

**1999
ABSTRACT
OF THE
MINUTES**

**COVENANT EAST CLASSIS
REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES**

**14TH Annual Spring Meeting
March 10-11, 1999
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Directory Information

Officers of Classis	Page 3
Classis Treasurer.....	Page 5
Directory of Ministers, Elders, and Churches.....	Pages 3-6

Abstract of the Minutes

Services.....	Page 8
Organization	8-9
Fraternal Delegates and Visitors	9
Reception of New Ministers and New Churches	9
Standing Committees	9
Presentation of Overtures, Reports, and Communications.....	10
Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports	
Executive Committee	10-11
Missions.....	12-15
Candidates and Credentials	15

Interchurch Relations.....	15-16
Publications	16
Reports of Officers	
President's Report	16-19
Stated Clerk's Report	19-20
Report of Executive Committee of Synod.....	20
Treasurer's Report.....	20, Appendix, 30-32
Parochial Reports of Ministers	20-21
Constitutional Questions to Elders.....	21
Numerical and Financial Statistics.....	21-22, Appendix, 33
Reports from Classis Fraternal Delegates	22
Addresses and/or Reports of Visitors	22
Examination of Candidates	22
Reports of Special Committees	22
Reports of Standing Committees	
Ecumenicity.....	22
Excuses	22
Finances	22-23
Judicial	23-24
Nominations	24
Overtures	24-25
Services	25
Minutes of Synod	25
Missions	25-26
Examination and Licensure.....	26
Miscellaneous Reports and other Business	26
Reading of the Minutes	26
Adjournment.....	26-27

Appendix

Standing Rules.....	Pages 28-30
Treasurer's Report	30-32

Statistics	33
Necrologies	34-35
Special Meeting of Classis (May 1999).....	36

**1999 DIRECTORY
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS**

OFFICERS OF CLASSIS

PRESIDENT	Rev. Robert Grossmann
VICE PRESIDENT	Rev. Hank Bowen
STATED CLERK	Rev. Harvey Opp
TREASURER	Elder Don Larson

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

BOWEN, Rev. Hank (612) 467-3872, Church: (612) 467-3878
15480 County Rd. 31, Hamburg, MN 55339
rcushank@juno.com

DAVID, Rev. Alexander (610) 853-6373
2361 Bond Ave., Drexel Hills, PA 19026

GROSSMANN, Rev. Robert (515) 923-3060, Church: (Same)
1905 200th St., Garner, IA 50438
rcusbob@juno.com

MALL, Rev. George (570) 282-2840
9 Railroad St., Simpson, PA 18407

OPP, Rev. Harvey (419) 599-2266, Church: (419) 599-3106
927 East Graceway Dr., Napoleon, OH 43545 HarveyOpp@juno.com

PLOEGER, Rev. Chester (515) 923-6026
135 West 11th, St., Garner, IA 50438

POTTER, Rev. Ronald (570) 785-4012, Church: (570) 282-6400
47 South Church St., Carbondale, PA 18407
reform@mail.ptd.net

RIEDEL, Rev. Maurice (717) 786-1138
625 Robert Fulton Hwy., S-309 Quarryville, PA 17566

SAVALAINEN, Rev. Jari (301) 805-9564
14803 London Lane, Bowie, MD 20715
Jarifinn@aol.com

SAWTELLE, Rev. James (612) 417-9851
3101 Virginia Ave. N, Crystal, MN 55427
redeemer@iol31.com

VANCE, Rev. Donald (920) 726-4464, Church: (Same)

LICENTIATE

DAVID, Rev. Samuel (610) 853-6373
2361 Bond Ave., Drexel Hills, PA 19026

PRIMARIUS ELDERS

ARENDR, John (570) 282-3879
30 Darte Ave., Carbondale, PA 18407-2131
jsoapy@ptd.net

GOEKE, Leslie (920) 684-0764
1715 South 35th St., Manitowoc, WI 54220

HOXIE, Kenton (410) 451-1215
1019 Simsbury Ct., Crofton, MD 21114
khoxie@geo.census.gov

KLINGE, Merle (515) 357-8730
1622 N. 24th Street, Clear Lake, IA 50428

KROELLS, Richard (612) 467-3214
137 Lake St., Norwood, MN 55368

SCHROEDER, Harold (419) 592-8175
10-510 Rd. P3, Napoleon, OH 43545

SECUNDUS ELDERS

BORGWARDT, Bill (920) 758-2240
12626 Newton Rd., Valders, WI 54245

HONECK, Mark (419) 592-5631
215 Kolbe St., Napoleon, OH 43545
MarkHoneck@juno.com

LARSON, Donald (515) 379-1037
2673 120th St., Livermore, IA 50558
dmler1@juno.com

LOBITZ, Fred (612) 467-3875
15805 158th St., Hamburg, MN 55339

SHARP, David (570) 472-9919
P. O. Box 42, Bear Creek, PA 18602

CLASSIS TREASURER

LARSON, Donald (515) 379-1037
2673 120th St., Livermore, IA 50558
dmler1@juno.com

CHURCHES

Garner, IA

Peace RCUS, 50438
Highway 69 (3 miles south of Garner)(515) 923-3060
Pastor: Rev. Robert Grossmann (Wife: Pauline)
Worship: 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. (Summer),
7:30 p.m. (Winter); SS: 9:30 a.m.

Frederick, MD

Deaf RCUS, 20715
Office: 14803 London Lane, (Bowie, MD).....(301) 805-9564
Pastor: Rev. Jari Saavalainen (Wife: Ramona) Meeting at: New Hope Presbyterian Church,
216 Carroll Parkway, Frederick, MD
Worship: 1:30 p.m.; SS: 3:00 p.m.

Hamburg, MN

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339
15480 County Road 31..... (612) 467-3878
Pastor: Rev. Hank Bowen (Wife: Patty)
Worship: May - October 9:30 a.m.; SS: 8:25 a.m.
November - April 10:30 a.m.; SS: 9:25 am.

Napoleon, OH

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

Carbondale, PA

Covenant RCUS, 18407
47 South Church St.(570) 282-6400 Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)
Worship: 10:00 a.m.; Bible Classes 1:00 p.m.

Manitowoc, WI

Salem-Ebenezer RCUS 54220

6524 County Trunk C..... (920) 726-4464

Pastor: Rev. Donald Vance (Wife: Joan)

Worship: 10:00 a.m.; SS 8:45 a.m.

