

2007

Abstract
of the
Minutes
of the
Covenant East Classis



22nd Annual Session
March 6 and 7, 2007

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS OF CLASSIS

President	Rev. James Sawtelle
Vice President	Rev. Ron Potter
Stated Clerk	Rev. Jeff De Boer
Treasurer	Elder James Drewes

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

(per communicant member)

General Fund	12.00
Missions Fund	48.00
Benevolence Fund	0.00
Student Aid Fund	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL	60.00

CLASSIS TREASURER

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

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive:	J. Sawtelle, De Boer, D. Sawtelle
Candidates and Credentials:	Syms, De Boer, Potter, Chandler
Interchurch Relations:	Sorensen, Potter, Brice, Stuebbe
Missions:	Opp, Schnabel, Renner, Kroells, Honeck
Publications:	no committee formed
Special Committee:	Potter, Syms, J. Sawtelle, D. Sawtelle

(First name serves as Chairman of the Committee.)

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 COVENANT EAST CLASSIS**

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 dnlsk@comcast.net

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 2313 Hickory Ln., NewHeolstein, WI 53061
 stuebbes@chilton.k12.wi.us

CHURCHS AND MISSION WORKS

Bentonville, ARKANSAS

Grace RCUS, 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: Rev. Jeff DeBoer (Wife: Karen)
 Worship: 10:30 a.m. SS: 9:30 a.m.
 www.peacereformedchurch.com

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, 18431
335 Beach Lake Highway (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
22nd Annual Spring Meeting
March 6 and 7, 2007
Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, Ohio

Services

The 22nd annual meeting of Covenant East Classis was called to order at 8:11 a.m. on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, by Rev. James Sawtelle. Rev. Sawtelle led the body in the reading of Ephesians 4:1-16, highlighting the command to maintain the unity of the body in the bond of peace. He also led the body in prayer.

At 7 p.m. on Tuesday evening the classis delegates, along with members of the Napoleon congregation, were led in worship by Rev. Wesley Brice. Rev. Jeff De Boer preached a sermon during that service from 1 Timothy 4:7b entitled, "Start with the Man in the Mirror."

On Wednesday morning Rev. Sawtelle led the body in a devotion from Mark 15:27-37 during which he spoke on the suffering of our Savior during the time of darkness while he hung on the cross.

In addition, 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. Sawtelle, the president of classis, called the body to order on the morning of March 6. After the devotions were completed the opening roll was called which showed 9 ministers and 6 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. Elders Tom Renner and John Honeck 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. Ronald Potter as vice-president, Rev. Jeff De Boer as clerk, and Elder Jim Drewes as treasurer.

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

The special order of the day was then adopted—which included a time on Tuesday morning for discussion on the departure of the Deaf Reformed Church from the RCUS.

There were no examinations of candidates to be done at this meeting of classis.

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

Rev. James Slaa was present as a visitor from Classis Ontario West of the Canadian Reformed Churches and was given time to address the classis. Also welcomed were first time elder delegates Dick Kroells from Hamburg, Minnesota and Jerry Chandler from Kansas City, Missouri.

Other visitors who were recognized and welcomed included Mr. Stephen Wright from the mission work in Pennsylvania and Mr. Jimmy Hall from Garner, Iowa who is anticipating attending Mid America Reformed Seminary in the fall.

Rev. Chuck Synder was also introduced and allowed to sit in the bar of the house to interpret for the body.

Reception of New Ministers and New Churches

There were no new congregations or ministers to welcome.

Special Order—Debate on the Departure of the Deaf Reformed Church from the RCUS

At 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, and for approximately two hours thereafter, the body held discussion about the reasons for the congregational votes which had already occurred in the Danville and Relay churches to leave the RCUS. The discussion centered on some theological differences the officers of these churches had with the Heidelberg Catechism as well as cultural differences between the hearing and deaf cultures.

The classis later adopted the following statement about the departure of these churches: “It is with heavy hearts that we inform the members of the RCUS that the deaf office bearers and congregations have chosen to leave the RCUS. This was because of their disagreement with the creeds concerning the phrase “he descended into hell” as well as how members submit to the creeds. They also cited communication and cultural differences between the deaf and hearing cultures. No opportunity for debate was given by the deaf brothers prior to their decision to leave” (see also Standing Judicial Committee recommendations, pg. 34).

The resignations of Rev. Jari Saavalainen and Rev. Kevin Hamilton were also submitted to the classis. After the closing of discussion the deaf delegates left the meeting.

Standing Committees

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

<i>Excuses/Benevolences:</i>	Syms, J. Sawtelle, Stuebbe
<i>Finances:</i>	Chandler, Sorensen, Renner
<i>Judicial:</i>	Schnabel, Potter, Brice, D. Sawtelle, Renner, Honeck
<i>Minutes of Synod:</i>	De Boer, Kroells, Sorensen
<i>Missions:</i>	Opp, Syms, Renner, Stuebbe
<i>Nominations:</i>	J. Sawtelle, Opp, Honeck, Chandler
<i>Overtures:</i>	Potter, D. Sawtelle, Kroells
<i>Services:</i>	Brice, Schnabel, Honeck, 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. 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 the classical year of 2006 the following recommendations were approved and information was brought to the classis by the following Executive Circulars:

Executive Circular Volume 21, Number 1 August 15, 2006

Esteemed Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following information along with one recommendation.

A. Request for Benevolent Aid

Your Executive Committee has received a request from Rev. Kevin Hamilton for benevolent aid. Rev. Hamilton recently had an unexpected reduction in the Social Security support he receives each month. He will now receive \$800 a month less than what he expected for July through December of this year. Your committee has been told that his Social Security amount per month will return to the rate he previously expected at the beginning of 2007. Rev. Hamilton is willing to get a part time job (as he had previously) in order to support his family. But at the spring meeting of classis in 2006 classis agreed to support him to the extent, it appeared then, that he need not labor outside his congregation in an effort to build up his church. Therefore your committee believes it would be wise to provide the requested benevolent aid through the end of this year.

The total amount required, if approved, is \$4800. Half of that amount is available from our classis’s funds without any anticipated shortfall in other areas by transferring \$2400 from the General Fund to the Benevolence Fund. We would encourage the churches of classis to consider contributing toward the remaining half by way of benevolent monies or special collections in each congregation. If the churches of our classis are not able to raise this remaining \$2400 by October 1st of this year, then the remaining balance will be requested from the diaconal committee of synod.

Therefore our recommendation is:

“That \$2400 be transferred from the General Fund to the Benevolence Fund and be provided for Rev. Kevin Hamilton in benevolent aid from Covenant East Classis for the remainder of 2006 and the individual churches of classis be encouraged to provide additional aid to Rev. Hamilton from local benevolence funds or offerings as sent through the classis treasurer.”

Executive Circular Volume 21, Number 2

September 20, 2006

Esteemed Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following information and reminder.

A. Request for Admittance from Emmanuel Reformed Presbyterian Church

Your committee has received a request from Emmanuel Reformed Presbyterian Church of Auburn, Maine, to be admitted into the Reformed Church in the United States. On September 10, 2006, the congregation voted by a two thirds majority to enter into relationship with the RCUS. The Executive Committee is favorably disposed to their request and has sent them a communication indicating so. We have also informed them that in order to be fully admitted they will need to submit a constitution which can be approved by classis.

The committee which has been assigned to work with this congregation, consisting of Rev. Ronald Potter, Rev. George Syms, and elder Mark Honeck, has been asked to continue their work advising Emmanuel Reformed Presbyterian Church. We are thankful to our God and Father for bringing this congregation to make this request and we pray that soon they might be received into our communion.

B. Request for Benevolent Aid

The churches of classis are reminded to either forward the funds collected for Rev. Kevin Hamilton to the classis treasurer or notify him of their intent to do so by October 1st. If there are more funds collected than are needed the excess funds will be returned to contributing congregations according to the percentage each congregation contributed.

**Executive Circular
Volume 21, Number 3
January 22, 2007**

Esteemed Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following information, reminder, and recommendation.

