# 2014
# Abstract
# of the Minutes

of the

# COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

29th Annual Session

March 4 - 5, 2014

held at

Peace Reformed Church

Garner, Iowa

## INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

### OFFICERS of Covenant East Classis

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Rev. Randall Klynsma |
| Vice President | Rev. Dan Schnabel |
| Stated Clerk | Rev. Kyle Sorensen |
| Treasurer | Elder Jim Drewes |

### CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

| | |
|---|---|
| General Fund | $12.00 |
| Missions Fund | $20.00 |
| Benevolence Fund | $20.00 |
| Student Aid Fund | $14.00 |
| **TOTAL per communicant member** | **$66.00** |

### CLASSIS TREASURER

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

### PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

**Executive**: Klynsma, Sorensen, Stuebbe
**Candidates and Credentials**: Brice, Fluck, Potter, Weilersbacher, Wright
**Church Camp**: Stuebbe, S. Altman, Sawtelle, Gilman, Mark Bruckschen* (*Deacon)
**Interchurch Relations**: Sawtelle, Klynsma, Kron, Van Heest
**Missions**: Opp, Schnabel, M. Altman, Anderson, Blank, Willemsen
**Publications**: no committee formed

**Special Committee to Study the Exclusive Use of Wine in the Lord's Supper**: Kron, Fluck, Potter, Van Heest

(underlined serves as chairman)

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**CHURCHES AND MISSION WORKS**

*Northwest ARKANSAS*

Grace RCUS, 72756
3320 N. Second Street, Rogers, AR .....(479) 202-5550
Pastor: Rev. Wesley Brice (Wife: Ginger)
**Worship**: 10:00 a.m. ; SS: 11:30 a.m.
www.gracereformednwa.org; pastor@gracereformednwa.org

*Garner, IOWA*

Peace RCUS, 50438
1905 200th St. (3 mi. south of Garner on US 69).....(641) 923-3060
Pastor: Rev. Harvey Opp (Wife: Carol)
**Worship**: 10:30 a.m.; SS: 9:30 a.m.
www.peacereformedchurch.com ; opp@comm1net.net

*Eden Prairie, MINNESOTA*

Emmaus Road RCUS, 55344
Meeting at Eden Lake Elementary School,
12000 Anderson Lakes Pkwy, Eden Prairie, MN .....(612) 751-2096
Pastor: Rev. Ryan Kron (Wife: Colleen)
Mail: 8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438
**Worship**: 10:30 a.m. ; SS: 9:10 a.m.
www.emmausrcus.org ; ryankron@hotmail.com

*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 ; dm7schnabel@gmail.com

*Minneapolis, MINNESOTA*

Redeemer RCUS, 55422
1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley .....(763) 417-9835
Pastor: Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)
Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55427
**Worship**: 10:15 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m. (Sept- May)
www.redeemerrcus.org ; sawtellejim@gmail.com

*Kansas City, MISSOURI*

Northland RCUS, 64164
2901 NW Cookingham Dr.....(816) 420-9700
(Exit 40, I-435, North one mile)
Pastor: Rev. Randall Klynsma (Wife: Julie)
**Worship**: 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; SS: 11:00 a.m.
www.northlandreformed.org ; northlandreformed@gmail.com

*Napoleon, OHIO*

Peace RCUS, 43545
638 Huddle Rd.....(419) 599-3106
Pastor: Rev. Steven Altman (Wife: Bianca)
**Worship**: 10:00 a.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m.
www.peacercus.com

*Waymart, PENNSYLVANIA*

Heritage RCUS, 18472 in Lower Level of Waymart Presbyterian Church,
200 Belmont Turnpike.....(570) 785-4012
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)
Mail: 136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421
**Worship**: 10:30 a.m.; Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
www.heritagercus.org; reformed@nep.net

*Manitowoc, WISCONSIN*

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 54220
6524 Hwy 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

**CLERK's NOTE:**

On March 3, 2014, the night before the Spring Classis meeting was to begin, the delegates of classis gathered for a presentation by Rev. Jeff DeBoer, former RCUS pastor of the Garner congregation. He is currently serving Hope PCA in north Liberty, IA, and is nearing the completion of his D. Min. studies. The presentation was titled, "Importance of Integrity in Church Leadership."

After the presentation, there was time for discussion. The evening's activities ran from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., and were greatly appreciated by all in attendance, which included about 20 members of Peace RCUS in Garner, IA.

## Abstract of the MINUTES

### of the Covenant East Classis

of the Reformed Church in the United States
29th Annual Session -- March 4-5, 2014
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa

### Services

After the president, Rev. Randall Klynsma, called the body to order on Tuesday, March 4, 2014, he led the classis in prayer. He then read Psalm 91. He gave a devotion titled, "Is this too good to be true, or is this what true faith believes?"

On Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. the classis delegates, along with members and guests of the Peace Reformed congregation, worshiped our Triune God and Savior. Rev. Wes Brice led the service and Rev. Ronald Potter preached a sermon on Matthew 7:13-29 titled, "The Peril of Self-Deception."

On Wednesday morning, March 5, Rev. Jim Sawtelle led the body in a devotion from Ecclesiastes 7:13-18 titled "Consider the Work of God in the Crooked 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 other appropriate times in the meeting, such as for ministers' widows and fraternal churches.

### Organization

The 29th annual session of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was called to order at 8:05 a.m. on Tuesday, March 4, 2014, by Rev. Randy Klynsma, President. After the devotions were completed, the Stated Clerk, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, called the roll which showed 9 ministers and 8 elders present, a quorum. The bar of the house was defined as the first seven rows. Elders Dan Wright and Walt Van Heest were appointed tellers by the president. On motion from the floor, the reading of the Standing Rules was suspended.

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

The president appointed Rev. Wes Brice as reporter to the *Reformed Herald.*

### Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

One fraternal delegate was present at the classis meeting, and he was given time to address the classis. Rev. John VanWoudenberg, was sent to us as fraternal delegate from Classis Niagara of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Among the many visitors present during the meeting were Tim Fenby, Nathan Fenby, and Elders Don Buysse, Dennis Luquette, Les Morton, and Phil Snyder—all from Sovereign Grace Church in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

## Reception of New Ministers and New Churches

None to report.

## Standing Committees

The President announced the Standing Committee appointments. Chairmen are underlined:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Benevolence; Excuses*: | Klynsma, Blank, Gilman |
| *Examination & Licensure*: | Brice, Potter, M. Altman |
| *Finances*: | S.Altman, Stuebbe, Van Heest, (Drewes advise) |
| *Judicial*: | Sawtelle, Fluck, Sorensen, M. Altman, Stuebbe |
| *Minutes of Classis; Services*: | Opp, Willemsen, Wright |
| *Minutes of Synod*: | Fluck, S. Altman, Van Heest |
| *Missions; Nominations*: | Schnabel, Klynsma, Anderson |

## Presentation of Overtures, Reports, and Communications

The items were referred and distributed to the Standing Committees as determined by the Executive Committee, which informed the classis in writing of these referrals before the meeting. (See Appendix #1) The actions taken on these documents are found in the section of this abstract that contains the Standing Committee reports.

## Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports

### A. Executive Committee On Their Minutes

During the classical year of 2013 your committee conducted spiritual oversight of congregations and its ministerial members when sought or where appropriate. On occasion this year we have had pastors seek our advice and prayers. On other occasions we have had elders and/or Consistories seek our advice and prayers. We are happy to provide such aid when asked. We do remind all members of Classis, including ourselves, that none of us has to face hardships and crises alone. God has provided us the wisdom of a multitude of counselors. In some cases, the Executive Committee may serve as part of that group of counselors. Remember, however, that for official advice to be given or action to be taken, the Biblical process outlined in Matthew 18 and our constitution needs to be followed.

The Executive Committee brought before the classis the following three circulars with their information and recommendations (all were approved without objection).

**Executive Circular - Volume 28, Number 1 – April 21, 2013**

A. Reception of Emmaus Road Reformed Church

Your Executive Committee has received the report of the Special Committee to organize Emmaus Road Reformed Church. On March 20, 2013, a congregational meeting was held under their oversight. Among the items decided by the congregation that night was an amendment to Article 15 because of the exception to it which we as a

classis took at our recent meeting. On March 24, 2013, this same committee supervised the ordination and installation of the elders and deacons chosen by Emmaus Road Reformed Church.

**Recommendation 1:** That Covenant East Classis hereby receives Emmaus Road Reformed Church as an organized congregation and adds it to our roll of churches. By this action, we also accept the credentials which Emmaus Road Reformed Church have properly submitted to the Stated Clerk. For your information, their elder primarius is Mr. John Morton and their elder secundus is Mr. Walt Van Heest.

B. Pastoral Call to Rev. Ryan Kron

Your Executive Committee has received a pastoral call which was issued from Emmaus Road Reformed Church of Eden Prairie, Minnesota to Rev. Ryan Kron. The call states that at a congregational meeting held on April 14, 2013, Rev. Kron was elected as pastor. Your committee has also received the acceptance of that call from Rev. Kron, his resignation as Associate Pastor of Redeemer Reformed Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Redeemer Consistory's acceptance of that resignation. After considering these documents, the terms of the call, and speaking with the parties involved, your committee brings the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 2:** That the call from Emmaus Road Reformed Church of Eden Prairie, Minnesota to Rev. Ryan Kron to serve as pastor be found in order and approved as received. The pastoral relationship is thus established between Rev. Kron and Emmaus Road RCUS and the pastoral relationship dissolved between Rev. Kron and Redeemer RCUS (Minneapolis), effective immediately.