CHAPEL

Minneapolis, MN

Redeemer Reformed Chapel, 55427

Office: 3101 Virginia Ave. N, (Crystal, MN) (612) 417-9851

Pastor: Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)

Meeting at: Groves Academy,

3200 Highway 100 South, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Worship: 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m.

**ABSTRACT
OF THE
MINUTES**

**ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS
REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES**

**14TH Annual Spring Meeting
March 10-11, 1999
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA**

SERVICES

The Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States opened its 14th Annual Spring Meeting at Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA on Wednesday, March 10th, 1999 at 1:08 PM. Rev. Robert Grossmann led the Classis in the singing of a hymn and in prayer. He then brought a devotion on Acts 5:17-42, concluding with prayer.

A worship service was held on the evening of March 10th at 7:00 PM, with Rev. Donald Vance conducting and Rev. Hank Bowen preaching a sermon from I Thessalonians 1:2-4, entitled "The Pastor's Heart".

Morning devotions on Thursday, March 11th, were led by Rev. Jari Saavalainen based on Joshua 14:6-12 and concluding with prayer.

Each session of Classis was opened and closed with prayer, including thanksgiving for our meals, and each meal was followed with scripture reading, prayer, and appreciation expressed to those who prepared the meals and served us.

Closing devotions on March 11th were led by Rev. Harvey Opp based on II Timothy 4:1-5.

ORGANIZATION

Classis President, Rev. Robert Grossmann called the meeting to order following the opening devotions on March 10th, 1999. The opening roll call showed 4 Ministers and 3 Elders present, a quorum.

Ministers of the Word present for opening roll call were: Robert Grossmann, Harvey Opp, Chester Ploeger, and Donald Vance. Due to poor weather and other delays, Hank Bowen, George Mall, Ronald Potter, and Jari Saavalainen arrived later in the afternoon.

Elders *primarii* present for opening roll call were: Merle Klinge and Harold Schroeder. Due to poor weather and other delays, Kenton Hoxie and Richard Kroells arrived later in the afternoon.

Elder *secundus* Bill Borgwardt was present for the opening roll call. David Sharp arrived later that afternoon also due to weather, etc.

The delegates who arrived late were excused, and all delegates attending remained to the closing of the meeting.

Rev. Alexander David and Licentiate Samuel David were absent and excused from all sessions.

The Bar of the House was designated as the first 4 rows of pews, and Elder Bill Borgwardt and Elder Merle Klinge were appointed as Tellers. The President read the Standing Rules of Classis.

After a delay for delegates to arrive, elections for officers were held, resulting in the following:

President	Rev. Robert Grossmann
Vice-President	Rev. Hank Bowen
Stated Clerk	Rev. Harvey Opp
Treasurer	Elder Donald Larson

Rev. Donald Vance was appointed to be the Reformed Herald Reporter.

The Agenda, Order of the Day, and Services were adopted.

FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

The following visitors were present and were welcomed: Rev. Chuck Snyder, who was seated in the Bar of the House for the purpose of Deaf Interpretation; Rev. Rodney King, Pastor of Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church (OPC), Des Moines, IA, fraternal delegate from the Presbytery of the Midwest, Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Rev. Keith Davis, Pastor of Hills United Reformed Church, Hills, MN, representing the Classis Central of the URC. Rev. King and Rev. Davis were seated in the Bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor.

RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS AND NEW CHURCHES

Rev. Bowen and Rev. Vance were welcomed as new Ministers of Classis.

There were no new churches.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The President appointed the following Standing Committees, with chairmen listed first:

Examination and Licensure:	Potter, Grossmann, Borgwardt, Hoxie
Excuses:	Mall, Saavalainen, Schroeder
Finances:	Bowen, Potter, Klinge, Kroells
Judicial:	Grossmann, Bowen, Kroells, Hoxie
Minutes of Synod:	Vance, Opp, Sharp
Missions:	Vance, Bowen, Schroeder, Klinge
Nominations:	Potter, Saavalainen, Klinge, Sharp
Overtures:	Saavalainen, Opp, Borgwardt, Hoxie
Services:	Grossmann, Mall, Sharp

PRESENTATION OF OVERTURES, REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

All pertinent overtures and materials were given to the Standing Overtures Committee.

PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

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

Volume 13, Number 1 (May 5, 1998)

1. Information on the call to Rev. Hank Bowen from the Hamburg charge and his acceptance of the call.
2. That a Special Meeting of Classis be held on May 19, 1998 at 9:00 PM, at Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA to examine Rev. Hank Bowen and consider his call to St. Paul's

Evangelical RCUS, Hamburg, MN.

Volume 13, Number 2 (June 15, 1998)

1. Information that the reception of Rev. Bowen had been completed, and that his first Sunday at Hamburg would be June 28, 1999.
2. Information regarding the beginning of the church-planting work in Minneapolis, MN which had received Synod funding for the summer months. Miscellaneous expenses were proposed to be the responsibility of Classis.
3. That the installation of Rev. Hank Bowen as Pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, Hamburg, MN be conducted by a committee consisting of Rev. Robert Grossmann, Rev. Chester Ploeger, and the Elders of the Hamburg charge, at a time to be arranged by the committee.
4. That Classis approve the arrangements for the mission work in Minneapolis, MN, including the oversight consistory being designated as that of Peace RCUS, Garner, IA.
5. That Classis authorize expenditure of up to \$1,000 from the Mission fund for miscellaneous expenses of the Minneapolis work.

Volume 13, Number 3 (October 6, 1998)

1. Information that Rev. Bowen was installed as Pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS on July 12, 1998.
2. Information on the resignation and dismissal of Rev. Neale Riffert to the Western Classis, said resignation to take effect October 26, 1998.
3. Information on the call to Rev. Donald Vance from Salem Ebenezer RCUS and regarding a conference call examination of Rev. Vance.
4. Information on publishing of paperback Heidelberg Catechisms.
5. That the resignation of Rev. Neale Riffert be approved, that he be dismissed to the Western Classis of the RCUS, and that the pulpit of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church (RCUS) be declared vacant as of October 27, 1998.
6. That Classis confirm the Call of a Minister from Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church (RCUS) to Rev. Donald Vance, contingent upon the sustaining of his conference call exam on October 10, 1998, that Rev. Vance then be received as a Minister of Classis upon certificate of dismissal from South Central Classis (RCUS), and that his installation be conducted by a committee to be appointed by the Executive Committee.
7. That Classis authorize expenditure of \$556 from our general fund for publishing of paperback Heidelberg Catechisms (1986 Edition), in cooperation with the South Central Classis (RCUS), said amount to be repaid by sales of our 500 copies at \$1.50 per copy.

