2015
Abstract
of the Minutes

of the

COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

30th Annual Session

March 3 - 5, 2015

held at

Peace Reformed Church

Napoleon, Ohio

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS of Covenant East Classis

President	Rev. Randall Klynsma
Vice President	Rev. Ryan Kron
Stated Clerk	Rev. Ron Potter
Treasurer	Elder Jim Drewes

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

General Fund	$12.00
Missions Fund	$33.00
Benevolence Fund	$18.00
Student Aid Fund	$ 3.00
TOTAL per communicant member	**$66.00**

CLASSIS TREASURER

Mr. Jim Drewes
(419) 592-0795
13033 Co. Rd. L2, Napoleon, OH 43545
jimdkhd@bright.net

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive: Klynsma, Potter, Liesveld
Candidates and Credentials: Fluck, Brice, Luquette, Wright
Church Camp: Stuebbe, S. Altman, Sorensen, Mark Bruckschen* (*Deacon)
Interchurch Relations: Sawtelle, Kron, Van Heest
Missions: Schnabel, Opp, Smith, M. Altman, Blauw
Publications: no committee formed

(underlined serves as chairman)

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CHURCHES AND MISSION WORKS

Northwest ARKANSAS

Grace RCUS, 72756
3320 N. Second Street, Rogers, AR .....(479) 202-5550
Pastor: Rev. Wesley Brice (Wife: Ginger)
Worship: 10:00 a.m. ; SS: 11:30 a.m.; 6:00 p.m. B.S.
www.gracereformednwa.org; pastor@gracereformednwa.org

Garner, IOWA

Peace RCUS, 50438
1905 200th St. (3 mi. south of Garner on US 69).....(641) 923-3060
Pastor: Vacant
Worship: 10:30 a.m.; SS: 9:30 a.m.
www.peacereformedchurch.com

Eden Prairie, MINNESOTA

Emmaus Road RCUS, 55344
Meeting at Eden Lake Elementary School,
12000 Anderson Lakes Pkwy, Eden Prairie, MN .....(612) 751-2096
Pastor: Rev. Ryan Kron (Wife: Colleen)
Mail: 8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438
Worship: 10:30 a.m. ; SS: 9:10 a.m.
www.emmausrcus.org ; ryankron@hotmail.com

Hamburg, MINNESOTA

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339
15470 Co Road 31 .....(952) 467-3878
Pastor: Rev. Dan Schnabel (Wife: Marie)
Worship: 9:30 a.m.; SS: 8:30 a.m.
www.stpaulsrcus.org ; dm7schnabel@gmail.com

Minneapolis, MINNESOTA

Redeemer RCUS, 55422
1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley, MN……..(763) 417-9835
Pastor: Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)
Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55427
Worship: 10:15 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m. (Sept- May)
www.redeemerrcus.org ; sawtellejim@gmail.com

Kansas City, MISSOURI

Northland RCUS, 64164
2901 NW Cookingham Dr.....(816) 420-9700
(Exit 40, I-435, north one mile)
Pastor: Rev. Randall Klynsma (Wife: Julie)
Worship: 9:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; SS: 11:00 a.m.
www.northlandreformed.org ; northlandreformed@gmail.com

Napoleon, OHIO

Peace RCUS, 43545
638 Huddle Rd.....(419) 599-3106
Pastor: Rev. Steven Altman (Wife: Bianca)
Worship: 10:00 a.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m.
www.peacercus.com

Gettysburg, PENNSYLVANIA

Covenant RCUS, 17325
149 Centennial Rd., ...(717) 398-2603
Pastor: Rev. Jay Fluck (Wife: Loretta)
Mail: 330 Montclair Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325
Worship: 10:30 a.m.; S.S. 9:30 a.m. Wed. Study /Prayer 7:00 p.m.
jefluck@msn.com

Waymart, PENNSYLVANIA

Heritage RCUS, 18472 in Lower Level of Waymart Presbyterian Church,
200 Belmont Turnpike.....(570) 785-4012
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)
Mail: 136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421
Worship: 10:30 a.m.; B.S. 9:30 a.m.; Wed. Study/Prayer 7:00 p.m.
www.heritagercus.org; reformed@nep.net

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 54220
6524 Hwy C.....(920) 726-4940
Pastor: Rev. Kyle Sorensen (Wife: Donielle)
Worship: 10:00 a.m.; SS 8:45 a.m.
www.salemebenezer.org; salem@lakefield.net

CLERK's NOTES:

1. On March 2nd, 2015, the night before the Spring Classis meeting convened, the delegates of classis gathered in a closed door session between 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. for a power point presentation by Rev. Kyle Sorensen, the RCUS pastor of the Manitowoc congregation. The presentation was entitled: *Bringing Peace to Conflict: God's method for all Christians in all places and all times.* After the presentation, there was a time of discussion.

2. On March 3rd, 2015, the Classis went into executive session at 3:35 p.m. to discuss matters germane to the Northwest Arkansas and Garner, IA congregations. The executive session continued into the evening following the worship service and concluded at 8:55 p.m.

Abstract of the MINUTES
of the Covenant East Classis
of the Reformed Church in the United States
30th Annual Session -- March 3-4, 2015
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa

Services

After the President, Rev. Randall Klynsma, called the body to order on Tuesday, March 3, 2015, he led the Classis in prayer. He then read Ephesians 2:1-10. He gave a devotion from that passage."

On Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. the Classis delegates, along with members and guests of the Peace Reformed congregation, worshiped our Triune God and Savior. Rev. Jay Fluck led the service and Rev. Ryan Kron preached a sermon on Genesis 2:18-25, titled, "The Covenant of marriage"

On Wednesday morning, March 4, Rev. Kyle Sorensen led the body in a devotion from Acts 1:12-26 titled "The Church of the Upper room."

In addition, each session of classis was opened and closed with a prayer asking God to grant wisdom and mercy upon the business and decisions of classis. Meals were concluded with a brief Bible reading, appropriate comments, and prayer. After the reading of each pastor's parochial report, another delegate led in prayer for the pastor and his charge. Prayer was also offered to our God at other appropriate times in the meeting,

Organization

The 30th annual session of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was called to order at 8:02 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2015, by Rev. Randy Klynsma, President. After the devotions were completed the Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Altman, called the roll which showed 10 ministers and 8 elders present, a quorum. The Bar of the House was defined as the first seven rows. Elders Tim Bessette and Walt Van Heest were appointed tellers by the president. The President read the Standing Rules of Classis..

The following delegates were elected to serve as the officers of Classis for the year: Rev. Randall Klynsma as president, Rev. Ryan Kron as vice-president, Rev. Ron Potter as stated clerk, and Elder Jim Drewes as treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Dan Schnabel as reporter to the *Reformed Herald.*

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

Several fraternal delegate was present at the Classis meeting. Rev. Reuben Bredenhof represented the Classis Ontario West of the Canadian Reformed Churches; Rev. Zach Wyse represented Classis Eastern U.S. of the United Reformed Churches of North America; Rev. Larry Oldaker represented the Presbytery of Ohio of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Rev. Tom Wetselaar of Classis central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches of North America. Each of these delegates were seated in the bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor and each addressed the body

Among the many visitors present during the meeting was Rev. Paul McDade from Paris, TN, a minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church U.S.

Reception of New Ministers and New Churches

There were no new Ministers to receive.

Covenant Reformed Church of Gettysburg was received as a member church of Classis and prayed for. The right hand of fellowship was extended to the officers of Covenant RCUS present by the delegates.

Standing Committees

The President announced the Standing Committee appointments. Chairmen are underlined:

Benevolence; Excuses:	S. Altman, Herrmann, Leisveld.
Examination & Licensure:	Brice, Bessette, Sawtelle.
Finances:	Kron, Blauw, Herrmann, (Drewes advise).
Judicial:	Sawtelle, Stuebbe, Drewes, Sorensen, Fluck.
Minutes of Classis:	Sorensen, Larson, Opp.
Minutes of Synod:	Fluck, Bessette, Drewes, Brice.
Missions; Nominations:	Schnabel, Van Heest, Klynsma.
Service:	Opp, Larson, Stuebbe.

Presentation of Overtures, Reports, and Communications

The items were referred and distributed to the Standing Committees as determined by the Executive Committee, which informed the Classis in writing of these referrals before the meeting. (See Appendix #1) The actions taken on these documents are found in the section of this abstract that contains the Standing Committee reports.

Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee On Their Minutes

During the Classical year of 2014, your Executive Committee has exercised spiritual oversight to our congregations of Classis and to its minister's when sought or when deemed appropriate. We have prayed with and for many of you throughout the course of this past year, and have been encouraged to see that our members are seeking the advice and support of this committee. We would remind all of the members of Classis that there is no need for any of our members to go through the many struggles that we so often

encounter in ministering in the midst of a fallen world alone. Almighty God, in His wisdom, and His providence has placed us in one another's lives for this very purpose.

It has been a very busy year in the life of this committee. This past year we have had several conversations with churches interested in learning more about the RCUS through both written communications, and in one instance, through a conference call. Some of those conversations are still ongoing at present. In early June your committee, at the time consisting of Rev. Klynsma, Rev. Sorensen, and Elder Steve Stuebbe, travelled to Peace Reformed Church, in Garner, IA in answer to a request from the consistory there to preside over a meeting presenting the congregation with Biblical instruction and principles of communication regarding dealing with offenses in the church. In October, a follow up committee consisting of Pastors Klynsma, and Sawtelle, along with Elders Jay Liesveld, David Blauw, and David Sawtelle from their respective congregations, travelled back to Garner for a follow up meeting aimed at facilitating reconciliation among the members of Peace Reformed Church. Their report apprised your committee of the current state of things in the congregation, as well as made several helpful observations. Your Committee also appointed a committee consisting of Pastors Schnabel and Potter, along with Elders John Grimm and Dan Wright, to visit with the Gettysburg congregation in order to interview the officers there, to evaluate the charge, and to then report back to your committee. Again their committee did a very thorough job, and made a helpful recommendation for our consideration. Another committee, consisting of Pastors Sorensen and Kron, and Elder VanHeest, was utilized to evaluate Gettysburg's constitution, and to make any recommendations needed in order to facilitate bringing their constitution into line with the RCUS. And one final committee consisting of Rev. Klynsma and two elders from Northland Reformed Church, Jay Liesveld, and Marc Wiersma, recently travelled to Rogers Arkansas to meet with Rev. Brice, and two elders who had resigned their respective charges due to a dispute that arose in their Spiritual Counsel. They met with all parties involved and offered advice and even admonition where it was deemed appropriate. Your committee has been grateful for all of the assistance that has been given this past year from so many of our members who willing gave of their time in order to assist us in doing this critical work of the church.

We brought before classis the following three circulars this year along with their information and recommendations, consequently all of which were approved.

Executive Circular Volume 29, Number 1, May 13, 2014

A. Resignation of Rev. Harvey Opp from Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA

Your Executive Committee has received a copy of Rev. Harvey Opp's resignation from Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA, to be effective on June 13, 2014. We have also received a copy of the Consistory's acceptance of this resignation.

Your Executive Committee has had some contact for the past few months, and daily contact in the past week, with several Consistory members, with Pastor Opp, and also with some church members who are not on the Consistory. We do believe that while this is a sad conclusion to the pastor- congregation relationship, the wisest course is for Classis to dissolve the pastoral relationship according to the terms which have been agreed to by all parties involved.

Recommendation #1:

"That Covenant East Classis finds in order the papers regarding Rev. Harvey Opp's resignation from Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA. We hereby dissolve the pastoral relationship between Rev. Harvey Opp and the congregation at Garner, to be effective on

June 13, 2014. We also declare that the pulpit of Peace Reformed Church in Garner, IA, is vacant as of that date."

Executive Circular Volume 29, Number 2, June 3, 2014A. Resignation of Rev. Kyle Sorensen as Stated Clerk

Your Executive Committee has received the resignation of Rev. Kyle Sorensen as Stated Clerk of Covenant East Classis. He had informed classis at our recent meeting that he would be serving one more year. However, with his unexpected election to Reformed Herald Editor, he has stated that he will not be able to properly fulfill the demands of the office of Stated Clerk for the rest of the year. His resignation is effective immediately, and he requests that all phone calls and e-mails on Executive Committee matters and Clerk matters be directed to the new Stated Clerk pro tem.

Recommendation #1:

"That Covenant East Classis appoint Rev. Steve Altman as Stated Clerk pro tem until the March 2015 meeting of Covenant East Classis, effective immediately."

B. Update on Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA

At the request of the Consistory of Peace Reformed Church of Garner, IA, your Executive Committee came to the special meeting of the congregation on June 2, 2014, at 7 p.m. The full committee was in attendance (Klynsma, Sorensen, Stuebbe). We met with the Consistory over supper, then we conducted the meeting, and after some fellowship and conversation with those in attendance, we went to the parsonage to provide pastoral care for the Opp family.

At the congregational meeting, Rev. Klynsma opened with prayer, a devotion, and a hymn. Rev. Sorensen then presented a multi-media Bible Study on "Bringing Peace to Conflict." The primary Scriptures discussed and applied were Matthew 18:15-20 and Philippians 4:2-3. Along with the handout for the study, 100 copies of a brochure called "Peacemaking Principles" from Peacemaker Ministries were distributed for further detail and application in the months ahead. Elder Stuebbe closed the meeting with a Scripture reading and prayer.

The meeting was well attended, by most of the parties involved. The study was well received by all sides, and we were blessed to see some people taking the Biblical admonition seriously "do not let the sun go down on your wrath..."

Please remember in prayer the Consistory and the congregation. The issues they face will live on for some time, and they truly desire to find a pastor soon. Pray also for Pastor Harvey and Carol Opp and their family in their final week in Garner. The final Sunday for Pastor Opp is June 8. He will be moving to Ireton, IA. He is seeking employment in the administration at Dordt College for the time being.

Executive Circular Volume 29, Number 3, October 27, 2014

A. Student Aid to Mr. Steve Carr

Your Executive Committee has received a request from the Consistory of Redeemer Reformed Church in Minneapolis, MN, to provide financial aid for Steve Carr, Student Under Care of Classis. At the time of our Classis meeting in March of this year, it was unclear what Mr. Carr's financial situation would be. However, the needs are more evident now, so they have been able to present Classis with this request. The total amount requested is the same as the past two previous years.

Classis delegates should know that the local congregation in Minneapolis is providing regular financial aid to the Carr family to aid in paying their living expenses. He is also receiving financial aid from Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Mr. Carr is now in his 3rd and final year of seminary study.

We have anticipated these sorts of needs and have set aside $12,000.00 in the Student Aid Fund in order to meet potential additional benevolent needs for our students for the ministry in the Classical year 2014-2015. The Treasurer has confirmed the availability of these funds.

In light of this recommendation, we present to the members of Covenant East Classis the following recommendation:

Recommendation #1: That the Treasurer of Covenant East Classis be instructed to provide $9,000.00 from the Student Aid Fund to our Student Under Care, Mr. Steve Carr for the 2014-2015 school year. This aid will be distributed according to a schedule that is mutually agreeable to both the Classis Treasurer and Mr. Carr.

