

**INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY**

***OFFICERS OF CLASSIS***

President	Rev. James Sawtelle
Vice President	Rev. Harvey Opp
Stated Clerk	Rev. Jeff De Boer
Treasurer	Elder Jim Drewes

***CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING***

*(per communicant member)*

General Fund	10.00
Missions Fund	50.00
Benevolence Fund	7.50
Student Aid Fund	<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67.50</b>

***CLASSIS TREASURER***

DREWES, Jim ..... (419) 592-0795  
 13033 Road L2, Napoleon, OH 43545  
 jimkhd@bright.net

***PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES***

<b>Executive:</b>	J. Sawtelle, De Boer, D. Sawtelle
<b>Candidates and Credentials:</b>	Syms, De Boer, Potter, Hoxie
<b>Interchurch Relations:</b>	Sorensen, Potter, J. Sawtelle, Brice, Fisher
<b>Missions:</b>	Opp, Sorensen, Schnabel, Borgwardt, Renner
<b>*Deaf Ministries:</b>	Hamilton, Saavalainen, Speranza, Pennington
<b>Publications:</b>	no committee formed

*(First name serves as Chairman of the Committee.)*

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

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**2005 DIRECTORY  
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS**

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

- BRICE, Rev. Wesley ..... (479) 876-1064  
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- HAMILTON, Rev. Kevin ..... (859) 236-5189  
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205 Second Ave. SW, Norwood Young America, MN 55397

SPERANZA, Dominic . . . . . (304) 728-0449  
23 Cloverdale Heights, Charles Town, WV 25414  
Grayghost1963@msn.com

**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 200<sup>th</sup> 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: 8:55am

*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**

*Special Meeting*

May 11, 2004

Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, Wisconsin

**Services**

The president of classis, Rev. James Sawtelle, opened the meeting with prayer, asking particularly for the blessing of our God on the licensure of Rev. Stephen Payson.

**Organization**

The clerk of classis, Rev. Jeffrey De Boer, called the roll. Nine ministers and 6 elders were present, *a quorum*. Rev. Payson was also present. The bar of the house was set, permission was given to the interpreters to sit in the bar of the house, and the proposed agenda was adopted.

**Business**

Rev. Ronald Potter gave a report on behalf of the Candidates and Credentials Committee which informed the body that Rev. Payson had satisfactorily fulfilled the requests of the committee in completing papers in hermeneutics, apologetics, and Greek exegesis. There were questions asked from the floor to the candidate, after which the licensure of Rev. Payson was approved.

The form for licensure was then read and signed, and the members of the classis extended the right hand of fellowship to Rev. Payson. Rev. Harvey Opp then led the body in a prayer of thanksgiving.

**Reading of the Minutes**

The clerk read the minutes and the president declared them approved as read.

**Adjournment**

The body approved adjournment of the meeting, the roll was called, and Rev. Sawtelle led the members in prayer.

**ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES**

of the

**Covenant East Classis**

20<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Meeting

March 1 and 2, 2005

The Deaf Reformed Church, Danville, Kentucky

**Services**

The Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States opened its 20<sup>th</sup> annual spring meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2005 at 1:15 p.m. at the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, Kentucky. Rev. James Sawtelle led the body in a devotion from Psalm 101 and closed the time of meditation in prayer.

On Tuesday evening at 7:30 p.m. the delegates and the Deaf Reformed Church congregation came together for worship. Rev. James Sawtelle led the worship service and Rev. Daniel Schnabel preached from John 2:13-22. During that service Mr. Michael Brabo was installed as an elder in the Danville congregation to serve at the mission work in Chicago.

On the following morning, March 2, Rev. Kyle Sorensen led the body in a devotion from Malachi 2 on the nature of the priestly office of minister.

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**

Rev. James Sawtelle, the president of classis, called the body to order on the afternoon of March 1. After the devotions were completed the opening roll was called which showed 9 ministers and 7 elders present, *a quorum*. 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. Kyle Sorensen and Elder Jim Drewes 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. Harvey Opp as vice-president, Rev. Jeff De Boer as clerk, and Elder Jim Drewes as treasurer.

The president appointed Rev. Wesley Brice as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

The special order of the day was then adopted. There were no examinations of candidates to be done at this meeting of classis.

**Fraternal Delegates and Visitors**

Rev. Calvin Tuininga was present as a visitor from the Eastern Classis of the United States of the United Reformed Churches. Mr. Ray Schnabel was welcomed to the meeting, as were Messrs. James Cline, Robert Cagle, Jason Smith, and Paul Hamilton, members of the Deaf Reformed Congregation.

Mr. Mike Brabo were introduced and allowed to sit in the bar of the house to

interpret for the body.

First time elders to classis Elders Tom Renner (Garner), Jim Drewes (Napoleon), David Sawtelle (Golden Valley), and Mark Fisher (Kansas City) were also recognized and welcomed.

### **Reception of New Ministers and New Churches**

There were not any new congregations to welcome. Rev. Stephen Payson is a new minister in the Covenant East Classis, but was not present to welcome.

### **Standing Committees**

The President appointed the following Standing Committees. Chairmen are listed first:

<i>Excuses/Benevolences:</i>	Brice, Syms, D. Sawtelle, Borgwardt
<i>Finances:</i>	Fisher, Saavalainen, Renner, Pennington
<i>Judicial:</i>	Syms, Saavalainen, D. Sawtelle, Drewes
<i>Minutes of Synod:</i>	De Boer, Kroells, Sorensen
<i>Missions:</i>	Opp, Schanbel, Borgwardt, Renner
<i>Nominations:</i>	J. Sawtelle, Opp, Drewes, Fisher
<i>Overtures:</i>	Hamilton, Schnabel, Hoxie, Pennington
<i>Services:</i>	Sorensen, Brice, Hoxie, Kroells

### **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 had one item referred to the Standing Committee on Overtures by the Executive Committee. All overtures were dealt with by the appropriate committees and a record of their actions can be found in the section of this abstract that contains the Standing Committee reports.

### **Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports**

#### **A. Executive Committee Report**

Dear brothers,

During classical year 2004 the following information was presented to classis along with the included recommendations (all of which were adopted) by your Executive Committee.

Executive Circular (Volume 19, Number 1; April 22, 2004)

#### **A. Special Meeting of Classis to License Stephen Payson**

At the spring meeting of classis the Standing Committee on Examination and Licensure brought the following recommendation, which was subsequently adopted by the body:

“That we proceed to the licensure of Rev. Stephen Payson upon the successful completion of the additional work required in recommendations 1 and 2.”

Those previous recommendations specified further study in apologetics and hermeneutics and the completion of a Greek exegesis paper. The Candidates and Credentials Committee has notified the Executive Committee that papers have been

produced in the requested areas by Rev. Payson to the satisfaction of the Candidates and Credentials Committee. Therefore your Executive Committee brings the following recommendation:

\_\_\_\_ “That Classis convene at 8 p.m. on May 11, 2004 at Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church of Manitowoc, Wisconsin for the purpose of licensing Rev. Stephen Payson.”

#### **B. Continued Service of Rev. Ronald Potter in Honesdale, Pennsylvania**

The Executive Committee has received a communication from Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio expressing their desire that Rev. Potter continue serving (without a particular call) in the Honesdale, Pennsylvania area. The Napoleon church is also considering the urging of classis to call Rev. Potter as an associate pastor. Your Executive Committee brings the following recommendation:

“That permission be continued for Rev. Ron Potter to preach and hold Bible studies in the Honesdale, Pennsylvania area in whatever way God providentially allows until September 30, 2004.”

Executive Circular (Volume 19, Number 2; June 11, 2004)

#### **A. Benevolent Aid for Rev. Stephen Payson**

Your Executive Committee has received a request for \$250 per month from Rev. Payson to assist in the payment of health insurance. Treasurer Don Larson believes this assistance can be granted within the parameters of our current guidelines. The Executive Committee therefore brings this recommendation:

“That Rev. Stephen Payson be granted \$250 per month from June of 2004 through March of 2005 for the payment of health insurance.”

