

ABSTRACT
of the
MINUTES
for the
WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States



27th Annual Session
March 6-8, 2012

Grace Reformed Church
Lancaster, California

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27th ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL*For the Classical Year beginning March 6, 2012*

Minister	Primarius Elder	Secundus Elder	Charge
Henry Bowen	Derrick Merkel	Michael Peery	Faith, Anderson, CA
Tracy Gruggett	Rob Wegis	Lowell Pollema	Grace, Bakersfield, CA
Lloyd Gross	(Pastor Emeritus, Bakersfield)		Retired, Mesa, AZ
Gary Mancilas	Jim Gochnauer	David Helseth	Covenant, Chico, CA
Dennis Roe	Steve Wilbur	Joe Vacchiano	Covenant, Grass Valley, CA
Jonathan Merica	(Associate Pastor, Grass Valley)		Calvary Chapel, Stockton, CA
Scott Henry	Michael Frias	Mark Reyna	Grace, Lancaster, CA
Neale Riffert	(Pastor Emeritus, Lancaster)		Retired, Sherman, TX
Michael Voytek	Wayne Lingenfelter	Jerry DeYoung	Providence, Lodi, CA
Thomas Mayville	Herman Drost	Richard Fay	Trinity, Modesto, CA
Paul Treick	(Pastor Emeritus, Modesto)		Trinity, Modesto, CA
Jim West	Chris Fellersen	Tom Lagomarsino	Covenant, Sacramento, CA
Frank Walker	(Associate Pastor, Sacramento)		City Seminary, Sacramento, CA
Guillermo Baloy	(Associate Pastor, Sacramento)		Covenant Chapel, San Diego, CA
Paul Henderson	Ryan Spitzer	Bob Williams	Ebenezer, Shafter, CA
Vernon Pollema	(Pastor Emeritus, Shafter)		Retired, Bakersfield, CA
Jay Fluck	(Associate Pastor, Shafter)		Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, 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

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS

President – Rev. Jim West
 Vice-President – Rev. Paul Henderson
 Stated Clerk – Rev. Hank Bowen
 Treasurer – Mr. Chris Fellersen

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

(per communicant member)

Classis Dues	\$10.00
Benevolences	46.00
Home Missions	50.00
Publications	-----
Home Missions Building Fund	1.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	<u>3.00</u>
TOTAL	\$110.00

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

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Indicates Convener

Executive Committee: J. West, H. Bowen, J. Gross

Candidates and Credentials: D. Helseth, B. Williams (1 yr); D. Roe, G. Stewart (2 yrs); S. Henry, F. Walker (3 yrs)

Christian Education in the Church: V. Pollema, J. Gross (1 yr); P. Treick, M. Reyna (2 yrs); D. Yeager, M. Voytek (3 yrs)

Missions: D. Schlegel, J. Jones (1 yr); G. Baloy, S. Powell (2 yrs); T. Gruggett, M. Reyna (3 yrs)

Interchurch Relations: T. Mayville, R. Fay (1 yr); V. Pollema, G. Baloy (2 yrs); J. Merica, D. Merkel (3 yrs)

Publications: G. Mancilas, W. Lingenfelter (1 yr); E. Bristley, D. Merkel (2 yrs); S. Powell, H. Drost (3 yrs)

Diaconal: Deacon J. Vander Wal, J. Gochnauer (1 yr); R. Wegis, P. Henderson (2 yrs); L. Pollema, D. Roe (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: P. Henderson, M. Frias (1 yr); T. Gruggett, M. Voytek (2 yrs); S. Henry, K. Bowen (3 yr.)

Two Kingdoms Study Committee: T. Gruggett, S. Henry, J. West, D. Merkel, G. Stewart.

Musical Instruments in Worship Study Committee: E. Bristley, T. Mayville, S. Powell, L. Pollema, R. Spitzer.

DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS

ANDERSON, CA - Faith Reformed Church

Church Location: 3291 Rupert Rd. (off Stingy Lane)
 Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 902 Anderson, CA 96007
 Church Phone: (530) 365-6874
 Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM; Evening 5:30 PM
 Pastor/Wife: Hank Bowen/ Patty
 Home Address: 22452 Meadow Crest Lane, Palo Cedro, CA 96073
 Home Phone: (530) 549-5704 E-Mail: rcushank@sbcglobal.net
 Church Web Page: www.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; Eve. Worship 3rd Sun. at 6:30 PM
 Pastor/Wife/Children: Tracy Gruggett / Michelle / Samantha, Angela, Lydia, Corissa
 Home Address: 7016 Rhone Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93308
 Home Phone: (661) 587-3676 E-Mail: tmgruggett@bak.rr.com
 Church Web Page: www.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
 Mission 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 Address: www.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) 273-6280 or 273-4673
 Service Times: Sunday: 9:30 AM - Bible Classes; Worship 11:00 AM.
 Pastor/Wife: Dennis E. Roe / Julie
 Home Address: 17355 Alexandra Way, Grass Valley, CA 95949
 Home Ph.: (530) 272-6693 E-Mail: pastor@crcgv.org
 Assoc. Pastor: Jonathan Merica (See Stockton - Calvary)
 Church Web Page: www.crcgv.org

LA HABRA - Rehoboth Reformed Church

Church Location: 501 S. Idaho, Suite 120, La Habra (Between La Habra Blvd., & Lambert Rd.)

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; Evening Service 6:00 PM.

Mission 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: www.RehobothReformedChurch.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; Bible Study 6:30 PM

Pastor/Wife: Scott Henry / Maria

Home Address: 43449 Fleetwood Dr., Lancaster, CA 93535

Home Phone: E-Mail: shenry0328@gmail.com

Church Web Page: www.gracereformedchurchlancastr.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: www.prclodi.com

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 & 5:30 PM

Pastor/Wife: Thomas Mayville / Carolyn

Home Address: 5513 Savage Ave., Ripon, CA 95367

Home Phone: (209) 502-7390 E-mail: thomasreformed@gmail.com

SACRAMENTO, CA – Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 2020 16th Avenue, Sacramento (from Fwy. 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 Fwy 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: Jim West / Elaine

Home Address: 5216 Locust Ave., Carmichael, CA 95608

Home Phone: (916) 488-5569 E-Mail: jimwest3253@hotmail.com

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

Church Weg Page: www.covenantreformedchurch.org

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; Lunch 12:30 PM; Wednesday Bible Study and Prayer Meeting 6:30 PM.

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

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

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

Church Web Page Address: www.CovenantReformedChurchSD.org

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: jonathanmerica@yahoo.com

Church Web Page Address: www.calvaryreformedchapel.com

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; Sun. Sch. 11:15 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: hendorcus@yahoo.com

Assoc. Pastor: Michael Voytek (See LA HABRA - Rehoboth)

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; Worship 10:00 AM; Sun Bible Study - 6:00 PM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Eric Bristley / Kathleen / Matthew, Nathaniel

Home Address: 660 N. Murdock Ave., 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 / Amanda, Kaerie, Maggie

Home Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991

Home Phone: (530) 674-8797 E-Mail: sampowell365@gmail.com

Church Web Page: www.reformedyubacity.org

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States
27th Annual Spring Meeting
March 6-8, 2012
Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, California

What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vow to the LORD now in the presence of all His people.

Psalm 116:12-14

SERVICES

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States convened its 27th Annual Session at Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, California on Tuesday, March 6, 2012 at 1:00 PM with Rev. Scott Henry welcoming the body, leading the body in prayer and the singing of the first stanza of *“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”* Rev. Henry then read from Romans 12 and proclaimed the opening devotion under the theme, *“We Are Saved To Serve Christ.”* Rev. Henry closed in prayer.

The Tuesday evening worship service was held at 7:30 PM with Rev. Eric Bristley, Pastor of Grace Reformed Church, Willows, conducting the service. The Scripture reading was from 1Corinthians 2:6-13 and Licentiate Douglas Schlegel, Stated Supply of Providence Reformed Church, Lodi preached a sermon entitled, *“What We Say, What We Know.”* Following the service the congregation welcomed the delegates.

On Wednesday morning Rev. Eric Bristley, led the body in the singing of *“Great is Thy Faithfulness.”* He then read Titus 1:4-5 and several other passages in a devotion under the theme, *“Mediations Concerning Titus: Paul’s Companion”* and closed in prayer.

Elder Michael Frias led the body in a closing devotion from Psalm 103 and closed in prayer.

Each session was opened and closed with prayer 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

Rev. Jim West, President of the Executive Committee of Western Classis, called the meeting to order at 1:20 PM on March 6, 2012. The Rev. Vernon Pollema led the body in prayer. The initial roll call showed fifteen pastors and ten elder delegates present. The President declared a quorum was present and the meeting was open for business. The Bar of the House was declared to be the first six rows of chairs. The President read the standing rules of the Western Classis as required in Standing Rule 5. Elder Bob Williams and Elder Lowell Pollema were appointed as tellers for the meeting.

The following men were nominated and elected to office for this Classical year: Rev. Jim West, President; Rev. Paul Henderson, Vice President; Rev. Henry Bowen, Stated Clerk; and Elder Chris Fellersen, Treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Scott Henry as reporter for the Reformed Herald.

The Agenda, Services, and Order of the Day including a special order to examine Licentiate Doug Schlegel following the Wednesday morning devotion were adopted.

Elder Steve Mettler was approved to serve as a delegate elder for the Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield due to the providential hindrance of both delegated elders from attending sessions of Classis.

FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

Elder Robert Mettler from Rehoboth Chapel in La Habra, Elder Daniel Yeager from First Reformed Church, Elders Albert White and Doug Schlegel of Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church were all introduced, welcomed and seated in the bar of the house.

Elders Herman Drost of Trinity RCUS, Modesto, Lowell Pollema of Grace RCUS, Bakersfield, and Michael Frias of Grace RCUS, Lancaster were all welcomed as first time elders.

RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

Rev. Scott Henry was welcomed as a new minister added to the roll of Classis this past year along with all of the new elders in attendance this year. Rev. Voytek was installed as pastor of Rehoboth Reformed Chapel in La Habra this past year. Rev. Paul Treick led the body in a prayer of thanksgiving for these new additions.

There were no new churches to be received.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The President made the following appointments for the Standing Committees:

- A. Examination-Licensure: Walker, Treick, Mayville, Williams
- B. Excuses: Treick, Baloy, Drost
- C. Finances: Fellersen, Roe, Gochnauer
- D. Judicial: Voytek, Henderson, Stewart, Merkel
- E. Minutes of Synod: Baloy, Merica, Frias
- F. Missions: Mayville, Riffert, Lingenfelter, Mettler
- G. Nominations: Gruggett, Mancilas,
- H. Benevolence: Bristley, Merica, Gross
- I. Overtures: Pollema, Henry, Stewart

PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES, REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

All pertinent overtures and materials were given to the Overtures Committee for dispersal 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

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee accomplished the following work with six circulars in seven recommendations primarily dealing with the installation of ministers into vacant churches.

Recommendation 1: That the Rev. Scott Henry be added to the roll of ministers of the Western Classis.

Recommendation 2: That the Executive committee work with the consistory of the Grace Reformed Church of Lancaster to set the time, place and participants for Rev. Scott Henry's installation service. Further, that notice of the service be communicated to the member churches of the Western Classis upon its determination.

Recommendation 3: That the call of Rev. Michael Voytek to become Associate Pastor of Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter with pastoral responsibilities at Rehoboth Chapel in La Habra be declared to be in order. That the pulpit of Providence RCUS in Lodi be declared vacant effective June 19, 2011.

Recommendation 4: That Licentiate Douglas Schlegel be authorized to serve as the stated supply of Providence RCUS in Lodi effective July 1, 2011 until such time as a pastor can be called.

Recommendation 5: That the installation service for the Rev. Scott Henry as pastor of Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, California be set for Sunday, July 17, 2011, 6:00 PM at Grace RCUS, Lancaster. The installation committee is to consist of Rev. Vern Pollema giving the charge to the congregation, Rev. Tracy Gruggett giving the charge to the pastor, the Rev. Paul Henderson officiating, and the Elders of the Grace RCUS church.

Recommendation 6: That the installation service for the Rev. Michael Voytek as associate pastor of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, California, serving as the missionary pastor of Rehoboth Chapel, be set for Sunday, September 18, 2011, 10:00 AM at Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, California. The installation committee is to consist of Rev. Gil Baloy giving the charge to the pastor, Rev. Paul Henderson giving the charge to the congregation, with the Rev. Paul Henderson officiating, along with the Elders of the Ebenezer RCUS church.

Recommendation 7: That the following schedule for services be approved:

Tues. March 6: Opening Devotion at 1:00 PM -- Rev. Henry

Tues. March 6: Evening Service at 7:30 PM – Doug Schlegel, preaching; Rev. Roe, conducting.

Wed. March 7: Morning Devotion – Rev. Bristley
 Thurs. March 8: Morning Devotion – Rev. Powell
 Thurs. March 8: Closing Devotion -- Elder from Lancaster

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. J. West (pres.), Rev. H. Bowen (clerk), Elder W. Johnson

Classis Action: The report was received and adopted.

B. Missions

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

The work of your committee this year mainly involved the following mission works that received support from Classis and Synod: Covenant Reformed Church in Chico, California and Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, California. Two members of the committee were able to visit Rehoboth Chapel. Our committee met on February 16th of this year. We report the following:

Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California – The Rev. Gary Mancilas

On January 11, 2012, elder Doug Schlegel and Rev. Sam Powell visited with the consistory and the congregation of Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, CA, and present this report.

We were concerned about the financial report that we received from the consistory (also distributed to the Classical Missions committee). It very clearly shows that the income is far less than the expenses.

We asked the consistory what they are planning to do. We informed them that Synod has spoken clearly on two issues: The first, that the 10% reduction is set and most likely unchangeable – which means that their income will go down further in the coming years. The second, Synod has spoken that decreasing the salary package of Rev. Mancilas is not acceptable (see synodical abstract, 2011, page 101). The consistory informed us that they are aware of Synod's decision. One of the elders expressed his disagreement with Synod concerning Rev. Mancilas' salary package. It was his opinion that Synod had tied their hands in an impossible situation. There simply isn't any money to continue to pay Rev. Mancilas at the current level. Everything else has been cut and they have no other options.

It was our understanding that Rev. Mancilas' salary has been reduced for the first quarter of 2012 (until the spring meeting of Classis in March).

Other alternatives were proposed: Perhaps they could move into a house instead of continuing to rent their building. We again mentioned that whoever was paying for the radio broadcast at \$270 per month could perhaps be persuaded to fund sermonaudio (at 39.00 a month) instead and use the rest to balance the budget (right now, these funds are designated and cannot be used for anything other than the radio program.)

The congregation has a few visitors, but has not increased in numbers. The loss of several families has contributed to the financial shortfall. They quite simply do not have the numbers in the congregation to support the work at this time.

We also brought up the possibility that Classis might recommend removing Covenant Reformed as a mission work. There was some discussion about this, concerning what the alternatives would be. As for the consistory and the congregation,

they are committed to continuing the work whether they are funded as a mission work or not. They are very thankful for the funding and beg that it be continued at the current schedule (with the scheduled deductions of 10 percent each year).

Rev. Mancilas has expressed his desire to continue pastoring the church, and has asked that Classis continue the funding according to the current reduction schedule – that it be allowed to run down as scheduled (10% per year).

After the meeting with the consistory, we met with the congregation. There were a few families that were hindered from attending, but the majority of the congregation was in attendance. We encouraged them and prayed with and for them. They expressed their gratitude to Classis and Synod for the support thus far, and asked us to request continued support according to schedule. After the meeting, one of the elders approached me (Rev. Powell) and asked what my personal view was as to whether Classis should continue funding. I told him frankly that I had not yet made up my mind and wanted to discuss it with the committee. On the one hand, the consistory and congregation are of one mind and strongly desire to continue the work. On the other hand, funds are not unlimited and sometimes hard decisions need to be made. This is a topic that needs wisdom and prayer.

Here is an excerpt from a member's analysis of the Chico financial report: "...they are also expending far too much on advertisement which has yielded no visible results, considering they began with 19 communicant members in 2000, and reported the same number in 2011. ... moving out of the present facility which would save \$9,000. ... Even if those two expenditures were eliminated completely, they would be left with a deficit of \$2,560 for 2012, \$9,830 for 2013, and \$13,550 for 2014, resulting in a total deficit of \$25,940 over the next three years. ... From our brother's report, it was noted that they have \$4,000 in their account. Based on their current budget for 2012 they would exhaust that amount and still be about \$10,000 short. I don't know how that works. If they eliminated both the rent and advertisement they would still be about \$2,000 short for 2012. That's assuming that the misc. income of \$3,890 materializes. ... As stewards of the Lord's money, we should also take note that the Classis and Synod support for the next three years comes to a total of \$53,740."

On Thursday, February 16th, our committee met at Bakersfield Grace Reformed Church to prepare our report for the Western Classis. After reviewing the above report as well as the three year budget and statistics for Classis, we believe that the Western Classis should remove Chico from mission status and funding be discontinued after the current funding expires. The committee considered the following in its decision.

It is the opinion of the committee that a mission work must have a reasonable expectation of growth or self support. After reviewing the statistical history and future projections, it is difficult to propose a strategy of mission endeavors that would predict a rise in giving and / or communicant members.

The financial situation is clear, drastic cuts would need to be made to balance the budget and continue to maintain the goal of self support. The opportunities for cuts are few and would have a negative impact to evangelistic efforts.

Given this information the committee believes that continuing on the current path is only postponing the inevitable and not a wise use of valuable resources.

Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, California – The Rev. Michael Voytek

Two committee members, Elder Jeff Jones, and Rev. Tracy Gruggett, visited Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, California on Sunday, November 6th, 2011. Elder Jones, and Rev. Gruggett also met with the consistory of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter.

We met with the congregation during the time normally set aside for Sunday school in order to discuss the state of the work at Rehoboth. The meeting was led by Elder Jones, who opened with prayer. Then we began a time of question and answer focusing on the following subjects: general information, demographic makeup of the congregation, facility, finances, church life, Pastor Voytek's transition, and other concerns.

Under general information we were provided with information on the average attendance and services offered by the church. The church holds both a morning and an afternoon worship service with time set aside for Sunday School and a noon-time fellowship meal between the worship services. Also there is a Wednesday night study. The morning service, Sunday school, and meal are well-attended. Also there are small group Bible studies conducted by members in homes in a number of areas.

Under the topic of the facility it was noted that they are looking for a new location because their lease ends in 2014. We were given a couple of informational papers on properties for sale in the area. This information made it clear that building costs in this area will be significantly more than the typical RCUS buildings.

In terms of their finances, their income for the year 2011 fell short of their expenses by \$10,999. This and the reduced support from Shafter has prompted the work to propose a budget that does not include a reduction of support.

Regarding church life, we received a number of responses, most of them positive, focusing on the outlook and potential of the congregation.

Regarding Pastor Voytek's transition, the members express optimism and seem to embrace Rev. Voytek's preaching, teaching, leadership, and vision.

Our meeting with the Shafter consistory mainly focused on the plan to particularize the La Habra work. Pastor Voytek and Elder Clarence Goehring expressed a guarded optimism.

We believe that the Western Classis should continue support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra and that funding be continued at the current funding level.

Future Home Mission Church Planting by the Western Classis

Our committee also spent time discussing the development of a 3-5 year strategic plan for our mission endeavors within the bounds of the Western Classis as directed by the RCUS Home Missions Manual (II.4). As stated in last year's report, we agreed that we should continue to target one metropolitan area at a time and concentrate our energy and resources on that area until a self-sustaining church is established. Again we agreed that the Western Classis set aside an Annual Day of Prayer for Western Classis Home Missions in the coming year. Furthermore, that the churches be encouraged to take a special offering on that day for Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, California to be used by them in either securing a permanent facility or to enable them to rent an effective facility until a permanent one is found. We also discussed various ways to begin an outreach to Spanish speaking communities in areas where an established church can assist with support.

Recommendations:

1. That Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California, be removed from mission status and funding be discontinued after the current funding expires December 31, 2012.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 266th Synod for mission support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California at the current rate until December 31, 2012.

3. We strongly encourage the churches of Western Classis to faithfully pray for the congregation in Chico as they faithfully continue to persevere with their goal of establishing a reformed witness in that community.
4. That the request from the Ebenezer Reformed Consistory, Shafter, California for classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra in the amount of \$20,391 for the 2013 year be granted.
5. That the Western Classis petition the 265th Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, California in the amount of \$10,116 for the year 2013.
6. That the Western Classis set aside an Annual Day of Prayer for Western Classis Home Missions in the coming year. Furthermore, that the churches be encouraged to take a special offering on that day for Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, California to be used by them in either securing a permanent facility or to enable them to rent an effective facility until a permanent one is found.

Respectfully Submitted in Christ's Service,
*Elder Jeff Jones (chairman), Rev. Sam Powell, Rev. Tracy Gruggett
 Elder Bob Williams, Elder Doug Schlegel, Rev. Gil Baloy*

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

C. Christian Education

Esteemed Brethren:

Your Christian Education Committee was not commissioned by the Classis to do any new projects during this past classical year. For that reason the committee did not meet nor conduct any business.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. E. Bristley (chairman), Rev. V. Pollema, Rev. P. Treick
 Elder M. Reyna, Elder J. Gross, Elder J. Gochnauer*

Classis Action: The report was received and adopted.

D. Candidates and Credentials

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

During the past Classical year, the Candidates and Credentials Committee examined Rev. Scott Henry in orthodoxy and intent pursuant to his call to pastor the Lancaster charge, and oversaw the ministerial preparations of Licentiate Doug Schlegel and Student Derrick Merkel.

Rev. Henry's exam was conducted via conference call on March 22, 2011. The committee's recommendation to sustain it was subsequently circulated and approved by the Classis. Rev. Henry was later installed as pastor of the Lancaster charge.

Licentiate Doug Schlegel has been serving as the Stated Supply in Lodi since last summer. Since he will give a full account of his labors in his parochial report, I will not provide that information here. However, we must note two things. First, he completed his internship under Rev. Jim West, who reports that he has been both busy and productive in the ministry (see attachment). Rev. West also recommends that we proceed with his

ordination exam. And second, the only areas remaining in Licentiate Schlegel's ordination exam are English Bible, Anthropology and Apologetics.