Executive Circular volume 29, Number 4, January 26, 2015

A. Time and Place of Spring Classis Meeting

Our annual Spring Classis meeting will be hosted by Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, OH. Classis will convene at 8am on the morning of Tuesday, March 3rd, 2015, and continue on Wednesday, March 5, through the end of business, which should conclude no later than 12pm. Please contact me (419-356-2095 or **thealtmans@sbcglobal.net**) with your housing and transportation needs. We have a couple of homes that will be able to house delegates and we have reserved a block of 10 rooms at the Holiday Inn Express here in Napoleon. The price will be $92.00 per night plus tax, and includes 2 Queen size beds and a complimentary hot breakfast. These rooms will only be reserved for us until February 16th, so please contact them at 419-592-5599 to make your reservation. If you are bringing anyone else besides your delegates, please let us know that as well so that we can plan accordingly.

B. Pre-Classis Fellowship and Discussion

The Executive Committee has once again called for an organized discussion on the night that we all arrive. This discussion will run from 7pm through 8:30 pm, on March 2nd. Rev. Kyle Sorensen will be sharing with us a powerpoint presentation that he has prepared on *Bringing Peace to Conflict.* This presentation will be followed by a round table dissuasion on the topic. It would be helpful to the discussion for the delegates to brush up on the constitutional avenues for dealing with conflict in our congregations, as well as any other methods that you have found to be helpful when dealing with the conflict that we all know will and does arise.

C. Forms for Classis

The forms necessary for the classis meeting are all included with this circular. Please send the Clerk the membership statistics, financial statistics, and the

delegate credential form as soon as possible. In addition to these, please also include any necrologies and overtures.

If your congregation is supervising a mission congregation, please see the declaration on statistical reporting that was approved by Classis (2008 Abstract, 31). These should all be received by February 10, 2015, which is three weeks before our meeting. Overtures received by that date will be circulated with their supporting grounds so that the delegates and their consistories may consider them prior to the meeting (Standing Rule 14). Permanent and Special Reports shall be mailed to Consistories by February 10th. The Parochial Reports should be sent to President Klynsma by February 17th.

D. Stated Clerk

There is one final thing that I would ask you to consider brothers. As some of you may already know, in August of this year we learned that the private health Insurance industry had priced us out of the market. After much prayer and discussion with our consistory, I decided to work in a local truck shop as a mechanic at night during the week as a means of securing Health Insurance for my family. This is of course a temporary solution, but as of now, it is one that has no immediate end in sight. As a result of this new time commitment, I would ask that you consider nominating someone else for this position at our Spring meeting. I wanted to give you all time to consider it, and would appreciate your prayers for all of us here in Napoleon as we face what is a sad reality of the times in which we are living. We are holding up well, and we are extremely grateful to God for the provision of this job for our family.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Randy Klynsma, Rev. Steve Altman, Elder Steve Stuebbe

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Classis Action: The report was adopted.

B. Candidates and Credentials Committee

Esteemed Brethren

Our Committee did conduct an exam, or the Rev. Dr. Mark Larson, an ordained minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in response to the Peace Reformed, Garner IA request that the Covenant East Classis examine him in Orthodoxy and Intentions as it relates to Article 35 in the RCUS Constitution The exam took place by means of Conference Call, Thursday evening, February 5, 2015. Rev. Ron Potter examined him in Intent and Rev. Jay Fluck examined him in Orthodoxy.

The Committee voted to approve their request to have him candidate at Peace Reformed Church in Garner, Iowa.

Peace Reformed Church has extended a call to Rev. Dr. Mark Larson, we are now awaiting his response, which if accepted we will be examining him in LOCI at this classis meeting.

Your committee was able to do more follow up with our students this year as was requested of us last year. The men seemed to greatly appreciate it.

Request from Students Under Care

For Cody Schwichtenberg: **Tuition:** $4800 for seminary support at Heidelberg Theological Seminary; **Books** $400 in books.

For Christopher Campbell : **Tuition**: $1200; **Books**: $400

Steven Carr sent a report expressing deep appreciation for the past help and guidance he has received. Please see their annual reports and requests attached:

Respectfully submitted, Wesley Brice, Chairman, Rev. Jay Fluck, Rev. Ron Potter, Elder Daniel Wright, Elder Donald Weilersbacher

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

C. Interchurch Relations Committee

Dear Brothers,

Your committee's activity this past year was embarrassingly slight. Letters of invitation to attend our Spring classis meeting were sent to two OPC presbyteries, two URCNA classes, one CanRC classis. We have not sent an invitation to the RPCNA presbytery. We received invitations to classis and presbytery meetings this past year, including the Ontario West Classis and Niagara (CanRC), the Presbyter of the Midwest (OPC), the Classis Central and Eastern Classis (URCNA).

However, due to conflicts for the committee, we were only able to delegate men to Classis Niagara and RPCNA Atlantic Presbytery. We expect to have a delegate attend the Classis Ontario West (CanRC) March 2015 meeting. We have also had little representation from our fraternal churches at our own meetings. An exception to that has been the consistent attendance from our Canadian brothers in Ontario for the last number of years.

I sent letters of greeting to classes and presbyteries that we were invited to but could not attend. Your committee will make a concert effort to send delegates to the Midwest Presbytery (OPC) meetings and the URCNA meetings of Classis Central and East.

Your Minnesota classis churches continue to participate in lively fellowship with our OPC brothers in the region. We have a bi-monthly pastor's lunch with three OPC pastors and our three RCUS pastors. Redeemer Reformed Church, Emmaus Road Reformed Church, St. Paul's Evangelical Church, Mission OPC, and the OPC mission work in Andover held another annual joint Reformation service this fall.

Respectfully submitted: Rev. James Sawtelle, Rev. Randall Klynsma, Rev. Ryan Kron Mr. Walt Van Heest.

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

D. Missions Committee

Dear Brothers,

Your committee recently conducted visitations with the following at Waymart, PA, Blue Bell, P.A. and Rogers, AR .

Rogers, Arkansas.

Rev. Harvey Opp and Elder Marc Wiersma conducted the AR visitation starting the evening of January 9th with a meeting for the entire congregation. This was held at the Grace RCUS church building in Rogers. It is now the second year for the congregation in their own building which has a capacity of about 100 people. The property includes 3 acres and a 3 bedroom house. They continue to pay about $1,000

monthly on the mortgage. That includes the bank loan, now at $57,000, and the loan from Synod, now at $73,000. They continue to have some savings in case the older A/C or furnace would go out. They have 35-48 for typical attendance, including visitors and members, at their services.

Rev. Opp opened the meeting with a devotional on Matthew 16:13-19, where Jesus assured His people in saying: "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." It was stressed that Christians should therefore have confidence in the Lord and His grace, and with a positive approach invite others to "come and see" that we seek to follow the Scriptures in doctrine and practice. The purpose of our missions' visitations, with the involvement of Classis and Synod, was explained, as well as the goal of having self-supporting congregations established. It was good to interact with questions and comments from church members and to meet some new visitors who have been attending.

It was reported that Rev. Brice has been in good health as he continues in his ministry. The congregation described various congregational activities. They have Sunday School classes for the children and adults. In the adult class, Pastor Brice is going through the Heidelberg Catechism in detail with a power point presentation. They now have a time for prayer requests and prayer offered by various individuals at the close of the adult Sunday School hour. Rev. Opp was able to remain for that time after the next service, and it was a blessing to join the congregation in prayer.

They have been using the R. C. Sproul video series, 'Dust to Glory', for an evening study. Their church sign was updated. Invitations to this study have been put forth thereby and with other means such as pamphlets distributed in the neighborhood. They have distributed other reformed literature in the past, and Rev. Brice hands out business cards freely with an invitation to services listed. The church web site was updated, and it continues to be the main source for bringing visitors, as well as personal invitation by members. Visitor cards were produced to enable contact with any who might visit on the spur of the moment.

They are included on a free church listing on a local newspaper, although only times of services are reported there. They have discontinued the paid subscription of Sermon Audio, partially because their recording equipment broke down. Your committee suggested that an inexpensive digital recorder at the pulpit can work quite well. The suggestion was appreciated and a recorder was obtained for the next service, so that their church web site could have the sermons linked to it. It was also said that they can contact other mission works for suggested outreach methods. Social networking was stressed by some in attendance, and cautions with that means were discussed. The officers did meet afterward with an individual to pursue that outreach.

Your committee also urged that elder visitation be conducted as vital to the work. We also met the next morning with 2 men who are new to the work, and with a couple that have been visiting. The latter meeting included a presentation on the biblical basis for infant baptism, as that is an uncertain issue for the couple. We also met with the Spiritual Council regarding a matter of concern regarding sin in the congregation and how to approach those involved and how to teach the congregation regarding the issue.

Since the visitation the 2014 treasurer's report and a three year budget have been received. They request continued funding with a slightly greater decrease than received in recent years. Classis support requested is $4,860, a reduction of $900, a 6.25% decrease of original support. Synod support requested is $1,764, a reduction of

$1,116, a 7.75% decrease of original support. Your committee finds these requests agreeable. They do expect to use some savings to meet their budget for several years.

Overall, the visitation went well and was encouraging. The need for renewed outreach was mentioned by officers outside of the congregational meeting. It was good to see new visitors and meet with them. However, since the visitation, serious disunity has recently been manifested in the congregation. The Executive Committee of Classis is seeking to deal with this. Please keep the congregation in your prayers.

Waymart, Pennsylvania

On January 26th, Rev. Dan Schnabel visited Heritage Reformed Church. Other Elders were unable to attend the meetings. Rev. Schnabel met with the congregation that evening and had a dinner with them and met with the elders on Tuesday morning. The meeting began with the scripture reading Ephesians 1:15- 23 encouraging that the Classis continues to pray for them with thankfulness for God's sovereign work of grace among them and how God has worked in them to be steadfast in the faith.

A variety of things were discussed with the congregation including being asked if there were any issues or concerns that they wanted addressed. It's clear the congregation continues to strive to evangelize and sees how God has them in the community and at their jobs for this purpose. This year added to their normal studies (Men have Calvin's Institutes, Catechism and midweek Bible studies in homes) they examined material from Tony Curto on evangelism. This was done to prayerfully assist them in "*drawing out areas evangelism could take place*." They continue to place signs, use any free avenues such as newspapers, as well as rely on their website(3 domain names) for advertising. They also continue to have conferences and have members that are placing the Reformed Heralds in the local hospital. Rev. Potter is also now serving as a police chaplain for the Forest City area also as a form of outreach. This year they will also have a bake sale and rummage sale during the towns parade to bring more visibility to the church. They also had a wedding, which brought many people to hear the preaching of God's word. To encourage the communion of the saints they also participate in the Gettysburg conference at Covenant Reformed Church in Gettysburg.

3 times a month Rev. Potter has been preaching in the afternoons at Reformation Church Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. It was asked of the congregation if there were any concerns or issues with sharing their pastor. Everyone was thankful for the opportunity to have Rev. Potter do this work. The members at Reformation Church Blue Bell also have joined Heritage Reformed. Concerning their work with Reformation Church, taking it on as a mission work of Heritage, the future plans were also discussed. The possibility of Rev. Potter staying overnight in Blue Bell and holding a bible study on Monday in different areas was discussed. The possibility was also discussed that some time in the future perhaps they could have an intern or co-pastor to aid in the work. The difficult part is they have a great desire to put more effort to the Blue Bell area but do not have the finances.

A 3 year budget was submitted. This year they were helped by Reformation Church Blue Bell and their contribution. Their request for benevolent aid (which assists with the downturn) originally began at $500. That has been reduced to $350 and they continue to request that amount for this year.

Blue Bell, Pennsylvania

On Tuesday evening, January 27th ,Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Ron Potter met with some of the members from Reformation Church Blue Bell. This church continues to be the only Three Forms of Unity church in the Philadelphia area. Rev. Potter along with the assistance of Rev. Jay Fluck have been working with this congregation. The 9 members of Reformation Church Blue Bell went through membership class with Rev Potter and now are members of Heritage Reformed Church. Through this it is clear that their views concerning, worship, the covenant and other issues are in line with the RCUS views. During the month Rev. Potter preaches on three Sundays and Rev. Fluck on one Sunday. They currently have two services on the Lord's Day. Mr. Ken Hanko (previously a Protestant Reformed minister) will exhort in the morning. One of the changes that has occurred with the church is they have moved from having weekly communion to having it once a month. Through the year they have had occasional visitors, which is encouraging.

It is clear that while the recession diminished the church, the population in the area continues to change and grow. There was much discussion of what is being done as well as what can be done for outreach of the gospel. Rev. Schnabel had read Proverbs 15:22 concerning this need to prayerfully seek God's sovereign hand and the counsel of other godly men in order begin formulating more of a strategic plan. Currently they do use the website for most of their advertising. They are sitting well financially since they have use of the building in exchange for maintaining the property. So those expenses are minimal. Yet they do need financial assistance for any major work of outreach they may undertake. They are interested in having a full time minister there in the future but are also very happy with Rev. Potter. They are considering along with Rev. Potter beginning a bible study on Mondays in different areas of the city. They are also asking for a minimal amount of financial assistance that they can draw on if needed in order to do more outreach and finance conferences.

Eden Prairie, Minnesota

A meeting with the consistory of Emmaus Road Reformed Church was canceled due to an ice storm and was rescheduled to a later date. Emmaus Road is now off of all support from Classis and Synod. We thank our sovereign Lord for His blessing the hard work of Rev. Ryan Kron and their consistory as well as Rev. Jim Sawtelle and the Redeemer consistory who prayerfully planned and spearheaded this mission work.

Recommendations:

1. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with $405 per month, a total of $4,860 in fiscal year 2016, beginning July 2015. [A reduction of $900, 6.25% of original support.]
2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas, with $147 per month, a total of $1,764 in fiscal year 2016, beginning July 2015. [A reduction of $1,116, 7.75% of original support.]
3. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA, with $350 per month, a total of $4,200 in fiscal year 2016, beginning July 2015, for rent and associated costs. [Same as last year.]
4. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with $3,000 for outreach through Reformation Church Blue Bell if needed.

5. That during the Covenant East Classis time would be made for a prayer of thanksgiving to our gracious triune God and His blessing Emmaus Road Reformed Church.

Respectfully: Rev. Harvey Opp, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Mr. Mike Altman, Mr. Robert Anderson, Mr. Lee Blank, Mr. Mori Willemsen.

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

E. Publications

No committee was formed.

F. Church Camp Committee

Preparation for camp really began in July of 2013, with the reservation of Camp Sinawa in Manitowoc County, WI for the summer of 2014. This was done by long-time camp organizer and director, Carolyn Hackmann. Real organization for the July 8-11 camp began in April, but much early ground work had been done by Carolyn and others prior to this.

In order that camp brochures could be sent out by early May, it was crucial that a camp theme be chosen. Pastors Sawtelle and Altman came through in a timely fashion by the first week of May with the theme "Hallowed Be Thy Name."

Volunteer signup sheets were sent out on or about the 1st of June and the response throughout the Classis congregations was heartening, with members of the home Manitowoc church taking the lead role. As always, the camp depended heavily on donations as well, and a number of people from all churches contributed money, with the members of the home congregation providing many of the material items and hands on work—food and food service, boats and drivers, lifeguards, transportation, etc.

Churches were asked to estimate attendance by June 29, 2014, so that more specific planning could go forward.