#### **B. Memorial from Vicksburg, Pennsylvania**

A memorial requesting organization as a particular congregation in the Reformed Church in the United States has been received from a group in Vicksburg, Pennsylvania (pastored by Rev. Payson). However after conferring with Rev. Payson about the work in Vicksburg, including such things as size, financial ability, and officer training, your Executive Committee is of the opinion that this group is not yet ready to be organized and has urged the members of this group to seek membership in a RCUS congregation until such time as that organization is possible. Your committee therefore recommends no action on the memorial at this time.

#### **C. Correspondence from the Spiritual Council of Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley, CA**

The Executive Committee has received the enclosed letter from the Spiritual Council of Covenant Reformed Church, Grass Valley, California. The apology it contains is in reference to the actions of Rev. Dennis Roe when officiating at the installation of officers in Carbondale, Pennsylvania without the knowledge or consent of the pastor of Carbondale at that time, Rev. Ronald Potter. These actions were contrary to article 31 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

In consideration of the letter received from the Grass Valley Spiritual Council your committee brings this recommendation:

“That a letter be sent by the clerk of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States to the Spiritual Council of Covenant Reformed Church of

Grass Valley, California, acknowledging the reception of their letter, humbly granting the forgiveness requested, and praising God for their willingness to promote the bond of Christian brotherhood in the church.”

Executive Circular (Volume 19, Number 3; October 18, 2004)

**A. Call to Rev. Ronald Potter**

Your Executive Committee has received a pastoral call which was issued from the Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio to Rev. Ronald Potter. The call states that at a congregational meeting held on September 26, 2004 Rev. Potter was elected as an associate pastor to labor in northeastern Pennsylvania. Your committee has also received the acceptance of that call from Rev. Potter. After considering these documents your committee brings the following recommendation:

“That the call from the Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio, to Rev. Ronald Potter to serve as an associate pastor in northeastern Pennsylvania be found in order and approved as received.”

**B. Meeting Place of Spring Classis Meeting**

Your Executive Committee also wishes to alert the members of classis that we have received an invitation from the Deaf RCUS of Danville, Kentucky to host our 2005 spring meeting of classis. Unless some unforeseen problem arises, that invitation will be accepted.

Executive Circular (Volume 19, Number 4; January 11, 2005)

**A. Committee to Install Rev. Potter**

Your Executive Committee brings the following recommendation in regard to the committee appointed to install Rev. Ronald Potter as an associate pastor of the Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio:

“That Rev. Harvey Opp and Rev. Kyle Sorensen, along with the elders of Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio, constitute the installation committee for Rev. Ronald Potter.”

**B. Meeting Place of Spring Classis Meeting**

Your Executive Committee also wishes to alert the members of classis that the spring meeting of the Covenant East Classis in 2005 will be held at the Deaf RCUS of Danville, Kentucky, commencing on the afternoon of March 1. At this point it is not anticipated that business will extend the meeting beyond the evening of March 2.

Your committee now brings one additional matter to your attention. At our last meeting of classis Rev. Stephen Payson was examined and subsequently added to the roll of classis. It was anticipated that some time shortly after he would receive a call to labor in Pennsylvania. Your Executive Committee has tried to assist in the acquiring of a call (re. Art. 91) through contact with both the Napoleon and Kansas City congregations. However, as of this writing no call has been issued. We would therefore urge the Standing Judicial Committee to consider what might be done to remedy this situation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. James Sawtelle, President; Rev. Jeff De Boer, Stated Clerk; Elder Walter Van Heest

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

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**B. Candidates and Credentials**

Esteemed Brethren:

Your Committee herein reports on its labours during the past Classical year. Only one item of business was brought before your committee this year, namely, a request from Rev. Stuart Pastine, a member of our Kansas City Church, to be examined by Classis and declared eligible to receive a call in the RCUS.

Though the request was in e-mail form and was given to the present chairman by the outgoing chairman at the spring 2004 Classis meeting, your committee did not undertake to deal with this request until December 2004. The reason for this delay was that there was no church attempting to recruit Rev. Pastine and thus there was no hurry to deal with his request. Rev. Pastine was previously examined approximately three years ago by the Candidates and Credentials Committee of this Classis for orthodoxy and intentions in order to be approved to preach in Kansas City under the oversight of the Elders. He successfully sustained that examination.

Rev. Pastine has been out of the URCNA for over two years, and according to their Book of Church Order, his name is erased from their roles. This means he has no credentials to transfer to the RCUS which presents us with a problem of how to ecclesiastically regard Rev. Pastine.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Ron Potter, Rev. Jeff DeBoer, Rev. George Syms, Elder Lee Blank

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**Classis Action:** The report was adopted as read.

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**C. Interchurch Relations**

Esteemed Brethren:

Your Committee herein reports on its interchurch contacts and labors during the past Classical year.

1. Invitations to attend the 2005 spring meeting of Covenant East Classis were sent to Presbyteries and Classes of churches with whom we have fraternal relations or with whom we exchange observers who are in the Danville, KY region. This included the RPCNA, the URCNA and the OPC. To date no firm commitments have been received indicating that these bodies plan to have a delegate or observer present at our proceedings.

2. The Rev. Kyle Sorensen visited, as a fraternal delegate, the Mid-West Presbytery of the OPC on March 19th, and September 17, 2004. His report is attached and will be read on the floor of Classis and commented on.

3. An invitation was received from the Ancaster Council of the Canadian Reformed

Churches, the convening church for the Regional Synod East of the CanRC to attend their regional synod November 10, 2004. Your chairman, as the one closest to Ancaster, was unable to attend due to a NAPARC meeting and a meeting with the Interchurch Relations Committee of the CanRC in Kansas City, MO at the time their regional synod met. The regional Synod was advised of this and a letter of greeting was sent.

4. The Rev. Jim Sawtelle visited the Mid-West Classis of the URCNA as an observer on January 11th, 2005. His report is attached and will be read on the floor of Classis and commented on.

5. An invitation was received from the Grace Reformed Church of Kerwood, Ontario, the convening church for Classis Ontario West, to attend their Classis meeting on March 9, 2005 in Hamilton, ON. There will be three examinations of candidates for the ministry at this classis meeting. Again, your chairman is the closest contact but will find it difficult to attend because of tent making activities. Another delegate is currently being sought. If one is not found then a letter of greeting will be sent.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Ron Potter, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Elder Jay Leisveld, Rev. Wes Brice

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**Classis Action:** The report was adopted as read.

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#### **D. Missions Committee**

Dear Brothers:

Your Committee carried out multiple duties in the past year, including, at the beginning of September, visitation to assess financial needs at Deaf RCUS, Columbia, MD. This was in regard to the benevolent aid for Rev. Saavalainen that was approved by Synod. On the same trip, Revs. Opp, Sorensen, and Elder John Honeck also conducted mission evaluation visits of the works at Vicksburg, PA under the ministry of Rev. Stephen Payson, and at Honesdale, PA under the ministry of Rev. Ron Potter.

Rev. Dan Schnabel and Elder Jim Bruckschen conducted the annual visitations at Golden Valley and Bentonville. Deaf Ministries sub-committee will also report herein, as will Deaf Reformed Ministries.

#### **Mifflinburg, PA**

On August 31, 2004, Opp, Sorensen, and Honeck met in Vicksburg, with Rev. Payson and the group under his ministry. There had originally been a group of about 35 people, that had basically come out of the UCC when Stephen resigned from his UCC pastorate in Mifflinburg. They began to hold services August 17, 2003, and had taken the name of Providence Reformed, as it was and remains Rev. Payson's commitment to serve in the RCUS.

Stephen has taught from our creeds, and taught RCUS practices. Our positions regarding women voting and Free Masonry were seen as hindrances by a number of the people. Many, therefore, left the group over that first year. In August 2004 the group

consisted of 6 families.