**Recommendation 3:** That the installation committee for Rev. Ryan Kron shall be comprised of Rev. James Sawtelle and the elders of Redeemer Reformed Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota."

**Executive Circular - Volume 28, Number 2 - October 4, 2013**

A. Student Aid to Mr. Steve Carr

Your Executive Committee has received a request from the Consistory of Redeemer Reformed Church in Minneapolis, MN, to provide financial aid to Mr. Steve Carr, Student-Under-Care of Classis. At the time of our Classis meeting in March, it was unclear what Mr. Carr's family financial situation might be. Now the needs are more evident, so they have been able to present Classis with this request.

Classis delegates should know that the local congregation in Minneapolis is providing regular financial aid to the Carr family for their living expenses. He also is receiving financial aid from Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Mr. Carr is in his second of 3 years of seminary study.

At our classis meeting last March, we anticipated these sorts of needs when we passed this motion: "That $12,000 be reserved in the Student Aid Fund in anticipation of additional benevolent needs for our students for the ministry that may need to be used in Classical Year 2013." (2013 Abstract, 33)

In light of these considerations, we present to the members of Covenant East Classis the following:

**Recommendation 1:** That the Treasurer of Covenant East Classis be instructed to provide $9,000 from the Student Aid Fund to our Student-Under-Care, Mr. Steve Carr for the 2013-2014 school year. This aid shall be distributed on a schedule which is mutually agreeable to the Treasurer and Mr. Carr.

**Executive Circular - Volume 27, Number 3 – January 22, 2014**

This circular included information on deadlines and meeting details for the Spring Classis meeting. It also provided the following information on the annual Pre-classis Fellowship and Discussion.

The Executive Committee has again called for an organized discussion on the evening we all arrive. This discussion will run from 7:00-8:30 p.m., on March 3, 2014. We have asked Rev. Jeff De Boer to present to us this year. He is no stranger to most of us, having served as pastor of Peace RCUS in Garner, IA, from 2000-2007. Rev. De Boer is currently nearing the completion of his D. Min. at Covenant Theological Seminary, and is pastoring Hope Evangelical (PCA) in North Liberty, IA. The topic he will lead us through is "Lessons from Titus on how to connect Faith and Faithfulness."

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Randy Klynsma, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Elder Steve Stuebbe

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

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## B. Candidates and Credentials Committee

Esteemed Brethren,

Our Committee did not conduct any exams or have any business brought before it but as Chairman I am forwarding the reports from Students-Under-Care with their request for Student Aid for the coming year, with the recommendation that we overture Synod for said support for the following:

For Christopher Campbell, **Tuition:** $2000, **Books:** $400.

For Cody Schwichtenberg, **Tuition:** $5200 for seminary support at Heidelberg Theological Seminary with this explanation - the amount is higher than previous years due to the fact that he will be taking two one credit homiletic courses along with his regular course load.

**Books:** $400.00

Please see their annual reports and requests attached. I have not received a report from Steven Carr yet at the time of sending in this report.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Wesley Brice, Rev. Ron Potter, Rev. Jay Fluck,
Elder Walt Van Heest, Elder Dan Wright

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

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## C. Interchurch Relations Committee

Dear Brothers,

Your committee made efforts to maintain and further our fraternal relationships within the bounds of the classis. Letters of invitation to attend our Spring classis meeting were sent to OPC presbytery, two URCNA classes, one CanRC classis. We have not sent an invitation to the RPCNA presbytery. We received numerous invitations to classis and presbytery meetings this past year, including the CanRC Ontario West Classis, the OPC presbyteries of Ohio and of the Midwest, the URCNA Classis Central and Eastern classis. We have not had a delegate from the Midwest Presbytery or the Classis Central US for a couple of years.

Men from our classis were delegated to represent us at the OPC Presbytery of the Midwest September meeting, Classis Central US URCNA, October meeting. We expect to have a delegate attend the CanRC Classis Ontario West, March 2014 meeting. Reports on those meetings will be presented by those men who attended.

In terms of general ecumenical activities to report, in October 2014, Redeemer Reformed Church, with Emmaus Road Reformed Church, and St. Paul's Evangelical Church in Hamburg invited Mission OPC to a joint Reformation service. Rev. Ryan Kron was invited to speak. We had a good representation of all these congregations. We plan to hold another Reformation service in 2014 with these same churches.

The local RCUS and OPC ministers in Central Minnesota and Western Wisconsin have begun meeting on a monthly basis for fellowship and some book reviews. This is a wonderful and edifying development for us all. These are all good and solidly reformed men. Rev. Kyle Sorensen is also involved in a similar ministerial gathering with OPC ministers in his area. We would urge all of the ministers in our classis to seek out such fraternal gatherings wherever possible. Such fellowship and interaction is invaluable to truly know and pray with and for each other and strengthen our fraternal bonds.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. James Sawtelle, Rev. Randall Klynsma, Rev. Ryan Kron, Mr. Don Weilersbacher

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

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## D. Missions Committee

Dear Brothers:

Your Committee recently conducted visitations at Eden Prairie, MN, Waymart, PA, and Rogers, AR. A meeting was also held with a small group at Blue Bell, PA. A summary of these visits and events during the past year follows:

**Waymart, Pennsylvania.**

On January 27th, Classis Missions committee members, Rev. Dan Schnabel and Elder Dale Harms, visited Heritage Reformed Church. After dinner, we had time to speak with the members, and then sat in on their annual meeting. Later, we met with Rev. Potter and His wife Sharon, and the next morning with the consistory. After one year as a particularized church they are very united and happy to see the Lord's blessings. There is a strong bond within the group and continued thankfulness for the service of Rev. Potter among them. Their membership is currently at 14 communicant members and 6 baptized children, one of which was a covenant child born last year.

Rev. Potter is preaching through Ezekiel and also John 13, as well as other appropriate texts for the church year. Catechetical instruction of the whole congregation continues prior to the Lord's Day worship. Through the month there are studies on

Calvin. For outreach they have finished "The Truth Project", and have moved to Bible studies in various homes, and are considering other locations. They advertise by using a professionally designed website, free newspaper listings, and notification at a local campground.

As for finances, there was some improvement, with increased tithes this past year. Rev. Potter continues to work doing refinishing of antiques to assist with their income. Rev. Potter and Sharon also expressed their deep gratitude for the help of the benevolent aid they receive toward health care costs. He has also been preaching at Reformation Church in Blue Bell, which has helped financially. The Heritage congregation is also deeply thankful for the benevolent aid they received last year. They ask if this could continue with a reduction of $100 monthly, to $400 per month. They will continue to receive assistance toward Synod and Classis guidelines from Peace Reformed of Napoleon, OH until June of this year.

**Reformation Church, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania**

In 2013, Rev. Ron Potter and Rev. Jay Fluck (whose mother attends the church) began providing some pulpit supply for the Reformation Church in Blue Bell. The city of Blue Bell is a suburb of Philadelphia, about 20 minutes from Westminster Seminary. This group has not only expressed interest in joining the RCUS, they have already received their attestations from the Canadian Reformed Church of Dunville, Ontario. Those were passed to the consistory of Heritage RCUS, and the people are in the process of joining there. For this reason, committee members, Elder Dale Harms and Rev. Daniel Schnabel, along with Rev. Ron Potter and Rev. Jay Fluck, met with church members the evening of January 28th. Along with Rev. Potter's wife, Sharon, we were graciously hosted by Ken and Mary Hanko. Ken is a former pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church and served as the church's elder. The group meeting included other members, such as David Sawyer (trained at Westminster Seminary, but not previously ordained), David Hanko, and Barbara Fluck.

The church currently has 6 communicants, and 3 baptized children in attendance. They gather in the historic building of the Old Union Meeting House. It is owned by a cemetery committee, which provides use of the Meeting House to this group for free. The only requirement is the maintenance of the building and property. The Reformation Church also rents to the Korean Presbyterian Church in America. By allowing their parking lot to be used by the nearby office building they have free maintenance and snow removal.

The church was originally a member of the OPC. After the presbytery stepped in over a matter, the congregation split into three groups. The original congregation joined the Canadian Reformed Church in 1985. Membership declined when the Premier School Agenda publishing house sold their local business, where a number of members had worked. Their last pastor left in July 2012. He was strongly influenced by Norman Shepherd, but the congregation is not. Since that time, there have been sermon readings on Sundays, as well as pastors of the Canadian Reformed Classis Ontario and the URC filling in. The Canadian Reformed Church encouraged them to seek out the local RCUS pastors, which are closer.

In August, Rev. Potter and Rev. Fluck started preaching there on a regular basis. The congregation strongly holds to the Three Forms of Unity. In worship, they follow the Canadian Reformed directory of worship with prepared confessions of sin and written prayers. The last pastor influenced the church towards weekly communion. There is obviously a strong affinity for this practice. Your committee directly asked if they considered the worship of the Lord and the preaching of God's word as incomplete,

without weekly observance of the Lord Supper. They all replied they did not view it as incomplete. Your committee believes it would be wise for our Classis to give direction to the Spiritual Counsel of Heritage Reformed regarding weekly communion. The members were also asked if would they would submit, if Classis ruled against weekly communion,. They all agreed that they would. It was clear, however, that one member would push for the ruling to change. Overall your committee, as well as Rev. Potter and Rev. Fluck, did not find other issues or their understanding of the Reformed faith to be out of line with the RCUS. They do not want to operate as an independent church, nor go to another denomination, which is not a Three Forms of Unity church.

