

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS OF CLASSIS

President	Rev. Jim Sawtelle
Vice President	Rev. Ron Potter
Stated Clerk	Rev. Jeff De Boer
Treasurer	Elder Don Larson

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING
(per communicant member)

General Fund	13.00
Missions Fund	57.00
Student Aid	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	70.00

CLASSIS TREASURER

LARSON, Donald (515) 379-1037
 2673 120th St., Livermore, IA 50558
 delarson@fbx.net

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive:	Sawtelle, De Boer, Van Heest
Candidates and Credentials:	Potter, De Boer, Syms, Blank
Interchurch Relations:	Potter, Sawtelle, Sorensen, Leisveld, Brice
Missions:	Opp, Sorensen, Schnabel, Honeck, Bruckschen
*Deaf Ministries:	Hamilton, Saavalainen, Speranza, Pennington
Publications:	No Committee formed

(First name serves as Chairman of the Committee.)

*Deaf Ministries is a sub-committee to the Missions Committee.

**Abstract
of the
Minutes
for the
Covenant East Classis**



19th Annual Session

March 3 and 4, 2004

Peace Reformed Church
Garner, Iowa

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CHURCHES

Bentonville, ARKANSAS

Grace RCUS Chapel, 72714
Office: 15 Kensington Drive, Bella Vista (470) 876-1064
Pastor: Rev. Wesley Brice (Wife: Ginger)
Worship: Call Pastor
www.grc-nwa.org

Garner, IOWA

Peace RCUS, 50438
1905 200th St. (3 miles south of Garner) (641) 923-3060
Pastor: Mr. Jeff DeBoer (Wife: Karen)
Worship: 10:30 a.m. SS: 9:30 a.m.
www.peacereformedchurch.org

Danville, KENTUCKY

Deaf RCUS, 40422
Office: 917 Rosemont Ave. (859) 936-1879
Pastor: Rev. Kevin Hamilton (Wife: Robin)
Contact Pastor for location of church meetings
Worship: 1:30 p.m., Bible Study: 3:00 p.m. Fax: 936-1879

Relay, MARYLAND

Deaf RCUS, 21113
Office: 115 Langdon Farm Circle, Odenton (410) 674-4854
Pastor: Rev. Jari Saavalainen (Wife: Ramona)
Contact Pastor for location of church meetings
Worship: 1:30 p.m.; Bible Study: 3:00 p.m.
www.deafReformedChurch.org Fax: 674-4860

Golden Valley, MINNESOTA

Redeemer RCUS, 55427
Office: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal (763) 417-9835
Pastor: Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)
Church: 1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley
Worship: 10:15 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m.
www.redeemerrcus.org

Hamburg, MINNESOTA

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339
15470 Co Road 31 (952) 467-3878
Pastor: Rev. Dan Schnabel (Wife: Marie)
Worship: May - October 9:30 a.m.; SS: 8:25 a.m.
November - April 10:00 am; SS: 8:5 5am

Kansas City, MISSOURI

Northland RCUS, 64164
2901 NW Cookingham (816) 420-9700
Pastor: Rev. George Syms (Wife: Debbie)
Worship: 9:30 a.m. . and 6:00 p.m.; SS: 11:00 a.m.
www.kcnrc.org

Napoleon, OHIO

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)

Honesdale, PENNSYLVANIA

Heritage RCUS Chapel
Meeting at Lakeside Elementary School, 100 Lakeside Dr.. . . (570) 785-4012
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)
Worship: 10:30 a.m.; Bible Classes 9:30 a.m.
www.heritagercus.org

Manitowoc, WISCONSIN

Salem Ebenezer RCUS 54220
6524 County Trunk C (920) 726-4940
Pastor: Rev. Kyle Sorensen (Wife: Donielle)
Worship: 10:00 a.m.; SS 8:45 a.m.
Salem@lakefield.net www.salemebenezer.org Fax: 726-4164

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES

of the

Covenant East Classis

19th Annual Spring Meeting

March 3 and 4, 2004

Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa

Services

The Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States opened its 19th annual spring meeting on Wednesday, March 3, 2004 at 8:25 a.m. at Peace Reformed Church in Garner, Iowa. Rev. George Syms then led the body in a devotion from 2 Timothy 1:1-14 and closed the time of meditation in prayer. On the following morning, March 4, the president of classis, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, led the body in the consideration of 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 and in prayer.

On Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. the delegates and the Peace Reformed Church congregation came together for worship. Rev. Dan Schnabel led the worship service and Rev. Stephen Payson preached from John 5:1-18 using as the title for his sermon "Do You Want to be Made Well?" This sermon was preached as part of the requirements for Rev. Payson's licensure in the RCUS.

Closing devotions on March 4 were led by Elder Clayton Greiman, the elder delegate from the host church. Mr. Greiman read from Psalm 91 and led the body in prayer.

Each session of classis was opened and closed with a prayer asking God to grant wisdom for the body's deliberations. After the reading of each pastor's Parochial Report prayer was offered for the pastor and his charge. Prayer was also offered at numerous other times during the meeting when appropriate.

Organization

The stated clerk *pro tem* of classis, Rev. Harvey Opp, called the meeting to order on March 3 in the absence of the president of the Classis Executive Committee, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, per article 2 of the Rules of Order for the Reformed Church of the United States. During opening devotions, Rev. Sawtelle arrived. After the devotions were completed the opening roll was called which showed 9 ministers and 6 elders present, a *quorum*. Elder Leslie Goeke was accepted as the elder delegate from Manitowoc by a 2/3 vote per article 54 of the RCUS Constitution. The roll then showed 9 ministers and 7 elders. The bar of the house was established as the first five rows of pews. The stated clerk then read the Standing Rules of Classis as required by Standing Rule 5. Rev. Dan Schnabel and Elder Dominic Speranza were appointed as tellers for the meeting by the president.

The following delegates were elected to serve as classical officers for the year: Rev. Jim Sawtelle as president, Rev. Ron Potter as vice-president, Rev. Jeff De Boer as clerk, and Elder Don Larson as treasurer.

The president appointed Rev. Kyle Sorensen as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

The special order of the day was then adopted. This special order called for the examination of Rev. Stephen Payson for licensure directly after the presentations of overtures and communications.

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

Rev. Larry Johnson was present as a visitor from the Classis Central of the United States of the United Reformed Churches. Rev. Stephen Payson and Mr. Travis Hollenbach were also welcomed as visitors—Rev. Payson would later undergo a licensure examination. Mrs. Glenda Mathes, reporter for the *Christian Renewal*, was welcomed as well.

Signers Rev. Chuck Synder and Mr. Mike Brabo were introduced and allowed to sit in the bar of the house to interpret for the body.

Reception of New Ministers and New Churches

Revs George Syms and Dan Schnabel were welcomed as new ministers to Covenant East Classis. Rev. Syms serves the congregation at Northland Reformed Church in Kansas City and Rev. Schnabel is the pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Church in Hamburg, Minnesota.

Standing Committees

The president appointed the following Standing Committees. Chairmen were listed first:

<i>Examination and Licensure:</i>	Potter, Van Heest, Sawtelle, De Boer, Saavalainen
<i>Excuses:</i>	Brice, Goeke, Sawtelle
<i>Finances:</i>	Blank, Goeke, Greiman, Brice
<i>Judicial:</i>	Syms, Sorensen, Saavalainen, Speranza
<i>Minutes of Synod:</i>	Sorensen, Opp, Herrmann
<i>Missions:</i>	De Boer, Syms, Honeck, Goeke
<i>Nominations:</i>	Sawtelle, Blank, Potter, Honeck
<i>Overtures:</i>	Schnabel, Speranza, Van Heest
<i>Services:</i>	Opp, Herrmann, Greiman

Presentation of Overtures and Communications

All overtures and appropriate materials were given to the Standing Committee on Overtures for referral to the appropriate standing committees. Classis received two items which were eventually referred to the Standing Judicial Committee. One was a request from Rev. Ron Potter seeking advice on how he might continue to serve in Pennsylvania. The other was correspondence from the Western Classis about a judicial matter. There were also other items which arose in permanent committee reports and reports of the classis officers which were referred to the standing committees.

Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee Report

Dear Brethren,

During the Classical year of 2003, the following recommendations were approved, and information was brought to the Classis, by these Executive Circulars:

Volume 18, Number 1 (April 28, 2003)

1. "That the documents concerning Rev. Bowen's resignation from St. Paul's Ev.

RCUS in Hamburg are in order and that the pastoral relationship be dissolved, the charge be declared vacant on July 8, 2003, and Rev. Bowen be dismissed to the Western Classis."

2. "That the Committee to defend the actions of Classis at Synod this year against the two Complaints and the two Appeals be made up of Jim Sawtelle, Hank Bowen, Jeff DeBoer, Kenton Hoxie, and Harvey Opp."

3. "That the Classis overture Synod for benevolent aid in the amount of \$425.00 per month to aid in the cost of insurance (for Rev. Potter)."