T-shirts were ordered with the new camp theme on or about June 9th from a new vendor (Van Tees and Graphics of Manitowoc, WI) using the previous year's number and sizes.

A couple of important additions to the physical aspect of the camp were, the spraying of a mosquito and insect repellant (Liquid Preventative Insecticide) from the beach area, through the woods, to the lodge, by Storm—The Lawn Pro. This seemed to be quite effective at reducing the "July in Wisconsin" mosquito menace. Additionally, a Clean Air Zone Generator was purchased with camp funds. This machine was run for a time in each of the cabins on the camp grounds in an attempt to reduce the development and effects of mold. The results seemed positive.

The camp theme "Hallowed Be Thy Name" seemed well-received by senior and junior campers alike. An overview of the theme was presented Tuesday night, and four sessions followed during the week: Islam, Me-Ism, Hallowed be Thy name, and Daily conversion. Pastors Sawtelle, Sorensen, Klynsma, Schnabble and Altman were responsible for and delivered the lessons.

Devotions were led each evening with the boys and pastors in the lodge, and the girls and women counselors in the dorm.

Covenant Cup camp competition was organized Tuesday evening with members of each team being of mixed age group and church affiliation.

The talent show Thursday night ran the gamut from "a pastor in space" to various musical numbers. It was attended by all campers and a number of non-campers and volunteers.

After some pre-camp discussion about the final night of camp continuing to be an "all nighter" for senior level campers, reassurances regarding supervision were put in place. Also, the hard and fast rule that no all night participants be allowed to drive home on Friday was instituted. The general reaction to this final night was that it was a positive experience with no abuses reported.

Final camp statistics-

65 campers attended (37 girls, 28 boys…40 juniors, 25 seniors)
15 adults attended including 5 pastors
Break down of church participation: (campers and adults)-Garner-8, Hamburg-10,
KC-18, Manitowoc-13, Minneapolis-26, Naploean-5

Once camp was over, the committee chairman asked pastors to consider possible improvements for camp going forward. The following suggestions were made:

1. Better coordination of Covenant Cup teams and ice-breaker at the beginning of camp- - -possible Covenant Cup team coordinator
2. Recruiting of college or post-college age men and women to mix with the campers, act as mentors, mixers, etc.
3. Air-soft guns to be used as competition during Covenant Cup games
4. A good keyboard (may have been solved)
5. Moving the time of meals from 6:00pm to 5:30pm.
6. Extend camp…begin Monday night.
7. Camp lesson suggestions
    a. All lessons must have hand out notes
    b. Pastors should not let all rhetorical questions go unanswered
    c. Possibly use a team approach (2 pastors) to each lesson

Chairman-Steve Stuebbe, Rev. Steve Altman, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Andrew Gilman, Mark Bruckschen

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Classis Action:
The report was adopted by the Classis.

Reports of Officers

A. President's Report

"I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You. You who fear the Lord, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard. My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever! All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations." Psalm 22:22-28

This quotation from Psalm 22 is remarkable. Most of us recognize Psalm 22 as a sad and even tragic Psalm. The first verse passes from the LORD Jesus' lips while in agony on the cross, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" The verses that follow prophetically describes Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. They are obscene and graphic, and accurately describe the events and circumstances of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. There are a couple things to which I would like to draw your attention. As a prophetic psalm it foretold what Christ would have to endure to secure the redemption of His people. From the beginning it was clear; a tremendous price would need to be paid. Yes, He would crush the serpent's head; but in doing so, He would be bruised. It was this bruising, even before his crucifixion, that torturously brought forth prayerful drops of blood in the Garden. And still he went, willingly, readily, the full distance for the sake of His people.

But Psalm 22 speaks of more than this dismal event. As the Psalm reaches its apex, we learn the effect and goal of His work. As I called up the passage on Biblegateway.com, I noticed the title describing the Psalm: THE SUFFERING, PRAISE AND POSTERITY OF THE MESSIAH. Christ endured all that He endured because he knew that His sacrifice would be accepted and His People would be redeemed. The remainder of the Psalm describes how they will hear, be drawn, and assemble to worship and praise His Name. If you read through the above verses you will see how they predict the unfolding ministry of the Spirit in the Book of Acts. He speaks of the descendents of Jacob rejoicing and the offspring of Israel being gathered in. Then moments later the Psalmist affirms that the ends of the world will hear and fear and worship the LORD. They too will be gathered into the assembly, the congregation. All this, of course, points to the New Testament Church, which is "*the general assembly and church of the firstborn*" (Hebrews 12:23).

While we belong to a particular denomination called the Reformed Church in the United States, it is good for us to remember that we are just a part of this unfolding mystery and majestic work of God's grace throughout time and history. Every generation in every age needs to be vigilant and take its stand for God and the Kingdom of His Christ. We and our congregations need to be vigilant and give ourselves wholly in service to our Lord. Without diligence and watchfulness, we will grow weak and tired. May God and His Spirit be pleased to renew and invigorate us to continue laboring in this work.

As I've read through and reflected on the Parochial Reports of the ministers of Covenant East Classis, I've been encouraged. It is clear that our pastors are committed to Christ's Church and the preaching and teaching of His Word to the best of their abilities. As our pastors have labored, our congregations have heard the Word. God has been pleased to bless the work and continue his grace toward our congregations.

From their reports, it is clear that each of our pastors is laboring diligently in the work of the Christian ministry. They are dedicated to the preaching and teaching of the holy Gospel. They are feeding and shepherding their flocks. Most of our pastors are fully supported by their congregations, but a few remain who continue with financial challenges. A common note throughout the reports is gratitude to the Lord and congregations for the livelihood provided. As best I can recall, I believe all our ministers have enjoyed relatively good health. We have one minister, in response to complications of Obamacare, who has taken on extra employment in order to continue insurance coverage for his family. While not a long term solution, it was thought to be workable for the time being.

It should probably be noted that the Peace Reformed Church of Garner has gone through a major conflict over the last year. This conflict resulted in the resignations of Rev. Harvey Opp and two of the elders. As you might suppose, this left the congregation in a state of flux. Former elders were appointed to finish the unexpired terms and since then the congregation has

elected their replacements. They have recently extended a call to an OPC pastor, Dr. Mark Larson. He has indicated his desire to accept this call and arrangements are being made for his examination.

Each report also indicated that our ministers have been laboring with our youth in catechism instruction. Most of the ministers have also participated in our Summer Church Camp. We remain grateful for the faithful labors of the Manitowoc congregation and Rev. Kyle Sorensen for the organizing and hosting of each year's camp. "Thank-you!" I've included these or similar words for the last few years, but we are truly grateful for this ministry you provide for our youth.

Over the last year, our mission works have varied from a state of holding their own to prospering. God has been blessing and growing the church in Eden Prairie, MN, in dramatic fashion. Their communicant membership has increased from 55 last year to 76 this year. In Rev. Kron's report he states, "As a church we are not focusing on numbers, but on shepherding the flock that God has entrusted to us and in growing in the grace of Christ together." He had pointed out earlier how shepherding is an essential part of their work,

> "We cannot shepherd those we do not know, so shepherding means we as servant-leaders must truly get to know each person in the congregation. One way this happens is through family visiting, as the elders come to our homes to open the word of God, pray with us, and hear the struggles and joys of our hearts. This is a great opportunity for the elders to get to know the congregation (and for the congregation to get to know them), which enables us as servant-leaders to continue to minister the gospel of Christ to the congregation…so our hearts are knit more closely together…."

Statistically, there were some year over year changes, but most are understandable in light of the ebb and flow of Church life. Notable is the fact that our confirmed, unconfirmed, and baptized members all increased by 2%. This is the first time that all three of these have been positive in recent history. It is certainly an occasion to give thanks to God! We're thankful to note that there were 15 young people confirmed this year and 12 baptisms.

As noted last year most of the congregations are providing opportunities for spiritual growth and study. Most congregations have Bible Studies, small groups and designated times for fellowship and mutual learning. One congregation mentioned their plans to begin a mid-week Prayer Service. Some were studying our Creeds and Confessions, while others were studying classic reformed works. It was mentioned by a few of our congregations that they were being blessed by R.C. Sproul's *Dust to Glory: A Survey of the Old and New Testaments*. May the Lord be pleased to bless all of these labors for his glory and the building up of the saints.

It seems that the internet and our web presence continue to be the most consistent and successful way to reach new members. Several of our churches also upload their sermons to SermonAudio.com which has been a helpful tool to acclimate potential visitors to the teaching and preaching they can expect to hear. It is encouraging to see sermons preached in the context of a local church continue to minister to dozens, hundreds, and occasionally even thousands of individuals across the United States and around the world.

There remain three men under care with a couple of our men, Steven Carr and Cody Schwichtenberg, nearing the end of seminary education. Several of our ministers are presently in mentoring relationships with those preparing for the gospel ministry. We should continue praying for those who hope to one day become leaders in our churches.

One particular joy that stands out is what the Lord has done in the Gettysburg, PA, congregation where Rev. Jay Fluck has been laboring over the last three years. This congregation had been adrift from the Reformed faith as they tried to sort out what was and wasn't "*the faith once for all delivered to the saints.*" On September 28, 2014, the congregation

voted to seek membership in the RCUS. They have brought their constitution and practices in line with RCUS standards. Rev. Fluck reports:

> 2014 has been a monumental year in the history of our congregation. It began in the difficulties of theological conflict and a division based on that conflict. Over the course of the year the sides of that conflict became more clearly defined. We began to recognize that we had claimed to be historically Reformed, but we were not. As we became more cognizant of the Reformers, especially those classified as "Reformed", we began to understand that we had not known what they had said, so we were learning new things from the old teachers of the inspired Word. This accentuated the differences between us and led us through conflict to a new resolution.

In summary then, we rejoice that the Lord has been using and blessing the ministry of the Gospel to build up the churches of Covenant East Classis. Let's all give ourselves afresh with renewed zeal that we and our congregations might "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*." Let us never forget the exhortation of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:15-16: "*Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you*."

Sincerely, your co-laborer in the Gospel, Rev. Randall Klynsma

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Classis Action:

The report was to be spread in the official minutes, printed in the *Abstract of the Minutes*, and submitted to the *Reformed Herald*.

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Dear Brothers in Christ,

It has been my privilege to serve as your Stated Clerk for the last half of this year. As you all know, in May at Synod our former clerk, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, was elected to serve as the editor for the *Reformed Herald*. Though none of us would argue that Rev. Sorensen is certainly a good fit for such a position, it did necessitate his being relieved of his duties as clerk in order to carry out this work. In July, while attending our Covenant East Youth Camp in Manitowoc, I was able to secure all of the necessary records from Rev. Sorensen, in order to move the post of Stated Clerk with me to Napoleon. Please know that I appreciate your patience with me as I have much to learn in regards to doing this job for the Classis.

Prior to resigning his post, your former clerk typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder all of the minutes of the 29th meeting of the Covenant East Classis, along with all of the report's, overtures, and other relevant information. The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the abstract, and sent to the *Reformed Herald.* The 2014 Abstract was prepared and copies were printed and distributed to the churches of Synod in compliance with standing rule #10. All of the requisite forms and necessary communications were sent to the Synod Clerk, along with the overtures to Synod from our Classis.

This year, together with the former Clerk, we sent out four Executive Circulars. The President and I, secured our Pre-Classis speaker. I also was involved in serving with the various issues that were brought to the Executive Committee throughout the course of this past year.

For this meeting, I have organized all of the overtures, communications, and reports, and placed them all in their proper folders. I have received one Necrology for this year. Also, along with the President, I helped to put together our Agenda and schedule for this meeting. One word regarding our reports this year. Gentlemen, I know that we can do better than we have this year. Many reports came late, and needed correcting. Many of our churches statistics were late as well. This makes the job of the clerk more difficult than it ought to be, and it can be easily rectified. We need to be mindful of our deadlines, and I certainly include myself in that admonition, in order to make certain that we carry out the work of the church orderly and well.

I thank all of you who have went out of your way to aid me in this work this past year. Though I'm still on a bit of a learning curve, I shudder to think of where I would be without the help that so many of you have given. I thank you again for the confidence that you have placed in me in assigning me this post. And I look forward to another year in the service of our Lord!

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Steven R. Altman

Clerk's Note: Necrology for Elder Gustav appears in Appendix #2

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

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

1. Classes should take note of the corrections that should be made to their minutes as adopted by the Synod (268th Abstract, pp. 95-96).
2. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the *calendar* year.
3. Standing rules #2 and #3 which respectively read: "The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod May 1"; "The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk May 1."
4. That the Stated Clerk of each Classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring Classis meeting.
5. Standing Ministerial Aid recommendation 8 (2013 Abstract page 76), that pursuant to Article 28 of the RCUS Constitution, Classes shall not consider a pastoral call letter as "adequate support" to the temporal needs of the called pastor, unless retirement is addressed and funded in the terms of the call.
6. The Treasurer's request that the treasurers of the various churches be reminded to comply with Synod standing rule 8 with regard to designating for which fund the monies delivered to the RCUS are to be attributed.
7. Concerning recommendation #1 of Standing Judicial (*268th Abstract*, page 92), that paragraph 49 of the Rules of Order be amended by inserting the sentence, "Moving the question requires two-thirds of the votes cast in the affirmative to be sustained," I made the recommended change to the Rules of Order. I am sending you the amended Rules in a pdf file.

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

Respectfully submitted,
David Fagrey, Stated Clerk, RCUS

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

D. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jim Drewes presented the following report.

Classis Action: The report was adopted. It was also audited by the Standing Finances Committee and found to be in order.

