

2009  
Abstract  
of the Minutes



of the  
**COVENANT EAST CLASSIS**  
Reformed Church in the United States

Special Fall Meeting  
October 27-28, 2008  
Peace Reformed Church  
Napoleon, Ohio

24<sup>th</sup> Annual Session  
March 3 - 4, 2009  
Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church  
Manitowoc, Wisconsin

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

**OFFICERS  
of Covenant East Classis**

President	Rev. Ron Potter
Vice President	Rev. Dan Schnabel
Stated Clerk	Rev. Kyle Sorensen
Treasurer	Elder Jim Drewes

**CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING**

General Fund	2.00
Missions Fund	60.00*
Benevolence Fund	9.00
Student Aid Fund	<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$71.00</b> (per communicant member)

\*\$30 per communicant member is set aside for future mission works

**CLASSIS TREASURER:**

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

**PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES**

<b>Executive:</b>	<u>Potter</u> , Sorensen, Borgwardt
<b>Candidates and Credentials:</b>	<u>Brice</u> , Potter, Sawtelle, Kroese
<b>Interchurch Relations:</b>	<u>Sawtelle</u> , Sorensen, Dill
<b>Missions:</b>	<u>Opp</u> , Schnabel, Gruenhagen, Hall, Stromer
<b>Publications:</b>	no committee formed

(underlined serves as chairman)

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2009 DIRECTORY  
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

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STUDENTS UNDER CARE

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2905 E. Lincoln Hwy, Lynwood, IL 60411  
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CHURCHES AND MISSION WORKS

*Bentonville, ARKANSAS*

Grace RCUS, 72714  
Mail: 15 Kensington Drive, Bella Vista ..... (479) 876-6649  
worship at La Quinta Inn, 1001 SE Walton Blvd, Bentonville  
Pastor: Rev. Wesley Brice (Wife: Ginger)  
Worship: 10:00 a.m., SS: 11:30; Bible Study: 1 p.m.  
www.gracereformednwa.org

*Garner, IOWA*

Peace RCUS, 50438  
1905 200<sup>th</sup> St. (3 miles south of Garner) ..... (641) 923-3060  
Pastor: Rev. Harvey Opp (Wife: Carol)  
Worship: 10:30 a.m. SS: 9:30 a.m.  
www.peacereformedchurch.com

*Golden Valley, MINNESOTA*

Redeemer RCUS, 55427  
Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal, MN ..... (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. (Sept. - May)  
www.redeemerrcus.org ; redeemerrcus@usfamily.net

*Hamburg, MINNESOTA*

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

*Kansas City, MISSOURI*

Northland RCUS, 64164  
2901 NW Cookingham ..... (816) 420-9700  
(Exit 40, I-435, North one mile) Fax: (same)  
Pastor: vacant  
Worship: 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; SS: 11:00 a.m.  
www.northlandreformed.org

*Napoleon, OHIO*

Peace RCUS, 43545  
638 Huddle Rd. .... (419) 599-3106  
Pastor: vacant  
Worship: \*10:00 a.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m.  
\*(1/2 hour earlier June - August)  
PRCNapoleon@bright.net

*Honesdale, PENNSYLVANIA*

Heritage RCUS, 18431  
335 Beach Lake Highway ..... (570) 785-4012  
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)  
Worship: 10:30 a.m.; Bible Study 9:30 a.m.  
www.heritagercus.org; hrc@nep.net

*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.  
www.salemebenezer.org; salem@lakefield.net

**ABSTRACT of the MINUTES**

of the

**Covenant East Classis**

Special Fall Meeting

October 27-28, 2008

Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, Ohio

**Services**

Covenant East Classis began the Special Fall Meeting on October 27, 2008, with Rev. Ron Potter calling the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m and giving devotions. The meditation was from 1 Timothy 3:14-16 on the church's call to be the pillar and ground of the truth. He then led the body in prayer.

At 7 p.m. on Monday evening the classis delegates, along with members of the Napoleon congregation and some guests, worshiped our gracious Lord in spirit and in truth. Rev. George Syms conducted the service and Mr. Steve Altman delivered a message on Galatians 1:10-24 entitled, "The Gospel of Revelation."

On Tuesday morning Rev. Kyle Sorensen opened the day with a brief devotion on 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 and then led the body in prayer. In addition, each session of classis was opened and closed with a prayer asking God to grant wisdom and mercy upon the business and decisions of classis. Many of these prayers had a particular emphasis on asking that God's wisdom and grace to rest on both the candidate being examined as well as the examiners and delegates conducting the exam.

**Organization**

Rev. Potter, the president of classis, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. After the devotions were completed the opening roll was called which showed 6 ministers and 4 elders present, *a quorum*. (Elder Emil Broers was accepted as the alternate delegate from Garner, per article 54 of the RCUS *Constitution*) The bar of the house was defined as the first four rows of pews. Elders John Honeck and Larry Stock were appointed tellers by the president. Due to the absence of the vice-president, the president appointed Rev. James Sawtelle to serve as vice-president *pro tem*. The president appointed Elder Jay Kroese as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

**Fraternal Delegates and Visitors**

No fraternal delegates were present. Several guests and visitors were welcomed, including Rev. David Bayly, pastor of Christ the Word Presbyterian (PCA), in Toledo, Ohio, and professor at Reformed Evangelical Pastors College.

**Standing Committees**

The President appointed the Standing Committees. Chairmen are underlined:

*Examination & Licensure:* Syms, Brice, Kroese, Potter

*Excuses/Finances:* Opp, Sorensen, Broers

**Examination of Candidates for the Ministry**

The president introduced Mr. Steve Altman as the candidate for Licensure. Rev. George Syms, Chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee, introduced the exam. Mr. Altman is currently supplying the pulpit of Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio. The candidate was examined in the areas of Background/Intention, Philosophy, Apologetics, Prolegomena, English Bible, Doctrine of God, Doctrine of Man, Doctrine of Christ, and Doctrine of Salvation. Questions were allowed from the floor following each section. The outcome of the exam is reported in the Standing Examination and Licensure Committee report.

**Reports of Standing Committees**

The following reports with their motions appear in the final form in which classis adopted them, unless otherwise noted. As such the reports include any amendments and additional motions made from the floor relative to the standing committee's report. The first name listed is the chairman of the standing committee.

**A. Examination and Licensure**

1. That the examination cease and be declared unsatisfactory, and that the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee be instructed to work with Mr. Altman in preparation for a subsequent licensure examination.
2. That Mr. Steve Altman be approved as pulpit supply for Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio, until the licensure, ordination, and internship requirements are completed and the ordination takes place.

Syms, Brice, Kroese, Potter

**B. Excuses**

1. That the excuses for Rev. Jeff De Boer and Rev. Dan Schnabel be granted.
2. That the excuses for Elders Bruce Gruenhagen, Melroy Panning, and Mark Fisher be granted, although the reasons for the scheduling conflicts were not provided. [Note that Kansas City did not provide a reason that there was no alternate delegate to this meeting]
3. That Classis delegates be reminded that each meeting of Classis is the necessary and important work of Christ's Church, and that every effort to attend its sessions, in their entirety, be made, and that the Clerk send such notice to each Consistory.

Opp, Broers, Sorensen

**C. Finances**

1. That the following travel expenses be paid:  
Ron Potter       \$296  
Wes Brice        \$500

George Syms \$305  
Larry Stock \$323  
Jim Sawtelle \$890

Opp, Broers, Sorensen

**Expression of Appreciation to Hosting Congregation**

A motion from the floor passed stating that the following note be placed in the bulletin of the host congregation the coming Sunday:

“To the members and Consistory of Peace Reformed Church, the Covenant East Classis extends our heartfelt appreciation for your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in serving us at this classis meeting. May our God richly reward you for your generosity.”

**Reading of the Minutes**

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

**Adjournment**

The Special Fall meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 28, 2008, until the next stated meeting.

**A. Roll Call**

The final roll call showed 6 ministers and 4 elders present.

**B. Devotions**

Elder John Honeck read from Scripture and closed 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.

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**ABSTRACT of the MINUTES**

of the

**Covenant East Classis**

24<sup>th</sup> Annual Session

March 3 - 4, 2009

Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, Wisconsin

**Services**

On Monday evening, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, classis delegates and visitors joined together for a pre-classis discussion of John Calvin’s legacy for the Christian Church as a teacher and practitioner of evangelism. The discussion was based on an article by Dr. Joel Beeke which was distributed and read ahead of time, with Rev. Kyle Sorensen moderating the 90 minute discussion.

After the president called the body to order on the morning of March 3, 2009, Rev. Ron Potter read from 1 Peter 5:1-4 and gave devotions on the duty of ministers and elders to be shepherds of the flock of God.

At 7 p.m. on Tuesday evening the classis delegates, along with members and guests of the Manitowoc congregation, worshiped our Triune God and Savior. Rev. Dan Schnabel conducted the service and Rev. Wes Brice preached a sermon on Isaiah 40:1-2 entitled, “Speaking Comfort to God’s People.”