Volume 18, Number 2 (May 8, 2003)

1. "That the Rev. George Syms be received into the Covenant East Classis and added to the roll. That an installation committee be erected in consultation between the Executive Committee of Classis and the Northland RCUS consistory as to who will be on the committee and when the installation shall take place."

Volume 18, Number 3 (June 6, 2003)

Information that Rev. Opp had been designated to serve as Clerk Pro Tem of Classis; that Rev. Bowen had been dismissed to Western Classis, effective July 8, 2003; and address of Rev. Syms.

1. "That the pastoral relation between Rev. Potter and Covenant RCUS, Carbondale, PA be hereby dissolved, and that the pulpit at Carbondale be declared vacant."

Volume 18, Number 4 (July 23, 2003)

1. "That Classis accede to the request of Covenant RCUS, Carbondale, PA; that it be removed from the roll of Classis churches; and that Rev. George Mall be administratively erased from the roll of Classis ministers."

2. "That the Executive Committee appoint a special committee, on behalf of Classis, to draft and send a complaint to the Western Classis, RCUS, against said action of Rev. Roe."

3. "That Classis overture Synod for an additional \$1,200.00 for the Bentonville work for the Synod fiscal year 2003." (Due to an oversight at Synod.)

Information on the status of Rev. Ron Potter and nine other former members and two baptized children of the Carbondale congregation. They have been received as members of Peace RCUS, Napoleon, OH, and Rev. Potter was ministering to this group with permission of the Executive Committee of Classis and the Peace Spiritual Council. Prayer was requested for this group.

Volume 18, Number 5 (October 15, 2003)

1. "That Classis overture Synod on behalf of Deaf RCUS, Danville, KY, requesting a loan of \$30,000 for purchase of a church building."

2. "That Classis overture Synod on behalf of Deaf RCUS, Danville, KY, requesting that \$500 per month in Synod Missions funds be granted to the Danville charge for mission work in the Chicago area until the 2004 Synod Meeting, and that an evaluation of the work be submitted to the Synod Home Missions Committee before its Spring 2004 meeting."

3. "That the Call to Rev. Dan Schnabel be confirmed, contingent upon his sustaining of

the Candidates and Credentials exam, and the reception of a dismissal from Northern Plains Classis, and that Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Jeff De Boer, and the elders of the Hamburg charge conduct the installation service at a time determined by the Hamburg Consistory.”

4. “That the Consistory of Deaf RCUS, Columbia, MD be encouraged to undertake oversight of a Deaf Reformed Chapel in the Houston, TX area.”

5. “That the request of Rev. Samuel Marsh for a licensure exam be referred to our Candidates and Credentials Committee.”

6. “That Rev. Kyle Sorensen be added to the Missions Committee.”

Volume 18, Number 6 (January 8, 2004)

1. “That the Spring Meeting of the Covenant East Classis be held at Peace Reformed Church, 1905 200th St., Garner, IA beginning at 8:00 AM, Wednesday, March 3rd, 2004, and concluding on Friday, March 5th, 2004.”

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

Your Committee now also brings before you two matters for your consideration:

A. The status of Rev. Ron Potter and Heritage Reformed Chapel.

In accord with Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution, your Committee has sought to assist Rev. Potter “in obtaining a suitable field of labor” since the Spring 2003 Classis meeting. Rev. Potter has served agreeably with the former Carbondale members as noted above. The group, having taken the name of Heritage Reformed Chapel, has a meeting place provided to them at Lakeside Elementary School in Honesdale, PA. Officer training is being done, and they would like to organize as soon as possible. However, given the small size of the group presently, continued oversight and perhaps a borrowed elder, in closer proximity to Honesdale, may be needed for some time. Therefore, your Committee believes that the matter of oversight and Rev. Potter’s permission to so labor, without a call to this work currently, should be referred to the Judicial Committee to recommend actions for Classis to take in this situation.

B. Rev. Stephen Payson and Providence Reformed mission in Vicksburg, PA.

Rev. Payson, who will undergo a licensure exam at Classis, has been ministering to approximately 35 people, who have been worshiping in Vicksburg. He has from the beginning of this work made known his intention to enter the RCUS, and seek establishment of an RCUS congregation there. A steering committee has been functioning, and requested an informational meeting with your Committee, to become better acquainted with the RCUS and be advised as to the process of becoming a member congregation. Jan. 27-28, 2004 was set for said meeting. However, in God’s providence, only Rev. Opp was able to attend. Rev. Sawtelle’s flight was cancelled due to adverse weather. Also, only the steering committee (and several wives at the first evening meeting) were able to meet, not the whole group as planned.

Yet, the time together was helpful. Some questions were answered, and the format that Synod established in 1995 for meetings with new groups was considered.

Constitutional provisions for organization were addressed. Prayers of the Classis are requested for this work as the members work through the understanding of our positions. We sincerely hope all the people may be convinced that they should seek membership in the RCUS!

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jim Sawtelle, President; Rev. Harvey Opp, Clerk Pro Tem; Elder Jay Kroese

Classis Action: The matter of Potter’s status was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee. The entire report was referred to the Standing Committee on Overtures.

B. Candidates and Credentials

Dear Brothers:

Since our 2003 Spring Classis meeting, your committee has conducted the business of interviews with the Reverends George Syms and Dan Schnabel as to their continued stance in the faith and commitment to their prior subscription vows as ministers in the RCUS (CEC Standing Rule 20). In accordance with the standing rule, these interviews were done by conference call, after the classis was notified and invited to submit questions. Each man gave a good accounting of his faith, doctrine and life, and the committee recommended their exams be declared satisfactory and that they be welcomed to their respective charges by the classis and added to the roll of ministers of Covenant East Classis.

Your committee has received requests from the Reverends Stephen Payson and Samuel Marsh to be examined for licensure in order to be received into the classis as ministers of the Word to serve the congregations with which they are already associated. Both men have been previously ordained as ministers. We recommend that both men be examined at this classis meeting, according to the proposals outlined below.

We propose that the Examination Committee at Classis be augmented (beyond the Candidates and Credentials committee members) by the following people: Jari Saavalainen, and elder Speranza. Our reasons being that they will be doing these exams in the future in the deaf classis and would benefit now by being involved with the process of examinations. Kevin Hamilton will most likely not be at classis as he anticipates his wife will be giving birth about then.

1. Stephen Payson:

Stephen has been asked to submit written work in the following areas: NT exegetical paper; Greek exam; two written sermons, either of which or another may be preached at Classis.

Jim Sawtelle will administer a Church History exam off the floor of, or before classis.

Examination on the floor of Classis:

Introduction, Piety and Intent	: 10 minutes	Jim Sawtelle
English Bible	: 10 minutes	Elder

Historical Philosophy	: 15 minutes	Jeff De Boer
Apologetics	: 15 minutes	Jeff De Boer
Prolegomena (Scripture/Revelation)	: 15 minutes	Jim Sawtelle
Doctrine of God	: 15 minutes	Ron Potter
Doctrine of Man	: 15 minutes	Jari Saavalainen
Doctrine of Christ	: 15 minutes	Jari Saavalainen
Doctrine of the Holy Spirit	: 15 minutes	Ron Potter
Ecclesiology	: 15 minutes	Jeff De Boer
Eschatology	: 15 minutes	Ron Potter
Practica	: 15 minutes	Jim Sawtelle
Constitution	: 15 minutes	Elder
Open Questions from floor	: unlimited	

2. That Mr. Samuel Marsh be examined in the following areas:

Examination on the floor of Classis:

Piety and Intent (or Personal Questions)	: 10 minutes	Jim Sawtelle
Doctrine of the Word of God	: 15 minutes	Elder Speranza
Doctrine of God	: 15 minutes	Ron Potter
Doctrine of Man	: 15 minutes	Jari Saavalainen
Person and Work of Christ	: 15 minutes	Jari Saavalainen
The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)	: 15 minutes	Ron Potter
The Doctrine of the Church	: 15 minutes	Jeff De Boer
Eschatology	: 15 minutes	Jim Sawtelle
Apologetics	: 15 minutes	Jeff De Boer
Practical Theology	: 15 minutes	Jari Saavalainen

*Unlimited Questions from the floor.

3. That Reverends Marsh and Payson preach a sermon before classis, at a time to be designated by the Executive Committee; and that they submit a written text of that sermon to the Examination Committee.

4. That Rev. Marsh be given written exams in Church History, Confessions, and Constitution. The exams would be administered by the committee on a schedule worked out with Mr. Marsh after Classis meets.

5. That Reverend's Marsh and Payson, in accordance with Article 35 of the RCUS Constitution, present to the Classis (through the Clerk) certificates of dismissal from their former denominations (if possible), and their ministerial credentials and/or Ordination Certificates.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Sawtelle, Ron Potter, Jeff De Boer, Jay Kroese

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

C. Interchurch Relations

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren:

This past classical year witnessed three visits by representatives of the Covenant East Classis to various churches within the orbit of the CEC IRC. The Rev. Kyle Sorenson visited the Mid-West Presbytery of the OPC on March 21, 2003, a Presbytery with whom we have had frequent contact and enjoy cordial fraternal relations. The Rev. Ron Potter visited Classis Ontario West of the Canadian Reformed Churches on September 10th, 2003. This is the first inter classical contact that our churches have enjoyed in the East since entering into fraternal relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches as a denomination. The Rev. Jeff DeBoer visited the 13th Meeting of the Classis Central U.S. URCNA on January 13th, 2004. We are grateful for the ongoing observer relationship we have with this Classis. The reports of these representatives will appear below.