A. Deaf Reformed Churches

Your Executive Committee has been involved in a series of e-mails, letters, and conversations with the churches in Danville, Kentucky and Relay, Maryland, as well as the mission work in the Chicago, Illinois area. It has become apparent the elders and pastors of these churches perceive some significant differences between their churches and the RCUS in general. Your committee requested and received the following correspondence with the purpose these differences could be expressed by them to the members of classis. What follows is their letter.

January 12, 2007

To Executive Committee of CEC,

The Deaf churches will be leaving RCUS at the conclusion of the Classis in March 2007 or by March 10th, 2007, whichever comes first. Danville will vote for a "no confidence" in remaining with RCUS on January 14th, while Columbia will vote on January 21st. The vote is just to make it official. We will be leaving due to three reasons:

1) Strict subscription for officers on all points and all articles of 3FU. Some of us find the Heidelberg Catechism interpretation of "He descended into hell" to be in error, and view Westminster's Larger Catechism Q/A 50 as being the more accurate interpretation. While we feel this is not a major issue, however strict subscription gives us no choice and disqualifies us from being officers for RCUS.

2) Strict subscription for members. While there is some confusion on whether or not RCUS requires the practice of strict subscription for members, we believe that any church that requires this violates the spirit of the Belgic article 28. We believe that while one might not fully agree, one can submit to the doctrine of the church. We ask that the Classis submit a request to the Synod to clarify exactly what the practice is for members.

3) Deaf/Hearing differences. This is the most difficult point, and we want to try to keep this more general.

a) There is a lack of interaction between both parties, mainly due to the difference of languages. Some of us have been with RCUS for over a decade, there was/is no interest from the Hearing party in general to learn ASL. We appreciate the Synod's recognition of the difference by approving a future Deaf Classis, but again, we see a lack of interaction during Synod, and even during Classis with hearing brothers who we are closer to. The fact that the Classis approved a hearing work (Yorksville) funding close to a deaf mission work just proves this point. (Why not encourage hearing persons to go to a Deaf congregation? We do have hearing members, and provide voice interpreting for those unfamiliar with ASL. Hearing members who immerse themselves in ASL and the Deaf culture are viewed VERY FAVORABLE by the Deaf community at large.)

b) Deaf themselves do not consider disabled, but a (for a lack of a better word) "foreign" group. RCUS does not impose itself on foreign missions. Generally, the Deaf community considers RCUS a "foreign" entity, leading us to believe that we do not see a future for the Deaf to join and grow within RCUS. Other Deaf Christians will not join RCUS just because it's a "hearing" denomination as being a chief reason. We shared with some about a possibility of a Deaf denomination, and there is overwhelming positive feedback. We believe that we would reach more Deaf persons by leaving rather than staying in RCUS.

We hope that this summary helps clarify our reasons. We want to say that we still love our Hearing brothers in Christ, and believe that this is almost like going through a divorce. Some brothers will be upset and disappointed, but we hope to have a good relationship even after we leave RCUS. We realize our leaving RCUS will have us go through financial suffering, but His kingdom is not of this world. We must follow His calling, and we hope that you will give us your blessings.

In Christ,
Your Deaf Brothers

Your committee brings before you three additional pieces of information in this regard. The first is we intend to set aside a block of time at the beginning of our upcoming classis meeting immediately following its organization to discuss these issues. The members of classis are encouraged to prayerfully consider this matter before their arrival.

Second, the Executive Committee intends on including with the anticipated materials necessary for the classis meeting some historical information which might prove helpful to the members of classis (e.g. synodical decisions about officers vows, membership views, etc.).

Finally, the information contained in this letter is only for delegates to classis and their consistories. We do not believe it would be helpful to bring this matter before our congregations or our denomination in general at this time. The Executive Committee of Synod has been notified and consulted.

B. Starting Time for Classis

Delegates to classis are reminded to schedule their arrival so they are present at the 8 a.m. beginning of our meeting on Tuesday, March 6. We anticipate concluding business no later than the evening of Wednesday, March 7. If there are any overtures which should be considered at our meeting of classis be reminded they should be sent to the clerk at least three weeks, and preferably more, before the beginning of our meeting.

C. Status of Rev. Stephen Payson

Your clerk has received a letter from Rev. Payson requesting he be removed from our roll of ministers. Rev. Payson was examined and received as a minister by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on November 18, 2006. Your clerk has requested and received verification of this reception from the clerk of the Presbytery of Philadelphia (OPC). It is to be noted, however, that Rev. Payson was not regularly dismissed (Art. 33). It is therefore the recommendation of your committee that,

“Rev. Payson has joined the Orthodox Presbyterian Church without being regularly dismissed, and therefore the name of Rev. Stephen Payson be removed from the roll of ministers in the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States.”

**Executive Circular
Volume 21, Number 4
February 7, 2007**

Esteemed Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following information.

A. Time and Place of Classis

Our annual Spring Classis Meeting will be held at Peace Reformed Church in Napoleon, Ohio, beginning 8 a.m. on the morning of March 6 and continuing through March 7. Based on the information currently available to your committee, we do not believe classis will continue into March 9. Please make your travel plans accordingly. Rev. Harvey Opp should be notified as soon as possible about when you will arrive and how many will need housing. The delegates are also reminded there will be a special order planned for immediately following the organization of the classis meeting. That time will be dedicated to a discussion of the information sent in Executive Circular 21, 3 (Deaf Churches' Concerns).

B. Forms for Classis Meeting

The forms necessary for the classis meeting are included with this circular. Please send the clerk of classis the statistical information form, financial record form, and the delegate credential form as soon as possible. Any necrologies to be included in the next abstract should also be forwarded, as well as any overtures which are to be considered at our meeting. Pastors should also send their parochial reports to the

president of classis.

In addition to the preceding circulars there is one additional item of information your committee brings before the classis. During this past year the Executive Committee was contacted by a Reformed church in Auburn, Maine, seeking affiliation with the RCUS. A special committee consisting of Rev Ron Potter, Rev George Syms, and elder Mark Honeck, was assigned to assist in this matter. Their final report follows.

Monday, January 29, 2007

Executive Committee,
Covenant East Classis
Reformed Church in the U.S.

Esteemed Brethren:

Further to our report to you of June 13th, 2006 your committee would add the following as its final report.

The Emmanuel Presbyterian and Reformed Church of Auburn, ME voted to become affiliated with the RCUS. Immediately after that vote several resignations from membership were received by the provisional session as well as the request of Rev. Stewart to be released from his commitment to be their pastor.

As time progressed it became apparent that the Auburn Church was becoming less and less viable. In the end, after the resignation of one of the principle leaders of the congregation from membership, two families were left. The Church was then dissolved and the assets dispersed by the end of 2006.

You committee did give counsel designed to help the church remain viable after it voted to come into the RCUS and began to bleed members and in the end provided counsel relative to dissolution. None of the dispersed funds were distributed to the RCUS in any way.

The two remaining families, still desirous of being part of the RCUS traveled to NE Pennsylvania in November of 2006 and have determined to move into the region to be part of the work in Honesdale, PA to help build the RCUS church there.

As much as the remaining two families would like to have an RCUS presence in the Auburn region, they acknowledge the Lord's will in the dissolution of the Church and affirm their willingness and commitment to relocate to help establish an RCUS presence in NE PA.

Respectfully,
Rev. Ron Potter (Chairman)
Rev. George Syms
Elder Mark Honeck

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. James Sawtelle
Rev. Jeff De Boer
Elder Jay Kroese

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

B. Candidates and Credentials

Esteemed brethren:

Greetings in the name of Christ our Lord!

Your committee had no instructions or requests for any action to be taken in the examinations of candidates during the past Classical year.

We humbly submit the report that we had no business before us, did not meet, but did have an occasional exchange via email.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. George Syms

Rev. Jeff De Boer

Rev. Ron Potter

Elder Kenton Hoxie

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

C. Interchurch Relations

Dear Brothers:

This past Classical year was a slower one than previously for your committee. We did not have as many face-to-face contacts with our fraternal churches, though we did have more e-mail correspondence this year, and from a greater number of presbyteries and classes. Brothers from two fraternal denominations have requested information from me as to when our next meeting is, so that they may find someone to come. Can you imagine it, somebody seeking the RCUS out so that we may share our mutual love for Christ and His gospel? It is wonderful to remember God's mission outside the boundaries of our own denomination. I remember one e-mail in particular when a scheduled visit by one of our ministers had to be called off, and the brothers promised prayer for the family situation of our RCUS delegate.

