

# Abstract of the Minutes



of the

## COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

36<sup>th</sup> Annual Session

March 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>

Hosted by

Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church

Manitowoc, WI

## INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

### **OFFICERS of Covenant East Classis**

President	Rev. Christopher Campbell
Vice President	Rev. Chuck Muether
Stated Clerk	Rev. Steve Carr
Treasurer	Elder Alan Hermann

### **CLASSIS GUIDLINE FOR GIVING**

General Fund	\$15.00
Missions Fund	\$40.00
Benevolence Fund	\$5
Student Aid Fund	\$0
<b>TOTAL per communicant member</b>	<b>\$60</b>

### **CLASSIS TREASURER**

Mr. Alan Hermman  
(952) 288-4364  
14620 County Rd 31  
Hamburg, MN 55339

### **PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES**

**Executive:** Campbell, Carr, Gilman

**Candidates and Credentials:** Altman, Fluck, M. Larson, Luquette, Wright

**Church Camp:** Sorensen, Hall, Sawtelle, Stuebbe

**Interchurch Relations:** Potter, Muether, Groseclose, Stetler, Wiersma

**Missions:** Kron, Schnabel, Van Heest, Jacobsen, Mankins

**Publications:** No committee was formed.

The Covenant East Classis devotes the 2021 Abstract to the loving memory of the faithful ministry and enduring legacy of Rev. Dr. Robert Grossmann (1937-2021).

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[srutherford77@gmail.com](mailto:srutherford77@gmail.com)
- Fluck, Rev. Jay..... (717) 398-2603  
330 Montclair Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325  
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436 Vista Dr., Butler, PA 16001  
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8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438  
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- Larson, Rev. Mark..... (641) 923-3060  
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[larsonmark57@gmail.com](mailto:larsonmark57@gmail.com)
- Marinelli, Rev. Tim ..... (763) 614-9785  
10542 103rd Avenue N., Maple Grove, MN 55369  
[debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com](mailto:debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com)
- Muether, Rev. Charles ..... (641) 295-9264  
310 Prairie St Pella, IA 50219  
[chuckmuether@thekirkside.com](mailto:chuckmuether@thekirkside.com)
- Potter, Rev. Ron..... (570) 785-4012  
136 Grand Avenue, Forest City, PA 18421  
[reformed@nep.net](mailto:reformed@nep.net)
- Sawtelle, Rev. James ..... (763) 417-9835  
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### **Primarius Elders**

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16223 158<sup>th</sup> St, Hamburg, MN 55339  
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547 Hawthorne Dr., Liberty, MO 64068  
[ljwitt@swbell.net](mailto:ljwitt@swbell.net)

**Students Under Care**

None

## Churches and Mission Works

### *Northwest ARKANSAS*

Grace RCUS, 72756

3320 N. Second Street, Rogers, AR ..... (479) 372-1108

Pastor: Steven Carr (Wife: Crystal)

Service Times: Worship: 10:00 am.

E-mail: [pastor@gracereformednwa.org](mailto:pastor@gracereformednwa.org) Web site: [www.gracereformednwa.org](http://www.gracereformednwa.org)

### *Garner, IOWA*

Peace RCUS, 50438

1907 200th Street, Garner, IA

(3 miles south of Garner on US 69) ..... (641) 923-3060

Pastor: Rev. Mark Larson (Wife: Cynthia)

Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am; S.S. 9:30 am.

E-mail: [peacereformedchurch@gmail.com](mailto:peacereformedchurch@gmail.com) Web site:

[www.peacereformedchurch.org](http://www.peacereformedchurch.org)

### *Southwest, IA*

Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, 50219

612 Franklin St. Pella, IA 50219.....(641) 295-9264

Pastor: Rev. Charles Muether (Wife: Kristie)

Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am

Email: [chuckmuether@thekirkside.com](mailto:chuckmuether@thekirkside.com)

### *Eden Prairie, MINNESOTA*

Emmaus Road RCUS, 55438

Meeting at Minnetonka Seventh Day Adventist Church

3510 Williston Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55345..... (612) 751-2096

Pastor: Rev. Ryan Kron (Wife: Colleen)

Mail: 8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438

Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am. S.S. 9:10 am (Sept. through May)