Fund Balances (YTD July 2014 thru Feb 2015 YTD)			
Starting Balance – July 1, 2014			**$95, 432.32**
General Fund **Balance 06/30/14**	$ 3, 513.57		
Receipts	$ 4,148.00		
Expenses	$ 883.99		
Balance 2/28/15		$ 6,777.58	
***Missions Fund** **Balance 06/30/14**	$82,011.64		
Receipts	$ 6,911.00		
Expenses	$13,624.73		
Balance 2/28/15		$75, 297.91	
Benevolence Fund **Balance 6/30/14**	$ 4,225.87		
Receipts	$ 6,911.00		
Expenses	$ 10,168.00		
Balance 2/28/15		$ 968.87	
Student Aid Fund **Balance 6/30/15**	$ 5,681.24		
Receipts	$ 5,067.67		
Expenses	$ 7,200.00		
Balance 2/28/15		$ 3,548.91	

ENDING Balance February 28, 2015			**$ 86,593.27**
*Current $55,344.30 available for future CEC Mission works			

Detailed Income Report (July 2014 thru Feb 2015 YTD)

		18%	+ 30%	+ 30%	+ 22%	=100%		
Guideline Total $66		$ 12	+ $ 20	+ $ 20	+ $ 14	= $ 66		
	Members	**General**	**Missions**	**Benevolence**	**Student Aid**	**Budget**	**Totals YTD**	**Due 6/15/15**
NW Arkansas	24	$288	$480	$480	$336	$1,584	$1,108.80	$475.20
Garner, IA	86	$1,032	$1,720	$1,720	$1,204	$5,676	$2,838.00	$2,838.00
Hamburg, MN	209	$2,508	$4,180	$4,180	$2,926	$13,794	$66.88	$13,727.12
Kansas City, MO	56	$672	$1,120	$1,120	$784	$3,696	$0.00	$3,696.00
Manitowoc, WI	143	$1,716	$2,860	$2,860	$2,002	$9,438	$7,471.76	$1,966.24
Minneapolis, MN	101	$1,212	$2,020	$2,020	$1,414	$6,666	$3,333.00	$3,333.00
Eden Prairie, MN	55	$660	$1,100	$1,100	$770	$3,630	$3,630.00	$0.00
Napoleon, OH	67	$804	$1,340	$1,340	$938	$4,422	$4,422.00	$0.00
Waymart, PA	14	$168	$280	$280	$196	$924	$0.00	$924.00
Totals	**755**	**$9,060**	**$15,100**	**$15,100**	**$10,570**	**$49,830**	**$22,870.44**	**$26,959.56**
						Other income and interest		$167.23
Income Total		**$4,148.00**	**$ 6,911,00**	**$ 6,911.00**	**$ 5,067.67**			**$23,037.67**

Detailed Expense Report (July 20143 thru Feb 2015 YTD)

General Fund Expense		
Spring Classis Meeting	$ -	
Clerk/Printing & supplies	$ -	
Travel	$ 855.50	
Honorarium	$ -	
Postage/Phone/Conf Calls	$ 28.49	
Total		**$ 883.99**
Mission Fund Expense		
Grace Reformed Church	$ 3,840.00	
Heritage Reformed Church	$ 2,800.00	

Emmaus Road Reformed Church	$ 4, 664.00		
Travel	$ 2,320.73		
Total		**$13,624.73**	
Benevolence			
Heritage Reformed Church	$ 3,200.00		
Medical - Fluck	$ 3,168.00		
Medical - Potter	$ 3,800.00		
Total		**$10,168.00**	
Student Aid			
Schwichtenberg, Cody	$ 1,200.00		
Carr, Steve	$ 6,000.00		
Total		**$7,200.00**	
		Expense Total	**$31,876.72**
Total Classis Income vs Expense July 2014- Feb 2015			**-$8,839.05**

Respectfully Submitted, Jim Drewes, Treasurer

Parochial Reports of Ministers

Each minister read his parochial report. Opportunity was given for delegates to ask questions about any report. Prayer was then offered for each of the pastors, elders, and their charges after their report was read.

Classis Action: The classis took note of each report.

Constitutional Questions to the Elders

The President addressed the questions found in article 81 of the *RCUS Constitution* to the elder delegates of each congregation. A brief time of further questions for the elders followed the official answers found below:

1. Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God?
   All churches 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 churches answered "Yes."

3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:
   a. Is visitation faithfully performed?
      All churches answered "Yes," except Hamburg , which answered, "A work in progress," and Kansas City and Minneapolis who answered: "Needs improvement."

b. Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution?

All churches answered "Yes," except Minneapolis, which answered "Yes, needs improvement."

4. Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution?

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

      All churches answered "Yes."
   c. Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the guidelines for giving?

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

      All churches answered "Yes."

6. Are the Church records properly kept?

All churches answered "Yes."

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

All churches answered "Yes."

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

All churches answered "Yes" except Waymart which answered: "According to the provisions of our congregation as well as Classis."

Report of Membership and Financial Statistics

The Stated Clerk provided a table of statistics based on the information submitted by the churches of classis (see Appendix #3, of this abstract). This report was adopted.

Reports from Classis Delegates to Fraternal Bodies

Rev. Ron Potter reported on his visits to Classis Niagara of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Atlantic Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Churches or Visitors

Rev. Tom Wetselaar from Classis Central U.S. of the URCNA addressed the Classis. Rev. Jim Sawtelle led the body in prayer.

Rev. Zack Wyse from Classis eastern U.S. of the URCNA addressed the Classis, Rev. Ron Potter led the body in prayer.

Rev. Reuben Bredenhof from Classis Ontario West of the CanRC addressed the body. Rev. Ryan Kron led the body in prayer.

Rev. Larry Oldaker from the Presbytery of Ohio, OPC addressed the body. Rev. Kyle Sorensen led in prayer.

Reports of Special Committees

A. Special Committee to study the exclusive use of wine in the Lord's Supper

A majority and minority report were brought before the body. By Classis action the minority report was substituted as the report before the body.

Concerning the biblical and confessional data pertaining to
The use of wine in the Lord's Supper
Minority Study Paper

Preamble: The undersigned was not satisfied with the thoroughness of the majority of the Committee in fulfilling the above mandate, specifically as it relates to providing guidance for new and existing churches and the historical and practical grounds for this. Thus by agreement with the Chairman of the Special Committee, the undersigned herein submits a minority report for Classis consideration and possible adoption. - RP.

Introduction:
This paper is in fulfillment of the mandate of Covenant East Classis RCUS in 2014 to a Special Study Committee appointed by Classis . . . *to study the biblical and confessional data pertaining the use of wine in the administration of the Lord's Supper, in order to ascertain whether the Bible and/or our confessional standards require the exclusive use of wine in the sacrament, or do they allow for the use of grape juice or "non-alcoholic wine, " routinely, or as an exception. The Committee will present its findings to the 30th Annual Session of the Covenant East Classis for adoption, and thereby provide guidance to new and existing churches.*[1]

I propose, in fulfillment of the above mandate to study the historical antecedent to the LORD's Supper, the Passover; to inquire into the Jewish contextual background to the LORD's Supper; to explore the New Testament context regarding the LORD's Supper and its institution and to examine the practice of early church, the Reformed Confessions of the Church; the contemporary situation and the particular documents of the RCUS germane to the question of the use of wine in the LORD's Supper and to determine whether there may be exceptions to the use of wine either routinely or in individual cases, and the substitution of some other beverage in its place and then, if so, what kind, with what biblical warrant may these exceptions be made, and who is it that makes them..

This Study will also seek to determine if personal circumstances (scruples, medical issues etc.) ever historically warranted a substitution of another beverage for wine in the Reformed Churches and if so who made that decision.

[1] Abstract of the Minutes of the 29th Annual Session of Covenant East Classis, 2014, p. 34 (Judicial #2).

This paper will not be concerned with establishing the biblical legitimacy of the use of wine by the Christian. The mandate assumes what has been thoroughly studied and established elsewhere. [2] This paper will not deal with all the resources germane to the subject but will reflect in the footnotes additional information that may be consulted.

I. The historical antecedent to the LORD's Supper: The Passover

Though the covenant ritual of Exodus 24:6-8 provided the principle antecedent for the LORD's Supper, the earlier Passover, instituted in Egypt, provided an important antecedent as well, inasmuch as it typified, in the literal sacrificial lamb, the blood and body offering of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ Thus the apostle Paul speaks of "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7).

Now it must be kept in mind here that there was never in the Passover the use of an element to represent the blood of the lamb because there *was* literal blood shed, that of the animal itself.

Now while wine was enjoined upon the people of God as a drink offering that accompanied the daily sacrifice (Ex. 29:40); as part of the presentation of first-fruits (Lev. 23:13;) and other offerings (Numbers 15:5); as an eligible part of the tithe to be eaten and drunk before the LORD (Deut 12:17-18); as a drink offering to the LORD (Numbers 15:5,7,10) and as a lawful beverage to " gladden the heart of man" (Ps. 104:15)[3], no biblical mention is made of its legislation or use in conjunction with the Passover. Though not enjoined by the law of God, the use of wine with the Passover became an established *custom* (emphasis added*)* in the post-Babylonian period.[4]

II. The Jewish contextual background to the use of wine in the Lord's Supper.

There are two principle sources through which historical Jewish customs and practices may be investigated. Both were written in the early Christian era. The first is the *Jerusalem Talmud* compiled in northern Israel by the third century AD. The second is the *Babylonian Talmud* published around the fifth century AD. The *Jerusalem Talmud*, though earlier, is shorter and is considered to be the less authoritative of the two. The *Babylonian Talmud* (*Talmud Bavli)* is the longer and tends to favor multi-part, complex and lengthy arguments and debates. It is the *Babylonian Talmu*d that is most often referred to simply as "The Talmud" and will be the principle one referred to below by that name.

The *Talmud* is the central text of Rabbinic Judaism. It consists of two parts, the *Mishnah* which is a written compendium of Rabbinic Judaism's oral instruction (torah) and the *Gemera* which is a later elucidation or commentary on the *Mishnah* and on the Hebrew Bible in general.

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[2] This has been ably done by G.I. Williamson, Wine in the Bible and the Church, Pilgrim Publishing, 1976 and by Kenneth L. Gentry Jr.: The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages. A biblical perspective, Baker Book House, 1986, etc.

[3] Mankind in general not just the upper class as the majority paper suggests.

[4] *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature;* Rev. John M'Clintock, DD, James Strong, S.T.D, New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1881. Volume X, p. 1015, Alfred Edersheim; *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, Reprint 1982, p. 235.

The *Talmud* contains 63 *Tractates* on a host of topics ranging from the Doctrine of God to the Hereafter and everything in between, including Folklore. These tractates each consist of the *Mishnah* and the *Gemera,* with the teaching of the Mishnah followed by the commentary of the *Gemera.* The *Tractates* gather together the teachings and opinions of thousands of Rabbi's over the centuries preceding the actual publication of the *Talmud* in the 5th or 6th century AD.

One particular *Tractate* called the *Pesachim* deals solely with the Passover. Chapter 10 of the *Pesachim* is entitled: *REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE MEAL ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER AND THE FOUR CUPS OF WINE TO BE DRUNK WITH THE MEAL*. In the opening paragraph the *Mishnah* reads:

"On the eve of any Passover it is not lawful for a person to eat anything from the time of Min'hah (afternoon prayer) until after dusk. Even the meanest in Israel shall not eat until they have arranged themselves in proper order at ease round the table; nor shall a person have less than four cups of wine, even if they must be given him from the funds devoted to the charitable support of the very poor."[5]

Three directions germane to our subject are enjoined here by the Rabbi's. The first is that the Passover consisted of 4 distinct cups. What these are and how they fit into the Lord 's Supper will become plain below. The second directive is that the four cups were intended for each participant. The third directive indicates that each of these four cups contain *wine* That this was literal fermented *wine* (Heb. yahin) is made clear from the following quotes from the *Gemerera* as it "fleshes out" or comments upon the *Mishnah.*

> We have learned in a Boraitha, R. Jehudah said: "The cup must contain the taste and the color of red wine." Said Rabha: "What is the reason of R. Jehudah's statement? Because it is written [Proverbs xxiii. 31]: 'Do not look on the wine when it is red' (whence we adduce, that wine must be red).[6]

In the context of Proverbs it is wine with the capacity to intoxicate that is in view here. And it is to be red. Red wine gets is colour from being fermented with the skins. Therefore the cup enjoined in the Passover is literal wine with the capacity to intoxicate, thus alcoholic wine..

This raises a problem. If children were present at the Passover (which apparently according to this tractate they were)[7] then does this mean they were to also drink wine? And if so did not drinking four cups as the *Mishnah* prescribes leave the children rather inebriated? In anticipation of this the *Genera goes on* to add.

> The rabbis taught: "The duty of drinking the four cups devolves upon all alike--men, women, and even children." R. Jehudah, however, said: "What benefit

[5] *The Babylonian Talmud*; translated by Michael L. Rodkinson, Volumes 1-10; 1918. Public Doman PDF accessed October 1st, 2014 through www.ultimatereferencelibrary.com; Volume 3, chapter 10, p. 1436

[6] Ibid. p. 1446.

[7] Cf. paper by the undersigned prepared as part of Licensure requirements for the Western Classis of the RCUS which in arguing against Paedocommunion also argues against children being present in the first Passover.

would children derive from wine? They should rather be given nuts, parched corn, etc., on the eve of Passover, so as to keep them awake at night, and that may make them inquire into the reason of the festivity.[8]

When one considers that a cup of wine was quarter of a hin and that a hin was equivalent to 5 liters it is no wonder children were excluded from the four cups used during the Passover even if it was passed from person to person which according to this tractate, it was not. The exclusion of children alone argues for the use of literal wine in the Passover.

A question might be asked at this point as to whether the Jews ever considered using another beverage since the scriptures do not specifically legislate the use of wine in the Passover? The answer is yes they did. You see this in the *Gemera* as the debate over the statement of the *Mishnah* continues with an anecdote:

> Mar the Younger and Mar the Elder, sons of R. Hisda, related to R. Ashi the following: It once happened, that Ameimar was a guest in our house, and not having any wine, beer was brought for the Habdalah; but he would not use it for that purpose, and went to sleep without supper. On the morrow, after a good deal of trouble we succeeded in procuring some wine; and he said the Habdalah and ate. A year afterwards he was again our guest, and once more we did not have any wine, so we brought beer for the Habdalah. He then remarked: "If wine is so scarce with you and your usual beverage is beer, then the beer may be considered as wine of your land." Accordingly he said the Habdalah over it and ate his meal. [9]

Here is a case where, because of *scarcity,* beer was substituted for wine during the service prior to a holy day which would include the Passover. However it was the exception not the rule. But then notice the *Gemera* goes on to offer this comment regarding the cup of blessing after meals which would include the cup of blessing in the Passover:

> The rabbis taught: "Neither Kiddush nor any other benediction should be made with anything except wine." Is there then no benediction made over beer and water, namely: "Through whose word everything came into being"? Said Abayi: "The teaching of the rabbis relative to any other benediction means, that the cup given for the benediction after meals should only be of wine." (Emphasis added).

More could be added from the *Tractate Pesachim* to establish that when it came to the Passover the four cups used at the various stages were not cups of anything other than wine. If there had been a change in this practice as the New Covenant era approached the *Talmud,* published a few centuries after the inauguration of the New Covenant, would surely have had something to say of this. It is this Jewish background concerning the *custom* of the use of wine at the Passover that informs our understanding of what took place at the final Passover over which our LORD presided with His disciples. Consider next,

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid p. 1444

III. The New Testament background for the Lord's Supper.

According to the *Talmud* the wine in the four cups of the Passover could be, but did not necessarily have to be, mixed with water. "R. Jehudah said in the name of Samuel: "Each cup must contain wine which, when mixed with three parts of water, will be good wine. If unmixed wine was drunk, the duty has nevertheless been fulfilled."[10]

Lightfoot's comment is helpful here as to why mixed wine was used in the Passover. Quoting the *Jerusalem Talmud* he writes: "Rabbi Chain saith, Four cups contain an Italian quart of wine."[11] He then adds: "Their wine was very strong, and not fit to be drunk without water . . .The mingling of water with every cup was requisite for health, and the avoiding of drunkenness." [12]

It is this celebration of the Passover which used wine capable of intoxication that our LORD
summoned His disciples to eat with Him. **Luke 22:7-14** ***7****Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.* ***8****And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.* ***9****And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?* ***10****And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.* ***11****And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?* ***12****And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.* ***13****And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.* ***14****And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.*

As the *Pesachim* made clear, four cups of wine were used in the Passover. There is a divergence of rabbinical opinion as to why the number four was chosen. That is not germane to our study here. These four cups were handed around at specified intervals in the Pascal meal. At this Passover meal with His disciples, Jesus, as Head of that household would pass four cups of mingled or unmingled wine to His disciples.