Your committee believes Classis should consider Reformation Church, Blue Bell, as a possible mission in order to reach the northwest Philadelphia suburbs. While the town's population is 6,067 people, the county's population is just under 800,000. Forbes in 2008 listed this county as the 9th best place in the USA to raise a family. The average household income is from $94,000 to $106,000. Also, 61% of the people have a bachelor's degree, and 23% have a graduate or professional degree. The closest OPC church is 9 minutes away and there are a total of 4 such churches within 35 minutes, all to the east, northeast and south of Blue Bell. The initial response of some in the OPC has also been favorable to Blue Bell joining us. Having a mission in this area would be a great opportunity, since Reformation Church is the only Three Forms of Unity congregation in the Philadelphia area. We consider this a prime location to reach the northwest suburbs of Philadelphia with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Reformed faith.

**Eden Prairie, Minnesota.**

On January 15th, Rev. Harvey Opp, Elder Tom Renner, Rev. Dan Schnabel, and SHMC member Mori Willemsen visited Emmaus Road RCUS. Committee members met first at the parsonage, in Bloomington, which was purchased in the summer. It is a split level, 4 bedroom, 3 bath home, which is 4 miles from the Eden Lake Elementary School, where their Sunday services are held. The price was $350,000, and a $250,000 loan was received from an RCUS source. Interest only is being paid currently, as suggested by the lender. Therefore, savings are being accumulated toward a future church building. A five year plan for such is in place, and the cost of a church building could exceed one million dollars.

The visitation continued at Eden Prairie Senior Center with Pastor Kron and the 2 elders and 2 deacons of the church, as organized last spring. There was also time for input from about 6 other members who braved a very snowy Wednesday evening. Normally, there are four different groups, numbering about 40 adults who study Romans at that time. The church now has a total of 65 communicants and baptized members. It is common to have 1-2 new visitors each Lord's Day, and 80-90 members and visitors at a service. Membership classes are ongoing, and 9 visitors completed the course by Christmas.

Rev. Kron has been preaching from Luke and the Psalms. As for Sunday School, there are 3 children's classes of various ages, using Great Commission materials. Rev. Kron teaches the adult class, as regarding worship, the Ten Commandments, etc. There is a catechism class of four youth. Six men are studying the Westminster Confession. A number of men took officer training in the past year, and 'leadership training' for all men will begin soon. Outreach efforts include ads in a community mailer, on radio, the church web site – emmausrcus.org, a blog, sermonaudio.com, and most of all, personal invitations. There are only a few reformed congregations in the metro area, including 2 OPC congregations and Redeemer RCUS.

As for the congregation, a good nucleus resides in the area not far from the rented school. Consistent attendance is seen, and the elders do family visitation. The report is that "personal investment" in the church is growing, so that many say it "feels like family". That is a blessing, since there is no significant amount of natural kinship. They share church meals once per month.

As explanations for the quick numerical growth the following were suggested: thirst for the gospel and for orthodoxy, many in the area are tired of mega church situations, and Emmaus fills a niche, so there are people of many different backgrounds. Above all, continual prayer is key - which a group of them undertakes on the first Saturday morning of each month. May all of our churches take that 'key' most seriously!

Emmaus Road is doing very well in all aspects seen by your committee, including finances. (They did not request any financial support.) However, they desire their own church building in the future. Therefore, we believe that Synod and Classis support should continue in the next fiscal year, although at a final year's level. Also, we would seek approval that the Synod Day of Prayer offering go to Emmaus, since the church has never received it, and the offering will be an aid to their building fund. Proposed support is $1,000 from Synod, and $7,000 from Classis, an overall reduction of $7,000, or 10% of original support.

**Rogers, Arkansas.**

Rev. Harvey Opp and Elder Tom Renner conducted the AR visitation the evening of February 6th, meeting at the Grace RCUS church building! After more than 10 years of services in rented rooms, this acquisition was a great blessing for the congregation. The first use of the building, at 3320 N. 2nd St., in Rogers, was at the beginning of November. Their annual Reformation Conference was held there. The building has a capacity of about 100 people. The property includes 3 acres and a 3 bedroom house. The price was $185,000, purchased with a Synod loan of $77,000, and a bank loan of $60,000. They also replaced roofing on both structures, and have savings in case the older A/C or furnace would go out. They have more visitors with this building - for a total of approximately 50, including members, at their services.

It was reported that Rev. Brice has been in good health, having the strength to 'serve well' in care for the congregation. Spiritual growth is seen in the continuing unity, as they serve the Lord together. There is 'sweet harmony' among the four Consistory members. New people have come in the past year, and two families are in a membership class. Increased visitors are also anticipated, after obtaining a new lighted sign which is next to the busy road from Pea Ridge, along which their property is located. They currently have 27 communicants and 2 baptized children on the roll.

The worship service is held at 10 AM, with three Sunday School classes following for the ages of kindergarten, young adult, and adult. Rev. Brice teaches the adult class, mostly from the Belgic Confession, and regarding topics such as 'post-modernism'. Every other Sunday, they enjoy a church meal together, and have a prayer time afterward. One of the men conducts that time, with psalms, taking requests, and asking for prayer to be offered as suitable for each request. The time is one of blessing in what is described as an 'outspoken congregation', working in accord.

As for outreach, the church web site continues to be a means of bringing visitors. They also have a weekly church listing in a newspaper. Rev. Brice meets with 4 men at a restaurant each week, and there are conversations on spiritual matters with some who drop by. A group of 11 youth from our Manitowoc congregation visited, and handed out material door-to-door last summer, in the church neighborhood. It was a good

experience for all, and the youth were impressed with the Grace congregation being so excited about the reformed faith.

We then met with Rev. Brice and Deacon Sam Hillyer to go over their budget form. In 2013, the congregation received over $19,000, including the 2012 Synod Day of Prayer offering, which helped them purchase the property. Having a mortgage, they do expect to use some savings to meet their budget for several years. Yet, that trend may well be reversed with the giving of newcomers. The congregation is prepared to take a 5% decrease in support from Synod and Classis. Also, yearly increases are budgeted for the support of their pastor and his eventual retirement!

**Strategic Plan for Missions**

In fulfillment of the Synod requirement for each Classis to develop and annually update a 3-5 year plan for its mission endeavors, we offer the following:

1. We believe that Grace RCUS will make good progress in self-support within that time frame.
2. With Emmaus Road becoming self-supporting, we will be open to starting another suitable mission work.
3. We believe our Classis work, Waymart, PA, can progress toward self-support within that time frame.

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

1. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA, with $350 per month, a total of $4,200 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014, for rent and associated costs. [Same as last year.]

2. That Classis provide Emmaus Road RCUS with $583 per month, a total of $7,000 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $6,000, 20% of original support.]

3. That Classis overture Synod to provide Emmaus Road RCUS with $83 per month, a total of $1,000 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $1,000, 2.5% of original support.]

4. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with $480 per month, a total of $5,760 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $720, 5% of original support.]

5. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas, with $240 per month, a total of $2,880 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $720, 5% of original support.]

6. That our Classis Judicial Committee advise, or give a judgment, concerning weekly communion.

7. That Classis consider the possibility of Blue Bell, as a mission work of Classis, upon further evaluation.

8. That Classis overture the Synod Home Missions Committee that Emmaus Road RCUS might receive the 2014 Synod Day of Prayer offering.

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Harvey Opp, Rev. Steve Altman, Rev. Dan Schnabel
Elder Dale Harms, Elder Tom Renner, Elder Randy Schroeder, Elder Marc Wiersma

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

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**E. Publications**

No committee was formed.

## Reports of Officers

**A. President's Report**

*"Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them."* Deut. 7:9-11

Deuteronomy 7 is a remarkable chapter. It reveals the wonder of redemption and salvation. While addressing the Israelites before they enter the Promised Land, it describes the unilateral nature of God's love and His determination to save a people for Himself. In the verses just before these he says that they were not a special nation… in fact, they were not a nation at all. He then affirms His sovereignty and the fact, as C.S. Lewis occasionally alludes, He is not a "tame Lion." We cannot make Him to do our will. He is the Almighty and in Him we live and move and have our being.

You see, God is not the god of our imagination. He is not as we might like or want Him to be. While He is loving and compassionate and merciful, He is also a consuming fire. He is not slack toward those who hate him. In fact we're told He will repay him to his face. Our God is faithful and true; He is the covenant keeping God. One of my favorite phrases in these verses (in vs. 9) affirms that He "keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations." Just think on this, "for a thousand generations…" almost time immemorial. God will be true and every man found a liar. To what affect are all these words? Well, they're supposed to get our attention. They're supposed form our faith and conviction about God and the nature of our relationship to Him. In short: Remember, believe and do what He says.

As I've read and reviewed the parochial reports of the pastors serving the churches of Covenant East Classis, it is clear that the work of the ministry is being done. We can and should rejoice that each of our pulpits is filled and that our pastors are enjoying sufficient health to continue their labors.