On Wednesday morning Rev. Jim Sawtelle led the body with a devotion on Philippians 1:12-26, reminding us of the Apostle Paul’s mandate to follow his example in our pastoral ministry by exalting the gospel of Christ in all things.

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

**Organization**

The 24<sup>th</sup> annual session of Covenant East Classis was called to order at 8:01 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2009, by Rev. Ron Potter, President. After the devotions were completed the opening roll was called which showed 6 ministers and 6 elders present, *a quorum*. The bar of the house was defined as the first six rows of pews. Elders Ken Armbruster and Dean Stromer were appointed tellers by the president. The president then read the Standing Rules of Classis as required by Standing Rule 5.

The following delegates were elected to serve as the officers of classis for the year: Rev. Ron Potter as president, Rev. Dan Schnabel as vice-president, Rev. Kyle Sorensen as stated clerk, and Elder Jim Drewes as treasurer.

The president appointed Elder Ken Hall as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

### **Fraternal Delegates and Visitors**

The following fraternal delegates were present during portions of the meeting. Each brother was given time to address the classis: Rev. Brian De Jong of the Presbytery of the Midwest of the OPC; Rev. John Ludwig of Classis Ontario West of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches; and Rev. Talman Wagenmaker of the Classis Central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches of North America.

Also welcomed were first time elder delegates Daniel Dill from Manitowoc, Wisconsin, Ken Hall from Golden Valley, Minnesota, and Dean Stromer from Garner, Iowa. Several visitors were recognized and welcomed, including Mr. Steven Altman, candidate for licensure.

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

There were no new congregations or ministers to welcome.

### **Standing Committees**

The President appointed the Standing Committees. Chairmen are underlined:

*Benevolence/Excuses:*       Stromer, Brice, Dill  
*Examination & Licensure:* Brice, Herrmann, Potter, Sawtelle  
*Finances:*                   Fisher, Armbruster, Opp, Drewes (advise)  
*Judicial:*                     Sawtelle, Hall, Herrmann, Potter  
*Minutes of Synod:*         Sorensen, Stromer  
*Missions:*                  Opp, Dill, Fisher  
*Nominations:*             Schnabel, Armbruster  
*Overtures/Services:*      Schnabel, Herrmann, Sorensen

### **Presentation of Overtures and Communications**

All overtures, supporting documents, and communications were given to the Standing Committee on Overtures for referral to the appropriate standing committees. The actions taken on these overtures are found in the section of this abstract that contains the Standing Committee reports.

### **Examination of Candidates for the Ministry**

Rev. Wes Brice, Chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee, introduced the exam. He presented Mr. Steve Altman as the candidate for Licensure. Altman is currently the Classis-approved pulpit supply of Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio. The candidate was examined in the areas of Doctrine of God, Doctrine of Man, Doctrine of Christ, and Doctrine of the Word. Questions were allowed from the floor following each section. The outcome of the exam is reported in the Standing Examination and Licensure Committee report.

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

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

Dear Brothers,

During the classical year of 2008 your committee conducted spiritual oversight of congregations and its ministerial members when sought or where appropriate. In accordance with Article 91, we are aiding the consistories in the Napoleon and Kansas City congregations in securing pulpit supply and new pastors.

Your committee also fielded inquiries from a congregation interested in joining the RCUS. In late November a congregational church about 25 miles west of Portland in Limington, Maine contacted Rev. Potter. Their pastor is an OPC man working out of the bounds of his presbytery, Rev. Leonard Gulstrom. This church is looking at the OPC, the PCA, the URCNA and the RCUS. The RCUS creeds and Directory of Worship was forwarded to the Limington Elders. Your committee advised the Limington church of our position on women voting in congregational meetings. In January the church requested that we visit them in late March. This was agreed to and Rev. Brice and Rev. Potter agreed to travel there to represent the RCUS. In the process of arranging matters, we inquired as to just how much RCUS material had been read. They had not actually read nor discussed our creeds and position papers. Access to the RCUS web site was blocked for the last few months, so the position papers had to be forwarded while final travel arrangements were being firmed up. Some weeks later, and after much discussion among the Limington elders, the elders have chosen as of this date not to have anyone from the RCUS come to visit. Due to some internal situations, it seems unlikely the group will pursue affiliation with a denomination in the near future.

After the Special Classis meeting in October to examine Mr. Steve Altman for licensure, all the ministerial members of Classis received a letter from Rev. David Bayly, pastor of Christ the Word Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Toledo, Ohio. He was in attendance during the examination, and expressed strong concerns about the content, method, and conduct of the examination. We then forwarded the letter to all elder delegates of Classis as well, and informed him that a full reply would have to wait until a future date. After a due investigation into the issues he raised, the Executive Committee responded on behalf of the entire Classis in a letter to Rev. Bayly dated January 14, 2009. This correspondence is in the permanent records of this 2008 classical year.

We also brought before the classis the following four circulars with their information and recommendations (all of which were approved without objection).

#### **Executive Circular - Volume 23, Number 1 - June 3, 2008**

##### **A. Time and Place of Special Fall Classis Meeting**

###### **Recommendation 1:**

The Executive Committee finds it necessary to call a special Classis Meeting to be held at Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio, beginning at 3:00

p.m. on Monday, October 27 and finishing early afternoon on Tuesday, October 28. The purpose of this meeting is to examine Mr. Steve Altman for licensure.

The Candidates and Credentials Committee reports that Mr. Altman successfully sustained an orthodoxy and intent exam over the teleconference on May 29, at which all but one church of Classis was able to take part. He will begin labors as a summer intern in the Napoleon congregation in June and Rev. Ron Potter will be serving as his supervisor during this internship period. (Please note that the Candidates and Credentials Committee has hereby fulfilled the instructions of Classis in recommendation 11 of the Standing Overtures Committee, Abstract, p. 32) Please remember to pray for our brother in his labors and studies for licensure this fall.

#### B. Covenant East Classis Youth Camp

\_\_\_\_\_ Please promote the Youth Camp to your congregations. The dates for camp are the afternoon of July 15 through the morning of July 18. DEADLINE for getting your numbers to Dan Schnabel, Camp Director, is JULY 1<sup>st</sup>. **PLEASE SPECIFY** a) number of boys/girls; b) number of jr/sr campers.

#### **Executive Circular - Volume 23, Number 2 - September 19, 2008**

##### A. Special Fall Classis Meeting

A detailed schedule for the licensure examination of Mr. Steve Altman was published.

##### B. Sovereign Grace Presbytery

Your Executive Committee has received a renewed request from Sovereign Grace Presbytery of Gettysburg, PA, to pursue affiliation with the RCUS.

###### Recommendation 1:

The Executive Committee of Covenant East Classis be declared the contact committee with Sovereign Grace Presbytery, and shall supplement itself for such contact from the members of Classis as necessary.

###### Recommendation 2:

If there is an objection to recommendation 1, then that recommendation will be handled at the Special Fall Classis Meeting on October 27-28.

##### C. Call to Rev. George J. Syms

Your Executive Committee has received a pastoral call which was issued from the Grace Reformed Church of Mitchell, South Dakota, to Rev. George J. Syms on August 24, 2008.

###### Recommendation 3:

That the documents concerning Rev. George J. Syms' resignation from Northland Reformed Church of Kansas City, Missouri are found in order, the pastoral relationship between Rev. Syms and the Northland Reformed Church

is dissolved as of October 31, 2008, and the charge is hereby declared vacant as of that date. Further, Covenant East Classis hereby dismisses Rev. George J. Syms to the South Central Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. as of October 31, 2008.

#### **Executive Circular - Volume 23, Number 3 - January 15, 2009**

At the Fall 2008 Classis meeting on October 28, 2008, your clerk was instructed to notify you of the following action that was passed:

“Classis delegates are reminded that each meeting of Classis is the necessary and important work of Christ’s Church, and every effort to attend its sessions, in their entirety, is to be made.”

##### A. Time and Place of Spring Classis Meeting

Our annual Spring Classis meeting will be held at Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Classis will convene at 8:00 a.m. on the morning of Tuesday, March 3, 2009, and continue through the end of business on Wednesday, March 4. The Candidates and Credentials Committee expects to conduct a partial licensure examination of Mr. Steve Altman. That fact, along with other Classis business and a few other potential items, means that Classis delegates should plan that Classis **will not end** before/until supper on Wednesday. Take note when making travel plans.

##### B. Pre-classis Fellowship and Discussion

Since everyone will arrive Monday, the Executive Committee has called for an organized discussion of an essay on the legacy of John Calvin for today’s gospel ministry. All are strongly encouraged to attend. It will run from 7-8:30 p.m., March 2. Details to follow.

##### C. Forms for Classis Meeting

The forms necessary for the classis meeting are included with this circular. If your congregation is supervising a mission congregation, please see the declaration on statistical reporting that was approved by Classis last year (2008 Abstract, 31).

##### D. Covenant East Classis Youth Camp

\_\_\_\_\_ Please inform your congregations that camp is July 14-17, 2009. Brochures to follow.