Student Derrick Merkel reports that he has had numerous opportunities to test his gifts this past year. Not only has he labored in his home church, but he has also engaged in several outreach efforts, teaching and defending the doctrines in the Three Forms of Unity (see attachment). Last fall, he also enrolled in Heidelberg Theological Seminary and took two classes — Ancient Church History and Prolegomena, receiving an A in both. This semester he is taking three classes. He plans to take classes full time starting in the fall. Student Merkel requests Classis to overture Synod for \$3,000.00 to cover his part-time tuition expenses for the current year, and \$5,200.00 (\$4,800.00 tuition and \$400.00 books) to take a full course load in the forthcoming academic year.

The Committee has also received a request from Mr. Matthew Davis to be taken under care. Mr. Davis is a member of the La Habra mission work and is currently auditing classes at Heidelberg Theological Seminary to get a sense of the workload that seminary would require. Your committee understands that recommendation from his overseeing consistory (Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter) will be available at Classis. Mr. Davis is also planning to attend the Wednesday session of Classis in order to be interviewed by your committee and examined on the floor.

Recommendations:

1. That Classis overture Synod to grant Mr. Merkel's request for tuition aid of \$3,000.00 for the current academic year.
2. That Classis overture Synod to grant Mr. Merkel's request for \$5,200.00 (\$4,800.00 tuition and \$400.00 books) for the forthcoming academic year.
3. That Mr. Doug Schlegel's internship be approved.
4. That Mr. Doug Schlegel be examined as follows:
 - a. English Bible (15 minutes) — Henderson
 - b. Anthropology (15 minutes) — Mayville
 - c. Apologetics (15 minutes) — Walker
5. That matters pertaining to Mr. Davis' request be referred to Standing Examinations.

On behalf of the committee,
*Rev. F. Walker (chairman), Rev. P. Henderson, Rev. T. Mayville,
 Elder D. Helseth, Elder B. Williams, Elder G. Stewart*

Classis Action: Recommendations 1-3, 5 were referred to the Standing Examinations and Licensure Committee. Recommendation 4 was passed.

E. Interchurch Relations

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

The Western Classis Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee has endeavored to keep in contact and nurture heartfelt fraternal relationships with our brethren of the churches with whom we have fraternal relations. Communications have been maintained through various media i.e. email, telephone calls and U.S. mail. In some cases exchange of pulpits with an RCUS minister was arranged on a few occasions. Your committee would encourage, when possible, that RCUS ministers provide pulpit supply for our fraternal congregations when invited to do so. Invitations were sent via email to the Stated Clerks or contact person of our fraternal churches, inviting them to attend our 27th

Annual Western Classis Meeting at Grace RCUS in Lancaster, CA. Directions to our meeting were also sent. Invitations to attend our Western Classis Meeting were sent to the Presbyteries of Southern California and Northern California & Nevada of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA, the Classis Pacific East of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches of North America, the Classis Southwest, U.S., of the URCNA, and the Classis Pacific Northwest of the URCNA. By God's grace it is our desire to receive a delegate or greetings by letter from these Presbyterian and Reformed Churches at the 27th Annual Western Classis Meeting on March 6-8, 2012. The time at which these delegates will address the Western Classis will be determined by the call of the Western Classis President. Preferably, Wednesday, March 7, 2012 will be a good time to hear from the delegates that are present.

The Western Classis Interchurch Relations Committee endeavors to keep costs of traveling within reason, while keeping in close contact with our fraternal brothers. The Classis Pacific East of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches in North America, agreed last year to alternate our exchange of delegates to every other year. On the year when a delegate is not sent, we request of each other a letter of greeting. Your chairman has sought very diligently to have someone from the Western Classis to attend the Classis Pacific East on February 23, 2012. In the past, it was my understanding that no Western Classis delegate attended a Classis Pacific East since 2008. Willing servants to attend the Presbytery/Classis meetings of our fraternal churches is greatly appreciated. The 2011-2012 fraternal delegates who attended Presbytery and Classis meetings of our fraternal churches, or when letters of greeting were sent in lieu of sending a delegate are as follows:

- a) A letter of greeting was sent to the 2011 Spring Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Northern California & Nevada, which convened on March 18-19, 2011 hosted by the New Covenant OPC in South San Francisco, CA.
- b) A letter of greeting was sent to the Classis Pacific East of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches in North America which convened on September 15, 2011.
- c) Rev. Jonathan Merica attended as the Western Classis delegate the 2011 Fall Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Northern California & Nevada, which convened at First Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Sunnyside, CA on September 16, 2011. Fraternal greetings were given, and your delegate was warmly received.
- d) Rev. Paul Henderson was the Western Classis delegate to the Classis Pacific Northwest of the URCNA Meeting on October 18, 2011, in Visalia, CA. Heartfelt fraternal greetings were extended to our brothers of the Classis Pacific Northwest of the URCNA.
- e) Rev. Michael Voytek had planned to attend the Presbytery of Southern CA, OPC on October 21-22, 2011, but was providentially hindered. Rev. Voytek said, "I was unable to attend the meeting on Friday as an important ministry need arose at the last minute that required me to minister in La Habra. I sent an email to the clerk of the presbytery asking if they were going to meet on Saturday, but I did not receive a response."
- f) Your chairman responded to notification of the Meeting of the Classis Southwest U.S., URCNA to convene in Phoenix, AZ on January 17, 2012. Later, the Stated Clerk advised the chairman that their meeting would be very brief, because there was not much business before their Classis. They advised us to send a delegate in the late summer which will convene in San Diego, CA. When we receive notification of their summer meeting we will plan to send a delegate to their Classis.

g) The Pacific Coast Presbytery, RPCNA is having their next meeting scheduled for February 17-18, 2012 in Phoenix. A letter of greeting was sent to their Stated Clerk commending God's blessings upon all their deliberations of Presbytery, and assuring them of our desire to strengthen our ecclesiastical fellowship.

h) The Classis Pacific East of the Canadian & American Reformed Churches sent the Western Classis an invitation to attend their Classis meeting on February 23, 2012, and your chairman after seeking out a volunteer, ended up having to attend with the meeting fast approaching.

The reports of our fraternal delegates representing the Western Classis will be given when the Western Classis convenes on March 6-8, 2012. May God give us grace to nurture a closer fraternal bond with nearby fraternal churches by having an exchange of pulpits, as well as uniting in other kinds of Christian fellowship. *"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and give thee peace"* (Numbers 6:24-26).

Respectfully Submitted,
*Rev. Jonathan Merica, Chairman, Rev. T. Mayville,
 Rev. V. Pollema, Rev. G. Baloy, Elder J. Heerma,*

Classis Action: The report was received and adopted.

F. Publications

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

You committee received no business and consequently conducted no business. Such business as we did not have was dispatched with efficiency and decorum.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. S. Powell (chairman), Rev. N. Riffert, Rev. E. Bristley,
 Elder W. Lingenfelter, Elder D. Merkel*

Classis Action: The report was received and adopted.

G. Diaconal Ministries

Esteemed Brethren,

Your Committee received no requests for diaconal aid since our 2011 Classis Meeting. We did contact Rev. Merica and the Chico Consistory by email, since they had received diaconal aid in the past. Elder Gochnauer reports that Chico has no request to make of your Committee as of February 8. Rev. Merica wrote to us saying: *I am happy to report that the Lord has provided for the needs of Marsha and me. Presently, we are provided for in our temporal needs. I give heartfelt gratitude for the support of Classis and Synod in the past when things were very lean for us. Marsha works for our son who has helped. Pray for us that this support will continue.* Your Committee also takes note of the fact that on December 31, 2009 there was a \$7,469 deficit in the Benevolence Fund of Classis, and a \$5,169 deficit December 31, 2010. We rejoice with you that in these tough economic times, the fund had a \$296 *surplus* as of December 31, 2011! We thank God for the generosity of His people in 2011. We do not have a recommendation

for Classis. But we would ask the Standing Benevolence Committee to consider raising the guideline from \$46 to \$48 in order to build a small surplus for any diaconal needs which may arise in 2012.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. T. Mayville (chairman), Rev. P. Henderson, Elder Steve Wilbur,
 Elder J. Gochmayer, Elder A. White, Deacon J. Vander Wal*

Classis Action: The report was received and adopted.

H. Heidelberg West Camp

Esteemed Brothers in Christ Jesus our Lord:

The 2011 Heidelberg West Youth Camp was held this year at our new Campgrounds, Sierra Christian Camps. Overall the response was a big “Thumbs Up!” The Camp Committee wishes to thank each and every person who helped make this the best camp ever (according to some!).

The new format of instruction was greatly appreciated by both pastors and the young folk. We hope that this ‘reformed’ manner of instruction will result in a maturation of our covenant young people and a humble thankfulness as well as a strong dependence upon the Word of God as it is preached and taught within our churches.

The newness of the place proved to be a ‘boon’ to our fearless Activity Director, Mr. Todd Crabtree, as he found a whole lot more room and availability of things to do! The cooks from Shafter really spoiled us and I am excited to announce that they have actually volunteered again to serve the Camp in 2012. There were a total of 82 people (25 Staff & 57 Campers).

Again, we hope that all of you will take advantage of this opportunity to serve the Lord and His ‘younger sheep’ as they grow up and mature under our guidance and instruction in this unique format called “Church Camp.” As you will see below, the Camp expenses were more and the beginning balance is less. The committee will recommend to the Classis as a delegated body to cover a portion of the costs.

Beginning Balance 1-01-11	\$1,394.00
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Income:

Guidelines received Thru 12-31-11	\$1,728.00
Camper Fee – 2011	\$6,832.00
Allocated Interest Income	\$4.44
Total Receipts	<u>\$8,564.44</u>
Total Funds Available	<u>\$9,958.44</u>

Expenses:

Sierra C.C. deposit-2011	750.00
Camp Items (Activity Stuff)	493.75
Shafter – Camp Food	2,273.73
S. C. C. incl. Deposit-2012	6,560.00
Ebenezer Reformed – Offset Food (500.00)	
Total Expenses this year:	<u>9,577.48</u>

Ending Balance 12-31-11

\$380.96

Recommendations:

1. That the Heidelberg West Youth Camp Guideline be raised to \$7.00 per communicant member.

Grounds: We need to adequately cover the cost of the Camp Rental. Seeing that not all churches pay this Guideline, we need to cover for those who do not. We believe that this is proper seeing that Heidelberg is an officially approved work of the Classis. Therefore, the Western Classis churches should help defray the cost.

2. That the Camp cost be set at \$80.00 per camper to cover the cost of meals and activity items (a decrease of \$30.00 from last year).

Grounds: If we approve the 'new' guideline, this lower cost for campers will adequately cover these needs and will hopefully make it more affordable for parents to send their covenant children to be further instructed and/or disciplined under the pastors of the Western Classis.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. P. Henderson (chairman), Rev. J. Fluck, Rev. G. Baloy,
Elder M. Reyna, Elder G. Born*

Classis Action: The recommendations passed and the report was adopted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

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

Dear Fathers and Brethren,

Your President has received all your parochial reports and is ready to present his 13th consecutive President's Report of the Western Classis. Each year when in the throes of making this report, I become buried in paper work and its accompanying stress. Then, as I reflect upon the pending meeting of Classis, I am encouraged that I will be able to "get out of Dodge" for a few days to fellowship with you fellow-ministers and elders of like precious faith. This will be true even if Classis decides to slaughter this report! So, I begin his report with the anticipation of the fellowship that I know will refresh and energize. May God's grace be with us as we gather for our 27th Annual Meeting.

Now for a summary of your parochial reports: Pastor Paul Henderson praises God for the temporal stability and generosity of the Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter, as well as the zealous work of the elders and deacons in the congregation. The Church majored in being gracious to other churches in need. Although he speaks of "some discipline cases," he also writes that "the body in general is spiritually healthy, and still seeking to remain faithful to the faith of our fathers."

Pastor Dennis Roe, although lamenting the negative impact of the economy upon the temporal condition of the Covenant Reformed Church at Grass Valley so that more families may have to relocate, praises God for the loving-kindness of God's people and for the faithful diligence of all the church officers. He reports that although his Hepatitis C viral infection has subsided substantially, he is still considering "another attempt of chemo-therapy." He is hopeful that such therapy will kill the disease once and for all.

The Reverend Michael Voytek of the Rehoboth Chapel speaks about the smooth pastoral transition after the Rev. Jay Fluck moved on to the Reformed Church in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He is grateful that the congregation hungers to learn more about the word of God and he praises God for the addition of three new officers. He speaks about outreach Bible studies in the community and three to four visitors attending his New Members Class. He especially asks that we pray that God would give the church wisdom as it works "towards the particularization of the Chapel into a self-governing church." He exuberantly praises God for the members and officers of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter for their continual support over the years.

Pastor Sam Powell of First Reformed Church in Yuba City tells about his great love for the congregation of First Reformed Church. He speaks of his various Bible studies, which include a completed series of lessons on the *Belgic Confession*. He also speaks of setting up a booth at the Christmas Stroll in downtown Yuba City, where about 500 pamphlets explaining what it means to be Reformed were distributed. He rejoices that the mortgage of the Church has now been paid off so that the Church is debt-free. There are nine children currently being disciplined for Confirmation. He also reports that the agonizing trials of the past year have driven both him and his wife closer to the Lord and thus closer to each other.

Of our five retired pastors, the Rev. Paul Treick reports that he continues active in the preaching ministry of God's word to both RCUS churches and Orthodox Presbyterian Churches. He continues as editor of the Reformed Herald and continues to write, although not as much as he would desire. The Rev. Neale Riffert has good things to say about the progress of *Christ the King Reformed Church* in Sherman, Texas, where he

labors outside the bounds of the Western Classis. He is serving as Associate Pastor of Grace Reformed Church in Mitchell, South Dakota. Vernon Pollema speaks of his retirement as a “slowing down” time in his ministry. He speaks of his appointment as Stated Supply at Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, his participation as a Board-member at Heidelberg Theological Seminary, and his chairing two Committees for the Western Classis. He also reports of his recent adventure in the Philippines where he says that the fields are very white unto harvest. All three of these “retired” enjoy good health, so that they are heartily and hardily serving Christ in the ongoing work of the kingdom. Retired Pastor Lloyd Gross speaks of his daily battles with his poor health and his desire to be “transferred” from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant. He tells us that he prays for us daily and prays that the Lord’s blessing will be on this year’s Classis meeting. He exhorts us to continue to reach out to a dying world that is “becoming increasingly pagan.” Pastor Gene Sawtelle reports that after his recent surgery, that he has arisen from his sickbed to do a limited amount of preaching. Nevertheless, his physical condition appears to be hampered into the foreseeable future. Let us uphold both him and Lloyd Gross in our prayers.

Pastor Thomas Mayville rejoices in his busy work at Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto. He has many irons in the proverbial fire and praises God for the diligent work of the elders whom he works with. He also praises God for the diligence of the deacons, who have worked tirelessly to care for the temporal needs of the church. The church is studying music and investigating adding a song book to the Trinity Hymnal. He thanks God for the well-being of little Hurley Van Houten who weighed only 2 lbs, 10 oz. at her premature birth last year, but who now appears to be a normal size baby. He also thanks God for the improved health of John Heerema, who has abandoned his walker, and often does not require a cane. His greatest burden is the trend of declining membership from 92 baptized members in 2004 to 80 in 2010. He also mentions that the elders are working with him regarding his preaching since August. He requests prayer about this matter.

The Rev. Jonathan Merica speaks of his travels to Pakistan in behalf of Westminster Biblical Missions and of preaching the Gospel to thousands of Pakistani Christians there. With the help of the overseeing congregation in Grass Valley, the Chapel recently ordained a new elder in the person of Greg Goehring. The congregation is busily spreading the Gospel through its website, distribution of fliers, the yellow pages, Google Ad Words, and the internet yellow pages.

The Rev. Scott Henry describes his many labors at Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster. Most notable among these labors are his radio sermons, which he began in August of last year and which are directed toward the huge population area in Los Angeles County. He reports of the zeal and love of the congregation and of its militant evangelistic efforts, saying that “the congregation also desires to reach out to the people in the Antelope Valley with the Gospel of Christ. Some are engaged in city park evangelism, passing out tracts, and distributing door hangers that explain the Gospel of Christ. We are also in the process of developing a plan that will enable us to reach out to the needy in our community with clothing, and food items. This will be our foot in the door to minister to the spiritual needs of many who know not Christ...” The church has solved a pressing leadership problem in that a new elder was recently ordained and installed.

Pastor Tracy Gruggett rejoices in the privilege of preaching God’s word to the saints at Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield. The word of God is preached, the sacraments

are faithfully served, and church discipline is meted-out. Tracy also reports of numerous opportunities to counsel God's people. The Gospel is also spread through conversations by the members to their friends and neighbors. The church set up a street-fair booth several times which was used to pass out brochures and booklets. Pastor Gruggett also mourns the loss of "three beloved saints," among whom was Vivian Stuebbe, the wife of our beloved Rev. Robert Stuebbe.

The Rev. Gary Mancilas reports that he has shepherded the Home Missions work in Chico for ten years. Both the elders and the deacons are employing their gifts in the management of the congregation. Concerning outreach, one highlight is the recent attendance of eight young adults, who came to the church as a result of scanning the Church website. As of this writing, they are determined to continue their attendance at Covenant Reformed Church. The Church recognizes that its "viability....falls on its members and its financial responsibility to sustain itself." The church continues to be a "small congregation," but is still "an effective reformed presence in Chico."

Pastor Frank Walker rejoices at being in the ministry for twenty-five years, eleven of which at Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento. He currently divides his time between Church and Seminary. He reports that he has taught about twenty courses over the years, not including many independent courses. He praises God for the opportunity to teach and to train men for the ministry. He has two major book projects in the works and thoroughly enjoys preaching the word of God.

Pastor Gil Baloy addresses the three-fold responsibility of the Christian pastor: preaching the word of God, administering the Christian sacraments, and the meting-out of Christian discipline. He thanks God that the discipline load was lighter this past year, yet expresses his desire for the youth of the church to focus more on the instruction of their godly parents "in order to lay a foundation for life." He is also concerned of what he deems a slackening stewardship of the people's time, treasure, and talents. He also expresses his hope that the Chapel will become a particular church in the near future, while also desiring the addition of another elder and deacon. As for formal evangelism, the church continues to do it, even though the fruit of conversions have not been apparent.

Pastor Hank Bowen spends nearly one-half of his report dealing with the subject of evangelism at Faith Reformed in Anderson. He tells us that the communicant membership there stands at 22 "with over one-half in their golden years." He reminds us that Faith Reformed has received aid for ten years and that moving toward "a self-supporting congregation eludes us." He assures us that God's people in Anderson desire to see people come to Christ and that the members invite friends, but without noticeable fruit. Yet, he also reports that there is no formal church evangelism and that he "is out of ideas of what do when it comes to trying to bring people into the church." Yet, with the addition of Elder Derrick Merkel, weekly outreach is occurring at a local coffee shop, where planned theological discussions often lasso curious patrons who "just happen" to eavesdrop. Family-wise, Pastor Bowen rejoices in the pending wedding of his daughter, but also grieves that his son has rebelled against the Christian Faith. He ends his report rejoicing in God Who sustains and strengthens him. His zeal for the Christian ministry remains fervent and faithful.

My own report highlights the many irons-in-the-fire ministry of Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento. The Gospel is preached, God's people are visited, discipline is meted-out when needed, and the sacraments are faithfully administered. There are visitors galore, the new membership class does not lack attendees, and outsiders who are

not members of the church irregularly ask for counseling. Around October of last year I announced my plan to step-down as pastor of the congregation in September, 2013. The main reason is I am nearing ministerial “burn-out.” My prayer is that I do not become a lame-duck pastor, who tries to squeak by with a minimum of work until “stepping-down day” arrives.

Pastor Eric Bristley is upbeat about the advance of the Gospel in the Willows’ congregation. He speaks about brotherly love and the employment the spiritual gifts there. There is unity in the Faith not only among the members of the Consistory, but throughout the congregation. The Church recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. He expresses gratitude for the members who receive his ministry joyfully and heartily. Yet, he is concerned that the church needs a greater emphasis on evangelism in its practice. He speaks of a significant opportunity to the North, where the opportunity of purchasing a radio station is available, if and when it is put on the market.

As for commentary on your Parochial Reports, there is not a great deal different from last years’ *President’s Report*. Like last year, the financial posture of some of our congregations is not improving. Some churches are operating on a shoe-string budget and barely able to pay their bills; others remain strong and solvent, even though there has been a substantial decline in giving and in their treasury funds. Two churches continue to receive diaconal aid from Synod. In some cases there is a “Scottish Revival” occurring, but not over doctrinal differences. The sick American economy (especially in housing), has impacted our churches negatively. This has necessitated many to relocate to areas where gainful employment is available. In the Sacramento Church one member (a married man with two children) simply got into his car and drove (unannounced) to Williston, North Dakota, where he immediately received work in the oil fields. He continues to work there, even though there is literally no housing and no available hotel space (he sleeps in a camper).

The marks of the true Church are apparent in all our Classis churches, including the difficult and taxing responsibility of church discipline. The morale of the ministers with a few exceptions, seems to be healthy, if not exuberant. There is particular love for the preaching of the word of God. I am reminded that during the days of the Judges there was declension of the true religion in Israel, and yet in the midst of it all, true piety flourished in the lives of Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi. God was still working His kingdom even in the worst of times. That should give us encouragement, knowing that when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

There are two theological issues that some of the churches are grappling with. The first concerns the use of different musical instruments in worship, including instruments like the electric guitar and drums. Is the day of the organ or even the piano on the way out? How does Psalm 150 impact our choice of musical instruments? Grading the worship of a church on the basis of its music is not always a symptom of wanting “to go Hollywood.” While this matter is perhaps settled in the minds of those who have been raised on the organ and piano, it is by no means settled for the coming generation of young adults, who passionately desire to praise God with other musical instruments. The second concern is what is called *Escondido Theology* or the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, which is streaming out of Westminster Seminary in California. This theological battle is perhaps in its embryonic form now, as we may be on the verge of more and more books on this topic. At last year’s Synod Dr. Joey Pipa of Greenville Seminary told me that this was *the* hot issue in his bivouac. The Reformed Church in the

United States is often on the cutting edge when it comes to addressing such matters, so that I think it would good for us to pause and consider whether we want to formally address this matter (either on a Classical or Synodical level)? As President, let me repeat what I will say in my Parochial Report: when I first heard about the “two kingdoms” viewpoint, it made my blood boil. But then upon reflecting upon it and also reflecting upon the faithfulness of the Reformed men in Escondido who are in the vanguard of the fight to preserve the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, I think we owe it to them to study their views coolly and wisely. This is especially the case since some appeal to the writings of John Calvin to support their position.