This is not to say that our ministers have not had burdens to bear or perfect health, but rather that through each of their trials their needs have been supplied. Perhaps the best example of this is Pastor Steve Altman of the Peace Reformed Church in Napoleon, OH. He has gone through two hip replacement surgeries. These surgeries

were done a month or two apart and he now reports being nearly pain free. We rejoice with Steve, his family and the Peace Reformed Church. It also been reported that one of the effects of these operations is that he is now over an inch taller than before the surgeries. ☺ Pastor Altman also shared something of the joys and sorrows of the Gospel ministry. While they had three infant baptisms and five professions of faith, they also had several members removed from the roll. He shares the burden of pastoring:

> "We have witnessed God's restoring grace, and we have also seen the tragic consequences stemming from the grip that sin seeks so desperately to place around the necks of God's people. I am sad to say that though we have rejoiced at the additions to our congregation this year, through both new members, and visitors who have been returning regularly, six of our members were administratively erased. It grieves my heart as a pastor to see that, yet I trust and know in my heart, from the Word of God, that God is faithfully building His Church for His glory. I pray for those who have left, that God will bring them to the place of peace and joy in Jesus Christ, where they can, once again, faithfully enjoy worshipping among the people of God wherever they are!"

Another notable event was the culmination of the mother-daughter church plant between the Minneapolis/Eden Prairie congregations. Pastor Ryan Kron reports:

> "By the grace of God, our first elders and deacons were ordained and installed at Emmaus Road Reformed Church on March 24, 2013. We praise God from whom all blessings flow for calling these men to shepherd and care for the flock of God. Currently we have two elders and two deacons serving."

Of this same event Pastor Jim Sawtelle adds "I was privileged to preside at the organizational meeting for Emmaus Road Reformed Church and participated in the installation service of Rev. Ryan Kron as pastor of Emmaus." We rejoice with them in this work and the Lord's blessing upon their labors. Perhaps this will be a continuing model that can be often repeated.

Rev. Wesley Brice, on behalf of the Grace Reformed Church of Northwest Arkansas, joyfully shares the story of how they have found and were able to purchase a church building.

> "….at about the middle of last [year] we heard about a church building that had just come on the market at 3320 North Second Street in Rogers, Arkansas and this time offers were made, received, conditional use permit sought and granted and with thankful hearts we are now in own building, rejoicing and giving God thanks for answered prayer….I remember that at the close of our first worship service our new building, a member of our church, Sally Green, said to me, "I know that the building is not the church, but worshipping here this morning sure felt a lot more like being in church." We all understand what she meant; for it is true the church is not the building, for the church is the body of Christ, and it is the worshippers in the building that is the

church. But there is something about pews and pulpits and an organ that does make it "feel" more like a church."

Several pastors and consistories identified ways that they were intentionally trying to involve the membership into the life and ministry of the Church. Some spoke of having their youth accompany the singing in worship and actively participate by serving refreshments. Other congregations have tried to organize a plan for hospitality for visitors. Several consistories are trying to become more involved in the lives of the families and individuals of the church. Some are being more active in prayer, others are endeavoring to make monthly contact by phone calls and emails with the members assigned to them. One congregation shared a practical idea that has been a blessing to them:

> "One practice we've started, which has been well received, is identifying one family or member per week as our *Focus Family (or Member) of the Week.* Prior to the Lord's Day the pastor contacts them for an update on how things are going and asks if they have any prayer requests. Then before the congregational prayer, he shares these items and prays for them specifically."

Several of our churches have made use of Focus on the Families' The Truth Project. This is a 13 Lesson DVD Series that covers many aspects of the Christian Worldview. While it is not perfect, it conveys a great deal of information in a systematic and understandable way. It gives full weight to the Bible's Authority and "brings in experts" like RC Sproul, Ravi Zacharias, and Os Guinness to explain doctrines that can be hard to understand. In short our congregations are providing a fruitful setting for spiritual growth and study. Most congregations have Bible Studies, men's and women's groups meeting for fellowship and mutual learning.

The reports also indicate that our ministers are laboring toward the instruction of the youth. Not only does each charge instruct their youth in catechism and prepare them for confirmation, but most of the ministers have participated in our Summer Covenant Youth Camp. As a Classis we remain grateful for the faithful labors of the Manitowoc congregation and Rev. Sorensen for the organizing and hosting of each year's camp. THANK-YOU! We are grateful for all that you do. It is a wonderful blessing to us all.

Several congregations continue to work with men who are under care or are being mentored while studying for the Gospel ministry. To this end two congregations have taken on Summer Interns and been able to encourage and provide the students with opportunities to gain experience in the work of ministry. One of these mentoring relationships might even be the catalyst for a new outreach ministry to the Chinese college community in the greater Minneapolis area. Pastor Sawtelle reports:

> "We want to explore some specific ways we can utilize the unique gifts and opportunities we have locally to further our efforts in evangelism. We are looking into developing an outreach to Chinese students at the U of M. We have two Chinese families [attending]; one of the men is taking distance classes at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary."

As we pray for Christ's Church, we ought also pray for those who will, the Lord willing, become her future pastors, elders and deacons.

The statistical reports show that overall our congregations are doing quite well. Most changes reflect the normal flow of congregational life. Most (if not all) have been able to pay their classical and synodical guidelines and a couple have made substantial progress in paying down their building debt. While our communicant membership numbers haven't changed much, there have been some significant shifts. With the completion of the mother-daughter church relationship of the Minneapolis congregations, 50 members were dismissed to the newly formed Eden Prairie congregation. With their new officers, they have added to the number of active elders and deacons actively serving the Classis.

In addition to the work of pastoring on a local congregational level, it was interesting to note the additional ministry activities that our pastors are doing. In addition to leadership positions with the denomination, we have men who volunteer with police departments, and emergency response units, engage in prison ministry, participate in NAPARC assemblies (and serve as Secretary). Some serve on boards of seminaries and international ministries, attended the International Council of Reformed Churches and Inter Church Relations meeting. Others have extended fraternal greetings at various church assemblies and challenged others to continued faithfulness to the authority of God's Holy Word. Still others have been involved in the life of their communities through sports and educational activities.

Overall, we can rejoice in all that the Lord has done and is continuing to do through the churches of Covenant East Classis. Our covenant God is faithful and true. His Word will not change. As Christ boldly proclaimed, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will never pass away."* The question for us as a church is not whether God's Word is true or whether it is understandable. We stand on the heads and shoulders of generations of believers who have known, believed and proclaimed the Truth. These teachings are summarized in our creeds and confessions. They ARE "the Faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The question for us (and all of every age) is do we truly believe it and have we been transformed by it?

This is where we stand and this is what we believe. And here, by God's sustaining grace, we shall remain.

Sincerely, your co-laborer in the Gospel,
Randall Klynsma

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**Classis Action**:
The report was to be spread in the official minutes, 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,

It has been a privilege to serve as your Stated Clerk for another year. Following the 2013 Spring Classis Meeting the minutes of the 28th 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 2013 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 our Classis.

In addition three Executive Circulars were sent out this year. Together with the president of Classis, I secured a speaker for our pre-Classis discussion to be held at this meeting. I also handled the paperwork and was part of advising Rev. Ryan Kron on the process of the acceptance of the call to Emmaus Road RCUS in Eden Prairie, MN. I also served as Clerk for our communications with Sovereign Grace Church of Gettysburg, PA.

For this meeting, all the congregations were very timely with sending in your information. THANKS. In several cases, there were some errors which required a series of back and forth e-mails with church treasurers and pastors to straighten out the numbers. When the forms come in on time, this makes it possible to fix such discrepancies.

Last year Classis authorized me to investigate how to create fillable forms for handling statistics forms and credentials. I did some further research, including using options like Google Docs, but the process of retyping the master form into a new format, which then has to be submitted to others, exported back onto my computer, reformatted, etc., was simply more work and hassle than it takes to just manually enter in the info for our 9 congregations. Perhaps some ambitious volunteer will want to take a crack at it. There are more technologically savvy people than me out there.

I have received one necrology. Please submit any more as soon as possible for publishing in the 2014 Abstract, so that we might honor the memory of these elders and ministers whom God called home this year and used in such mighty ways in His Church here on earth.

I wish to use this report to announce to you that if you have already elected me to serve as Stated Clerk in 2014, this will be my last year. I have learned much from the Lord and from you during this journey since I was appointed clerk pro-tem in May of 2007. I believe it is time for other men to have this same experience and to use their leadership skills in this way. I have noticed repeatedly over the past two years many delegates of Classis depending upon me to get things done or keep things running smoothly. As exciting as it is to be on such a momentary power-trip, it is dangerous as well. I am ready to share.

As **each of you** considers whether God may be calling you to serve as the next Stated Clerk, I would offer these thoughts. The Clerk's work involves more than the preparation for Classis and preparation of the Abstract. It takes around a week's worth of work in late April/early May to prepare everything properly that needs to go to Synod. Also, the Clerk serves as advisor to the President throughout the year, and must be ready to put into words the mind of the Executive Committee in all their various communications throughout the year. It is a challenging and rewarding job. You really know what is going on within the Classis, and get a better sense of God's work across the nation.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen, Stated Clerk

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

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

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 267th Synod, there are some items that the Classes should take note of:

1. Classes should take note of the corrections that should be made to their minutes as adopted by the Synod (267th Abstract, pp. 79-80).

2. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the *calendar* year.