Lest it be thought that when the phrase "the cup" is used it did not expressly refer to wine, let it be noted that aside from what the cup was meant to represent, "the cup" of the Passover never held anything other than wine. To argue that "the cup" could refer to any beverage and especially to unfermented grape juice is to impute to these words "the cup" a meaning that discounts the actual substance it contained. If it is to be argued that another beverage may be substituted for wine then that argument must take place outside of the context in which the LORD's Supper was founded. It cannot be sustained by a reference to the Passover itself which required, according to *custom*, four cups of wine with the capacity to intoxicate if unmingled.

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[10] Ibid p. 1446

[11] *Comment on the New Testament From the Talmud and Hebraica,* John Lightfoot, Hendrickson Publishers, third printing, 1997, Volume 2, p. from the original edition, Oxford University Press, 1859

[12] Ibid

Luke specifically writes of two of these four cups of wine. The first is mentioned in **Luke 22:17** ***17****And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:* . . . According to Edersheim this was the first of the four cups.[13] The second cup that Luke mentions is actually the third of the four cups and is called by Luke "the cup after supper" (22:20) and by Matthew (26:27) and Mark (14:23) as simply "the cup". Lightfoot points out that this third cup was commonly called in Talmudic language: *the cup of blessing*[14] language used by the Apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 10:16** ***16****The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?* . . .

Edersheim writes: "There cannot be any reasonable doubt that this was the third cup which our Lord connected with His own Supper. It is called in Jewish writings, just as by St. Paul, "the cup of blessing,' partly because it and the first cup required a special 'blessing,' and partly because it followed on the 'grace after meat." Indeed, such importance attached to it that the Talmud notes ten peculiarities, too minute indeed for our present consideration, but sufficient to show the special value set upon it."[15]

To argue that no mention is made in the gospels of the four cups of the Passover is not germane to the establishment of the contents of the cup. We know that however many were referred to they contained wine.

IV. The Institution of the Lord's Supper itself.

When the final morsel of the Pascal meal was eaten the LORD then says this with respect to "the cup of blessing":: **Matthew 26:28** ***28****For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* By these words He brings to an end the Mosaic economy and institutes a New Covenant or Testament. Under the Old Covenant the confirmation of this covenant was by the blood of bulls and goats (Exodus 24; Hebrews 9) because there was still blood to be shed for the remission of sins, that of the antitype of these bulls and goats, the LORD Jesus Christ, . In contrast , the New Covenant was confirmed by a cup of wine because there would be no further need of the shedding of blood and the wine was intended by our Lord's use of the near demonstrative pronoun "this" to signify His own blood.

Using almost the same identical covenant language that Moses did in Exodus 24:8 when he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the people in confirmation of the Old Covenant, our LORD here declares, with the sign and seal of a cup of wine representing His blood shed under the New Covenant for the remission of sins, that a time of reformation has come. **Hebrews 9:11-15**

11*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;* ***12****Neither by the blood of goats and calves, <u>but by his own blood</u> he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* ***13****For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:* ***14****How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

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[13] Edersheim. *op cit* p. 239
[14] Lightfoot *op cit* p. 352
[15] Edersheim, pp. 243-244.

[15]And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

This last Passover in which the cup of wine was used was made, consistent with the Old Covenant ritual in Exodus 34, to signify the blood of the Covenant shed by the Saviour which now forms an important element in the institution of the LORD's Supper. The contents of the cup are made by our LORD to represent His blood in language entirely in harmony with Exodus 34. The Apostle Paul writes: **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** *[23]For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: [24]And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. [25]After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, <u>This cup is the new testament in my blood:</u> this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. [26]For as often as ye eat this bread, and <u>drink this cup,</u> ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

Clearly the wine filled cup of the Passover is now the wine filled cup given by our LORD to the New Covenant Church, to represent His blood, shed for the remission of sins. Wine signifies the blood of the Saviour in the institution of the LORD's Supper. No other liquid was in "the cup" except wine, perhaps mingled with water, as was the custom, but still wine..

V. The practice of the early Church.

It is not the intent of this portion of the study to be exhaustive but rather illustrative of the truth that wine in the cup of the LORD's Supper was the practice of the early church. In importing the views of these early church fathers into this study is not to suggest that their practice is the final word. Scripture alone has that authority. But it is to say that these early readers and interpreters of the New Testament had an understanding of scripture that we today must labour to re-construct. Calvin in the Prefatory Address to King Francis in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* writes of the value of consulting the early church fathers: . . .we do not despise; in fact, if it were to our present purpose, I could with no trouble at all prove that the greater part of what we are saying today meets their approval."[16] In the pages that follow he shows that the writings of 17 of the early Church fathers are consistent with his views.

Justin Martyr (AD 110-165)

That the practice of the Jews to mingle water with wine at the Passover, carried over into the early church, in its practice of the Lord's Supper, is evident in this quote from the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr. He writes:

> There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and <u>a cup of wine</u> mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people must express their assent by saying 'Amen.' . . . And when the

[16] J.T. McNeill (Ed), (LCC). Volume 1, p. 18, The Westminster Press, 1960.

president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those of us who are called deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bead and the wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion."[17]

Though mixed with water it was wine and not some other beverage that was used in the administration of the Lord's Supper at this stage in the early church.

Clement of Alexander (153-217)

Clement authored, for the sake of new converts to Christ, a series of writings contained in three books entitled *The Instructor.* In these books Clement explained what Christian morals and manners ought to look like according to the instruction of Christ, *the* Instructor. In Book II he lays down rules for the regulation of the Christian life in painstaking detail. In the second chapter of this book, entitled *On Drinking,* while discoursing on the abuses of wine, he writes this: "The scripture accordingly, has named wine the symbol of the sacred blood."

Then two paragraphs later he adds, when speaking of Christ drinking wine: "He Himself also partook of wine; for He, too, was a man. And He blessed the wine, saying, "Take drink: this is my blood". . ."[18]

Clement, in this chapter on drinking and the abuses to which wine may be putt, has at the same time no hesitation in affirming the truth that Christ drank wine as a man and that what Christ gave as a symbol of His blood was in fact wine. He maintains this to be the truth of scripture obviously not prescribed *per se* but correctly inferred. He says nothing of it being mixed with water.

Cyprian (200-258 AD)

In the 62nd of *The Epistles of Cyprian* he writes against the practice of those who were introducing water into the communion cup instead of wine. This substitution was apparently introduced by some of the Gnostic sects, not by orthodox Christians. It appears to be the only instance in church history where, outside of the later Temperance Movement, something other than wine was introduced into the cup. Even with the Temperance movement however (see below) a connection to the grape was maintained.

In this epistle 62 entitled: *To Cæcilius, on the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord* Cyprian writes this in paragraph 2:

Know then that I have been admonished in offering the cup, the tradition of the Lord must be observed, and that nothing must be done by us but what the Lord first did on our behalf, as that cup which is offered in remembrance of Him should be offered mingled with wine. For when Christ says, "I am the true vine,' the blood of Christ is assuredly not water but wine; neither can His

[17] The First Apology of Justin Martyr, Chapter LXV Administration of the Sacraments; *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, Vol. 1, p. 185

[18] Clement of Alexander, *The Instructor*, Book II, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, Vol. 2, p. 245-246.

> blood by which we are redeemed and quickened appear to be in the cup, when in the cup there is no wine whereby the blood of Christ is shown forth, which is declared by the sacrament and testimony of all the Scriptures.[19]

It was Cyprian's view that if anything other than wine was in the cup (e.g. water) then there was an improper representation of the blood of Christ and thus an improper partaking of the cup. After a lengthy argument against the use of anything other than wine in the cup Cyprian concludes with these words:

> Therefore it befits our religion, and our fear, and the place itself, and the office of our priesthood, dearest brother, in mixing and offering the cup of the Lord, to keep the truth of the Lord's tradition, and, on the warning of the Lord, to correct that which seems with some to have been erroneous; so that when He shall begin to come in His brightness and heavenly majesty, He may find that we keep what He admonished us; that we observe what He taught; that we do what He did. . . ."[20]

There was very clearly present here, in the 3rd century a desire to adhere to and defend what was taught and exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ in the giving of wine in the cup as a sign of His blood, shed for the remission of sins.

The Roman Catholic Church historically

Though outside the pale of orthodox Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church, in its doctrine of the Sacraments has historically and confessionally understood that it was wine that was used by our LORD in the institution of the Supper. "At the Last Supper, Christ our Lord instituted this adorable Sacrament and gave it to the apostles under the species of bread and wine."[21] One will search in vain in Roman Catholic documents for evidence that anything other than wine was used in the sacrament of the Supper. In one case conciliar provision was made for wine to be mixed with water.[22]

VI. The Testimony of the Magisterial Reformers.

Martin Luther.

On April 2nd, 1534, Luther, preaching in the Parish Church of Wittenberg from Luke 22:7-20 stated this:

> In this manner Christ celebrated the old Passover with His disciples. And we should bear in mind that we are properly to distinguish this from the sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. True it is that a person eats and drinks here just as he does at the Sacrament, But here it is simple bread and wine only with which Christ for the last time celebrated the old Jewish paschal lamb, kingdom, priesthood, proclamation, and thanksgiving for the deliverance from Egypt,

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[19] Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian*, Number 62, paragraph 2, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI,, 1981, Vol. 5, p. 359..

[20] Ibid, p. 363-364

[21] *The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church in English Translation*, Jesuit Fathers, St. Mary's Kansas, Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford, Ill, 1973, p. 288. See also, The Sixth Council of Rome - 1079 (p.712); The Council of Constance - 1414-18 (p.277); The Council of Trent -1545-63, *Decree on the most Holy Eucharist* Chapter 1, (p. 281), chapter 3 & 4, (p. 283), etc.

[22] The Council of Florence – 1438-45 which permitted wine to be mixed with water but not wine only or water only. Ibid (p.278)

> Thereupon he immediately institutes a new paschal lamb, a new kingdom and priesthood, and new proclamation and thanksgiving as follows: *And he took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you. . . .* He does nothing more than take bread and wine and say, "Take eat, this is my body; drink, this is my blood"; also, "This do in remembrance of me." .Let us then open our eyes and prick up our ears and firmly apprehend these words.[23]

Luther articulates the change from the Passover to the LORD's Supper and holds that the wine in the former continued to be wine in the latter. There was no change in the contents of the cup when the cup of blessing in the Passover was made to represent the blood of Christian the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

In a sermon preached a year earlier in 1533 Luther said this of the Lord's Supper as he preached from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26:

> Therefore, the old fathers who have had the mind of Christ have said Christ used bread and wine for his supper because as many kernels, each having its own body and form are ground together ,becoming one bread, so every human being is an individual kernel, that is, his own person and a separate creature. But because we are all partakers, we are all one bread and body, and are called one lump (1 Cor. 10:17). For there is one faith, one confession, love, and hope. Similarly, in wine are many grapes, many berries, each having its own body and form, and subsequently pressed and made into wine; there is no dissimilarity in wine but it is one, excellent, fine end product (Saft.)[24]

Clearly Luther agreed with the fathers that it was wine that was used as a sign and seal in the LORD's Supper and not something else. In fact in the metaphorical use to which it is put as a picture of the oneness of believers it would be hard to conceive of a better symbol than the bread and the wine.

John Calvin.

Among the benefits given by God, Calvin regards wine as one of those gifts. He writes of the fact that "that wine gladdens the heart of man . . ."[25] He goes on in his treatise on the LORD's Supper to say this:

> But as for the outward ceremony of the action - whether or not believers take it in their hands, or divide it among themselves, or severally eat what has been given to each; whether they hand the cup back to the deacon or give it to the next person: whether the bread is leavened or unleavened; the wine red or white - it makes no difference. These things are indifferent, and left at the churches discretion.[26]

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[23] *Complete Sermons of Martin Luther,* Baker Book House, 2000, Volume 5, p. 454
[24] Ibid, Volume VI, p. 45
[25] *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, (*III.X.2), Library of Christian Classics, Westminster Press. Vol. 1, p. 721
[26] *Institutes* (IV.XVII.43), Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 1420

Clearly Calvin regarded the use of leaven or unleavened bread and the use of red or white wine as a "thing indifferent." However he did not regard the use of bread *per se* or the use of wine *per se* in the Lord's Supper as a "thing indifferent." This would have been the place we would have expected him to say that grape juice or water or some other thing was a matter of indifference when it came to the cup. But he did not. Calvin affirms wine to be used in the Supper.

In the next paragraph Calvin articulates the order for the Supper and speaks thus: First, then it should begin with public prayers. After this a sermon should be given. Then when bread and wine have been placed on the Table, the minister should repeat the institution of the Supper. . . "[27] Again the use of wine in the Supper is affirmed by Calvin.

We also find Calvin affirming the use of wine in the LORD's Supper in his tract to Emperor Charles V entitled Necessity of Reforming the Church. In writing of the Lord's Supper Calvin states:

> We hold, that in this ordinance the Lord doe not promise or figure by signs anything which he does not exhibit in reality; and we, therefore, preach that the body and blood of Christ are both offered to us by the Lord in the Supper, and received by us. Nor do we thus teach that the bread and the wine are symbols, without immediately adding that there is a truth which is conjoined with them, and which they represent.[28]

Calvin once again affirms that the wine of the Lord's Supper, and not some other beverage, is the proper symbol of the blood of the Lord

The Marburg Articles (1539)

Rather than list several other Reformers perhaps it would be the better part of wisdom to cite article 15 of the Marburg Articles agreed to by such luminaries as Luther, Zwingli, Bucer Oecolampadius, and others. In this agreement between the Reformed and the Lutheran

Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ agreement is implicitly manifest on the elements of the Supper, bread and wine.

(Preamble) The Marburg Articles: The undersigned have agreed to the articles given below at Marburg on October 3, 1529

Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

> Fifteenth, we all believe and hold concerning the Supper of our dear Lord Jesus Christ that both kinds should be used according to the institution by Christ; [also 5} that the mass is not a work with which one can secure grace for someone else, whether he is dead or alive;] also that the Sacrament of the Altar is a sacrament of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ and that the spiritual partaking of the same body and blood is especially necessary for every Christian. Similarly, that the use of the sacrament, like the word, has been given and ordained by God Almighty in order that weak consciences may thereby be excited to faith by the Holy Spirit. And

[27] Ibid.

[28] *John Calvin Tracts and Letters,* Banner of Truth Trust 2009, Volume I: Tracts, Part I, p. 169

> although at this time, we have not reached an agreement as to whether the true body and blood of Christ are bodily present in the bread and wine, nevertheless, each side should show Christian love to the other side insofar as conscience will permit, and both sides should diligently pray to Almighty God that through his Spirit he might confirm us in the right understanding. Amen.
>
> (Signed:) Martin Luther, Justus Jonas, Philip Melanchthon, Andreas Osiander, Stephan Agricola, John Brenz, John Oecolampadius, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, Caspar Hedio.[29]

During the period of the Reformation the New Testament and Early Church practice of using wine to represent the blood of our Lord continued uninterrupted.

VII. The Testimony of the Reformed Confessions.

Luther's Small Catechism (1530)[30]

Question: What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself.

Observation: Notwithstanding the fact that the catechism supports consubstantiation wine is clearly confirmed as used in the Lord's Supper.