#### **Executive Circular - Volume 23, Number 4 - January 27, 2009**

##### A. Pre-classis Fellowship and Discussion

Enclosed you will find an intriguing article by Dr. Joel Beeke, “John Calvin: Teacher and Practitioner of Evangelism.” When we gather on March 2 from 7-8:30 p.m., we will discuss this article together, but we will not read it then. **SO PLEASE READ IT** ahead of time. Ask yourself what this means for the gospel ministry today



and for our congregations, as well as our Classis/Synod practice of Home Missions. Again, all elders and ministers are strongly encouraged to attend and participate. It will be a pretty laid back discussion.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Ron Potter  
Rev. Kyle Sorensen  
Elder Bill Borgwardt

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

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### **B. Candidates and Credentials**

Esteemed brothers,

Greetings in the name of Lord Jesus Christ,

Your committee met via telephone conference several times this past year. We met regarding procedure for proceeding with licensure exam of Steve Altman. At subsequent meetings we have proposed to Altman that he plan to be prepared for oral exams at the Spring Classis Meeting, March 3,4 2009 on four sections, the Doctrines of Word, God, Christ and Man. Your Chairman has been in touch by telephone on several occasions helping to prepare him for these examinations.

We also met in response to Northland Reformed Church, Kansas city request that the Covenant East Classis exam Mr. Drew Eenigenburg for Orthodoxy and Intentions as it relates to Article 26 in the RCUS Constitution. However he has since chosen to receive a call elsewhere.

We have continued to have contact with our student-under-care Jimmy John Hall, who is attending Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, IN. Reverend Jim Sawtelle has been our contact man to inquire as to his progress and to give him guidance and encouragement. Your Chairman has also had opportunity to visit with him on several occasions. He is progressing well in his studies and hopes to be in attendance at our Classis Meeting. We did receive a report from him. (Please see attached)

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Wesley Brice, Chairman  
Rev. Ron Potter  
Rev. Jim Sawtelle  
Elder Jay Kroese

---

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

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### **C. Interchurch Relations**

Dear Brothers,

Your committee made efforts to maintain and strengthen our fraternal relationships within the bounds of the classis. We received numerous invitations to classis and presbytery meetings this past year, including the CanRC, the OPC presbyteries of Ohio and of the Midwest, the URCNA classis Central and Eastern classis. Delegates representing our classis went to the OPC presbytery meeting of the Midwest in September, and the Classis Central US of the URCNA in November. Letters of greeting were sent to those classes and presbyteries to which we were not able to be present. Permit me a comment about our attendance at various classis/presbytery meetings. I think it has been some time since we have sent a delegate to a CanRC classis meeting. This is regrettable but understandable given our lack of geographic proximity to many CanRC churches. However, I believe we ought to work on some kind of rotation in which we make it a priority to send delegates to CanRC classis meetings at least every year.

At the OPC Midwest presbytery meeting in September of 2008, your chairman, on behalf of our committee and classis expressed our desire to hold classis/presbytery meetings at a joint location at which time both bodies would set aside time to meet together in order to develop a better knowledge of and friendship with one another. The presbytery heartily encouraged such a proposal and directed our committee to work out the details with their interchurch committee. Nothing has been done since that time to promote such a meeting. One note about the logistics of such a proposed meeting ought to be made: the presbytery moves its meetings around on a rotating basis that is more or less set in concrete. Therefore, some of their meeting places would be handy for us as a classis; some would be very difficult to work out if we were to meet at a joint location. Your committee will work on this proposal for the coming year.

One final note for the report. In the fall of 2008, your committee became aware of the fact that the Classis Eastern US (URCNA) was going to vote on receiving the Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, PA into their federation. Your committee wrote a letter to the classis through their Fraternal Relations Committee expressing our concern at their proposed action without first working through the details of the Carbondale congregation's departure from the RCUS, and the discipline issues that were part of that departure. We invited them to meet with our classis committee before proceeding with a vote and advised them that we thought this situation a good test for our new fraternal relationship. The Executive Committee of the Synod of the RCUS had in the spring of 2008 expressed the opinion, in writing, to one of the ministers of the Classis Eastern US, enquiring about the Carbondale situation, that we considered the matter of Carbondale's departure from the RCUS a mark of the true church issue. Classis Eastern US, without further discussion or consultation with Covenant East Classis, or the Synod of the RCUS, proceeded to vote on reception of the Carbondale congregation, and did by a majority agree to accept this congregation into the URCNA pending their synod's approval.

You committee therefore proposes the following recommendation to the Classis:

1. That the Covenant East Classis invite and urge the Classis Eastern US (URCNA) to meet through officially constituted committees to discuss the matter of their reception of the Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, PA. The issue we desire to explore is the application of our mutual fraternal commitments, in particular, upholding and recognizing the discipline of a fraternal church.

It is our hope and desire that this matter be resolved in a brotherly, honorable, and faithful way unto God's glory and the good of His church.

[Note: a 3 page appendix was provided to delegates with background information and correspondence for the purpose of considering the recommendation]

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. James Sawtelle  
Rev. Kyle Sorensen  
Elder Larry Stock

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**Classis Action:** The report was adopted and its recommendation approved.

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#### **D. Missions**

Dear Brothers:

Your Committee conducted a visitation at Bella Vista, AR, and a conference call with the steering committee at Honesdale, PA. A visit with the Consistory of Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN was also conducted. A summary of these and developments during the year follows:

#### **Bentonville, Arkansas**

Rev. Harvey Opp and Elder Dean Stromer from Garner, and Elder Jim Bruckschen from Manitowoc, (who is on the SHMC) met with Rev. Brice and the congregation of Grace Reformed Chapel on December 4, 2008. The next morning we also looked at a house which had previously been for sale, which the steering committee thought had good potential as a church building. It has now been leased by another party for a year.

We were able to hold a group meeting with half of the members. They again stressed that they had good fellowship. They now have three Sunday School classes, having more children attending than ever before. Adult classes have studied Hebrews, and then church history, for example. They now have a meal together each Lord's Day, and follow with a study time, rather than have a Sunday evening study, with the driving involved. As for Wes' teaching, they said it is appreciated, as being of "very good quality", along with the happy commendation that it is "not boring".

Rev. Brice also had some evangelism training this year, in which he is planning to train members as well. To reach unchurched people in that way has become a greater focus, rather than seeking out reformed people, for the most part, as done in the past. That attempt has had limited effect, as a number have left, over the years, for another, or more familiar reformed denomination.

The only reported area where a united view of things was lacking is in the matter of singing of Psalms. The remaining family that had an RPCNA background mentioned it, who would prefer more of such, of course. Yet, they stated this does not cause disunity in fellowship. Also, Rev. Brice has chosen several psalms in most worship services.

Questions asked of the committee regarded any initiatives of the RCUS to help missions outreach. When told of brochures introducing the denomination, it was suggested that a DVD for that purpose would be good. We agreed, if it could be produced for a reasonable cost. Denominational support to sponsor programs such as R. C. Sproul, and White Horse Inn was suggested also. If that is desired by a work, perhaps it could commonly be a part of the advertising budget, since the air time is the only cost.

Since the chapel has submitted a constitution and memorial to Classis, they asked if the Garner Consistory had a positive outlook that the time for their organization as a congregation had come. We responded that overall it was positive, with the increase of 11 communicants this past year, having progressed from the situation of several years ago, when about four families left.

We also knew, that this fall, an RPCNA family, that had attended for several years, decided to check into other churches, without having any particular reason to, as they reported. The reality is that they would likely never have joined the RCUS. Still, they are missed. Also, as the Garner Consistory's report to your committee stated, a family, consisting of three members, had indicated in December they are likely not to return. Some communication and personality differences over a theological purpose statement was the issue, as it was to be formulated by the steering committee. Communications with the family head, seeking to avert this departure, were attempted by Rev. Brice, another member, and Rev. Opp. Recently, the family head voiced the possibility of their returning. However, he may also be moving out of state for work, which would prohibit such. This family is still on the membership roll, which shows 20 communicants and 4 baptized children. It should also be noted that three of the communicants are students at college.

One of the positive indications of diligence in the group regards their financial giving. Even with a loss of offerings, with the above mentioned family, all obligations were exceeded. They have been able to put \$30,000 in a building fund, over the years. Offerings for the year were about \$53,000. They paid all Classis and Synod guidelines. However, with the current giving, it is asked that Classis support would remain the same for 2009. Synod support has already been reduced by \$1,440 for 2009, and their request is to have another 10% reduction from Synod in 2010.

The steering committee and other members have come to the conclusion that being organized as a congregation would be a help to their growth in a number of ways, in having local officers, and so being presented, etc. They also believe that having a church building is needed, rather than meeting in rented rooms, and are looking and waiting on the Lord regarding this. Your committee and the Garner Consistory also see the advantages in both matters. As for organization, two diligent members would be good candidates - for one elder and one deacon. May the Lord guide Classis regarding their request.