The missions committee had sent questions for the families, and some for the entire group to be addressed at our August 31st meeting. The people expressed agreement with our church government, and with our creeds, and being willing to subscribe to them. Appreciation for the centrality of the Scriptures in the RCUS was expressed. Acceptance of our practices was also acknowledged, although some had misgivings on the prohibition of women voting for entering congregations. They expressed the conviction that a mission church should be established there, and they were preparing for RCUS membership. A potential elder and a potential deacon were noted. Outreach efforts were also reported.

Various expenses for the congregation were discussed, and the support that Rev. Payson was receiving. The people tithe and are giving very well for the size of the group. Stephen also serves a small UCC congregation in Laurelton, PA on a yearly contract basis. However, his total support was far behind what was budgeted, with the original larger group at Vicksburg.

The committee sought to encourage the group to continue in their work, as to complete membership classes, and with their outreach, etc. We explained that any financial support from Classis could be considered at its Spring Meeting when our guidelines for the year are set. We also noted that usually new groups are not taken on as Synod mission works until there are around 20 communicants. Since last Synod, the Executive Committee of Classis also communicated our procedures for new mission settings and possible financial support.

The morning after the group meeting, the committee met with Rev. Payson, who expressed appreciation for meeting with them. He felt the meeting was positive over all, with good discussion. Hearing it was unlikely they would be recommended for mission work status soon was not a desired message, however. Nonetheless, their steering committee continued to take steps toward membership in our Kansas City congregation, and that Rev. Payson might have an associate pastor call from there. The membership classes Stephen taught were completed at the beginning of October.

During the last months of 2004 several discouraging things occurred. One was the withdrawal of a young couple that had been with the group since its beginning. The building rent in Vicksburg became unaffordable. Then the plan to join with Kansas City was put on hold. At the end of December, the steering committee decided not to come under care at KC, but to seek to grow numerically first.

Thankfully, the Lord provided a church building for less rent in Mifflinburg. Rev. Payson has expressed his continued interest in an associate pastor call from KC, and Rev. Syms reported they will seek to have this done before Classis meets.

#### **Columbia, MD**

In the past Classical year, Rev. Saavalainen received benevolent aid from Classis totaling \$14,000. He also is receiving \$1,000 per month from Synod, since its last meeting. These amounts were requested after he lost his outside employment. Synod also asked Classis "to send a delegation to visit Deaf RCUS, MD, to assess their financial needs." Opp, Sorensen, and Honeck met with Jari and the Columbia



congregation on Sept. 1, 2004. The members had met beforehand and determined answers to the 'missions and benevolence' questions sent by the committee.

The congregation expressed much appreciation for the support that enabled Jari to work full-time as their pastor for the first time in ten years. They strongly agreed that they would not want him to be part-time again, as it was detrimental to the church. They reported numerous means by which they have become quite knowledgeable in the Reformed faith, including sermons, Bible study, videotapes, Deaf Reformed Network, magazines, and conferences. Newcomers were also so taught. They saw a need to improve on the mission outreach of the congregation, but they did seek to bring visitors, as by personal invitation of friends, their web site, and Jari's contacts at Gallaudet University, where he is a chaplain. We suggested greater usage of internet listings and video-phone contacting, if possible.

Their long-term vision is to spread the Reformed faith, establish other Deaf Reformed churches, and hold additional conferences. They saw no disunity in the congregation. The two elders have spiritual maturity, and are a sufficient number for the work of the church. However, another deacon would be helpful, having only one now. They had lost 2 members in 2003, due to relocation, and had one erasure. The membership is now 16 communicants and 7 covenant children. Two visitors had been attending for several months.

Their meeting place, a church they rent in Relay, MD is centrally located and adequate for their needs. Having to meet in the afternoon is somewhat of a hindrance however, and there is no kitchen available. They would like to have their own building, but their building fund is quite insufficient to pursue this.

As for support for Jari, a housing allowance is provided for him to cover such costs, and \$1,200 was budgeted to begin an IRA for him for in year 2005. All of his salary in 2004 had come from the Classis and Synod support. Some reduction in that support is budgeted for 2007, with the church contributing to salary starting in 2005. Health insurance for his family is provided through his wife Ramona's work.

The congregational giving is reported as faithful, and 'doing as much as they can'. They had prepared a three-year budget, which was examined with the committee. It does project some slight increases in offerings over 2005-2007. However, without substantial increase, as perhaps through a doubling of their membership or more, it seems to the committee members that Rev. Saavalainen will need the continued amounts of Classis and Synod support, unless he is to take full-time outside work again. This, we would not want to happen, and so would recommend the same funding be provided.

#### Honesdale, PA

On Sept. 2, 2004, Opp, Sorensen, and Honeck met at the home of Rev. Potter with the members of Heritage Reformed Chapel. There are 11 adults and 5 children in 7 families who are members of Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, OH. All members were present for the meeting, and we went through the same visitation questions that were used at Columbia.

They expressed much appreciation for the ministry of Rev. Potter, and repeatedly stated that they had learned much from him. All but one had come from a non-reformed

background. They noted the various ongoing studies they have and the reformed books available on their book table which have been very beneficial. These are also means of introducing the reformed faith to visitors, etc. They have had visitors from Reformed Baptist, PCA, and OPC backgrounds, for example. There have been meetings for fellowship with the Mifflinburg group and with an OPC work in Wilkes-Barre. The latter promised to send referrals who are in the area of Honesdale. In order to make the work known, the members have been putting up flyers and posters, and have signs in several locations.

The committee members were impressed with the fine meeting room that has been provided for their services. This is in a rather new public school, Lakeside Elementary (Honesdale). Amazingly, they also have had use of the meeting room, without paying any rent, and can keep chairs, etc., on site.

The group asked for and they were given information on procedures with the Napoleon oversight, for admitting new members, and what would be the growth needed to become organized independently. They do not want to attempt the latter prematurely, which we see as wisdom. A Constitution has been prepared, and training of potential officers has been proceeding. The tent-making situation of Rev. Potter was discussed, as well as the procedures of an associate pastor call.

The committee members also met with the group apart from Rev. and Mrs. Potter. The group again expressed unanimous appreciation for Rev. Potter, and saw the good providence of God in bringing them through the past upheaval with the Carbondale situation. They all strongly indicated their desire to have Rev. Potter continue to be their pastor. The officer training was seen as appropriate, and all see church office as a high calling to be taken most seriously.

The members were asked about their financial giving and commitment to the work, which is unquestionably strong in the view of the committee. They were concerned for Ron that his health not be diminished in any way with his tent-making work, which has mainly been in home-remodeling and furniture restoration. He enjoys such work, but they do take it as a personal responsibility to care for his well-being. Ron has often stated to the committee chairman, and the group is of the same conviction, that they do not want to depend on much outside support. The committee encouraged them to seek other aid, however, if it becomes necessary. We were glad they have budgeted for salary increases, and urged that they continue to make this a priority. The only financial aid they request is a continuance of aid for the Potter's medical and life insurance, and related costs.

Since our meeting, Rev. Potter was elected as associate pastor at Napoleon, to labor in the northeast PA area. He was installed at Honesdale on Jan. 20th, 2005.

#### Golden Valley, MN

On October 20th, 2004, Rev. Dan Schnabel and Elder Jim Bruckschen visited with Rev. Sawtelle and the consistory of Redeemer. They reported that attendance at Sunday morning worship is between 135 to 150 people. They have had 12 new members this past year. New members classes continue on a regular basis. Last year the church held a marriage conference which was well attended. Other things are being done to increase

the fellowship in the church such as a game night, talent show, and church meals.

Redeemer is still on schedule for their planned reduction of support. They did have expenses which were higher than budgeted for, such as benevolence needs. They had budgeted \$3,500, but were expecting to expend over \$20,000 towards such. However, the congregation has responded with much generosity concerning this shortfall, giving \$14,000 in benevolence contributions. Other areas of capital expenses were installing new furnaces, a new roof, and parking lot work.

The church does have an eye to the future concerning what the Lord may bring about in the Twin Cities area. They are starting to advertise on a local Christian radio station in conjunction with the R.C. Sproul program. Part of the funding for these commercials is coming from Synod. Redeemer has also had an interest in having a missions minister, which possibly could be shared between their congregation and St. Paul's Ev. Reformed in Hamburg. This minister would be used, Lord willing, to try to determine where another church plant might be set up in the metropolitan area. This is only in the discussion stage, however, and no commitment to such work has been made.