Augsburg Confession (1530)

Article X: On the Lord's Supper

Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the [true] body and blood of Christ are truly present [under the form of bread and wine], and are [there] communicated to those that eat in the Lord's Supper [and receive]. And they disapprove of those that teach otherwise [wherefore also the opposite doctrine is rejected.[31]

In his defense of the Augsburg Confession against the Roman Catholics, Philip Melanchthon wrote: The Tenth Article has been approved, in which we confess that we believe, that ***in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly tendered, with those things which are seen, bread and wine, to those who receive the Sacrament***.[32]

Observation: This defense not only re-affirms the use of wine in the Lord's Supper but also reveals this Reformers view of the elements used.

Formula of Concord (1576)

Article VII Of The Lord's Supper

[29] www.academia.edu/344495/The_Marburg_Articles_of_3_October_1529 (Accessed October 17, 2014)

[30] *The Creeds of Christendom,* Philip Schaff Volume III *The Evangelical Protestant Creeds,* Baker Books, 1993, p.90

[31] www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.iii.ii.html. Accessed October 21st, 2014

[32] bookofconcord.org/defense_greeting.php. Accessed October 21st, 2014

Affirmative**: I.** We believe, teach, and confess that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and that they are truly distributed and taken together with the bread and the wine. [33] (cf. also Article VI)

Negative: **VIII**. That the bread and wine are only signs, instituted for a memorial, and having the character of seals and pledges, by which it is made sure to us that faith, when she ascends and is transported into heaven, there as truly becomes participant of the body and blood of Christ, as we do truly in the holy Supper eat the bread and drink the wine.[34] (cf., Articles VI, XVI, XIX)

Observation: Though the *Formula* is advocating consubstantiation and opposing the Zwinglian view of the Lord's Supper nevertheless there is an acknowledgement of the use of wine in the Supper by the Lutheran Church.

French Confession of Faith (1559)
Article XXXVIII
Thus we hold that water, being a feeble element, still testifies to us in truth the inward cleansing of our souls in the blood of Jesus Christ by the efficacy of His Spirit, and that the bread and wine given to us in the sacrament serve to our spiritual nourishment, inasmuch as they show, as to our sight, that the body of Christ is our meat, and His blood our drink. And we reject the Enthusiasts and Sacramentarians who will not receive such signs and marks, although our Saviour said: This is my body, and this cup is my blood."[35]

Observation: This confession was prepared by John Calvin and his pupil De Chandrieu and was approved by the Synod of Paris in 1559 and delivered by Beza to Charles the IX in 1561 and subsequently adopted by the Synod of La Rochelle in 1571. It was also known as the Confession of Rochelle. The content of the cup among the French churches was clearly wine.

Belgic Confession of Faith (1561)
Article XXXV
. . . Christ, that he might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, hath instituted and earthly and visible bread, as a sacrament of his body, and wine as a sacrament of his blood, to testify by them unto us, that, as certainly as we receive and hold this Sacrament in our hands, and eat and drink the same with our mouths, by which our life is afterwards nourished, we also as certainly receive by faith (which is the hand and mouth of our soul) the true body and blood of Christ, our only Saviour in our souls, for the support of our spiritual life.[36]

Observation: as far as the *Belgic Confession of Faith* is concerned the content of the cup representing the blood of the Savior and drunk by believers is wine. Thus the Reformed Church in the United States in adopting the *Belgic Confession of Faith* has joined the historic Church and the Reformers in declaring explicitly exactly what it is the cup contains, wine.

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[33] *Op cit*, p.137
[34] Schaff, *op cit*, p. 143
[35] Schaff, p. 381
[36] Schaff, p. 429

The Scotch Confession of faith (1560)
Article XXI Of the Sacraments
. . . Not that we imagine anie transubstantiation of bread into *Christes* body, and of wine into his natural blude, as the *Papistes* have perniciouslie taucht and damnanie believed; . . . So we confesse, and undountedlie believe, that the faithful, in the richt use of the Lords Table, do eat the bodie and drinke the blude of the Lord *Jesus*, that he remaines in them, and they in Him: Zea they are maid flesh of his flesh, and bone of hisbones; . . .[37]

Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church (1563)
Article XXVIII
. . .Insomuch that to suche as ryghtliew, worthily,a nd with faith receaue the same he bread whiche we breake is a parttakyng of the body of Christe, and likewise the cuppe of blessing, is a partakying of the blood of Christe.Transubstantiation (or the change of substance of the bread and wine) in the Suppere of the Lorde, can not be proued by holye write, but is repugnaunt to the playne words of scripture; . . .[38]

Observation: The content of the cup is wine according to this Article. This is consistent in the 1801 American revision and in the Anglican catechism of 1849 and 1662 (fn. below).

Heidelberg Catechism (1563)
The Heidelberg Catechism speaks of the contents of the cup referred to in Q & A 77 as bread and wine when it asks this question in Question 78: Do the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ? In Question 79 where the cup is referred to, once again the answer draws the analogy between ". . . bread and wine" sustaining this temporal life and of the use of bread and wine as a "visible sign and pledge" and as ". . . these holy tokens in remembrance of Him;. . ." [39]

Observation: Inasmuch as the Heidelberg Catechism is one of the *Three Forms of Unity* adopted as a confessional standard by the Reformed Church in the United States, we see again that the content of the cup is wine.

Second Helvetica Confession (1566)
Chapter XXI Of the Supper of the Lord.
THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE SUPPER.
We do not, therefore, so join the body of the Lord and his blood with the bread and wine as to say that the bread itself is the body of Christ except in a sacramental way; . . .[40]

Observation: This confession originally written by Henry Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, affirms once more that it was wine that was contained in the cup of the LORD and that

[37] Schaff, p. 468
[38] Schaff, p. 505. Note: that the Anglican Catechism of 1549 & 1662 asks: What is the outward part of sign of the Lord's Supper. Answer: Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.
[39] *The Three Forms of Unity*, Reformed Church in the United States, 2001, pp. 20-21
[40] www.ccel.org/creeds/helvetic.htm. Accessed October 21st, 2014

the use of wine in the cup was consistent among the first as well as second generation Reformers..

The Irish Articles of Religion (1615)
Of the Lord's Supper
93. The change of substance of bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, commonly called *Transubstantiation* cannot be proved by holy Writ;[41] . . .

Westminster Confession of Faith
Of the Lord's Supper
Article 29:3: The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use; and to take and break bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; . . .

Article 29:5: The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that yet truly, yet sacramentally only they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only, bread and wine, as they were before.[42]

Observation: The Westminster Standards (see fn. below) very clearly articulate that the content of the cup at the LORD's Supper was wine and that is symbolized His blood. There is no departure from either scripture or Church history by the Westminster Divines.[43]

VIII. Other Confessions of Faith.

In the interests of establishing historical continuity as it pertains to the contents of the cup being wine, three additional confessions will be cited.

The Dordrecht Confession (1632)
X. Of the Holy Supper
We also confess and observe the breaking of bread, or Supper, as the Lord Christ Jesus before His suffering instituted it with bread and wine, and observed and ate with His apostles, commanding them to observe it in remembrance of Him; which they accordingly taught and practiced in the church, and commanded that it should be kept in remembrance of the suffering and death of the Lord; and that His precious body was broken, and His blood shed, for us and all mankind, as also the fruits hereof, namely, redemption and eternal salvation, which He purchased thereby, showing such great love

[41] Schaff, p. 542
[42] Schaff, p. 667 (Note: see also Westminster Directory for The Worship of God, Larger Catechism Question #168, 169, 177 & Shorter Catechism #96)
[43] At the risk of being tedious this study has not articulated the views of continental writers such as Turretin, Witsius or á Brakel or English Presbyterian, Independent or Puritan authors. Nor will this study articulate the views of Presbyterian Theologians in America both historically and to the present day. A consistency with the confession standards of the Reformed Faith, and with Church history, will be found among all of them when it comes to the contents of the cup. .

toward us sinful men; whereby we are admonished to the utmost, to love and forgive one another and our neighbor, as He has done unto us, and to be mindful to maintain and live up to the unity and fellowship which we have with God and one another, which is signified to us by this breaking of bread. [44]

Observation: This Anabaptist confession adopted by a Dutch Mennonite Conference held at Dordrecht, Holland. is cited to show that though they strenuously objected to the Reformed practice of covenant baptism they did not see the need to object to the contents of the cup.

Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)
Chapter 30: Of the Lord's Supper
Paragraph 3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants. 1 Cor. 11:23-26, etc.[45]

Observation: The Baptist Confession of 1689 was the confession of English and Welsh Calvinists who held to Reformed soteriology but rejected infant baptism. In distinguishing themselves from the Reformed they saw no need to change the contents of the cup from wine to something else.

The Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742).
The Philadelphia Confession is identical to the Second London Confession of Faith (1689), except that chapters 23 and 31 have been added (with other chapters appropriately renumbered). This confession was first issued by the Philadelphia Association in 1742.

Chapter 32: Of the Lord's Supper
3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants.(1 Cor. 11:23-26, etc.)[46]
Observation: Though the *Philadelphia Confession* departed from its earlier roots in the second *London Baptist Confession* in a couple of places it did not alter the original language of the 1689 confession. Wine continues to be the content of the cup.

As an aside her it is worth mentioning that when the Southern Baptist Seminary was chartered in 1858 it adopted a series of principles called the *Abstract of Principles.* Any professor that departed from any one of these *Principles* would find himself on the outside looking in. Among those *Principles* was the following pertaining to the Lord's Supper and the use of wine.:

[44] www.gameo.org/index.php?title=Dordrecht_Confession_of_Faith_(Mennonite,_1632) Accessed October 21st, 2014.
[45] www.reformed.org/documents/baptist_1689.html Accessed October 21st, 2014
[46] www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/phila.htm Accessed October 21st, 2014.

XVI. The Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and wine, and to be observed by His churches till the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their church fellowship.[47]

IX. **The contemporary situation.**

One does not have to look to far afield in the contemporary church to find that there has been a radical departure in many ecclesiastical quarters from the use of wine in the cup of the Lord's Supper. Unfermented grape juice is commonly used in evangelicalism today contrary to their baptistic and anabaptistic confessional roots (see above). It is to be understood that in some countries, as cited in the Majority Study that other beverages have been substituted because of a lack of access to wine. Thus in Africa it was stated flat coke was used. This writer is also aware that in Pakistan where alcohol is forbidden that the church commonly soaked raisins in water and used the resulting liquid in the place of wine in the Supper. No such restrictions are on the churches of this nation however. So it must be asked why has the wine of the cup been replaced with unfermented grape juice?

The answer is not long coming: The Temperance movement of the 19th century which reacted against the widespread abuse of alcohol. That reaction affected the church's use of wine in the cup of the Lord's Supper. In other words the church did not come to a new understanding about the contents of the cup. It came under the influence of those who eschewed the use of alcohol in any way or form in an effort to curb the abuse or potential abuse.

Much has been written on the influence of the Temperance reforms and on the influence of wine on an alcoholic. The reader is directed to those sources.[48]

It is worth noting however that in the midst of the temperance movement and unrelated to it, the Rev. John M'Clintock and James Strong compiled a series of volumes entitled: Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. In the 1894 volume X which contains an article on wine, the influence of the temperance movement is apparent as the biblical exegesis supporting the use of wine in the cup is supplanted by rational cultural and personal considerations.

> There is no proof positive that the fluid used by our Lord in instituting the sacred communion was alcoholic; it is nowhere expressly called wine, but simply "the fruit of the vine," (Matthew 26:29). That it was wine properly so-called, however, is a fair presumption from the fact that this was the customary liquor of the Jews in the Passover meal, as we learn from the definite

[47] www.sbts.edu/about/truth/abstract/ Accessed October 21st, 2014

[48] See for example see the chapter by G.I. Williamson: Constitutional Alcoholics? in *Wine in the Bible and the Church*, Pilgrim Publishing, 1972, p. 23; Kenneth L. Gentry Jr: Appendix: The Potential Alcoholic in *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages: A Biblical Perspective*, Baker Book House 1986, p. 99; Keith A. Mathison, *Protestant Transubstantiation*, Part 4, Origins of the Rejection of Wine: The Temperance Movement; IIIM Magazine Online, Volume 3, Number 4, January 22nd to January 28, 2001

prescription of the Talmud ("There shall not be less than four cups of wine" [yáyin]. Mishnah, *Pesach.*x.1). Many modern Jews, it is said use the liquor of steeped raisins for paschal purposes, but there is no trace of such a custom in ancient times.

Therefore the use of any other fluid in the communion at the present day must be justified, if at all, from *prudential* considerations growing out of the modern temperance reform; just as we consider ourselves at liberty to vary the kind of bread (originally, unleavened), the posture of the communicant, and other unessential details, to suit the convenience of the occasion and the parties. These considerations are undoubtedly of the gravest character, especially the danger of relapse to reformed inebriates partaking or even approaching the communion-table, where the taste or fumes of alcohol are liable to revive their appetite. If, as it is confidently claimed by many, unfermented grape juice can be procured at a moderate cost and without great inconvenience, and can be preserved with ordinary care a sufficient length of time, and is not offensive to the sense, or otherwise particularly objectionable, there is no reason why a ceremonious scruple should be allowed to stand in the way of its employment. Whether individuals not susceptible to such a danger as the above are excusable in withholding themselves from the communion where alcoholic wine is used, is quite another question, which does not lie within the scope of this article to discuss.[49]

The problem with this representative article is that on the one hand the author is compelled by the weight of evidence to admit that fermented wine [yáyin / oinos] (i.e. fruit of the vine) was indeed in the cup of the Lord's Supper. He even dismisses the possibility that the Jews used the liquid from soaked raisins in the Passover. Yet on the other hand he has no scruples about changing the fermented wine in the cup in the Supper to unfermented because of the temperance reforms taking place in the culture. Noticeably absent from his article is how the church historically viewed the matter in its teaching, practice and confessions which might have chilled his zeal to exchange exegetical certainty for cultural uncertainty.

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X. The documents of the Reformed Church in the United States.

The official Documents of the Reformed Church in the United States leave no doubt that wine is to be used in the cup of the LORD's Supper. This has been established with reference to the *Heidelberg Catechism* and the *Belgic Confession of Faith* cited above. It is also apparent from our *Directory of Worship*. In the last paragraph of the prayer before the LORD's Supper it is to be prayed: "Be pleased also, O Lord, to bless these elements of bread and wine, that we, receiving them, in remembrance of the passion and death of thy dear Son, may by faith be made partakers of his crucified body and shed blood with all his benefits to our spiritual nourishment and the glory of thy holy name. Amen"[50].

While the *Form* itself does not reference wine *per se* preferring to speak of "the cup" the Minister is enjoined in the instruction preceding the administration of the cup to "(. .

[49] M'Clintock and Strong, *op cit,* Vol X, p. 1016

[50] *The Directory of Worship For the Reformed Church in The United States*, Second edition, 1998. P. 37.

.pour out the wine and take the cup)" thus establishing that the content of the cup is wine and not something else.