Invitations to this 2007 Spring meeting of Covenant East Classis were sent to classes/ presbyteries nearest to Napoleon. This included the CanRC, OPC, RPCNA, and URCNA. At the time of this report, I have had no reply.

Our Classis received the following invitations to send a fraternal delegate.

CanRC: We received an invitation to the Fall meeting of Classis Niagara.

OPC: We received invitations to the Spring and Fall meetings of the Presbytery of the Midwest. Rev. Sorensen was providentially hindered from attending the Spring meeting, but God's wise providence allowed Rev. Jan Saavalainen to represent us at their Fall meeting on September 15, 2006. We also received an invitation from the Presbytery of Ohio.

URCNA: We received two invitations from the Classis Eastern U.S. Rev. Ron Potter visited and sent a letter of greeting for the Fall meeting to which we did not send a delegate.

We also received invitations to meetings of the Classis Central U.S. on March 21, June 13, and October 24, but were unable to secure a delegate. We will make every

effort to send a delegate in the coming year. This Classis is the only fraternal body which sends us copies of the minutes and agendas for their meetings. These help our committee stay informed on our brothers' activities in God's Kingdom. From these documents, it appears that several men have passed examinations for ordination. The minutes also note that "much discussion" was held regarding what to do when somebody wants to join a church but doesn't yet accept some doctrines found in the Three Forms of Unity. It was suggested that the churches as a whole continue discussing the issues. The Classis also gave over a dozen cases of concurring advice to local elders in proceeding with the next step of church discipline of individual members. The Classis also sent an overture to the 2007 URCNA Synod to add a church polity area to the exam for candidacy to the ministry. The Classis also overtured their Synod to begin the process of joining the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel, with hopes that one day soon URC ministers could be able to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces as Chaplains.

The reports from our fraternal delegates are attached.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Kyle Sorensen

Rev. James Sawtelle

Rev. Wesley Brice

Elder Mark Fisher

Fraternal Delegate Reports

Presbytery of the Midwest of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

I was invited to give 7 minute talk to OPC Midwest Presbyter in Chicago area on Friday, Sept 15, 2006. My daughter was my interpreter. I spoke and told them that RCUS gave them a warm greeting. I explained that RCUS still strongly stands against Federal Vision and a few others (I couldn't remember). I also urged them to start deaf ministries/churches and/or American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting services if they have some deaf people who may express their interest to attend their churches. I "joked" them since RCUS has two Deaf churches and one (Chicago) was on the progress while OPC has none by telling them that it was time for them to "wake up". They just responded with a good laugh. I explained a short history about how Deaf churches got involved with RCUS years ago. My speech was well received and I answered several questions from them. After this we stayed with them for lunch. I had a good chat with several guys.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jan Saavalainen

Presbytery of New Jersey of the OPC

Esteemed Brethren:

The undersigned attended the stated Meeting of the Presbytery of New Jersey (PRJ) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, on Tuesday April 25th, 2006 held at Calvary OPC in Bridgeton, NJ, south of Philadelphia. This constituted about a 4 hour

drive to get there from NE PA.

Classis was just underway when your delegate arrived. He was recognized by the Chair, introduced, cordially received, given the privilege of the floor, and the opportunity to address the PNJ on behalf of Classis. It was good to be among the brethren and to renew friendships with some brothers of long acquaintance.

Among communications dealt with was the withdrawal of ministerial credentials from the jurisdiction of the PNJ by one Minister, over the issue of Justification and the OPC GA's handling of a particular case that came before it. The withdrawal was not acted upon pending the need for additional communication with the Minister consisting of an attempt to dissuade him from his action and, if unsuccessful, to help him put his desire to renounce the jurisdiction of the OPC in a proper form.

Longstanding Clerk of Presbytery, Elder Richard Barker, submitted his resignation as Clerk. Elder Barker has been an elder statesman and leading figure in the PNJ over the years and believed, because of age, that it was time to pass the clerical duties on to another. His resignation took effect in the Fall of 2006.

Under the Home Missions agenda item, reports were received concerning on the ongoing work of the Board Walk Chapel, in Wildwood, NJ and the NE Philadelphia mission to the Jews. A HM administrative report was brought which highlighted the attempt of the HM committee to bring HM expenses in line with giving which is lagging. To this end, cuts were made in various places in the administrative office, radio outreach and the salary paid at Boardwalk Chapel. The Boardwalk Chapel has assets estimated at in excess of 4 million dollars and as high as 10 million but it is cash poor. Present estimates are that if giving does not come up to expenses the Chapel has an estimated future of no more than ten years. Work is underway by designated OPC churches to develop a plan for the Chapel. A report was also received regarding the request of a church in Pennsville, NJ to become affiliated with the PNJ. A meeting between this church and the HM committee of the PNJ was recommended and approved to further this affiliation and to help them bring their documents in line with the OPC and to issue a call to a Pastor.

In Foreign Mission matters an update was given on the work of PNJ Minister Rev. Cal Cummings in Japan and on a PNJ Ministerial member working in Uganda. In light of the desire of the OPC Foreign Missions Committee to interdict the OPC work in Japan, and the reaction of the churches to this, the PNJ called Rev. Cummings to serve there as its missionary.

In other PNJ business, the Rev. Milton Villaneuva a former CRC pastor from Puerto Rico was examined pursuant to receiving a call from the PNJ to Pastor a church in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This church plant is a co-operative effort with the Presbytery of the South who has other contacts in Puerto Rico.

The examination, conducted by a member of the Candidates and Credentials Committee, was done through a Spanish translator. The candidate was examined in Prolegomena, anthropology, christology, ecclesiology, the covenant, personal piety and eschatology. The examination lasted approximately 40 minutes. Questions from the floor took up another 20 minutes. These dealt with creation, the role of works in

justification, the ordination of women, the Westminster Standards, the OPC Form of Government, Directory of Worship and Book of Discipline. Relative to the documents of the OPC just mentioned the Candidate was asked if there was any area where he was in disagreement. Two testimonials were also read to the body.

The examination was arrested and approved. The Candidate affirmed seven vows in the Form of Government as put to him by the Moderator through the translator. The Presbytery voted to issue a call to the Candidate and approve its terms. A call from the PNJ was placed in the hands of the Candidate and he was enrolled as a ministerial member of the PNJ with an installation to follow later in San Juan.

Your delegate was given time to address the PNJ and brought greetings from the Covenant East Classis, expressed appreciation to the PNJ for their labour in the Lord and for our fraternal relationship, and brought them an update on our denominational and classical activities.

Your delegate, because of distance and church responsibilities was not able to stay to the very end of the PNJ meeting but did make sure that the bulk of the major business was done before he left.

Respectfully,
Rev. Ron Potter

Classis Eastern U.S. of the URCNA
Esteemed Brethren:

The undersigned attended the Sixteenth Session of the Classis Eastern U.S. (URCNA) in Newton, NJ, on Wednesday, March 29, 2006 as an observer from the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS.

The Newton congregation (formerly CRC) has had a long history of propagating the Reformed faith in that region of east central NJ. During one of the break times two members of that congregation expressed great interest in the RCUS presence in NE PA and referred a family member living in NE PA to the RCUS. This person recently visited our congregation.

I am finding, particularly here in the east, that these Classes meetings provide a forum for publicizing our own RCUS work in the NE as well as coming to know that there are brethren of like mind not far away with whom we can fellowship.

Your delegate was cordially received by the brethren and given the privilege of the floor and the opportunity to report on our own recent Classis meeting. At one point in the proceedings the Classis went into Executive session and your delegate, as well as delegates from another fraternal church were asked to leave. This gave an opportunity to become re-acquainted with the delegates from the OPC Presbytery of NJ and opened the door for an invitation to that Presbytery.