E-mail: [pastor@emmausroadrcus.org](mailto:pastor@emmausroadrcus.org) Web site: [www.emmausroadrcus.org](http://www.emmausroadrcus.org)

### *Hamburg, MINNESOTA*

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339

15480 County Road 31 ..... (952) 467-3878

Pastor: Rev. Dan Schnabel (Wife: Marie)

Service Times: Worship: 9:30 am; S.S. 8:30 am

E-mail: [Stpaulsrcus@gmail.com](mailto:Stpaulsrcus@gmail.com) Web site: [www.stpaulsrcus.org](http://www.stpaulsrcus.org)

### *Minneapolis, MINNESOTA*

Redeemer RCUS, 55427

1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley, MN ..... (763) 417-9851

Pastors: Rev. Tim Marinelli (Wife: Renita); Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)

Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave., N. Crystal, MN 55427  
Service times: Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm; S.S. 9:00 am (Sept.- May)  
E-mail: [debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com](mailto:debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com); [sawtellejim@gmail.com](mailto:sawtellejim@gmail.com)  
Web site: [www.redeemerrcus.org](http://www.redeemerrcus.org)

*Kansas City, MISSOURI*

Northland RCUS, 64164  
2901 NW Cookingham Drive ..... (816) 420-9700  
Pastor: Christopher Campbell (Wife: Megan)  
Service Times: Worship: 9:30 am & 5:00 pm.  
E-mail: [pastor@northlandreformed.org](mailto:pastor@northlandreformed.org) Web site: [www.northlandreformed.org](http://www.northlandreformed.org)

*Napoleon, OHIO*

Peace RCUS, 43545  
638 Huddle Road ..... (419) 599-3106  
Pastor: Rev. Steven Altman (Wife: Bianca)  
Service Times: Worship: 10:00 am; S.S. 9:00 am  
Web site: [www.peacercus.com](http://www.peacercus.com)

*Gettysburg, PENNSYLVANIA*

Covenant RCUS, 17325  
1495 Biglerville Road ..... (717) 398-2603  
Pastor: Rev. Jay Fluck (Wife: Loretta)  
Mail: 330 Montclair Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325  
Service Times: Worship: 11:00 am; S.S. 10:00 am; Wed. Study /prayer 7:00 pm  
E-mail: [jefluck@msn.com](mailto:jefluck@msn.com) Web site: [www.rcusgettysburg.org](http://www.rcusgettysburg.org)

*Waymart, PENNSYLVANIA*

Heritage RCUS, 18472  
200 Belmont Turnpike  
(lower level of Waymart Presbyterian Church) ..... (570) 785-4012  
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)  
Mail: 136 Grand Ave. Forest City, PA 18421  
Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am; Bible Study 9:30 am; Wed. Study/prayer 7:00 pm  
E-mail: [hrc@nep.net](mailto:hrc@nep.net) Web site: [www.heritagercus.org](http://www.heritagercus.org)

*Manitowoc, WISCONSIN*

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 54220  
6524 Hwy C..... (920) 726-4940  
Pastor: Rev. Kyle Sorensen (Wife: Donielle)  
Service Times: Worship 10:00 am; S.S. 8:45 am  
E-mail: [info@salemebenezer.org](mailto:info@salemebenezer.org) Web site: [www.salemebenezer.org](http://www.salemebenezer.org)

**Abstract of the Minutes**  
of the  
**Covenant East Classis**  
**Special Classis Video-Conference Meeting**  
May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Services and Organization**

The President, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm (Central). He led the body in devotions reading from Philippians 2:12-16 and prayed. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr, called the opening roll showing 13 ministers and 9 elders present, a quorum. The President appointed Rev. Christopher Campbell as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

**Election of Treasure**

No nominations were received.

It was moved, seconded, and carried that the Executive Committee appoint a three-man ad hoc committee to seek a Treasurer nominee by speaking with each of the churches and reporting back to the classis with their efforts.

1. That Classis Standing Rule 19 be amended by adding, "The Treasurer shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually." This recommendation, if passed, authorizes both an honorarium to be paid to our outgoing treasurer, Jim Drewes, and also to the newly elected treasurer.

