isaiah 53 (which I exhorted the congregation to do a few years ago).

My health this past year took a dive, as I developed a pinched nerve in my neck. It was so bad that I could not even look into my computer monitor, being forced to place the monitor on the floor! For a time, even driving a car was difficult, if not torturous. I made the trip to New York City last year, primarily because the tickets had already been purchased. Even looking down from the pinnacle of the Empire State building was uncomfortable! I had to decline a few preaching opportunities, too. After several trips to the chiropractor (my first time) and a physical therapist at Kaiser, the pain has substantially diminished (although it still flairs up, usually on Sunday morning at church). As for my wife, she still struggles with fibro myalgia, which gives her daily pain and hinders her from doing all that she would like to do. But the grace of God is sufficient, for when we are weak, the Lord makes us strong.

As for our temporal needs, Classis should have my request in hand asking Synod to continue ministerial aid for the next Synodical year in the same amount as this year. The Lord is meeting our financial needs, as "the young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack anything" (Psalm 34:10).

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Jim West

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Mark Crook led the body in prayer.

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ELDERS

The President addressed the Questions of Article 81 of the Constitution to the Elder Delegates of each congregation. The answers are as follows:

1. Are the doctrines of the gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God? All answered yes.
2. Is careful attention given to the instruction of the youth for confirmation, the reception of members into the Church, and the Christian nurture of the members? All answered yes.
3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:
 - a. Is visitation faithfully performed? All answered yes with the exceptions of Bakersfield, Shafter, Willows and Yuba City who answered no, and Stockton who said needs improvement.
 - b. Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution? All answered yes.
4. Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution? All answered yes.
5. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:
 - a. Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? All answered yes, except for Anderson, Chico, Grass Valley, and Lodi who answered no.
 - b. Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis Treasurer? All answered yes except Anderson who answered no.

- c. Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? All answered yes, except for Anderson, Chico, Grass Valley, Lancaster, and Lodi who answered no.
 - d. Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer? All answered yes except Anderson, and Lancaster who answered no.
6. Are the Church records properly kept? All answered yes.
- 7a. Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge? All answered yes, except Anderson who answered no.
- 7b. Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs? All answered yes except Anderson, Stockton, and Lancaster who answered no.

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The Stated Clerk provided a table of statistics. It appears in the Appendix.

Classis Action: The report of Membership and Financial Statistics was adopted.

REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES

Rev. Merica reported on Rev. Baloy's visit to the 2014 Classis Southwest of the URCNA Fall Meeting, held September 9-10, 2014, at First United Reformed Church in Chino, California.

Rev. Merica reported on Rev. Baloy's visit to the Third Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California, OPC, held October 17-18, 2014, at Calvary OPC, La Mirada, California.

Rev. Voytek reported on his visit to the 2014 Fall Meeting of the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, which convened at Reformed Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles on October 16, 2014.

Rev. Merica reported on his visit to the Presbytery of Northern California, OPC, which convened on March 21-22, 2014, at Sovereign Grace Community Church in Hughson, California.

Classis Action: A question was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee as to whether there is a formal requirement that we must honor in sending fraternal delegates to regional bodies.

ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

Rev. Merica read a letter of greeting from Rev. Abol Pol of the Canadian Reformed Churches, Classis Pacific East.

Classis Action: The Clerk was instructed to send an overture to the Synod asking that the Interchurch Relations Committee communicate to the General Assemblies of those we have fraternal relations with, except for the Canadian Reformed Churches, asking them if there is a difficulty existing within the Western assemblies preventing them from sending fraternal delegates to our Classis meetings.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL STUDY COMMITTEES

A. The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Your Special Committee was busily at work throughout 2014 and the first two months of this year. We had two special committee meetings with the last on January 23 of this year in Sacramento to talk things out and to tie up any loose ends. However, like last year, some of our work was impeded by providential events such as Elder Derrick Merkel's relocation to Nevada and Paul Treick's vertebrae break which hampered him significantly.

As things stand now the length of the report is pushing forty pages. We added sections on the Christology of Two Kingdom theology, what the Reformed Creeds of the 16th century teach, the particular views of John Calvin, and a section concerning the Cultural Mandate (the latter being what the Classis assigned us to do last year). All of the men on the Committee are on the same page regarding the dangers of Two Kingdom Theology and even initially agreed to recommend that all the Classis' ministers, elders, and Consistories be warned accordingly. However, most of the Committee members think we need one more year to perfect the report, especially the section dealing with the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:26-28.