#### **Honesdale, Pennsylvania**

On January 29, 2009, committee members, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Rev. Harvey Opp, Elder John Honeck, Elder Dean Stromer, and Elder Bruce Gruenhagen, met with the steering committee of Heritage Reformed Chapel through a teleconference. That included Rev. Ron Potter, Steve Wright, and Frank Johnson, Jr. The missions committee reviewed the work that is being done for our Lord at Harvest Reformed Chapel, in Honesdale. A summer visitation is planned, as it did not work out to visit in person before Classis meets.

Rev. Potter reported that he has been preaching from 1 Peter, as well as other appropriate texts through the year. Sunday morning they also have class time for catechetical instruction or a Bible study. Much of the congregation is there for the catechetical instruction. There are also Sunday and Wednesday evening studies and prayer time. Rev. Potter continues to ~~rent-make~~ by doing fine furniture repair. As of late, he has not been able to do as much due to the commitments for the church and the denomination. All of this has been well received by the congregation.

The church continues to do various things to get their name out into the community. They have a professional web designer, from the OPC, who has graciously offered to build and maintain a website for them free of charge. They also continue to use a few signs along the route to the church. They have invested money in advertising in the local telephone books, as well as look for opportunities for free listings where they can.

The church building continues to be adequate for their worship and meetings. They have had some difficulties with the location due to an auto body shop being the downstairs tenant, which has created some problems, with fumes making it difficult at times to worship there. However, the building has been sold, which has included the eviction of that shop. They have also been assured that Heritage will continue to be allowed to use its current location.

Your committee also reviewed the budget for Heritage Reformed Chapel for the next three years, as well as the last record of actual intake and expenses. We considered their current overtures for assistance, including \$8,000 for rent, an increase from the \$5,500 they received last year. Due to the slowdown in the economy, the income for various members has decreased. They also request that Classis again overture Synod for \$450 a month to help Rev. Potter and Sharon with their medical expenses.

Currently, they have 13 baptized members, 9 of them being communicants. They expect to add 10 new baptized members from 3 families, with 8 of them now studying to be communicant members.

Since our meeting, the church has suffered a great loss, as the Lord suddenly called Steve Wright to His heavenly home. Steve had worked faithfully in many areas, including being the treasurer at Heritage Reformed. Please keep his wife Rhonda and their son Daniel in your prayers during this trial.

#### **Minneapolis Metro Area, Minnesota**

On February 7, 2009, committee members, Rev. Harvey Opp, Rev. Dan Schnabel, and Elder Dean Stromer, met with Rev. Jim Sawtelle and seven officers of Redeemer RCUS, at Golden Valley, MN. Your committee was invited to discuss the possibility of starting another mission work in the metro area, under the oversight of Redeemer RCUS. This has been a long-standing desire of officers at Redeemer, and there are some families in the church that have expressed interest in being part of such a work.

The Consistory has determined to seek funding from Classis and Synod as the main factor in whether this endeavor could go forward. Secondly, they will teach the congregation on evangelism and missions. Last month, a class on evangelism and reaching out to others was begun. A timeline for bringing in another pastor for this work, identifying a core group and an area to concentrate on would follow a commitment on funding, and the teaching to prepare the congregation.

The plan is that another minister would work at Redeemer as a co-pastor, that the congregation would continue to grow, and that a core group could be developed for the new work in 1-3 years. To have a large enough group to worship on their own in their own location, within that time frame, is the intention. Of course, they would need a 3-5 year financial commitment in order to call a man to this work.

Two areas are being considered, the southwest and the north metro, at both of which 5 church families reside. Having current RCUS members available to begin a core group, and the overseeing consistory being 20 minutes away, this should be a more promising beginning than we have typically had in our works.

This would also be a more proactive approach to intentionally start a mission work in a given area, than usual, rather than waiting for people to contact us. It is according to the model that the SHMC proposed last year to Synod as our "primary approach for Synod missions." (2009 Abstract, #1, pg. 74). There is precedent in how several ministers worked together at our Sacramento congregation to start nearby works, and similarity to our past missionary-at-large efforts to choose an area, and develop contacts there.

The main concern for Classis and Synod will likely be the cost involved. With a work to a metropolitan area, done by a seasoned minister, there will certainly be higher costs. Redeemer intends to cover about \$10,000 of an \$80,000 budget. By planning ahead, our Classis currently has just over \$39,000 set aside for a new work. Synod also has over \$100,000 that has been designated for new works, over the past

six years. Therefore, it seems reasonable that Classis could fund \$30,000 a year and Synod \$40,000 per year for 3-5 years, until such a work should be much more self-supporting. This will probably require a \$30 Classis guideline dedicated for this, instead of the \$20 for a new work designated last year. (There would be no amount for another future work, for the years we would be providing this level of support.)

Your committee has desired to see another mission work in the Metro area, for some years, and would urge Classis to consider this seriously. We also note that Redeemer has been our fastest growing mission work, and we hope for such development again in that large population area.

### **Strategic Plan for 3-5 years**

The Synod Home Missions Manual now requires each Classis Missions Committee to develop a plan for our mission endeavors, and annually update and report on its progress to the SHMC. Therefore, we bring before you a basic outlook. We hope, Lord willing, that our mission work in Bentonville, AR will be close to self-supporting within 3-5 years. We know it is their desire also. In addition, if approved as above, we hope for a Metro Minneapolis work to be at half support, or less, in five years. (Redeemer became totally self-supporting in less than 8 years.) Honesdale is a mission work of Classis only, but Lord willing it will gain a number of members in the next 3-5 years, as there are a number in membership class this year.

#### The Missions Committee brings the following recommendations:

1. That Classis provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$840 per month, through March 2010, a total of \$10,080 for 12 months. [This is the same support as currently given. Synod support has already been reduced to \$7,200 for 2009, a 10% reduction from 2008.]
2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas, with \$5,760 in fiscal year 2010, (another 10% reduction of the original support).
3. That Classis provide Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA with \$8,000 from April 2009 through March 2010, for rental costs, if needed.
4. That Classis approve the plan of Redeemer RCUS to call a co-pastor in order to start a mission work in the Metro Minneapolis area, and provide \$30,000 for the first year, from currently available funds, upon arrival of this man, contingent upon additional Synod support.
5. That Classis overture Synod to approve the proposed Metro Minneapolis work, and provide \$40,000 for the first year, from currently available funds, upon arrival of a co-pastor in order to start the new mission work.

6. That Classis designate a \$30 guideline, available for a Metro Minneapolis work, if approved by Classis and Synod, or for future mission works.

7. That Classis take note of the Missions Committee's proposed Strategic Plan for 3-5 years.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Harvey Opp, chairman  
Rev. Dan Schnabel  
Elder John Honeck  
Elder Bruce Gruenhagen  
Elder Dean Stromer

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

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#### E. Publications

No committee was formed for this year.

#### **Reports of Officers**

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

Beloved Brethren:

The first thing that came to mind when I finished the initial reading of the parochial reports of the Ministers of Classis and the reports of churches without pastors was the words of William Cowper's hymn: *God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform. . . .* It would be impossible to develop any kind of a standardized ecclesiastical template that could be imposed upon the church to assess whether the LORD is working in that church or even as to how we might expect Him to work. That kind of standardization might appeal to men but it is not how our LORD works. Everything our LORD does is characterized by diversity. One can read the gospel accounts of our LORD's miracles and see this. As J.A. Alexander explains of our LORD's working : ". . . *miracles were varied for the purpose of evincing his own liberty and discretion, as distinguished from the uniform routine to which men would have tied him.*"

The reports reveal our LORD working among us in a wholly mysterious diverse way. Every church reveals a different facet of our LORD executing His will among us. No two churches are alike though our LORD's working is clearly evident.

I do not propose to give an abstract of each report separately. I believe you will agree, when you hear these reports read by their authors, that some of these reports reveal heartfelt struggles that should not be published to a wider audience but which are necessary for us to know so that we may offer one another the consolation, encouragement, prayer support, fellowship and counsel that may assist each other in our labours. I plan instead to fulfil the mandate required of a President and to report on

the state of the church as a whole and to offer a suggestion or two.

The parochial and church reports reveal that our God is leading and sanctifying His Ministers of the Word by a variety of means. He is sovereignly granting times of discouragement that He may be earnestly and prayerfully sought and also granting times of elation that He may be praised. He is lightening some burdens and increasing others. He is visiting some of his ministers with personal trials related to physical health and some by ecclesiastical trials related to the spiritual health of the congregations they serve and in some cases both at once. But what stands out from stem to stern in the “good ship classis” is that she is manned by faithful Ministers of the Word who are sticking to their posts in faithfulness to and dependence upon the captain of our salvation Jesus Christ. There is no question that the marks of the church are evident throughout the classis and that Ministers are labouring, as Paul, that Christ might be formed in those they oversee.