Grounds: Most other Classes, as well as the Synod, provide an honorarium for their officers, including Treasurer. The dollar amount is identical to the honoraria we provide to our Classis President and Stated Clerk

**Election of Classis Delegates to the 274<sup>th</sup> Synod**

Jim Sawtelle, Kyle Sorensen, and Dan Schnabel were elected as pastor delegates to Synod.

Dennic Luquette, Larry Stock, and Jay Liesveld were elected as the elder delegates to Synod.

**Excuses**

Classis voted to excuse Rev. Mark Larson and the elders from Garner.

**Reading of the Minutes, Roll Call, Devotions, and Adjournment**

The Stated Clerk read the minutes which were declared approved as read and corrected by the President. The roll was taken showing 13 ministers and 9 elders

present, a quorum. The President closed the meeting by leading the Classis in reciting the Lord's Prayer and pronouncing a benediction.

**Abstract of the Minutes**  
of the  
**Covenant East Classis**  
**Special Classis Video-Conference Meeting**  
August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Services and Organization**

The President, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm (Central). The President led the body in devotions by reading from 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 and praying. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr called the opening roll showing 12 ministers and 10 elders present, a quorum.

**Fraternal Delegates and Visitors**

Elder David Oberhaus was welcomed, and Classis voted that he be seated in the bar of the house and given the privileges.

**Financial Request for Rev. Tim Marinelli**

1. That Covenant East Classis provide monthly support of \$6,500 per month to Rev. Tim Marinelli for 3 months (September, October, November), with a fourth month (December) if needed. It is understood that he may request an advance of this amount as needed for initial monthly rent, security deposit, and related costs. If before the end of the time period for this aid a pastoral call is accepted by Rev. Marinelli, this aid shall cease upon the effective date of Classis approval of that call.

Classis Action: Motion was carried.

**Election of Treasurer**

The ad hoc committee nominated Elder Alan Hermann as Treasurer.

Alan Hermann was elected treasurer by acclamation, carried by two-thirds vote.

**Excuses**

Classis voted to excuse Rev. Jay Fluck and Rev. James Sawtelle from the Classis meeting, and Elder Ben Nelson from part of the meeting.

**Reading of the Minutes, Roll Call, Devotions, and Adjournment**

The Stated Clerk read the minutes which were declared approved as read and corrected by the President. The roll was taken showing 12 ministers and 9 elders present, a quorum. The President closed the meeting by leading the Classis in prayer and pronouncing a benediction.

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**Spring Meeting**

**CLERK'S NOTE:**

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the night before the Spring Classis Meeting convened, the delegates of Classis gathered for a pre-Classis discussion led by Rev. Ryan Kron on the book *Pastors and Their Critics* by Joel Beeke and Nicholas Thompson.

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**Abstract of the Minutes  
of the Covenant East Classis**  
of the Reformed Church in the United States  
36<sup>th</sup> Annual Session—March 2-3, 2021  
Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church Manitowoc, WI

**Services**

The President, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, called the 36<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis to order at 8:00 am. The President led the body in devotions by preaching from 2 Timothy 2:22-26, “The Lord’s Servant Is Gentle in Conflict,” and singing from Hymn # 135, “I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art.”

On Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm, classis delegates, along with members and guests from Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church gathered for a scheduled worship service. Rev. Altman conducted the service and Rev. Muether preached a sermon on Matthew 3:1-12 titled “In Those Days and in Our Days.”

On Wednesday Morning Rev. Stetler led in the body in devotions by preaching from Ephesians 5:1-17, singing from Hymn # 402 “Amazing Grace,” and praying.

Closing devotions were led by Elder Steve Stuebbe from Salem Ebenezer RCUS, Manitowoc, WI led the Classis in devotions by reading from Psalm 61 and praying.

In addition, each session of Classis was opened and closed with prayer and at appropriate times during the meeting and after each parochial report was read. Meals were conducted with a Bible reading, appropriate comments, and prayer.

**Organization**

The 36<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was called to order at 8:00 am by President Rev. Kyle Sorensen. Following opening devotions, the Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr, called the roll of Classis which showed 10 ministers and 10 elders present, a quorum. The bar of the house was defined as the first five rows on the left side. The President appointed Elders Steve Mankins, Marc Wiersma, and Walt Van Heest, and Rev. Richard Stetler as tellers.