Volume 13, Number 4 (January 14, 1999)

1. Information regarding the time, place, and business of the 1999 Spring Classis Meeting; the installation of Rev. Vance; and the availability of the soft cover Heidelberg Catechisms.

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

The installation of Rev. Vance was conducted on Jan. 22, 1999, by a committee consisting of Rev. Robert Grossmann, Rev. Hank Bowen, and the elders of Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church.

A reception of Rev. Neale Riffert has been received from the Western Classis, RCUS, dated Feb. 2, 1999.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Robert Grossmann (President), Rev. Harvey Opp (Clerk), Elder Don Larson

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Overtures Committee. (See pg. 24.)

Missions Committee

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers:

Your Committee consisted of only the two undersigned members after the dismissal of Rev. Riffert to the Western Classis. We conferred regarding our mission works, and include the following information reported to us concerning Minneapolis and Bowie.

1. REDEEMER REFORMED CHAPEL

REPORT ON REDEEMER REFORMED CHAPEL, MINNEAPOLIS, MN
February 4, 1999

BEGINNINGS:

Redeemer Reformed Chapel began with five informational meetings held in northwest Minneapolis between the end of April and the beginning of June in 1998. The first meetings included members of approximately ten families, of which seven families were a cohesive group from one of the Christian Reformed Churches in the Minneapolis area. From the beginning there was confidence that the group would remain together if the RCUS would commit itself to working with them. They were pleasantly surprised that the Home Missions Committee and the Synod in May committed to substantial support by adopting the group as a synodical home mission project.

At these meetings a large amount of information about the RCUS and its teachings was communicated by Rev. James Sawtelle of the Synodical Home Mission Committee and by Rev. Robert Grossmann, pastor of Peace Reformed Church at Garner. Rev. Neale Riffert also attended one of the meetings on behalf of Synodical Home Missions. Subsequent questions demonstrated that not all of the information presented was digested, especially the fact that the RCUS defines itself doctrinally rather strictly. Nevertheless, the group was generally pleased with the picture presented and the commitment of the RCUS. Unfortunately only one unmarried RCUS member, Brian Gramm from Mitchell, has been among those committed to the work, and only one other member of the group, Lydia Grossmann, has an RCUS background. This has made it more difficult to communicate the reality of the RCUS to those unfamiliar with it.

SERVICES:

Worship services were begun on June 14, 1998, with RCUS summer student Jeff DeBoer preaching in the morning and Rev. Grossmann in the evening. Morning services were held at a community room in southwest Minneapolis while evening services were held in a classroom of Calvin Christian School in extreme north Minneapolis. Services were later moved to a more central location at Groves Academy for both morning and evening. During the summer, Rev. Grossmann led most evening services with Rev. Hank Bowen also participating after his arrival in Hamburg, MN, early in July. Mr. DeBoer did excellent work during the summer, having had only one year of seminary finished. He is very personable, with a fine wife, and seems well fit for the ministry. His work was very much appreciated by the congregation, which decided during the information meetings to call itself Redeemer Reformed Church when it is eventually organized as a particular congregation.

After the beginning of the seminary school year, arrangements were made to fly Mid-America Seminary students to Minneapolis to lead services from Sunday to Sunday. This has worked very well because reasonably priced flights have been available from Midway Airport in Chicago near the seminary, and because the students have done good work for us. Approximately seven students have been involved. On two occasions services were led by one of the members of the Redeemer group who has served as an elder in a CRC and who has had one year of seminary training at Mid-America.

MEMBERSHIP:

As mentioned, the group began with about ten interested families. Presently we have transfers from other churches for six families, including the one RCUS single man. We expect two or three more families to be released from their present memberships in the near future.

Membership classes were held as a kind of Sunday School before the evening services late in July and throughout August, with one weekday meeting to finish in early September. The group seems to have enjoyed the classes, though some were surprised at their extent. We covered the whole Heidelberg.

The Garner Consistory is prepared in the near future to receive the families that have been dismissed from other churches into its membership. It will then supervise the election of officers and the organization of Redeemer Reformed Church when both it and the group at Redeemer are comfortable to go ahead. There are able men in the congregation who can be trained as elders and deacons.

Recently, the undersigned has undertaken a series of pastoral meetings with the various families by visiting with two families at a time in one home.

ORGANIZATION

Shortly before beginning worship services, two men were appointed Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to take care of local collections and expenses. Later, five men were appointed as a "steering committee" that would be responsible to spearhead the search for an organizing pastor. This Committee has also been generally responsible for local planning and finances since its appointment. This Committee has functioned very well and has communicated regularly with the Garner Consistory for advice and information.

During this period of formation, the consistory of First Christian Reformed Church in Minneapolis has dealt patiently with its members who are involved in Redeemer chapel, and has recently dismissed from its membership those who intend to join Peace Reformed as part of the chapel. We have had cordial correspondence with them, explaining our intentions and procedures so that they might be comfortable with them. They have responded with gratitude for this information.

FINANCES

As a group, the Redeemer Chapel folks have given very well, averaging about \$600 per Sunday. They have happily used their treasure to support the work of the ministry among themselves, providing housing for the DeBoers and travel for the visiting preachers, as well as the major part of payment for leading the services. We have added \$25 per service to the \$45 that Redeemer has supplied, since the students of Mid-America have had to leave their homes on Saturday, not returning until Sunday evening.

A proposed budget will be presented to the Home Missions Committee for Redeemer, so that it can budget for the Synodical portion of the finances.

FINDING A PASTOR:

The folks of Redeemer have been anxious since the fall to find an organizing pastor. Their and our efforts focused on Rev. Paul Treick for a couple of months as we sought to see if he might be the man the Lord has in mind. When this door closed, a number of other possible candidates were contacted, and we are presently in the process of having Peace Reformed Church and Consistory issue a call to Rev. James Sawtelle as a candidate to be organizing pastor. Rev. Sawtelle preached in Minneapolis on January 31st, and the group is very enthusiastic about calling him.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Robert Grossmann

Your Missions Committee has no further information, but the Standing Missions Committee will need to make a recommendation on the Classical portion of financial support for this work. The work has certainly advanced with blessing from the Lord. It was approved as a Synodical Home Missions work in the fall of 1998.