It is noticeable also from the reports that the Ministers of the Word are assisted by capable Elders in fulfilling their ministerial calling. These are men active in furthering the work of Christ’s church whether that work is in ruling or in instructing Christ’s flock. In the case of two of our churches without pastors the Elders are carrying on the work of the church inclusive of visitation, providing for the pulpit, engaging in pastoral search and/or the preparation of a candidate for licensure examination. It must be recognized that the Elders as well as the Ministers sacrifice for the sake of fulfilling their office. Our elders are not on the payroll when it comes to visiting, instructing, counseling or engaging in the work of the various judicatories of the church. The reports thus properly highlight the work of the eldership and it’s importance to the well being of the church of Jesus Christ.

The reports also highlight the fact that our LORD is diversely working in the lives of the sheep over which He has made the Ministers and Elders overseers. They are being challenged by the Word of God to pursue holiness, to live godly lives, to be faithful in the worship and service of our LORD, and they are rising to the challenge. Though the culture militates against them and attempts to submerge them in a sea of relativism they strive to shine as lights and to live for Christ regardless of the cost.

On the other hand the reports reveal that many of the saints are being winnowed and sifted under the preaching of the Word to see who are faithfully holding fast, to see who will stand. Many are responding positively to this. Others have grown disobedient, apathetic and indifferent. Regrettably some of these pockets of disobedience, apathy and indifference are found among 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation saints from whom younger saints ought to expect more. Our Belgic Confession in Article 29, paragraph 3 tells us that the marks of a Christian who is a member of the church having received Christ by faith is that . . . *they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbour, neither turn aside to the right or to the left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof.* The tragedy is that when these marks are not found among some who claim to be true believers that it infects subsequent generations and brings great grief to those overseeing. And though the subtle temptation is to somehow accommodate these erring ones so that they remain among

the saints, the real cause is their own apathy and indifference and an unwillingness to turn from sin unto righteousness.

The reports highlight pastoral and elder involvement with youth both in catechetical labours, youth bible classes and in the classis youth camp, which continues to be popular among our covenant youth. Some concern is expressed about the apathy and indifference seen among some youth to the Word of God and yet on the other hand there are many of our youth pressing forward in studies and in seeking to live for the LORD. Again we see the LORD’s diverse working.

The reports also reveal that a mission mindedness is upon us not only in terms of the two home mission works already under Classis oversight who will report, but in the preliminary steps being taken by one of our churches, in concert with the Home Missions Committee to establish a new mission work in the Minneapolis area. When we add to that the ongoing discussions taking place with a church in Pennsylvania interested in the RCUS with connections to a church in Missouri, we are hopeful of future growth outside of our present established churches.

What is also notable from the reports is that in this last year there are a number of saints who have moved from the church militant, to the church triumphant. Our ranks have been thinned by death. Families have grieved, friends have been separated and gifts and abilities have been lost to the church. But the church continues to be built because it is our sovereign LORD who is building it. The Word is preached, the sacraments observed, discipline administered, the saints are maturing, members are being received, covenant youth are being catechized and confirmed, a mission mindedness is upon us and the city on a hill continues to shine forth even brighter against the darkening clouds of postmodern relativism. In many ways the reports reflect what the church has always been, the body of Christ with all of its diversity.

What stands out notably in the reading of this year’s reports is the candidness which characterizes several of them. Every one of our Ministers is carrying a heavy work load consisting of local and denominational responsibilities. But in addition, along with the Elders, they are carrying a burden for the lost outside the church who could care less about the gospel and for those inside the church who are apathetic and indifferent toward the gospel. They are labouring in counseling settings which can be emotionally and physically draining. There is grief and there is discouragement present among our men in some cases, which to me at least, because of our isolation and infrequent meeting together, highlights the necessity of a heightened communion among us.

Our pre-classis Monday evening fellowship and topical discussion is an attempt by the Executive Committee to set in stone a practice we tested a few years ago in Kansas City and to make it a regular happening for those Ministers and Elders attending Spring Classis. But as good as it is to come together once a year to discuss a topic more is needed. Our isolation from one another will preclude any regular meetings through the year. Therefore we need to be more alert to calling one another up regularly just to see how it is with each of us and to pray for one another over the telephone. We do not hold to an Episcopal form of government where there is an

overseer of overseers, but we are brethren, and ought to have a mutual care for one another especially in light of our isolation and infrequent gatherings. Given the formidable adversary that opposes us in ministry, concern for, and prayer for our colleagues ought never to be far from our minds and actions.

What can be added to this is the disseminating of prayer requests from classis churches that we can bring before our various prayer meetings or place in our bulletins to be carried by our members into their family worship and closets. I know that each of our churches pray for our classis churches regularly and for our licentiates and seminarians. But there are often times when more specific and concerted prayer is needed as when a church is experiencing some trial or some difficulty. We need to know this. When you hear the parochial reports read I believe you will understand that there are some churches that could really use the prayer support of their brethren right now.

On the other side of the issue there is much we can bring before our people to thank God for as we listen to His diverse working among us. He is doing great things, though often in mysterious, unfathomable ways. The more we pray for one another and the more we give thanks for God's working among us, the more we are self consciously knit together.

With all of the diversity of God's working among us, there is a great unity and that unity is grounded in the truth of the Word of God we hold dear and which is summarized in our confessional standards. It is incumbent upon us in the year that lies ahead to continue to do what we have done in the past, to hold fast the word of truth, to shepherd the flock of God and to seek to proclaim the gospel faithfully and to pray fervently for the LORD's blessings on our mutual labours.

Respectfully,  
Rev. Ron Potter

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**Classis Action:** The report was 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 2008 Spring Classis Meeting the minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder with all reports, overtures, and relevant information. The exceptions which Synod took upon reviewing our minutes have been duly amended where possible.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was printed in the abstract and sent to the *Reformed Herald*. The 2008 Abstract was prepared and copies were printed and distributed to the churches at Synod in compliance with the synodical standing rule #10. 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 were four Executive Circulars sent out this year. There was an occasional request for Classis documents and correspondence from prior years, and most of these requests were difficult to fulfill because much past Executive Committee correspondence and the archives are not available to me or in existence, to my knowledge. In the future, Executive Committee correspondence shall normally be kept with that year's record books, even though it is not officially part of the minutes which are reviewed from Synod.

Your clerk did receive all of the credential and statistical information from the churches in good order this year with two exceptions. There were only a few minor errors discovered in the compiling of the statistics that were then corrected. Please do remember that ALL STATISTICS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN INK, not pencil. It is more permanent, and the Synod has requested that our classis congregations do this.

I make the following recommendation:

1. That the Classis safe be moved from Hamburg, Minnesota, to the Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

GROUNDS: This is the location of the current clerk, and whenever the clerk should change, since most congregations partake in the Classis Youth camp in Wisconsin, it would be relatively easy to access the archives in the safe.

One necrology has been received at this writing. Any further necrologies for the 2009 Abstract need to be submitted as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Kyle Sorensen

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**Classis Action:** The report was adopted and its recommendation approved.

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

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Your Executive Committee of Synod reminds the Classes of the RCUS of the following matters which require attention or action:

1. Any new requests for benevolent or diaconal aid should follow the procedure set out in Abstract of 262 Synod p. 23, and 75.
2. Each Classis Home Missions Committee shall develop a 3-5 year strategic plan for their mission endeavors, and annually report on its progress to the Synod Home Missions Committee. (Abstract of the 262 Synod, p. 35, #10 ). This plan should appear in your Classis Home Missions Committee Report. Also Classes are encouraged to reflect budget money for future works (Abstract of the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod, p. 36, #17 ).
3. Note the change in Synod Standing Rule #13 (Abstract of the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod, p. 79, Judicial Committee #3).

4. That the stated clerk of each classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring meeting of Classis.

5. Classes should note the corrections, etc. to their respective minutes as noted on p. 81 of the Abstract of the 262<sup>nd</sup> Synod.

Classes are reminded that the 263<sup>rd</sup> Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS meets May 11-14, 2009 at St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church of Hamburg, MN.