Another issue is the National economic scene; this is an election year and we would be burying our heads in the sand if we did not recognize the issues that are at stake, not the least being the gargantuan National Debt and the imposition of more and more State socialism. We would be foolish to think that these matters will not harm our churches. For example, one United States Congressman reports that the debt in Greece today is about \$39,000 per citizen, while the debt in the United States is \$49,000 per citizen. This is not encouraging news. The more the debt grows, the more our leaders will be tempted to cut the military, inflate the currency, delay the inevitable meltdown, or just default on the debt. All these temptations will jeopardize the health of our churches. When the New Deal was enacted in the 1930s and 1940s, there was the fear of what was called “creeping socialism.” Rightly or wrongly, historian Samuel Elliot Morrison of Harvard University and a staunch defender of the New Deal wrote that the effect of creeping socialism was “galloping capitalism.” But today we are in danger of “galloping socialism,” the outcome of which could produce a totalitarian State, which claims omnipotence over every nook and cranny of life, including the ministry of Christ’s Church. I state these convictions in this President’s Report not just for ourselves, but so that future generations will realize that we were not bewitched by this threat. Of course, we all know that the answer to encroaching socialism is the Gospel message that is typified by the Old Testament Year of Jubilee and which is proclaimed in Leviticus 25:10: “And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land....” History tells us that the conditions of Gospel-liberty and political liberty go hand-in-hand. There can be no political liberty unless there is freedom from the dominion of sin through the preaching of Gospel truth. This is what Jesus preached and this is what toppled the idolatrous and tyrannical Caesarism of the Roman Empire (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:17-19). Politics is but a side-show compared to the music of the Gospel-trumpet.

As for the history of the Western Classis, it appears that the Committee to write the history of our first 25 years has completed its work. The next step seems to be publication. This historical survey is important not only because the history of the Church is the history of the working of God’s Spirit, but because it shows that we are not a top-down denomination. While we appreciate the work of Synod, we also must not gloss over the grass-roots work of the Classes and its respective churches.

Finally, there is one parliamentary matter that needs exploring. Two years ago Synod made some business changes which seem to be working well, not the least being phasing-out the Overtures Committee and other parliamentary tweaks. It would be wise for us to investigate these changes and ascertain as to whether they would benefit us, too (particularly in the interests of saving the precious commodity of time). This is not an exhortation for us to baptize all the actions of Synod with Classis water. Much less is it a case of a mindless “monkey see, monkey do.” But it is a reminder about the need always

to redeem the time. Therefore I make request that Classis refer this matter and whatever else is germane in my Report to Standing Judicial.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Jim West

Classis Action: The last paragraph was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee to evaluate the Classis' practices to align with the new practices of the Synod in particular regard to the difference in the Classical and Synodical year. The report was then received, and adopted. It is to be spread upon the Abstract of the Minutes, and submitted to the Reformed Herald for publication.

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The minutes of the 26th 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.

There were 250 copies printed and bound. Each of the congregations of the RCUS was hand delivered the required number of copies at the Synod meeting saving the Classis in mailing costs. The cost of printing the Abstract was \$732.35 or \$2.93 a copy. The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the Abstract and in the *Reformed Herald*. The necrology of Elders Frank Krivolavek and Case Van Egmond were printed in the back of the Abstract. Thirteen overtures from the Western Classis along with copies of the supporting documents for information were sent to Synod for consideration. They were acted upon and reported in the Synodical Abstract of the 265th Annual Session. The other required information regarding delegates credentials, church directory and changes to the roll of ministers were sent to the Synod Clerk. A summary of all financial matters approved by the Classis was sent to the Treasurer.

There were a couple of changes in matters pertaining to the roll of the Western Classis. The Rev. Scott Henry was received into the Western Classis and the South Central Classis was duly notified. The Covenant East Classis sent notification that Rev. Jay Fluck had been received by that body. There was one oddity to report. Your Clerk received a copy of a letter of call for the Rev. Neale Riffert from Grace Reformed Church in Mitchell, South Dakota to work in Sherman, Texas. There was no request for any action and so your Clerk has simply held onto the letter.

Your Clerk represented the Western Classis at the funeral service for Rev. Chester Ploeger in Garner, Iowa on Wednesday, August 24, 2011. Rev. Ploeger had served the RCUS faithfully during the years of the Eureka Classis and served in every geographical Classis including serving as pastor of Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield, California. I want to thank those who have sent me their parochial and permanent reports in MS Word formats as it is a tremendous help in expediting the printing of the Abstract. Your clerk can think of nothing further to report.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Henry P. Bowen
Stated Clerk, Western Classis, RCUS

Classis Action: The matter of the call of Rev. Riffert to Mitchell, SD was referred to Standing Judicial. The report was received and adopted.

C. Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 265th Synod, there is an action that requires consideration by the Classes. The following motion carried at our last Synod meeting: “That Synod overture the Classes to request that home mission funding be based on the Synodical fiscal year.”

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 (265th Abstract, p. 103).
2. The change in the Standing Rules of Synod, #1, “The fiscal year of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States shall run from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. The Synodical dues shall be due on the first of June and are to be paid not later than the thirtieth of June of the current fiscal year.
3. The change in Standing Rule #2: “The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod two weeks before the session of Synod.”
4. The change in Standing Rule #5: “The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Synod at forty-five cents (\$0.45) per mile per vehicle. Public transportation costs and rental car fees for the delegate shall be reimbursed at full cost. (Delegates are exhorted to exercise good stewardship in the use of Synod’s funds and to not abuse this provision).”
5. The change in Standing Rule #6: “Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Synod whose congregations have paid the synodical dues in full to the Synod Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Synod or have been properly excused by Synod.”
6. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the calendar year.
7. 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.
8. The Classes are reminded that the 266th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 21-24, 2012, at Grace Reformed Church, Rapid City, SD.

Respectfully submitted,
David Fagrey, Stated Clerk
 for the Executive Committee of Synod

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

D. Treasurer's Report**BALANCE SHEET**
As of December 31, 2011

	12-31-11	12-31-10	CHANGE
ASSETS:			
Cash	177,470.42	182,946.26	(5,475.84)
TOTAL ASSETS	177,470.42	182,946.26	(5,475.84)
LIABILITIES:			
Accounts Payable	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0.00	0.00	0.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	<u>177,470.42</u>	<u>182,946.26</u>	<u>(5,475.84)</u>
TOTAL LIAB & SURPLUS	<u>177,470.42</u>	<u>182,946.26</u>	<u>(5,475.84)</u>
FUND BALANCES:			
General	10,471.91	9,731.67	740.24
Missions Building Fund	146,565.77	145,526.66	1,039.11
Missions	13,212.44	19,762.62	(6,550.18)
Benevolence	3,250.09	2,953.44	296.65
Publications	3,589.26	3,577.87	11.39
Heidelberg Camp	<u>380.96</u>	<u>1,394.00</u>	<u>(1,013.04)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>177,470.42</u>	<u>182,946.26</u>	<u>(5,475.84)</u>

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2011

INCOME	1-01-11	Dues	Bldg. Fund	Missions	Benev	Publ	Camp	Total
Faith -Anderson	24	240.00	24.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	72.00	336.00
Grace-Bakersfield	135	1,289.50	129.00	6,450.00	5,934.00	0.00	387.00	14,189.50
Covenant-Chico	22	220.00	0.00	694.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	914.00
Covenant-Grass Valley	40	110.00	11.00	550.00	506.00	0.00	33.00	1210.00
Grace-Lancaster	30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Providence-Lodi	39	390.00	0.00	0.00	91.25	0.00	0.00	481.25
Trinity-Modesto	62	710.00	71.00	3,976.00	3,266.00	0.00	213.00	8,236.00
Covenant-Sacramento	156	1,560.00	156.00	7,800.00	7,176.00	0.00	468.00	17,160.00
Ebenezer-Shafter	101	1,010.00	101.00	5,050.00	4,646.00	0.00	303.00	11,110.00
Grace-Willows	35	320.00	32.00	1,600.00	1,472.00	0.00	96.00	3,520.00
First -Yuba City	52	520.00	52.00	2,600.00	2,392.00	0.00	156.00	5,720.00
F&M Bank-int Alloc		<u>30.97</u>	<u>463.11</u>	<u>62.89</u>	<u>9.40</u>	<u>11.39</u>	<u>4.44</u>	<u>582.19</u>
TOTAL INCOME	696	<u>\$6,400.47</u>	<u>\$1,039.11</u>	<u>\$28,782.89</u>	<u>\$25,492.65</u>	<u>\$11.39</u>	<u>\$1,732.44</u>	<u>\$63,458.94</u>

EXPENSES STATEMENT

Stated Clerk Expenses:

Gratuity 2011-12 Clerk	\$1,000.00	
Abstract and Mailing	732.35	\$1,732.35

Executive Committee Expenses:

Classis Meeting-March 2011	3,214.51	
Candidates/Credentials Committee Expense	0.00	
Executive Committee Travel	713.37	
Office Supplies/Postage	0.00	3,927.88

Benevolences:		
Faith - Anderson	6,000.00	
Grace-Lancaster	4,074.00	
Covenant-San Diego	3,900.00	
LA Basin-Shafter	6,000.00	
Diaconal Aid-Chico Medical	3,622.00	
Diaconal Aid- Jonathan Merica	1,600.00	25,196.00
Inter-Church Relations:		
Travel-Delegate to OPC-SoCal (Spring)	0.00	
Travel-Delegate to OPC-SoCal (Fall)	0.00	0.00
Home Missions:		
Covenant Reformed-Chico	12,865.00	
LA Basin-Shafter	22,134.17	
Committee Expense	333.90	35,333.07
Heidelberg Camp:		
Camp Expenses	9,577.48	
Camp Fees Received	(6,832.00)	2,745.48
Publications:	<u>0.00</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>\$68,934.78</u>
INCOME FOR YEAR		<u>(\$5,475.84)</u>
CASH ON HAND 12-31-10		\$182,946.26
CASH ON HAND 12-31-11		<u>\$177,470.42</u>

INCOME STATEMENT BY FUND

FUND:	General	Missions Bldg Fund	Missions	Benevolen	Publicat	Heid. Camp	Total
INCOME:							
Giving	\$6,369.50	\$576.00	\$28,720.00	\$25,483.25	\$0.00	\$1,728.00	\$62,876.75
Allocated Interest	<u>30.97</u>	<u>463.11</u>	<u>62.89</u>	<u>9.40</u>	<u>11.39</u>	<u>4.44</u>	<u>582.19</u>
Total Income	\$6,400.47	\$1,039.11	\$28,782.89	\$25,492.65	\$11.39	\$1,732.44	\$63,458.94
EXPENSE:							
Stated Clerk	1,732.35						1,732.35
Exec. Committee	3,927.88						3,927.88
Inter Church	0.00						0.00
Benevolences				25,196.00			25,196.00
Home Missions			35,333.07				35,333.07
Homes Missions Bldg							0.00
Publications							0.00
Heidelberg Camp-Net						<u>2,745.48</u>	<u>2,745.48</u>
Total Expense	5,660.23	0.00	35,333.07	25,196.00	0.00	2,745.48	68,934.78
Income (Loss) Yr.	<u>\$740.24</u>	<u>\$1,039.11</u>	<u>(\$6,550.18)</u>	<u>\$296.65</u>	<u>\$11.39</u>	<u>(\$1,013.04)</u>	<u>(\$5,475.84)</u>
Balance 12-31-10	\$9,731.67	\$145,526.66	\$19,762.62	\$2,953.44	\$3,577.87	\$1,394.00	\$182,946.26
Balance 12-31-11	\$10,471.91	\$146,565.77	\$13,212.44	\$3,250.09	\$3,589.26	\$380.96	\$177,470.42

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Fellersen

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

PARCOCHIAL REPORTS

A. Rev. Neale Riffert

Esteemed Brethren,

"O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!"
— *Psalms 118:1*

My labor with the Christ the King Reformed Church continued through 2011. The church now meets for both worship on Sunday morning, and Bible Study on Thursday evenings at the Hampton Inn in Sherman, TX. We are indeed grateful for the oversight of the Grace Reformed Church, Mitchell, SD, and the South Central Classis' Home Mission Committee who have taken us under their wing. Last year after being granted permission by the Western Classis to labor outside the bounds of Classis, I attended the South Central Classis meeting in Greeley, CO.

The Grace Reformed Church of Mitchell extended a call to me to serve as Associate Pastor, which I accepted and is now my present status, as I continue to labor outside the bounds of the Western Classis.

When we first began worship services in June of 2010, I began preaching from Genesis (chapter 10) and finished the series in Genesis in May of 2011. The summer was spent in the Psalms in a series called *"A Summer of Psalms,"* which I plan to continue this coming summer, with a series titled, fittingly, *"A Second Summer of Psalms."* Since last summer I have been in the Gospel of Matthew, and plan to remain there until summer of this year. Our Bible Study finished the book of Romans in December of 2011, which we first entered into in the fall of 2009. We are presently in the book of Jonah and have gotten him into the belly of the great fish, awaiting his deliverance by the grace and mercies of his God, and ours.

We continue with the Men's Breakfast Fellowship on Wednesday mornings at a local restaurant and will finish our study in the Heidelberg Catechism by the summer.

The congregation is very faithful in their attendance of the service and activities of the church, and this is indeed a blessing. At the Men's Fellowship Breakfast, the men of the church can be counted on to be there, and they are. So too with our Bible Study, the whole membership is there. Of course there are those times when someone may be prevented from attending, but in general everyone attends. That I find quite unique, and very delightful.

In August the SCC Home Missions Committee visited us, and we had wonderful fellowship with them, and the privilege of having them conduct the worship service on a Sunday morning with the administration of the Lord's Supper. Also in August I had the opportunity of examining one of my granddaughters, Xaris Emmett, in the Heidelberg Catechism, and the doctrines of the faith, before the Session of the Faith OPC, Garland, Texas, in which she was received into communicant membership. I am grateful for the Session's granting of the privilege. I continue catechetical instruction for one of my grandsons, Jack, who is in his second year instruction.

Our congregation held its first Mission Fest in September with Maynard Koerner as the guest minister. While I was unable to participate in our first Mission Fest, it gave me an opportunity to accept an invitation to be the Mission Fest guest in the Grace Reformed Church, Mitchell, SD. Mary Elizabeth and I had a great time of fellowship with the saints there.

As most of you know, Mary Elizabeth and I, had a bit of scare on a Saturday in October, when Neale Jr. had another issue with a bleeding ulcer, and had to be rushed to the emergency room. We were so thankful to our Lord, that in His providence the doctor on duty and in charge that morning was a gastroenterologist and was able to correct a complete misdiagnosis by another doctor on duty. We try to watch Jr. carefully but this came as a complete surprise.

Our family is very grateful to the RCUS in the support they give us through Ministerial Relief, without which we'd become wards of the state. We praise God for the saints, and for the love shown to us, and humbly ask that the Western Classis petition the Synod for our continued support.

Mary Elizabeth and I are both doing well, despite a few wounds of aging, and look forward to serving in Christ's service as He is pleased to allow.

"O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!"
— *Psalms 118:1*

Respectfully submitted in Christ,
Rev. Neale Riffert

Classis Action: The report was referred to Standing Benevolence.

B. Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Esteemed Father and Brethren,

The Word of God says *Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*²⁶ *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*²⁷ *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish* (Ephesians 5:25-27). Christ died for the Church, and He continues His work to present her to Himself as of His glorious bride. I thank our Lord for the small role He has given me to co-labor with Him for these glorious ends. To be able to minister His powerful, soul-saving Word is an inestimable privilege.

Ministry of the Word: This year the Word was ministered much as it always has been at Grace Reformed Church. The Word was preached each Lord's Day. In the early part of the year I finished preaching through the book of Hebrews. This was followed by sundry sermons, including a sermon dealing with abortion, which I've begun to do each "Sanctify of Life Sunday." I then preached a series of sermons entitled "For Sinners Only." In May I began a series through the book of Ephesians, which is soon to be completed. I teach the adult Sunday school as well. During the year I taught through 2 Peter, a series on "The Communion of Saints" that segued into a series on "Biblical Peacemaking." I also taught a short series on music in the church. Sunday school classes were conducted for all ages using material from Great Commissions. Confirmation classes were conducted on Wednesday nights. A Vacation Bible School was conducted in the summer. In the later part of the year, I began a "Theology for Men" discussion group. I also write a monthly article for our church newsletter. In it I feature articles on sundry topics, and began a series on the Ten Commandments. While this sounds like a lot, it really is not compared to our forefathers. I do find myself wondering if we attain biblical standards of teaching with a primarily one day a week focus.

Sacraments: The sacraments were administered faithfully. The Lord's Supper was served four times and the Sacrament of Baptism was administered to two covenant youths. We have the congregation fill out cards indicating that they took the Lord's Supper. Based on the cards the average count is below 80. We think that the actual count is much higher, since our communicant membership is 131. We confirmed four covenant youth in June.

Oversight: During the year, we exercised oversight through the regular preaching, teaching and Sunday interaction. Both the Consistory and Spiritual Council met regularly to conduct the business of the church. Visits were conducted through the pastor's regular visitation of the elderly and on a case by case basis. Over lunch I regularly meet with members of the congregation, sometimes specifically for counseling. In the latter part of the year we began to implement a system for knowing the sheep better. We got the idea from Tim Witmer's book *The Shepherd Leader*. As a way of knowing the flock better, there needs to be more frequent contact between the elders and the sheep. So the families have been assigned to an elder who then calls them, via telephone, three to four times a year to start with. It is hoped that they will build greater rapport and trust that will lead to a more effective ministry.

Two families were dismissed to other churches. One family was erased. And two members were suspended from the Lord's Supper. Near the end of the year, we have had a number of hard cases surface that are still underway. On these cases I have received counsel from a few of the brethren of Classis and Synod.

Worship: Worship is a hard thing to gauge. Outwardly the elements are there. But are we truly worshipping in the Spirit from the heart, or just going through the motions. It varies, a congregation could come with a dull heart but by the end of the service be excited and challenged and recommitted for the Lord. I've exhorted the congregation that a good worship service is not judged by how well the music was played, the hymn selections, or the quality of the sermon, but whether the congregation actually shows up to seriously worship the Lord. Along with this I've given several exhortations against consumerism in our worship. We have good attendance, and the people seem desirous to hear the Word. We sing mostly out of the Trinity Hymnal, but we introduce new songs occasionally. We also use the piano more.

Fellowship: The congregation exhibits a high degree of friendliness and a welcoming spirit. How much hospitality is being extended to strangers, I cannot say. I do think that we need to grow in our depth of fellowship and discipleship. I think that this is happening in some ways. There has been some talk of getting a small group going, however, this has not gained momentum. Our ladies get together for a monthly "Women of Grace" meeting. And there are other occasions for get-togethers as well.

Evangelism: Most evangelism is done through conversations by the members with their friends and neighbors. How much of this is being done is hard to tell. A street-fair booth was set up several times during the spring and early summer months in which we gave out brochures and booklets. In the later part of the year, I tried to promote Christmas Day and also the preceding Sunday (the day of our Christmas program) as invitation days—days that we go out of our way to invite friends and family to attend.

Care for the Poor and Needy: We temporarily stopped the practice of special offerings because determining whom to give to had become largely ad hoc. After generating a list of causes (RCUS and otherwise) we resumed the practice and have

published this list in our Newsletter. We gave to some local organizations as well as to other needs. As mentioned earlier I try to regularly visit our widows and widowers.

We saw the departure of three beloved saints: Vivian Stuebbe, Leta Wielenga, and George Parker. I also preached the gospel at the funeral of Mr. Don Bickford, whose family are members of our congregation.

My family is doing well. Michelle and I are eager to raise our children in the Lord, and the Lord has given us much grace and wisdom, though there are many challenges. We are not always sure how to navigate some of them, and are cognizant of our daily failures. But the Lord intercedes for us in the merit of His obedience. Our oldest, Samantha, is in high school. Angela is thirteen and in junior high. Lydia and Corissa are in third and second grades respectively. Michelle teaches fifth grade four days a week. We are very much modern parents driving our kids to this event or that practice. Like most parents we have to monitor Facebook and text messages. We are thankful to the congregation for its generosity in providing for us a pastoral contract that supplies our needs.

Thank you brethren for your prayers for Grace Reformed Church and for my ministry among this precious flock of God's people. May God continue to bless Grace Reformed Church and all the churches of the Western Classis.

In His Service,
Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Classis Action: Take note.

C. Rev. Paul Henderson

Dear Elders and Ministers of the Western Classis RCUS, in the Lord Jesus Christ,

After reading through last year's report on the temporal and spiritual conditions of Ebenezer, and of my pastoral labors, I remain ever confident in, as well as truly thankful for, God's unfailing mercies and His daily sustaining grace as I go about waging 'spiritual warfare' in this good fight of faith!

Wherefore, in regards to the temporal condition of Ebenezer, it continues to be very solid as the saints faithfully and cheerfully give back to the Lord His due. The Deacons continue to administer and distribute the collections of the church, seeing that they are well spent. As a body of Christ, the congregation, through its officers, have helped or contributed much in the way of finances and care to a few of our other churches. I praise God for Ebenezer's willingness to minister grace to others in need.

The Elders continue to serve with all humility and are ever hoping to improve upon their tasks as under-shepherds among the flock. We have been working with some discipline cases which will come to a conclusion in the near future, and a couple of them do not look too promising from our perspective (The Lord truly knows). Our 'elder' visitations were sort of "put on hold" as we desired to see the brethren of Rehoboth Chapel become a self-governing body. Thus we have tried to concentrate a bit more on the spiritual condition of Rehoboth, and we pray that the great Head of the Church will bless our labors of love. Please note that the pastor, as well as the elders and deacons have visited many of the members, although not in a systematic manner.

In saying this though, we as Spiritual Council do believe that the body in general is spiritually healthy, and still seeking to remain faithful unto the faith of our fathers. The need for continual growth and sanctification is always a concern with us, and we must continue to place our hope and confidence upon the unshakeable foundation of Jesus Christ proclaimed, believed, loved and thus lived. The means of grace, as set forth in our Confessions and commanded in God's Word is still the stay and ground upon which God will build His kingdom, increasing our faith and our numbers!