Invitations to this Classis Meeting were sent to the Mid-West Presbytery of the OPC, the Classis Central U.S. of the URCNA; the Mid-West Presbytery of the RPCNA; the Classis Ontario West of the CanRC and to the CanRC Classis immediately north of the border.

It is hoped that as Classis funds permit in the ensuing years, visits to other Presbyteries and Classes of fraternal and observer churches may be made.

Your Committee is thankful for the willingness of Ministers in the Classis to, if possible, visit neighboring Presbyteries and Classes on behalf of the committee. It would be good if there were some Elders willing to make these visits thus providing more manpower for additional visits. We would also like to include our Deaf brethren in making these visits on behalf of the Classis. The problem is providing an interpreter and the costs associated with this. Perhaps if it were possible to have a family member accompany the Minister or Elder making the visit, to do the interpretive work, it would keep expenses down and facilitate additional exposure for the work these brethren are doing. This warrants additional discussion.

Your Committee also notes that an Elder is needed to replace last year's nominee.

The following are the reports of the delegates and observers to the presbytery and Classis meetings spoken of above.

Mid West Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

On March 21, 2003, I made a fraternal visit to the Presbytery of the Midwest of the OPC. I brought greetings and experienced Christian fellowship.

Several men are under care of that Presbytery or in different stages of licensure and ordination. I was able to observe only 2 of those examined at the meeting. On the issue of creation, one man held to the six normal days position, but said that he thought the church's tent was larger than his view, and could include alternate creation interpretations. This man, however was not licensed because during most of his examination his answers were correct, but not backed by Scripture or explained clearly. It was encouraging to see the Presbytery press for more precision

The other individual examined was finishing his ordination exam. He holds to Premillennialism and also the Framework Hypothesis. Vigorous debate ensued on the issue of creation. Several ministers and elders expressed good critique of this man's views, and it became clear that he did not understand verbal, plenary inspiration. However, about 80% voted to sustain his exam and he is now ordained. The debate seemed to be finished when one delegate said that the Presbytery shouldn't restrict its boundaries beyond what the denomination has.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen

Classis Ontario West, Canadian Reformed Churches

This Classis met at the CanRC Church in London Ontario. Your delegate was met by two Elders in Hamilton, ON and driven to London. He was warmly received and given the privilege of the floor. Two Ministers of Classis who your delegate expected to see there were not present because of serious ailments. The Rev. DeJong, who has been a professor at the Theological College in Hamilton, is suffering from early onset Alzheimer's. The Rev. C. Stam is suffering from M. S. These brothers and their families stand in need of our prayers.

The principle reason for this Classis meeting was to examine a candidate for the Ministry and on the basis of the outcome of the examination, determine his eligibility to receive a call. After opening the Classis meeting with the singing of a Psalm, the reading of the Word, prayer and the approval of the credentials of the delegates to Classis, the examination of the candidate began.

Two attestations were received, one from the church at Ancaster and another from the Theological Seminary. The candidate preached the sermon. This sermon was previously submitted to an examination committee of two ministers called the "deputies for examination". This "sermon proposal" had to first be approved by the Classis before the rest of the examination proceeded. This was done in closed session. The discussion covered several areas including, aptitude for preaching, christology and other doctrines, content, exegesis, homeletical organization, application and delivery. The critique by the delegates was very thorough and was aided by the input of the "deputies." The sermon was approved and the exam continued.

The candidate was seated at the table with the delegates and visitors to the Classis and was examined by Ministers in various areas. The exam began with Old Testament exegesis and New Testament exegesis from passages previously assigned. Each of these exams were 25 minutes in length. The examination consisted of a verbal translation of portions of the assigned texts, the parsing of selected verbs, contextual and historical considerations germane to the text, the thrust of the book from which the passage was taken, its form and lexical matters. This was followed by 10 minutes of questions from the rest of the delegates after each portion of the exegesis was completed. The questions were very thoughtful and thorough and required the candidate to have made a painstaking study of the assigned text and the book of the bible in which it appeared.

Then followed an examination in Doctrine in Creeds. This tended to fasten on Lord's Day 7 of the catechism concerning faith. Matters such as trust, obedience, assurance, knowledge, the content of the apostles creed and the means of faith were

thoroughly gone over. This exam lasted 25 minutes and was followed by questions from the delegates for 10 minutes. In closed session and after discussion, the Classis declared the candidate eligible for a call.

Your delegate inquired as to the limited scope of this examination concerning doctrine and creeds. He was told that the eligibility exam was simply one of several examinations the candidate had to go through including a thorough examination when a call was actually received. Your delegate was thoroughly impressed with the depth of knowledge that the candidate exhibited, the thoroughness of his study and the thoroughness of the examiner questions.

In other matters Classis discussed the problem of a lack of uniformity of practice among the churches as to the use of attestations for the Lord's Supper. Your delegate was given opportunity to speak on this subject. There was discussion of a change of order in the baptismal form. This was referred to regional synod in the hope it would then be referred to General Synod. The church Visitors reported on their visits to various churches in the Classis and some funds were provided for needy churches. There were requests for advice from various churches that was given and assessments for Classis were set at \$10.00 per communicant member for needy students and \$4.00 per communicant member for Classis.

The Rev. Dennis Royal was present from the URCNA and along with your delegate was given time to address the Classis. Your delegate brought a brief history of the RCUS and spoke of matters concerning the Covenant East Classis in particular. These comments were well received.

The Classis was done its business by mid-afternoon and adjourned to its next session after the reading of the Minutes and the press release and their adoption.

There are several classes in the Canadian Reformed Churches in this region. Classis Ontario West also reaches into the U.S. with one congregation in the Grand Rapids region. Further contact with these Canadian Reformed brethren is anticipated.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Ron Potter

Classis Central U.S., United Reformed Churches of North America

Classis Central U.S. of the URCNA met in Doon, Iowa on January 13, 2004. After taking care of the organization of the meeting, the body heard fraternal greetings from both the Covenant East and South Central Classes of the RCUS, as well as the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC. There was also a presentation by Rev. Paul T. Murphy who is working to establish a Reformed work near the former location of the World Trade Centers in New York City.

The Classis then went to the consideration of three overtures. The first dealt with a request to the upcoming URC synod to add a Biblical and Theological Committee to its CERCU synodical committee which has as its goal unification with the Canadian Reformed Churches. In the course of debate there were objections that such an addition would create positions beyond the Three Forms of Unity that is, a pseudo-confessional extra in such areas as the Covenant, the view of the church, the application of redemption, and the relationship of Law and Gospel. The overture was defeated.

The second overture requested the erection of a classical committee to draft an abbreviated form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Such a form would assist a more frequent celebration. After debate the overture was defeated. It was reasoned in debate that each Consistory was capable of creating an abbreviated form on their own as at least two United Reformed Churches has done.

The final overture was interested in creating a fund in each church for the support of seminary students. Currently the churches of which seminarians are members are responsible for their financial needs. The motion was defeated.

There were also a few pastoral and discipline cases which were discussed in closed session. After which the meeting was ended at about 3 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff De Boer

Report respectfully submitted by the Interchurch Relations Committee:
Rev. Ron Potter (Chairman), Rev. Kyle Sorenson, Rev. Wesley Brice

Classis Action: Take note.

D. Mission Committee

Dear Brothers:

Your Committee conducted its business during the past year by telephone, email, and with those present for the October 2003 visitation at Minneapolis and the re-evaluation of northwest Arkansas.

Bentonville, Arkansas

At the end of October 2003, committee members, Opp, DeBoer, and Bruckschen again spent several days in Arkansas in a re-evaluation of the Bentonville work. All members of the chapel were met with, and questions were asked regarding the spiritual, numerical, and material progress of the group. Rev. Wes Brice has labored at Bentonville throughout the year. Conference rooms in the Holiday Inn Express in Bentonville continue to serve for the Sunday meeting place. Bible studies are held in homes of members.

The people expressed their encouragement regarding the work, including satisfaction with the ministry of Rev. Brice, and in seeing good progress over the year. A high degree of unity and commitment to having the Reformed presence established there was expressed. Membership, under oversight of the Garner Spiritual Council, had increased from two in January, unto ten members in October. Among the members are three former OPC officers, two elders and one deacon. Previously, one couple, remaining disagreeable regarding Classis oversight, etc., left the group. Two other adults were to join at the beginning of 2004.

A variety of means of seeking additional members have been utilized, including newspaper and Yellow Pages ads, personal invitations, and some canvassing, both door to door and by mailings. Having only two rooms available on Sunday mornings limits accordingly the number of classes that may be held. However, there have only been

two children in the group thus far. Other possibilities for a meeting place are being considered. Yet, with the ads listing the current location, a change in the near future is not in view.