Over all the church is doing quite well, spiritually, and in numerical growth. There is a great deal of spiritual maturity in consistory members, and in the congregation. A major concern is the immense debt that the church carries. Nonetheless, the consistory said they were still on track for going off of support at the beginning of 2007. The church does have many professionals who are tithing faithfully for its support, and had no complaint concerning their financial burden, trusting that the Lord will provide.

#### Bella Vista, AR

Schnabel and Bruckschen also visited at Bella Vista, Arkansas, on October 21st with Rev. Brice and the members of Grace Reformed Chapel. There was good attendance for the meeting with the majority of the normal 15 who are in attendance on the Lord's Day. They spoke about the good teaching they were receiving and expressed enthusiasm about such. Several adult studies were being held, most of which focused on the Three Forms of Unity. The Heidelberg Catechism is taught in Sunday School and Thursday night is the time set aside to look closely at the Belgic Confession. They had previously held a Sunday night Bible study. This was canceled to enable Rev. Brice to go down to Little Rock every other week, as there were several families interested in having a reformed church begun there. Recently, those study times have been put on hold, as several of that group are not convinced regarding infant baptism.

The only area which was lacking that they saw, was the teaching of the children. Rev. Brice is answering that short fall by gathering up Sunday School material for the 6 children that are currently attending, and he will be obtaining teachers.

Over all, there was reported to be an increase of attendees on Sunday morning, to have between 15 to 25 attending. They did sustain a total loss of 1 in terms of their membership. This was due to 2 of the men, one with a wife and child, leaving to go to seminary. Then a new couple joined the chapel. Another family should be joining soon, and two other families attend regularly. Also, a recent visitor, a lady from nearby southwest Missouri has attended several times.

Currently the facilities for Sunday worship are quite adequate. They began to meet

last fall at a local VFW in Bella Vista, which has the capacity they need, as well as a piano they can use. This location is more central to the majority of the members than the former Bentonville site. A decrease of rent also occurred with this facility to cost only \$50 per use. Concerning their future plans, if they are able to establish a church in that area, the local community will donate land for a church building site.

One of the main discussions was the aspect of how they were seeking to have the Chapel recognized in the area, particularly through outreach and advertising. The committee members also stressed the necessity for outreach, not just by Rev. Brice, but by the members, in the relationships they have with others. They have sought to have the Chapel name recognized through advertising in two newspapers and listings in 3 telephone directories. The committee stressed the necessity for Rev. Brice to focus his attention on the preaching and teaching of God's word. So, the advertising, as well as maintaining such, needed to be taken on by the members when possible. The group immediately responded with volunteers to take on these tasks. Previously, much of the advertising had been meager with the newspapers and directories, as well as the signs which direct people to the worship service. The group showed much interest in seeking to advance their visibility by increasing the advertising budget.

The people who were there showed not only an eagerness to participate in the work but they also showed spiritual insight. This was displayed when speaking about modern tendencies in churches today, concerning worship, and the way churches try to draw people with Finney-style of enticements, rather than the preaching of God's word.

An issue raised privately was concern that Rev. Brice had too many responsibilities himself, as well as working with Little Rock. The committee encouraged greater participation from the group for certain tasks. This was responded to, as noted above. Also, the Little Rock effort is on hold. One couple had thought that some visitors might think there were too many studies, which might scare them away. The committee did not see that they had any more studies than other RCUS churches. In any case, should Wes become overburdened, the Garner Consistory and the Missions Committee will suggest changes.

Rev. Brice sees great possibilities for the Lord's work there, and has put his hand to the plow with great joy and without looking back. He was also encouraged to delegate matters where he could. Your committee also thought it wise that he be given at least a small book allowance to encourage his own spiritual refreshment and growth. The new church budget now includes \$200 dollars per year towards the purchase of books for his studies. Also, the advertising for 2005 is budgeted to increase to \$6000. This increase is offset by the decrease in rent at the new location.

Overall the meetings at Arkansas and Minnesota went very well. We look forward to what the Lord will work through Redeemer and Grace Reformed Chapel.

#### Chicago, IL

The worship services at Chicago that have been conducted under the oversight of Deaf Reformed Church, Danville, KY have continued for about 18 months. Twice each month, worship services and classes meeting at Moody Memorial Church have been supplied by RCUS ministers and elders. Since last fall, a second service was added.

This service has been held in Lombard, about 20 miles west of downtown Chicago at New Life Community Deaf Church. This name was recently taken by the former So. Baptist church, which rents a Christian Reformed Church building. Our men supplying there have been much appreciated, and teaching from our creeds has begun. Michael Brabo has been our man on the scene, and has recently been elected by Danville to be an elder on their consistory, to serve in the Chicago area. When ministers or elders of Danville or Columbia have been there, up to 59 adults and children have attended, between the two sites. The average over a period of 31 Sundays has been 25 individuals attending.

In recent months a plan to possibly bring a deaf missionary on the scene full-time has been pursued. To this end, committee members, Opp, Sorensen, and Bruckschen, along with Rev. Saavalainen and Michael Brabo met with two dozen adults interested in this proposal, on Jan. 24, 2005. The proposal had been presented in written form previously, and the meeting went well. The committee's plan was to first send a missionary on a one-year trial basis in order to preach and teach from all of the Bible on the Christian faith, worship, Christian living, and how the church functions, etc. Rev. Saavalainen had been asked about this, and is quite open to doing that work. He explained the proposal, for the most part, to the attendees on Jan. 24th.

Although a number in these two groups do not have much understanding of the Reformed faith, all were given cards on which to express commitment to such a work, if they chose to do so. They were asked: "Will you commit yourself to seek to attend and learn from the worship, preaching, and teaching times under the labors of an RCUS deaf minister?" They were to sign names on those cards. Eight family units have since given such commitment. Also, the Moody group has given commitments to provide at least \$970 per month in support for such a missionary. The Lombard group voted on Feb. 5th, to provide \$800 per month for one year, starting in July 2005.

Another wonderful provision is that a deaf man with a house about 25 miles from the Lombard location is planning to go for a year to Gallaudet University in Washington D.C., where Jari has been a chaplain. Jari has met this man, seen his house, and they have agreed to 'swap houses' for the year beginning in July, if this work goes forward.

Although news of this possibility came as something of a shock to the members at Columbia, there has been recognition expressed by some that this may be the Lord's will, and that they will rely on God regarding their future. It would not be easy for them to obtain another deaf reformed minister, yet between the two elders there is certainly knowledge and ability to exhort and carry on as overseers of the flock. The intention is to ask Columbia if they would give permission for a year's sabbatical for Jari, in order that the tie between Rev. Saavalainen and Columbia may not be ended prematurely. A number of the Chicago people may be learning reformed doctrine for the first time. Also, Jari could be of some assistance yet to the consistory and spiritual council, if needed.

As for funding this missionary work, your committee intends that Classis guidelines would not need to be increased. As of last year, \$2,000 monthly between Classis and Synod has been provided in benevolent aid for Rev. Saavalainen, since losing his non-church employment. Also, there is currently \$600 per month provided between

Classis and Synod for the Chicago work at this time. Above the total of what our two Synod mission works currently receive, we would need to ask for \$13,000 of additional money from Synod mission funds.

We can note that future missions in the Chicago area could include the establishment of hearing churches also, as with the hearing children of these families and other contacts. The concept of a missionary to an area, not having a number of RCUS members yet, has been done before. The timing and details coming together lead your committee to recommend taking on this work.