After the preliminaries germane to the opening of Classis, Classis dealt with several items of business. They approved \$5,000 support for a student for the Ministry to attend WTS Escondido in addition to \$1,000 provided by the student's home church. A report was given on the church plant in Lancaster, PA which is showing great growth and potential. It is interesting to note that much of the support for URCNA

church planting comes from the appeal of the church being planted to other churches in the Federation. To this end the Minister spends time traveling other URCNA churches to raise support.

There were a few committees that did not have a report available for this Classis meeting, one being missions and another dealing with the disposal of church property in Franklin Lakes, NJ, as a result of a relocation of members to a nearby URCNA church.

One principle item of business that pertained directly to the RCUS was the fine-tuning of an overture to the URCNA Synod in 2007 to change the guidelines for Ecumenical and Church Unity. These brothers have the same concern as the RCUS did with the URCNA guidelines namely that entering into a fraternal relationship commits to eventual integrated church unity.

Your delegate spoke to this issue as he did at their Fall 2005 Classis meeting. Their concern was that their Synodical Committee on Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU) was running ahead of the churches on the basis of their present guidelines by doing phase 3 work when the relationship with another church may only be at a phase two level. Changes to the present guidelines were formulated and approved to be passed on to Synod 2007.

Your delegate, in his remarks, expressed deep appreciation for the brethren in the Eastern Classis of the URCNA and expressed the willingness of the RCUS to be present among them as often as possible.

Respectfully,
Rev. Ron Potter

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

D. Missions Committee

Dear Brothers:

Your Committee conducted visitations at Lombard, IL, Bella Vista, AR, and Honesdale, PA. The time in Honesdale was to fulfill the Classis mandate of 2006 “to assess and evaluate the work and report back to the Spring Classis of 2007”. The other works received mission funds from Classis and Synod throughout the past year. Golden Valley, MN also received such funding, but since it is not requesting further funding no visitation was done. For seven months the attempt was made to develop a Chicago hearing mission also. A summary of visits and developments during the year follows:

Golden Valley, MN

Classis certainly has much to thank God for in the establishment and growth of Redeemer RCUS. At the end of this month, the congregation will be totally self-supporting, and is to be commended for its diligence in establishing a Reformed church. In less than 8 years of financial support being provided, the congregation has grown to over 150 total members. The congregation also has properties worth over \$1,000,000, on which they owe less than half that amount. The time and commitment

involved have been greatly blessed by the Lord, and we trust that their good work in promoting the gospel will continue to be blessed.

The congregation continues to consider starting another mission church in the area. There has been indication that financial support for such a mission is probably the main limitation to proceeding at this point. Your committee believes that our denomination must be aggressive in missions when there are many advantages, such as in metropolitan areas having other established RCUS congregations. These can give oversight and even start a new work with a core of their own members. This is what Redeemer has been planning to do for several years. Your committee believes that the time may be right to proceed with a proposal on such within a year. Therefore, we are recommending that the Classis missions guideline not be reduced, even if there are reductions for other works, in preparation for a new mission work.

Lombard, IL

On Jan. 14, 2006, 9 of the 11 members of Lombard New Life Deaf Community Church voted to proceed toward RCUS membership. Since that time, the teaching of a series of 14 lessons was completed by Rev. Saavalainen, on topics that the missions committee called for, as essential to preparation for membership. In the summer of 2006, services at the Moody Church location were discontinued since Rev. Saavalainen believed that acceptance of reformed doctrine and the RCUS would not spread there beyond our members at the time. Those members, 4 communicants and 2 baptized children, thereafter attended at Lombard.

On Oct. 5, 2006, CEC Missions Committee members, Revs. Harvey Opp and Kyle Sorensen, and Elder Jim Bruckschen, of the Synod Missions Committee, met with Rev. Saavalainen at his home. Rev. Kevin Hamilton and Elder Chris Pennington of the Danville Consistory were also present. There was a review of the work over the 14 months that Rev. Saavalainen had been there. The teaching since March was discussed, and Jari had recently decided to go further in depth on TULIP. We thought this was a good step, since the lessons completed before were only meant to be a brief survey approach, as we had said the previous year.

Then we met at the Lombard church with several RCUS members individually. Appreciation for the fellowship and learning was expressed, but some disappointments also. One RCUS member had reported he would move and return to the Moody Church, since hearing aids would enable his participation there. The committee was able to talk with this member later, but could not convince him to do otherwise. We had sent questions for all the congregation regarding reformed doctrine, and government, infant baptism, our creeds, and distinctives. When we met with the congregation and questions on the same lines were asked, it became apparent that a number of them did not have the understanding or acceptance that we had thought from their answers. So, we explained that good understanding was needed before anyone would be able to join rightly, and this seemed to be well accepted. We also urged that further teaching on our doctrine and on infant baptism be done in the congregation and with individuals as needed. Finally, we saw that there were matters where reconciliation was needed, and urged that the Danville brothers mediate in such. This mediation was carried out that same evening.

Since our deaf brothers have recently made known their intentions to leave the RCUS, it seems apparent that the Lombard work will not continue toward the RCUS. This was a surprise to your committee, and further discussion about it will be left until the time at Classis.

Bella Vista, AR

Rev. Harvey Opp and Elder Jim Bruckschen from Manitowoc, (who is on the SHMC) met with Rev. Brice and the congregation of Grace Reformed Chapel on November 27th, 2006. Rev. De Boer and Elders Tom Renner and Jerry Kropp were also present to visit on behalf of the Garner Consistory. Twelve adults from the chapel attended. Six of these represented the four member families at the time. One other adult has since joined. In the past year there was a disappointing reduction in that four member families left the congregation. Various reasons were given. Discouragement at the slow growth of the group was commonly stated by those who left. A positive thing is that three of the remaining families are younger, and have children. Also, the financial giving of the group has remained at about the same level.

In this meeting, questions were reviewed which were sent to them beforehand. Unity in the group was expressed and much appreciation for Rev. Brice. That the preaching and worship were according to the Scriptures was commonly mentioned, as was gratitude for the Reformed doctrine being taught. Rev. Brice said the love of the people was a great blessing, and this reality was evident to us. Two families that have attended about a year are from RPCNA background, and to this point have not been convinced to join. One other couple has since left, being of Baptist and dispensational mindset.

We responded to questions about what would be necessary to organize as a congregation. The commitment to continue working through questions, being more self-sustaining, maturity and preparedness for church officers, and a more unanimous conviction to become an RCUS congregation were things we said would need to be seen.

The three men of the steering committee were then met with separately. Reasons were discussed as to why new members have come and why some have left. Some of the RCUS distinctives have not been agreed with by those having come from other reformed backgrounds. The chapel has had more visitors since returning to Bentonville for services last fall, meeting currently in the La Quinta Hotel. Means of outreach were discussed. These have included newspaper and radio ads, mailings, phone calls, brochures for 'Welcome Wagon', a reformed conference last fall, and fellowship meals. There was good coverage on the reformed conference afterward in newspapers, and several visitors came. So, increased spending on conferences and possible connection with reformed programs on the radio was desired. Approximately \$10,000 was spent on all the above outreach in 2006. The steering committee was asked to determine what kind of non-reformed people in the area they want to reach and the best ways to reach them. With such a plan in mind, further increase of outreach funding could be sought. At this point, your committee recommends only a slight reduction in Classis support (less than 3%), since Synod support has already decreased 10% for 2007. Prayers for this work in Arkansas are greatly desired.

Honesdale, PA

Since your committee is recommending that Honesdale, PA be designated a mission work of Classis, the entire report of the members conducted the visitation of that work is included:

"On October 23-24, 2006, the Revs. Dan Schnabel, Kyle Sorensen, and Elder Bob Smith, visited Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA. Classis decided in the Spring of 2006 to send a committee to "assess and evaluate" the work. Your visitation committee was pleased to be the first official delegation of Classis to assess this work. It is our desire that Classis declare something about the work, its status, and its relationship to the Classis. Before our visit, the only other contact was through the Napoleon congregation and a 2004 visit of the Missions Committee to assist the Napoleon consistory in its care for Pastor Ron Potter and the Napoleon members who live in the Honesdale area.