The following delegates were elected to serve as officers of Classis for the year: Rev. Christopher Campbell as President, Rev. Chuck Muether as Vice President, Rev. Steve Carr as Stated Clerk, and Elder Alan Hermann as Treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Ryan Kron as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

## Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

There were no fraternal delegates.

### Reception of New Ministers and New Churches

The President Welcomed Rev. Jimmy John Hall.

### Standing Committees

The President announced the following standing committees (Chairmen are underlined):

<i>Benevolence; Minutes of Synod:</i>	<u>Potter</u> , Larson, Luquette, Wright
<i>Examination and Licensure; Excuses:</i>	<u>Groseclose</u> , Fluck, Jacobsen, Schnabel, Hall
<i>Finances:</i>	<u>Altman</u> , Schroeder, (Hermann advise)
<i>Judicial:</i>	<u>Muether</u> , Stetler, Wiersma
<i>Minutes of Classis; Services:</i>	<u>Campbell</u> , Mankins, (Carr advise)
<i>Missions:</i>	<u>Kron</u> , Van Heest, Stuebbe
<i>Nominations:</i>	<u>Sorensen</u> , Gilman

### 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

Esteemed Brothers,

Since the Spring Classis meeting of 2020, your committee fulfilled its responsibilities as per Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution. Those duties included but were not limited to the following: organizing three special classis meetings, providing counsel to the churches of Classis as requested, providing counsel to individual members and to groups of concerned members from the churches of Classis, providing pastoral counsel to ministers of Classis, and aiding three of our ministers on matters related to seeking a call suitable for their ministry. We also had to interact in two separate situations with fellow NAPARC churches due to their concerns about some matters summarized above. We kept the Classis Interchurch Relations Committee informed, where possible.

At last year's meeting, Classis passed a recommendation that "the consistories of Covenant East Classis be encouraged to seek the advice and counsel of the



Executive Committee of Classis in a timely manner regarding significant or potentially divisive issues (Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution)." As you can see from the opening paragraph of this report, we got what we asked for, and then some! This is a good thing, because we are not supposed to 'go it alone' as church officers or congregations. God has given us the communion of the saints to assist and advise.

However, this year your committee, and especially your president, felt a bit like Moses must have felt when Jethro came to him and said, "Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself." (Exodus 18:18) We are grateful for Rev. Win Groseclose for assisting with some of our work, where there was overlap with Interchurch Relations issues as well as Executive Committee advice to a local Spiritual Council. Otherwise, we felt like having only 3 men on this committee is far too small, especially for challenging years which may also include unique stresses in the congregations of the men on the committee. We have a proposal at the end of this report which we hope Classis will consider to address this.

No churches reported any changes to their local constitutions this year.

In addition to the above, your committee sent out the following eight executive circulars, which were approved, with the exception of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Executive Circular 35.1**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following items related to the election of a Classis Treasurer and to the upcoming Synod meeting.

#### **Regarding the Election of Classis Treasurer:**

**RECOMMENDATION 1.** That Classis elect a Treasurer by a secure and private electronic ballot, to be sent to all ministers and primarius elders on April 16, 2020, in the morning and concluded by 8 p.m. (Central), after which the results will be announced.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.** That Classis Standing Rule 19 be amended by adding, "The Treasurer shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually." This recommendation, if passed, authorizes both an honorarium to be paid to our outgoing treasurer, Jim Drewes, and also to the newly elected treasurer.

Grounds: Most other Classes, as well as the Synod, provide an honorarium for their officers, including Treasurer. The dollar amount is identical to the honoraria we provide to our Classis President and Stated Clerk.

### **FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING TREASURER'S ELECTION**

**ON PROCEDURE: NOMINATIONS must be emailed to the Stated Clerk, Steve Carr, by 12 noon (Central) on April 15, 2020.** This allows time for the finalization of the ballot. (ALSO, we have done a few test runs with Survey Monkey and are confident that such an anonymous electing ballot is possible. Once a person responds to the email with their vote, he cannot respond and vote a second time, for example. Further, we do not know how he voted, just that he did.)