Last year's report did not emphasize the Christology of Two Kingdom theology which proclaims that Christ rules His Church as the God-man, but bypasses His manhood when ruling everything outside the Church. This dividing of Christ's nature in His mediatorial rule was new to the Committee and caused us to ponder whether this was a significant departure from Reformed Christology. Therefore, the Committee is asking Classis for one more year to finalize its report.

Recommendation: That the Committee to Study the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms continue for one more year before bringing its findings and recommendations to the 2015 meeting of the Western Classis.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. J. West (chairman), Rev. T. Gruggett, Rev. P. Treick,
 Rev. E. Bristley, Elder D. Merkel, Elder G. Uttinger*

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

B. Use of Instruments in Public Worship

Esteemed fathers and brothers,

Recommendation: [Defeated] That the Western Classis commend this report to its churches as pastoral advice and that its pastors and elders be encouraged to consider it as a tool while overseeing the ministry of music in public worship.

(The report is not included here since the recommendation was defeated and the body expressed for the committee to no longer continue their work on this study).

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. M. Voytek (chairman), Rev. E. Bristley
 Rev. T. Mayville, Elder K. Snow*

Classis Action: The recommendation was defeated. The report was adopted.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The following committee motions and their dispositions reflect the final form of the motions including all amendments made to the committee's recommendations, and any additional motions that may have come from the floor relative to the committee's report. Unless otherwise noted, the motions below were adopted by the Classis.

A. Benevolences

1. That ministerial aid be requested from Synod in the following amounts:

Rev. Pollema	\$1,000.00
Rev. Gross	\$1,200.00
Rev. West	\$1,500.00
Rev. Treick	\$1,200.00
Rev. Riffert	\$2,000.00
Rev. Sawtelle	\$1,800.00
Rev. Roe (beginning July 1)	\$1,500.00
Mrs. Duckett	\$1,000.00
Mrs. Savage	\$1,200.00
2. That the Western Classis grant benevolent aid to Trinity Reformed, Modesto, in the amount of \$800.00 per month for the 2015 Classical year and that Classis petition the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States for \$800.00 per month benevolent aid for the next Synodical year, beginning July 1, 2015.
3. **[Defeated]** That the Western Classis grant benevolent aid to Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA in the amount of \$800.00 per month for the next Classical year, beginning January 1, 2016, and that the Western Classis petition the 269th Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States for \$800.00 per month in benevolent aid for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA in the next Synodical year, beginning July 1, 2015.
4. **[Take note]** Covenant Reformed Church, Chico expresses heartfelt gratitude to the 30th Annual Session of the Western Classis and the delegates of the 269th Synod of the RCUS who have provided financial support and prayers before God's throne of grace for the work at Covenant Reformed Church, Chico.
5. That the Western Classis grant benevolent aid to Grace Reformed, Lancaster in the amount of \$180.00 per month for the Classical year 2015, and that the Western Classis petition the 269th Synod RCUS for benevolent aid in the amount of \$180.00 per month for the 2015 Synodical year.
6. That the Western Classis grant benevolent aid to Covenant Reformed Church, San Diego in the amount of \$405.00 per month for the Classical year 2015.
7. That Rev. Mayville be granted \$315.00 per month in diaconal aid to pay for health insurance for the Classical year or until he obtains full time pastoral work with health insurance before March, 2016 [Picked up later in minutes].

B. Missions

1. That the request for classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Church in the amount of \$22,525.00 for the 2016 Classical year be approved.
2. That The Western Classis overture the 269th Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Church in the amount of \$22,525.00 for the 2016 Fiscal year.