3. Please take note of the changes to standing rules #2 and #3 which respectively read: "The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod May 1"; "The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk May 1."

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 Classis meeting.

5. Please take note of Standing Ministerial Aid recommendation 8 (2013 Abstract page 76), that pursuant to Article 28 of the RCUS Constitution, Classes shall not consider a pastoral call letter as "adequate support" to the temporal needs of the called pastor, unless retirement is addressed and funded in the terms of the call.

6. Please take note of the Treasurer's request that the treasurers of the various churches be reminded to comply with Synod standing rule 8 with regard to designating for which fund the monies delivered to the RCUS are to be attributed.

7. The Classes are reminded that the 268th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 19-22, 2014, at Emmanuel Reformed Church, Sutton, NE.

Respectfully submitted,
David Fagrey, Stated Clerk, RCUS

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

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**D. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Jim Drewes presented the following report.

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**Classis Action**: The report was adopted. It was also audited by the Standing Finances Committee and found to be in order.

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| **Fund Balances (July 2013 thru Feb 2014 YTD)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Starting Balance – July 1, 2013** | | | **$107,913.22** |
| | | | |
| **General Fund** **Balance 06/30/13** | $ 1,260.34 | | |
| Receipts | $ 3,651.20 | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expenses | $ 198.91 | | |
| **Balance 2/28/14** | | $ 4,712.63 | |
| | | | |
| ***Missions Fund** **Balance 06/30/13** | $ 91,197.51 | | |
| Receipts | $ 6,693.86 | | |
| Expenses | $ 17,229.60 | | |
| **Balance 2/28/14** | | $ 80,591.77 | |
| | | | |
| **Benevolence Fund** **Balance 6/30/13** | $ 12,500.44 | | |
| Receipts | $ 4,462.57 | | |
| Expenses | $ 13,064.00 | | |
| **Balance 2/28/14** | | $ 3,899.01 | |
| | | | |
| **Student Aid Fund** **Balance 6/30/13** | $ 2,594.93 | | |
| Receipts | $ 5,476.80 | | |
| Expenses | $ 7,200.00 | | |
| **Balance 2/28/14** | | $ 1,231.73 | |
| | | | |
| **ENDING Balance February 28, 2014** | | | **$ 90,435.14** |
| | | | |
| *Current $64,008.30 - $8,664 for Emmaus Road RCUS= $55,344.30 available for future CEC Mission works | | | |

## Detailed Income Report (July 2013 thru Feb 2014 YTD)

| | | 18% | + 33% | + 22% | + 27% | =100% | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Guideline Total $66** | | $ 12 | + $ 22 | + $ 14 | + $ 18 | = $ 66 | | |
| | **Members** | **General** | **Missions** | **Benevolence** | **Student Aid** | **Budget** | **Totals YTD** | **Due 6/15/14** |
| NW Arkansas | 28 | $336 | $616 | $392 | $504 | $1,848 | $1,108.80 | $739.20 |
| Eden Prairie, MN | 37 | $444 | $814 | $518 | $666 | $2,442 | $2,442.00 | $0.00 |
| Garner, IA | 86 | $1,032 | $1,892 | $1,204 | $1,548 | $5,676 | $2,838.00 | $2,838.00 |
| Hamburg, MN | 208 | $2,496 | $4,576 | $2,912 | $3,744 | $13,728 | $0.00 | $13,728.00 |
| Kansas City, MO | 51 | $612 | $1,122 | $714 | $918 | $3,366 | $0.00 | $3,366.00 |
| Manitowoc, WI | 158 | $1,896 | $3,476 | $2,212 | $2,844 | $10,428 | $6,083.00 | $4,345.00 |
| Minneapolis, MN | 95 | $1,140 | $2,090 | $1,330 | $1,710 | $6,270 | $3,135.00 | $3,135.00 |
| Napoleon, OH | 68 | $816 | $1,496 | $952 | $1,224 | $4,488 | $4,488.00 | $0.00 |
| Waymart, PA | 20 | $240 | $440 | $280 | $360 | $1,320 | $0.00 | $1,320.00 |
| **Totals** | **751** | **$9,012** | **$16,522** | **$10,514** | **$13,518** | **$49,566** | **$20,094.80** | **$29,471.20** |
| | | | | | | Other income and interest | | $189.63 |
| **Income Total** | | **$3,651.20** | **$ 6,693.86** | **$ 4,462.57** | **$ 5,476.80** | | | **$20,284.43** |

## Detailed Expense Report (July 2013 thru Feb 2014 YTD)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **General Fund Expense** | | | |
| Spring Classis Meeting | $ | - | |
| Clerk/Printing & supplies | $ | - | |
| Travel | $ | - | |
| Honorarium | $ | - | |
| Postage/Phone/Conf Calls | | $ 198.91 | |
| **Total** | | | **$ 198.91** |
| **Mission Fund Expense** | | | |
| Grace Reformed Church | $ | 4,320.00 | |
| Heritage Reformed Church | $ | 2,800.00 | |
| Emmaus Road Reformed Church | $ | 8,664.00 | |
| Travel | $ | 1,515.60 | |
| **Total** | | | **$17,299.60** |
| **Benevolence** | | | |
| Heritage Reformed Church | $ | 4,000.00 | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Medical - Fluck | $ 5,264.00 | | |
| Medical - Potter | $ 3,800.00 | | |
| | **Total** | **$13,064.00** | |
| **Student Aid** | | | |
| Schwichtenberg, Cody | $ 1,200.00 | | |
| Carr, Steve | $ 6,000.00 | | |
| | **Total** | **$7,200.00** | |
| | | **Expense Total** | **$37,762.51** |
| **Total Classis Income vs Expense July 2013- Feb 2014** | | | **-$17,478.08** |

Respectfully Submitted, Jim Drewes, Treasurer

## Parochial Reports of Ministers

Each minister read his parochial report. 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.

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

## Constitutional Questions to the Elders

The President addressed the questions found in article 81 of the *RCUS Constitution* to the elder delegates of each congregation. A brief time of further questions for the elders followed the official answers found below:

1. Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God?
   All churches 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 churches answered "Yes."

3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:
   a. Is visitation faithfully performed?
      All churches answered "Yes," except Minneapolis, which answered, "Yes, needs improvement."

   b. Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution?
      All churches answered "Yes," except Minneapolis, which answered "Yes, needs improvement."

4. Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution?
   All churches 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 churches answered "Yes."
    b. Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer?
        All churches answered "Yes."
    c. Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the guidelines for giving?
        All churches answered "Yes."
    d. Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer?
        All churches answered "Yes."

6. Are the Church records properly kept?
    All churches answered "Yes."

7a. Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge?
    All churches answered "Yes."

7b. Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs?
    All churches answered "Yes."

## Report of Membership and Financial Statistics

The Stated Clerk provided a table of statistics based on the information submitted by the churches of classis (see Appendix #3, pages ?? of this abstract). This report was adopted.

## Reports from Classis Delegates to Fraternal Bodies

Classis Eastern U.S. of the URCNA was visited by Rev. Randy Klynsma, who gave a verbal summary of his fraternal visit.

## Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Churches or Visitors

Rev. John VanWoudenberg, fraternal delegate of Classis Niagara of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches, addressed the body. A time for questions from the delegates followed. Rev. James Sawtelle led the body in prayer for the fraternal delegate and his respective churches.

## Reports of Special Committees

### A. Installation Committee of Rev. Ryan Kron

Dear Brothers,

On May 19, 2013, your committee carried out the task of installing Rev. Ryan Kron as pastor of Emmaus Road Reformed Church, Eden Prairie.

Presiding ministers conducting this worship service of installation were Pastors Dan Schnabel and James Sawtelle. Pastor Sawtelle conducted the service and gave the charge to the minister from 1 Timothy 4:11-16, *A Successful Ministry.* Pastor Schnabel gave the charge to the congregation from Hebrews 13:7-25, addressing *Your God Given Relationship to Your Pastor*.

In His service,
Rev. James Sawtelle, Rev. Dan Schnabel

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

**B. Committee to Consult with Sovereign Grace Church, Gettysburg, PA**

Your Executive Committee, along with the able assistance of Rev. Ron Potter, maintained contact with Sovereign Grace Church (SGC) of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This past year has been the busiest year for our committee, full of communications, letters, and phone calls among ourselves and also with the Session of SGC. We held a conference call as a committee in August and we met by conference call in November to which we invited Rev. Jay Fluck. We found it necessary to have a third conference call in December, to which we invited a RCUS minister who was repeatedly being accused of false teaching by the Session of SGC. On that matter, let us make it plain to everyone that the case is not settled, because there is no case to begin with. No charges have been filed, and our conversation with the minister was to specifically enable us to better respond to the concerns being repeatedly raised in the SGC letters to us.

Between all these conference calls were exchanges of letters between our Committee and the Session. There were many issues raised throughout this time, and it is impossible to include them all in a report like this. One issue which your committee kept a singular focus on in 2013 was the mandate which Classis gave us regarding our involvement with SGC: "to set a reasonable deadline for their application to join the RCUS." (*2013 Abstract*, 37) After seeking to address the largest of their concerns as we saw it, we then requested that they present to their annual congregational meeting in early 2014 a vote on whether to join the RCUS. We set this deadline for them in our letter to the Session of SGC dated November 14, 2013, and again in our letter to them on January 3, 2014.