The financial giving of the group was described as being 'very faithful'. Offerings did increase greatly during the year, making budgeted 2004 offerings of approximately \$32,000 seem reasonable. The committee members spoke to the group specifically regarding the amount they had been giving toward support of the pastor. It was made clear that he had received less than the former salary scale for missionaries after support from Classis and Synod was also taken into account. (At the time of his call, Rev. Brice was willing to serve there with this level of support, and was still willing to do so. However, the call stated that: "Salary will be increased with increased offerings.") We suggested that with their increased offerings, it would be appropriate that they could increase their giving toward the salary. We were delighted with their response to commit to the amount proposed, and also to reimburse the past amount that Rev. Brice had subsidized!

Rev. Brice has come to Garner for some consistory meetings, and has been in a conference call with the consistory at other times. Also, officers at Garner have traveled to Bentonville several times. Overall, the committee members were very thankful for the progress of the past year, and we praise God for His blessing on this work! Yet, we do also realize that continuing progress is needed, and ask for the prayers of Classis for Grace Reformed Chapel.

Minneapolis, MN

A Mission Committee visit to Redeemer Reformed Church, Golden Valley, MN, was undertaken by two members, Rev. De Boer and Elder Bruckschen. An account of that visitation follows:

"Elder Jim Bruckschen and your author visited Redeemer Reformed Church in late October of 2003. We were able to meet with the entire consistory for about two hours to discuss the progress of the work there. Our questions for them were centered on three areas.

The first dealt with the spiritual progress of the group. Although most of the members of the church are relatively young, (that is, couples with young children) your committee was told about and witnessed a significant amount of spiritual maturity. The elders and the deacons are quite serious about their calling and work well with their pastor to encourage the material and spiritual growth of the church. There was a general agreement about the consistory members, as well as we were told, the church, that Redeemer Church continues to consider itself a congregation with a mission to bring the gospel to the Twins Cities region. There was also a hearty endorsement of the preaching and teaching which is given from week to week. We also heard about a great deal of love and compassion evident among the members of the church. For this the church and your committee gives great thanks.

The second area we inquired about was the numerical progress of the group. During 2003, 13 new members were added to the church. One was lost. These 13 added to the reported 55 members of 2002 gives a total membership of 67 for 2003. Your committee was very pleased and praises God for his continued adding to the Redeemer saints. Most of those were added in 2003 were from Reformed backgrounds and moved into the

greater Twin Cities area. Your committee encouraged the Redeemer church to also investigate ways of reaching those who did not know Christ. The church has tried to do so, and will continue in such effort.

There is a long term desire in Redeemer, commended by your committee, to establish a reformed work on the east side of the metropolitan area to compliment Redeemer's presence on the west side. Although the Minneapolis and St. Paul area is a growing metropolis there are very few reformed churches. There have been a few inquiries from people on the east side of the metropolitan area, but so far they remain as inquiries.

The final area your committee inquired into was the physical progress of the church. Redeemer was able to purchase a building for worship last year, as was reported. This building required some roofing work to be done, and there remain some things which will require attention in the near future (such as the parking lot, furnaces, etc.). In spite of the considerable amount of financial outlay required for these projects, as well as debt maintenance, the church has committed themselves to a 25% reduction in classical and synodical support beginning in February 2004, and then additional 25% reductions in the next two years. If our God so wills, they will be off all support by 2007. Such a commitment to reduction is a testament to very generous and planned giving by the members of the church, and a trust that God will continue to add to their number those who desire the clear preaching and teaching of his Word. It is also important to note that at this time the church carries approximately \$600,000 worth of indebtedness--which is a substantial amount for a group of this size, but an amount this group believes will be manageable.

In general your committee was very encouraged by its visit, commends the Redeemer church for its work, and continues to pray for God's blessing for them.

Sincerely submitted,
Rev. Jeff De Boer on behalf of the committee”

Your chairman notes that the 25% reductions in support for Redeemer will have been implemented by the time Classis meets.

Columbia, MD

Our brothers at Deaf Reformed Church of Columbia, MD have continued to minister to the deaf community in the past year. Rev. Saavalainen received from Classis \$750 per month for the three summer months, when the school he works at is not in session.

Deaf Ministries Committee

This committee was established at the 2003 Classis meeting to operate as a sub-committee of the Missions Committee. Deaf Ministries Committee members are Rev. Kevin Hamilton (chairman), Rev. Jari Saavalainen, Elder Dominic Speranza, and Elder Chris Pennington. Following is their report:

“Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ! We, the Deaf ministers, have been active lately with our mission works in Houston and Chicago. This work has been helped by Deaf Reformed Ministries (DRM) successfully hosting six Mini-Conferences in addition to

their annual national conference. Elder Kenton Hoxie has done a great job teaching and organizing these important events. I also had the privilege of teaching at half of the conferences. It was a blessing to see people eager to ask questions concerning the Word of God. I have enclosed a DRM report in addition to this report. Rev. Jari Saavalainen and I are very pleased with Kenton's work as director of DRM. He has done an outstanding job. In addition, we are excited about the conference multi-media DVDs that Mike Brabo has been producing.

Deaf Reformed Church of Danville (DRCD) has been working with believers to establish an RCUS mission work in Chicago. As part of this work, we have accepted Mike and Carol Brabo as members of our congregation in Danville, even though they live in the Chicago area. Mike Brabo and I have been working hard to make the Chicago work accessible for Deaf individuals and their families to hear the Word of God. Now, we are very pleased that an accessible location has been provided, which attracts many people to worship with us. I am thankful that the Danville elders, Shane Hodge and Chris Pennington, have been willing to travel and minister to the people in Chicago. Kyle Sorenson was able to come once to minister the Word and James Grossman also came occasionally to teach them. In 2004, we have developed a new schedule, which consists of a Deaf Pastor or elder traveling to Chicago on the second and fourth Sundays of each month to minister the Word. This schedule has been an improvement over last fall. We continue in the learning process of establishing new chapels and rejoice in the opportunities to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

As for the Houston work, Rev. Saavalainen went there last August for a DRM Mini-conference. While there, Jari met with Samuel Marsh and Toby Welch. They showed a keen interest in joining the RCUS. I am pleased to inform you that Covenant East Classis will examine for licensure Rev. Samuel Marsh. Rev. Marsh was my former pastor about 10 years ago in another denomination. I am very excited about him becoming part of the RCUS.

Working with two additional cities has not been an easy task for us but we have been trusting the Lord. We continue to learn how the RCUS deals with mission works and how they become chapels. It is our request that the Covenant East Classis recognize the Chicago and Houston mission works as RCUS chapels soon. We are very thankful with how CEC and Synod have been helping us with their prayers and support.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Kevin Hamilton”

The Missions Committee notes that neither the Chicago or Houston works have been taken on as chapels of Classis, but are under the oversight of Danville and Columbia, respectively. The Missions Committee has given some counsel regarding the Chicago work. Neither work would seem to be at a point to have an official missions assessment, which must be positive, in order to approve official mission work or chapel status under the Classis. However, they can remain under oversight of the churches, as is now the case.

For Classis information, we include the following summaries on Chicago and Houston:

Worship services have been held in the Chicago area since last fall, originally at the

home of Brabo family. Beginning this year, a wonderful provision has been a room for meetings at Moody Memorial Church, north of downtown Chicago. Additional visitors have come with this location. There were about a dozen hearing folk in the first services also, although that number has dwindled some. Attendance lately has been about 30, with deaf and some hearing adults, and children. Michael Brabo is receiving some elder training, and will teach some Sunday School classes when there is no deaf minister or elder. In addition to those listed above, Rev. Saavalainen taught and preached there during Jan. 23-25. Videos have been used on Sundays when no minister or elder has supplied. Synod missions funds of \$500 per month were approved, with the first month being January. It seems proper that Classis fund one-half of the amount determined for the future. The same amount seems fitting at this time, mainly for travel reimbursement.

Regarding the work in Houston, Rev. Saavalainen met in August with Rev. Samuel Marsh and Toby Welch. Doctrines, constitution, and procedures of the RCUS were discussed. These were agreeable to be under our Columbia church for oversight. The group includes 5 families (16 people). They have been meeting for class and worship services at a room provided in a PCA church on Sunday mornings, and for study at homes on the Heidelberg Catechism. Rev. Marsh does have a full-time job, and would like to become a full-time RCUS pastor soon. We look forward to a licensure exam for him at Classis. The work continues to be under the oversight of the Columbia church.

Deaf Reformed Ministries holds conferences throughout the year. Their report follows:

“To Deaf Ministries sub-committee of Missions,

Warm greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ!

In 2003, Deaf Reformed Ministries received a total of \$4,000 from both Covenant East Classis (\$2,000) and Synod (\$2,000).