2. DEAF REFORMED CHURCH

As a reminder, the Bowie charge was designated a mission work of Classis in 1997, and our churches were "encouraged to pray for the outreach of Deaf Reformed Church". The congregation gained one member in 1998 to now have 12 communicants. Classical support has included \$400 per month in mission funds and \$400 per month in benevolent aid for Rev. Saavalainen's health insurance. Last year, Classis authorized Rev. Saavalainen to serve as a chaplain for Reformed and Presbyterian students at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. He has been hired for that ministry on a part-time basis.

In a letter to your Committee, Rev. Saavalainen expressed his thankfulness for the financial support from Classis, and also related a new development as follows:

"Without your support it would not have been possible to cover our living expenses because there was not much work for me as a self-employed painter. I am very pleased to inform

you that God has provided me with a permanent full-time job that includes benefits which I started last October as an overnight counselor in the boys' dormitory at the Maryland School for the Deaf. It is only a 30 minute trip from my home. Since I got the job I had to reduce my schedule as a chaplain at Gallaudet to about three hours a week ministering to the students and staff....I no longer need to receive \$800.00 a month from March 1999 and beyond....However, I would like to make another request...to provide the same amount of \$800.00 per month for the three summer months (June, July, and August). The reason being that I will not receive a salary from the school during those months because school is not in session. I have been informed that in order to keep my health benefits during the summer break I would need to sign an agreement stating that I will return to work in late Aug. and also pay approximately forty dollars biweekly.”

Your Committee has asked Rev. Saavalainen to further inform Classis as to how his family and the church have dealt with all that is involved in having this additional work, and regarding the outlook of church members. The Standing Missions Committee will again need to make a recommendation on the financial support of the Bowie charge.

Respectively Submitted,
Harvey Opp, Mark Honeck

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Missions Committee. (See pg. 25.)

Candidates and Credentials

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your Committee met several times by telephone during the year. Rev. Neale Riffert was chairman for all of the business the Committee transacted since he moved to California shortly after Rev. Vance's examination..

Your Committee conducted two examinations of ministers transferring from other Classes to Covenant East Classis.

1. The examination of Rev. Hank Bowen from the Western Clasis was held at a special Classis meeting held the evening of May 19, 1998 during the meeting of the RCUS Synod. Rev. Bowen sustained this examination.
2. The examination of Rev. Don Vance from South Central Classis was held by telephone on December 26, 1998. Rev. Vance sustained this examination.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Grossmann, Don Larson, David Sharp

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Licensure and Examination Committee. (See pg. 26.)

Interchurch Relations

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Your Committee has not been as active in visiting other church bodies as it was in 1997-98 or as was anticipated in the 1998 Report to Classis. A delegate was however sent to the 1998 Fall Midwest Presbytery meeting of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as part of the fraternal relationship that exists between the RCUS and the OPC. The Rev. Harvey Opp will report to Classis on his visit to that Presbytery.

Minutes are received each quarter from the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York of the OPC which show that Presbytery to be actively engaged in the work of our Lord with both the planting of a Home Mission work in the NYC area as well as the active support of Foreign Missionaries.

An invitation has been sent to the Midwest Presbytery of the OPC and a delegate, the Rev. Rodney King from Des Moines, IA, is expected to be present for, and address, the Classis at its Spring meeting. An invitation was also sent to the United Reformed Church in North America to send an observer to the Spring Classis meeting, but no official response has been received at the time of this writing. An E-mail attempt to locate the Chairman of the Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (through the Synodical Interchurch Committee of the RPCNA) in the region of the midwest has not been responded to and thus no invitation has been sent to have a delegate from the RPCNA present. This is a perennial problem at the Classis/Presbytery level.

As time permits, attempts to visit other Presbyteries of the OPC will be made. The door is certainly open to do this, especially in the East. In the case of the RPCNA, it appears, from a conversation with the Rev. Gordon Keddie, Chairman of their Interchurch Relations Committee, that Presbyterian interaction with bodies they are in fraternal relationship with is not something they regularly do.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Ron Potter (Chairman), Rev. Jari Saavalainen, Elder Steve Steubbe

Classis Action: The report was adopted as a whole. [*Clerk's Note: There was no Standing Ecumenicity Committee formed for this meeting.*]

Publications Committee

No Permanent Publications Committee was formed for the 1998 Classical year. (See 1998 Standing Nominations Committee Report, 1998 Abstract, pg. 22.)

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

President's Report on the State of the Church

Esteemed Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

It is with great joy that I report to you that the state of the church in Covenant East Classis is one of great blessing from God, and of solid commitment to the keeping and spreading of His word. Such blessings of course do not come by chance, they are the work of God Himself and are effected by the Holy Spirit. With the apostle Paul we confess, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was nor in vain; but I labored more abundantly they they all, yet, not I, but the grace of God which was with me (I Cor. 15:10)." While none of us claims the high diligence of the apostle, yet all of us, ministers, elders, and congregations of Covenant East Classis are what we are, and do what we do, by the grace of the same God that Paul glorifies.

THE FAITHFUL MINISTRY OF GOD'S WORD

Each of our pastors reports that he faithfully administered the infallible word of God from week to week, both from the pulpit and from house to house. Our classis continues to be blessed with ministers and elders who know in their hearts that this is the central work of Christ's church. Ministers report spending much quality time in the study of God's word, and of the many situations in which they are privileged to minister it, nor only to their own congregations but to others as well. May God be praised for faithful ministers of His word and for elders who take seriously their calling to minister as God gives them ability.

Just as essential to the life of the church as faithful preaching is faithful listening to God's word. Here too, our ministers express thankfulness for the open hearts who hear God's word every Sunday, and for members who faithfully attend Bible studies and other meetings where the word is expounded. It is not without recognizing that some among us

are less than faithful in attendance upon God's word that these reports are given, and yet the vast majority of our people live not by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

We are happy to report that the preaching needs of our mission chapel, Redeemer Reformed in Minneapolis, have also been well met. Since the summer of 1998, a variety of students from Mid-America Reformed Seminary have filled the pulpit of Redeemer and have done good work. Rev. Bowen and Rev. Grossmann have occasionally filled the pulpit there, and Mr. Eric Rynders, one of the members who has had a year of seminary training, has led several services using taped sermons.