**ON WHO MAY BE NOMINATED:** We do not find a clear rule requiring that a Treasurer only be a minister or elder. The duties of a Treasurer are especially duties which a Biblically qualified Deacon would possess (although many elders also have these skills too, and a smaller number of ministers). It is our

**CONCLUSION:** A Treasurer for a Classis or Synod must be a man who is a communicant member in good standing who also holds the office of minister, elder, or deacon. He ought to be able to handle basic spreadsheets and be committed to attending the annual meetings of the judicatory which he serves. Of course, he should also have a love for the Lord and a deep integrity as he dispenses the charities of the church to missions, benevolences, and all other approved expenses.

For your information, we reached this conclusion in this manner. Your Executive Committee did some constitutional research, reviewed the historical practices of the RCUS (including, for example, a Classis which currently has a Deacon as its Treasurer), and also sought out the advice from men across the RCUS on the practice of Treasurer elections in various Classes through the years. Here are the particulars of that research and thinking which led to the conclusion noted above. On the matter of the Election of a Treasurer for a church court of the RCUS: Does he need to be an officer of the church?

While not directly answered in the RCUS Constitution, Rules of Order, or Standing Rules, by good and necessary inference this can be concluded. Article 48 states that men who may be nominated for service in the local church as elder or deacon must be “in full communion with the Church and earnestly devoted to the cause of Christ.” While we would love to be able to say that is true of every church member, it is clear (to both the Constitution and our own human experience) that not every church member would be able to have that status of being vetted by their Consistory and found ‘earnestly devoted to the cause of Christ.’ It is hard to imagine how a Classis or Synod could elect a Treasurer who would not have equal earnest devotion as all the Consistory members (and delegates of Classis or Synod). That earnest devotion is something that is determined by others, not the candidate. Thus, we believe until a Consistory has taken the actual steps of nominating such a worthy candidate, and the congregation agrees by way of its election of him, he ought not to be considered by any higher judicatory for office and service in the Church.

Some flexibility exists in the details governing the officers of church courts. Article 52, “A Classis and the Synod shall elect a President, a Stated Clerk, and such other officers as they may respectively deem necessary, who shall hold their offices for such term as the respective judicatories may determine.”

Note that a Treasurer is not even specified as an officer. Other Constitutional articles regulate the duties of the President and of the Stated Clerk. None exists for a treasurer. His existence falls under the 'such other officers deemed necessary' who may hold an office for however long a term the judicatory 'may determine.'

Some argue that a Treasurer must be delegated to that assembly in order to be a potential nominee. Yet that is not stated nor implied. In practice, both on the Classis and Synod level, it is normal for the Treasurer to not be a delegate elder...thus we always need to have a motion to seat him in the bar of the house or to allow him to speak so that he can present his report.

Some argue that a Treasurer must be present at the meeting when he is first to be nominated and elected. With the change in the Fiscal Year such that it begins several months AFTER any Spring Meeting of Classis (or Synod), the need for a Treasurer who is elected at the March meeting to be present in March is no longer a consideration. In future years, that Treasurer would need to be present in March to bring his report and provide advice and information to the Standing Finances Committee, etc.

Thus, we do not find a clear rule requiring that a Treasurer be a minister or elder, and our conclusion is found above.

### **Regarding the Upcoming Synod Meeting:**

**Recommendation 3:** That Covenant East Classis concurs with the basis of representation for a delegated Synod meeting in May 2020 of 3 ministers and 3 elders per Classis (Synod Circular).

**Recommendation 4:** That Covenant East Classis elect our delegates to the 2020 Synod of the Reformed Church in the U.S. by a secure and private electronic ballot, to be sent to all ministers and primarius elders on April 16, 2020, in the morning and concluded by 8 p.m. (Central), after which the results will be announced.

NOTE: The election of delegates will look something like this. One question will ask for a slate of 3 ministers to be chosen. Another will ask for a slate of 3 elders. The elder list will include all primarius and secundus elders as candidates (they are all on the roll of Classis which was approved by Classis at our recent meeting).

NOTE: The Synod meeting will be via Zoom videoconference. In order for proper voting and file sharing to occur at the meeting, this REQUIRES all 6 delegates which we elect to be using a computer with video (or tablet).

NOTE: The date in the recent Synod circular is correct: the new Synod date will be May 18-20, 2020. IF ANY DELEGATE ELDER OR MINISTER KNOWS that he will not be available or be able to use the necessary technology for that meeting, please inform the Stated Clerk ASAP so we can leave your name off the ballot.