Last year, the organization had six local conferences and one national annual conference. Those conferences are often where the Deaf are exposed to the Reformed Faith for the first time. Some receive it favorably while others do not. One local conference, which was taken place in Puerto Rico, a speaker asked the audience if they knew Martin Luther and some of them thought he was a black fellow. Funny, but when you think about it after some time, it's actually sad. They basically do not know why Reformation occurred, and do not know the doctrine of justification. Most time and teachings is spent on real basic doctrines of the Bible. However often times it is a joy to see their eyes be enlighten. Basic point here is that we have a long way to go to build the kingdom of God. Surely, we need not feel dismayed or discouraged because it is the Lord who will build His church (Matthew 16:18).

As of this writing, there are two RCUS ministers (Rev. Kevin Hamilton and Rev. Jari Saavalainen) on the DRM council overseeing the organization. Another council member (Rev. Samuel Marsh) is now undergoing pastoral examination and will eventually join RCUS. After that happens, there will be a majority of RCUS ministers on the council. Because DRM remains very favorable for RCUS and has more events scheduled for the year of 2004, I highly recommend continuing the support for DRM with \$4,000, to be split evenly between the Covenant East Classis and Synod.

Respectfully submitted,

Elder Kenton Hoxie (Director for Deaf Reformed Ministries)

The Missions Committee brings the following recommendations:

1. That Classis continue to provide Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, AR, with \$1,200 per month, for a total of \$14,400 for the classical year 2004.
2. That Classis report a positive assessment on the Bentonville work, and overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, AR, with \$14,400 in fiscal year 2005.
3. That Classis provide Redeemer RCUS, Minneapolis, MN, with \$764 per month, for a total of \$9,168 for classical year 2004.
4. That Classis overture Synod to provide Redeemer RCUS, Minneapolis, MN with \$6,876 in fiscal year 2005.
5. That Classis provide \$250 per month in mission funds for the Chicago work, and likewise overture Synod for \$250 per month, informing the Synod Home Missions Committee that we give a positive evaluation of the Chicago work at this point.
6. That Classis provide \$2,000 for Deaf Reformed Ministries, and likewise overture Synod for an additional \$2,000 for this work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Harvey Opp, chairman; Rev. Jeff DeBoer; Rev. Kyle Sorensen; Elder Jim Bruckschen; Elder John Honeck

Classis Action: The Permanent Missions Committee Report was referred to the Standing Mission Committee.

E. Publications Committee

No Permanent Publications Committee was formed for 2003.

Reports of Officers

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

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

After Darkness, Light... Last year in my report on the state of the church in Covenant East Classis, I recounted the many ways in which our Lord saw fit to shake us as churches and individuals. This year, it is with much joy and humble gratitude that I think I can say that through the faithfulness of God's Mighty Hand our previous trials have "yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." What strikes me about the parochial reports is the tempered resolve and conviction to minister in such a way that the three marks of the faithful church will be manifest. This despite—or really I must say, because of—the difficult discipline matters that threatened to overwhelm the ministry of some of our congregations, as well as our Classis. Reading your reports, I am struck by what the Lord has spared us from: either a retreat into timidity and fearful caution, a battle fatigue over discipline matters, or a harsh and rash spirit, a contentious spirit that imagines an enemy under every pew. I confess I feared those traits might arise among us. Instead I read about humility, spiritual growth, increased ministerial vigilance motivated by love and tempered by pastoral balance. As

sincerely as my sinful heart is able, I am "boasting in the Lord" about all of these things. For certainly we are weak servants, we minister to imperfect people, and the message we minister is not powerful by the standards of human wisdom. But the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. As churches and as a Classis our faith in God was tested. But, by the Grace of God, through the counsel and aid of many of our brothers beyond this Classis, we stuck to God's Word and the principles of Biblical Church Government, and the Lord Who is our Light, has blessed us beyond what we could ask or imagine.

By this acknowledgement, on behalf of Covenant East Classis, I want to thank our brothers in Synod for their help and encouragement and patience with us during the many judicial proceedings of the past three years. More than ever we see the wisdom of Biblical Church government, and the benefits of our union with a broader church in general and the RCUS in particular.

The Ministry of the Word

One of the evident and great blessings God has given our churches is the steady ministry of the gospel in each charge. Each pastor reports to preaching regularly in his own pulpit as well as using every opportunity to preach in a variety of settings and forums. I trust our churches are not taking this blessing for granted. Without the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God's people would starve spiritually. Each charge will be asked if it is honoring this essential labor of its pastors with an adequate temporal support of their pastor's needs.

Likewise each pastor reports diligence in catechizing the covenant youth, preparing new members for membership in special classes, visitation of the widows, elderly and the sick, and participation in the communities in which they live, seeking opportunities to spread the gospel in ever broader circles.

One of the encouraging themes of the parochial reports was an increased activity of visitation to the families of the congregations by the elders and pastor. In some cases, such activity has never taken place on a regular or systematic basis. If continued, this trend is sure to be a blessing to the congregations.

Both sacraments are being administered faithfully, and, as noted above, discipline is being faithfully and carefully ministered. We pray the Lord's blessing on these efforts. The Special Advisory Committees made the following pointed comment: "If there is anything your committee believes should be garnered from our experience it is this: discipline should be exercised promptly and judiciously." We all should take this admonition to heart.

The Salem-Ebenezer Church again ably and commendably hosted the Covenant East Youth Camp. Attendance of the camp by young people was down considerably this year due to the date it was held. We hope that the new date for this year will prove to make the camp more accessible. We certainly want to encourage all pastors and elders to stir up the youth to participate in this camp.

New Pastors

I am happy to report that all the pulpits of our established churches are filled. This for the first time since my joining of CEC in 1999. The Reverend George Syms was installed in the Kansas City congregation, and the Reverend Dan Schnabel was installed

in the Hamburg Church. We welcome these brothers into our mist, and look forward to the addition of their gifts.

We do note that one of our ministers, the Reverend Ron Potter, is laboring without a call. His labors are under the oversight of Peace Reformed Church, of Napoleon, OH, among whose members he is ministering in NE Pennsylvania. Rev. Potter has the permission of Classis to labor in those circumstances; however, our Classis needs to give further guidance to Potter regarding his labors and his lack of a formal call.

We note the loss of two ministers from our ranks in the past year. The Reverend George Mall, Sr. chose to leave the RCUS with the Carbondale congregation. He was erased from the roll of ministers, since he did not seek the dismissal of his credentials to another church body. The Reverend Hank Bowen left us for his state of origin, the Land of the Lotus-Eaters, AKA California. We will miss his diligent service and gifts.

We also look forward to the examination of the Reverend Stephen Payson at this meeting, and rejoice in his desire to be added to the roll of ministers.

Our Retired Pastor

We do not want to forget the Reverend Chester Ploeger and his wife Grace, who live in Garner, IA. Reverend Ploeger suffers from some infirmities and is not able to preach. He is able to attend worship at Peace Reformed Church, and Grace enjoys relatively good health. Let us remember to pray for Rev. Ploeger and his wife, even as we support them in their benevolence needs. Reverend Ploeger was a faithful minister among us for fifty years, and we miss his presence.

On Churches and Outreach With the Gospel

One step back, three steps forward. After twenty plus years of affiliation with the RCUS, Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, PA voted unanimously to withdraw from their bond with us. We are sorry these brothers and sisters saw it necessary to withdraw from our fellowship. We certainly take no delight in such rending of the body, especially so since we know that our actions over the last few difficult years with them were not without weakness.

Nevertheless, we are thankful for a continuing group of former members of the Carbondale charge that have elected to remain affiliated with us and carry on the witness of the gospel in the general area of NE Pennsylvania. The number of that group remains small, but their zeal is abounding. The Scriptures remind us we ought not to despise the day of small things. We are grateful that the Napoleon charge willing to act as a refuge for these members and provide oversight of the work there.

In the providence of God, there is another work emerging in Pennsylvania, in the Mifflinburg area. This work is forming under the labors of the Reverend Stephen Payson, who was invited to leave the United Church of Christ and the congregation he faithfully served for nine years, because of the decidedly reformed and biblical character of his teaching and preaching.

Yet, God is apparently not done with that area, as He raised up over thirty people who are interested in a continuing of the ministry of the gospel there. They, with an additional couple of families in the community, have prevailed upon Rev. Payson to labor with them in the gospel there. At this time, the group is still working through the process of reformation, with a goal of being organized and affiliating with a reformed

Church. Rev. Payson has made it clear to the group that he intends to affiliate with the RCUS. Your Executive Committee represented by Reverends Sawtelle and Opp made arrangements to meet with the group for an informational meeting. However, Sawtelle's flight was cancelled due to bad weather conditions in Pennsylvania. Rev. Opp was able to meet with some of the group and answered numerous questions. Another meeting will need to take place sometime this spring, and the Lord willing this group will find a home among us.

We have also seen the emergence of a work among deaf Christians in the Chicago area in recent months. In this case, we must again express thanksgiving to see the willingness of the Danville elders to oversee this work. The Lord has provided a meeting place for this work, there has been a concerted effort to provide pulpit supply on a weekly basis, and there have been many opportunities to bring the faithful ministry of the gospel to deaf Christians there. We praise God for this opportunity and must seek His wisdom to carry on.