#### Deaf Ministries Committee

This committee operates as a sub-committee. Its members are Rev. Kevin Hamilton (chairman), Rev. Jari Saavalainen, Elder Dominic Speranza, and Elder Chris Pennington. They were mainly concerned with the Chicago work over the last year. Following is their report, by Revs. Saavalainen and Hamilton:

(Jari S.): The Chicago mission work was somewhat slow, but steady for the first ten months of 2004, with services at Moody Memorial Church, until the Lombard Deaf congregation started to have special speakers come to preach and teach two times per month, starting in October. That meant speakers had two services on the same day, one at Lombard during the morning and another one at Moody in the afternoon. I think the services went well, but the speaker did not have much time for fellowship with the Lombard church because he had to zoom to Moody for its afternoon service. It is kind of awkward with two services, but I think they went well for now.

It seems that Kevin, Mike Brabo, and I feel that Chicago is ready to have a full-time 'mission' pastor to work and train two churches in the near future. Kevin and I are grateful for Mike Brabo and his dear wife, Carol for their persevering work in Chicago. We are now working with the mission committee about the possibility of starting a new full-time mission pastor for Chicago for one year.

(Kevin H.): Our church was very pleased with how Deaf Reformed Church in Maryland and the Chicago people worked with us very well. We are thankful that there was much willingness, as from Jari, Chris, Shane, Kenton and some others from Houston and York in PA. We were blessed to be entertained by Mike Brabo's hospitality. We also wanted to let you all know that we called Mike Brabo to be our elder. It is important to have an elder in the Chicago area. We were blessed to have him on board. He is working tirelessly and graciously. We are looking forward to working with him from now on. Also, it is a good start if we begin the Chicago mission work with him and possibly with Jari to be our associate pastor. We still are working on it. Please pray for us. I also am working on the sessions focusing on the Three Forms of Unity using them in the power point lessons. Mike Brabo will be teaching from the sessions that I am working on. Also, please pray for me to find time to finish this task soon. I am half way to finishing it. Our church believed that we should get it going for the Chicago work. We also felt that Jari is the better person to serve in that area. We recommend that we need to begin the mission church in the fall, or earlier than that time.

## Deaf Reformed Ministries

Deaf Reformed Ministries also has been receiving funds from Classis and Synod, and the Director, Elder Kenton Hoxie, reports to our Deaf Ministries Committee. DRM holds conferences throughout the year. Revs. Hamilton and Saavalainen are on the governing council of DRM. Jari forwards the following:

DRM received a total of \$4,000 from the RCUS for 2004. About \$2,200 went to support four local conferences in Chicago, Houston, Sioux Falls, and PA. DRM had a loss from its national conference last June, so the remaining \$1,800 went to help cover this conference's expenses.

Both Kevin and I did a financial audit for DRM last June, and we found things in order. We recommend the same amount of support of \$4,000 for 2005.

*The Missions Committee brings the following recommendations:*

1. That Classis continue to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$1,200 per month, for a total of \$14,400 for the classical year 2005.
2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas, with \$11,200 in fiscal year 2006.
3. That Classis provide Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN, with \$509 per month, for a total of \$6,108 for classical year 2005.
4. That Classis overture Synod to provide Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN with \$3,060 in fiscal year 2006.
5. That Classis grant Rev. Jari Saavalainen the status of Missionary to the Deaf in the Chicago Area, for a trial period of one year, if permission to so labor or an associate pastor call is approved.
6. That Synod be informed that Classis gives a positive evaluation of the Chicago work, and will grant Rev. Jari Saavalainen the status of Missionary to the Deaf in the Chicago Area, for a trial period of one year, once permission to so labor or an associate pastor call is approved.
7. That Classis continue the provision of \$250 per month in mission funds for the Chicago work, and likewise overture Synod to continue provision of \$350 per month for the Chicago work. These funds will be used for expenses of pulpit supply or for a deaf missionary, if that arrangement is finalized.
8. That Classis provide Rev. Jari Saavalainen with \$1,000 per month, for a total of \$12,000 for the classical year 2005, in mission support of his labors.
9. That Classis overture Synod to provide Rev. Jari Saavalainen with \$12,000 from May 2005 to May 2006, in mission support of his labors.
10. That Classis inform the Synod Home Missions Committee that we give a positive evaluation of the Chicago work, and overture Synod for \$13,000 in mission support for the work of a deaf missionary to Chicago, starting July 2005 through June 2006.
11. 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, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Elder Jim Bruckschen,

Elder John Honeck

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

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## E. Publications Committee

No Permanent Publications Committee was formed for 2004.

### **Reports of Officers**

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

Esteemed Brothers,

One can hardly read a page of Scripture that does not in some manner emphasize two truths: God is sovereign over all things, and in His sovereignty, He has appointed the means of salvation and the gospel as that by which He will both call and keep men in His salvation. Secondly, man must persevere in the use of the Gospel so that men might be saved.

A striking instance of those two truths set side by side is found in Colossians 1:28, 29: "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." And yet, despite the prominence of these two great truths of Scripture, there are disturbing signs that the Church in North America is not listening. According to a recent survey of Protestant pastors, conducted by George Barna, "only half (51%) passed the test on whether they possess a biblical worldview." For the purposes of his survey, Barna's definition of a biblical worldview consisted of "a belief in absolute moral truth as defined by Scripture, as well as acceptance of six core biblical beliefs: the accuracy of biblical teaching, the sinless nature of Jesus, the literal existence of Satan, the omnipotence and omniscience of God, salvation by grace alone, and the personal responsibility to evangelize." With this dismal picture of ministerial ignorance of the gospel, it is not surprising to find out that another survey by the Barna Research Group indicated that only 9% of all born-again adults -- and just 7% of Protestants -- possess a biblical worldview [which was defined in the same way as that given above, JS]." The Church's failure to believe and preach the gospel is coming home to roost.

Ironically, Church Growth gurus studiously pouring over such surveys for effective techniques for church growth will be confronted with what the Bible taught all along: the lost will be brought to salvation, disciples will be made, only as we preach the biblical Christ, "warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom..."

Which brings me to the joyful observation I want to make in this report. The parochial reports of the ministers, as well as the committee reports, provide a chorus of accounts of diligence and vigilance in the use of God's ordained means of salvation. The Gospel is preached faithfully, the sacraments administered faithfully, discipline is faithfully maintained. Did you catch that? Do you hear the echo of Paul's words? "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." This is the testimony of God's working

which works also in you mightily (see verse 29). What greater testimony would any Church covet than that God is working among us mightily, which work is displayed in the perseverance of the preaching of Christ? This is an occasion for humble thanksgiving to God our Savior!

There is one further observation that I would make about the parochial reports. In only one report did a pastor express his joy in doing his ministerial work. I don't wish to read too much into this observation, and perhaps I have misread you all. I certainly don't bring it up to scold anyone. I do want to encourage you, and to call us all to pray for one another to persevere in our calling, rejoicing in it. Unto us, earthen vessels that we are, our Lord has committed the ministry of the Gospel that every man may be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. And the Bible promises us that there is no more important and fruitful labor we can engage in than fulfilling this ministry of Christ.

This year we happily received one new pastor as a ministerial member of classis, the Reverend Stephen Payson. We need to diligently pray and labor for the day when our brother will be able to labor under the oversight of one of our churches. The Executive Committee has worked with Rev. Payson to that end, but at this time, nothing has been concluded. We are thankful that Reverend Ron Potter now labors in Northern Pennsylvania under the oversight of Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon. Neither of the groups among which the Reverends Payson and Potter labor are ready to be organized, and by all accounts, it could be some time before this hope will be realized.

We have received no new churches to add to the rolls of classis this year. However, the mission works in NW Arkansas and Chicago have seen progress. In particular the classis is challenged with how to respond to the developments among the deaf mission work in the Chicago area. There are as many as 50-60 people who gather for services when a pastor is present, and though there are many significant challenges to meet there, it would seem that the opportunity to preach the Gospel among the deaf community in Chicago is one that we must explore diligently. We must especially pray that the Lord would raise-up another minister to labor among the deaf churches. The mission work in Minneapolis continues to make progress toward full self-support. The Minneapolis church has indicated the desire to see classis work toward establishing another church in the Twin Cities, and this subject is one we as a classis might need to discuss. Intentionally starting new mission works as a classis in large metropolitan areas where we have an existing congregation, when doing so doesn't necessarily include working with a particular core group is something we are not accustomed to doing. Perhaps this is an approach to missions the classis needs to think about more thoroughly.