3. That the request for classical support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2015 Classical year be approved.
4. That the request for classical support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2016 Classical year be approved.
5. The Western Classis overture the 269th Synod for mission support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2015 Fiscal year.
6. The Western Classis overture the 269th Synod for mission support for Valley of Grace Reformed Bible Church in the amount of \$17,760.00 for the 2016 Fiscal year.
7. That Calvary Reformed Chapel, Stockton, CA be approved as a viable home mission work of the Western Classis.
8. That Western Classis inform the Synod Home Mission Committee of the approval of Calvary Reformed Chapel as a viable home mission work.
9. That support for Calvary Reformed Chapel in the amount of \$15,750.00 (\$1,750.00 per month) be paid beginning April 1 for the remainder of the 2015 calendar year.
10. That support for Calvary Reformed Chapel in the amount of \$21,000.00 (\$1,750.00 per month) for the 2016 calendar year be approved.
11. That Western Classis overture the 269th Synod for mission support for Calvary Reformed Chapel in the amount of \$1,750.00 per month for the 2015 and 2016 fiscal years.
12. That the Western Classis set aside April 26, 2015 as an Annual Day of Prayer for Western Classis Home Missions and that the churches of the Western Classis be encouraged to take a special offering on that day for Calvary Reformed Chapel.
13. **[Take note]**. That Classis give permission to Mr. David Voytek to contact the churches of the Western Classis in order to raise prayer and financial support to enable to work as a “Missionary Associate” under the supervision of the missionaries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. There is nothing prohibiting such contacts.
14. That the Western Classis overture the Synod that the Permanent Homes Missions Committee meet with the home missionaries as a whole group in person every other year.

C. Examination and Licensure

1. That the examination of Mr. Yevgeny Kogay be declared unsatisfactory and that he be re-examined in the following areas: Theology Proper, Apologetics, Historical Philosophy, Church History, English Bible, Hermeneutics, RCUS Standards, and Practica.
- * That a Special Classis be called for October 27, 2015 to meet at Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto, at 10:00 AM for the purpose of the reexamination of Mr. Yevgeny Kogay. Seconded. Carried.

D. Minutes

1. Regarding the Minutes of Synod Report, there are no items that require action by the Classis. Take note.
2. The minutes of the 30th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis were reviewed and corrections were suggested to the Clerk. Those corrections were incorporated into the minutes. Take note [Done after all business was completed].

E. Judicial

1. That the Providence Reformed Church, Lodi, perfect its overture regarding adult male voting and the grounds for it, and resubmit its overture, if it so desires, to the thirty-first meeting of the Western Classis.
2. That Standing Rule 14 be amended by adding at the end that "Special Committees writing study papers are to complete and submit their work to the consistories of all the churches by January 1."
3. That a Special Committee be erected to study the issues and to develop a child safety plan to be recommended to the churches, and to be implemented in the Western Classis at any of the youth programs that Classis sponsors, including the Heidelberg West Youth Camp, and to report to the Annual Western Classis Meeting in March, 2016.
4. With regards to the proposed change to the constitution of Rehoboth Reformed Church in Los Angeles. Take note.
5. That the motion to suspend our fraternal relationship responsibility to all fraternal churches, except the Canadian Reformed Churches, violates our fraternal relationship responsibility, and therefore, as the President to rule it out of order.
- * A subsequent motion was then made to overture Synod asking that the Interchurch Relations Committee communicate to the General Assemblies of those we have fraternal relations with, except for the Canadian Reformed Churches, asking them if there is a difficulty existing within the Western assemblies preventing them from sending fraternal delegates to our Classis.
6. That the resignation of the Rev. Dennis Roe be approved and that the pulpit be declared vacant effective on July 1, 2015.

F. Nominations

1. That the Permanent and Special Committees be as follows (The underlined name indicates the convener):

Executive Committee: F. Walker, H. Bowen, W. Johnson

Candidates and Credentials: D. Schlegel, R. Williams (1 yr); D. Roe, G. Stewart (2 yrs); S. Powell, R. Mettler (3 yrs)

Christian Education in the Church: G. Mancilas, R. Goehring (1 yr); P. Treick, L. Lynch (2 yrs); T. Mayville, K. Combs (3 yrs)

Missions: J. Gross, D. Helseth (1 yr); R. Stetler, P. Henderson (2 yrs); T. Gruggett, L. Lynch (3 yrs)

Interchurch Relations: K. Snow (1 yr); V. Pollema, G. Baloy (2 yrs); D. Schlegel, M. Crook (3 yrs)

Publications: R. Mettler (1 yr); E. Bristley, J. DeYoung (2 yrs); J. Merica (3 yrs)

Diaconal: N. Riffert, Deacon M. Velasquez (1 yr); P. Henderson, J. Gochnauer (2 yrs); M. Voytek, R. Saunders (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: G. Stewart, M. Davis (1 yr); T. Gruggett, V. Alpuche (2 yrs); J.J. Hall, R. Williams (3 yr.)

Two Kingdoms (Special): T. Gruggett, E. Bristley, P. Treick, J. West, G. Uttinger.