The two existing mission works within our Classis, Redeemer Reformed Church of Minneapolis and Grace Reformed Chapel of Bentonville continue to make steady progress.

And finally, it is with joy that we read of the improved situation in the Kansas City congregation. Not only is there a pastor laboring among them again, a number of membership issues were resolved, though sadly a significant number of people did leave and for that we are sorry. At the same time, we are heartened to report that a number of new families have been added to the church and they see visitors regularly. Last but not least, the Special Advisory Committee to this congregation was able to come to a resolution over an outstanding matter. This is a cause for much rejoicing. The elders in KG, also, are to be commended for their diligent labor during the trails of the past year. I can attest personally to the fact that their labors were often with tears and anxiousness and weakness, but also with perseverance and faith.

Conclusion

In concluding this report I want us to acknowledge how the Lord has once again shown His faithfulness to bless us beyond what we are able to ask or think. The Lord set before our Classis some great trials. In many ways we showed ignorance and bumbling in dealing with them. Yet, in sincerity of heart, we sought the honor of Christ and the pursuit of His will in His Word. Therefore, despite our imperfection, He has honored those who sought to honor Him. We have lost a congregation. But two and possibly a third have been added back, He has brought a large measure of healing to another congregation, He has provided godly men for the pulpits, He has continued his means of grace among us through the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments, he has continued His witness among us through regular worship, through many efforts among us all to spread the truth to our communities. I am reminded in all of this of our Lord's words to His disciples: "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my sake and the gospels, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time...and in the age to come, eternal life." You cannot out-give God. With this let us be encouraged, and press on.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. James Sawtelle

Classis Action: The report was received and is to be printed in the Abstract of the Minutes and submitted to the *Reformed Herald*.

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

Since Rev. Bowen was the Stated Clerk until last summer, the following summary regards some of his activities of the last year, as well as my own.

Following the 2003 Spring Classis Meeting the minutes of the 18th Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder with all reports overtures, and relevant information.

The 2003 Abstract of the 18th Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis was prepared and copies were printed and distributed to the churches at Synod in compliance with the Synod standing rule #10.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the Abstract and sent to the Reformed Herald.

All of the requisite forms and communications were sent to the Clerk of Synod along with eight overtures from the Covenant East Classis that were acted upon by the Synod. These were requests for missions support for the work in Bentonville, Arkansas and for Redeemer Church, ministerial aid for Rev. Ploeger, aid for Mrs. Vance, Rev. Hamilton, Rev. Potter, and Deaf Reformed Ministries, and for a ruling on filling church offices.

There were six Executive Circulars sent out this year. Communications were exchanged with the South Central Classis to receive the Rev. George Syms as a member of our Classis.

Your Clerk pro tern reminds the churches that their Statistics are to be sent to the Clerk two weeks in advance, and are to be carefully prepared. I had to make corrections on every set submitted. Also, church improvement expenses and debt payments are to be included also in general expenses.

Changes over the year included the dismissal of Rev. Bowen to Western Classis, and the reception and installation of Rev. Syms at Kansas City. No necrologies have been received. One will be forthcoming regarding former Napoleon Elder, Mr. Martin Elling.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Harvey Opp

Classis Action: Take note.

C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your clerk of synod would note the following actions passed by the 257th Synod of the RCUS that should be noted by your Classis:

1. That the Model Constitution for Congregations, Article 21, be amended by deleting the words "Recommendations for" and the word "Nominations" be capitalized. The first "shall" in Article 21 be changed to "may". The publications committee is to provide "stick on" labels to indicate changes in the model constitution.

2. That as long as the Constitution of a congregation provides for the congregation's ability to nominate a man for office, the matter of when the nominations from the congregation are to be finalized is properly decided by the congregation.

3. That Synod add the following clause to Article 22 of the Model Constitution for Congregations: "by appointing an inactive elder or deacon or by calling a special congregational meeting."

4. Churches are encouraged to use the Synodical Sunday School curriculum along with the teacher-training video disk yet to be developed by its authors. Synod approved the production in PDF format, the first year of the Sunday School curriculum which was to be completed in September 2003, or shortly thereafter (cost for the first year is \$49.00). This material may be reviewed and feedback given to the Synod's Publication Committee.

5. The Three Forms of Unity read by Rev. George Syms are to be available in audio form on the RCUS web site.

6. Classes clerks are reminded to provide to the RCUS web page in electronic (digital) form an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of classis.

There were no items from Synod requiring the vote of the Classes. The above is for information only.

In the Lord's service,
Paul H. Treick, Stated Clerk

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

D. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer of Classis, Elder Don Larson, presented the following report.

Balance 2/1/03	15,373.78
General Fund Balance 2/1/03	-2,804.15
Receipts	12,026.00
Expenses	6,834.37
Balance 1/31/04	2,387.48
Missions Fund Balance 2/1/03	15,618.93
Receipts	34,532.40
Expenses	35,678.89
Balance 1/31/04	14,472.44
Student Aid Fund Balance 2/1/03	2559.00
Receipts	0.00

Expenses	2,080.00
Balance 1/31/04	479.00
Balance 1/31/04	17,338.92

Detailed Income Report

	<u>Members</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bentonville, AR		28.00				
Garner, IA	121	1,694.00	4,840.00	0.00	6,534.00	6,534.00
Danville, KY	14	224.00	640.00	0.00	756.00	864.00
Relay, MD	19	266.00	760.00	0.00	1,026.00	1,026.00
Golden Valley, MN	55	770.00	2,200.00	0.00	2,970.00	2,970.00
Hamburg, MN	246	3,444.00	9,840.00	0.00	13,284.00	13,284.00
Kansas City, MO	53	490.00	1,400.00	0.00	2,862.00	1,890.00
Napoleon, OH	62	868.00	2,480.00	0.00	3,348.00	3,348.00
Carbondale, PA	37	518.00	482.00	0.00	1,998.00	1,000.00
Manitowoc, WI	266	3,724.00	10,640.00	0.00	14,364.00	14,364.00
Totals	873	12,026.00	34,532.40	0.00	47,142.00	46,558.40

n.b. The total for the Missions Account includes \$900.00 which was designated for the Kenya Economic Development Fund, \$265.00 of interest, and a \$5.00 gift.

Detailed Expense Report

General Fund Expenses

Spring Classis Meeting	4,103.50
Clerk	925.92
Installation Committees	1,136.95
Miscellaneous	668.00
Total	6,834.37

Mission Fund Expenses

Grace Reformed Chapel	16,800.00
Redeemer Reformed Church	12,225.00
Travel and Phone	973.97
Rev. K. Hamilton support	1,429.92
Deaf Reformed Ministries	2,000.00
Rev. J. Saavalainen support	2,250.00
Total	35,678.89

Student Aid Expenses

Rev. K. Hamilton	1,000.00
Whitefield Theological Seminary	1,080.00
Total	2,080.00

Total Classis Expenses	44,593.26
Total Classis Balance for 2003	1965.14

Respectfully submitted,
Donald Larson, Treasurer

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

Parochial Reports of Ministers

Each minister attending the meeting read his parochial report. Prayer was offered for each of the pastors and their charges after the reports were read.

Classis Action: Take note (after 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. 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."

3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:

a. Is visitation faithfully performed?

All answered "Yes" except Danville which answered "Needs improvement" and Hamburg which answered, "No, needs improvement."

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

All answered "Yes."

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

All answered "Yes."

5. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:

a. Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the guidelines for giving?

All answered "Yes."

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 Columbia, Hamburg, and Manitowoc which answered "No."

d. Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer?

All answered "Yes."

6. Are the Church records properly kept?

All answered "Yes" except Columbia which answered "Yes, needs improvement."

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

All answered "Yes."

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

All answered "Yes."

Membership and Financial Statistics

Opp presented the report which included a table of statistics as provided by the churches of classis (this table may be found in Appendix #1, pages 39-40, of this abstract).

Classis action: Take note.

Reports from Classis Delegates to Fraternal Bodies

Potter presented the reports of three Covenant East Classis's delegates to bodies with which we have fraternal relations. Those entire reports are found within the Permanent Interchurch Relations Report found on pages 15-18 of this abstract.

Classis Action: Take note.

Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Bodies and Visitors

Rev. Larry Johnson of Classis Central of the United Reformed Churches in North America brought greetings from the body he represents. After Johnson's comments the delegates asked a number of questions which were answered by Rev. Johnson.

Potter also read a letter of greetings from Classis Ontario West of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Examination of Candidate

Rev. Stephen Payson, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, appeared before classis to submit to a licensure examination. Rev. Payson came to know the RCUS through a group study of the Heidelberg Catechism in which Rev. Potter was also involved.

Rev. Payson was examined in the following areas by the Candidates and Licensure Committee: Piety and Intent, English Bible, Historical Philosophy, Apologetics, Prolegomena, Theology Proper, Anthropology, Christology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, the RCUS Constitution and Creeds and Confessions.