The answer of the Session of SGC was that they desire to bring the issue up for a vote, but did not think it wise until some level of resolution can be given to the congregation about the issues they have raised. Your committee, however, wonders how widespread within the congregation these reservations really are. How would the Session be able to determine that? There seem to be a few people on the Session with reservations, but many more within the congregation and Session who are ready to join the RCUS at this time.

Classis delegates will remember that last year we heard from the session of SGC that their Constitution was nearly completed and they would like our informal feedback. Your committee did this review, and gave recommendations for revising 15 different articles of their Constitution.

This Committee is glad to have the opportunity to meet with most of the Session of SGC at this Classis meeting. They have invited us repeatedly to travel to Gettysburg or to another location for a special meeting this past year. As we reviewed the letters they had sent, we decided it was wisest to pursue the route we took before meeting in person. In hindsight, we would not have been able to have the necessary information we gleaned through all our conference calls if we would have met in person with the Session of SGC before now.

Before laying out a summary of the issues that remain to be answered, we want to remind Classis delegates as well as the Session of SGC of our history together. In the Spring of 2007, Covenant East Classis was contacted by Sovereign Grace Church with their request to pursue union with the RCUS. We sent a committee there in April 2007, and again in September 2008 after some tragic moral failures by their pastor which led to

his discipline and eventual excommunication. They were a congregation seeking to be Reformed, longing to uphold the doctrines of grace, and needing direction. Their lay elders provided the spiritual and practical leadership they were able to give for many years. After continued contacts with the RCUS, we agreed to allow a minister to labor outside our ecclesiastical bounds as pastor of their congregation. Rev. Jay Fluck has been working on the scene since June 2011. During the past 7 years, and particularly the last 3 years, the members and Session of SGC have really come to know the RCUS and have started adjusting their worship and Constitution in preparation for union. Some members of our classis have gotten to know them, but because of time and distance, we desire to know one another better.

This Committee believes that after the discussion held on the floor of this classis meeting, the time of decision has come. The Congregation of Sovereign Grace Church needs to be given the opportunity to express their Biblical faith and choose what denomination to join. The members of Classis need to understand clearly the beliefs and perspectives of SGC so that they can decide how to respond to a potential request to join the RCUS. Just as SGC has been investigating the RCUS for 7 years, the RCUS needs to be certain that SGC, like our current local congregations, would be an accurate representative of the RCUS in doctrine and practice, by God's grace.

<u>Some of the questions that we would like to discuss with the SGC representatives include</u>:

1. What is your relationship with other Christian churches? How do and will you express that relationship?
    a. With whom would you exchange pulpits?
    b. To what church(es) would you dismiss a member?
    c. Who can attend the Lord's Supper at SGC?
    d. In what situation, if ever, is it appropriate for your pastor/members to participate with other churches in community events, prayer gatherings?
    e. What is your plan for how you intend to relate to the OPC as a denomination, and to its members and church officers?

2. What is your understanding of the subscription vow made by RCUS officers?
    a. Your answer to us in your most recent letter is "We have read and studied the three Forms of Unity and are readily willing to (and already do) submit to the truth that is faithfully declared in them."

<u>Some of the questions that the SGC representatives would like to discuss with Classis include:</u>

1. From SGC Session, Letter dated 1-15-2014, "Brothers, there is but one impediment that stands in our way from whole-heartedly joining the RCUS. It is not an issue with the proposed constitution. It is not an issue with the creeds and confessions of the church. It is not any one pastor, nor is it circumstantial. It is clarifying the doctrine of the gospel and how that doctrine is lived and practiced day to day in the RCUS."

    a. Our Committee answers SGC by saying that we are surprised that you are still unclear on what the doctrine of the gospel is among

the RCUS. You must have had some sort of clarity before ever pursuing us years ago. In our years of contact, now, you have seen our teaching and practice at Classis meetings and worship services, in the leadership of one of our own pastors, and in the training of your congregation through the Heidelberg Catechism. We have taught some of your youth at our summer Church Camp, and several of our pastors have been guest speakers at your summer camp.

b. What precisely are you looking for us to say or confess? It seems that you may be looking for us to agree with statements that are comfortable to your way of thinking, but are not specifically stated in our creeds. Could this be a partial reason for some of the difficulty in our communications?

2. For the sake of the delegates of Classis, we will copy below some of the list of questions you (SGC) raise in your most recent letter….
    a. "Is Arminianism a "different gospel" and a "false gospel" according to the apostle Paul?"
    b. "Does the Spirit of Christ preach a message that God has made salvation simply possible?"
    c. "Are those who believe and/or preach a message of 'salvation made possible' to be regarded as regenerate?"
    d. "Is God's election of grace the 'good news'?"
    e. "Is it evil to assume, believe, and confess (even in ignorance) that Christ has died for the sins of every person who has ever lived?"
    f. "Is a person to be regarded as regenerate who presently holds to a Reformed doctrinal position but knowledgeably insists he was regenerate when believing that God simply made salvation possible in Christ?"

This Committee offers to the rest of Classis this summary of our answers to some of the above. The Session of SGC has a way of expressing its belief in the sovereignty of God and the doctrines of grace that is not clear. As is indicated in item 'f.' above, they question the legitimacy of a conversion experience which is not thoroughly and self-consciously Calvinistic. In fact, in one specific example they told us, in writing, that they would seek the repentance of a church officer who is Reformed now but teaches that he was a Christian before he was Reformed. If he does not repent they said they would press charges against him (if they were to join the RCUS). Yet they do not always express themselves this way. For a year ago they wrote to our committee,

> "To clarify: we are not saying that someone may not have confusion or doubt ever. We are not saying that someone may need to revisit their "believing unto salvation" and in doing so may readily affirm it was God's work to them, but we cannot affirm that they understand the truth of the Gospel savingly if they hold to some factor of their life, their faith, their will as being the deciding factor in their salvation." ("A Brief Summary of the position of Sovereign Grace Church Gettysburg on Arminianism Sanctification and Evangelism," page 2)

In this same paper the Session of SGC admitted that somebody who hears a false teaching could still be saved.

> "Further, we are not saying that someone cannot be saved by God's grace unless they are completely and totally outside of hearing an Arminian false teaching. i.e., that there is never any salvation granted to someone while they are for example attending an Arminian "Church" (though we do not affirm it as the normal means). God is Sovereign and will save those who have already been included in the atoning work of Christ at the cross as they hear even the truth of His word read for example." (Ibid., Page 3)

In conclusion, your committee is glad to have the opportunity for everyone at Classis to participate in this discussion. We do not pretend to know the best course forward. We do urge everyone's fervent prayer, patience, and charity so that the peace, purity, and unity of Christ's Church may be upheld among us today.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Randy Klynsma, Rev. Ronald Potter, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Elder Steve Stuebbe

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

Immediately following the presentation of this report, the classis entered a committee of the whole for a maximum of one hour on Tuesday, March 4, 2014, at 11:00 a.m. The stated purpose for this special order was to hold a conversation with the delegation from Sovereign Grace Church of Gettysburg, PA, regarding their possible entrance into the RCUS and the impediments that remain. This discussion lasted an hour, during which time Elder Les Morton of Sovereign Grace Church read a prepared statement to the Covenant East Classis which he distributed to the body. After he finished, members of classis who were not on the Committee to consult with SGC asked questions of the elders from SGC.

For a list of the actions taken by the Classis in regards to this entire matter, see the Standing Judicial 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. Thus, the reports listed here include any amendments and additional motions made from the floor to the standing committee's report. The first name listed is the chairman of the standing committee.

### A. Benevolence

1. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Grace Ploeger in the amount of $1,200 per month for Synodical year 2014-2015.

2. That Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid of $475 per month for Classical year 2014-2015 to Rev. Ron Potter, to assist with health care costs.

3. That Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid of $400 per month for Classical year 2014-2015 to Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart, PA.

4. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of $1,000 per month for Synodical year 2014-2015.

5. That Covenant East Classis provide from the Student Aid Fund $150 per month to Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg, to assist with his living expenses as a Student-Under-Care, for Classical year 2014-2015.

6. That Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid of $396 per month for Classical year 2014-2015 to Rev. Jay Fluck, to assist with medical insurance costs.

Klynsma, Blank, Gilman

**B. Examination and Licensure**

1. That Classis overture Synod to provide student aid to Mr. Chris Campbell with $2,000 for tuition and $400 for books for the 2014-2015 academic year.

2. That Classis overture Synod to provide student aid to Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg with $5,200 for tuition. We also request aid of $400 for books if needed. This student aid is for the 2014-2015 academic year.

3. That Classis overture Synod to provide student aid to Mr. Steven Carr with $8,500 for tuition and $400 for books for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Brice, Potter, M. Altman

A motion was passed from the floor instructing the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee to report next year with a recommendation on how they will more proactively and formally oversee our Students-Under-Care.

**C. Excuses**

1. We excuse Rev. Ryan Kron from all sessions of our classis meeting.

2. We excuse Elder Don Weilersbacher from all sessions of our classis meeting.

Klynsma, Blank, Gilman

**D. Finances**

1. Standing Committee on Finances has reviewed the audit performed by the Consistory of the Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon, Ohio, of the Final Treasurer's Report, Fiscal Year 2013, and found it to be in order.

2. We have audited the Treasurer's Partial Report for the period from July 1, 2013-February 28, 2014 and find it to be in order.