Brothers, we know there is much information in this circular on a variety of topics. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to us. Let us rejoice that God is still on His throne, and He has blessed us with the ability to communicate with one another even across the distances. May He build His Church through our feeble efforts and faithful ministries to His flock.

NOTE: we have attached the Synod circular, for your information. A few elders on our Classis delegate list may not have been on the email list of the Synod Clerk yet.

## **Executive Circular 35.2**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee informs the members of classis, in light of the fact that our circular 35.1 failed because of an objection we received, that the President of Covenant East Classis (per Article 90) has called a Special Meeting of Covenant East Classis on Tuesday, May 5, at 7 p.m. Central Time, meeting via Zoom videoconference.

The stated purpose for this meeting is to handle, in order, recommendations 1-4 listed below. NOTE: recommendations 3-4 are only in order for this special classis meeting in the case that the Synod circular 273.3 passes.

### **Regarding the Election of Classis Treasurer:**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1.** That Classis elect a Treasurer.

NOTE: to assist in this process, we encourage two matters.

1. EACH pastor and elder delegate to this special meeting should use his own video-capable device (computer/smartphone/tablet). This will allow a smoother and more secure and secret ballot process for all elections. (For those with technological questions or difficulties, please contact Kyle Sorensen for assistance. If necessary, a person could also vote by sending a vote via email or text message as well)
2. Since this is a Classis meeting, we will receive nominations at the meeting. However, there has been remarkable LITTLE RESPONSE to the need for nominations of a Classis Treasurer this year, so PLEASE, PLEASE, recruit suitable men and PRAY so that we may have someone to elect.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.** That Classis Standing Rule 19 be amended by adding, "The Treasurer shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually." This recommendation, if passed, authorizes both an honorarium to be paid to our outgoing treasurer, Jim Drewes, and also to the newly elected treasurer.

Grounds: Most other Classes, as well as the Synod, provide an honorarium for their officers, including Treasurer. The dollar amount is identical to the honoraria we provide to our Classis President and Stated Clerk.

## FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING TREASURER'S ELECTION

**ON WHO MAY BE NOMINATED:** We do not find a clear rule requiring that a Treasurer only be a minister or elder. The duties of a Treasurer are especially duties which a Biblically qualified Deacon would possess (although many elders also have these skills too, and a smaller number of ministers). It is our

**CONCLUSION:** A Treasurer for a Classis or Synod must be a man who is a communicant member in good standing who also holds the office of minister, elder, or deacon. He ought to be able to handle basic spreadsheets and be committed to attending the annual meetings of the judicatory which he serves. Of course, he should also have a love for the Lord and a deep integrity as he dispenses the charities of the church to missions, benevolences, and all other approved expenses.

For your information, we reached this conclusion in this manner. Your Executive Committee did some constitutional research, reviewed the historical practices of the RCUS (including, for example, a Classis which currently has a Deacon as its Treasurer), and also sought out the advice from men across the RCUS on the practice of Treasurer elections in various Classes through the years. Here are the particulars of that research and thinking which led to the conclusion noted above. On the matter of the Election of a Treasurer for a church court of the RCUS: Does he need to be an officer of the church?

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Thus, we do not find a clear rule requiring that a Treasurer be a minister or elder, and our conclusion is found above.

### **Regarding the Upcoming Synod Meeting:**

**Recommendation 3:** That Covenant East Classis concurs with the basis of representation for a delegated Synod meeting in May 2020 of 3 ministers and 3 elders per Classis (Synod Circular).

**Recommendation 4:** That Covenant East Classis elect our delegates.

NOTE: This election would take place during the Zoom videoconference, in a manner that is as secure and secret as possible.

The Special Classis Meeting will close with time for a brief prayer update from brothers regarding how their congregations and ministries are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Executive Circular 35.3**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee informs the members of classis that we have received the resignation of Rev. Tim Marinelli as pastor of Redeemer Reformed Church, Golden Valley, MN, together with the notice from the Consistory of their action in accepting that resignation, effective June 30, 2020. In line with our Biblical and Constitutional duties per Article 30, the Classis must now take action. We propose the following to be the action of our classis.