After each portion of the examination other members of the body were permitted to ask questions. After all of the sections of the examination were complete the delegates were again allowed to ask questions of Rev. Payson. Rev. Payson also provided the classis with a copy of his certificate of ordination.

The results of the examination are included in this abstract and may be found in the report and recommendations of the Standing Committee on Examination and Licensure (pgs. 34-35 of this abstract).

Reports of Special Committees

A. Advisory Committee to Kansas City

De Boer read the report of the Advisory Committee sent to Kansas City in November of 2002. After the report was read and discussed it was moved and carried to include the recommendations of the report in this abstract. The recommendations of the report are as follows:

Recommendation #1: Classis give due consideration to article 121 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States before sending an advisory committee in the future.

Recommendation #2: The churches of classis be encouraged to deal promptly with discipline cases.

B. Liaison to the Deaf Reformed Churches

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The undersigned was given the task of liaison with the Deaf Reformed ministries and churches several years ago in hopes of helping them move forward toward establishing a Deaf Classis in the RCUS and of spreading the Reformed Faith among deaf Christians. While we do not at this time have a deaf classis, much progress has been made toward both of these major goals. Deaf Reformed pastors and elders are now very much a part of the RCUS, regularly participating in classis and synod meetings, and serving on our permanent committees.

Two Deaf Reformed Churches, one in Relay, MD, and the other in Danville, KY, are member congregations of the RCUS, and both are growing and vigorous churches. Their pastors, Rev. Jari Saavalainen and Rev. Kevin Hamilton conduct weekly worship services and along with their elders oversee the other normal functions of the church. Unfortunately from our perspective, the group in Houston, TX, led by Samuel Marsh seems to be headed into the PCA and will therefore not be the third congregation for a deaf classis in the RCUS. Nevertheless, another group, in Chicago, IL, is meeting regularly for worship and Bible study, and its leaders look forward to the possibility of establishing a deaf Reformed congregation there.

Deaf Reformed Ministries continues a vigorous program of introducing the Reformed faith to deaf folks across the United States. We quote from a description by Elder Kenton Hoxie:

"In 2003, we had six local conferences and one national conference. Numbers range from 10 to 30 for local conferences, and our 9th annual national conference had about 140 folks, making this the 2nd highest number for attendance. I think our 10th annual will be our record. We have about over 300 addresses in our database who were at least exposed to the Reformed Faith. Those addresses are those who are not hostile toward the Reformed Faith. Anyway, we received a total of \$4,000 (\$2000 from Synod and \$2000 from Classis) we spend about \$3,000 on local conference for airfares, speakers, so forth, and about \$1,000 for the national conference. The total operating expense is about \$16,000 for the year of 2003.

As for 2004, we now have three local conferences scheduled and the national conference in June. We think there will be two or three more scheduled late 2004. We will request \$4,000 for 2004 (to be split between Synod and Classis). Oh yes,

one of the local conferences will take place in Sioux Falls during the first weekend of June. Kevin and I will speak on the sovereignty of God. No idea how we will be received by them, but God ordains everything to pass, so whatever will happen will happen."

Further developments are also important. Our deaf brothers have continued their search for theological education and several of them are now enrolled at Whitefield with Chuck Snyder translating for them. Again a quote from Elder Hoxie: "As a side note, four deaf men (including Kevin/ Jari, and I) are now enrolled at Westminster Theological Seminary, with another one now applying to enroll.... Anyway, Chuck Snyder is doing much translating work. He has some supporters contributing to help with this seminary project."

One other matter needs to be considered, which is the continuance of this position of a Liaison Representative to the Deaf Reformed community. Since the congregations, pastors and elders are members of the RCUS, they can do their own communication with the body. Deaf Reformed Ministries is also perfectly capable of reporting to Classis and Synod how their funds are being spent. Perhaps in the future, when a deaf classis is established, it will be good to have an experienced member of Synod as a temporary advisor and perhaps even member of the Classis until it works out its procedures in line with RCUS practice, but at present it no longer seems necessary.

Recommendations:

1. That Covenant East Classis support Deaf Reformed Ministries in the amount of \$2000 this year.
2. That the Synod of the RCUS support Deaf Reformed Ministries in the amount of \$2000 this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Robert Grossmann

Classis Action: Take note.

C. Installation Committee for Rev. George Syms

Esteemed brothers in Christ,

The undersigned was the representative of the Classis participating in the installation of Rev. George Syms at Northland Reformed Church, Kansas City, MO on August 24th, 2003. Rev. Lloyd Gross, a retired minister of our Western Classis preached for this installation, as well. It was truly a blessed time of fellowship and rejoicing with the brothers and sister at Northland. It was a delight to stay with George and Debbie Syms, and with Lloyd. We certainly had some hearty laughter, which was enjoyable for each of us!

In Christ,

Harvey Opp

Classis Action: Take note.

Reports of Standing Committees

The following reports with their motions appear as adopted by the body of classis unless otherwise noted. As such the reports include any amendments and additional motions made from the floor relative to the standing committee's report.

A. Ecumenicity

___No Standing Ecumenicity Committee was formed for this classis meeting.

B. Examinations and Licensure

1. That the examination of Rev. Payson be declared satisfactory with the requirement that further study be completed in the areas of apologetics and hermeneutics to the satisfaction of the committee.
2. That the committee continue to work with Rev. Payson to complete the following assignments: Greek exegesis paper.
3. That the certificate of ordination for Rev. Payson be found in order.
4. That the sermon preached before classis be declared satisfactory.
5. That we proceed to the licensure of Rev. Stephen Payson upon the successful completion of the additional work required in recommendations 1 and 2.

Van Heest, Sawtelle, De Boer, Saavalainen, Potter

C. Excuses

1. That Rev. Kevin Hamilton be excused from all sessions of classis.
2. That Elder Shane Hodge be excused from all sessions of classis.
3. That Rev. Jeff De Boer be excused from the classis meeting on Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Brice, Goeke, Sawtelle

D. Finances

1. The Treasurer's Report has been audited and found in order.
2. Transfer of \$900 from the Covenant East Classis to the Foreign Missions Committee of Synod for the Kenya account.
3. That travel expenses be paid for the following amounts:

Walt Van Heest	\$75.00
John Honeck	305.00
Harvey Opp	122.00
Chuck Snyder	259.00
Jari Saavalainen and Dominic Speranza	472.00
Ron Potter	382.40
Wesley Brice	250.00
Lesley Goeke	212.50
Michael Brabo	210.50
4. That travel expenses of \$155.00 be paid for Rev. George Syms in light of the fact that Northland Reformed did not meet the classical dues for Covenant East Classis. Refer to the letter sent to the Clerk.

5. That Covenant East Classis pay Chuck Snyder \$500 and Michael Brabo \$400 for their interpreting services for the classis meeting.
6. That travel expenses be paid for Stephen Payson in the amount of \$369.70.
7. That the consistory of the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville be given \$1,000 out of the Missions Fund for the purchase of a LCD video projector.
8. That guidelines for giving for communicant member for 2004-2005 be:

General Fund	\$13
<u>Missions Fund</u>	<u>57</u>
Total	70

Goeke, Blank, Greiman, Brice

E. Judicial

1. Covenant East Classis recommends that the Consistory of Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio, consider extending a call to Rev. Ron Potter to serve as Associate Pastor, with the particular duties of pastoring to the members of the Napoleon church who are located in the Honesdale, PA, area.
2. Covenant East Classis take note of the correspondence from the Western Classis concerning Rev. Dennis Roe.

Syms, Sorensen, Saavalainen, Speranza

F. Minutes of Synod

1. That classis take note of the Synod Clerk's report to the classes.
- Sorensen, Opp, Herrmann

G. Missions

1. That Classis continue to provide Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, AR, with \$1200 per month, for a total of \$14,400 for the classical year 2004.
2. That Classis report a positive assessment on the Bentonville work and overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel, Bentonville, AR, with \$14,400 in the fiscal year 2005.
3. That Classis provide Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN with \$764 per month, for a total of \$9168 for classical year 2004.
4. That Classis overture Synod to provide Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN, with \$6876 in the fiscal year 2005.
5. That Classis provide \$250 per month from March 2004 to April 2005 in missions funds for the Chicago work, and likewise overture Synod for \$250 per month from June 2004 until the 2005 synod meeting, informing the Synod Home Missions Committee that we give a positive evaluation of the Chicago work at this point.
6. That Classis provide \$2000 for Deaf Reformed Ministries, and likewise overture Synod for an additional \$2000 for this work.
7. Concerning overture #1, that Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid to Rev. Jari Saavalainen in the amount of \$2000 per month for March and April of 2004 and \$1000 per month from May 2004 through February 2005.
8. Concerning overture #2, that Covenant East Classis provide benevolent assistance for Kevin Hamilton in the amount of \$300 per month for a period of 10 months, May 2004 through February 2005, and that Covenant East Classis overture Synod

for \$500 per month for the same time period.