In regards to the labors of Rev. Michael Voytek, and Elder Clarence Goehring, and the "Steering Committee," we can only extend thanks, praise, and honor to the Lord of Lords for His loving kindness and care; for with the arrival of Rev. Voytek, the work in Rehoboth has been given renewed focus, and a much needed push for growth. Many thanks to the dear brothers and sisters for all their labors unto the Lord and His folk! We also rejoice greatly over the Ordination of two new elders and one new deacon!

As to account for my spiritual labors in the pastorate, I provide the following brief description:

The sermons and Bible studies are prepared weekly; The Epistle of I Peter has taken up most of this year's worship services along with a variety of Psalms and other appropriate passages, and 'seasonal' sermons; In Sunday S. we have been going through the book of Daniel, and have had a time for sermon discussion and other various subjects throughout the year. The Catechism lessons are studied and taught. The Shafter Rest Home Service has been faithfully carried out among the "least of Christ's brethren." The Spiritual Council and Consistory meetings continue to provide me with much labor as I seek to be both a faithful leader, as well as a humble servant among these chosen officers.

I have had the privilege of filling the pulpit in Rehoboth Chapel on numerous occasions, and was able to bring the charge to the congregation upon the installation of Pastor Voytek. I also was honored to lead the worship service at Pastor Henry's installation service, where I duly noted that we now include in the service, not only the 'right hand of fellowship', but also the 'holy hug' of fellowship!

The Lord provided once again the strength and even the desire to lead the Heidelberg West Youth Camp. I really appreciate all the help that many of the pastors and the Western Classis members give! Also, I am currently serving on the Diaconal Committee of the Classis, as well as on the Special Committee of Synod to deal with a Christian view of Human Sexuality (great paper, by the way!). I am also currently serving on the ever-busy Publications Committee of Synod.

In between all of these duties, I also enjoy being the husband of a wonderful God-fearing wife, and the father of four wonderful, God-honoring children. The Lord surely has been very, very good to this ole Okie from McFarland! Indeed, the labors of the ministry are varied, tiring, and very fulfilling as I witness the Lord's continual goodness and mercy in the hearts and lives of God's covenant people.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Paul Henderson

Classis Action: Take note. Rev. Frank Walker led the body in prayer.

D. Rev. Hank Bowen

Beloved Brothers,

Philippians 4:6-7 says, *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

The year of 2011 has been a testimony to the reality that we daily depend on God and His grace to sustain us. Humanly speaking, I am weak, and sick, and poor. But God is clear in His Word that He calls the weak and the sick and the poor so that our glory will be in the power of God. While I may understand these words intellectually, living in the comfort of them is more of a challenge. I arrived at Faith Reformed Church the month of July, 2003 full of expectations that the Lord was going to build up His church in Anderson and restore her ministry as a witness to the power of the grace of God. But as I come to my ninth year here, rather than the church growing it is slowly slipping year by year as the faithful members age and are called home to be with the Lord.

Our average attendance on Sunday mornings has fallen from 30 to about 25. The general income of the church reflects a steadfast commitment by this small flock of God, but it is a numbers game and our overall income continues to go down each year. The giving along with the denominational aid is no longer able to cover all of our basic operating expenses and members of the consistory find themselves purchasing all of the small things.

Our communicant membership numbers currently stand at 22 with over half of those in their golden years. Our dear brother and deacon Floyd Peery was called home this past year. His loss is deeply felt. He served as a deacon for several decades and in many ways it was taken for granted that he would always be there to do the little and necessary things behind the scenes. He is truly missed, but he has attained the goal of our calling in Jesus Christ and now sits at Jesus' feet worshipping his Lord and Savior.

The Synod this past year defeated a motion that "Faith be encouraged to redouble their efforts by prayerfully discussing, planning and implementing ideas for the purpose of reaching their area with the gospel." It was not defeated because the Synod does not think evangelism is necessary. We all understand the importance of taking the gospel into our communities and as such what followed was a recommendation that we submit a report to the permanent Diaconal Committee of our discussions regarding evangelism and implemented ideas. The consistory has worked on this report.

Faith Reformed has been receiving aid for over ten years. What is the answer to our moving toward becoming a self-supporting congregation eludes us. Again, we all must continually implore our gracious God to sustain Faith Reformed Church in our every need.

As a church there is a desire to see the lost brought to faith in Christ. The normal morning and evening services of the church continue. Members continue to invite friends to church when opportunity presents itself but without any measurable fruit from these efforts. Many things have been tried over the past nine years. The Evangelism Explosion course was taught to a third of the congregation twice and while it produced a greater confidence in those members to evangelize the lost, the opportunities seem to have been few and far between for most. At this time, however, there is no formal time in the church

to go out and do evangelism. The church website is still our best source of attracting visitors.

A member of the Synodical Diaconal Committee visited us recently and asked about our evangelism efforts. There was some confusion in my mind at the time as to the nature of the meeting going in, but I enjoyed the engaging discussion. In the rough draft of his report he noted several things where he concluded that my morale for the ministry in Anderson had gone "south." Generally speaking this is not the case. I still have passion to preach the gospel and thrive on sermon preparation. I enjoy those times of engaging people in witness for Christ. But it is true that my own weakness of the flesh finds me in a place where after years of effort I now doubt that evangelism in the Anderson community is going to lead to the church significantly growing. I am out of ideas of what to do when it comes to trying to bring people into the church. Largely because I believe that is done by preaching the Word, but our current church environment in the midst of this post-modern society seems hooked on entertainment as the way a church grows. The number one question we are asked when we invite someone to church is, "what kind of music do you have?"

That does not mean that we have given up trying, only that, while we are not to grow weary in well-doing, the exhortation is needed to labor on because there is a definite level of weariness in the process of evangelism. Nevertheless, Elder Derrick Merkel has been actively engaged in some outreach, organizing Theo Thursdays - an evening Bible study at a local coffee shop that involves our handful of college aged members engaging others on theological subjects. This has led to several of them visiting the church off and on. Derrick also took advantage of a summer opportunity to do some street evangelism in downtown Redding. In my own activities as a sports official I find myself in situations on a regular basis where I am traveling with a fellow official and it has provided regular opportunities to share the gospel.

I preached 48 times this past year and Elder Merkel the other Sundays. The evening service continues to be enjoyed by those who attend our Classics Reading Hour. This past year we completed the books "Desiring God" by Dr. Piper, and "The Sovereignty of God" by A.W. Pink. We are now into "The Prodigal God" by Tim Keller.

The ordination of Derrick Merkel as an elder last year marked the first new addition to the consistory in over a decade. He is doing an excellent job teaching our morning adult Sunday School on the Heidelberg Catechism. He has begun studies for the ministry through Heidelberg Theological Seminary through distance learning and I am currently teaching him the Introduction to Apologetics course which I am scheduled to teach in Sioux Falls, South Dakota following our Classis meeting.

I did attempt to seek out someone to write a one-page history of the Anderson congregation, but no one felt they could do an adequate job.

The year personally has been a very mixed bag. My daughter, Bethany, was engaged to Mark Opp, the daughter of Rev. Harvey Opp. The two met during Heidelberg Church camps while they were quite young. Their interest for each other grew and the courting process began after they visited during the Synod meeting held in Hamburg, Minnesota. They plan to be married here in Anderson the first week of August. What a blessing to see two of our covenant youth come together through the ministry of our churches. On a sad note, my son, Marcus, has rebelled against the faith and the family for the most part. He has been removed as a covenant child in the church.

My responsibilities as the clerk of the Classis always make the first quarter of the year interesting with all that is involved in getting ready for Classis and then wrapping the heavy load up with pulling the Minutes and Abstract together before Synod. On the Synodical level things were much easier this year moving from the Publications Committee over to the Synod Home Missions Committee. That has really entailed no work up to this point, and the only work will be when we meet in Minneapolis in April. As I look to the upcoming year, it will definitely mean some major changes for Patty and me. We will be empty nesters for the first time in 21 years sometime before the end of the year. But in the meantime, with wedding plans already in full gear, things are moving at a frenzied but joyful pace. While there are many things that could be a cause for anxiety, I rejoice that I can go to the God of all grace to sustain and strengthen me in my every endeavor and need.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Hank Bowen

Classis Action: Take note.

E. Rev. Dennis Roe

To the Honorable Members of the Western Classis:

I thank God for giving me the privilege to serve Christ and His church. I am in the 29th year of my pastoral ministry, and my 17th year at Covenant RCUS at Grass Valley. I offer the following report regarding my service to Christ:

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD: This past year I finished a series of expositions through the book of Acts, and then began a new series from the Gospel of Matthew on the “Teachings of Jesus Christ.” I preached a number of messages for special occasions during the year. I preached at four funeral services and had the privilege to preach for the “Mission-fest” services at Ebenezer Reformed Church at Shafter, California in November.

Our Sunday morning worship attendance slipped some during the year with averages of fifty to sixty. We have been blessed with a few visitors this past year and hopefully some will remain with us. I continue to pray for the Lord to sanctify and add to His church those He is calling to faith in Jesus.

I finished a study on Bibliology (the origin and basis for the Bible) in our adult Sunday Bible class. We began using new video materials as well. So far we have completed studies by John R. Stott, R.C. Sproul, and Tim Keller. The average attendance at our Sunday morning Bible classes is about fifteen to twenty. In our young people’s Bible classes, we have had several realignments of teachers and students to accommodate families moving away and children growing older.

Last spring our catechism class, with two students enrolled, recited questions one through forty three of the Heidelberg Catechism before the elders and then the congregation. I began a new class in September with two students enrolled. We began studying the second section, questions 44-85, of the catechism, along with the history of famous hymns and additional readings. Because of one family’s planned move and the other family’s personal problems, the class has been canceled for the time being. This the first time in 29 years of pastoral ministry that I have not had a weekly catechism class to instruct. I believe this is regrettable.

We held several special services throughout the year. The highlight was hosting the Western Classis in the spring. We enjoyed having Rev. Victor Atallah, Rev. Sardar Din and our newest elder, Rev. Joseph Vacchiano as guest speakers. We especially thank God for bringing Pastor Joseph, and his dear wife Sue, to be with us. His gifts of preaching and teaching, as well as his wisdom brought to the Consistory and Spiritual Council, are truly a blessing to me personally as well as to our church family.

We continue to hold Sunday afternoon services at a local nursing home on a monthly basis.

This past year I provided many private and family counseling sessions, hospital visitation, and calling upon members and visitors in their homes. Because of my improved health I was able to return to a more regular visitation schedule for each family and member.

II. THE MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS: It was my privilege to conduct the service for the Lord's Supper twelve times and we were blessed with the household baptism of four children from one family.

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS: Our membership changes in 2011 were few. We lost a long time visitor and two former members were promoted to the Church Triumphant. We will miss them dearly.

Our Spiritual Council and Consistory continue to assist Pastor Merica's efforts in church planting in the Stockton area. We thank God that a family of three was added to the congregation at Calvary Reformed Chapel. We thank God for Pastor Jonathan's and his wife Marsha's faithful labors at Calvary Reformed Chapel.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES: I did not serve on any committee of the Western Classis or of our Synod in 2011.

I continue to labor as General Secretary for Westminster Biblical Missions. In this capacity I work with all the fields: Central/Eastern Europe, Mexico, and two fields in Pakistan. I made no international trips in 2011. I traveled once to Philadelphia for a board meeting and missed only one Sunday service because of that trip. We are able to carry on much of our business now by the use of tele-conferencing. I continue to maintain the missions' web site, post the missionary newsletters online, and work with Rev. Merica in promoting WBM's ministry in Pakistan. By God's grace, I will continue to do this.

I served as Dean of Students for City Seminary at Sacramento. In this position I help the students develop and map out a program for their course of studies and provide personal counseling to them when needed.

I also continue to serve voluntarily as the chaplain for the 3rd Squadron of the 4th Cavalry Association, the unit in which I served while an infantry soldier in Vietnam. This involves counseling on an as needed basis as well as organizing and preaching at a memorial service for the deceased veterans.

V. CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT: It would be an understatement to say that this has been a difficult year for our congregation in many ways. It is difficult to lose our brothers and sisters in Christ to the Church Victorious. But it is also difficult to lose the living when difficult providential circumstances cause people to move away and leave our congregation. Although our membership statistics don't completely reflect this, we are on the verge of a number of families moving away because of the lack of gainful employment. We have had families lose their jobs, their houses, and their businesses. In the last few years we have lost approximately half of our families. Were it not for the kind and generous charity of our late Elder Frank Krivohlavek, who included the church

in his will by a gift of a tithe, we would be under water financially. It is not that our people are not committed to giving; it's just that they don't have much to give. While things have been looking a little better in some areas of the country, we continue in our area to be hard hit as it is an area heavily dependent on tourism, real estate, and construction for income. Please pray for us.

I am happy to report that our congregation is blessed with great love and sweet fellowship among the saints. We thank the Lord that not one family has left due to ill will or unresolved difficulties.

VI. PERSONAL: I thank God that it has been a better year for me physically, and yes, even spiritually. My Hepatitis C viral infection has come down dramatically in the past six months, which reverses a trend of the previous five years. I have lost over 50 lbs. and I am reading more Scripture. Take your pick as to the contributing factor to my improved health. I give the glory to the LORD!

Although my previous treatment for the Hepatitis C did not bring about a cure, there are some new promising developments regarding new effective treatment. Please pray for me to have the wisdom to whether to attempt another regimen of chemo-therapy. I especially thank our Heavenly Father for giving me the strength to continue my pastoral labors. He has taught me never to take this for granted.

Thank you my dear brothers and co-laborers in the Gospel of Christ for the privilege to serve Christ and His people with you. May Christ Jesus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, whose precious blood was shed to seal the everlasting covenant of grace continue to bless you, strengthen you, and keep you in His service. May the Lord keep us all faithful in preaching Jesus Christ and His cross. Sola Christus!

Your Servant in Christ,
Rev. Dennis Roe

Classis Action: Take note.

F. Rev. Jim West

Dear Fathers and Brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ,

By the grace of God this past September marked my 25th year as Pastor of Covenant Reformed Church. While there is nothing magical about 25 years, in my own mind it marks a milestone of God's grace and mercy to me, as that kind of longevity in one pulpit today is not commonplace. Yet, I think that my labors have not originated mostly from myself, but by "the grace of God that was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

This past year saw me preaching through the *Acts of the Apostles* and my rather ambitious plan to preach on each book of the Bible. Thus far, I have preached from Genesis through the Psalms in the Old Testament and Matthew through Galatians in the New Testament. This project has been both formidable and difficult, primarily because of the sheer volume of the material. One has to be very selective as to what to preach on, considering the numerous choices. Upon preaching on one book I always leave it wanting to return to chapter one, verse one, and then negotiating the whole book. If I were Matthew Henry and had another 50 years of ministerial life in my body, maybe I could do it. Plus, I am reminded that Matthew Henry succeeded only thru the *Book of Acts*.

I also have served the Lord's Supper perhaps as many as 11 times this past year, baptized children, and assisted the elders in some of their visitation. I also assist the elders in reviewing the Sunday School and its curriculum for all the classes.

My other teaching assignments were conducting a mid-week Bible study, instructing the catechumens each Thursday night, and lecturing the students at City Seminary, where I recently taught Pastoral Care and Counseling. This particular course was offered only the second time at City Seminary; I barely remembered teaching it years ago. Interestingly, after being assigned to teach the class the second time I began sinking into a quagmire of despair. What could be more challenging and difficult than the task of caring for the people of God? Sinner that I am, I can barely take care of myself, let alone others. At a faculty meeting one of the professors made this comment as we were discussing seminary classes; he said that the real difficult classes are ones dealing with academics. I remember thinking to myself as I considered Pastor Care and Counseling, the not too enlightened thought, "O yeah?!" So, after renovating my old course and presenting it to the students, Pastoral Care and Counseling turned out to be one of the most satisfying courses I have taught at City Seminary. My other responsibility is conducting a new membership class each Sunday morning. To accomplish this goal and to speed the process forward, I determined to transform my New Membership Outline into a book format. In this way I could assign chapters of reading to each aspiring member and then simply summarize each chapter during our formal instruction time. This should save time and stop me from blazing new rabbit trails. To accomplish this, I proposed to you men of the Western Classis that I be given the opportunity to compose a New Membership Class booklet. Last year Classis decided that was a good idea, except that it reversed itself and voted to construct a Committee to do the work (which I did not learn about until months after Classis). I am on the Committee, too, but I did not know about the Committee (this was due to my medical exit from Classis last year.) But at that time I was already half-way through my own version of the manual. The future of this project may be decided at this year's Classis meeting. In the meantime I finished the Manual. I recognize that the Manual may be DOA, especially since the proposed manual may have distributed without its undergoing the theological and grammatical surgery that it needs. To complete the Manual, I had to drop out of City Seminary for one semester, having to relinquish my favorite subject (Anthropology) to Pastor Eric Bristley. But it was good discipline in writing and certainly will help prospective members of Covenant Reformed Church, regardless whether the Committee decides to perfect it or adopt another approach.

Church discipline cases this past year have been few and far between, but even having one church discipline case is a most grievous matter. When such matters do arise, the elders of Covenant Reformed Church are not tentative and uncertain. Such matters are swiftly dealt with.

This past year I was privileged to preach at three weddings. These were preceded by pre-marital counseling sessions. You all know that weddings are filled with pressure; you sometimes feel that the roof will cave in if you make one mistake. At the first wedding (when Pastor Frank Walker's daughter was married), it was my privilege to preach a sermon called: ROYAL WEDDING (from Psalm 45). What a precious Psalm! I was even able to get away with taking a shot at the Archbishop Canterbury and his views of a royal wedding!

My responsibilities in the Western Classis continue to be the Presidency, which is now my 13th year. Last year I questioned whether I should run again, as my thinking was that it was time to give someone else a chance. As it turned out, I changed my mind and ran and was elected. It turned out to be the wrong decision, as my health turned south for about five months—a deep cold that wouldn't die and regularly mutated into the flu. At the Classis meeting I came down with something more serious and had to retire from the field and head off to Kaiser for medication. If that wasn't bad enough, I came down with the flu at Synod as well. Thus I am beginning to wonder about my durability, already knowing that the mental wear and tear is taking its toll. I notice also that I am becoming less and less tolerate of the “garbage” of the ministry, that is, dealing with problems that tend to be very petty. I notice that sometimes just before opening the front door of the church building on Sunday morning, when people are already there preparing for the praise-time, I halt, take a deep breath, pray for strength and wisdom, as if I am about to enter the Eastern Front during World War Two. I think that what is happening is that as I get older, I am becoming more and more aware of my incredible weakness and need to trust in the grace of God to sustain me. In fact, a common prayer of mine begins, “Oh Lord, you know how incredibly weak I am!” A precious promise is John 15:5: “I am the vine ye are the branches, he that abides in Me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing.”

Last year we halted the Reformation Bible Conference after 26 years. There were at least two reasons: first, with the busy work of managing City Seminary, the Reformation Bible Conference was becoming too heavy a task for us. Many of our people were carrying loads heavier than an Egyptian porter. Second, the busyness of the elders in the work of the kingdom, including visiting the members of the church was becoming harder and harder to fulfill. Each year the elders are asked at the Classis meeting whether visitation has been faithfully performed. All too often our answer was “no” (although this year the answer will be in the affirmative). As of the writing of this report, stated visitation has not been completed this year either (even though the lion's share of it has been accomplished). So, for the first time in a while our elder delegate will answer in the affirmative when asked if the people have been visited. My own view of this is that the elders could visit many, many families immediately after the morning or evening services. What does it matter where the visitation occurs, as long as it occurs? But so far my would-be Solomonic wisdom has not been absorbed by our elders! This tells me that my Solomonic wisdom may not be very Solomonic.

Even though the Annual Reformation Bible Conference was terminated, we did carry on with our yearly Reformation Day dinner and service. Plus, for the first time in my remembrance, we conducted a Good Friday service. This was so well received that the elders have voted to hold another Good Friday Service this year, too. And on this score, many of the young people have stepped forward to provide special music for the Good Friday service. Music is one of the common topics of discussion within our church (as it may be in yours). In our church the discussion revolves around the use of guitars and drums in public worship. Many of our young adults who have musical gifts in these areas and who desire to praise God with all kinds of instruments, have respectfully asked the elders to consider their ideas. There are three strands of thought here: the first is that the current practice of staying with the piano and sometimes the violin is what we should stick with. To go beyond that is a “slippery slope” that could get us into trouble and perhaps introduce entertainment into the worship. The second strand is that we have an obligation under Christ to employ the musical gifts of God's people and that we would be

discouraging God's people if we limited worship to the piano. The danger is that we would drive people out of our church. The third approach is that while all instruments are lawful, all things are not expedient. We have an obligation to study the peace of the church. So, we shall see where this takes us.

Other church activities include a Vacation Bible School, the ongoing work of our Evangelism Committee, which invites people in our neighborhood to attend the worship services.

Three other events must also be reported (although two of them took place this year). I refer to the accident of Mr. Jay Nelken, which nearly took his life. Although the Lord mercifully spared his life, his accident reveals that in this world we walk on banana peels; one little misstep and the Lord can quickly remove us to glory. But by God's grace he is recovering from his head wounds and has high hopes of full restoration. The second event was the death of little Ian Dominic Schlegel, who lived about 13 minutes after his birth. This was the first time I ever laid eyes on a dead child; my final words to his mother before I left for home at 1:30 in the morning were, "Death doesn't stand a chance against Christ's resurrection." Again, we learn another lesson about the brevity of life and our final destiny in God's kingdom. Let us always be redeeming the time because "what is your life but a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). The third event just occurred; I refer to the death of my son-in-law's father whose memorial service occurred in a local Roman Catholic Church. After the Requiem Mass deacon my son-in-law came forward to do the eulogy. He spoke for about ten minutes, thanking God for his earthly father and for his Heavenly Father. He was able to "preach" the Reformed Gospel in a Roman Catholic Church! His message underscored the Gospel of message of faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone (thus graciously contradicting the works' "Gospel" of the Irish priest). While hearing his message of sovereign grace, I was almost transformed into an *Amen Charlie!*

For this year, the Church just voted to ordain two new officers at Covenant Reformed Church. This is not a commonplace happening at our church, as the elders and deacons here serve for life. Hopefully in the near future, you will be introduced to Mr. Kurt Snow (our newest elder).