Rev. Potter gave us a driving tour of the area and its new upscale housing developments. The entire region is quite decentralized, with many smaller towns scattered around. The meeting facility (Classis is assisting in the rental costs) is in a good location on a highway with great visibility due to the large and attractive signs they have installed. This location is at the heart of a 30 mile radius wherein there is no Reformed witness to the gospel. Yet it is also at the heart of a present population of around 50,000. This population (of Wayne County) has grown by 5% in the past 5 years, compared to a 1.2% growth for the rest of Pennsylvania. It seems that the main prospects for new members in the mission work come from the new migration from New York state, and elsewhere. The industry in the area is becoming more diverse, with home-based computer technologies, paper industry, medical technologies, and the vast range of housing industry and their support systems due to the building. There is lower unemployment in the area at this time due to this economic boom. The Pocono mountain region, where the church is located, is also a center for tourism and resorts.

The meeting facility itself is a huge improvement over past meeting facilities. The large room allows seating for 40-50 people maximum, which would allow for some growth. There is a small book table and several literature racks, as well as a single bathroom. There are no kitchen facilities or Sunday School rooms. However, Rev. Potter reports that he has checked into renting the office space next door for Sunday School rooms if necessary, and the owner is willing.

Before meeting with the Steering Committee members, we met with a man who is in membership training. He has three young children, and has been attending for two years. We were able to answer some of his questions, and he expressed a strong commitment to the Reformed faith and to the Heritage Reformed Chapel. It was encouraging to see that he had been received well by other members, and could testify that any visitors are always welcomed heartily by all the members.

After a gracious home-cooked meal provided by one of the ladies, we met with each steering committee member separately for a few minutes, and then we met with the full steering committee and Rev. Potter. It became very clear to us that the level of commitment to the Reformed faith and to establishing a congregation in Northeast Pennsylvania is extremely high. When we asked if they would be willing to relocate

their meeting facilities or even their families to maintain a Reformed witness, they said they were open to the Lord's leading, and could see that where they are now is definitely the result of the Lord's wise and mysterious providence.

We discussed for some time the relationship between the Classis and a mission work. We asked them what they anticipated and/or expected from the Classis. They answered that they didn't expect anything, and didn't feel like they deserved support from Classis. They said it was very hard for them to ask for financial support to rent the building. They think that, Lord willing, they will be able to return a portion of the funds Classis has approved sending in 2006. They do anticipate needing some help with the rental costs for the next year or two. They do not desire to be a charity case, but are firmly committed to tithing, and are working very hard to remain self-supporting. Their resolve on this issue impressed the committee.

They do pray for the works of Classis and Synod, and view themselves as members of the RCUS. We do not see any spirit of independentism, but a desire to be under Biblical oversight and mutual submission. In fact, they expressed a firm resolve that the presbyterian form of church government is Biblical and necessary. They have seen first hand the benefits of proper accountability and church discipline, and they know the patience of faith and soul that God works in hard times.

The following day, we met with Rev. Potter in his home to discuss his pastoral work among the saints there. He also expresses the deepest conviction that God has a remnant whom He is drawing to Himself, and it is a privilege to preach and pastor and wait on the Lord to bring the increase. During the wait, Potter is fully prepared to continue tent-making with his antique furniture restoration business. He has recently made some good connections and sales which are likely to bring in even more business. Potter's pastoral load remains full, as he preaches once each Lord's Day, teaches a weekly Adult Sunday school, teaches a mid-week Bible study and prayer time, and leads a men's Bible Study twice a month. The topics and Scriptures of his teaching and preaching plan were discussed.

The statistical information for Heritage Reformed Chapel is currently the same as reported in the 2006 Abstract: 6 families, comprised of 11 communicants and 5 children, making 16 baptized members. However, as was mentioned one more family of 4 is in membership training. Also, two more families (each with middle school and teenage children) plan to move to the area from Maine (within a year) and join Heritage Reformed Chapel. They visited the Church in early November to acquaint themselves with the church and with the area. A three-year budget was provided to the committee and is found in order. Some assistance with this budget has been provided by the overseeing Consistory in Napoleon, OH.

According to this assessment and evaluation, including the minimal amount of financial aid requested and the prospect for 3 new families in the coming year, it is our recommendation that Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA, become a mission work of Covenant East Classis."

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Kyle Sorensen
Rev. Dan Schnabel
Elder Bob Smith

Chicago Hearing Mission

From January until August 2006, the establishment of a hearing mission work in the west suburbs of Chicago was pursued. The Manitowoc consistory oversaw this endeavor. The plan was to teach a Bible study at the home of Mike and Carol Brabo twice each month. Rev. Sorensen and Rev. Opp began this rotation of teaching. Elder Brabo also showed a reformed video and discussed such on occasion. However, some of the original participants, and others who had expressed interest, did not follow through. Some went on to established churches, and did not continue with the study. One couple moved from the area. A web site for this Reformed Chapel of Fox Valley was developed. Some neighborhood canvassing by youth from Manitowoc was done. However, with the summer scheduling conflicts it became apparent that a consistent group was not being formed. Having a study on a weekly basis would have been a benefit, yet with the distance for the teachers, etc., that did not develop. At this point, the web site continues to be maintained, but the work is on hold.

Deaf Reformed Ministries

Deaf Reformed Ministries again received \$2,000 in funds from Classis and the same from Synod. Director Kenton Hoxie submitted the following report: For 2006, there was four local conferences (Kansas City, MO; State College, PA; Houston, TX; and Sacramento, CA) and a national conference in Danville, KY. The total cost for all these five conferences was \$7,628.92. Ten percent of the funds from Classis and Synod went to the DRM's administrative support (\$400) and the rest (\$3,600) went to the above events. Let me know if you have any questions.
In Christ,
Kenton

The Missions Committee brings the following recommendations:

1. That Classis provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$960 per month, for a total of \$11,520 through February 2008. [Note: Synod support has already been reduced to \$10,080 for 2007, a 10% reduction from 2006.]
2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas, with \$8,640 in fiscal year 2008, (another 10% reduction of the original support).
3. That Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA, be designated a mission work of Covenant East Classis.
4. That Classis provide Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA with \$5,500 from April 2007 through March 2008, for rental costs, if needed.
5. That Classis designate a \$25 guideline, available for future mission work.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Harvey Opp, chairman
Rev. Dan Schnabel
Rev. Kyle Sorensen
Elder Bob Smith
Elder Tom Renner

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

E. Publications Committee

No Permanent Publications Committee was formed for 2006.

Reports of Officers

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

Esteemed Brothers:

What is the state of the Church as found in the congregations of Covenant East Classis? In what general direction are we headed? Are we being faithful to our covenant together as churches as expressed in our Confessions and the Constitution? If our forefathers could visit us, would they recognize our labors and faith and hope and love as that of the Church of all ages? Are we genuinely seeking to bring the one true Gospel of our Lord and Savior, and holding out our confession of faith to the age and society in which we are living? These questions I have before me as I review the reports of the committees and the parochial reports of the pastors of our congregations. And while these reports are surely not exhaustive expressions of the state of the churches, I believe they provide useful insight into answering the above questions with some certainty.

As I review the reports of the pastors on their own labor and the condition of the congregations they serve, they speak with a united voice in the desire to be known by the marks of a true Church: the pure preaching of the doctrine of the Gospel, the maintaining of the pure administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church discipline.

It is always encouraging to see that our pastors and elders and deacons see it as a matter of first importance that diligent pastoral work is our unchanging responsibility. All of the pastors speak about preaching and teaching, visitation, and catechization, efforts of evangelism, struggles with discipline as matters that occupy their time and labor. I hope we do not grow bored with hearing about such things year after year in our classis meetings. For if the marks of the true church are not present among us, we have no right to call ourselves a church at all, no matter how large or wealthy or influential or successful we may be.

It is also encouraging to hear that the members of the churches live, by and large, with a desire to be known by the marks of Christians. To be sure we read reports of great infirmities that remain among us all. But the fact that faith in Christ and the battle against our infirmities is manifest among us is a testimony that the Spirit is bearing fruit among us. Truly, the Lord has not abandoned His work, but is governing, preserving and increasing His Church.

I believe our forefathers would indeed recognize in us the same faith and labor and hope that our God gave them. I think they would recognize us as a truly Catholic Church.