Summary: From this historical survey it has been established that from the time of the establishment of the Lord's Supper the liquid in the cup was meant to be fermented wine not something else. That wine was on occasion represented in scripture as "mixed" this, according to Gentry referred to wines mixed together or to wines mixed with various herbs and spices. He writes: (there is) " . . .only one passage where water diluted wine is mentioned: Isaiah 1:22. It is worthy of note that this sole reference to water-diluted wine speaks of such a practice in a negative manner: Thy silver is become dross, thy wine [sobe = rare word for fine wine] mixed with water . . ."[51]

The practice of the Jews at times, and of the early church (rarely), to mix water with wine did not eliminate the wine from the cup, but it did weaken of diminish or "cut" it. The normal practice of the church historically was uncut wine whether red or white (Calvin's view). But it was always wine in the cup.

This study has not cited more recent Reformed Theologians such as the Princeton Theologians in its historical survey. It was believed this would unnecessarily encumber the paper since these theologians are in lock step with the Church fathers, the magisterial and the second generation reformers on the use of wine in the Lord's Supper.[52] Indeed there is evidence that among those post-temperance theologians of Baptist persuasion who eschew the use of wine and yet acknowledge that wine was undoubtedly the beverage that Jesus used originally in administering the Supper.[53]

There is no evidence that this study has unearthed to show that personal scruples or medical concerns ever warranted a substitution of wine in the cup for some other liquid. There is simply nothing in the historical or confessional record to warrant a substitution for any reason. The use of grape juice in the cup is rooted in the rationalism of temperance reforms not in scripture. How this is to be handled in the light of those in our congregations with personal scruples concerning the use of wine in the cup or with medical sensitivities to wine itself and thus to the cup will be the task of the next section in this study.

XI. The matter of exceptions and their warrant.

a. A historical Reformed example of an exception being granted.

This writer sought at length to determine if there is any evidence in the Reformed Churches historically where an exception to the use of wine was permitted. One concrete reference was indeed found. Dr. N.H. Gootjes in a series of articles entitled *The Meaning of the Lord's Supper* which appeared in *The Clarion* [54] addressed the subject of whether or not it is important to maintain that only wine should be used. He asked: "Can grape juice not be a good substitute? Why wine?"

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[51] Gentry *op cit.* p. 112

[52] See Keith Mathison: Protestant Transubstantiation Part 3,, IIIM Magazine online, Volume 3, Number 2, January 8 to January 14, 2001.

[53] Ibid, Mathison, Part 4, Volume 3, Number 4, January 22 to January 28, 2001

[54] Clarion, Volume 41, No. 5,6,8,9,10, 1995; available on Spindleworks.com.

He goes on to establish that wine ought to be used because it belonged to festivities at the sanctuary (Deut. 14:26) and was used at festive meals (Job 1:13) and at weddings (John 2:13) and as part of the feast that the LORD will prepare for his people (Is. 25:6). He adds: "The function of wine in the Lord's Supper, is to give a festive character to the meal and anticipates drinking with Christ in His kingdom (Mark 14:25). He concludes his section on wine with these words:

> Wine belongs to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. What then to do for those brothers and sisters who for some reason cannot drink wine? They should not be forced to drink the wine. But since it is an individual problem, individual solutions should be found. (Emphasis added –RP)

At this point Gootjes footnotes this statement with the following note: "This is a traditional reformed position, in place as early as 1565, see W.F. Dankbaar, Communiegebruiken in de eeuw der Refmatie (2,ed; Gronigen: Instituut voor litugiewetenschap, 1987) 83".[55]

Regrettably the reference is only available in Dutch. After consultation with our Canadian Reformed brethren and publication of my search for this reference and a translation, on their Ministers Internet Forum, I unearthed the following information courtesy of the Librarian at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. It appears with her comments and a reference to an earlier French work that Dankbaar referenced.[56]

> In the churches of the Reformation, there never existed any hesitation that both the bread and the wine had to be used by all communicants [ie. participants – my translation]. Therefore it is all the more noteworthy, that the "Synod under the cross of "La Vigne (i.e. the congregation of Antwerpen), Easter 1565, was exceptionally accommodating towards persons who could not drink wine (no reason why was given.) They were allowed to be served only bread, if they gave evidence that their position [or attitude—translation] was not the result of contempt and that they were doing their best to change. [here is where the footnote to Hooijer is inserted]. Communion under one form in the face of necessity. Another accommodating solution was found in a similar case by the provincial synod of Kampen, June 20-23, 1620. When asked how to deal with people [here follows very old Dutch in a quote in Dankbaar] "who naturally so abhor wine that they cannot bear the slightest taste of it", [the synod—my insertion] determined that they "could help the person out with pressed grapes [I think—could not find the world in

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[55] Translation: "Communion Practice in the Age of the Reformation, published by the Institute for Liturgical Studies of the State University at Groningen, 1986. http://www.dutchchurch.org.uk/?page_id=72 Dankbaar is drawing on the practice of the Dutch Refugee Church in London (History 1550-1950) As one Canadian Reformed Minister advised: "That makes sense, at the "local church level" many of our practices (even our liturgical forms) actually have their origin in the Dutch Refugee Church in London."

[56] Dankbaar cited the following: Hooijer, *Oude kerkordeningen der Nederlandse Hervormde Gemeenten (1563-1638*), Translation from the French courtesy of Rev. Bernard Westerveld, ERQ: "The bread of the Supper may be administered to thos who do not drink the wine if they refuse it not because of disdain [for the wine], and if they make every effort [to drink it?] " Source: http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10590640_00035.html

an old Dutch dictionary - original does have the word grape as its basis] if this could be found and thereby help the person out, if possible. [Here follows the reference to Reitsma, VanVeen, Acta der provincial en particuliere synoden in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, 1572-1620, vol. 5, pg. 21, (Groningen: 1892).]

From the above it may be understood that the Dutch Reformed churches very early on in the Reformation did make rare exceptions for the use of wine in the Lord's Supper either by serving bread only or by substituting pressed grapes if they could be found. The question now to be taken up is this:. If there is a historic Reformed precedent for an exception upon what basis could this rest, and upon what basis can an exception be made today? This is the burden of what follows.

b. The biblical warrant for an exception.

Clearly the principle of using wine in the cup of the Lord's Supper is established biblically, historically and confessionally as the norm. If an exception to the norm is to be made upon what basis can it be argued? I suggest the following:

1. There are exceptions made to biblical norms in scripture which provide a precedent. David was given, and ate of, the shewbread that was a weekly offering set before the LORD in the Tabernacle and which was wholly the Lord's and to be eaten only by the priests as special form of the meat or bread offering (Exodus 25:30; 1 Sam 2:16). In David's exceptional situation the norm was violated by the Priest. An individual decision was made in an individual case.

This was not censured but rather exemplified by Jesus when the Jews accused his disciples of violating the Sabbath law (the norm) by gleaning on the Sabbath as they picked and threshed grain from the field they were walking through (Mark 2:23-27). Jesus grants His disciples an individual exception. Other examples such as the Hebrew midwives or Rahab can be cited as departures from the norm in that they lied. Their exceptions were justified in their situations and were not censured by the LORD.

2. These exceptions were abnormal not the norm. However they were they not censured in scripture. In fact Rahab appears in Hebrews 11:31 as an example of faith. In other words scripture did not regard the exceptions as violations of biblical law or biblical practice because <u>they were the exceptions not the rule</u>. While the letter was not kept the spirit of the law was kept. This is because all these exceptions involved the principle of neighbour love and mercy.

Jesus establishes this in the case of the disciples gleaning on the Sabbath when he adds to the example He used of David: **Matthew 12:5-7** *[5]Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? [6]But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. [7]But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.* He regards his disciples as guiltless on the principle of mercy in this case.

3. Scripture does not deal with every specific situation we will encounter but it does offer us a precedent to depart from the norm in abnormal situations as those cited above. On this basis therefore it is hermeneutically warranted, in certain specific cases, to make an

exception from the principle as long as it is clearly stated as such and as long as the exception stays as close as possible to the principle and is not regarded as the norm. Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath made an exception for His disciples, he did not change the norm.

Thus the *Talmud* cited above used alcoholic beer in place of alcoholic wine when none was available in the case of the Habdalah. That was as close as they could get to the norm. Grape juice did not exist because of the lack of pasteurization. In the instance of soaking raisins to use the juice in the Lord's Supper, as cited above in a Pakistani culture that eschewed alcohol, that raisin juice was a close as they could get to the norm. In the African instance referenced above from the majority paper, flat coke was as close to the norm as they could get. But beer or raisin juice or flat coke is not the norm. They are the exception. Therefore they cannot routinely replace the wine in the cup. They are abnormal exceptions not the norm and therefore cannot become routine practice.

4. This means in the case of wine in the LS that in exceptional cases (i.e. Nursing Home situation; medication contradictions, allergic reactions; landlord rules etc.) a substitute for alcoholic wine may be made as a manifestation of mercy and neighbour love as long as the substitution strives to be as close to the norm as possible to preserve the meaning and the integrity of the Supper. David eating the showbread did not violate the principle, nor did the disciples gleaning or the Priest's service on the Sabbath. As it pertains to the present culture getting close to the norm could make use of grape juice or non-alcoholic wine as the exception but not the norm in individual cases..

5. This avoids forcing someone to take what will harm them or forcing them to abstain from what is meant to be a means of grace unto them. Thus love and mercy is shown. It's always right in scripture to show love and mercy even when in exceptional cases it is contrary to a settled principle of biblical law or practice. It's right to violate a no trespassing sign to save a life. No court would censure that violation because it is not the norm. It's the exception.

6. This also means that there ought to be no exceptions for frivolous reasons or personal preference or pleading the weaker brother (however see reference #8 below re: Mathison). Alcoholic wine in the LS is the norm. Citing the illustration above, violating a no trespassing sign at one time, does not give warrant to make violating no trespassing signs routinely. That the court *would* censure.

7. The exception instances cited above indicate that they were individual exceptions made in individual cases, by individual entities. This would mean that since the Elders prepare the Supper inclusive of the elements, and summon the people of God to partake of the Supper in accordance with Scripture and our Constitution[57], they must be the ones to make the exceptions. They are in the best position to know the legitimacy of the need and to judge what best accords with keeping the principle if the exception is warranted. This accords with the Reformed precedent cited above by Dankbaar and his earlier source.

[57] RCUS Constitution Article 44.

Classis or Synod does not prepare the elements, or summon the communicants or preside over the Table. The Elders do. They give the pastoral guidance in other specific situations not Classis or Synod and therefore it ought to be their responsibility to also administer the exceptions at the Table as well.

As an example here, our Sacramento RCUS Church requires individuals to request a written exception from the use of alcoholic wine, stating the reasons for the request. This is then evaluated by the Elders and a decision made in that one case and that one case only.[58]

In a slightly different scenario than those envisioned above in this study, a church may be subject to Landlord rules prohibiting the use of alcoholic beverages. In this case the Elders ought to seek for an exception from those rules in the case of the Lord's Supper. The church I currently Pastor has done just that. If this request for exemption cannot be granted, then an exception must be made that sticks as close to the norm as possible, with the understanding that though this exception appears routine to the person in the pew, it is not the norm and that once premises are secured that do permit the use of alcoholic wine in the Lord's Supper, then wine (the norm) will once more be served.

8. The two areas that need more thought than can be given in this study are the areas of addictions and the weaker brother. Keith Mathison in his book: *Given For You: Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper* (P&R 2012) deals with several reasons for the rejection of wine, inclusive of addictions and the weaker brother. In his dealing with those particular matters his conclusions would accord well with the thoughts and position taken above of distinguishing between the norm and the exception. (p. 304 ff.).

Conclusion:
The mandate from Classis did not ask for recommendations and thus none are offered here. That is wisdom on the part of Classis. The matter ought to be left in the hands of the Elders of each local Church and not legislated by Classis or Synod as argued for above.

The instruction given to the Committee in its mandate stated this in its final sentence: *The Committee shall present its finding to the 30th Annual Session of the Covenant East Classis for adoption, and thereby provide guidance to new and existing churches.* The undersigned is hopeful that the minority paper has provided what was required .and that some insight and guidance has been offered herein.

Respectfully, Rev. Ron Potter,

Clerks Note: Cf. Standing Judicial Committee recommendation #4 re: statement of affirmation.

Classis Action: The report was received by Classis.

Reports of Standing Committees

The following reports with their motions appear in the final form in which classis adopted them, unless otherwise noted. Thus, the reports listed here include any

[58] Private e-mail conversation with Pastor Jim West (Ret.), Fall of 2014

amendments and additional motions made from the floor to the standing committee's report. The first name listed is the chairman of the standing committee.

A. Benevolence

1. That Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid of $475 per month for Classical year 2015-2016 to Rev. Ron Potter, to assist with health care costs.

2. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of $1,200 per month for Synodical year 2015-2016.

3. That Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid of $396 per month for Classical year 2015-2016 to Rev. Jay Fluck, to assist with medical insurance costs.

4. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Grace Ploeger in the amount of $1,200 per month for Synodical year 2015-2016.

Altman, Herrmann, Liesveld.

B. Examination and Licensure

1. That Classis overture Synod to provide student aid to Mr. Chris Campbell with $1,200 for tuition and $400 for books for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Brice, Bessette, Sawtelle

C. Excuses

1. That Covenant East Classis excuse Elder John Grimm from all sessions of our classis meeting.

2. That Covenant East Classis excuse Elder Dan Wright from all sessions of our classis meeting.

Altman, Herrmann, Liesveld.

D. Finances

1. The Standing Committee on Finances has audited the Final Treasurer's Report, Fiscal Year 2015, and found it to be in order.

2. We have audited the Treasurer's Partial Report for the period from July 1, 2014-February 28, 2015 and find it to be in order.

3. That travel reimbursement for this Classis meeting be as follows:

St. Paul's RCUS	$839.26
Fluck	$538.50
Potter	532.50
Stuebbe	$186.50

Van Heest	$410.20
Blauw	383.20
Kron	344.20
Brice	$648.00
Sawtelle	$374.20
Opp	$799.00
Sorensen	$20.00
Klynsma	$690.00
Larson	$307.50
TOTAL:	**$6,073.06**

4. That the Classis pay motel expenses for fraternal delegates as follows:

Bredenhof	$208.38
Oldaker	$71.18
Total:	$279.56

5. That the Classis adopt the following guidelines:

General Fund	$12.00
Missions Fund	$33.00*
Benevolence Fund	$18.00
Student Aid Fund	$ 3.00
TOTAL per communicant member	**$66.00**

*$8,000/$3,000 Blue Bell up to $11,000 may be moved to set aside fund if not used.

On motion Classis approved paying Rev. Steve Altman, $250 for his services as Stated Clerk *pro tem*

Kron, Blauw, Herrmann, (Drewes advise)

E. Judicial

1. That the Constitution of Covenant Reformed Church , Gettysburg, PA, be found in order.

2. That Covenant Reformed Church, Gettysburg, PA, be received as a member of Covenant East Classis.

3. That the terms of the call which Rev. Fluck is currently laboring under since 2011 be affirmed by Classis.

4. In light of the Special Committee Report Classis affirms that wine should normally be used in the Lord's Supper, but exceptions may be made by the local Spiritual Council, on a case by case basis, motivated by mercy and love for brothers and sisters who in God's providence warrant an exception.

Sawtelle, Stuebbe , Drewes, Sorensen, Fluck.