Child Safety in Classis (Special): S. Powell, V. Alpuche, J. DeYoung, D. Yeager

G. Finances

1. That travel expenses be paid for the 30th Annual Classis as follows:

Name	Mileage	Amount	Airfare/Rental	Total
Hank Bowen	400 @ .45	180.00		180.00
Eric Bristley	698 @ .45	314.10		314.10
Matthew Davis	604 @ .45	271.80		271.80
Chris Fellersen	530 @ .45	238.50		238.50
David Helseth	710 @ .45	319.50	351.89	671.39
Thomas Mayville	0 @ .45	0.00	56.00	56.00
Jonathan Merica	620 @ .45	279.00		279.00
Robert Mettler	325 @ .45	146.25		146.25
Sam Powell	600 @ .45	270.00		270.00
Neale Riffert	0 @ .45	0.00	545.00	545.00
Dennis Roe	100 @ .45	45.00		45.00
Rodney Saunders	497 @ .45	223.65		223.65
Doug Schlegel	520 @ .45	234.00		234.00
Kurt Snow	556 @ .45	250.00		250.20
Richard Stetler	320 @ .45	144.00		144.00
Paul Treick	412 @ .45	185.40		185.40
Michael Voytek	360 @ .45	162.00		162.00
Frank Walker	516 @ .45	232.20		232.20
Jim West	615 @ .45	276.75		276.75

TOTAL 8,383 @ .45 \$3,772.35 \$952.89 \$4,725.24

2. That the Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2014 be adopted.
 3. With regards to sending an overture to Synod to request a change in the Synod financial year. Take note.
 4. That Classis establish a Diaconal Fund Guideline for use by the Permanent Diaconal Committee to meet emergency requests for aid.
 5. That the Guidelines for Giving for the 2015-2016 Classical Year be as follows:

Classis Dues	\$11.00
Benevolences	35.00
Diaconal	5.00
Home Missions	98.00
Publications	0.00
Home Missions Building Fund	0.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	<u>5.00</u>
TOTAL	\$154.00

H. Excuses

1. That the excuse from all or part of the sessions of Classis be granted to Rev. Gil Baloy, Rev. Thomas Mayville, and Elder Michael Peery.
 2. That excuse be granted to Elder Rodney Saunders and Rev. Jim West for the final session of the Classis.
 3. [Take note] That retired pastors need no excuse for missing sessions of Classis.

I. Special Judicial Committee

1. That the appeal of Mr. Steven Boren should be heard at the 31st Annual Meeting of the Western Classis.
2. That the appeal of Mr. Derrick Merkel should be heard at the 31st Annual Meeting of the Western Classis.
3. That Covenant Reformed Church of Grass Valley provide all of the pertinent minutes, communications, and records pertaining to those appeals to the Stated Clerk at least one month prior to the 31st session.
4. That the Executive Committee of Classis, via Executive Circular, appoint a Special Judicial Committee for its 31st session and that all pertinent documents be given to them well ahead of the meeting.

Classis Action: That the Executive Committee determine the exact time by way of Special Order for the hearing of all appeals, complaints, etc. and that be communicated prior to the meeting of the Classis by the Clerk of Classis to all parties involved.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

A. Expression of Appreciation to the Host Congregation.

The delegates of the Western Classis express their heartfelt thanks to all of those members of Ebenezer Reformed Church who have labored to continue their justly earned reputation for great food, great hospitality and a warm welcome. You have nourished the body and brought joy to the heart. Thank you from our hearts to yours.

B. Adoption of Stated Clerk's, and Executive Committee's Reports.

C. Other Business

D. Adoption of Standing Minutes Committee Report

“The Draft Minutes were reviewed by the Standing Committee on Minutes of Classis and returned to the stated clerk for revision. These revisions were entered and then published as the Revised Minutes. The stated clerk read aloud the final items of business for which there was no time to complete this review process. After accepting further corrections, the President declared the minutes approved as corrected.”

Classis Action: All of the above reports were adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:23 PM the 30th Annual Session of the Western Classis was adjourned to the 31st Annual Meeting of the Western Classis to convene at Grace Reformed Church, Willows, California on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at 1:00 PM.

A. Roll Call

– The roll call was taken at the beginning of each business session. The closing roll showed 17 ministers and 11 elders present.

B. Devotions

– Elder Raymond Williams led the body in a closing devotion from 2 Timothy 2:1-13, 3:14-4:5, and then closed in prayer.

C. Close

- The President led the delegates in the confession of our catholic faith through the Apostles' Creed and in the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced the Benediction and all joined in the singing of the Doxology.