All but one of our pastors reports extensive reaching to the youth of the church, and we trust that the one who did not mention it also carries on this important ministry. The *Constitution of the RCUS* requires pastors to hold Catechism classes, and this task is taken seriously among us. This bodes well for the future of the Church since folks who were well-trained as covenant youth continue to make up the core membership of most of our churches. This is not to despise evangelism, as we will see below, but it is to recognize that covenant youth have particular responsibilities to know and confess their faith.

The Covenant East youth camp at Camp Sinawa near our Manitowoc, WI, church, offers our youth another opportunity to receive instruction in God's word. Ably hosted by Salem-Ebenezer Church, with lectures and discussions led by Classis pastors, our Do-Unto-Others camp has been better attended by more youth from more of our churches each year.

NEW PASTORS

It is a blessing to report that as 1998 ended, our established church pulpits were all filled, even though one of our pastors had accepted a call and moved on to a congregation in another classis, and our student supply had left St. Paul's church at Hamburg. As the year ended, we were still looking for an organizing pastor for Redeemer Reformed Chapel in Minneapolis, but a call has been extended to a candidate since then.

It was with joy and satisfaction that Rev. Hank Bowen was installed at Hamburg on July 12, 1998. Both pastor and consistory have indicated that the pastoral relationship is very good, and we rejoice to have Rev. Bowen as a partner in the work of our Classis. The same may be said of Rev. Don Vance who joined us at the very end of the year, moving to the Salem-Ebenezer charge at Manitowoc, WI, and being installed there on January 22, 1999. God has added two of his true servants to our midst, and we rejoice in His blessing upon the ministry of the word in our Classis churches.

OUR RETIRED PASTORS AND THOSE WITHOUT CHARGE

Rev. Chester Ploeger and his wife Grace continue to live in Garner with Rev. Ploeger serving Peace Church and other area Reformed churches as opportunity allows. The Ploegers are in reasonably good health, enthusiastically support Peace Church and carry on a ministry of prayer for all of the RCUS.

Rev. George Mall of Carbondale, PA, also continues in good health after 42 years of ministry in Pakistan. He finds opportunity to preach the word not only in Covenant Church, but also in a nursing home ministry. He worked with a group of Pakistani Christians in New York for about a month to start a new Urdu speaking church. The group was not interested in joining the RCUS, so he discontinued his preaching there.

Rev. Maurice Riedesel continues in fairly good physical health at Quarryville Nursing Home in Quarryville, PA, but suffers almost complete memory loss from the effects of Alzheimer's disease.

Rev. Alexander David has moved to Philadelphia where he and his licentiate son Sam have been working with an independent group. After some consideration they have decided to continue under the care and authority of our Classis. Their reports will be presented to Classis.

OUTREACH WITH THE GOSPEL

A new Home Mission work was started in 1998 at Minneapolis, MN, by our Classis in cooperation with the Home Mission Committee of our Synod. The Garner Consistory is overseeing the ministry and organization of Redeemer Reformed Chapel. With seventeen communicant and fifteen baptized members, Redeemer Chapel has been having regular Sunday services since June 14, 1998. They were ably served by RCUS student Jeff De Boer during the summer and by Mid-America Seminary students this fall and winter while an organizing pastor has been sought. Families have undergone membership training and will be joining Peace Reformed Church at Garner in the near future as they prepare for organization as a full-fledged congregation of the RCUS. Classis will need to consider budgeting funds for the support of Redeemer Chapel.

Our congregations report other efforts to spread the gospel. From an active Bible study ministry in Carbondale and Bowie, to a weekly radio program at Garner, most of our congregations carry on organized evangelism ministries. Deaf Reformed Church is especially active in working to provide Reformed teaching to the whole deaf community in the

United States. This is a large and daunting task but one taken on with enthusiasm by our brothers and sisters in Bowie. A Deaf Reformed Newsletter is being published and various conferences are held and attended each year by Pastor Saavalainen and Elder Hoxie. Deaf Reformed Church is planning to move across the Washington, DC, metropolitan area to establish themselves in Frederick, MD, where they will be able to use an OPC Church building for their services.

Finally, I would note that an action of the 1998 Synod seems to need modification. Last year the Synod answered a poorly worded question with a poorly worded motion that places the burden for assessing an officer's adherence to our creeds on that officer himself, rather than on the judicatory to which he is subject (see 1998 Synod Abstract, #10 at the top of page 54). While unintended, this wording allows for an independentist approach to creedal subscription.

CONCLUSION

One can only conclude that our Covenant God is indeed blessing Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. We must all give thanks to Him, and pray that He will continue to use us in glorifying Him through regular worship and a service which includes obedience to the Great Commission. It has been a privilege to serve as your president for another year.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Robert Grossmann

Classis Action: The matters regarding Minneapolis and creedal subscription were referred to Missions and Judicial, respectively. (See pp. 25 and 23-24.) The report was to be spread in the Abstract, and submitted to the *Reformed Herald*.

Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

The following is a summary of the activities of your Clerk during the past Classical year:

1. Following the 1998 Spring Classis Meeting:
 - a. Preparation, printing and binding of the *Minutes* of the 1998 Spring Classis Meeting, and of the Special Meeting, May 19, 1999.
 - c. The preparation and mailing of all requisite forms, overtures and correspondence to the Stated Clerk of Synod.
2. Preparation of a camera ready copy of the 1998 *Abstract of the Minutes* for the copier service and subsequent distribution of the *Abstract* to the Churches of Classis and Synod as required.
3. Preparation and mailing of Executive Circulars Volume 13, Numbers 1-4.
4. Preparation and mailing of a Reception of a Minister form on behalf of Rev. Hank Bowen, receiving him from the Western Classis, RCUS on May 22, 1998.
5. Preparation and mailing of a Dismission of a Minister form on behalf of Rev. Neale Riffert, dismissing him to the Western Classis, RCUS effective October 27, 1998.
6. Preparation and mailing of a Reception of a Minister form on behalf of Rev. Donald Vance, receiving him from the South Central Classis, RCUS on January 5, 1999
7. Preparation and mailing of two letters notifying the appropriate individuals that Classis had authorized Rev. Saavalainen to serve as a chaplain for Reformed and Presbyterian students at Gallaudet University.
8. Preparation of the Statistical Report, Executive Committee Report, and miscellaneous forms for the 1999 Spring Meeting of Classis .

A necrology of Elder Claire Knipp, of Peace RCUS, Napoleon, OH accompanies this report.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Harvey Opp

Classis Action: Take Note. [*Clerk's Note: A necrology of Elder Elroy Borgwardt was also submitted and read at the Classis meeting. Necrologies of Elders Orville Kloempken and Milton Kroells, were received after the Classis Meeting. All necrologies are included the Appendix, pg. 34-35.*]

Report of the Executive Committee of Synod

There was no current business reported from Synod for Classis consideration.