**RECOMMENDATION 1.** That Covenant East Classis finds in order the papers regarding Rev. Tim Marinelli's resignation from Redeemer Reformed Church, Golden Valley, MN. We hereby dissolve the pastoral relationship between Rev. Tim Marinelli and the Redeemer congregation, to be effective on June 30, 2020.

Let us all keep the saints at Redeemer in our prayers during this time. May God use them as a light of gospel peace in the midst of a city in crisis.

Let us also keep Rev. Marinelli and his family in our prayers. In the next week, Lord willing, a surgery for their daughter Talitha will occur. We also pray for Tim's continued search in the short-term for employment to provide for his family, while also in the search in the long-term for a potential church where he may exercise his ministerial calling. For those who may wish to contact Tim, he can be reached at [debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com](mailto:debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com), or 763-614-9785.

#### **Executive Circular 35.4**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee has received an update with a financial request from Rev. Tim Marinelli. As you remember, he is a pastor without a call right now. While the search for a ministerial call is ongoing (with some delays due to the pandemic), he is planning to take immediate steps to provide for his family by seeking recertification as a physical therapist. This requires an unpaid internship for a few months, after which the internship would need to be found satisfactory and then he would be eligible for employment. The medical board meetings approving the start of such internships, etc., meet in early August. Due to his daughter's ongoing medical condition, they need at this point in time to reside close to her medical team in the Twin Cities, MN. They have researched places to rent for their family and will be in financial hardship starting September 1. They hope to begin residing in a new place in August, and will likely need an advance on a month's rent, security deposit, and any related costs.

The Executive Committee has conferred with the Classis Treasurer and also another church officer with diaconal experience. We have also talked with Tim via videoconference and given advise about his search for a call and also the options of providing for his family in the meantime.

**RECOMMENDATION 1.** That Covenant East Classis provide monthly support of \$6,500 per month to Rev. Tim Marinelli for 3 months (September, October, November), with a fourth month (December) if needed. It is understood that he may request an advance of this amount as needed for initial monthly rent, security deposit, and related costs.

NOTE: The monthly support amount is based upon reviewing his recent compensation package over the past year, minus portions which would not be needed or fitting for a pastor without a call. Medical coverage is included in this amount.

#### **Executive Circular 35.5**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee informs the members of classis, in light of the fact that our circular 35.4 failed because of an objection we received, that the President of Covenant East Classis (per Article 90) has called a Special Meeting of Covenant East Classis on Tuesday, August 4, at 7 p.m. Central Time, meeting via Zoom videoconference.

The stated purpose of this meeting is twofold. **First**, we will handle the financial request from Rev. Tim Marinelli, a ministerial member of our classis. **Second**, we will hear an update from the ad-hoc committee to seek out a new Treasurer for the classis, with the potential of proceeding to an election of a treasurer at the August 4 meeting.

On the matter of the financial request from Rev. Marinelli, the Executive Committee will first provide a report of any updates to its proposed recommendation from the July 8 circular, and then it will make a motion which will then be on the floor for debate, amendment, and passage or defeat, per all the usual rules of order for our classis meetings.

### **Executive Circular 35.6**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following item:

**Recommendation:** That Rev. Tim Marinelli be dismissed from the Covenant East Classis to unite with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC).

Rev. Marinelli has received a pastoral call from an OPC congregation in Colorado, and has successfully sustained an examination this week by the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC.

### **Executive Circular 35.7**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you for your consideration the following recommendation:

We have received the letter of dismissal from the South Central Classis of the RCUS regarding Rev. Jimmy John Hall. He was examined by the Candidates and Credentials Committee in fulfillment of their duty in line with Standing Rule 21. In light of Articles 84-87 of the RCUS Constitution, we present the following recommendation:

“That the Covenant East Classis receive Rev. Jimmy John Hall from South Central Classis of the RCUS as a minister and add him to the rolls.”

Note: He is currently without a pastoral call, but he is studying for a D. Min. He is a member, along with his family, at Peace Reformed Church in Napoleon, OH.



## Executive Circular 35.8

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you for your consideration the following item of business for the Spring 2021 Classis Meeting.