*Rev. Henry P. Bowen
Stated Clerk of the Western Classis*

APPENDIX

to the

ABSTRACT

of the

MINUTES

MEMBERSHIP

and

FINANCIAL

STATISTICS

STANDING RULES

of the

WESTERN CLASSIS

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

2014 Western Classis Statistics	Faith Anderso n	Grace Bakers- field	Covenant Chico	Covenant Grass Vly Stockton	Grace Lancaste r	Provi- dence Lodi	Rehobot h Los Angeles	Trinity Modesto
1. No. of Elders	1	3	2	3	1	3	3	2
2. No. of Deacons	1	3	1	0	1	1	1	1
3. Comm. Last Year	21	131	15	37	32	24	33	30
4. Rec'd by Confirm	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	4
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	2	0	3	9	2	2	0
7. Tot. Received	0	3	0	11	9	2	2	4
8. Tot Old/New Mbr	21	134	15	48	41	26	35	34
9. Lost by Dismissal	2	5	0	3	1	0	3	5
10. Lost Eras/Disc	0	9	0	0	0	5	0	5
11. Lost by Death	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	2
12. Total Lost	4	17	0	4	1	5	3	12
13. Comm. this Yr	17	117	15	44	40	21	32	22
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	8	32	9	19	13	1	6	2
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	25	149	24	63	53	22	38	24
16. No. of Families	12	55	8	23	22	12	18	11
17. No. of S.S. Child.	1	40	0	0	8	1	6	0
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	0	1	7	5	0	1	1
20. Total Baptisms	0	0	1	7	6	0	1	1
21. No. Rec. LS	20	110	15	44	38	24	25	23
22. Times LS.Served	6	4	12	12	4	12	6	4
23. Reg. Offerings	41,447	199,007	34,249	106,462	73,626	53,923	102,296	50,280
24. Special Offerings	0	16,143	517	4,244	189	3,809	623	2,057
25. Other Sources	3,000	2,800	20,646	0	28,493	8	60,708	11,400
26. Total Receipts	44,447	217,950	55,412	110,706	102,308	57,740	163,627	63,737
27. Giv. to Syn Guidl.	0	39,138	1,115	1,366	612	600	6,541	5,920
28. Giv. to Clas Guidl	0	24,575	950	672	5,312	982	5,478	4,980
29. RCUS non-budget	0	17,428	225	0	189	0	0	504
30. Non-RCUS cause	0	2,553	0	4,540	150	3,227	1,371	0
31. Other Expenses	34,652	173,763	54,026	109,240	73,596	52,390	145,260	62,084
32. Total Expenses	34,652	257,457	56,316	115,818	79,859	57,199	158,650	73,488
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	400,000	600,000	0	219,125	0	264,740	0	350,000
34. Parsonage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35. Impr on Prop'ty	0	0	0	0	0	4,360	0	2,023
36. Pres Prop'ty Deb	0	0	0	8,971	0	0	0	0
37. Debt Pd Last Yr	0	0	0	4,275	0	0	0	4,000
38. Syn guidl/comm	0	299	74	37	19	25	198	197
39. Clas guidl/comm	0	188	63	18	166	41	166	166
40. Tot. RCUS/Com	0	619	153	55	191	66	364	380