In the Lord's Service,

Rev. Paul Treick, Stated Clerk for the Executive Committee of Synod

**Classis Action:** Take Note.

**D. Treasurer's Report**

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

<b>Balance 2/1/08</b>	-	-	<b>\$ 43,273.78</b>
<b>General Fund</b>	Balance 2/1/08	\$	11,677.46
Receipts		\$	5,585.31
Expenses		\$	6,082.18
Balance 1/31/09			\$ 11,180.59
<b>Missions Fund</b>	Balance 2/1/08	\$	29,955.72
Receipts		\$	36,576.00
Expenses		\$	17,163.90
Balance 1/31/09			\$ 49,367.82
	<i>note: this fund includes \$39,120 designated for new mission works</i>		
			<i>2006 (\$8360),</i>
			<i>2007 (\$15520),</i>
			<i>2008 (\$15240)</i>
<b>Benevolence Fund</b>	Balance 2/1/08	\$	1,161.20
Receipts (includes \$479 transfer from student aid fund)		\$	5,051.00
Expenses		\$	5,500.00
Balance 1/31/09			\$ 712.20
<b>Student Aid Fund</b>	Balance 2/1/08	\$	0.00
Receipts		\$	0.00
Expenses		\$	0.00
Balance 1/31/09			\$ 0.00
<b>Balance 1/31/09</b>	-	-	<b>\$ 61,260.61</b>

**2008 Detailed Income Report**

GUIDELINE	\$	7.00	\$	48.00	\$	6.00	
	<u>Memb</u>	<u>ers</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Benevolence</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Bentonville, AR	9		\$63.00		\$54.00	\$549.00	\$549.00
Garner, IA	110		\$770.00	\$5,280.00	\$660.00	\$6,710.00	\$6,710.00
Golden Valley, MN	98		\$686.00	\$4,704.00	\$588.00	\$5,978.00	\$5,978.00
Hamburg, MN	217		\$1,519.00	\$10,416.00	\$1,302.00	\$13,237.00	\$13,237.00
Kansas City, MO	49		\$343.00	\$2,352.00	\$294.00	\$2,989.00	\$2,989.00
Napoleon, OH	64		\$448.00	\$3,072.00	\$384.00	\$3,904.00	\$3,904.00
Manitowoc, WI	215		\$1,505.00	\$10,320.00	\$1,290.00	\$13,115.00	\$13,115.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>5,334.00</b>	<b>\$ 36,576.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,572.00</b>	<b>\$ 46,482.00</b>	<b>\$ 46,482.00</b>
Other income and interest							\$251.31
<b>Income Total</b>							<b>\$ 46,733.31</b>

**2008 Detailed Expense Report**

<b>General Fund Expense</b>		
Classis Meetings (travel)		\$3,871.29
Clerk/Printing & supplies		\$778.54
Travel		\$698.90
Honorarium		\$500.00
Postage/Phone/Conf Calls	\$	233.45
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$6,082.18</b>
<b>Mission Fund Expense</b>		
Grace Reformed Chapel		\$10,920.00
Heritage Reformed Chapel		\$5,500.00
Travel		\$743.90
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$17,163.90</b>
<b>Benevolence</b>		
Mr. Jimmy Hall (student under care)		\$5,500.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$5,500.00</b>
<b>Expense Total</b>		<b>\$28,746.08</b>
<b>Total Classis Income vs Expense 2008</b>		<b>\$ 17,987.23</b>

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jim Drewes, Treasurer

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

It was also audited by the Standing Finances Committee and found to be in order.

### **Parochial Reports of Ministers**

Each minister attending the meeting read his parochial report. Elder delegates from charges currently without a pastor presented a report on their congregation (Napoleon and Kansas City). Opportunity was given for delegates to ask questions about any report. Prayer was then offered for each of the pastors, elders, and their charges after their report was read.

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**Classis Action:** The classis took note of each report.

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### **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 answers are 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."
  - 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."

### **Membership and Financial Statistics**

The Stated Clerk provided a table of statistics based on information submitted by the churches of classis (see Appendix #1, pages 41-42 of this abstract).

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**Classis action:** The report of Membership and Financial Statistics was adopted.

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

The Presbytery of the Midwest of the OPC was visited in March by Rev. Harvey Opp and in September by Rev. Jim Sawtelle. The Classis Central U.S. of the URCNA was visited in November by Rev. Harvey Opp. Their reports follow.

#### *Presbytery of the Midwest of the OPC*

Esteemed Brethren:

The undersigned attended this presbytery during its meeting in Cedar Falls, IA on March 14, 2008. I was not able to attend the second day of its session on the 15<sup>th</sup>, but did attend a conference they held on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, the subject of which was entitled "Keeping our Covenant Youth". An OPC elder from Westminster, CA, Mr. David Winslow gave two lectures at that time.

The topic was of obvious importance, as said that over 10,000 youth leave their churches each year, without joining elsewhere. The background of societal change with the industrial revolution, the state school system, and college becoming more common has lead to increasing disconnect between youth and parents. Young people are not ready for marriage and work until older than in the past. They may not return to church after college, etc. Solutions were put forth, such as getting parents more involved with their teens, training their children in the faith, in regular family church attendance, family worship, teaching them regarding good marriage choices, and educational choices. The church must also help in ministering to the lonely, teaching 'ownership', that this is their faith and church, feeding youth by preaching, teaching, catechizing, and encouraging families to sit together in worship, tending, and mending the flock. Worship that is covenantal and evangelical was called for, as well as training of fathers who are not diligent in leading their children in the reformed faith. Youth groups, camps, conferences, mission trips, and Christian colleges were other means promoted. Certainly, there are in such a list needed reminders and actions



that will help retain our youth in the RCUS also.

The main business of the meeting involved six examinations. A motion by the Candidates and Credentials Committee to not have examinees sit in on other exams until their own was finished was not approved. I observed four of these exams, the first two being applicants for student for the ministry status. Both of those exams were approved.

Two licensure exams followed, that of Mr. Patrick Severson, and Mr. Nick Larame. In both cases, as is the presbytery's practice, most of their examinations took place previously in committee. It was reported that both were there sustained in English Bible, Church History, Hebrew, and Greek. Testimonials for both were deemed sufficient. There was considerable discussion regarding the sermon submitted by Mr. Severson, in that he departed from the assigned text of Genesis 6:1-4, and went into following verses. Yet, the sermon delivery was approved, as were his theological and exegetical papers, which only the committee saw. In his floor exam it was good to note that he held to a normal 6 day creation. It was then noted on the floor that an analogical or framework interpretation is also acceptable in the OPC. As for Mr. Larame, his assigned theological paper was reported to be on the state of infants, dying in infancy, or those dying in early childhood. At any rate, each floor exam took less than a hour, I believe, and both men were licensed, after giving a good presentation of knowledge and belief.

My fraternal address was well received. One thing I expressed was that we certainly appreciate the fellowship with our brethren in the OPC, and the various ways we have worked together. I personally enjoyed this time, attending their meeting as a delegate.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Harvey Opp

The Presbytery of the Midwest (OPC) met in Baldwin, WI in September as one of its twice a year stated presbytery meetings. I was able to observe their meeting for only one day. However, the bulk of their work was accomplished in that day.

The Presbytery of the Midwest continues to be very aggressive in the work of planting churches, and the Lord is in many ways prospering these efforts. Not every effort produces fruit in immediate and amazing ways, as the flesh judges. Yet it is wonderful to see them make every effort to plant the seeds of the gospel in the hope that God will provide the increase. I heard a number of home missionary reports on their labors.

The bulk of the day's work I observed was given to consideration of charges brought against one of the ministers of the presbytery. There was sustained and lively debate for hours over the question of the readiness of the charges for a hearing. A judicial committee recommended that the charges not be found ready for hearing due to insufficient weightiness of the charge. Many others in the presbytery struggled with that recommendation. Since this debate went on even after I had to leave, I cannot

give an eyewitness account of the outcome. I found this debate and the efforts the presbytery went through to clarify charges and do all things in order, encouraging-- though admittedly tedious. Having gone through numerous classis trials, appeals, complaints, etc, I have come to appreciate greatly the time and effort that must go into a just system of church court discipline. Injustice in discipline does not glorify God our Savior. I commend the brothers for their patient thoroughness in working through the case that was before them. Since our fraternal relationship with the OPC, and others, includes the mutual concern for the faithfulness of the church in doing church discipline, the so-called third mark of the Church, I think it important to see the discipline processes of our fraternal churches in action. It is confirming to see that they are making every effort to be faithful to Christ in this area.

I was given the opportunity to address the body. I reported on any relevant news of our classis. I also informed the presbytery of the desire of our classis to hold a joint classis/presbytery meeting with the PMW. The promotion of this effort must take place in connection with the PMW interchurch committee, and as of this report, has not advanced.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. James Sawtelle

*Classis Central US of the URCNA*

Esteemed Brethren:

The undersigned attended this classis during its meeting in Wellsburg, IA on November 10-11, 2008. I was not able to attend to the end of the second day, but saw most of the business. During breaks I learned of several items of interest to the RCUS, one being their beginning of a mission in Omaha, after a minister of another denomination approached the Redeemer URCNA, Orange City, IA requesting such. Also, the URCNA has received a request for ecclesiastical fellowship from the ERCC (Congo). After inquiry, I found this contact was made by the brethren we are supporting, since last Synod, as being the leadership in the ERCC.

My fraternal address was given early in the meeting, speaking of our work together in the Africa radio ministry, and in standing together in our teaching on justification, etc. My remarks were well received, and I certainly enjoyed fellowship with the brethren throughout the time there.

One item of business was approval, that is "concurring advice of the" Classis that the Sioux Center, IA Church be organized, as a member Church in the federation of the URCNA. This request was made by the mother congregation, Redeemer URCNA, Orange City, IA. Currently, a pastor has been installed for the work, Rev. Bradd Nymeyer, coming from AZ. After a few comments, the motion was approved.