Treasurer's Report

(For the report, see Appendix, pp. 30-32.)

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Finances Committee. (See pg. 23.)

PAROCHIAL REPORTS OF MINISTERS

Each Minister attending the meeting read his report. Rev. Bowen read the reports of Rev. Alexander David and Licentiate Samuel David. The Clerk read the report that Rev. Grossmann submitted on Rev. Riedesel, who being incapacitated, cannot report.

Classis Action: 'Take Note' of each report, except for those of Alexander David and Samuel David which were referred to Excuses. (See pg. 22.)

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ELDERS

President Grossmann asked the Elder delegates the Constitutional Questions (Art. 81, RCUS Constitution). The Elders answered as follows:

1. *Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God?* All answered "Yes."
2. *Is careful attention given to the instruction of the youth for confirmation, the reception of members into the Church, and the Christian nurture of the members?* All answered "Yes", except Hoxie answered "Needs improvement".
3. *In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:*
 - a. *Is visitation faithfully performed?* All answered "Yes", except Kroells answered "Needs improvement".
 - b. *Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution?* All answered "Yes", except Kroells answered "Improving"; Borgwardt answered "Yes, Needs improvement".
4. *Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution.?* All answered "Yes."
5. *In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:*
 - a. *Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered "Yes."
 - b. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer?* All answered "Yes."
 - c. *Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?* All answered "Yes", except Kroells answered "No"; Borgwardt answered "90%".
 - d. *Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer?* All answered "Yes".
6. *Are the Church records properly kept?* All answered "Yes."
- 7a. *Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge?* All answered "Yes."

7b. Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs? All answered "Yes", except Hoxie answered "No".

REPORT OF NUMERICAL AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

(This Report appears in the Appendix of this Abstract, pg. 33.)

The Clerk presented the report.

Classis Action: The report was adopted as presented.

REPORTS FROM CLASSIS FRATERNAL DELEGATES

Rev. Harvey Opp brought an oral report on his visit to the 1998 Fall Meeting of the Presbytery of the Midwest, of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church..

Classis Action: 'Take Note' of the report.

ADDRESSES AND/OR REPORTS OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

Rev. Rodney King, fraternal delegate from the Presbytery of the Midwest, OPC addressed the body. Rev. Saavalainen responded on behalf of Classis. Rev. Keith Davis addressed the body as an observer from Classis Central, URC. Rev. Bowen responded on behalf of Classis.

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES

There were no candidates to be examined.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

No Special Committees had been formed.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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

Ecumenicity

No Ecumenicity Committee was formed for this Classis meeting. The Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee report was adopted by Classis. (See pp. 15-16.)

Excuses

1. That the following be excused (for late arrival): Jari Saavalainen, Kenton Hoxie, Ron Potter, David Sharp, George Mall, Henry Bowen, Richard Kroells.
2. That Rev. Alexander David be excused from the 1999 Spring Classis Meeting.
3. That Licentiate Samuel David be excused from the 1999 Spring Classis Meeting.

Finances

1. That travel expenses be paid in the following amounts:

	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Airfare</u>	<u>Rental Car</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jari Saavalainen		596.00	157.00	753.00
Kenton Hoxie				
David Sharp	20 @ .25	353.00		358.00
Ron Potter	64 @ .25	326.60	188.00	529.60
George Mall	50 @ .10	326.60		331.60
Richard Kroells	280 @ .25			70.00
Harold Schroeder	1240 @ .25			310.00
Harvey Opp	1240 @ .10			124.00
Donald Vance	800 @ .05			40.00
William Borgwardt	800 @ .25			<u>200.00</u>
			TOTAL	2,716.20

2. That Chuck Synder be paid \$317.50 for travel and a \$400.00 honorarium for his deaf interpretation work for the Classis Meeting.

3. That Classis overture Synod for \$500.00 per month in ministerial relief for Rev. Maurice Riedesel and \$600.00 per month in ministerial relief for Rev. Chester Ploeger.

4a. That the Classis Clerk distribute to the churches a standard form for the remittance of guidelines.

4b. That Mr. Larson be commended for the thorough job he has done as Classis Treasurer. (Note: The Treasurer’s books were audited for 1998.)

5. That Classis adopt the following guideline:

General Fund	10.00
Missions	11.00
Student Aid Fund	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	21.00

Judicial

1. That Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS to adopt the following position vis -a-vis homosexuality:

“Whereas according to the Holy Bible, homosexuality, like other violations of the Seventh Commandment, is a sin and an abomination before God, the Reformed Church in the United States declares homosexuality to be unacceptable in any form. Therefore, in Christian love we call those who are involved in this sin to turn in repentance to God, who promises to forgive all sinners through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. We further declare that the same is a principle of our religious faith.”

Grounds:

- a. The RCUS has not previously formulated a position statement on this subject.
- b. As a possible aid toward religious objection to laws supporting homosexuality, such a statement is needed.

2. That Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS to restate Recommendation #10 of the 1998 Judicial Committee report (pg. 54, 1998 Synod Abstract) in the following form:

“That all deacons, elders and ministers, regardless of when they took their vows, are bound to full subscription to the creeds in accordance with the present vow of subscription. If an officer believes that he cannot so submit, he shall bring the matter to the attention of the judicatory under which he serves and submit his continued service to final decision of the

authorities of the Reformed Church in the U.S.”

[Clerk's Note: Overtures items #5 and #6 were previously taken up by Examination and Licensure, though originally referred to this committee.]

Nominations

(First named and in **bold** are chairmen.)

Executive: **R. Grossmann**, H. Opp, M. Klinge
Candidates and Credentials: **R. Grossmann**, H. Bowen, R. Potter, D. Sharp
Interchurch Relations: **D. Vance**, J. Saavalainen, S. Stuebbe
Missions: **H. Bowen**, H. Opp, R. Kroells
(Publications was not needed)

Overtures

(The following items were received by Overtures, and then referred to the Standing Committees underlined, unless otherwise indicated.)