Covenant Sacto*	Covenant San Diego	Ebenezer Shafter	Grace Willows	First Yuba City	2014 Totals	2013 Totals	% Chg	Calvary Chapel Stockton	Valle de Gracia Shafter
5	2	2	2	3	32	33	-.03	1	0
5	2	4	3	3	26	32	-.19	0	0
147	30	65	34	64	663	673	-.01	16	0
0	0	3	4	0	8	16	-.50	0	0
2	4	3	2	4	27	16	.69	2	0
3	2	2	0	5	30	22	.36	2	0
5	6	8	6	9	65	54	.20	4	0
152	36	73	40	73	851	727	.17	20	0
11	0	0	1	4	35	39	-.10	0	0
4	0	2	1	0	26	19	.37	0	0
0	0	1	0	0	9	6	.50	0	0
15	0	3	2	4	70	63	.11	0	0
137	36	70	38	69	658	663	-.08	20	0
65	7	12	9	23	206	194	.06	8	0
202	43	82	47	92	864	856	.01	28	0
68	20	37	16	40	342	337	.01	13	0
51	9	12	11	15	154	144	.07	0	0
1	1	0	0	1	4	9	-.56	0	0
7	0	1	1	5	29	23	.26	5	0
8	1	1	1	6	33	32	.03	5	0
147	36	70	38	69	659	619	.06	20	0
12	12	4	12	12	112	116	-.03	12	0
245,083	59,802	197,006	102,359	143,664	1,409,204	1,415,263	0	41,015	0
62,306	16,067	5,674	0	0	111,629	116,767	-.04	0	0
97,008	11,558	27,752	2,025	0	265,398	239,267	.11	0	53,310
404,397	87,427	230,432	104,384	143,664	1,786,231	1,771,207	.01	41,015	53,310
29,405	5,560	13,527	7,175	10,044	121,003	112,289	.08	976	0
24,402	4,980	10,790	5,644	10,624	99,389	53,547	.86	546	0
3,295	5,850	480	0	2,385	30,356	39,689	-.24	0	0
10,684	4,549	13,200	13,648	0	53,922	43,683	.23	3,315	0
342,619	70,870	194,319	81,074	118,100	1,511,993	1,428,825	.06	41,290	54,651
410,405	91,809	232,316	107,541	141,153	1,816,663	1,678,036	.08	46,127	54,651
377,080	0	500,000	500,000	312,737	3,523,682	3,521,106	0	0	0
0	0	150,000	0	126,536	276,536	275,965	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	6,383	41,466	-.85	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	8,971	17,246	-.48	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	8,275	7,035	.18	0	0
200	185	208	211	157	Avg. 139	Avg. 137	.01	61	0
166	166	166	166	166	Avg. 126	Avg. 69	.83	34	0
388	546	381	377	360	Avg. 299	Avg. 272	.10	95	0

*includes City Seminary

STANDING RULES OF THE WESTERN CLASSIS

1. Classical dues shall be paid not later than the first day of December of the current year. ('89)
2. The Parochial Reports and Reports of Statistics shall be submitted at least three (3) weeks before the Spring Meeting of Classis; the Parochial Reports to the President of the Executive Committee of Classis; the Statistics to the Stated Clerk of the Executive Committee of Classis. The statistics of the home mission congregation are to be included in the overseeing church's statistics when the congregation submits them to the clerk of Classis. ('87, '07, '09)
3. The writ of certification for Delegate Elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two (2) weeks before the session of Classis.
4. All congregations shall present an accurate report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire Catechism before Confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Catechism, Bible readings and the study of the books and contents of the Bible; also, singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
5. Any member may move to have the Standing Rules read after the defining of the bar of the house. Passage of the motion shall require a simple majority vote. ('15)
6. 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 to the parties concerned only in written form and relevant only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
7. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis, or for delegates to Classis, at forty-five cents (\$.45) per running mile per vehicle." ('07, '12)
8. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
9. The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an Abstract of the Classical Minutes and shall send a copy to each delegate to the Classis plus six (6) additional copies to each charge within sixty (60) days after Classis. The Stated Clerk shall receive a gratuity of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) per year. ('91, '10)
10. The Classis shall have Permanent Committees as follows: Executive, Missions, Christian Education in the Church, Candidates and Credentials, Interchurch Relations, Publications, Diaconal Ministries, and Heidelberg West Youth Camp. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. ('97)
11. The complete Classis statistics shall be made a part of the minutes at the spring meeting of Classis.

12. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names of the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
13. Every charge that will not have an Elder Delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. This copy shall be signed by all elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk.
14. The report and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the churches at least three (3) weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis. Special Committees writing study papers are to complete and submit their work to the consistories of all the churches by January 1. ('15)
15. The religious services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circularized before Classis. ('90)
16. Students for the Ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend only such seminaries as are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.
17. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the Reformed Church in the United States for at least five (5) years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the distinctives and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.
18. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Classis two (2) weeks in advance of Classis shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Classis at any time. ('90)
19. Only male members who have reached the age of twenty-one, or who are male heads of a household, shall constitute the voting membership of the congregations of the Classis. ('97)
20. All ministers licensed and ordained in any of the other Classes of the RCUS desiring to accept a call to a congregation of the Western Classis will undergo an examination in Orthodoxy and Purity of Intent. Such examination will take place either before the whole Classis or before the Committee on Candidates and Credentials, as that Committee shall determine in each case. If the examination is before the Candidates and Credentials Committee alone, the recommendation of the Committee must be approved via Executive Circular. ('01)

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