F. Minutes of Classis

1. Your committee received the draft minutes from the Stated Clerk and made corrections which were then incorporated in the revised minutes. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

Sorenson, Larson, Opp, Luquette

G. Minutes of Synod

1. Regarding #1 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis: the Clerk reports the correction of all 8 items. Take note.. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

2. Regarding #2 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

3. Regarding #3 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

4. Regarding #4 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

5. Regarding #5 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

6. Regarding #6 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

7. Regarding #7 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

8. Regarding #8 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

Brice, Bessette, Drewes, Fluck.

H. Missions

1. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with $405 per month, a total of $4,860 for Classical year 2015-2016. [Note: A reduction of $900, 6.25% of original support.]

2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas, with $147 per month, a total of $1,764 for Synodical year 2015-2016. [Note: A reduction of $1,116, 7.75% of original support.]

3. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA, with $350 per month, a total of $4,200 for Classical year 2015-2016, for rent and associated costs. [Note: Same as last year.]

4. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with $3,000 for outreach through Reformation Church Blue Bell if needed.

5. That during the Covenant East Classis time would be made for a prayer of thanksgiving to our gracious triune God and His blessing Emmaus Road Reformed Church as they come off of support for Classical year 2015-2016.

6. That Covenant East Classis provide support of $350 per month for Classical year 2015-2016 to Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart, PA. [Note: This is to help with expenses and is a reduction from last year of $50 a month.]

7. That Classis support the Redeemer RCUS church building efforts with up to $25,000 in classical year 2015-2016, as needed, for the purpose of building up the congregation with a view towards starting a mission work in the Minneapolis Metro area in around 3-5 years. [Note: "*As the Lord blesses the longer term goal would be to use 20 (or more) families to begin another daughter church*." Also "*We recognize this is a different way in which we are approaching the development of a new mission work, but we feel the Twin Cities is ripe unto harvest and with an additional laborer Christ will bless His Church*."]

8. That Classis overture Synod to provide Redeemer RCUS church building efforts with up to $25,000 for Synodical year 2015-2016 as needed, for the purpose of building up the congregation with a view towards starting a mission work in the Minneapolis Metro area in around 3-5 years.

9. That the Reformation Church Blue Bell being a mission work of Heritage Reformed Church have its statistics be listed separately in the Classical and Synodical abstracts

Schnabel, Van Heest, Klynsma.

I. Nominations

1. That the permanent committees be as follows (underlined serves as chairman):

Executive:	Klynsma, Potter, Liesveld.
Candidates and Credentials:	Fluck, Brice, Luquette, Wright
Interchurch Relations:	Sawtelle, Kron, Van Heest
Missions:	Schnabel, Opp, Smith, M. Altman, Blauw.
Camp:	Stuebbe, S. Altman, Sorensen, M. Bruckschen* (*Deacon)
Publications:	no committee formed

Schnabel, Van Heest, Klynsma.

J. Services

1. That Covenant East Classis accept the invitation from St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS of Hamburg, MN, to host the Spring 2016 Classis meeting.

2. That the following words of gratitude be extended to the congregation of Peace RCUS of Napoleon, Ohio: The delegates of Covenant East Classis want to express our sincere gratitude and delight in receiving your hospitality at our 2105 Spring Meeting. The Saints at Peace Reformed Church at Napoleon generously provided for our needs to satisfy our hunger and blessed us with rich fellowship. Your cheerful service and Christian kindness reflect the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord our God continue to bless you as you seek the honor of His name. Sincerely, In Christ, Covenant East Classis.

Opp, Larson, Stuebbe.

Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation to Hosting Congregation

This was handled through the Standing Services Committee.

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

These reports were previously adopted.

On motion Classis, by a two-thirds vote, approved the following amendment by addition to Standing Rule #19 "The President shall be paid an honorarium of $500 annually."

On motion, Classis also approved making the above amendment to Standing Rule #19 retroactive to include classical year 2014-2015.

Reading of the Minutes and their Approval

The "Draft Minutes" were reviewed by the Standing Committee on Minutes of Classis and returned to the Stated Clerk for revision. These revisions were entered and then published as the "Revised Minutes," which were distributed to all delegates as available. After appropriate time for review, the President called for any further corrections from the floor, and then declared them approved as corrected. The Stated Clerk read aloud the final items of business for which there was no time to complete this review process. Upon corrections from the floor, the President declared the minutes approved as corrected.

Adjournment

The 30th annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 3:20 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, until the next annual meeting to be held on March 1, 2016, at St. Paul's Evangelical Church in Hamburg, MN.

A. Roll Call

The final roll call showed 10 ministers and 9 elders present.

B. Devotions

Elder Jim Drewes read from 1 Corinthians 15:57 and prayed..

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

The President led the body in reciting the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced the Benediction and all who were present sang the Doxology.

Respectfully submitted and Chronicled for the King's Glory,

Rev. Ron Potter, Stated Clerk

Appendix for the 2015 Abstract follows:

#1 - List of Overtures and Communications

#2 - Necrology

#3 - Statistics

#4 - Standing Rules

Appendices

Appendix #1

List of Overtures and Communications

OVERTURES

1. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, PA, for benevolent aid in the amount of $350.00 per month for Classical year 2015-2016 for Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart, PA to assist with expenses in light of decline in membership. (To BENEVOLENCE, with 3 year budget attached)

2. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, PA, for benevolent aid in the amount of $475.00 per month for Classical Year 2015-2016 for Rev. Ron Potter to assist with health care costs. (To BENEVOLENCE, with 3 year budget attached)

3. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, PA, for $350.00 per month for Classical year 2015-2016 beginning July 2015 for church rent and associated building costs. (To BENEVOLENCE, with 3 year budget attached)

4. From Redeemer RCUS in Crystal, MN, that Covenant East Classis support, from the missions guideline, the church building efforts of Redeemer Reformed Church with up to $25,000.00 for the Classical year, and overture Synod for up to $25,000.00 for the same time period. (To MISSIONS)

5. From Peace Reformed Church in Garner, IA, to overture Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Grace Ploeger in the amount of $1200 per month for the Synodical year 2015-2016.(To BENEVOLENCE)

6. From Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, WI, to overture Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of $1200 per month for the Synodical year 2015-2016. (To BENEVOLENCE)

7. From Rev. Jay Fluck, request for benevolent aid. (To BENEVOLENCE)

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Budget for Covenant East Youth Church Camp for 2014 (To Finances)

2. Thank You from Rev. Ron Potter (To Benevolence)

3. Article 81 Questions from Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart, PA (read on the floor)

4. From Elder John Grimm, request to be excused. (To EXCUSES)

5. From SGC Gettysburg, PA a Final revised draft of their proposed constitution as well as their proposed articles of incorporation. (JUDICIAL)

6. Thank You from Mrs. Grace Ploeger. (BENEVOLENCE)

Appendix #2

Necrology

Gustav W. Stock (1928-2014) was born September 19, 1928, in Newton, Wisconsin, son of the late Gustav and Elsa (Rosso) Stock Sr. He attended schools in the Manitowoc area and graduated with the class of 1946 from Lincoln High School. On September 25, 1948, he married the former Delores Hochkammer at Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Newton. He worked on the family farm and was employed at A.H. Stock Manufacturing in Newton from 1956 until his retirement in 1992. He was a member of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, where he served as deacon and elder; and was an organizational and honorary member of the Newton Volunteer Fire Department. In his retirement years he enjoyed gardening, woodworking, and spending time with his family. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather.

Gus was called home to be with his Lord and Savior at the age of 85 on June 23, 2014. His loving and devoted wife of 65 years joined him several months later, in November, 2014. His three children remain members of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church: Larry (Shelly) Stock, Patty (John) Check, and Cindy (Patrick) Check. He is also survived by 7 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

While we will all miss him dearly, we are reminded, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.” Psalm 116:15

Appendix #3

Statistics of Covenant East Classis: covering 2014, reported in 2015

Category	Northwest Arkansas	Eden Prairie, MN	Garner, IA	Gettysburg PA	Hamburg, MN	Kansas City, MO
1. No. Of Elders	1	3	3	3	3	3
2. No. Of Deacons	2	2	3	1	3	4
3. Comm. Last Year	24	55	86	29	209	56
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	1	0	0	3	2
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	12	0	0	0	1
6. Rec'd by Prof.	1	12	4	0	2	6
7. Tot. Received	1	25	4	0	5	9
8. Tot. Old/New Mbr	25	80	90	29	214	65
9. Lost by Dismissal	0	2	2	0	5	0
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	0	0	0	0	0	3
11. Lost by Death	0	2	3	0	5	1
12. Total Lost	0	4	5	0	10	4
13. Comm. this Year	**25**	**76**	**85**	**29**	**204**	**61**
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	2	25	19	14	25	14
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	27	101	104	43	229	75
16. No. of Families	15	38	50	13	121	24
17. No. of S. S. Child.	8	27	12	0	14	25
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	9	0	0	2	2
20. Total Baptisms	0	9	0	0	2	2
21. No. L.S. Served	23	76	72	---	170	63
22. Times. L.S. Served	12	12	5	---	9	7
23. Regular Offerings	$88,861	$194,887	$127,824		$106,797	$190,077
24. Special Offerings	$655	$16,452	$5,880		$4,100	$8,352
25. Other Sources	---	$11,467	$5,718		$45,000	---
26. Total Receipts	$89,516	$222,806	$139,422		$155,897	$198,429
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.	$5,901	$10,945	$21,973		$41,872	$11,496
28. Giv. to Clas. Guidlin.	$1,901	$3,630	$5,676		$13,728	$3,696
29. RCUS non-budget	$480	---	$2,885		$8,500	$4,265
30. Non-RCUS causes	$1,591	$10,786	$9,727		$972	$16,260
31. Other Expenses	$90,763	$119,134	$92,963		$155,823	$146,863
32. Total Expenses	$100,636	$144,495	$133,224		$220,895	$181,580
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	$115,000	---	$750,000		$1,,000,000	$1,500,000
34. Val. of Parsonage	$50,000	$371,972	$125,000		$300,000	---
35. Impr. on Property	$12,328	---	---		---	---
36. Property Debt	$129,973	$250,000	---		---	$38,556
37. Debt Paid Last Yr.	$6,857	---	---		---	$56,003
38. Synod Giving /Com.	$245	$199	$256		$200	$205
39. Classis Giving /Com.	$79	$66	$66		$66	$66
40. RCUS Giving /Com.	$345	$265	$355		$307	$347

Statistics of Covenant East Classis: covering 2014, reported in 2015

Manitowoc, WI	Minneapolis, MN	Napoleon, OH	Waymart, PA	Blue Bell* PA	2014 Totals	2013 Total	% Change
4	3	3	2	0	28	25	11%
3	3	3	1	0	25	25	0%
143	101	67	14	0	784	792	-1%
0	2	0	0	0	8	15	-88%
0	2	0	6	6	21	9	57%
1	6	2	0	0	34	35	-3%
1	10	2	6	6	63	59	6%
144	111	69	20	6	847	851	0%
1	2	2	0	0	14	57	-307%
2	8	4	1	0	18	26	-44%
3	0	0	0	0	14	13	7%
6	10	6	1	0	46	96	-109%
138	**101**	**63**	**19**	**6**	**801**	**755**	**6%**
17	47	19	8	3	190	172	9%
155	148	82	27	9	991	927	6%
86	46	33	12	4	438	407	7%
10	51	12	4	0	163	155	5%
0	0	0	0	0	0	4	---------
1	4	3	0	0	21	12	43%
1	4	3	0	0	21	16	24%
135		62	14	6	615	714	-16%
4	6	6	12	12	73	67	8%
$162,857	$255,835	$129,687	$35,081		$1,291,906	$1,254,762	3%
$1,103	$15,132	$1,646	---		$53,320	$206,095	-287%
$93,183	$3,602	$942	$14,600		$174,512	$83,706	52%
$257,143	$274,569	$132,275	$49,681		$1,519,738	$1,544,563	-2%
$31,105	$19,212	$14,071	$2,786		$159,361	$163,460	-3%
$9,851	$6,468	$4,422	$924		$50,296	$51,233	-2%
$2,261	$7,330	$644	---		$26,365	$17,174	35%
$9,613	$22,032	$9,260	---		$79,241	$76,978	3%
$171,561	$213,566	$100,590	$34,443		$1,125,706	$1,066,495	5%
$224,391	$268,608	$128,987	$38,153		$1,440,969	$1,375,340	5%
$800,000	$750,000	$275,000	---		$5,190,000	$5,255,000	-1%
$250,000	$275,000	---	---		$1,371,972	$1,228,717	10%
$76,076	$4,297	$4,080	---		$96,781	$113,204	-17%
---	$234,235	---	----		$652,764	$744,237	-14%
---	$29,002	---	---		$91,862	$97,496	-6%
$218	$190	$210	$199		$211	$206	2%
$69	$64	$66	$66		$67	$65	2%
$302	$327	$286	$265		$313	$293	6%

*Statistics for Blue Bell are included in Waymart.

Appendix #4

Standing Rules of Covenant East Classis

1. The fiscal year of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. shall run from July 1st to June 30th of the following year. The Classical 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. [2011]

2. The Consistory of the Church to which the treasurer belongs shall audit the final Classis Treasurer report in July. The Treasurer shall distribute their findings and his report to the Consistories of Classis. [2012]

3. The parochial reports shall be forwarded to the President and the statistics to the Stated Clerk of Classis two weeks before the Spring Session of Classis.

4. The writ of certification of delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the Spring session of Classis.

5. All congregations shall present an annual report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school at the Spring Meeting of Classis. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire Heidelberg Catechism before confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Bible survey, Bible reading, Catechism, and also singing of "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."

6. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after defining the bar of the house.

7. If pastors, elders, or members of congregations request information from the Executive of Classis concerning Constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented to the parties concerned in written form and pertain only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.

8. A pastor and his elder delegate to Classis shall be paid a maximum of fifty cents per running mile; when an elder or pastor drives his own car, he shall be paid fifty cents per mile; when a pastor or elder rides with another person he shall be paid $20 per day. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Classis, they shall be granted full fare. [2009]

9. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis at fifty cents per running mile, or, if several ride together in one car or travel by public transportation, the actual fare. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only to those delegates to Classis whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Classis or have been properly excused by Classis. [2009]

10. 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.

11. The Classis shall designate the following Permanent Committees when needed as follows: Executive, Candidates and Credentials, Church Camp, Interchurch Relations, Missions, Publications. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. [2014]

12. The complete Classis statistics shall be made part of the minutes at the Spring Meeting of Classis.

13. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.

14. Prior to the Spring Meeting of Classis, the Spiritual Council of each charge shall direct the elder delegate how to answer the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. Every charge that will not have an elder delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. This copy shall be signed by all the elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk. [2003]

15. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the Churches at least three weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis. If possible, overtures with their supporting grounds shall be submitted to the clerk of classis at least three weeks before the scheduled meeting for circulation among the churches of classis. [2006]

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

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

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

19. The Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of $500.00 annually. [2005]

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

21. It shall be the practice of Covenant East Classis to examine ministers coming to it from other Classes of the RCUS to ensure that they have not departed from Reformed teaching or have developed major objections to the peculiar practices of the RCUS. Such examinations shall be completed before these candidates shall enter into a charge in Covenant East Classis and shall be conducted in such a way that each minister and delegate shall have opportunity to put questions to the candidate. [2003]

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