3. That travel reimbursement for this Classis meeting be as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Fluck | $477.50 |
| Klynsma | $315.00 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sorensen | $93.45 |
| Wright | $43.00 |
| Potter | $1,292.11 |
| Schnabel | $198.00 |
| Brice | $500.00 |
| Drewes | $601.00 |
| Stuebbe | $236.23 |
| McGee | $620.00 |
| **TOTAL:** | **$4,376.29** |

4. That the Classis pay a $250 Honorarium from the General Fund to Rev. Jeff De Boer to cover time and travel expenses for speaking at our 2014 Pre-Classis discussion.

5. That the Classis adopt the following guidelines:

| | |
|---|---|
| General Fund | $12.00 |
| Missions Fund | $20.00 |
| Benevolence Fund | $20.00 |
| Student Aid Fund | $14.00 |
| **TOTAL per communicant member** | **$66.00** |

S. Altman, Stuebbe, Van Heest, (Drewes advise)

**E. Judicial**

1. With respect to overture #4 from Heritage Reformed Church we note the following: On the matter of frequency of the Lord's Supper the Constitution requires only that "every congregation at least twice a year" publicly observe the sacrament (Article 187). The Constitution does not per se outlaw weekly communion. However, the general practice of the RCUS is not weekly communion. It would therefore be the responsibility of the Waymart Elders to be convinced of the necessity, desirability and advisability of allowing weekly communion in this RCUS congregation. For the sake of unity, we advise the Spiritual Counsel to work at leading its members in Blue Bell to reflect the common practices of the RCUS and the Waymart church.

2. With respect to Overture #6 from Redeemer Reformed Church, we recommend Classis erect a study committee to study the matters in Overture #6.

3. Regarding how to proceed with Sovereign Grace Church we recommend that Rev. Jay Fluck be encouraged to patiently and diligently continue his labors for another classical year with a view to shepherding the congregation through this time of transition.

4. That classis commend the special committee for their patience, diligence, and care in working with SGC over the last three years.

5. That classis express our gratitude to the session of SGC for the opportunity to interact with SGC over the years.

6. That classis express our gratitude to the leaders of SGC for the brotherly and amicable manner with which the leaders of SGC conducted themselves during the special order, and the clear presentation they brought to us in that time. The brothers of SGC have made a heavy investment of resources over the years as well as in coming to classis at Garner; a clear evidence of their desire to be faithful to their charge. With this desire we rejoice.

7. That classis convey to the session of SGC our disappointment with their expressed concern that the RCUS is too tolerant of Arminianism. The RCUS has a decade's long public record of our adherence to biblical orthodoxy as it is expressed and summarized in our creeds, and applied in the Constitution and procedures for reception of members, their discipleship and discipline, and numerous publications.

8. That classis convey to the session of SGC our disappointment with their unwillingness at this time to bring the matter of affiliation with the RCUS formally to their congregation for a vote.

Sawtelle, Fluck, Sorensen, M. Altman, Stuebbe

An additional motion was made from the floor that classis hold a special meeting in the Fall at Gettysburg, PA, to bring to a conclusion the discussion of the joining of Sovereign Grace Church with the RCUS. This motion failed.

**F. Minutes of Classis**

1. Your committee received the draft minutes from the Stated Clerk and made corrections which were then incorporated in the revised minutes. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

Opp, Willemsen, Wright

**G. Minutes of Synod**

1. Regarding #1 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis; the Clerk of Classis has added the table of contents to the 2013 Minutes; he has also added the seconds to the motions which were lacking them. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

2. Regarding #2 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

3. Regarding #3 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

4. Regarding #4 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

5. Regarding #5 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

6. Regarding #6 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

7. Regarding #7 of the Synod Stated Clerk's report to Covenant East Classis, take note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

Fluck, S. Altman, Van Heest

**H. Missions**

1. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA, with $350 per month, a total of $4,200 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014, for rent and associated costs. [same as last year]

2. That Classis provide Emmaus Road RCUS with $583 per month, a total of $7,000 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $6,000 for the year, 20% of original support.]

3. That Classis overture Synod to provide Emmaus Road RCUS with $83 per month, a total of $1,000 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $1,000 for the year, 2.5% of original support.]

4. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas, with $480 per month, a total of $5,760 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $720 for the year, 5% of original support.

5. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas, with $240 per month, a total of $2,880 in fiscal year 2015, beginning July 2014. [A reduction of $720 for the year, 5% of original support.]

6. That Classis consider the eventual possibility of Blue Bell, PA, as a mission work of Classis, upon further evaluation. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

7. That Classis overture the Synod Home Missions Committee that Emmaus Road RCUS might receive the 2014 Synod Day of Prayer Offering.

8. That Classis take note of the Missions Committee's proposed Strategic Plan for 3-5 years. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

9. That the Standing Financial Committee support these works from new guideline income in order to preserve the set aside funds for new works.

Schnabel, Klynsma, Anderson

**I. Nominations**

1. That the permanent committees be as follows (underlined serves as chairman):

**Executive**: Klynsma, Sorensen, Stuebbe
**Candidates and Credentials**: Brice, Fluck, Potter, Weilersbacher, Wright
**Interchurch Relations**: Sawtelle, Klynsma, Kron, Van Heest

**Missions**: Opp, Schnabel, M. Altman, Anderson, Blank, Willemsen
**Publications**: no committee formed

2. That the Classis establish a Permanent Church Camp Committee as follows:
**Church Camp**: Stuebbe, S. Altman, Sawtelle, Gilman, Mark Bruckschen* (*Deacon)

The purpose of the church camp committee shall be to come along side of the local congregation:

1. To establish policies, camp theme and lessons.
2. Send out forms and oversee registration as needed.
3. Make an annual report to Classis including financial report from Camp Treasurer, as well as theme and lessons for the upcoming year.

3.That the following serve as the
**Special Committee to Study the Exclusive Use of Wine in the Lord's Supper**: Kron, Fluck, Potter, Van Heest

Schnabel, Klynsma, Anderson

## J. Services

1. That Covenant East Classis accept the invitation from Peace RCUS of Napoleon, Ohio, to host the Spring 2015 Classis meeting.

2. That the following words of gratitude be extended to the congregation of Peace Reformed Church of Garner, IA: "The delegates of Covenant East Classis wish to express our delight and enjoyment due to the hospitality of the saints at Peace Reformed Church. Your generous provisions for our needs have served to satisfy our hunger and blessed us with rich fellowship. In your cheerful service we have experienced Christian kindness, even as you have received grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord our God bless you as you continue to seek the honor of His Name. Sincerely, in Christ, Covenant East Classis."

3. As for the adjusted budget of the Covenant East Church Camp, as of Dec. 31, 2013, Take Note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

Opp, Willemsen, Wright

## Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

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

This was handled through the Standing Services Committee.

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

These reports were adopted after they were presented.

## Reading of the Minutes and their Approval

The "Draft Minutes" were reviewed by the Standing Committee on Minutes of Classis and returned to the stated clerk for revision. These revisions were entered and then published as the "Revised Minutes," which were distributed to all delegates as available. After appropriate time for review, the president called for any further corrections from the floor, and then declared them approved as corrected. The stated clerk read aloud the final items of business for which there was no time to complete this review process. Upon corrections from the floor, the president declared the minutes approved as corrected.

## Adjournment

The 29th annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 1:02 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, 2014, until the next annual meeting to be held on March 3, 2015, at Peace Reformed Church in Napoleon, Ohio.

**A. Roll Call**

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

**B. Devotions**

Elder Bob Anderson read from Psalm 100 and closed in prayer.

**C. Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Benediction, Doxology**

The president led the body in reciting the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced the Benediction and all who were present sang the Doxology.

Respectfully Submitted and Chronicled for the King's Glory,
Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen, Stated Clerk

# Appendix for the 2014 Abstract follows:

#1 - List of Overtures and Communications

#2 - Necrology

#3 - Statistics

#4 - Standing Rules

## Appendices

## Appendix #1

## List of Overtures and Communications

### OVERTURES

1. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, to overture Synod for benevolent aid of $475 monthly for Rev. Potter's health care costs. (To BENEVOLENCE, with 3-year budget attached)

2. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, for benevolent aid of $400 monthly for one year to Heritage RCUS. (To BENEVOLENCE, with 3-year budget attached)

3. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, for $350 monthly from the Classis Missions budget for rental costs of Heritage RCUS. (To MISSIONS, with 3-year budget attached)

4. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, seeking advice from Classis on receiving new members who practice weekly communion. (To JUDICIAL)

5. From Peace RCUS in Napoleon, invitation to host Classis in 2015. (To SERVICES)

6. From Redeemer RCUS in Minneapolis, to establish a study committee on the exclusive use of wine in the Lord's Supper. (To JUDICIAL)

7. From Salem Ebenezer RCUS in Manitowoc, to overture Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance. (To BENEVOLENCE)

8. From Salem Ebenezer RCUS in Manitowoc, to create a Permanent Church Camp Committee. (To NOMINATIONS)

9. From Peace RCUS in Garner, to overture Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Grace Ploeger. (To BENEVOLENCE)

10. From Peace RCUS in Garner, to provide student aid for living expenses of Cody Schwichtenberg. (To BENEVOLENCE)

11. From Rev. Jay Fluck, request for benevolent aid. (To BENEVOLENCE)

### COMMUNICATIONS

1. Budget of Covenant Youth Church Camp for 2013 (2 pages) (To SERVICES)

2. Thank-you from Rev. Ronald Potter. (To BENEVOLENCE)

3. Thank-you from Mrs. Grace Ploeger. (To BENEVOLENCE)

4. Article 81 answers from Grace RCUS of Northwest Arkansas. (read on the floor)

5. Statement from Sovereign Grace Church of Gettysburg, PA (9 pages) (read from floor)

## Appendix #2
## Necrology

**Elder Leslie A. Goeke (1931-2013)**
Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church of Manitowoc, WI

Leslie A. Goeke (1931-2013) was born on April 26, 1931, in in Newton, Wisconsin, son of the late Edwin and Hilda (Stoltenberg) Goeke. Following service to his country in the U.S. Army, he worked at the Manitowoc Engineering Company as a machinist for several years and then concentrated solely on farming. He married Ann Buretta on November 19, 1960, and they were blessed with 50 years together. Ann preceded him in death on August 24, 2011.