9. Concerning overture #3, that Covenant East Classis overture Synod for Student Aid for Rev. Kevin Hamilton in the amount of \$530 for seminary courses.
10. That Classis overture Synod for benevolent aid to Rev. Jari Saavalainen in the amount of \$1000 per month from May 2004 to April 2005.

De Boer, Syms, Honeck, Goeke

H. Nominations

1. The committee's recommendations for the permanent committees are as follows (first named is the chairman):

Executive: Sawtelle, De Boer, Van Heest

Candidates and Credentials: Potter, De Boer, Blank, Syms

Interchurch Relations: Potter, Sawtelle, Sorensen, Leisveld, Brice

Missions: Opp, Sorensen, Schnabel, J. Honeck, Bruckschen

Deaf Ministries Sub-Committee: Hamilton, Saavalainen, Pennington, Speranza

Publications: No committee formed.

Sawtelle, Blank, Potter, Honeck

I. Overtures

1. That overture #1 for Rev. J. Saavalainen regarding mission support be referred to Missions.
2. That overture #2 for Rev. K. Hamilton of ministerial assistance be referred to Missions.
3. That overture #3 for Rev. K. Hamilton and educational assistance be referred to Missions.
4. That overture #4 for aid assistance for Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, Kentucky be referred to Missions.
5. That overture #6, excuse for Rev. K. Hamilton, be referred to Excuses.
6. That overture #7, excuse for Elder Shane Hodge, be referred to Excuses.
7. That overture #8, communication from the Western Classis Executive Committee, be referred to Judicial.
8. Concerning overture #9, that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Rev. Ploeger in the amount of \$1,200 per month.
9. Concerning overture #10, that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1000 per month.
10. In regard to the Executive Committee report, take note.
11. Concerning overture #5, that the Synod of the RCUS be overtured for benevolent aid in the amount of \$425 per month for Rev. R. Potter.
12. That overture #12, an excuse for Rev. J. De Boer, be referred to Excuses.
Schnabel, Speranza, Van Heest

J. Services

1. That Classis approve the following note of appreciation: "Covenant East Classis expresses our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Peace Reformed Church congregation for hosting the 2004 Spring Classis Meeting. May the Lord richly

bless you for your loving hospitality and service." And that this announcement be placed in the bulletin on the following Lord's Day.

2. That Classis take note of the changes to the services in the proposed agenda of Classis, namely that Rev. Syms conducted opening devotions and Rev. Sawtelle conducted Thursday morning devotions.

Opp, Herrmann, Greiman

Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation to Hosting Congregation

An expression of thanks to the Garner church is part of the Standing Committee on Service's report.

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

Each of these reports was adopted by the classis.

C. Miscellaneous Business

No additional business was brought before the classis.

Reading of the Minutes

The minutes were read by the stated clerk at the beginning of business on Thursday morning and at the end of business on Friday evening. Corrections were made on each occasion and final approval was given to the minutes as corrected.

Adjournment

The 19th annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 9:50 p.m. on Friday, March 4, 2004 until the time of the next stated meeting of classis.

A. Roll Call

The final roll call showed 9 ministers and 7 elders present.

B. Devotions

Elder Clayton Greiman led devotions from Psalm 91 and led the body in prayer.

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

The president of classis led the delegates in reciting the Apostle's Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced the Benediction and the body sang the Doxology.

Appendix #1

2003 Covenant East Classis Statistical Report as of 12/31/2003

Category	Bentonville, Arkansas	Columbia Maryland	Danville Kentucky	Garner, Iowa	Golden Valley, Minnesota
1. No. of Elders	0	2	2	3	3
2. No. of Deacons	0	1	0	3	3
3. Comm. Last Year	4	19	14	121	55
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	0	0	0	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	4	0	2	5	4
6. Rec'd by Prof.	2	0	0	2	3
7. Tot. Received	6	0	2	7	7
8. Tot. Old/New Mbr.	10	19	16	128	62
9. Lost by Dismissal	0	2	0	4	1
10. Lost by Eras./Dis.	0	1	0	7	0
11. Lost by Death	0	0	0	1	0
12. Total Lost	0	3	0	12	1
13. Comm. this Yr.	10	16	16	117	61
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	2	7	15	30	52
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	12	23	31	147	113
16. No. of Families	6	7	10	71	33
17. No. S.S. Child.	3	7	8	20	45
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	0	3	3	5
20. Total Baptisms	0	0	3	3	5
21. No. Rec. L.S.	10	19	12	103	62
22. Times L.S. Served	6	12	9	5	6
23. Regular Offerings	24,247	24,100	15,280	88,881	162,749
24. Special Offerings	615	916	0	30,558	4,085
25. Other Sources	28,800	3,250	0	2,342	23,431
26. Total Receipts	53,662	28,266	15,280	121,781	190,265
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidl.	793	1,487	3,172	25,656	9,860
28. Giv. to Cla. Guidl.	108	1,026	864	6,534	2,970
29. RCUS Non-budget	0	0	0	2,090	4,085
30. Non-RCUS Causes	0	1,380	0	300	0
31. Other Expenses	27,462	26,301	8,438	84,685	158,536
32. Total Expenses	28,363	30,194	12,474	119,265	175,451
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	0	0	0	700,000	660,000
34. Val. of Parsonage	0	0	0	120,000	210,000
35. Impr. on Prop'ty	0	0	0	19,045	28,018
36. Property Debt	0	0	0	0	603,924
37. Debt Paid Last Yr	0	0	0	0	49,435
38. Syn. Giving /Com	198	78	227	212	179
39. Class. Giving/ Com	27	54	62	54	54
40. RCUS Giving/Com	225	132	288	283	308

2003 Covenant East Classis Statistical Report as of 12/31/2003 (con.)

Category	Hamburg, Minnesota	Kansas City, Missouri	Napoleon, Ohio	Manitowoc, Wisconsin	Total
1. No. of Elders	3	2	3	3	21
2. No. of Deacons	3	3	3	3	19
3. Comm. Last Year	246	53	62	266	840
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	2	0	0	3	5
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	4	*10	0	29
6. Rec'd by Prof.	1	0	*1	8	17
7. Tot. Received	3	4	*11	11	51
8. Tot. Old/New Mbr.	249	57	*73	277	891
9. Lost by Dismissal	1	11	0	0	19
10. Lost by Eras./Dis.	0	11	3	7	29
11. Lost by Death	3	0	2	6	12
12. Total Lost	4	22	5	13	60
13. Comm. this Yr.	245	35	*68	264	832
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	44	27	*25	42	244
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	289	62	*93	306	1,076
16. No. of Families	137	19	*42	150	475
17. No. S.S. Child.	36	26	22	33	200
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	1	*1	3	16
20. Total Baptisms	0	1	*1	3	16
21. No. Rec. L.S.	192	35	*67	231	731
22. Times L.S. Served	7	6	*7	4	62
23. Regular Offerings	185,430	134,657	*105,478	123,795	864,617
24. Special Offerings	1,066	2,981	5,598	2,951	48,770
25. Other Sources	224,301	72,000	2,032	30,973	387,129
26. Total Receipts	410,797	209,638	*113,108	157,719	1,300,516
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidl.	23,056	7,464	12,892	45,801	130,181
28. Giv. to Cla. Guidl.	13,284	1,890	3,348	14,364	44,388
29. RCUS Non-budget	125	200	2,930	919	10,349
30. Non-RCUS Causes	1,066	2,000	1,814	2,507	9,067
31. Other Expenses	447,899	217,908	*73,990	92,673	1,137,892
32. Total Expenses	485,430	229,462	*94,974	156,264	1,331,877
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	1,225,000	1,200,000	165,000	650,000	4,600,000
34. Val. of Parsonage	150,000	120,000	85,000	140,000	825,000
35. Impr. on Prop'ty	225,000	4,650	477	9,887	287,077
36. Property Debt	73,000	450,000	0	0	1,126,924
37. Debt Paid Last Yr	0	120,600	0	0	170,035
38. Syn. Giving /Com	94	141	208	172	168
39. Class. Giving/ Com	54	36	54	54	50
40. RCUS Giving/Com	148	180	309	230	234

*Napoleon figures include Honesdale, PA: 11 communicants, 3 children, 7 families, \$21,341 in receipts, and \$15,723 in expenses.

Appendix #2
Necrology

MARTIN ELLING
PEACE REFORMED CHURCH
NAPOLEON, OHIO

Elling, Martin L. (1915-2003) was born on November 10, 1915, in Henry County, Ohio. On May 16, 1937 he married Esther M. Badenhop. To this union, five daughters and two sons were born.

Martin was a lifelong farmer in Henry County, an employee at Hoffman's Sawmill, Liberty Center, OH, and a member of the National Farmers Organization.

Since 1972, he was a member of Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, where he served as a deacon and an elder. Martin had served in 1976 as a delegate to the Eureka Classis. On November 29, 2003, the Lord called Martin home at the age of 88 years and 19 days.

Appendix #3
Standing Rules of the Covenant East 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 on 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. 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].

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 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.

18. The Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of \$200.00 annually.

19. 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].

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 put questions to the candidate [2003].

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.