- #1. Request from H. Opp that Classis approve and forward to Synod a position statement on homosexuality - Judicial
- #2. Request from R. Potter, D. Sharp, and G. Mall for excuses for late arrival - Excuses
- #3. Request from J. Saavalainen and K. Hoxie for excuses for late arrival - Excuses
- #4. Request for counsel for G. Mall regarding seminary attendance by Obaid Mall - Examination and Licensure
- #5. Request for counsel for G. Mall regarding working with 'Urban Nations' in New York City - Judicial
- #6. Request for counsel for G. Mall regarding working as a pastor to an Urdu speaking congregation in Philadelphia, PA - Judicial
- #7. Request from J. Saavalainen for financial aid for a mission trip to the United Kingdom - Missions
- #8. Executive Committee Report on their Minutes - That the Report be adopted.
- #9. An official statement of thanks to the Peace Reformed Church of Garner, IA for hosting the Classis Meeting - That the statement be adopted.

(Clerk's Note: Apart from Overtures Committee action, the following items were given directly to the indicated committees or referred on the floor.)

- a. Request from J. Saavalainen and K. Hoxie for an honorarium for Chuck Snyder - Finances
- b. Ministerial relief recommended by R. Grossmann for M. Riedesel - Finances
- c. Request from C. Ploeger for ministerial relief - Finances
- d. Request from J. Saavalainen for financial aid for the summer months - Missions
- e. A proposed budget for Redeemer Chapel, Minneapolis, MN - Missions
- f. President's Report regarding Redeemer Chapel, Minneapolis, MN - Missions
- g. President's Report regarding creedal subscription - Judicial

Services

This Committee received no business and took no actions.

Minutes of Synod

This Committee received no business and took no actions.

Missions

1. That Deaf Reformed Church receive \$800 per month for June, July, and August from the general fund for Rev. Saavalainen's support.

Grounds:

- a. Rev. Saavalainen's salary from the school he is employed by is only paid from Sept. to May. He has been supported in the past to an amount of \$800/month. He no longer is asking for the monthly support. We feel that this new request is not out of line.
2. That Rev. Saavalainen be granted \$500 toward costs of his trip to the United Kingdom to establish contact with other Reformed and deaf Christians.

Grounds:

- a. The return cost of the flight to the U.K. is \$380. Jari expects to spend the balance on car rental.
- b. We have a unique relationship with the deaf in our Classis and we want to support this investigative trip.
3. That Classis begin to support the Redeemer Reformed Chapel in Minneapolis, MN, and that \$6.25 be added to the Classis guideline to support this work.

Grounds:

- a. The Committee was given a financial plan for the new work. The expected total cost will be approximately \$75,000 per year.
- b. The Finances Committee must budget for 9 months. A pastor is not expected to be on the field until mid-summer.

4. Regarding the President's Report - Take Note.

Grounds:

- a. The pertinent material in the report is covered in the action above.
5. That an additional \$3.75 per communicant be added to the Classis Missions guideline.

Grounds:

- a. We want to build up a reserve for new mission works in the Classis.

Examination and Licensure

1. That Classis encourage Rev. Obaid Mall of Pakistan to seek emmigration to the U. S. with the understanding that Covenant East Classis promises to consider examining him and approving him as a candidate for our ministry.
2. Regarding Overtures item #5, on the propriety of Rev. G. Mall working with 'Urban Nations' - Take Note. [*Clerk's note: Rev. Mall had discontinued this work. This item and the next item, which were originally referred to Judicial were taken up by Examination and Licensure as appropriate to its concerns.*]
3. That Rev. G. Mall investigate the possibility of establishing an Urdu speaking RCUS church in the greater Philadelphia area.
4. From the parochial reports of Alexander and Samuel David: That the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee stay in contact with the Carbondale Spiritual Council about the status of Rev. Alexander David and Licentiate Samuel David.

Grounds:

- a. There is some uncertainty about what these two men plan to do with their ministerial credentials.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

The expression of appreciation to the host congregation was handled by the Overtures Committee, item #9. The Executive Committee's Report on their Minutes and the Overtures Committee Report were previously adopted.

READING OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes were read by the Stated Clerk at the closing of the session. Corrections were made and the Minutes were approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The 14th Annual Spring Meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was adjourned to the 15th Annual Session to be held at Peace RCUS, Napoleon, OH, convening on March 8, 2000.

The final roll call showed 8 Ministers and 6 Elders present. Closing devotions were held.

The body confessed the Apostles' Creed and prayed the Lord's Prayer in unison. The President pronounced the Benediction and the body sang the Doxology. The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 PM, Thursday, March 11, 1999.

Rev. Harvey Opp
Stated Clerk
Covenant East Classis, RCUS

**Appendix to the Minutes
1999 Spring Meeting, Covenant East Classis**

Standing Rules of Classis

1. The fiscal year of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. shall run from February 1st to January 31st of the following year. The Classical Dues shall be due on the first of January and are to be paid not later than the thirty-first of January of the current fiscal year.
2. The parochial reports shall be forwarded to the President and the Statistics to the Stated Clerk of Classis two weeks before the Spring Session of Classis.
3. The writ of certification of delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the Spring session of Classis.
4. All congregations shall present an annual report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school at the Spring Meeting of Classis. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire *Heidelberg Catechism* before confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Bible survey, Bible reading, Catechism, and also singing of "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs".
5. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after defining the bar of the house.
6. If pastors, elders, or members of congregations request information from the Executive of Classis concerning Constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented to the parties concerned in written form and pertain only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
7. A pastor and his elder delegate to Classis shall be paid a maximum of forty cents per running mile; when an elder or pastor drives his own car, he shall be paid twenty-five cents per mile; when a pastor or elder rides with another person he shall be paid ten cents per mile. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Classis, they shall be granted full fare.
8. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel in behalf of Classis at twenty-five cents per running mile, or, if several ride together in one car or travel by public transportation, the actual fare. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only those delegates to Classis whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Classis or have been properly excused by Classis.
9. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
10. The Classis shall designate the following Permanent Committees when needed as follows: Executive, Missions, Candidates and Credentials, Inter-Church Relations, Publications. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees.
11. The complete Classis statistics shall be made part of the minutes at the Spring Meeting of Classis.
12. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
13. Every charge that will not have an elder delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. This copy shall be signed by all the elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk.
14. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the Churches at least three weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis.