In other areas of statistics, I would note with gratitude that the overall number of communicant members of classis is up slightly, as was the giving of the churches, when everything is taken into account. One troubling statistic is that we have no students for the ministry in the classis. It is Christ who grants such gifts to His church, and we should pray that He would raise-up men for the ministry. As pastors, are we encouraging the young men of our congregations to consider the ministry?

One final note is in regards to Reverend Chester Ploeger. Rev. Ploeger's health is deteriorating markedly. He is now unable to attend church regularly, and may soon be admitted to a full time care facility. We should remember him and his faithful wife,

Grace, in prayer in these days of his infirmity.

Let us rejoice that our merciful God continues to entrust us with the ministry of the Gospel and the freedom to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. And in these days of great upheaval in the world, let us not forget that the most important work of God is the establishing of His eternal kingdom in his Church. Christ is sovereignly doing this, and He is accomplishing this as He works in us mightily through the preaching of the gospel. May He grant us grace to persevere.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. James Sawtelle

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

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### **B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes**

Dear brothers in Christ,

Following the 2004 Spring Classis Meeting the minutes of the 19th Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder with all reports, overtures, and relevant information.

The 2004 Abstract of the 19th 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*~~.

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All of the requisite forms and communications were sent to the clerk of synod along with ten overtures from the Covenant East Classis that were acted upon by the Synod. These were requests for missions support for the works in Bentonville, Arkansas, Chicago, Redeemer Church, ministerial aid for Rev. Ploeger, aid for Mrs. Vance, Rev. Hamilton, Rev. Saavalainen, Rev. Potter, and Deaf Reformed Ministries.

In addition there were four Executive Circulars sent out this year.

Your clerk was very pleased to receive all of the statistical and financial information from the churches in good order this year. Not only were the completed forms received promptly, but there was only one error discovered.

Changes this year included the installation of Rev. Ronald Potter to serve in a new area in Pennsylvania and the reception of Rev. Stephen Payson as a minister in our classis. No necrologies have been received at this writing. Any necrologies for the 2005 abstract need to be submitted as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Jeff De Boer

**Classis Action:** The report was adopted as read.

### **C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod**

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee of Synod reports that there are no matters from the 258<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RCUS that require special action at your Annual Classes meetings.

The Classes are advised to check that the new guidelines and interpretations for the Statistical Reports sent to the Classes Clerks are consistently followed. See 258<sup>th</sup> Synod Abstracts p. 95 #'s 5 and 6. This is the first year for these guidelines. Also note that if a mission church (unorganized) is under the oversight of another congregation, the mission's totals are to be added to the totals of the overseeing church, *and* the mission's numbers are to be listed, but not added again in the totals.

Note that there was an error in the date for the 259<sup>th</sup> Synod which meets in Bakersfield/Shafter, CA. The date should be corrected so that Synod convenes at 7:30 p.m., May 16, 2005. More information on that meeting will be forthcoming.

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

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**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 2/1/04	17,338.92
General Fund Balance 2/1/04	2,387.48
Receipts	10,829.00
Expenses	4,638.32
Balance 1/31/05	8,578.16
Missions Fund Balance 2/1/04	14,472.44
Receipts	47,532.98
Expenses	50,120.04
Balance 1/31/05	11,885.38
Student Aid Fund Balance 2/1/04	479.00
Receipts	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Balance 1/31/05	479.00
Balance 1/31/05	20,942.54

#### Detailed Income Report

	Members	General	Missions	Student	Budget	Total
Bentonville, AR	10	130	570	0.00	706	706
Garner, IA	117	1,521.00	6,669.00	0.00	8,190.00	8,190.00
Danville, KY	16	221.00	969.00	0.00	1,120.00	1,190.00

Relay, MD	16	208.00	912.00	0.00	1,120.00	1,120.00
Golden Valley, MN	61	793.00	3,477.00	0.00	4,270.00	4,270.00
Hamburg, MN	245	3,185.00	13,965.00	0.00	17,150.00	17,150.00
Kansas City, MO	35	455.00	1,995.00	0.00	2,450.00	2,450.00
Napoleon, OH	68	884.00	3,876.00	0.00	4,760.00	4,760.00
Manitowoc, WI	264	3,432.00	15,048.00	0.00	18,410.00	18,480.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>10,829.00</b>	<b>47,424.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>58,246.00</b>	<b>58,316.00</b>
Interest on Deposits						45.98
<b>Income Total</b>						<b>58,361.98</b>

#### Detailed Expense Report

##### General Fund Expenses

Spring Classis Meeting	2,812.60
Clerk	552.72
Travel	203.00
Honorarium	1,100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,638.32</b>

##### Mission Fund Expenses

Grace Reformed Chapel	14,400.00
Redeemer Reformed Church	9,168.00
Deaf Reformed Church, KY	9,168.00
Travel and Phone	3,102.04
Deaf Reformed Ministries	2,000.00
Rev. K. Hamilton support	2,700.00
Rev. J. Saavalainen support	13,000.00
Rev. S. Payson support	2,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,120.04</b>

<b>Total Classis Expenses</b>	<b>54,758.36</b>
<b>Total Classis Balance for 2004</b>	<b>3603.62</b>

Respectfully submitted,  
Donald Larson, Treasurer

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

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#### **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.

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**Classis Action:** The classis took note of each report except for J. Sawtelle's 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 Garner which answered "Getting better" and Danville which answered, "Yes, needs improvement."

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

All answered "Yes" except Garner which answered "Yes, improving" and Hamburg which answered "Yes, trying to improve."

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 Hamburg, which answered "No."

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

All answered "Yes" except Danville which answered "No."

6. Are the Church records properly kept?

All answered "Yes" except Columbia which answered "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**

Rev. De Boer 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 38 and 39, of

this abstract).

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### **Classis action: Take note.**

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### **Reports from Classis Delegates to Fraternal Bodies**

Rev. Kyle Sorensen presented the following report about his visit to the meeting of the Mid-West Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

Your servant represented our Classis at the OPC Presbytery of the Midwest on March 19 and September 17, 2004. I also was asked by the Consistory of Redeemer RCUS in Golden Valley, MN, to sit in on a meeting between Rev. Sawtelle and members of the OPC CHEX Committee on May 10 (same as our Missions Committee). At the September meeting I expressed our thanks to the Presbytery for their willingness to meet with us in May to clarify some issues. I expressed the willingness of Consistories and/or committees of Covenant East Classis to meet with OPC Sessions and/or Presbytery committees in the future if the OPC brothers should ever request it. The issues of our conversation in May centered on what kind of people qualify as prospects for new mission works, especially if they are currently pursuing or already in a pastoral relationship with another NAPARC church.

Three other items should be noted. First, the Presbytery continues to license and ordain men holding the Framework view. The number of presbyters who object and question these candidates has diminished since the first Presbytery I attended three years ago. Second, a pastor who disagreed with WLC #109 was received from another Presbytery. He defended the "artistic freedom to represent Christ" in images. Third, in addition to these two reasons for prayer, the Presbytery needs our prayers for their massive mission undertaking in the Chicago area to the Hispanic community. With no seed families and only a few prospects, they are committing money and energy to bring in a bilingual missionary. May God bless their labors!

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen

Rev. James Sawtelle presented the following report on the meeting of the Mid-West Classis of the United Reformed Church of North America on January 11, 2004.

Esteemed Brothers,

I give you the following report of the classis meeting of the Mid-West Classis of the URCNA as the delegate from Covenant East Classis.

This was a short meeting, with very little on its agenda. I arrived at 9:30 am and the classis was completed by 12:30 pm. The delegates handled a number of appointments to various synodical committees, as well as a few of their own committees, doing this from the floor, rather than by a nomination committee.

The biggest item on their agenda was to consider the report and the

recommendation of that report, on the matter of administration of the Lord's Supper to Shut-ins, the infirm and the sick. A lengthy report was produced by a committee detailing the history of the practice of administering Lord's Supper to those members of the congregation who are not able to attend the stated services of the church for a long period of time. One part of the report was handled by an MD, who discussed the issue of administering the sacrament to those who are mentally impaired. This was a helpful discussion, it seemed to me, and could be of use to anyone struggling with this aspect of the issue.