The report of the permanent Ecumenicity Committee expresses a sincere desire to maintain our fraternal relationships with those denominations of like faith. It is

regrettable, to my mind, that in many cases we are so far removed from many of our fraternal churches that we are not able to enjoy their fellowship and real knowledge of them to a greater degree. However, there is a concerted effort to at least be present at and extend greetings and exchange information with many of the regional assemblies of fraternal churches. In this our classis expresses a desire to cultivate a lively connection with the Catholic Church.

The Home Missions Committee has been very active and diligent in their task to oversee and advise the mission works of the classis. They report with thanksgiving that Redeemer Reformed Church is now able to go off the list of mission churches, as they are self-governing and self-supporting, they also report Redeemer's desire to be self-propagating. This would be the "trifecta" —in a good sense—of goals for mission works. As an aside, I would like to mention that regular, brief reports about the classis mission works would be useful to all the congregations so that we might be able to pray more intelligently about their needs.

It is clear to me in reading the Mission Committee's report that significant challenges are before us in the area of mission work. The current mission congregations are very small and from all appearances, likely a long way from being self-supporting and self-governing. As a classis, we have also lost an opportunity to spread the gospel in the leaving of one of our mission efforts, the Deaf Churches. The efforts this past year to gather a core group in Chicago has not born fruit. Do not misunderstand me, I am not suggesting we give up, or resort to hand wringing. What I would suggest is that before we launch into further mission works, we carefully analyze our missions efforts in the past with an eye to what we can learn from what has worked and what has not worked.

There is an old Dakota Indian proverb that says when the horse you are riding dies under you, the best strategy is to dismount. That's obvious, you say. Yet, too often, I think instead of the obvious, we might tend to think that we should change its feed, or hit it harder because it is no longer going fast enough, or change the saddle, or appoint a committee to advise its rider, or bring in a new rider, or provide added funding to increase the dead horse's performance. Our challenge in the area of missions is to ask: are we missing some obvious things? I do not get the sense that we are drawing back from the desire to do the work of evangelism and missions. But I do get the sense that we not all sure how to proceed from where we are.

Ours is not the first generation to ask the question how do we go about this work of spreading the gospel to our nation. But surely, we would be foolish if we did not ask the question with an eye to doing it with the challenges we face in our moment in history, and with our resources, in our region of the country, in accordance with biblical principles and convictions. All in all, it is apparent to me that our classis demonstrates a real desire to see, and labor for, the extension of the Catholic Church.

Our Candidates and Credentials Committee report is ominous to me in one respect: that we have no students studying for the ministry from our classis. Our Lord said, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few, therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

I would be remiss in my report if I did not also bring to mind a fellow harvest laborer, Rev. Chester Ploeger and his wife Grace. Let us remember to pray for our

brother and sister as they deal with a number of physical infirmities in their advanced age.

And finally, I must note with sadness that our Deaf brothers and sisters in Danville, KY and Columbia, MD have taken steps to withdraw themselves from our classis, ending some fifteen years of connection, in the case of Rev. Saavalainen and some of the members of the group in Maryland. This move to withdraw from us came as a surprise to us since at no point did these brothers, the pastors and elders, approach classis with the concerns leading them to sever their relationship with us. Their stated reasons for leaving are: objection to strict subscription to the Confessions; unwillingness to hold their members to the whole content of the Confessions, which they believe hampers their ability to evangelize; and, what they perceive to be insurmountable issues over Language/Cultural barriers. With regard to the Confessions and subscription, some of the office bearers among them have come to the conviction that the Apostle's Creed's "Descent into Hell" clause, and how it is interpreted by the Catechism, is wrong. Others have a concern that they cannot adequately hold to or explain to other deaf people how the statement in Q&A #37 that Christ "bore...the wrath of God against the sins of the whole human race" is consistent with Calvinism. It is the conviction of their officers that the Deaf Churches will be hampered from their desire to gather together Deaf believers into a Church which holds to a strict subscription to the Reformed Confessions, since many of their Deaf colleagues in ministry and their congregation hold to "believer baptism only." With regard to Church membership, they are convinced that since it is the duty of all men to join and unite themselves with the church (see Belgic Confession article 28) it is wrong to require members to hold to the extent of the Reformed faith. As for Language/Cultural barriers, though they acknowledge our efforts to work through these challenges, nevertheless, they feel that after trying to overcome the challenges for some years, it is apparent to them that there will never be real equality and mutual understanding of each other. They also claim that many in the deaf community will never join a Church in which "hearing" people are leaders, since it is the experience of deaf people that such ties generally lead to abuse, or leave them in inferior positions. Rather than continue in such a Church with these challenges, they feel it is time they leave and start a new denomination, a Deaf denomination.

This development of the loss of our Deaf Churches for the stated reasons constitutes a real challenge to our classis. On our part, we must ask ourselves how this growing divide happened without our seeing it? What could we have done better to bridge these barriers of Language/Culture? It is also a challenge because it seems the way of things in North America that various Ethnic, Cultural, and Language groups rarely ever overcome the real challenges of our differences. Rather, we tend to allow a willful segregation of groups according to tastes driven or shaped by ethnic and cultural differences. Yet, NA is increasingly diverse in ethnic groups from every nation. This separate existence seems to fly in the face of the Bible's teaching that Christ broke down the wall of separation, having made us one (Ephesians 2:14). As we look to the calling to make disciples of all nations, are we to acquiesce to the tastes and comfort levels of each one with his "own people?" Is it the case that only Hispanics can evangelize and minister to Hispanics, and only Deaf people are to evangelize and

minister to Deaf people, and so forth? How can we as a classis become wiser about dealing with groups ethnically and culturally different than we are through this experience? I believe we ought to linger over that question, for I am certain this difficulty will not go away. We cannot ignore the diverse population we face at our doorsteps.

At the same time, the problem of the departure of our Deaf brothers and sisters, according to their stated reasons for leaving, raises the issue of thorough discipleship. Both for them and us. What are the implications for diversity, to our minds and theirs, that discipleship is the calling of sinners out of darkness, from whatever tribe one is a part, unto Jesus, Who is the Truth. There is no such thing in the Bible as "tribal" or "ethnic" Christianity. We are never, as Christians, to define ourselves first by our "tribe;" rather we are defined by what we are in Christ, Who is the Truth. In the face of this creeping tribalism in NA, we are going to have to teach and disciple carefully with the hope that our churches will more and more truly reflect the faces of our communities.

We confess and believe there is one Holy, Catholic Church, which Christ is gathering by His Spirit and Word, from every nation, tribe, peoples, and tongues. Certainly it should be our expectation that our churches will reflect the diversity of that great Church as we seek to make disciples of our nation.

It is my conclusion that our Covenant God is blessing Covenant East Classis. There is clear evidence that our congregations and pastors are solidly committed to the keep and spreading of His word. We are not without great challenges and trials. Yet our Lord Himself warned us that in this world we would have tribulations. At the same time, He has overcome the world, and so we are to labor with good cheer. "May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 5:10,11.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. James Sawtelle

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Standing Committee on Missions and was to be printed in the Abstract of the Minutes and submitted to the *Reformed Herald*.

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Dear brothers in Christ,

Following the 2006 Spring Classis Meeting the minutes of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis and one special meeting were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder with all reports, overtures, and relevant information.

The 2006 Abstract of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis was prepared and copies were printed and distributed to the churches at Synod in compliance with the synodical 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 the overtures from the Covenant East Classis that were subsequently acted upon by the synod.

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

Your clerk did receive all of the statistical and financial information from the churches in good order this year with a few notable exceptions. There were only a few minor errors discovered in the compiling of the statistics that were then corrected.

No necrologies have been received at this writing. Any necrologies for the 2007 abstract need to be submitted as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Jeff De Boer

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee of Synod reports that there is a matter requiring a Classis vote to amend the Constitution. This appears on page 72 of the Abstract of the 260th Meeting of the Synod of the RCUS. In the first sentence of Article 41 the two uses of “four” are to be changed to “two” according to the recommendation passed by Synod. The action of Synod is as follows: That Article 41 of the RCUS Constitution be amended to read as follows: (The first sentence of the article would read) “If two ministers and two elders of the church, representing two different Classes, present to....(the rest would remain the same).