15. The services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circulated before Classis.
16. Students for the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend seminaries which are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.
17. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship of eight months for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the RCUS for at least five years. During this intemship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the peculiarities and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.
18. The Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of \$200.00 annually.
19. The Spring Meeting of Classis shall begin on the second Wednesday of March, and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed.
20. It shall be the practice of Covenant East Classis to examine Ministers coming to it from other Classes of the RCUS to ensure that they have not departed from Reformed teaching or have developed major objections to the peculiar practices of the RCUS. Such examinations shall be completed before these candidates shall enter into a charge in Covenant East Classis and shall be conducted in such a way that each Minister and delegate shall have opportunity to hear the examination and put questions to the candidate.
21. In order to preserve the historic Reformed and Biblical practice of voting in congregation meetings by male heads of households, the Covenant East Classis shall neither start nor receive new congregations in which voting by women is practiced.

Classis Treasurer's Report 2-1-98 to 1-31-99 (Summary)

Treasurer's Report - (Detailed Income)

Treasurer's Report - (Detailed Expenses)

Student Aid Fund	No Expense
TOTAL EXPENSE	14,921.65

(Donald Larson, Treasurer)

1998 Statistics

NECROLOGIES

CLAIRE KNIPP PEACE REFORMED CHURCH NAPOLEON, OH

Knipp, Claire J. (1913-1998) son of William and Clara (Rettig) Knipp, was born Dec. 15, 1913, in Henry County, Ohio. On Sept. 26, 1937, he married Ardella Eldred. To this union five children were born. He is survived by his wife, Ardella, their two sons and three daughters, two brothers, two sisters, 19 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-children.

Claire farmed in Henry County. He also worked at the Campbell Soup Co. of Napoleon from 1957 to 1978. He was a former member of the Army National Guard of Napoleon.

Claire and Ardella were among the original congregation which became Peace Reformed Church. Claire served as an elder delegate of Peace RCUS to the Eureka Classis.

In his later years, he endured numerous life-threatening physical ailments. Nonetheless, Claire always sought to be in attendance upon public worship of his Lord. When he could not do so, he showed much appreciation for visits from the pastor and the elders.

ELROY BORWARDT SALEM-EBENEZER REFORMED CHURCH MANITOWOC, WI

Borgwardt, Elroy Richard (1926-1998) was born on February 2, 1926, on a farm in the township of Liberty, Manitowoc, Wisconsin. A few years after graduation from an area school he became a partner with his brother at Sunnyside Dairy Farms raising Registered Holstein Dairy cattle. He later became a National Director and chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Holstein Association.

In 1946 he married Lucinda Dill at Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church at Newton. The marriage was performed by the Rev. Dr. K. J. Stuebbe. The Lord blessed this union with two sons and one daughter. Mr. Borgwardt also had seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

At a young age he became a deacon at Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church at Newton, and he was chairman of the Building Committee when the new church was built. For many years he was an Elder in the church and also a member of its Adult Bible Class. On August 22, 1998, the Lord called His servant home at the age of 72 years, six months and 20 days.

**ORVILLE KLOEMPKEN
ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH
HAMBURG, MN**

Kloempken, Orville W. (1924-1998) had been a life long resident of Sibley County, Minnesota. He was born on April 26, 1924 and was baptized on May 25th at St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church, Hamburg, MN, where he was also confirmed on April 10, 1938. He was married on June 21, 1947 to Emma Hoernemann and they settled into a life of farming. Together they raised three sons and four daughters.

Orville had an important part in the leadership of St Paul's Church serving as an elder on the consistory and being actively involved in other ministries of the church. His faithfulness is evidenced in the lives of his children who continue to be faithful in their commitment to Christ and the church. Following a stroke the previous April, he was called home to be with the Lord on December 16, 1998 at the age of 74 years, 7 months, and 20 days.

**MILTON KROELLS
ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH
HAMBURG, MN**

Kroells, Milton J. (1929-1998) was born on March 21, 1929 in Sibley County, Minnesota and baptized on April 19th. He was confirmed in the faith on March 29, 1942 at St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church, Hamburg, MN by the Rev. Otto Vriesen. On May 15, 1952 he was united in marriage to Lyla Panning and after returning from military service they settled into a life of farming in the Carver County area. He was the loving father of two sons and three daughters.

At the center of his life was service to Christ in His Church. Milton served as an elder, was active in the choir, and many other groups and committees at St. Paul's. Following a battle with brain tumors, His soul ascended to his Heavenly Father on Monday, June 1, 1998 at the age of 69 years, 2 months and 10 days.

**SPECIAL MEETING OF
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS
May 18, 1999
Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter,**

A Special Meeting of Covenant East Classis was convened at 9:05 PM on May 18, 1999, at Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, CA. The purpose of the meeting was for the examination of Rev. James Sawtelle, a Minister of South Central Classis, RCUS and associate pastor-elect of Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA.

Call to Order:

The President, Rev. Robert Grossmann, brought devotions by reading I Timothy 4:12-16, with prayer and comments on the passage. The Clerk, Rev. Harvey Opp, called the Roll, which showed 7 Ministers and 4 Elders present, a quorum. Ministers of Classis present were: Hank Bowen, Robert Grossmann, George Mall, Harvey Opp, Ron Potter, Jari Saavalainen, and Don Vance. Elders present were: John Arendt, Leslie Goeke, Mark Honeck, and Richard Kroells.

Examination:

The President reminded the body of the Constitutional provisions for examination of a Minister from another Classis of the RCUS. Rev. Ron Potter, of the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee, questioned Rev. Sawtelle as to whether his convictions have changed in any way since taking his ordination vows. Potter examined in various areas of theology. The Vice-President, Rev. Hank Bowen, assumed the chair, while Grossmann examined in various areas of theology. Questions were asked from the floor. The examination was arrested and sustained.

The President resumed the chair, and the Clerk read the documents regarding the call to Rev. Sawtelle and his acceptance of the call. The Clerk reported that he had received a dismission of Rev. Sawtelle from the South Central Classis. The papers were found in order, and the call approved. Rev. Sawtelle was received as a Minister of Classis and placed on the roll of Ministers. The right hand of fellowship was extended to Rev. Sawtelle. An installation service was approved at a time and place to be determined by the Executive Committee, with an installation committee consisting of Rev. Hank Bowen, Rev. Robert Grossmann, Rev. Chester Ploeger, and the elders of Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA.

An excuse was granted to Elder Kenton Hoxie.

Adjournment:

The Clerk read the Minutes which were approved as read. Bowen led in a prayer of thanksgiving for Rev. Sawtelle. The President led the body in the reciting of the Apostles' Creed, pronounced the Benediction, and the assembly sang together the Doxology.

Rev. Harvey Opp
Stated Clerk, Covenant East Classis, RCUS