Next, the meeting undertook the "examination for candidacy" of Mr. Philip Tjoelker, serving their Providence church plant in Palos Heights, IL. Three of his sermons had been critiqued, and one concern raised was that the Catechism sermon was not preached with the Catechism itself being the text. At length, the body "moved

on”, which did not mean that the sermon was approved. It was good to hear Mr. Tjoelker practiced nouthetic counseling and pre-suppositional apologetics. The Bible knowledge exam had many detailed questions. The questions on practica and ethics involved very specific matters also. One concern raised was that he did not directly quote the Belgic Confession and Canons of Dort. (However, he had quickly given a one sentence summary of each article of the Belgic Confession.) In the end, Classis concurred with the Lynwood, IL Consistory that Mr. Tjoelker had sustained his examination. It was also stated that if taking a call in the same Classis an ordination exam is normally waived. Their ordination exam goes through all the same areas, and is commonly for those licentiates who go to another classis before being ordained.

In other business, eight amendments were made to the Rules of Procedure for Classis Central US, regarding a variety of matters. Two proposed overtures to their Synod London 2010 were also considered. The first called for defining of Synodical Statements, such as pastoral advice and study committee reports, that the statements therein are not to be regarded as “extra-confessional bindings”. The other overture called on the Synod to create a new classis, dividing the northern IA, MN, and SD churches from those in WI, IL, IN, MO, and southern IA. The number and location of the churches was believed to inhibit closer ties, as in time for discussion and continuing education in Classis meetings. Time and expenses for travel were also considered. An election for Stated Clerk brought Rev. to hold that office. In summary, in the URCNA, there are obvious differences from some of our procedures, yet our agreement in the faith is also clear.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Harvey Opp

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**Classis Action:** Take note on each report.

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

Rev. Talman Wagenmaker of the Classis Central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches of North America brought fraternal greetings. There was a time for questions. Rev. Potter responded by expressing the joy and thankfulness of our classis for the close relations and openness which we share with the URCNA.

Rev. John Ludwig of Classis Ontario West of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches brought fraternal greetings. Rev. Sawtelle responded on behalf of Classis, expressing our desire to be in more regular contact with our CanRC brothers.

Rev. Brian De Jong of the Presbytery of the Midwest of the OPC brought fraternal greetings. Rev. Schnabel responded on behalf of Classis, noting our common mission in the Kingdom of Christ.

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

##### **A. Special Committee to Sovereign Grace Presbytery**

Rev. Ron Potter read the report. Other committee members were Rev. Kyle Sorensen and Elder Bill Borgwardt.

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**Classis Action:** The report was received and Classis took note of its content.

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#### **Reports of Standing Committees**

The following reports with their motions appear in the final form in which classis adopted them, unless otherwise noted. As such the reports include any amendments and additional motions made from the floor relative to the standing committee’s report. The first name listed is the chairman of the standing committee.

##### **A. Benevolences**

The Standing Committee noted that Synod’s guidelines for benevolence were followed in granting all these requests.

1. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for benevolent aid to provide \$450 per month for Synodical year 2009 to assist with life insurance, medical insurance, and medical costs for Rev. Ron Potter.
2. That Covenant East Classis provide to Heritage Reformed Chapel assistance for rental costs of \$8,000 for Classical Year 2009. [See the Standing Missions Committee report, Recommendation #3]
3. To provide benevolent aid of \$6,500 for Classical Year 2009 to student-under-care Mr. Jimmy Hall (at Mid-America Reformed Seminary).
4. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for student aid of \$6,000 tuition and \$250 books for student-under-care Mr. Jimmy Hall for school year 2009-2010.
5. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1,000.00 per month for Synodical Year 2009.
6. We recommend that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Rev. and Mrs. Chester Ploeger in the amount of \$1,200 per month for Synodical Year 2009.

Stromer, Brice, Dill

##### **B. Examination and Licensure**

Mr. Steve Altman was excused from the meeting for the discussion and decisions made from this report.

1. That Mr. Steve Altman’s sermon (delivered before Classis at the Special Meeting on October 27, 2008) and examination in the doctrines of God, Man, Christ, and the Word, be declared satisfactory.
2. That it be noted that his internship as per Covenant East Classis Standing Rule #17 has been completed. [Classis Action was to Take Note]

3. That the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee proceed with the examination of Mr. Steve Altman in Church History, Constitution, Greek and Hebrew languages, all to be completed to the satisfaction of the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee by June 1, 2009.
4. That, upon completion of Recommendation 3 above to the satisfaction of the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee, we proceed to an examination of licensure and ordination at a Fall Classis meeting.
5. Regarding Mr. Jimmy Hall's report, Classis action is Take Note.
6. That we adopt the report of the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee.

Brice, Herrmann, Potter, Sawtelle

**C. Excuses**

No excuses were received.

Stromer, Brice, Dill

**D. Finances**

1. That Standing Rule #7 be amended by taking out "ten cents per mile" and inserting "\$20 per day."
2. That Standing Rule #7 be amended by raising the auto reimbursement to fifty cents per mile.
3. That Standing Rule #8 be amended by raising the auto reimbursement to fifty cents per mile.
4. That travel reimbursement for this classis meeting be as follows:
 

Brice	\$333
Fisher	676
Stromer	440
Potter	258
Schnabel	450
<u>Armbruster</u>	<u>500</u>
TOTAL	\$2,658
5. That the Missions Fund guideline for giving per communicant in 2009 be \$60, with \$30 set aside for future mission works.
6. That the Benevolence Fund guideline for giving per communicant in 2009 be \$9.
7. That the General Fund guideline for giving per communicant in 2009 be \$2.

Fisher, Armbruster, Opp

**E. Judicial**

1. Concerning Communication #1 from Grace Reformed Chapel asking to be organized as a particular church, Classis finds that the Memorial and Articles of Incorporation are in order, constitutionally.
2. The proposed Constitution of Grace Reformed Chapel of Northwest Arkansas is approved with the suggested revisions by the committee to Articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 15, 16, and 21.
3. That Classis dismiss the ministerial credentials of Rev. Jeff De Boer to the Iowa Presbytery of the PCA, so that he might pursue the call to him from Hope Evangelical Church (PCA) of North Liberty, Iowa.
4. That a copy of the Constitution of Grace Reformed Chapel and its Memorial and Articles of Incorporation be filed in the records of Classis.
5. That the request of Grace Reformed Chapel to be organized by the Classis be found in order and Classis appoint a committee to superintend the election of elders and deacons at such time as Grace Reformed Chapel is able to do so according to its constitution.

Sawtelle, Hall, Herrmann, Potter

**F. Minutes of Synod**

1. We received a letter from the Executive Committee of Synod and take note of its content. [Classis action was Take Note]

Sorensen, Stromer

**G. Missions**

1. That Classis provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$840 per month through March 2010, a total of \$10,080 for 12 months. [This is the same support as currently given. Synod support has already been reduced to \$7,200 for 2009, a 10% reduction from 2008.]
2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace Reformed Chapel of NW Arkansas with \$5,760 in fiscal year 2010. [another 10% reduction from the original Synod support].
3. That Classis provide Heritage Reformed Chapel of Honesdale, PA, with \$8,000 from April 2009 through March 2010 for rental costs, if needed, and that these funds come from the Missions Fund, rather than the Benevolent Fund as previously approved.
4. That Classis approve the plan of Redeemer RCUS to call a co-pastor in order to start a mission work in the Metro Minneapolis area, and provide \$30,000 for the first year, from currently available funds, upon arrival of this man, contingent upon Synod approval.
5. That Classis overture Synod to approve the proposed Metro Minneapolis work, and provide \$40,000 for the first year, from currently available funds,

- upon arrival of a co-pastor in order to start the new mission work.
6. That Classis designate a \$30 guideline, available for a Metro Minneapolis work, if approved by Classis and Synod, or for future mission works.
  7. That Classis take note of the Missions Committee's proposed Strategic Plan for 3-5 years. [Classis action was Take Note]
  8. That the Permanent Missions Committee Report be adopted.

Opp, Dill, Fisher

#### **H. Nominations**

The committee's recommendations for the permanent committees is as follows (underlined serves as the chairman).

**Executive:** Potter, Sorensen, Borgwardt

**Candidates and Credentials:** Brice, Potter, Sawtelle, Kroese

**Interchurch Relations:** Sawtelle, Sorensen, Dill

**Missions:** Opp, Schnabel, Stromer, Gruenhagen, Hall

Schnabel, Armbruster

#### **I. Overtures**

1. Regarding overture #1, request from Peace RCUS Napoleon, OH for benevolent aid for Ron Potter be referred to Standing Benevolence.
2. Regarding overture #2, request from Peace RCUS Napoleon, OH for missions support for Heritage Reformed Chapel be referred to Standing Missions.
3. Regarding overture #3, request from Peace RCUS Garner, IA request for benevolent aid for Mr. Jimmy Hall be referred to Standing Benevolence.
4. Regarding overture #4, request from Peace RCUS Garner, IA request for aid for tuition and books for Mr. Jimmy Hall be referred to Standing Benevolence.
5. Regarding overture #5, request from Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI request for benevolent aid for Mrs. Joan Vance be referred to Standing Benevolence.
6. Regarding overture #6, request from Peace RCUS Garner, IA request for benevolent aid for Rev. and Mrs. Chester Ploeger be referred to Standing Benevolence.
7. Regarding Communication #2 from Mr. Jimmy Hall regarding current needs be referred to Standing Benevolence.
8. Regarding Communication #5 from Rev. Chester Ploeger regarding current needs be referred to Standing Benevolence.