I also continue to teach the catechumens from the Heidelberg Catechism each Thursday night. We just finished studying the doctrine of justification by faith alone. I was intrigued that the Heidelberg Catechism uses the word "only" some six times to describe faith. This emphasis was captured by some of my catechumens in a recent test when they answered that WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH PLUS NOTHING. *Nothing!* I don't remember using that word, but that's how they correctly answered. To illustrate HOW YOU BECOME A CHRISTIAN, I decided to make use of the cinema, showing the 1950's film on the Life of Martin Luther.

Besides visiting and counseling God's people, our church also offered a New Parent's Class, for young parents who are searching for ways to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This was very well attended and very well taught by two of our elders at the same time as the adult Sunday School class. Hopefully, this class will be offered from time to time to future parents, too, to parents who are grappling with the issue of how to raise their children for Christ.

The most personally important happening last year was my announcement in October to step down as pastor here in September 2013. After I made this decision known to the Consistory, they asked that I go public with it. I am not sure why they wanted me

to do this; it may have been that they wanted to cut off the rumor-mill, since some others already knew about this decision, or it might have been that they wanted me to make this decision as official as possible, in order to set me out to pasture before I changed my mind. There were a few tears and some pleas for me to hang on for another two years, but I stood resolute. The suspense of returning to the hungry years when one lives from paycheck to paycheck and almost has to beg for pennies to survive, is something I think about all the time. But God's name is Jehovah-Jireh.

Let me conclude by praising the God of all grace for the working of His Spirit in the lives of God's people in Sacramento. The Sacramento church is a people known for her orthodoxy in doctrine and life, not the least being its generosity to other congregations within the Classis. When I look at the church I see its "labor of love, work of faith, and patience of hope." It was a pleasure to serve the Lord in a church where the light of the gospel is set as it were like a city on a hill.

In Calvary love,
Rev. Jim West

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Jim Gochnauer led the body in prayer.

G. Rev. Michael Voytek

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

As you are well aware, we are attempting to establish a self-governing and self-supporting RCUS church in the L.A. Basin. What you may not have heard is that last month the members who attend Rehoboth Chapel in La Habra met to determine an appropriate name for this new church. As many as eight suggested names were presented and after a very fruitful discussion it was decided to select the name Rehoboth Reformed Church. One of the reasons for choosing "Rehoboth" is found in Genesis chapter 26, verse 22, *"And Isaac moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."* Notice the name was used to designate a well of water and that there were two reasons for the selection of that name. The first had to do with the Lord's provision of a place in which to dwell. The second had to do with the anticipation that the Lord, through that well, would cause His chosen ones to be fruitful. As I thought about the meeting and the selection of that name, another passage came to mind that I would like to share with you this afternoon. It is found in the twelfth chapter of Isaiah and reads as follows: *"And in that day you will say: 'O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And in that day you will say: 'Praise the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!'"* As we consider the situation that exists in the Los Angeles basin (i.e. a semi-arid desert both physically and spiritually) the need for a well of water is acute. Thus it is appropriate to use the name Rehoboth Reformed Church to point to the

Lord as the provider of the "*wells of salvation*" and the anticipation of His blessing that will be "*known in all the earth*".

As we look forward to the challenges of a new year, it is helpful to pause and reflect upon what has transpired with the mission work this past year. The Chapel faced a major challenge with the departure of Rev. Jay Fluck to serve a reformed church in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. A number of questions arose at the time concerning the future of the work here in La Habra. It was very encouraging to witness the tremendous work of God on our behalf ("*Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things*"). For example, He graciously provided both pulpit supply during the interim and a new pastor within a very short period of time. Furthermore, not only the officers but the rest of the congregation rallied together and shouldered various aspects of the ministry that could not be left undone. One of the things that our family noticed when we arrived in July was the love and acceptance that we received from the congregation. This love has not diminished but has become more evident since our arrival. It has been very encouraging to observe the hunger to learn as well as the teachable spirit exhibited by both members and visitors alike. One of my prayers is that this love and hunger will continue and increase as we together serve our Lord and Savior.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most encouraging signs of growth in the body here in La Habra is the involvement of so many of the members in the work of the ministry. For example, through the guidance and encouragement of elder Clarence Goehring, a steering committee was established and the men of that committee have taken up many of the responsibilities that needed to be done. As a matter of fact, it is from that committee that the Lord has raised up three men who have been elected, ordained and installed in the office of elder (i.e. Robert Mettler and Matthew Davis) and deacon (Frank Krall). Not only those members on the steering committee but many other members of the Chapel have faithfully worked in a multitude of ways and are to be commended for their service of the Lord and His beloved people.

This is also true concerning the teaching and preaching ministry. Elder Carl Esparza is to be commended for filling in during the pastoral transition as well as in completing a study of the Canons of Dort in the Adult Sunday School. Concerning my own ministry, during the Sunday morning service I have preached a series from the book of Jonah and am currently preaching through the missionary prayer letter of the Apostle Paul to the church in Philippi. Furthermore, in order to ensure that we all were thinking along the same lines, I have focused our attention in the adult Sunday school on answering a series of questions such as "Why do you go to church?", "Why do we worship the way we do?", "What is the mission of the church?", etc. We also started a Sunday afternoon and a Sunday evening study that initially addressed questions such as "What is the Church?", "What is Biblical Church membership?", etc. and is currently focusing on the book of Genesis. Another very important part of the teaching ministry of the church that should be mentioned is the confirmation preparation of the youth of the congregation. It is my joy to report that our current confirmation class stands at six covenant youth after the graduation of one student, who confirmed his faith in October of last year.

One of the areas of major concern for us as a mission work is the responsibility to reach our community with the Gospel. One way that we have attempted to fulfill this responsibility is by establishing outreach home Bible studies. Last year we conducted two such studies in the homes of two member families (in the cities of Whittier and Riverside). We are hoping that the Lord will provide opportunities to reach other

communities as well. I am also pleased to report that we have three to four visitors attending a New Members class held on Thursday evenings. Furthermore, the head of one family with six children that has been visiting for a little over a year has expressed the desire for he and his family to become members. Please pray that the Lord will continue to bring new visitors and establish them as members of Christ's church here in La Habra. While asking for prayer it would be good to add a request for wisdom for the Consistory and Spiritual Council as we work towards the particularization of the Chapel into a self-governing church.

I want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the members and officers of Ebenezer Reformed Church in Shafter who have faithfully ministered to the flock here at Rehoboth. They have gone the extra mile and continue to do so. May the Lord richly bless them. The same could be said for the members and officers of the churches of the Western Classis. As you well know, this mission work has been struggling to establish itself as a church for a number of years. If it were not for the patience and faithful support and encouragement of the other churches and individual members of the RCUS, the work would have probably failed.

On a personal note, my family and I are adjusting to life back in Southern California (Becky and all our children were born in San Diego County). My wife is home schooling the two youngest children (David (17) and Timothy (15)). We are currently renting a home in the city of Rowland Heights. We miss the love and fellowship of the saints at Providence Reformed Church in Lodi, California where we served for almost 10 years and yet are excited that the Lord has provided an excellent replacement in Doug Schlegel.

I will close with another passage from the prophet Isaiah that summarizes my hope and prayer for the work here in La Habra; *“For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you”* (Isaiah 62:1-5).

Your fellow bondservant in Christ,
Rev. Michael Voytek

Classis Action: Take note.

H. Rev. Vern Pollema

Esteemed Brethren:

Having now entered my second year of retirement, I have come to realize that retirement is more like down-shifting or slowing down rather than screeching to a stop. The slow-down continued when, at the last Synod, I requested that I not be re-nominated to the office of the President of the Executive Committee, after having served in that capacity for many years.

In the past year, I completed my appointment as Stated Supply at Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA, and on July 17, participated in the Installation of the Rev. Scott Henry as their new pastor. In addition, I have, upon occasion, supplied the pulpits of Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, CA, Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, CA, Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA and Northland Reformed Church, Kansas City, MO.

I continue to serve on the board of Heidelberg Theological Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD, as the representative of the Western Classis and am also listed as an adjunct professor of the seminary. A Seminary sponsored conference on the Providence of God was held at the Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, SD this past October at which I was one of the lecturers. The conference concluded with my preaching on that theme at their Missionfest Sunday.

I currently serve on two special committees of the Western Classis: the Special Committee on the History of the Western Classis; the Special Committee to Write an Instruction Manual for Church Membership.

At the request of the Synodical Foreign Missions Committee, this past January I agreed to travel to the Philippines along with pastors Gil Baloy and Matt Powell in order to give further training and instruction to the newly organized denomination, the United Covenant Reformed Church of the Philippines (UCRCP), now consisting of four congregations. The first week Pastor Baloy and I flew to the island of Mindanao, arriving first at Cagayan de Oro, to speak with two men who are laboring there as elders of, and under the oversight of, the church at Davao City. The next day we flew across the island to Davao City for a teaching seminar at the facilities of a church friendly to the Reformed faith and the Davao congregation. There were approximately 75 people in attendance. On Sunday I preached at the morning and afternoon services conducted by Pastor Vic Bernales in a seminary facility used by the congregation. They are now meeting in their own rented facility which they are in the process of remodeling to accommodate their needs.

Late Sunday evening we flew back to Manila on the island of Luzon. On Monday we traveled north to Baguio City, a distance of some two hundred miles, taking most of the day. The traffic in the Philippines is something else to say the least!

At Baguio City I participated in a Leadership Conference attended by approximately 25 men, lecturing on aspects of the Doctrine of the Church and the Constitution of the UCRCP, a near replica of the RCUS Constitution. On Wednesday, following the conference, I served as an advisor to the minister and elder delegates as they conducted the business of their 3rd Annual Session of Classis. On Thursday we traveled back to the Manila area. On the second Sunday I preached at the newly organized congregation at Laguna with Pastor-elect, Nap Narag conducting, and participated in the Ordination and/or Installation of the elders. It was also the second time that I enjoyed a sumptuous meal of roast pig (the whole thing)! The last Monday was spent visiting the Christian Day School in Cavite operated by Pastor Edwin Puzon and wife, a facility which also serves as the meeting place for the congregation he pastors. After eating out together and saying our farewells, Matt and I were dropped off at a hotel near the airport for the long flight home on Tuesday.

To wrap up this portion of my report, and give my impression and assessment of the UCRCP, they are in the midst of a field that is white for harvest (91 million people in a combined land mass about the size of Arizona), but the laborers are so few (only three

ordained ministers of the Word and a slightly larger number of ruling elders). Who will come forth and how will they be trained? That is the vital question and urgent concern facing the UCRCP as well as the RCUS. *“Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into His harvest”* (Luke 10:2).

With regard to my health, I continue to do well. The diabetes remains under control through oral medication. My PSA number remains nearly unmeasurable indicating no residual prostate cancer.

Due to the increase in the cost of living, medications and lower than expected returns from retirement funds, I’ve requested a modest increase in the monthly amount of ministerial aid for me and my wife, from \$850.00 to \$1000.00 per month.

The Lord has been very gracious in His provision for me and my wife, for which we are most grateful “and for what is future we have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love, since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move” (HC. #28).

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Vern Pollema

Classis Action: Take note.

I. Rev. Gene Sawtelle

Esteemed Brothers:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May God give you wisdom as you carry out the very important work of the church during this year's Classis sessions.

I regret that I will be unable to attend this year, again, because of physical problems. This past year has been a very difficult one for my dear wife and me. After many medical procedures, several surgeries to correct liver and pancreas trouble, it was determined that nothing more could be done unless I had a thorough cardiac evaluation. That was done during September and October. After two angiograms I was referred to a leading cardiologist at Mercy General Hospital for a quadruple bypass operation. Four large arteries located at the back of my heart were 100% blocked. The lower part of my heart had sustained permanent damage from a heart attack that I'd had and didn't know about.

The surgery was a success, by the grace of God, and I continue to recover. It has also been discovered that I have two growths in my pancreas, and it will be necessary to have cat scans every six months to measure their size. The migraines and back problems continue.

Thank you all for praying for Sharon and me. I thank God for my dear wife who has provided care for me and suffered with me. Please continue to pray that God's grace will be sufficient for us both. I'm sure you will agree with me that we would all be in pretty sorry shape if we hadn't been blessed with godly, faithful loving wives. It is no small thing to be so blessed.

I wish to thank God's people of the RCUS for our continuing ministerial aid.

May our heavenly Father continue to help you, the ministers of the Word, to be given to the ministry of the Word and prayer, and to be faithful shepherds to God's covenant people in the congregations of the Western Classis.

It has been my privilege to preach in Willows and Yuba City four times during 2011.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," Isaiah 45:22-23.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Gene Sawtelle

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

J. Rev. Scott Henry

Esteemed Brothers and Fathers in the Lord Jesus Christ:

In Hebrews 10:24-25 we read the following words: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." As those redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the writer to the Hebrews exhorts us to be faithful in our corporate worship of the true and living God. We are called to stir one another up to love and good works, and this is done as we gather together on the Lord's Day to praise God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our submission to God's Word, corporate worship, diligent prayer, and fellowship are the gracious means used by the Lord, "according to the effective working by which every part does its share, which causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16). Therefore, if the church is going to grow spiritually and be a healthy flock of Christ then it's imperative that we "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together" on the Lord's Day "as is the manner of some."

The year 2011 was one of transition for the Henry household as we moved from Menno, SD to Lancaster, CA. After serving the Zion Reformed Congregation at Menno, SD, for seven years, I accepted the call to begin laboring as pastor of Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA, on May 23. Throughout this time I have endeavored to faithfully preach and teach the Word of God with patience and careful instruction while seeking the spiritual health, growth, and well-being of the people of God in general, and the Grace Reformed Congregation in particular. However, I would, brothers, zealously covet your diligent prayers on my behalf as I see my lack of wisdom and understanding as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I often times think upon and pray the words of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:7, 9: "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in...therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" My desire is that the Lord would grant me a wise and understanding heart in order to preach, teach, counsel, and conduct my life for God's glory and the good of God's people. This is in keeping with what the Apostle Paul prayed for the people of God in Ephesians 1:16-19: "...making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints..."

My labors among the Grace Reformed Congregation since May 2011 are as follows:

- Preached 30 times and taught Sunday school (Canons of Dort and also lessons on Christian endurance).
- Taught a biweekly Sunday evening Bible study on Worship.
- On Sunday, August 4, I began a radio ministry on KTLW 88.9 that broadcasts my sermons at 2:30 PM on Sunday afternoons. The radio station reaches a potential five million listeners in LA County and six other states.
- Taught confirmation class every Wednesday evening since September.
- Counseled members of the congregation and also non-members on Tuesday and Thursday evenings since June.
- Taught a once a month Ladies' Bible Study, and also a family Bible Study in Tehachapi at the home of Elder Michael Frias.
- Administered the Lord's Supper, with the help of the elders, on two occasions during worship service.
- Conducted monthly Consistory and Spiritual Council meetings.
- Distributed Gospel door hangers in the Lancaster area with other members of GRC on three occasions.
- Wrote four articles for the Reformed Herald and 60 devotionals for the Grace members, and I am currently compiling six years of devotionals into book form.
- Helped in relocating to our present building in September and also with the interior construction work.
- My wife and I have served meals in our home on numerous occasions to the Grace congregation.
- With the help of the elders, visited each member of the congregation in their home.

The Grace Spiritual Council was very busy this past year. Sadly we lost one member by Judicial Erasure, and four members have come under the discipline of the church because of their forsaking worship on the Lord's Day. Disciplining sinning members is always difficult, but at the same time it's a necessary activity for the Glory of God, and the health and well-being of Christ's Church. The Belgic Confession, Article 28, reads as follows: "The marks by which the true Church is known are these: 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. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself."

The members of Grace Reformed Church are progressively growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is evident by their walk of humility, zeal for the truth, faithful love and forgiveness shown towards one another, and their steadfast love and encouragement towards me and my family. The Grace congregation clearly demonstrates genuine Christian love by their faithful obedience to the Word of God, diligent giving to support the Gospel ministry and their heartfelt love in ministering to one another as each member encounters particular needs in this troubled life. The members of Grace, Lancaster, have also humbly and joyously received the preaching and teaching of God's Word. They have spoken to me of conviction, repentance, joy, confidence, assurance of salvation, trust, humility and a renewed desire to live wholly unto Jesus, and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Him. The congregation also desires to reach out to the people in the Antelope Valley with the Gospel of Christ. Some

are engaged in city park evangelism, passing out tracts, and distributing door hangers that explain the Gospel of Christ. We are also in the process of developing a plan that will enable us to reach out to the needy in our community with clothing, and food items. This will be our foot in the door to then minister to the spiritual needs of many who know not Christ, and to encourage those who do trust Christ as their sovereign Savior. Many in the congregation have been active in corresponding with a brother who is incarcerated at Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA. This man is serving a life sentence but he's also one who has embraced the Good News of salvation in Jesus. He is truly striving to live as salt and light in a terribly dark place on this earth. One of our deacons, Mr. Bobby Denton, has also developed a Heidelberg Catechism correspondence course for prison inmates using Norm Jones' Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism. A number of inmates have already begun the correspondence program and we are praying that the Lord transforms the hearts of many through the truth of His Word as they participate in this program. All of these works truly glorify our Lord Jesus Christ and build up His spiritual body, the church. Therefore, "let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10).

Our congregation has also rejoiced in the recent ordination and installation of Elder Michael Frias, who is a long time, faithful member of Grace Reformed Church. Praise God for raising up faithful, qualified men to serve as elders and deacons in His church.

Growth in our congregation has been slow, but it is progressing, praise God. At present we have one new member, another young man who desires to become a member, and a new couple from the OPC who recently relocated to the Antelope Valley and have been faithfully worshipping with us over the past few months. We also have a family from Texas who anticipates moving back to Lancaster in the near future, and joining Grace Reformed Church. Our prayer is that God will continue to build Grace Reformed Church one family at a time in order that we might continue as a congregation to "Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day" (Psalm 96:2).

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Rev. Scott Henry

Classis Action: Take note. Rev. Gruggett offered prayer for these two men.

K. Rev. Sam Powell

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God (1 Thess. 1:2-4).

2012 marks my fifth year as pastor of First Reformed Church. The warmth and care of the congregation for me and my family continue to astound me. We are truly blessed to be a part of the family of God in Yuba City, and I am certainly blessed to continue to serve the church.

The Word of God was proclaimed from this pulpit each Sunday in 2011. I am once again very thankful for the willingness of Pastor Emeritus Gene Sawtelle to preach from

time to time. He filled the pulpit at First Reformed Church four times this past year. In December I completed the series through John's gospel that I had begun in February of 2010. This study has been very rewarding for me.

In the adult Sunday School class, I finished the study of the Belgic Confession, spent several weeks on Eschatology, completed a series of lessons on Biblical Sexual Morality, and started lessons on God's Law. In the summer there was an opportunity to discuss music in worship. Morgan Opie continues through the book of Genesis with the younger kids and Elder Greg Stewart continues through the Heidelberg Catechism with the older kids.

In the spring I completed the study through the book of Judges in the Wednesday Night Bible Study. After the Summer Break, I continued through the book of Ruth and started the book of 1 Samuel. The study is well attended and is an enjoyable time.

In the summer I held a series of classes on Church Leadership. We used as our primary source the book *Biblical Church Government*, by Rev. Frank Walker. The attendance was good, the discussions were edifying and we were all encouraged and strengthened. One man, Mr. Dan Yeager, showed the gifts and the willingness to serve the church in the office of elder. He was elected and installed in February of 2012.

The year started out on a tremendous high note when God graciously granted me the privilege of administering the sacrament of Baptism to my first grandson, Wesley Opie, the covenant child of Michael and Morgan Opie. Within a month, we received Darlene Starkey and her covenant child Essie into membership. Darlene was received by profession of faith and Essie received the sacrament of Baptism. In September, we were blessed with another child in the family of God – Hannah Milam, the covenant child of Michael and Sharon Milam. She was baptized on September 25th.

In the education of the young people, we are blessed to have the largest class in the history of First Reformed Church. We currently have nine young people preparing for confirmation. The class is divided in two and we are progressing through the catechism, with lessons on Bible History and theology. This is not a work that the pastor can do alone. I still need the continued help and support of the parents in drilling the catechism, reviewing the facts of Bible history, and helping to schedule the children in regular Bible reading and prayer.

In June Elder Greg Stewart and I took several carloads of kids and counselors to Heidelberg Camp. Since I foolishly attempted to follow the directions on the GPS rather than read the email that I was sent, we spent several hours wandering around Sequoia National Park. Mr. Stewart, however, read his instructions and arrived with no problems. When we finally arrived I taught a junior Bible study, supervised the dishwashing in the kitchen, told a ridiculous story, and introduced the campers to the dulcimer. It was a wonderful blessing to spend that time with our young people. We again look forward to a wonderful Camp in 2012.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was served 12 times this past year. There were some difficult discipline cases, but God greatly blessed the Spiritual Council with unity of mind.

In December we set up a booth at the annual Christmas Stroll in downtown Yuba City. I prepared several pamphlets explaining what it means to be reformed and we passed out about 500 of them. We got our name out there, met quite a few folks, and had a great time of fellowship. It is our intention to be more visible in the community so we look forward to doing it next Christmas.

For the Synod of the RCUS, I continue to serve as the Chairman of the Synodical Publications and Promotions Committee and as the Chairman of the Committee to Promote a Biblical Sexual Morality. The latter committee has prepared a paper which will be presented to the 266th annual Synod in Rapid City, SD. I also continue to serve on the Missions Committee of Western Classis and serve as the Chair of the Classical Publications Committee, although the work on the latter committee is generally limited to reporting each year that the committee received no business and therefore conducted no business. Most of the publications of the denomination are done by the Synod, not the Classis.

We completed the addition to the kitchen and the fellowship hall. The ADA compliant bathrooms are finished. Thanks to the generosity of our members, we paid off the mortgage and are now debt free. We certainly thank God for his provision to us! It is the intention of the consistory to take care of some maintenance issues on the property in 2012.

My dear wife, Susan, and I were faced with tremendous trials which could easily have driven us apart and caused us to despair. But God is tremendously gracious. God brought us even closer together through the power of His Word and Spirit, confirming and sealing His promises to us continually. I thank God for Susan and her faithfulness and love.