Grounds:

a. The new required number of office bearers necessary to seek the disqualification of a professor would better reflect the size and make up of the number of ministers and elders of the denomination.

b. The new requirement about those raising concerns would ensure that a greater representation of the synod be expressed if a charge against a professor is to be investigated.

Clerks are asked to remind members of their own Classis to check which Synodical Committees they may be on so they can be active in the preparation of their respective committee reports. These are printed in the Synod Abstract p. 18.

Delegates are reminded that the 261st Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS meets May 21-24, 2007 at Northland RCUS in Kansas City, MO. A circular is forthcoming from the Synod which is asking that congregations pay for the lodging costs for delegates from their local congregation. The cost is \$79 per night (double or single). Delegates need to make their own reservations.

In the Lord’s service,

Paul H. Treick, Stated Clerk

for the Executive Committee of Synod

Classis Action: The body voted without dissent to ratify the amendment of Article 41 of the RCUS Constitution. The report was also adopted.

D. Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer of Classis, Elder Jim Drewes, presented the following report.

Balance 2/1/06	27,453.16
General Fund Balance 2/1/06	9,661.76
Receipts	9,276.18
Expenses	9,177.38
Balance 1/31/07	9,760.56
Missions Fund Balance 2/1/06	17,219.40
Receipts	34,818.00
Expenses	36,742.18
Balance 1/31/07	15,295.22
<i>note: this balance includes 8,360 designated for new mission works</i>	
Benevolence Fund Balance 2/1/0693.00
Receipts	17,445.20
Expenses	17,440.00
Balance 1/31/07	98.20
Student Aid Fund Balance 2/1/06	479.00
Receipts	0.00
Expenses	0.00
Balance 1/31/07	479.00
Balance 1/31/07	25,632.98

Detailed Income Report

	<u>Members</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Benevolence</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bentonville, AR	15	150.00	630.00	232.00	1,012.50	1,097.20
Garner, IA	107	1,070.00	4,494.00	1,658.50	7,222.50	7,222.50
Danville, KY	15	150.00	630.00	232.50	1,012.50	1,012.50
Columbia, MD	16	160.00	672.00	248.00	1,080.00	1,080.00
Golden Valley, MN	82	820.00	3,444.00	1,271.00	5,535.50	5,535.00
Hamburg, MN	240	2,400.00	10,080.00	3,720.00	16,200.00	16,200.00
Kansas City, MO	47	470.00	1,974.00	728.50	3,172.50	3,172.50
Napoleon, OH	67	670.00	2,814.00	1,0385.50	4,522.50	4,522.50
<u>Manitowoc, WI</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>2,400.00</u>	<u>10,080.00</u>	<u>3,720.00</u>	<u>16,200.00</u>	<u>17,415.00</u>
Totals	829	8,290.00	34,818.00	12,849.50	55,957.50	55,653.20
Other income						3,463.90
Interest and other Income						22.38
Income Total						59,139.38

Detailed Expense Report

General Fund Expenses

Spring Classis Meeting	5,311.90
Clerk Supplies/Printing	574.53
Travel	390.95
Honorarium	500.00
Transfer to Benevolence	2,400.00
Total	9,177.38

Mission Fund Expenses

Grace Reformed Chapel	11,844.00
Redeemer Reformed Church	3,060.00
Deaf Reformed Ministries	2,000.00
Chicago Hearing Work	1,600.00
Rev. J. Saavalainen support	15,000.00
Travel	3,238.18
Total	36,742.18

Benevolence

Rev. Kevin Hamilton	5,640.00
HRC, Honesdale, PA	7,000.00
Transfer from Benevolence	2,400.00
Offering	2,400.00
Total	17,440.00

Expense Total	60,959.56
Total Classis Income vs. Expenses for 2006	-1,820.18

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Drewes, 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: The classis took note of each report.

Constitutional Questions to the Elders

The President addressed the questions found in article 81 of the RCUS Constitution to the elder delegates of each congregation. 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 Kansas City and Hamburg which said "No".

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."

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

All answered "Yes."

6. Are the Church records properly kept?

All answered "Yes."

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

All answered "Yes."

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

All answered “Yes” except Napoleon which said, “Potter continues to perform outside work.”

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).

Classis action: Take note.

Reports from Classis Delegates to Fraternal Bodies

These reports were included with the report of the Interchurch Relations Committee (pgs. 16-19 in this volume).

Classis Action: Take note.

Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Bodies and Visitors

Rev. James Slaa addressed the body on behalf of Classis Ontario West of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Afterward there was a time for questions. Rev. Potter then responded on behalf of the body.

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. We recommend that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS to provide benevolent aid to the Rev. Mr. Ron Potter in the amount of \$4,500.00 for the next Synodical year (at \$4500.00) for insurance premiums and other related expenses.
2. Referred to Standing Missions Committee.
3. We recommend that Covenant East Classis overture Synod of the RCUS for benevolent aid for Rev. and Mrs. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1,200 per month.
4. We recommend that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for benevolent aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000.00 per month.

Respectfully submitted,
Syms, J. Sawtelle, Stuebbe

B. Excuses

1. We recommend that the excuse for Elder Steve Stuebbe from all sessions of classis

on Tuesday, March 6, be granted.
Syms, J. Sawtelle, Stuebbe

C. Finances

1. The Treasurer’s books have been audited and found in order.
2. Classis instructs the Treasurer to transfer \$1,063.00 from the General Fund to the Benevolence Fund. This was the amount left over in the special collection for benevolent aid for Rev. Kevin Hamilton.
3. Classis pay the interpreter, Rev. Chuck Snyder, \$150.
4. That travel expenses be paid for the following amounts:

Daniel Schnabel:	665.20
Ron Potter:	294.80
Kyle Sorensen:	349.00
George Syms	719.20
Wesley Brice	384.60
Jim Sawtelle	745.00
Tom Renner	302.00
Jeff De Boer	314.00
5. That the guidelines for per communicant giving for 2007 be as follows:

General Fund	12.00
Benevolence Fund	0.00
Missions Fund	48.00
<u>Student Aid Fund</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total	60.00
6. That \$20 (rather than \$18) of the Missions Fund guidelines be set aside for future works.
Sorensen, Chandler, Renner

E. Judicial

1. Concerning Overture 1, request for advice: We encourage the Spiritual Council to recommit for another vote with no abstentions.
2. We remind the Spiritual Council that article 114 of the RCUS Constitution allows discipline in the form of admonition, censure, erasure of name, suspension, deposition, excommunication and restoration.
3. Concerning overtures 2, 3, 4: Due to the decision of our deaf brothers and the congregations they shepherd, sorrowfully we have no option apart from accepting their resignations and their request for their separation from the RCUS. This includes the removal of Rev. Kevin Hamilton and Rev. Jari Saavalainen from the roll of ministers and the removal of the Deaf Reformed Churches of Danville and Columbia from the roll of the churches of the Covenant East Classis.
4. Concerning the request for a public statement [about the departure of the deaf churches]: “It is with heavy hearts that we inform the members of the RCUS that our deaf office bearers and congregations have chosen to leave the RCUS. This was because of their disagreement with the creeds concerning the phrase “descended into hell” as well as how members submit to the creeds. They also

cited communication and cultural differences between the deaf and hearing cultures. No opportunity for debate was given by the deaf brothers prior to their decision to leave.”

Schnabel, Potter, Brice, D. Sawtelle, Renner, Honeck

F. Minutes of Synod

Your committee received no business and therefore conducted none.

De Boer, Sorensen, Kroells

G. Missions

1. That Classis provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$960 per month, for a total of \$11,520 through February 2008 [Note: Synodical support has already been reduced to \$10,080 for 2007, a 10% reduction for 2006].
2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas, with \$8,640 in fiscal year 2008 [Note: this is another 10% reduction of the original support amount].
3. That classis provide \$4,500 for a summer intern at Grace Reformed Chapel.
4. That Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA be designated a mission work of Covenant East Classis.
5. That Classis provide Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA with \$5,500 from April 2007 through March, 2008 for rental costs, as needed.
6. That the Standing Nominations Committee appoint a special committee to visit with representatives of the Presbytery of Sovereign Grace Church, regarding the RCUS and possible affiliation with us.
7. That the Permanent Missions Committee develop proactive guidelines for mission works and report back to the 2008 spring classis meeting.
8. That Classis designate a \$5 guideline, available for future mission work.