The recommendation of the committee was to distribute it to the churches for information and guidance in dealing with the issue of administration the Lord's Supper to shut-ins. The URCNA classes do not, for the most part, adopt papers such as this, though there are some notable exceptions to that practice.

I was given opportunity to address the delegates, which I did, bringing greetings from our classis, stating our gratitude for their URCNA Synod's willingness to go to Phase 2 (what we call Fraternal relations) in ecumenical relations with the RCUS. I informed the body of some of our classis' mission works, especially I mentioned the deaf work in the Chicago area, as a number of the URCNA's Mid-West classis congregations are in the greater Chicago area.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. James Sawtelle

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**Classis Action:** Take note.

#### **Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Bodies and Visitors**

Rev. Calvin Tuininga of the Eastern Classis of the United Reformed Churches in North America brought greetings. After Tuininga's comments the delegates asked a number of questions which were answered by Rev. Johnson.

Mr. Ray Schnable addressed the body on behalf of Heidelberg Reformed Seminary.

#### **Reports of Special Committees**

##### **A. Installation Committee for Rev. Ronald Potter**

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The undersigned represented Classis in the installation of Rev. Ron Potter, at Heritage Reformed Chapel on January 20th, 2005. Rev. Kyle Sorensen was providentially prevented from making the trip at the last moment. So, Rev. Stephen Payson was contacted, and he supplied, preaching Sorensen's e-mailed sermon! Rev. Payson brought the charge to Rev. Potter, and Rev. Harvey Opp brought the charge to the congregation, and asked the installation questions of Ron and the congregation.

It is good to officially have Ron as an associate pastor of Peace RCUS, Napoleon, serving those members of Napoleon, who live in northeast PA. The fellowship with the brothers and sisters was certainly a blessing!

In Christ,

Rev. Harvey Opp

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**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. Benevolences**

1. Regarding overture #8: request from Rev. Stephen Payson for benevolent aid for \$250 per month through June 2005 for help in providing health care, that classis provide \$250 per month for Rev. Payson through June of 2005.
2. Regarding overture #7: request from the consistory of Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA that classis overture synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Rev. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1,200 per month, that classis overture synod for ministerial aid for Rev. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1,200 per month.
3. Regarding overture #6: request from the consistory of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church of Manitowoc, WI to overture synod for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000 per month, that classis overture synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000 per month.
4. Regarding overture #1: request from consistory of Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, OH that we either provide or overture the synod of the RCUS for benevolent aid in the amount of \$425 per month for Rev. Ron Potter, that classis overture the synod of the RCUS for benevolent aid in the amount of \$450 per month for Rev. Ron Potter.
5. Regarding overture #11: request from Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, KY for benevolent aid of \$750 per month for Rev. Kevin Hamilton, that classis provide benevolent aid for Rev. Kevin Hamilton in the amount of \$750 for March and April 2005, and then provide \$375 per month from May 2005 through February 2006, and overture synod for \$375 per month through April 2006.

Brice, Borgwardt, D. Sawtelle, Syms

##### **B. Excuses**

1. Regarding overture #9: request from Rev. Stephen Payson to be excused from all sessions of classis meetings because of new employment requirements, that Rev. Stephen Payson be excused from all sessions of classis.
2. Regarding overture #10: request from Rev. Ron Potter to be excused from all sessions of classis meetings due to the serious illness of his wife's mother, that Rev. Ron Potter be excused from all sessions of classis.
3. Regarding overture #13, request from elder Chris Pennington to be excused from the afternoon session of classis on March 1 and the morning session of classis of March 2 due to work schedule, that elder Christ Pennington be excused as requested.



**C. Finances**

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

Jim Sawtelle	890.96
Wes Brice	326.00
Jeff De Boer	562.58
Don Larson	150.00
Jari Saavalainen	96.90
Dan Schnabel	401.60
Jim Drewes	244.80
Kenton Hoxie	96.90
Kyle Sorensen	460.80
Michael Brabo	279.10
Mark Fisher	450.00

**Total 3,959.64**

- 2. That Covenant East Classis pay Michael Brabo \$700 for his interpreting services for the classis meeting.
- 3. That the Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of \$500.00 annually.
- 4. That guidelines for giving for communicant member for 2005-2006 be:

General Fund	10.00
Benevolence	7.50
Missions Fund	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.50</b>

Fisher, Renner, Drewes, Saavalainen

**E. Judicial**

- 1. Regarding overture #3: the letter for advice from the Spiritual Council of Manitowoc, WI, that we respond to Rev. Kyle Sorensen and the Spiritual Council of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church that we heartily agree with the process pursued by the Spiritual Council related to said letter and consider the process to be biblical, constitutional, and pastoral. We affirm the actions taken and commend the Spiritual Council for their steadfastness.
- 2. Regarding overture #4: the letter from Manitowoc to require one biblical sermon regarding male headship and voting in the congregational meetings by all classis churches, that classis take note (classis action: take note).
- 3. Regarding the matter of Rev. Stephen Payson laboring without a call, that we refer the matter of Payson's work in the region of Mifflinburg, PA continuing through June 2005 to the Executive Committee of Classis with the following consideration: we recommend that Rev. Payson pursue and respond to a call from a particular RCUS church and Rev. Payson and his family become members in a RCUS church.
- 4. Regarding overture #4: the letter requesting Classis to overture the synod of the RCUS to erect a Committee to evaluate the *Reformed Herald* purpose, in style, content, readability, and target audience, and determine if it is meeting that

purpose, that classis take note (classis action: take note).

D. Sawtelle, Kroells, Savaalainen, Syms

**F. Minutes of Synod**

There was no business brought before this committee.

De Boer, Kroells, Sorensen

**G. Missions**

- 1. That Classis continue to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$1,200 per month, for a total of \$14,400 through February 2006.
- 2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas, with \$11,200 in fiscal year 2006.
- 3. That Classis provide Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN, with \$509 per month, for a total of \$6,108 through February 2006.
- 4. That Classis overture Synod to provide Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN with \$3,060 in fiscal year 2006.
- 5. That Classis grant Rev. Jari Saavalainen the status of Missionary to the Deaf in the Chicago Area, for a trial period of one year, if permission to so labor as an associate pastor call is approved.
- 6. That Synod be informed that Classis gives a positive evaluation of the Chicago work, and will grant Rev. Jari Saavalainen the status of Missionary to the Deaf in the Chicago Area, for a trial period of one year, once permission to so labor or an associate pastor call is approved.
- 7. That Classis continue the provision of \$250 per month in mission funds for the Chicago work, and likewise overture Synod to continue provision of \$350 per month for the Chicago work. These funds will be used for expenses of pulpit supply or for a deaf missionary, if that arrangement is finalized.
- 8. That Classis provide Rev. Jari Saavalainen with \$1,000 per month, for a total of \$12,000 through February 2006, in mission support of his labors.
- 9. That Classis overture Synod to provide Rev. Jari Saavalainen with \$12,000 from May 2005 through May 2006, in mission support of his labors.
- 10. That Classis inform the Synod Home Missions Committee that we give a positive evaluation of the Chicago work, and overture Synod for \$13,000 in mission support for the work of a deaf missionary to Chicago, starting July 2005 through June 2006.
- 11. That Classis provide \$2,000 for Deaf Reformed Ministries, and likewise overture Synod for an additional \$2,000 for this work.
- 12. Regarding the communication from the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville concerning their permission regarding Rev. Saavalainen's work in Chicago. Take note.
- 13. Regarding future missions as per Rev. Sawtelle's parochial report, we recommend that a \$5 guideline amount be designated for future mission works.
- 14. Regarding the recommendation from Northland Reformed in Kansas City, that Covenant East Classis overture Synod to designate MERF as a work worthy of support by the RCUS Synod, with consideration of including it in the guidelines, be

approved by classis.