I cannot express how much it means to us to belong to First Reformed Church. The congregation has been a tremendous blessing and I thank God for it. Truly God has been good to us and I am truly blessed to be a part of it.

I closed my report last year with God's tremendous promise from Psalm 69: *For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.* God indeed fulfills every word of His promises. Although we wait for the final fulfillment in the world to come, we clearly see the beginning of this promise taking place before our eyes.

³³ *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* ³⁴ *For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?* ³⁵ *Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* ³⁶ *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen. - Rom. 11:33-36.*

With great affection,
Rev. Sam Powell

Classis Action: Take note.

L. Rev. Paul Treick

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The Apostle Paul, the experienced preacher and inspired writer, teaches us, "... as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness — God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ." (I Thess. 2:4-6) Those words, "entrusted with the Gospel," ought to weigh heavily on the minds of every pastor and elder in the church. We are stewards,

who preach, and defend the most precious treasure in all the world — the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Preaching the Gospel brings no greater joy and at the same time bears no greater sense of responsibility for us. It was also Paul who realized his own weakness and insufficiency for that calling and task, and taught us to remember that "our sufficiency is from God" (II Cor. 3:5).

I am thankful to God for upholding me by His grace and allowing me, now retired from much of the pastoral work, to remain as active as I can. I was called upon to preach 27 times during 2011. These services were held in several of our RCUS congregations and area Orthodox Presbyterian churches. It has been a real blessing to get better acquainted with the saints in other congregations — something I was unable to do very often before retirement. It was an especially joyful thing to be able to return to Peace Reformed Church in Napoleon, OH, to preach at a special service last September. After twenty-seven years, many of the young people who I once taught were now the teachers, elders, and deacons there. Thank God for His covenant faithfulness and the faithfulness of His people!

My wife, Karen, also retired last May after teaching school for many years. After all the farewell parties ceased, we are now finding out what it is to live on a limited income in today's economy. We have not tried to sell our house yet, as it would be at quite a financial loss right now. Last summer, we joined my brothers in settling the estate and selling my father's belongings in Wisconsin. The log house, built 150 years ago and home to five generations of our family, is being dismantled so the logs can be reused by someone to build another house.

I have done some writing and rewriting over the past year, but not as much as I had intended. I find the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. A lot of my work involved the Reformed Herald and helping out the new Synod clerk when needed.

Karen and I are very grateful for the ministerial aid we received from the Synod over the past year and I extend our thanks to you. It just about equals our medical costs each month. We are also thankful for the faithful pastor, elders and deacons at Trinity in Modesto for their oversight, as well as the fellowship of all the members. We are not able to be there every Sunday, but we certainly are convinced that the RCUS is the best church home we could have.

To the pastors and elders assembled here, rest assured that our prayers are with you that you may continue to be faithful stewards of the Word of God and good caretakers of His people. May the Lord bless you and enable you in your labors to preach Christ — all for the glory of our Lord.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Paul Treick

Classis Action: Take note. Bob Williams led the body in prayer.

M. Rev. Gary Mancilas

Esteemed Brethren,

And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints Psalms 89:5. Once again, your servant reports that God has been exceedingly faithful to His covenant people at Covenant Reformed Church (CRC) in Chico. The saints rejoice in the faithfulness of God that has sustained and preserved us

through the promises we have in Christ as a “*sure and steadfast anchor of the soul*” (*Hebrews 6:19*).

Covenant Reformed continues to be a Home Mission work and an organic church of the RCUS; and as such, your servant maintains that the congregation is fulfilling its denominational mandate, in that our primary purpose is to glorify God in worship and to nurture the organic and spiritual growth of the Body of Christ as it develops. It is my purpose to demonstrate in this parochial report that my labors were expended in the nurture of the organic and spiritual growth of the church; thereby, I offer the following account of my labors and the spiritual and temporal condition of the charge:

This February marks my tenth year serving this congregation. I have discharged my pastoral duties by providing instructions in the adult Sunday school class, in Bible studies, and in personal visitations and counseling sessions. In my forty-nine Lord’s Days sermons, the preaching of the Gospel focused mainly on the Book of Ecclesiastes. Moreover, through the preaching of the Word of God, I have encouraged the members to avail themselves of the dispensed *means of grace*.

Presently, the Consistory functions with its pastor, two elders and one deacon, who remain encouraged by the spiritual growth evidenced in our faithful members, who use their gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and welfare of other members. Our deacon is doing a commendable job handling the temporal affairs of the church, by assisting and supporting the Consistory and promoting the general welfare of the congregation. The poor and needy are cared for, and the charities of the church are properly dispensed. He labors among the people in making known to them the needs of the church, which fosters the principle of stewardship, thereby cultivating the spirit of liberal and cheerful giving.

The Spiritual Council continues to watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation and reports that even during the continuing trials of the church, the members have demonstrated a commitment to the Reformed Faith and rest assured on the promises of our Heavenly Father that, for the sake of Christ, He will work all things according to His own sovereign purposes. Serving the congregation, our elders perform family visitation, assist with instructional classes, supply the pulpit when the pastor is on vacation, teach the adult Sunday school class when required, and visit and pray over the sick. They continue in their faithful oversight of the preaching and teaching of God’s Word and the administration of the Sacraments. The Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the Word, disciplines the body of Christ and produces spiritual growth. Vital to the spiritual health of the congregation, the elders continue to support their pastor in exercising the Office of the Keys. Solemnly, it became necessary by church discipline to exclude two family members from the communion of the church.

The Men’s Bible Study and Ladies’ Bible Study are each taught by me and are held twice monthly. Mid-year, the Men’s Bible Study, which was focused on the evangelism-training, concluded and currently the teaching is on the *Duties of Christian Accountability* using the examples of Jonathan Edward’s 70 Resolutions and St. Augustine’s personal confessions.

The Ladies’ Bible Study, which was focused on the topic of Duties of Christian Submission, concluded and currently the teaching is on the topic of *Building Spiritual Confidence*.

As an outreach, we continue to provide a Reformed witness in Chico and the surrounding area. As previously reported over the years, the worship service sermons are

video recorded and prepared for production on Access Cable; and excerpts of the same are broadcast on a radio program. Our website has been a viable medium for attracting visitors. Our congregation is recently encouraged by a group of eight young adults who have been studying reformed theology and attended our worship the first Lord's Day in February 2012 after becoming aware of our congregation from our website. Attending were one married couple, two couples, and two single men, one of which is a student at CSU. Following worship, they expressed an enthusiasm for Reformed worship and showed interest in future attendance. Follow-up contacts discovered that there is a strong interest among the group to continue their worship at CRC and to enter into Bible studies regarding Covenant Theology and biblical church government.

In reference to the denomination, my labors on behalf of Classis include serving on the Permanent Publications Committee and on behalf of Synod include serving as chairman of the Develop e-Books Committee. In observance, the congregation has been edified by the Synodical call for an Annual Day of Prayer for home and foreign missions and by Synod's encouragement to have regular special prayer meetings for the same, including all the work of the RCUS churches. On the Lord's Day, a prayer is also included for a designated mission work. In preparation for the RCUS *Special Day of Prayer and Fasting*, I preached a sermon on *prayer and fasting*. With anticipation, the Consistory prepared for the annual visitation by representatives of the Classis Home Missions Committee in compliance with the "oversight" section of the RCUS Home Missions Manual. Rev. Sam Powell and Licentiate Elder Doug Schlegel met with the Consistory and the congregation in January, for which we were most encouraged.

In closing, the congregation has kept the strong vision and hope that the Lord would grant the resources to continue our work in Chico and add to our membership. Until the Lord adds the adequate resources to His church, it remains dependent upon the financial support of our denomination. Nevertheless, the congregation recognizes that the viability of the church falls on its members and its financial responsibility to sustain itself. Notwithstanding this great responsibility as a small congregation, the church continues to demonstrate its effectiveness by a Reformed presence in Chico. In appreciation, the Consistory requested that the Classis Home Missions Committee please convey to the denomination that we are most grateful to those in our denomination 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.

N. Rev. Jonathan Merica

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

In building the church of God in his day, 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.***" (*Nehemiah 2:18*) As in the time of the Protestant Reformation the distribution of Biblical literature was an effectual tool of spreading the gospel. We

encourage our members and visitors to especially study our confessions and the reformed literature we make available to them.

We cherish the loving oversight and prayers of Covenant Reformed Chapel at Grass Valley. We are also thankful for an older lady in her 70s of the Ebenezer RCUS, Shafter, CA congregation, who continually keeps us in her prayers. Others throughout the denomination pray for us as they have graciously expressed to me. We praise the Lord for all who join with us as co-laborers in the Gospel through the means of prayer.

Praise the Lord I was enabled to minister the Word of God fifty Lord's Days this past year at Calvary Reformed Chapel. Each Lord's Day the messages are prepared with study and prayer that God's people may grow in the faith and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In the adult Sunday School class I have taught through the book of Hosea, which has proved to be a fitting study for our spiritually dark times. Thank the Lord I was invited several times to speak at Grace OPC in Modesto this past year.

It is a blessing to be a co-laborer in foreign missions to advance the Gospel in Pakistan through Westminster Biblical Missions, Inc. On October 20 thru November 2, 2011, I traveled to Lahore, Pakistan as guest speaker at the Annual Presbyterian Convention. The Convention theme was from Hebrews 12:24-25 on the topic "The Blood of Jesus Speaketh Better Things." The first three evening meetings at Calvin's Academy #1 was blessed with an average of 2,000 precious souls per night. Praise the Lord for His protection upon God's people, and in blessing the Word of God to the Pakistani people. On October 23, 2011, Rev. Frank Walker filled the pulpit at Calvary Reformed Chapel at Stockton, and on October 30, 2011, Rev. Paul Trieck filled the pulpit at Calvary Reformed Chapel while I was away at the Convention. Calvary Reformed Chapel was blessed by their ministry of the Word of God.

In the first part of April 2011, I worked with Rev. Dennis Roe on an itinerary for Rev. Victor Atallah, to help promote missions for Middle-East Reformed Fellowship. We are very grateful for all the RCUS congregations who welcomed Rev. Victor Atallah to give a presentation of the Lord's work in the mid-East.

As chairman of the Interchurch Relations Committee for our Western Classis, it has been my duty throughout the year to insure Western Classis fraternal relationships with other Reformed/Presbyterian Churches are maintained. Each of our fraternal churches were notified of our 27th Western Classis Meeting on March 6-8, 2012.

This past year on April 2, 2011, I was privileged to officiate the memorial service of a dear friend and Christian brother, Marcus Whitemire-Mason. Marcus was a true warrior of the faith and is now with the Lord. For many years he wrestled with a terminal illness called Huntington's disease. Marcus' parents and sister were received into communicant membership on July 17, 2011 at Calvary Reformed Chapel.

Our average attendance at Calvary Reformed Chapel for 2012 was approximately twenty. The largest attendance at Calvary Reformed Chapel this past year was 38 on October 2, 2012. Praise the Lord, we may be receiving more visitors into membership this year, as the Lord provides. Presently, Calvary Reformed Chapel at Stockton has 18 baptized members with one covenant child in catechism class.

I performed the wedding of Garrett Fitzgerald to his wife, Danielle on October 15, 2011. They have attended Calvary Reformed Chapel as visitors, and are dear Christian friends.

Praise the Lord for the installation of Gregory Goehring to serve as an active Elder at Calvary Reformed Chapel. Rev. Dennis Roe gave the charge to Elder Goehring on

February 20, 2011 at Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton. We are very thankful for the labors of our Treasurer, Greg Goehring, who has given all due diligence to keep accurate records of our finances for 2011. Elder Goehring is planning to be married on April 28, 2012. His fiancé' is Regina Seppi. Her family resides in Pixley, CA. The family has visited us several times. It was good to see that on December 7, 2011 we had 29 visitors and members attending the worship service at Calvary Reformed Chapel.

Calvary Reformed Chapel has submitted its guidelines for giving for 2011 to the Western Classis and the RCUS Synod. Presently, there are 14 communicate members and 18 baptized members at Calvary Reformed Chapel. We pray that God will bring a great harvest of new families to join with us this year.

Calvary Reformed Chapel is continuing its outreach efforts by not only having members inviting friends, but also we are able to reach out to others with our website, distribution of fliers, the yellow pages, Google Ad Words, and the internet yellow pages. Everyone at Calvary Reformed Chapel is encouraged to read and distribute the literature made available on the literature table.

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 the service of Christ,
Rev. Jonathan Merica

Classis Action: Take note.

O. Rev. Frank Walker

Esteemed Brothers,

It has been my pleasure to serve Covenant Reformed Church for another year. This past September marked my eleventh year in Sacramento and my twenty-fifth year in the gospel ministry. I praise the Lord for sustaining me in this work, for I would never have been able to do it without his aid. Yet, I am even more profoundly thankful that he continues to teach me how to serve him better.

As you know, my work is divided between the church and seminary. In theory, it's supposed to be about 25 percent in the church and 75 percent in the seminary. But in actuality, it has worked out this past year to be more like 50-50. I don't mind that because I've enjoyed preaching this year more than I ever have. There have even been a few times when I've thought about going back into full-time pulpit ministry. But there are two reasons why I have not moved in that direction. First, while my enjoyment of preaching has grown, so also has my enjoyment of teaching, though perhaps not quite as much. And second, and more importantly, after teaching in the seminary for ten and a half years, the burden I feel for training men who otherwise might not have access to a decent theological education has also grown. I have become convinced that teaching in a seminary is not just a matter of a man wanting to teach or even having the right academic credentials; he must also have a sincere, heartfelt yearning to train the next generation of gospel heralds.

When Professor Voytek accepted the call to southern California last summer, his departure left a vacuum in the Old Testament department of the seminary and required

the present faculty to make adjustments. I ended up teaching three classes that I had not planned for. Again, although it takes time to prepare for extra classes, even ones that I've already taught, a lot of good has come from them. The extra class that I taught last fall was very enjoyable, and the one this semester motivated me to put some papers that I had written on covenant theology about fifteen years ago into a book of 160 pages, which is now available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other book sites.

Recently, Professor Andrews announced that he had accepted a position teaching full-time at Reformed Theological Seminary in Mississippi, which he will commence the first of June. His departure will also require some adjustment for the faculty, but it's such a tremendous opportunity for him to do the work that burdens his heart that I can't blame him for leaving. Thankfully, Pastor Roe has expressed interest in teaching again. He'll be able to fill some of the voids.

I recently reviewed the courses that I have taught since coming to Sacramento and was surprised to find that I had taught a total of sixty-nine courses (that's 45 percent of all courses we've taught over the years), mostly on church history and New Testament.

Because all but one or two of these have been offered more than once, the total number of distinct courses is actually twenty, not counting numerous independent study courses that students have requested from time to time. Comparing this with what other seminaries expect, it's a pretty heavy teaching load. I hope that I have become at least a "jack of all trades," whether or not I have mastered any.

This past year I also tried an experiment to see if what we're doing at City Seminary has any value to people outside Sacramento. I made the audio recordings of my lectures available for free on iTunes.

Although it took a while for word to get around, by the end of the year I had seventy people listening every week. There was a high concentration of listeners in the area around New York City and a few scattered throughout the United States and Canada, but to my surprise there were also listeners in Brazil, the British Isles, France, Belgium, Turkey, India, Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. While Google Analytics provides demographic information about listeners, it does not give out contact information, so there's no direct way to urge listeners to sign-up for classes. In any case, I believe my experiment succeeded and I have removed the audio recordings from iTunes as of the end of last year. I just need to find a way to convert listener interest to actual students.

In addition to the work in the seminary, I also taught the adult Sunday school class most of the year. When I had to miss for one reason or another, Greg Uttinger filled in for me. I am extremely grateful for his willingness to do so. I preached thirty-eight sermons from the pulpit of Covenant Reformed Church, two in Stockton, one in Lodi and one in Modesto. In addition to this, I gave five one-hour lectures at a conference hosted by the Harbor of Grace Reformed Church in South San Francisco, and two one-hour lectures in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. I continue to serve with the elders on the Spiritual Council, moderate the Consistory meetings, and engage in counseling students and members of our congregation as needed.

Denominationally, I serve as chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee of the Western Classis, and as a member of the Executive and Web Site Committees of Synod.

The last thing I would note, which some of you may be interested in, is that the text of my commentary on Revelation is more or less complete and weighs in at a slender 457

pages. Recently, though, I decided to reorganize the material and to include my own translation of Revelation from the Majority Text, instead of the King James Version. Translating Revelation is relatively easy, but the reorganization of my notes has proven to be a monstrous task, which, because of my teaching schedule, will take considerable time. On average, I've only been able to do between five and ten verses per week. My desire is to complete the reorganization by the end of this year.

As for the present ministry of Covenant Reformed Church, I'll let Pastor West comment on that, since he is far more involved in it than I am. Although I would note that, in spite of the many trials with which our congregation was visited last year, the Lord's grace and mercy was evident in the trusting way that our members received them. Praise God for his faithfulness! Having begun a good work in us, we can be confident that he will also bring it to completion.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Frank Walker

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Wayne Lingenfelter led the body in prayer.

P. Rev. Thomas Mayville

Beloved Fathers and Brothers of the Western Classis,

With 2011 behind us, the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4 come to mind: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

In 2011 I preached twice per Sunday except for three weeks vacation (May and October) and on Reformation Sunday evening. Pastor Merica and I exchanged pulpits once. I also preached for our Good Friday service and Thanksgiving service. Many hours were spent in 2011 counseling several members of the congregation from time to time. We celebrated the Lord's Supper four times, with visitors almost every time. I taught a membership class for one, baptized two infants, visited six of our members in the hospital, and visited several members in their homes. We began Catechism class in 2011 with five catechumens on Thursdays, but only three have attended since June. However, a boy from the neighborhood has recently been attending catechism class as well, and seems to really enjoy coming to church here.

With Hughson OPC and Zion URC, I participated in our youth group's laser tag outing. Recently I met three times with our Deacon nominees for evaluation and training. We will ordain a new Deacon Feb. 19. I officiated at the wedding of one member, and accompanied the Elders on two family visits. My work on the Synodical Foreign Missions Committee involves about 30 minutes per week. I regrettably declined the opportunity to teach a three week class at Knox Theological College in May, but hope to do so before too long. For Classis, I worked at Heidelberg Camp, and attended the rafting trip. I am the Chairman of the Diaconal Committee, and participated in the examination of Rev. Scott Henry with the Candidates and Credentials Committee before his coming to Lancaster. At this meeting I will participate in the ordination examination of Licentiate Schlegel on anthropology. I also serve on the Interchurch relations Committee.

The Deacons and Elders are to be commended for their work this past year. We rejoice in the addition of Elder Mark Crook to our Spiritual Council. The Elders have been faithful in shepherding the flock by visiting the families of TRC, and in church

discipline. They have faithfully overseen the worship services. They have been working with me since August in terms of improving my preaching. Your prayers in this matter are greatly appreciated.

The Deacons have been diligent in caring for the poor, the widows and the elderly in 2011. The Consistory has overseen the improving of our sound system, upgrading our building for the Fire Inspector, resurfacing the parking lot, cleaning out the parking lot drain, replacing the water heater, and cleaning the carpet. We purchased a laptop to facilitate burning sermon CDs. This year, the Consistory will be looking into adding to our selections from the Trinity Hymnal by compiling a song book similar to ones used by other Western Classis churches. We would love to have a list of songs you all are using in your churches for consideration by our Spiritual Council. We are also open to the idea of accompaniment by acoustic guitar for the Hymn Sings. We have been blessed by one of our teenagers, and another of our ladies helping with piano accompaniment from time to time. The Consistory has also begun to look at other Western Classis Websites with the hope of having our own website soon. We would love to hear from you all as to what features and links have worked best for your websites.

I give thanks to our Triune God for those faithful members of Trinity Reformed Modesto, who do so much to make our times together as a congregation such a blessing. We have a wonderful team that provides us with music, flowers, refreshments, great food at our picnics, lunches and dinners. We are very blessed with capable and hard working Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, deacons, and elders. We give thanks for those who arrange for two of our elderly widows to attend worship twice every Sunday, and for those who labor to keep the building and grounds clean and well maintained. Carolyn and I give thanks for all our moving buddies who helped us relocate from Modesto to Riverbank in May (The Lord blessed us with a home of our own).

The people of God here gave faithfully to support the work of TRC and the RCUS, and the Consistory began contributing \$80 per month to my IRA since November. The brothers and sisters at TRC are faithful in praying for me, and encouraging me in my work.

2011 was a difficult year for quite a few in our congregation. Several of our members were hospitalized; some more than once. Several saw family members hospitalized. We mourn the loss of one of our members to death; our dear sister Olga Olander. Some of our members have been seeking better employment. Some members have relocated. Several have had financial struggles. Several struggle with serious health conditions. I myself have not always made the transition from Pastor Treick's ministry smooth and seamless. Yet, in all our struggles we confess with Jeremiah: This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" (Lamen. 3:21-24)

The LORD's mercies were evident in 2011. He brought the loved ones of the congregation out of the hospital, gave better employment to some, and provided for all our needs financially, and physically. You may remember us praying for baby Hurlay Van Houten at Synod last year. She weighed 2 lbs, 10 oz. at her premature birth. I baptized her recently and she looks to be the size of most babies her age now! You may also have been praying for Elder John Heerema regarding his stroke. I am delighted to report that he has abandoned his walker, and sometimes does not need his cane. His

mental acuity has returned and he is as sharp as ever! Praise the Lord and thank you for your prayers in behalf of these dear ones. We witnessed the marriages of two of our members, and engagements of two more. Two covenant children were baptized and two more are on the way. Several graduated from High School and College. Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 136.1)

As happy as we are for our members who are finding spouses, sometimes those marriages result in members leaving our congregation. On the other hand, we do rejoice that, just recently, we had a member added by means of marriage! I mention this to ask you to pray with me. May the Lord be pleased to help our young people find spouses who will join them as members of TRC. May He be pleased to help them find employment within driving distance of TRC. As our young people move through their college years, may the Lord give us grace, love and wisdom to encourage and motivate them to remain members of TRC. For those He calls to relocate out of the area, may He give us grace, love and wisdom to encourage and motivate them to remain members of the RCUS. May He give us in 2012 a youth group leader and someone to organize times of fellowship and fun for our 18-30 year olds.