Schnabel, Herrmann, Sorensen

#### **J. Services**

1. That the following expression of gratitude is to be read in the worship and published in the bulletin this coming Sunday.

“To the congregation members and Consistory of Salem Ebenezer RCUS, the Covenant East Classis extends our heartfelt appreciation for your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in serving us at this classis meeting. May our God richly reward you for your generosity.”

Schnabel, Herrmann, Sorensen

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

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

This was done through the Standing Committee on Services report.

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

Each of these reports was adopted by the classis.

##### **C. Miscellaneous Business**

There was none.

#### **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 later Wednesday morning. Corrections were made on each occasion and final approval was given to the minutes as corrected.

#### **Adjournment**

The 24<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, until the time of the next stated meeting of classis.

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

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

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

Elder Daniel Dill read from 1 Timothy 4:12-16 and closed 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 for the 2009 Abstract

# 1 - Statistics

# 2 - Standing Rules

# 3 - Necrology

Appendix #1: Statistical Information covering 2008

Category	Garner, IA	Golden Valley, MN	Hamburg, MN	Kansas City, MO	Manitowoc, WI
1. No. Of Elders	3	4	3	3	4
2. No. Of Deacons	3	4	3	4	3
3. Comm. Last Year	119	98	217	48	215
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	5	5	5	3
5. Rec'd by Letter	4	3	0	0	1
6. Rec'd by Prof.	7	2	0	5	0
7. Tot. Received	11	10	5	10	4
8. Tot. Old/New Mbrs.	130	108	222	58	219
9. Lost by Dismissal	2	2	0	6	0
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	1	3	0	0	1
11. Lost by Death	3	0	5	0	6
12. Total Lost	6	5	5	6	7
<b>13. Comm. this Year</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>212</b>
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	29	66	32	29	29
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	153	169	249	81	241
16. No. of Families	72	47	133	26	123
17. No. of S. S. Child.	16	61	32	30	18
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	2	5	3	2	3
20. Total Baptisms	2	5	3	2	3
21. No. L.S. Served	110	103	194	58	179
22. Times. L.S. Served	10	6	9	6	4
23. Regular Offerings	163240	214910	116105	162519	162401
24. Special Offerings	41836	13269	246	6599	948
25. Other Sources	49516	1193	17592	2966	7486
26. Total Receipts	254592	229372	133943	172084	170835
27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.	28329	21225	46598	10898	47995
28. Giv. to Clas.Guidlin.	7259	5978	13237	2989	13115
29. RCUS non-budget	4574	11849	1250	1871	385
30. Non-RCUS causes	2847	1420	811	7448	2382
31. Other Expenses	220597	195639	67375	122337	102819
32. Total Expenses	263606	236111	129271	145543	166696
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	750000	800000	800000	1500000	800000
34. Val. of Parsonage	125000	250000	125000	120000	200000
35. Impr. on Property	71884	27500	140000	2676	4294
36. Property Debt	0	389512	0	344508	0
37. Debt Paid Last Yr.	0	20891	0	58200	0
38. Synod Giving /Com.	238	217	215	227	223
39. Classis Giving/Com.	61	61	61	62	61
40. RCUS Giving /Com.	337	398	281	328	286

**Appendix #1: Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States**

Napoleon, OH	2008 Total	2007 Total	% Change	mission work statistics included in supervising congregation's totals	Bentonville, AR (Garner)	Honesdale, PA (Napoleon)
3	20	20	0.0%	<b>1. No. Of Elders</b>	0	0
3	20	20	0.0%	<b>2. No. Of Deacons</b>	0	0
64	761	776	-1.9%	<b>3. Comm. Last Year</b>	9	10
2	20	12	66.7%	<b>4. Rec'd by Confirm.</b>	0	0
0	8	14	-42.9	<b>5. Rec'd by Letter</b>	4	0
2	16	6	166.7	<b>6. Rec'd by Prof.</b>	7	0
4	44	32	37.5%	<b>7. Tot. Received</b>	11	0
68	805	808	-0.4%	<b>8. Tot. Old/New Mbrs.</b>	20	10
1	11	18	-38.9	<b>9. Lost by Dismissal</b>	0	0
0	5	16	-68.8	<b>10. Lost by Era/Dis.</b>	0	0
3	17	12	41.7%	<b>11. Lost by Death</b>	0	0
4	33	46	-28.3	<b>12. Total Lost</b>	0	0
<b>64</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>762</b>	1.3%	<b>13. Comm. this Year</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
18	203	203	0.0%	<b>14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.</b>	4	4
82	975	965	1.0%	<b>15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.</b>	24	14
32	433	436	-0.7%	<b>16. No. of Families</b>	11	5
11	168	167	0.6%	<b>17. No. of S. S. Child.</b>	4	0
0	0	0		<b>18. Adult Baptisms</b>	0	0
2	17	11	54.5%	<b>19. Infant Baptisms</b>	0	1
2	17	11	54.5%	<b>20. Total Baptisms</b>	0	1
61	705	708	-0.4%	<b>21. No. L.S. Served</b>	20	10
18	53	51	3.9%	<b>22. Times. L.S. Served</b>	6	12
124532	943707	953964	-1.1%	<b>23. Regular Offerings</b>	49521	23025
4240	67138	32410	107.2	<b>24. Special Offerings</b>	3375	0
94092	172845	178765	-3.3%	<b>25. Other Sources</b>	18990	12051
222864	118369	116513	1.6%	<b>26. Total Receipts</b>	71886	35076
14231	169276	173861	-2.6%	<b>27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.</b>	2054	0
3904	46482	46560	-0.2%	<b>28. Giv. to Clas.</b>	549	0
735	20664	16517	25.1%	<b>29. RCUS non-budget</b>	265	0
7005	21913	18236	20.2%	<b>30. Non-RCUS causes</b>	990	0
77256	786023	879684	-10.6	<b>31. Other Expenses</b>	65016	37767
103131	104435	113485	-8.0%	<b>32. Total Expenses</b>	68874	37767
200000	485000	480000	1.0%	<b>33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.</b>	0	0
0	820000	114500	-28.4	<b>34. Val. of Parsonage</b>	0	0
0	246354	124363	98.1%	<b>35. Impr. on Property</b>	0	0
0	734020	810403	-9.4%	<b>36. Property Debt</b>	0	0
0	79091	108435	-27.1	<b>37. Debt Paid Last Yr.</b>	0	0
222	222	224	-0.7%	<b>38. Synod Giving /Com.</b>	228	0
61	61	60	1.8%	<b>39. Classis Giving</b>	61	0
295	284	284	-0.2%	<b>40. RCUS Giving /Com.</b>	319	0

**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 fifty cents per running mile; when an elder or pastor drives his own car, he shall be paid fifty cents per mile; when a pastor or elder rides with another person he shall be paid \$20 per day. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Classis, they shall be granted full fare. [2009]
8. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis at fifty cents per running mile, or, if several ride together in one car or travel by public transportation, the actual fare. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only to those delegates to Classis whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Classis or have been properly excused by Classis. [2009]
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.

### **Appendix #3: Necrology**

#### **James F. Busch**

Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio

James F. "Jim" Busch (1934-2008) was born August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1934, near Elery, Ohio. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1961, he married Marie Nagel, who survives. The Lord blessed this union with three children.

Jim worked as a heavy equipment operator for a local contractor for over 30 years prior to his retirement. Jim also served six years in the Ohio National Guard and enjoyed restoring antique tractors.

Jim served Peace Reformed Church as a deacon and elder. He was a member of the congregation from its inception in 1967.

The Lord called him home on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, at the age of 74 years.

#### **Robert Walter Horn**

Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church of Manitowoc, Wisconsin

Robert Walter Horn (1918-2008) was born in Valders, Wisconsin, on February 16, 1918, to the late Dr. Walter Horn and Winifred (McCarthy) Horn. Robert married Esther Stuebbe on June 24, 1950, in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, at Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church. She preceded him in death on May 4, 2007.

Robert graduated from Valders High School in 1936, and went on to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning a bachelor's degree in 1942, and his law degree in 1945. He was admitted to The Wisconsin State Bar in 1946. Upon finishing law school, Robert entered the military and proudly served his country with the U.S. Army in the intelligence unit under General Patton in France. When Robert returned from the war, he began his law practice in Valders, where he practiced law for more than 50 years.

He was an active member in the American Legion Auxiliary, Wisconsin Lawyers Association, a member and co-founder of the Valders Community Chest, and an active member on the Valders village board and in the community. Robert actively served the Lord in His church during his lifetime, including serving for a time as a church officer at Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church. Robert and Esther enjoyed traveling, he was an avid reader, history buff, sports fan, especially his beloved Badgers and Packers, and most of all he enjoyed spending as much time as possible with his daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Attorney Robert Walter Horn was called home to eternal rest at age 90, on February 21, 2008.