Leslie was a lifelong member of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church and served as elder on the consistory for many years, and was a member of the Adult Bible Class. Upon their retirement in 1992, Leslie and Ann moved to Manitowoc. They traveled extensively across the United States and to many countries abroad. Leslie volunteered at Pinecrest Historical Village, logging hundreds of hours of service doing clean-up work and painting, including painting the caboose.

Leslie peacefully entered his eternal home on June 14, 2013, at the age of 82.

Leslie will be fondly remembered by his brother, Arnold (Doris) of Manitowoc; his sister, Eleanor (Wilbur) Westphalen, of Plymouth; his nieces and nephews, and many dear friends. He will also be sadly missed by his pet dog, Ivy. Leslie was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Ann; his brothers, Roland and Wilbur; and his sisters-in-law, Irene Goeke, Idabell Goeke, and Caroline Goeke.

| Category | Northwest Arkansas | Eden Prairie, MN | Garner, IA | Hamburg, MN | Kansas City, MO |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. No. Of Elders** | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **2. No. Of Deacons** | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| **3. Comm. Last Year** | 28 | 37 | 86 | 208 | 51 |
| **4. Rec'd by Confirm.** | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| **5. Rec'd by Letter** | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **6. Rec'd by Prof.** | 0 | 11 | 0 | 8 | 3 |
| **7. Tot. Received** | 0 | 20 | 3 | 8 | 7 |
| **8. Tot. Old/New Mbr** | 28 | 57 | 89 | 216 | 58 |
| **9. Lost by Dismissal** | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| **10. Lost by Era/Dis.** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| **11. Lost by Death** | 1 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0 |
| **12. Total Lost** | 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 2 |
| **13. Comm. this Year** | **24** | **55** | **86** | **209** | **56** |
| **14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.** | 2 | 14 | 19 | 28 | 15 |
| **15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.** | 26 | 69 | 105 | 237 | 71 |
| **16. No. of Families** | 13 | 25 | 48 | 124 | 22 |
| **17. No. of S. S. Child.** | 3 | 19 | 11 | 16 | 24 |
| **18. Adult Baptisms** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| **19. Infant Baptisms** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| **20. Total Baptisms** | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| **21. No. L.S. Served** | 24 | 57 | 77 | 181 | 56 |
| **22. Times. L.S. Served** | 6 | 12 | 5 | 9 | 7 |
| **23. Regular Offerings** | $76,691 | $161,767 | $129,515 | $153,265 | $170,057 |
| **24. Special Offerings** | $19,300 | $16,645 | $16,021 | $2,500 | $19,456 |
| **25. Other Sources** | $11,817 | $22,520 | $2,730 | $19,000 | $0 |
| **26. Total Receipts** | $107,808 | $200,932 | $148,266 | $174,765 | $189,513 |
| **27. Giv. to Syn. Guidlin.** | $4,274 | $6,600 | $26,960 | $41,854 | $10,282 |
| **28. Giv. to Clas. Guidlin.** | $1,385 | $2,300 | $5,932 | $14,212 | $3,468 |
| **29. RCUS non-budget** | $0 | $1,500 | $935 | $1,846 | $4,235 |
| **30. Non-RCUS causes** | $0 | $12,997 | $14,615 | $2,526 | $15,904 |
| **31. Other Expenses** | $69,709 | $111,170 | $115,372 | $118,039 | $159,274 |
| **32. Total Expenses** | $75,368 | $134,567 | $163,814 | $178,477 | $193,163 |
| **33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.** | $180,000 | $0 | $750,000 | $1,000,000 | $1,500,000 |
| **34. Val. of Parsonage** | $0 | $353,717 | $125,000 | $300,000 | $0 |
| **35. Impr. on Property** | $0 | $18,225 | $12,058 | $36,000 | $0 |
| **36. Property Debt** | $136,000 | $250,000 | $0 | $0 | $95,000 |
| **37. Debt Paid Last Yr.** | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $57,000 |
| **38. Synod Giving /Com.** | $153 | $178 | $313 | $201 | $202 |
| **39. Classis Giving /Com.** | $49 | $62 | $69 | $68 | $68 |
| **40. RCUS Giving /Com.** | $202 | $281 | $393 | $278 | $353 |

| Manitowoc, WI | Minneapolis, MN | Napoleon, OH | Waymart, PA | 2013 Total | 2012 Total | % Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 25 | 24 | 4.2% |
| 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 25 | 23 | 8.7% |
| 158 | 136 | 68 | 20 | 792 | 762 | 3.9% |
| 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 16 | -6.3% |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 0.0% |
| 0 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 35 | 30 | 16.7% |
| 0 | 16 | 5 | 0 | 59 | 55 | 7.3% |
| 158 | 152 | 73 | 20 | 851 | 817 | 4.2% |
| 0 | 50 | 0 | 3 | 57 | 34 | 67.6% |
| 11 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 26 | 18 | 44.4% |
| 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 14 | -7.1% |
| 15 | 51 | 6 | 6 | 96 | 66 | 45.5% |
| **143** | **101** | **67** | **14** | **755** | **751** | **0.5%** |
| 18 | 52 | 18 | 6 | 172 | 186 | -7.5% |
| 161 | 153 | 85 | 20 | 927 | 937 | -1.1% |
| 88 | 45 | 35 | 7 | 407 | 416 | -2.2% |
| 10 | 54 | 14 | 4 | 155 | 149 | 4.0% |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 300.0% |
| 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 14 | -14.3% |
| 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 16 | 16 | 0.0% |
| 145 | 95 | 65 | 14 | 714 | 720 | -0.8% |
| 4 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 67 | 66 | 1.5% |
| $168,134 | $237,924 | $133,429 | $23,980 | $1,254,762 | $1,224,875 | 2.4% |
| $1,532 | $129,079 | $1,427 | $135 | $206,095 | $59,568 | 246.0% |
| $6,909 | $2,594 | $2,386 | $15,750 | $83,706 | $95,465 | -12.3% |
| $176,575 | $369,597 | $137,242 | $39,865 | $1,544,563 | $1,379,908 | 11.9% |
| $33,507 | $21,686 | $14,177 | $4,120 | $163,460 | $146,665 | 11.5% |
| $10,871 | $7,147 | $4,488 | $1,430 | $51,233 | $47,191 | 8.6% |
| $2,100 | $6,023 | $535 | $0 | $17,174 | $31,511 | -45.5% |
| $2,286 | $22,734 | $5,781 | $135 | $76,978 | $34,890 | 120.6% |
| $109,752 | $256,716 | $95,761 | $30,702 | $1,066,495 | $971,516 | 9.8% |
| $158,516 | $314,306 | $120,742 | $36,387 | $1,375,340 | $1,231,773 | 11.7% |
| $800,000 | $750,000 | $275,000 | $0 | $5,255,000 | $5,175,000 | 1.5% |
| $200,000 | $250,000 | $0 | $0 | $1,228,717 | $795,000 | 54.6% |
| $0 | $41,014 | $5,907 | $0 | $113,204 | $116,067 | -2.5% |
| $0 | $263,237 | $0 | $0 | $744,237 | $447,817 | 66.2% |
| $0 | $40,496 | $0 | $0 | $97,496 | $68,743 | 41.8% |
| $212 | $159 | $208 | $206 | $206 | $187 | 10.4% |
| $69 | $53 | $66 | $72 | $65 | $60 | 7.8% |
| $294 | $256 | $282 | $278 | $293 | $287 | 2.0% |

## Appendix #4
## Standing Rules of Covenant East Classis

1. The fiscal year of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. shall run from July 1st to June 30th of the following year. The Classical Dues shall be due on the first of June and are to be paid not later than the thirtieth of June of the current fiscal year. [2011]

2. The Consistory of the Church to which the treasurer belongs shall audit the final Classis Treasurer report in July. The Treasurer shall distribute their findings and his report to the Consistories of Classis. [2012]

3. 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.

4. The writ of certification of delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the Spring session of Classis.

5. 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."

6. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after defining the bar of the house.

7. 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.

8. 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]

9. 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]

10. 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.

11. The Classis shall designate the following Permanent Committees when needed as follows: Executive, Candidates and Credentials, Church Camp, Interchurch Relations, Missions, Publications. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. [2014]

12. The complete Classis statistics shall be made part of the minutes at the Spring Meeting of Classis.

13. 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.

14. 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]

15. 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]

16. The services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circulated before Classis.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. The Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of $500.00 annually. [2005]

20. 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]

21. 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]

22. 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.