For 2012 the greatest burden of my heart has to do with a trend of a declining membership from 92 baptized members in 2004, to 80 in 2010. I know this grieves you as well. No doubt there are many factors which contribute to this sad statistic. With the help of our Covenant God, and the Consistory, we will seek in 2012 to retain as many members as possible, without sacrificing reformed doctrine or practices. Please join us in praying about this regularly in 2012. May the Lord bless all of the members as we seek to use every opportunity He gives us to invite folks to TRC. Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14.23) May He be pleased to add souls to TRC from outside our membership in 2012.

In conclusion, dear brothers, it has been my privilege, honor and joy to shepherd the flock at Trinity Reformed this past year. Thank you for ministering to me and Carolyn as fellow laborers in our Lord's vineyard. May Christ, by His word and Spirit, grant us all to walk with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in 2012.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen (1Cor. 16:23-24).

Sincerely,
Rev. Thomas Mayville

Classis Action: Take note.

Q. Rev. Lloyd Gross
Brothers In Christ,

This is just a bit of an update of my whereabouts (we still live here in Mesa, AZ) and what is going on in my life. I, of course, am no longer doing any preaching but am greatly blessed in being preached to with excellent Biblical sermons. Every day I look forward to the coming Lord's Day and worship services. That is also a reminder, dear brothers, that there are many others who likewise look forward to hearing you ministers bring God's Word to them each week. Yes, I know there are

also those who do not appear to be too eager to be in church but remember those who are eagerly hearing you expound God's Word and live to hear it proclaimed with boldness and clarity to the heart. As I sit in the pew I have heard on a number of occasions orthodox sermons which, however, were not directed to the heart. How important it is not to lose sight of that. In saying this I do not want to appear condescending to you as if you did not know that. But it is rather easy, I think, to at times lose sight of that.

My health continues to be a daily struggle. I look forward to the time when the Lord will receive me into His glorious presence trusting in His sheer grace to receive me. In the meantime I am profoundly grateful to God for my beloved wife of nearly 54 years and am still amazed that God saw fit to give her to me. She still works two days a week but at 77 years old she is beginning to eye the time she needs to quit. We are still able every Sunday morning and evening to worship the Lord together with all four of our children and their families. What an incredible blessing that is.

I want you to know that I greatly miss you brothers at Classis and Synod meetings but such is God's providence. I hold you all in most high regard and pray for you daily. May the Lord bless your Classis meeting and give you His wisdom to deal with the matters before you for the glory of the Lord and the blessing of the people of God. May He also bless you with a fervent spirit to reach out to our dying world and our own nation that is becoming increasingly pagan. May the preaching impact the pagan culture in which we live.

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

Classis Action: Take note.

R. Rev. Eric Bristley

Fathers and Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

This past year has been a time of God's great blessings in the life of our congregation as He has caused us to grow together in the grace and knowledge of Christ. It has been a great encouragement to me to witness increasing love among the members as each one uses their gifts for God's glory.

Sunday worship has been the core of our fellowship and growth in grace. I have continued to be enriched by God's grace as I lead the congregation in worship and prayer with the assistance of the elders. This past summer I finished an expository series on First John and in September began the exploration of the supremacy of Christ in Colossians. Special services were held on Good Friday, Reformation Day, and Christmas. A special hymn sing for the RCUS congregations of northern California was held at our church in January.

I have enjoyed teaching the class for young adults which completed a study of the privileges and responsibilities of church membership. In the fall, we began a new class on preparing for Christian marriage. Our evening fellowship has been a time of great blessings as God has knit our hearts together through prayer, singing, and meditation on His Word. In January I began a study of the Life of Christ from the Gospel of Luke, enhanced with Power point presentations. We also began, in the fall, to provide a time for fellowship and Bible study for the women of the congregation, Women of Grace, who began a study of Ephesians led by Mrs. Peggy Bowen.

It has been a great joy to labor with the elders and deacons in serving the church together in the Consistory. I thank the Lord for each of our elders and deacons for their faithful service and unity in the faith. We continue to thank God for the faithful giving of our members which enabled us to both exceed our budget and pay our dues to the Classis and Synod.

Early in the fall we began holding regular meetings of the Spiritual Council. The elders demonstrate a deep care for the spiritual needs of every member as we minister to them in times of need and trial. I had the joy of baptizing two covenant children this past year. I gave pre-marital counseling to a young couple (one is a daughter of the church) and had the privilege to join them in Christian marriage in May. But there have also been times of sorrow, sickness, and bereavement for our church family, and times to bring God's Word at gravesides. At these times we "weep with those who weep" and ministered to each other the Word of His promise and grace.

A great highlight of the year was the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Congregation held in September. We enjoyed three special services as former pastors Rev. Hank Bowen, Rev. Thomas Mayville, and Rev. Gene Sawtelle ministered the Word and reviewed the history of the church. A special meal and display were a part of this celebration. A number of events were held throughout the year to provide opportunities for fellowship and service, such as a Valentine's dinner, movie nights, and summer youth activities. I accompanied a number of our young people to Camp Heidelberg West where I addressed the campers at several sessions.

Missions and evangelism is an area that should receive greater emphasis in our practice. We are continuing in prayer for numerical growth as I set forth a vision for evangelistic outreach. We have had visitors and regular attenders as a result. The church website has been effective for this purpose. Our new sign and rotating window displays in our downtown location have raised the church's profile in the community. I continue my involvement with Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) and Westminster Biblical Missions during the past year. Our congregation hosted Rev. Victor Atallah of MERF who spoke in a special meeting in April.

A significant opportunity for outreach to the Northstate region has been brought to our attention. It has been suggested that we acquire the facilities of an existing Christian radio station if it comes up for sale. One of our members has experience working in broadcast and one of our elders is enthusiastic about the possibility. However, it seems that the cost would be prohibitive for just one congregation. But if the Classis was interested in getting behind this idea we would be interested in pursuing it.

I continue to teach as a faculty member of City Seminary in Sacramento, a ministry of Covenant Reformed Church. This past year I taught three courses—Applied Apologetics, Eschatology, and Evangelism. I also sought to minister to students pastorally.

I want to express my gratitude to God for our members who joyfully receive my ministry, pray for my labors, and encourage me in my service. It has been a joy to shepherd the flock of God among them. It is my vision that in the year ahead the church will deepen in faith, hope, and love not only as we grow together but as we seek to minister the riches of God's grace to the lost. My desire is to grow in faithfulness and fruitfulness in the building up of the Kingdom of Christ.

In the name of our gracious Triune God,
Rev. Eric Bristley

Classis Action: One matter regarding purchase of a radio station was referred to the Standing Missions Committee. Elder Herman Drost led the body in prayer.

S. Rev. Gil Baloy

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden” (Galatians 6:2-5).

As a pastor, I bear the brunt of three weighty tasks. To some extent, others in the church, especially my fellow elder and deacon, share in them. Praise God for these trustworthy men of God! What are those Herculean duties? First in the pastoral ministry is the heavy weight of the faithful preaching and teaching of God's holy Word. I preached in the morning worship service 48 times. To start the new year (2011), I developed a mini-series which I entitled: “The Treasure of God's People: A Purposed People (Acts 16), A Principled People (1 Corinthians 9), A Peculiar People (1 Pet. 2:1-10), A Praying People (James 5:10-18), and A Passionate People (Numbers 13:1-14,10, 21-24).” After that, I resumed the study of the “Sermon on the Mount” taking up “Don't Murder” (Matthew 5:21-26). I ended the year by completing “The Lord's Prayer” (Matthew 6:9-13). I included a few Lord's Supper sermons since we celebrate it each month. Also, thrown into the mix are messages dedicated to Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year and Easter.

Alfred White, Eric Lontoc, and Maricar Baloy faithfully teach God's Word in Sunday School. I can't thank the Lord enough for them. We are still honing the department by the addition of a few more dedicated teachers. Willing and capable brothers bring to the weekly fellowship lunch an edifying *Mealtime Meditation*, which is done on a rotation basis. One by Tom Cox was transformed into a Reformed Herald article to testify to a wider RCUS audience of the providence and grace of God in his life. We began in the middle of the year a Sunday evening Bible study (6:00-7:00 pm) conducted by myself two or three times a month. It meets in the Spring Valley County Library Community Room (it's free!). Our topics so far have been: the Book of Ruth, a study on the Covenant of Grace, Family Worship and selective chapters in R.B. Kuiper's Glorious Body of Christ. Last year, our Wednesday Bible study, with extended prayer, engaged the zealous “mid-weekers” in Apologetics and Evangelism, utilizing YouTube and videos. This meeting is held at another library in Bonita (also free!), which comes with its own high-tech projector and screen. Last, but not least, out of a sense of need to support the church, some of the ladies get together one day a week to read the Bible and pray. It is amazing how God through answered prayer chooses to bless our church in ways He has not before.

The second weighty responsibility in the pastoral ministry involves the proper administration of the sacraments. Instruction through the preaching gives a deeper insight into the meaning of the Lord's Table, as mentioned earlier. The Lord's Supper was celebrated eleven times. By the way, I know we can “fence the table” better than we do. I performed my first Baptism last year of baby Anna Smith. That gave me a good opportunity to talk about this sign and seal of the Covenant in the Christian Church.

When it is properly applied, Baptism more fully declares and seals to us the promise of the gospel (Heidelberg Catechism #66).

For adults, the membership course prepares them to more clearly and adequately know the foundation of their faith and to make a good profession of Christ in the church. An added bonus: they will be more ready to give an answer of the reason of their hope to a lost and dying world (1 Peter 3:15). I taught one membership class earlier in the year. I am presently instructing three classes held at different times and locations. I discovered a technique to keep my pupils' attention with the use of a *hand-drawn* power point presentation, which is "graced" with stick figure illustrations (which often get a chuckle or a smile). We have four new members, three by profession of faith and one by certificate of transfer, and are hopeful for more. We had no catechumens this past year. The third hefty task in the pastoral ministry is the Biblical exercise of the keys in godly discipline. I am sure glad I'm not alone in this. I wouldn't dare! Though I may conduct a counseling session for brothers without my fellow elder (though not apart from his knowledge), I would never discipline anyone on my own. Happily, the Lord mercifully lightened our judicial load in 2011, unlike in recent years. We performed one administrative erasure. We did encounter a flurry of counseling cases of our regular visitors and members which sometimes required a word of exhortation or admonition or two. I did premarital counseling with two couples. In one case I spent a good amount of time giving the gospel. Sadly, that did not have a happy ending in Christian marriage. Counseling the second couple was, comparatively speaking, a breath of fresh air! That one ended "happily ever after" with a beautiful wedding in a sister church which with we are familiar (Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church). How our youth need to focus on the tried and true doctrines taught by their godly parents and elders in order to lay a solid spiritual foundation for their life. Overall, the sagging stewardship of our people's time, treasure and talents is a matter of ongoing "speaking to," and prayer.

We conduct our own Spiritual Council and Consistory meetings on the first Tuesday after the first Sunday of the month. They are followed the next day by conference call meetings with Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church. Lord willing, this will be reduced in half in the near future when we become our own church under the Western Classis. I continue to keep busy with visits, calls, emails and texts to members and visitors who come our way. I am a member of the Classical Home Missions Committee and Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee. I went last year to our youth camp which is in a new and closer location to my driving relief. In the Synod, I am the chairman (and sole member) of the Philippine Sub-committee under the Foreign Ministries Committee. I went with Rev's. Vern Pollema and Matthew Powell to the Philippines January 2012 for two weeks to assist the United Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines (UCRCP) with teaching and counseling, and, of course, to enjoy hearty fellowship with the saints. The work seems to be turning the corner in terms of the leaders more and more taking ownership and their denomination coming into its own. Can the same be said of our home mission effort in San Diego with the future looking more rosy for our finally becoming a particular church? It would make it more complete if we are able to install another new elder and deacon, if not at the time of our organizing, hopefully not long after that.

My ministry is in its 13th year at Vista Convalescent Center with the appearance of new faces almost every Sunday and a growing interest in God's Word. "But the Word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). For your information, we have not abandoned our corporate once-a-month park preaching and tract distribution outreach, though we

have not seen in recent years the fruit of converts who regularly attend our church. In addition, I endeavor to go out each week with a small group of local evangelists, some of whom are Calvinists, into greater San Diego. Fasting and prayer are so important, especially in these dark and perilous times when the church is heavy laden with extraordinary needs. Two of my latest sermons have dealt with this very subject, drawing from our American past. For example, James Buchanan in a presidential proclamation on the eve of the Southern rebellion, called for a day of “humiliation, fasting and prayer throughout the Union” ... “to the God of our fathers.” Several months after the Civil War commenced in 1861, President Abraham Lincoln, in compliance with a resolution of Congress, proclaimed “the last Thursday in September next as a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for all the people of the nation...and especially to all ministers and teachers of religion of all denominations, and to all heads of families, to observe and keep that day, according to their several creeds and modes of worship, in all humility, and with all religious solemnity, to the end that the united prayer of the nation may ascend to the throne of grace, and bring down plentiful blessings upon our own country.” What a contrast that is to our nation today! For the first time this year, our congregation engaged in the annual “Day of Prayer and Fasting” proclaimed by our 264th Synod in May 2010, that God would raise up more men for the ministry. I trust this will not be the last time either that we will fast and pray.

Finally, I thank the Lord for the recent clean bill of health given to me by my primary care doctor. Take note how God has blessed me with a loving and supportive family and brethren in our San Diego congregation. I would be remiss, however, in not also remembering to give thanks to God for our extended Church family throughout the classis and denomination. I pray for you who are in Christ to abound in God’s Word and grace. “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Gil Baloy

Classis Action: Take note.

T. Licentiate Doug Schlegel

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

As each year passes, and the faithfulness of our covenant keeping God is proved, it is impossible not to praise Him for placing such a priceless treasure as the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in such earthen vessels as we are. And how amazing it is that by His sovereign decree, this is done so "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Cor. 4:7).

As most of you know, from January through June your servant continued to labor in the telecommunications field while waiting for the Lord to open up an opportunity to complete my internship and in the hope of a call. The contract under which I labored was due to expire at the end of June. How amazing God’s grace and sovereignty is that the opportunity to labor at Providence Reformed Church in Lodi was made available to me at the beginning of July. While always heartily confessing that God directs all for His glory and our good, this confession is ordinarily an exercise in Hebrews 11:1 faith. Rarely, if

ever, have I seen the obvious hand of God at work as I have during the past two years. To Him alone be the glory!

It was with great joy that I took up labors in Lodi as Stated Supply and to complete my internship under the oversight of Rev. West. My joy was further enhanced when I heard that Elders Jerry DeYoung and Dean Zoetewey agreed to return to active status. Currently, we now have three active elders and three active deacons. It is my judgment that the zeal and faithfulness of the elders and deacons is one of the strengths of Providence Reformed.

I am happy to report that the marks of the church are evident at Providence. Regarding the preaching ministry, I have been preaching through the book of Colossians. The congregation appears to be attentive to the proclamation of the Word. This is shown by the very frequent conversations that occur after the service. It is very encouraging to hear God's people commenting upon the substance of the sermon and not merely saying, "that was nice" or some other cliché. It was particularly encouraging to see the response when the text dealt with problems of which I was aware of. I have to admit that there was trepidation on my part, but the Holy Spirit applied the Word and even though there was a sting, the chastisement was received as from the Heavenly Father. In order to reinforce the proclamation of the Word on the Lord's Day, each week I have prepared a summary of the sermon and distributed it to the members of the church via e-mail. There has been a very positive response to this effort.

In Sunday School, I have been teaching the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. It has been a profitable time as we have seen the unfolding of God's plan from the beginning, but especially as we see it in the book of Matthew. I also teach a mid-week Bible study. We have been studying the book of Luke. Attendance at the mid-week study and Sunday School are not what I or the elders would like to see. There are some encouraging signs, but this is a matter of concern.

We have one catechumen at this time. I meet with her regularly during the week and she is progressing well. I also have been meeting with a young woman for one-on-one instruction in preparation for membership (I feel compelled to note that when meeting with these young ladies, either my wife or one of their parents are present). I have also been meeting with an inmate at Mule Creek State Prison on a regular basis. He has a credible profession. He is well versed in Reformed theology, and wants to become a member of Providence. I am pleased at this, but I am proceeding slowly and cautiously. He tells me that there is a group of about ten inmates there who have an affection for the Reformed faith. This is not something that I envisioned or pursued, but is an opportunity given. Your prayers and council in this regard are coveted.

Regarding the Sacraments, we have been the beneficiaries of the availability of Revs. Treick and Walker. I would not want to let this opportunity pass without recognizing and thanking them for their ministry. It has been the custom of Providence to celebrate the Lord's Supper monthly. We have decided to move to a bi-monthly schedule during this time of transition.

Regarding church discipline, a cursory examination of the statistical reports from the previous few years will show that there has been a sharp decline in membership at Providence. As you all well know, this is a double-edged fact. It is a sign of health and faithfulness when the elders and pastors take their responsibilities in this area seriously. Yet, it is easy to err in either laxity or in severity. I believe that the elders at Providence practice a biblical balance. The reasons for the decline are varied. In many cases, members have asked to be dismissed to sister churches in an orderly way. Others have

been compelled to move out of the area. But in too many cases, members simply do not have a biblical view of their responsibilities; there is carelessness regarding their vows, and they lack a biblical view of the church – both local and universal. This is a great cause of concern not only at Providence, but as I am learning, also in many of the churches in the Western Classis. This lack of connectedness to anything greater than oneself is a spirit of the age and it is starting to creep into the church. Nevertheless, the congregation is not downcast. On the contrary, there is a renewed zeal to grow the church. Indeed, it has been pointed out to me that the size of the congregation is similar to when it was planted and the attitude is summed up by what one member said: "Let's do it again!" How to effectively reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ continues to be the greatest challenge.

The church continues to have monthly fellowship meals and Family Activity Nights and there is good participation. In summary, the congregation of saints at Providence Reformed Church shows the love of Christ, and is stable spiritually and temporally. Of course that love and stability is because our foundation is not in ourselves, our history, or our own stubbornness. It is because of *who* our foundation is. "...The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (II Tim. 2:19).

Respectfully Submitted,
Elder Doug Schlegel

Classis Action: Take note. Elder Derrick Merkel 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 Shafter who answered no, and Grass Valley, Lodi, and Willows who said yes but 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 Bakersfield and Lancaster 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 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.
- 7b. Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs? All answered yes.

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 received and adopted.

REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES

Rev. Merica reported on his visit to the 2011 Fall Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Northern California & Nevada OPC which convened at First OPC in Sunnyvale, CA on September 16-17, 2011.

Rev. Henderson reported on his visit to the Northwest Classis of the URCNA, which convened on October 18, 2011, at Trinity United Reformed Church in Visalia, CA.

Rev. Merica reported on his visit to the Classis Pacific East of the Canadian & American Reformed Churches which met on February 23, 2012.

Classis Action: Take note.

ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

There were no fraternal delegate representatives present at this Classis meeting, however, Rev. Merica read a letter sent by the Classis Pacific East of the Canadian Reformed Churches wherein they state their intention to send a fraternal delegate to our 2013 Classis meeting.

Classis Action: No action was required.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. History of the Western Classis

Esteemed Brothers,

On Sept. 15, 2011, the remainder of the History of the Western Classis (21st Annual Session, 2005 to 25th Annual Session, 2010) was sent to all of the ministers of the WC along with the request to provide a copy for the elder delegate. A complete History of the WC will be provided upon request.

Since that time, it was suggested that the Committee write a concluding editorial page to “round off” the report. In response, the following paragraph is submitted as an Epilogue:

“In conclusion, although these twenty-five years of history is but a very tiny part in the whole of God’s plan and design for His Kingdom, let us be mindful of and grateful for the fact that we are a part of what has a far longer history, i.e., the Reformed Church in the United States, one of the first Protestant denominations to emerge from the 16th Century Reformation, as well as one of the first to come to America, beginning with three congregations in Pennsylvania in 1725. The subsequent history of the RCUS* is sad as well as promising: It is sad, when considering how a once large and faithful denomination forsook the Reformed faith for a liberal and humanistic religion; it is promising, when according to God’s Word, “*at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace*” (Rom. 11:5), who remain committed and obedient to “*the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3). However, our boast is not in our history or early beginnings, but in being a part of the **One Holy Catholic Church** as we confess (Apostles’ Creed, Article 9). As such, we look to and glory in our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, “*I will build My Church*” (Matt. 16:18) and who continues to gather His people out of the whole human race from the beginning to the end of the world.”

*This history is available from a variety of sources: History of the Eureka Classis, 1910-1985, Rev. N.C. Hoeflinger, Rev. R. D. Stuebbe; The Reformed Church in the United States, Rev. Norman L. Jones; Outline of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1725-1995, Rev. Robert Grossmann; You Shall Be My People, Edited by Robert E. Grossmann, Norman C. Hoeflinger

Also, on Sept 15, 2011, the minister delegates were made aware that at the 26th Annual Session of the WC it was moved that each congregation of the WC write and submit a one page history of their congregation to the Special Committee on the History of the WC, and that pictures (facility, congregation, pastors, etc..) be included and sent along with these histories. The deadline for sending said histories and pictures was Feb. 01, 2012. At the writing of this report, four congregations/ministers have complied. It is doubtful that all will be available at the time of this Annual Session.

The Committee believes that it has fulfilled its mandate and that this project now be placed in the hands of the Permanent Publications Committee for the final collection of the one page congregation histories and pictures, editing, compilation, formatting, etc., and thereby given the means by which to “justify its existence” (see Publications Report, 2011 WC Abstract, p. 23).

Recommendation:

1. That the Permanent Publications Committee continue and prepare the History of the Western Classis Congregations project for publication.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. Vernon Pollema (Chairman), Rev. Lloyd Gross,
 Rev. Paul Treick, Elder John Heerema, Elder Wayne Johnson*

Classis Action: The recommendation was passed and the report was adopted.

B. Instruction Manual for Christian Membership

Esteemed Brothers,

Already prior to the Classis formation of this Special Committee (see 2011 WC Abstract, p. 93), our colleague, Jim West, had indicated in his Parochial Report (2011 WC Abstract, p. 38) his intention to prepare an instruction book/booklet on church membership, and has recently supplied the committee with a first draft.