Renner, Syms, Stuebbe, Opp

H. Nominations

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

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

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

Interchurch Relations: Sorensen, Potter, Brice, Stuebbe

Missions: Opp, Schnabel, Renner, Kroells, Honeck

Special Committee [to visit the Presbytery of Sovereign Grace Church]: Potter, Syms, J. Sawtelle, D. Sawtelle

J. Sawtelle, Opp, Honeck, Chandler

I. Overtures

1. Regarding overture #1, request for advice from Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church of Manitowoc, WI, be referred to Standing Judicial.
2. Regarding overture #2, resignation of Rev. Kevin Hamilton, be referred to Standing Judicial.

3. Regarding overture #3, congregational vote of the Deaf Reformed Church of Danville, KY to leave the RCUS, be referred to Standing Judicial.
4. Regarding overture #4, congregational vote of the Deaf Reformed Church of Relay, MD to leave the RCUS and the resignation of Rev. Jari Saavalainen, be referred to Standing Judicial.
5. Regarding overture #5, request for benevolent aid for Rev. Ron Potter, be referred to Standing Benevolences.
6. Regarding overture #5, request for rental assistance from Honesdale, PA, be referred to Standing Missions.
7. Regarding overture #6, communication from Presbytery of Sovereign Grace Church, be referred to Standing Missions.
8. Regarding overture #11, request for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance, be referred to Standing Benevolences.
9. Regarding overture #9, request for ministerial aid for Rev. Chester Ploeger, be referred to Standing Benevolences.
10. Regarding overture #10, request for intern for Bentonville, AR, be referred to Standing Missions.
11. Regarding overture #8, request for excuse from Elder Steve Stuebbe, be referred to Standing Excuses.

Potter, D. Sawtelle, Kroells

J. Services

1. That Classis requests the following note of thanks in the bulletin of Peace Reformed Church this coming Lord’s Day.
“Covenant East Classis takes this opportunity to express thanks for your gracious hospitality. Your provision of excellent meals was deeply appreciated. Your care for us was exceptional. May our Lord richly bless you for all your labors on our behalf.”

Brice, Honeck, Kroells, Schnabel

Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation to Hosting Congregation

An expression of thanks to the Napoleon 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.

Appendix #1: Statistical Information Covering 2006

Adjournment

The 22nd annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 3:26 p.m. on Wednesday, March 7, 2007 until the time of the next stated meeting of classis.

A. Roll Call

The final roll call showed 8 ministers and 6 elders present.

B. Devotions

Elder Mark Honeck led the body in prayer and read from 1 Corinthians 13:3-13 and 12:1-6.

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.

Category	Columbia, MD	Danville, KY	Garner, IA	Golden Valley, MN	Hamburg, MN	Kansas City, MO
1. No. Of Elders	2	0	3	3	3	3
2. No. Of Deacons	1	0	3	4	3	4
3. Comm. Last Year	15	0	122	82	240	47
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	1	0	3	6	2	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	3	0	1
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	0	2	2	2	4
7. Tot. Received	1	0	5	11	4	5
8. Tot. Old/New Mbrs.	16	0	127	93	244	52
9. Lost by Dismissal	2	0	7	0	12	0
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	0	0	0	4	4	0
11. Lost by Death	0	0	1	0	5	0
12. Total Lost	2	0	8	4	21	0
13. Comm. this Year	14	0	119	89	223	52
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	4	0	22	70	33	33
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	18	0	141	159	256	85
16. No. of Families	6	0	68	43	141	27
17. No. of S. S. Child.	2	0	19	63	30	27
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	0	2	12	3	6
20. Total Baptisms	0	0	2	12	3	6
21. No. L.S. Served	17	0	110	89	196	52
22. Times. L.S. Served	2	0	9	6	9	6
23. Regular Offerings	19,684	0	156,974	221,858	157,740	150,559
24. Special Offerings	3,875	0	9,050	12,166	735	8,197
25. Other Sources	0	0	3,602	9,188	53,661	570
26. Total Receipts	23,559	0	169,626	243,212	212,136	159,326
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.	3,356	0	24,848	17,330	43,648	9,858
28. Giv. to Clas. Guidlin.	1,080	0	8,236	5,535	16,200	3,173
29. RCUS non-budget	0	0	8,883	11,148	100	2,535
30. Non-RCUS causes	600	0	2,150	1,018	1,179	3,259
31. Other Expenses	15,561	0	112,199	202,413	141,503	127,453
32. Total Expenses	20,597	0	156,316	237,444	202,630	146,278
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	0	0	750,000	800,000	750,000	1,500,000
34. Val. of Parsonage	0	0	125,000	280,000	250,000	200,000
35. Impr. on Property	0	0	1,491	33,464	73,121	38,000
36. Property Debt	0	0	0	459,838	0	404,039
37. Debt Paid Last Yr.	0	0	0	43,000	0	34,526
38. Syn. Giving /Com.	224	0	204	211	182	210
39. Class. Giving /Com.	72	0	68	68	68	68
40. RCUS Giving /Com.	296	0	344	415	250	331

N.b.: Hamburg membership statistics include members who were lost prior to this year.

Appendix #2
Standing Rules of the Covenant East Classis

Manitowac WI	Napoleon, OH	Total	stat. inf. for mission works included in super. cong.	Bentonville, AR (Garner)	Honesdale, PA (Napoleon)	Chicago, IL (Danville)
4	3	21	1. No. Of Elders	0	0	0
3	3	21	2. No. Of Deacons	0	0	0
240	67	813	3. Comm. Last Year	15	11	0
2	3	17	4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	0	0
0	0	4	5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0
0	0	10	6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	0	0
2	3	31	7. Tot. Received	0	0	0
242	70	844	8. Tot. Old/New Mbrs.	15	11	0
2	0	23	9. Lost by Dismissal	6	0	0
8	3	19	10. Lost by Era/Dis.	0	0	0
6	0	12	11. Lost by Death	0	0	0
16	3	54	12. Total Lost	6	0	0
226	67	790	13. Comm. this Year	9	11	0
25	19	206	14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	1	5	0
251	86	996	15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	10	16	0
132	34	451	16. No. of Families	4	6	0
19	13	173	17. No. of S. S. Child.	6	0	0
0	0	0	18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0
3	1	27	19. Infant Baptisms	0	0	0
3	1	27	20. Total Baptisms	0	0	0
221	65	750	21. No. L.S. Served	15	10	0
4	12	48	22. Times. L.S. Served	4	12	0
149,668	112,083	968,566	23. Regular Offerings	50,146	25,923	0
1,766	5,283	41,072	24. Special Offerings	4,450	0	0
19,962	17,851	104,834	25. Other Sources	24,011	15,143	0
171,396	135,217	1,114,472	26. Total Receipts	78,607	41,066	0
51,679	14,508	165,227	27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.	1,573	0	0
16,200	4,523	54,947	28. Giv. to Clas. Guidlin.	1,013	0	0
1,176	730	24,572	29. RCUS non-budget	0	0	0
2,326	7,532	18,064	30. Non-RCUS causes	0	0	0
98,624	102,711	800,464	31. Other Expenses	35,165	39,064	0
170,005	130,004	1,063,274	32. Total Expenses	37,751	39,064	0
780,000	200,000	4,780,000	33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	0	0	0
170,000	90,000	1,115,000	34. Val. of Parsonage	0	0	0
0	4,151	150,227	35. Impr. on Property	0	0	0
0	0	863,877	36. Property Debt	0	0	0
0	0	77,526	37. Debt Paid Last Yr.	0	0	0
215	217	203	38. Syn. Giving /Com.	105	0	0
68	68	68	39. Class. Giving /Com.	68	0	0
288	295	271	40. RCUS Giving /Com.	172	0	0

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. If possible, overtures with their supporting grounds shall be submitted to the clerk of classis at least three weeks before the scheduled meeting for circulation among the churches of classis. [2006]

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.