Opp, Schnabel, Brogwardt, Renner

#### **H. Nominations**

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

**Executive:** J. Sawtelle, De Boer, D. Sawtelle

**Candidates and Credentials:** Syms, Potter, De Boer, Hoxie

**Interchurch Relations:** Sorensen, Potter, J. Sawtelle, Brice, Fisher

**Missions:** Opp, Sorensen, Schnabel, Borgwardt, Renner

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

**Publications:** No committee formed.

J. Sawtelle, Opp, Syms, Fisher

#### **I. Overtures**

1. That overture # 3 concerning advice to the Spiritual Council of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, Wisconsin concerning a letter of judicial erasure be referred to Judicial.
2. That overture # 4 from Salem Ebenezer Reformed concerning the passing of a requirement that every congregation in Covenant East RCUS have one sermon preached which has as one of its main doctrines male headship in the year of 2005 be referred to Judicial.
3. That overture # 8 from Rev. Payson for aid in the amount of \$250 per month to help cover half of the cost of health care be referred to Benevolences.
4. That overture # 9, excuse from Rev. Payson, be sent to Excuses.
5. That overture #10, excuse from Rev. Potter, be sent to Excuses.
6. That overture # 11 from the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, KY with a five year plan for support to Rev. Hamilton be sent to Benevolences.
7. That overture #12 from Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, KY to give permission for Rev. Saavalainen to serve as a missionary to our members and visitors of Chicago be referred to Missions.
8. Concerning overture # 1 that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for benevolent aid in the amount of \$425 per month for Rev. Ron Potter be referred to Benevolences.
9. Concerning overture # 2 that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS that the Middle East Reformed Fellowship be considered as a work worthy of support from the congregations of the RCUS be referred to Missions.
10. Concerning Overture # 5 from Salem Ebenezer Reformed that the Synod of the RCUS be overtured to set up a committee to evaluate the Reformed Herald purpose in style content, readability, and target audience and determine if it is meeting that purpose be referred to Judicial.
11. Concerning overture # 6 that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000 per month

be referred to Benevolences.

12. Concerning overture # 7 that Covenant East overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Rev. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1,200 per month be referred to Benevolences.

13. That overture #13, excuse from Chris Pennington, be sent to Excuses.  
Hamilton, Schnabel, Hoxie, Pennington

#### **J. Services**

1. That Classis request the following note of appreciation be placed in the bulletin of the host congregation this coming Lord's Day: "Covenant East Classis considers it a great privilege to have finally met the brothers and sisters of Deaf Reformed Church, Danville, Kentucky. We sincerely thank you for hosting our Spring 2005 classis meeting. May our gracious Savior richly bless you for your loving hospitality and service."

Sorensen, Brice, Hoxie, Kroells

#### **Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business**

##### **A. Expression of Appreciation to Hosting Congregation**

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

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

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 Wednesday morning and at the end of business on Wednesday evening. Corrections were made on each occasion and final approval was given to the minutes as corrected.

#### **Adjournment**

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, 2005 until the time of the next stated meeting of classis.

##### **A. Roll Call**

The final roll call showed 9 ministers and 8 elders present.

##### **B. Devotions**

Elder Chris Pennington read the Scriptures 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: 2004 Covenant East Classis Statistical Report as of 12/31/2004

Category	Bentonville AR	Columbia, MD	Danville, KY	Garner, IA	Golden Valley, MN
1. No. Of Elders	0	2	2	3	3
2. No. Of Deacons	0	1	1	3	3
3. Comm. Last Year	10	16	16	117	61
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	0	0	0	4
5. Rec'd by Letter	2	0	0	2	6
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	0	1	0	2
7. Tot. Received	2	0	1	2	12
8. Tot. Old/New Mbrs.	12	16	17	119	73
9. Lost by Dismissal	3	0	0	1	0
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	0	1	0	0	0
11. Lost by Death	0	0	0	2	0
12. Total Lost	3	1	0	3	0
13. Comm. this Year	9	15	17	116	73
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	0	7	17	0	59
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	9	22	34	116	132
16. No. of Families	5	6	10	71	37
17. No. of S. S. Child.	5	7	12	20	58
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	0	2	2	4
20. Total Baptisms	0	0	2	2	4
21. No. L.S. Served	12	15	15	101	73
22. Times. L.S. Served	6	12	8	5	6
23. Regular Offerings	29,069	24,973	29,713	93,538	177,207
24. Special Offerings	0	3,651	0	25,165	19,920
25. Other Sources	28,800	19,000	5,997	12,771	19,100
26. Total Receipts	57,869	47,624	35,710	131,474	216,227
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.	2,136	3,108	2,914	23,507	12,093
28. Giv. to Clas. Guidlin.	770	1,120	1,190	8,190	4,270
29. RCUS non-budget	0	0	0	6,876	3,107
30. Non-RCUS causes	0	0	0	500	3,600
31. Other Expenses	0	19,353	0	88,756	233,322
32. Total Expenses	2,906	23,581	4,104	127,829	256,392
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	0	0	0	750,000	750,000
34. Val. of Parsonage	0	0	0	125,000	250,000
35. Impr. on Property	0	0	0	16,936	49,718
36. Property Debt	0	0	0	0	560,500
37. Debt Paid Last Yr.	0	0	0	0	53,820
38. Syn. Giving /Com.	214	194	182	201	198
39. Class. Giving /Com.	77	70	74	70	70
40. RCUS Giving /Com.	291	264	257	330	319

Category	Hamburg, MN	Kansas City, MO	Manitowac WI	Napoleon, OH*	Totals
1. No. Of Elders	3	3	3	3	22
2. No. Of Deacons	3	3	3	3	20
3. Comm. Last Year	244	35	264	68	831
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	2	0	6	3	15
5. Rec'd by Letter	2	2	0	0	14
6. Rec'd by Prof.	4	12	1	0	20
7. Tot. Received	8	14	7	3	49
8. Tot. Old/New Mbrs.	252	49	271	71	880
9. Lost by Dismissal	4	2	0	0	10
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	0	2	9	0	12
11. Lost by Death	6	0	4	3	15
12. Total Lost	10	4	13	3	37
13. Comm. this Year	242	45	258	68	843
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	49	26	40	24	222
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	291	71	298	92	1065
16. No. of Families	125	24	140	40	458
17. No. of S. S. Child.	36	25	25	19	207
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	3	0	4	2	17
20. Total Baptisms	3	0	4	2	17
21. No. L.S. Served	207	43	238	66	770
22. Times. L.S. Served	9	6	4	12	68
23. Regular Offerings	265,959	121,458	138,835	114,993	995,745
24. Special Offerings	255	5,540	1,065	5,723	61,319
25. Other Sources	0	1,382	22,638	6,255	115,943
26. Total Receipts	266,214	128,380	162,538	126,971	1,173,007
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.	34,495	6,799	52,382	13,559	150,993
28. Giv. to Clas. Guidlin.	17,200	2,450	18,480	4,760	58,430
29. RCUS non-budget	0	405	445	685	11,518
30. Non-RCUS causes	255	3,066	3,448	4,127	14,996
31. Other Expenses	206,349	116,476	92,276	132,201	888,733
32. Total Expenses	258,299	129,196	167,031	155,332	1,124,670
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	1,225,000	1,500,000	765,000	200,000	5,190,000
34. Val. of Parsonage	150,000	200,000	165,000	85,000	975,000
35. Impr. on Property	3,000	1,127	0	46,804	117,585
36. Property Debt	0	459,799	0	0	1,020,299
37. Debt Paid Last Yr.	0	51,255	0	0	105,075
38. Syn. Giving /Com.	141	194	198	199	182
39. Class. Giving /Com.	70	70	70	70	70
40. RCUS Giving /Com.	212	276	270	279	252

Include Honesdales, PA: 11 communicants, 5 children, 7 families, \$22,469 in offerings, \$5,100 synodical

aid, and \$25,420 in expenses.

**Appendix #2**  
**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 to those delegates to Classis whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Classis or have been properly excused by Classis.
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 \$500.00 annually. [2005]

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.