Since all of the members on this committee (and other RCUS pastors as well) have, over the years, developed and used their own methods and materials for such instruction, there are bound to be a variety of ideas and differences as to the construction and content of such a book or manual. Perhaps producing such a work by committee may prove, in time, not to be the best way to proceed. However, what will be required is time. Therefore, the committee requests that it be continued and given such time as it requires to prepare and present its work when and if it is completed.

Respectfully submitted,
*Rev. Vernon Pollema, (Chairman), Rev. Neale Riffert,
 Rev. Paul Treick, Rev. Jim West.*

Classis Action: A recommendation was passed to dissolve the committee and that Rev. Jim West be encouraged to proceed with the writing and publishing of this work at his own discretion. 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 the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for the next synodical year in the amount of \$1,000 per month for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for the next synodical year in the amount of \$1,000 per month for Mrs. Robert Sander.

3. That the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for the ministerial aid for the next synodical year in the amount of \$1,200 per month each for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe.
4. That the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for the ministerial aid for the next synodical year in the amount of \$1,000 per month for Rev. and Mrs. Vern Pollema.
5. That the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for the ministerial aid for the next synodical year in the amount of \$1,200 per month for Rev. and Mrs. Paul Treick.
6. That the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for the ministerial aid for the next synodical year in the amount of \$1,800 per month for Rev. and Mrs. Neil Riffert.
7. That the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for the ministerial aid for the next synodical year in the amount of \$1,800 per month for Rev. and Mrs. Gene Sawtelle.
8. That the Western Classis grant to Faith RCUS, Anderson, benevolent aid in the amount of \$500.00 per month for the classical year, and that the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod in the amount of \$500.00 per month in benevolent aid for the next synodical year.
9. That the Western Classis grant to Grace RCUS, Lancaster, benevolent aid in the amount of \$275 per month for the classical year, and that the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod for \$275 per month in benevolent aid for the next synodical year (This is in accord with the 10% reduction from the 2009 amount).
10. That the Western Classis grant to Covenant Reformed Chapel, San Diego benevolent aid in the amount of \$600.00 per month for the next classical year.
11. That the Western Classis grant to Covenant RCUS, Chico, benevolent aid in the amount of \$930 per month for one year beginning on January 1, 2013; and that the Western Classis petition the 266th Synod of the Reformed Church in the U.S. for \$930 per month in benevolent aid for one year beginning on January 1, 2013.

B. Missions

1. That Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California, be removed from mission status and funding be discontinued after the current funding expires December 31, 2012.
2. That the Western Classis petition the 266th Synod for mission support for Covenant Reformed Church, Chico, California at the current rate until December 31, 2012.
3. We strongly encourage the churches of Western Classis to faithfully pray for the congregation in Chico as they faithfully continue to persevere with their goal of establishing a reformed witness in that community.
4. That the request from the Ebenezer Reformed Consistory, Shafter, California for classical support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra in the amount of \$20,391 for the 2013 year be granted.
5. That the Western Classis petition the 265th Synod for mission support for Rehoboth Reformed Chapel, La Habra, California in the amount of \$10,116 for the year 2013.

6. That the Western Classis set aside an Annual Day of Prayer for Western Classis Home Missions in the coming year. Furthermore, that the churches be encouraged to take a special offering on that day for Rehoboth Chapel, La Habra, California to be used by them in either securing a permanent facility or to enable them to rent an effective facility until a permanent one is found.
7. That the Permanent Home Missions Report be amended according to prescribed wording. (These changes are reflected in the Permanent Home Missions Report in this Abstract).
8. [Take note]. The committee received a referral from the parochial report of Rev. Eric Bristley suggesting the purchase of a radio station.

C. Examination and Licensure

1. That Classis overture Synod to grant Mr. Merkel's request for tuition aid of \$3,000.00 for the current academic year.
2. That Classis overture Synod to grant Mr. Merkel's request for \$5,200.00 (\$4,800.00 tuition and \$400.00 books) for the forthcoming academic year.
3. That Mr. Doug Schlegel's internship be approved.
4.
 - a. That Mr. Matthew Davis not be taken under care at this time.
 - b. That Mr. Davis continue his classes at Heidelberg Theological Seminary and also work with Pastor Voytek to learn Hebrew, if possible, over the next year, and report his grades to the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee.
 - c. That the Candidates and Credentials Committee monitor Mr. Davis' progress in his studies and the exercise of his office over the next year and report to the Western Classis at its next annual session.
 - d. That Mr. Davis consider taking classes in liberal arts, if possible, to demonstrate his proficiency in these areas as they relate to the ministry.
5. That Mr. Doug Schlegel's ordination examination be approved.
6. That the call of Providence Reformed Church, Lodi, to Mr. Schlegel and his acceptance of the call be declared in order and approved.
7. That the ordination and installation of Mr. Doug Schlegel take place on Friday, March 30, 2012, with the ordination committee consisting of Revs. Dennis Roe, Jim West, Frank Walker, and the elders of Providence Reformed Church, with Rev. Roe giving the charge to the congregation, Rev. Walker giving the charge to the pastor-elect, and Rev. West conducting.

D. Minutes of Synod

In reviewing the minutes of the 265th Synod (May 16-19, 2011), the stated clerk Rev. David Fagrey, notified the Classes of the RCUS to consider the following motion carried out at that Synod's meeting: "That the Synod overture the Classes to request that home mission funding be based on the synodical fiscal year... beginning from July 1 to June 30 of the following year." The stated clerk raised the following items that the Classes (i.e. Western Classis) should take note of: [Take note on all 11 of the items.]

Item 1: Classes (i.e. Western Classis) should take note of the corrections that should be made to their minutes as adopted by the Synod (265th Abstract, p. 103, "G. Minutes of Classes Committee," #2,3,6).

Item 2: Synod Abstract, p. 103, #2: "That the Synod Clerk include the following in the list of "Guidelines for the Minutes of Classes Committee": (a) That a complete index precede the minutes proper — listing all pages on which each agenda item or report is taken up; (b) That every listing of a document within the minutes proper shall have a page or item number by which to locate such in the documents section; (c) That a tab divider and a table of contents precede the documents section, indicating the page location of each document; (d) That procedures recorded in the minutes shall be reviewed for consistency regarding the receiving of reports, according to the practice of each Classis."

Item 3: Synod Abstract, p. 103, #3: "A solid metal post or ring is to be preferred for ease of viewing minutes and protecting the edge of the papers

Item 4: Synod Abstract, p. 103, #6: "That the minutes of Western Classis be approved with the following exceptions: On numerous occasions, reports were simply received if there were no recommendations passed, instead of adopting the reports."

Note: The 27th Western Classis (March 6, 2012) agreed by common consent to correct the error of procedure pointed out by the 265th Synod, which is that our Classis would receive but not adopt those reports that are without a recommendation or recommendations. This decision will insure that our Classis will receive and adopt all of its reports.

Item 5: The change in the Standing Rules of Synod #2: "The fiscal year of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States shall run from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. The synodical dues shall be due on the first of June and are to be paid not later than the thirtieth of June of the current fiscal year.

Item 6: The change in Standing Rule #2: "The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod two weeks before the session of Synod."

Item 7: The change in the Standing Rule #5: "The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Synod at forty-five cents (\$0.45) per mile per vehicle. Public transportation costs and rental car fees for the delegate shall be reimbursed at full cost. (Delegates are exhorted to exercise good stewardship in the use of Synod's funds and to not abuse this provision).

Item 8: The change in Standing Rule #6: "Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Synod whose congregations have paid the synodical dues in full to the Synod Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Synod or have been properly excused by Synod."

Item 9: Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the calendar year.

Item 10: 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.

Item 11: The classes (i.e. Western Classis) are reminded that the 266th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 21-24, 2012, at Grace Reformed Church, Rapid City, SD.

E. Judicial

1. [Take note] That the Western Classis continue its practice of having an Overtures Committee to filter and process all overtures.
2. [Take note] That the Western Classis continue operating on our current calendar year.
3. That a special committee be erected to study the views of "The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms" that is being promoted by Westminster Seminary in California and to report back to the 2013 Spring Classis meeting with specific recommendations on how to respond to this teaching.
4. That Classis erect a special committee to study the place and use of instruments in our public worship services as set forth in the Bible, our Confessions, and the RCUS Directory of Worship and to report back to the 2013 Spring Classis meeting with their findings.
5. [Defeated] That the Western Classis overture the 266th annual meeting of the RCUS Synod meeting to change the date of Synod to a date in June or July.
6. [Take note] That Elder Steve Mettler of Grace Reformed Church at Bakersfield be seated as a delegate of the 27th annual meeting of the Western Classis (Elder Mettler was neither the primarius or secundus and the Classis had already voted to seat him).
7. That Rehoboth Chapel be organized as a church of the Western Classis RCUS, and that they be organized under the name of Rehoboth Reformed Church.
8. That with regards to Rev. Neale Riffert's credentials, that we commend our brother for his labors in Sherman, Texas. (This issue had to do with a retired pastor laboring outside the bounds of the Classis with Classis' permission but having received a call to be an Associate Pastor in a congregation of another Classis that was overseeing the labor he was involved in. The general consensus was that it was not necessary for him to move his credentials to the other Classis).
9. That the Western Classis petition the 266th RCUS Synod to consider repealing Articles 40, 41, and 42 of the RCUS Constitution.
10. That the Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego be organized as a church of the Western Classis under the name of Covenant Reformed Church of San Diego and that Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento, CA oversee the ordination of officers and the organization of this church.

F. Nominations

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

Executive Committee: J. West, H. Bowen, J. Gross

Candidates and Credentials: D. Helseth, B. Williams (1 yr); D. Roe, G. Stewart (2 yrs); S. Henry, F. Walker (3 yrs)

Christian Education in the Church: V. Pollema, J. Gross (1 yr); P. Treick, M. Reyna (2 yrs); D. Yeager, M. Voytek (3 yrs)

Missions: D. Schlegel, J. Jones (1 yr); G. Baloy, S. Powell (2 yrs); T. Gruggett, M. Reyna (3 yrs)

Interchurch Relations: T. Mayville, R. Fay (1 yr); V. Pollema, G. Baloy (2 yrs); J. Merica, D. Merkel (3 yrs)

Publications: G. Mancilas, W. Lingenfelter (1 yr); E. Bristley, D. Merkel (2 yrs); S. Powell, H. Drost (3 yrs)

Diaconal: Deacon J. Vander Wal, J. Gochnauer (1 yr); R. Wegis, P. Henderson (2yrs); L. Pollema, D. Roe (3 yrs)

Heidelberg West Youth Camp: P. Henderson, M. Frias (1 yr); T. Gruggett, M. Voytek (2 yrs); S. Henry, K. Bowen (3 yr.)

Two Kingdoms Study Committee: T. Gruggett, S. Henry, J. West, D. Merkel, G. Stewart.

Musical Instruments in Worship Study Committee: E. Bristley, T. Mayville, S. Powell, L. Pollema, R. Spitzer.

G. Finances

1. That the Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2011 be adopted.
2. That travel expenses be paid for the 25th Annual Session of Western as follows:

Gil Baloy	372 @ .35		130.20
Hank Bowen	1,124 @ .35		393.40
Chris Fellersen	718 @ .35		251.30
Jim Gochnauer	120 @ .35		42.00
Joe Gross	844 @ .35		295.40
Wayne Lingenfelter	671 @ .35		234.85
Thomas Mayville	600 @ .35		210.00
Jonathan Merica	648 @ .35		226.80
Vernon Pollema	184 @ .35		64.40
Neale Riffert	130 @ .35	+ 315.50	361.00
Dennis Roe	848 @ .35		296.80
Doug Schlegel	710 @ .35		248.50
Greg Stewart	814 @ .35	+ 65.00	349.90
Paul Treick	616 @ .35		215.60
Michael Voytek	204 @ .35		71.40
Frank Walker	720 @ .35		252.00
Jim West	750 @ .35		<u>262.50</u>
TOTAL			\$3,906.05

3. That Classis Standing Rule 7 be amended to read "forty-five cents (\$.45) from (\$.35).
4. That the Guidelines for Giving for the 2012-2013 Classical Year be as follows:

Classis Dues	\$8.00
Benevolences	42.00
Home Missions	46.00
Publications	-----
Home Missions Building Fund	2.00
Heidelberg West Youth Camp	<u>7.00</u>
TOTAL	\$105.00

H. Excuses

1. [Take note]. That a primarius elder does not need an excuse when a secundus elder is assigned to attend the Classis meeting.
2. That the request for excuse from all of the sessions of Classis, due to employment, be granted to Elder Joseph Vacchiano.
3. That the request for excuse from all of the sessions of Classis, due to illness, be granted to Rev. Sam Powell.
4. That the request for excuse from second day of Classis be granted to Elder Lowell Pollema.
5. That the request for excuse from the evening session of March 7 be granted to Rev. Dennis Roe.

I. Overtures

1. That the overtures 1-15 be referred as specified:
 - 1) Request for continued ministerial aid for Mrs. Marjorie Duckett from the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, CA. (To Benevolence)
 - 2) Request for continued ministerial aid from Mrs. Betty Sander. (To Benevolence)
 - 3) Request for continued ministerial aid for Pastor Gene Sawtelle and his wife, Sharon, from the Consistory of First Reformed Church, Yuba City, CA. (To Benevolence)
 - 4) Request for continued ministerial aid for Rev. Paul Treick and his wife, Karen, from the Consistory of Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto, CA. (To Benevolence)
 - 5) Request for benevolent support for Covenant Reformed Chapel in San Diego, CA from the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, CA. (To Benevolence)
 - 6) Request for benevolent support from the Consistory of Faith Reformed Church, Anderson, CA. (To Benevolence)
 - 7) Request to be excused from the 27th Annual Session of the Western Classis from the Elder Primarius of Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley, CA. (To Excuses)
 - 8) Request for Mr. Matthew Davis to be taken under care of the Western Classis as a student for the ministry from the Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, CA. (To Examination & Licensure)
 - 9) Request for continued ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Vernon Pollema from the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA (To Benevolence)
 - 10) Request for continued ministerial aid for Mrs. Marie Stuebbe from the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA. (To Benevolence)
 - 11) Request to change the annual meeting date of Synod from the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA. (To Judicial)
 - 12) Request to seat Elder Steve Mettler as the Classis delegate from Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA. (Take Note)
 - 13) A Memorial Request to organize the Rehoboth Reformed Chapel of La Habra, CA as a church from the members and officers of the Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, CA. (To Judicial)

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- 14) Request to be excused from the 27th Annual Session of the Western Classis from the Elder Secundus of Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley, CA. (To Excuses)
 - 15) Request to be excused from the 27th Annual Session of the Western Classis from Pastor Sam Powell. (To Excuses)
 2. That the overtures 16-18 be referred as specified:
 - 16) Request from Elder Lowell Pollema to be excused from the Wed. and Thurs. sessions. (To Excuses)
 - 17) Overture from the Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento to petition Synod to repeal Articles 40, 41, and 42 of the RCUS Constitution concerning Teachers of Theology. (To Judicial)
 - 18) Request for a reduced amount of benevolent aid from Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster. (To Benevolence)
 3. 19) Request to organize the Covenant Reformed Chapel of San Diego as a congregation, along with the accompanying documentation be referred to Judicial.
 4. That the overtures 20-21 be referred as specified:
 - 20) Request from Rev. Dennis Roe to be excused from the evening sessions of March 7, 2012. (To Excuses)
 - 21) Request for Benevolent Aid from the Covenant Reformed Church, Chico. (To Benevolence)
 5. That the following statement be adopted and printed in the bulletin of the Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA: "We, the delegates of the 27th Annual Session of the Western Classis express to you, the members of Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA, our heartfelt gratitude for hosting us. We have truly experienced the communion of the saints, i.e., that bond of love that unites us in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have demonstrated your love for us by using your gifts, readily and cheerfully for our advantage and welfare and we thank God for you."

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

- A. *Expression of Appreciation to the Host Congregation (Overtures Report).*
- B. *Adoption of Stated Clerk's Report, Executive Committee's Minutes, and Overtures Committee's Report.*
- C. *Other Business*

Classis Action: All of the above reports were adopted. Under other business a letter of appreciation and thanks was read from the San Diego Covenant Reformed Chapel, and a letter from Heidelberg Theological Seminary was read.

THE READING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes were typed, printed, distributed, and read at the beginning of business on Wednesday, Thursday, and at the close of business on Thursday. All corrections were made and the final approval was given to the minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:27 AM the 27th Annual Session of the Western Classis was adjourned to the 28th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis to convene at Providence Reformed Church in Lodi, CA on Tuesday, March 5, 2013 at 1:00 PM.

- A. **Roll Call** – The roll call was taken at the beginning and end of each business session. The closing roll showed fifteen ministers and ten elders present.
- B. **Devotions** – Elder Michael Frias led the body in a closing devotion from Psalm 103 and 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

2011 Western Classis Statistics	Faith Anderson	Grace Bakers- field	Covenant Chico	Covenant Grass Vly Stockton	Grace Lancaster	Provi- dence Lodi	Trinity Modesto
1. No. of Elders	2	4	2	3	2	3	4
2. No. of Deacons	1	4	1	0	4	3	3
3. Comm. Last Year	24	135	22	43	30	39	67
4. Rec'd by Confirm	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	0	0	7	6	1	0
7. Tot. Received	0	4	0	7	9	1	0
8. Tot Old/New Mbr	24	139	22	50	39	40	67
9. Lost by Dismissal	0	3	0	0	4	7	3
10. Lost Eras/Disc	0	2	3	0	1	7	0
11. Lost by Death	1	3	0	0	0	1	1
12. Total Lost	1	8	3	0	5	15	4
13. Comm. this Yr	23	131	19	50	34	25	63
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	2	48	6	20	16	6	17
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	25	179	25	70	50	31	80
16. No. of Families	15	58	9	21	20	15	29
17. No. of S.S. Child.	0	36	0	17	12	0	21
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	2	0	4	0	1	2
20. Total Baptisms	0	2	0	4	0	1	2
21. No. Rec. LS	26	75	21	50	28	34	62
22. Times LS.Served	12	4	12	14	4	9	4
23. Reg. Offerings	46,742	222,976	31,817	148,981	81,609	49,928	104,015
24. Special Offerings	0	10,976	2,247	10,960	9,339	1,853	5,454
25. Other Sources	12,000	25,770	36,079	527	14,119	347	0
26. Total Receipts	58,742	259,722	70,143	160,468	105,067	52,128	110,469
27. Giv. to Syn Guidl.	480	18,141	967	3,135	2,040	498	10,979
28. Giv. to Clas Guidl	336	14,190	914	1,620	3,960	481	8,236
29. RCUS non-budget	0	6,331	205	0	0	0	895
30. Non-RCUS cause	0	6,330	0	10,445	632	1,193	0
31. Other Expenses	57,212	162,198	71,980	103,194	87,021	53,231	86,181
32. Total Expenses	58,028	207,190	74,066	118,229	93,653	55,913	106,291
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	400,000	600,000	N/A	533,000	N/A	268,066	350,000
34. Parsonage	N/A	250,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
35. Impr on Prop'ty	0	10,000	0	100	0	0	3,000
36. Pres Prop'ty Deb	0	0	0	21,384	0	0	14,000
37. Debt Pd Last Yr	0	0	0	21,512	0	0	12,000
38. Syn guidl/comm	20	134	44	73	68	10	163
39. Clas guidl/comm	14	105	42	38	132	10	123
40. Tot. RCUS/Com	34	286	95	111	154	20	286

Covenant Sacto* S. Diego	Ebenezer Shafter LaHabra	Grace Willows	First Yuba City	2010 Totals	2009 Totals	% Chg	Rehobth Chapel LaHabra	Covenant Chapel S. Diego	Calvary Chapel Stockton
6	5	2	2	35	31	12.9	1	1	1
7	6	3	2	34	33	3	1	1	0
156	101	33	52	702	711	-1.3	29	16	11
5	1	0	0	10	9	11.1	1	2	0
6	3	0	0	12	13	-7.7	3	1	0
9	0	0	1	24	20	20	0	3	3
20	4	0	1	46	42	9.5	4	6	3
176	105	33	53	748	753	-7.7	33	22	14
5	2	1	0	25	28	-10.7	2	0	0
9	2	0	1	25	23	8.7	2	1	0
0	0	0	0	6	5	20	0	0	0
14	4	1	1	56	56	0	4	1	0
162	101	32	52	692	696	-6	29	21	14
57	24	15	14	225	220	2.3	20	1	4
219	125	47	66	917	917	0	49	22	18
68	55	15	27	332	356	-6.7	17	11	8
51	19	8	12	176	178	-1.1	19	1	3
0	0	0	0	0	3	-300	0	0	0
8	0	2	3	22	18	5.6	0	0	0
8	0	2	3	22	21	4.8	0	0	0
162	101	32	52	643	653	-1.5	29	21	14
12	4	12	12	99	101	-2	6	12	2
246,870	259,873	96,550	102,599	1,391,960	1,407,363	-1.1	89,393	35,159	32,250
77,690	5,600	945	9,279	134,343	150,304	-10.6	0	0	0
127,733	54,806	1,275	0	272,656	305,637	-10.8	67,783	10,434	527
452,293	320,279	98,770	111,878	1,799,959	1,838,374	-2.1	157,176	45,593	32,777
28,107	18,685	2,420	7,924	93,376	115,183	-18.9	5,365	2,911	2,437
17,160	11,110	3,520	5,720	67,247	92,321	-27.2	3,190	1,760	1,210
9,551	3,200	0	1,978	22,160	13,963	54.7	324	1,320	0
10,116	2,267	16,956	0	47,939	48,141	-4	3,000	420	3,250
491,420	258,561	79,308	100,492	1,550,798	1,515,433	2.3	143,697	38,952	22,949
556,354	293,823	102,204	116,114	1,781,865	1,801,060	-1.1	155,576	45,363	29,846
344,549	1,000,000	550,000	260,000	3,531,408	4,319,676	-18.2	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	250,000	N/A	145,000	645,000	665,000	-3	N/A	N/A	N/A
27,360	0	4,523	16,159	61,142	32,820	86.3	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	35,384	87,713	-59.7	0	0	0
0	0	0	20,471	53,983	26,411	104.4	0	0	0
180	185	73	152	Avg. 100	Avg. 131	-23.7	185	182	222
110	110	107	110	Avg. 82	Avg. 118	-31	110	110	110
352	327	180	300	Avg. 195	Avg. 263	-25.9	306	375	332

*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. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after the defining of the Bar of the House.
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.
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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