### **1. Host, time, and place of Spring Classis Meeting.**

The 36<sup>th</sup> annual Spring Classis Meeting will be hosted by Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI **March 2-3, 2021**. The Meeting will convene at 8:00 am on March 2 and continue through March 3 to the completion of business. Please make travel plans accordingly.

### **2. Pre-Classis Fellowship and Discussion.**

The Executive Committee has once again called for an organized discussion to run from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Monday evening March 1, 2021. Rev. Ryan Kron will lead us through a discussion of *Pastors and their Critics: A Guide to Coping with Criticism in the Ministry*, by Joel Beeke and Nick Thompson. Please read the book and come prepared to share your insights.

### **3. Forms for Classis Meeting.**

The forms necessary for this Classis Meeting are included with this Circular. Please send the Clerk the membership statics, financial statistics, and certification of delegate Elders as soon as possible. The Statistics Form is an editable form to facilitate using a computer to fill it out. If you hand write the statistics, please write clearly and legibly. The deadline for the reception of these forms is **February 16, 2021** (standing rules # 3-4). In addition to these forms please include any necrologies and/or overtures. Overtures received by **February 9<sup>th</sup>**, will be circulated with their supporting grounds so the delegates and their Consistories may consider them before the Classis meets (standing rule #15).

Parochial reports need to be forwarded to the President two weeks before the Classis meeting (standing rule #3).

If your congregation is overseeing a mission congregation please see the declaration on statistical reporting that was approved by Classis (2008 Abstract, 31).

Permanent and Special Committee reports need to be mailed to Consistories by **February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020** (standing rule #15).

### **4. Travel and Accommodations.**

We will send out a separate email with information about an area hotel. We will also explain briefly the current local COVID situation in that email.

**Recommendation #1:** For this specific meeting only, Covenant East Classis will meet in a hybrid format and allow delegates to attend digitally over videoconference. This is **restricted to those delegates who were already needing to excuse themselves due to health concerns**. As always, we would expect everyone to attend in person who is physically able.

NOTE:

1. This recommendation only allows those who attend remotely to observe the meeting and also to present any reports which they would need to do if here in person.
2. Once we arrive at the meeting, we will debate on the floor whether any further participation will be granted (such as voting, serving on Standing Committees, etc.). The technology exists in the Manitowoc congregation through microphones and a large projector screen to make observation possible, and participation through voting something worthy of classis discussion.
3. If this recommendation fails, then those who cannot come due to health reasons will not be able to participate in any fashion during the Classis meeting, unless someone were to make a motion once Classis begins on Tuesday, March 2, and it passed. Regardless of this, since the Monday night book discussion is not formally part of the Classis business meeting, that will be conducted over videoconference to Classis officers who are not able to attend in person due to health reasons.

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RECOMMENDATION 1: That Standing Rule 11 be amended by adding the following sentence: "The Vice President shall serve as an ad-hoc member of the Executive Committee to assist it in its duties, upon its request."

Respectfully Submitted,

Kyle Sorensen, Steve Carr, and Marc Wiersma

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Classis Action: Recommendation 1 was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee.

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

Fathers and Brethren.

Your committee conducted an interview with Rev. Jimmy John Hall on zoom to which the whole Classis was invited. On motion your committee recommended that Classis receive Re. Hall. Which was subsequently done by circular from the Executive Committee.

Your committee also attended a meeting of the Consistory of Salem-Ebenezer RCUS and the faculty of Heidelberg Theological seminary. The purpose was for a progress review of our Student-Under-Care, Mr. Ryan Anderson. Since that meeting, and of his own accord, we learned that he has withdrawn from Heidelberg

Seminary. Thus, we, we recommend that Classis remove his name from the roll of students-under-care.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Altman, Mark Larson, Ken Hanko, Dan Wright, and Jay Fluck

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Classis Action: The report was referred by the Executive Committee to the Standing Candidates and Credentials Committee.

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### **C. Interchurch Relations Committee**

Fathers and Brothers:

Your committee has had an interesting year trying to navigate through ecumenical meetings that were impacted by the novel Coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic. Many of our sister classis/presbytery meetings we had planned to attend were either postponed or moved to a teleconference format which prevented us from observing. It appears that a few spring meetings of 2021 are proceeding as planned with mask-wearing as an option or preference. If you are able to mask up as needed and willing to travel, please let us know so that we can communicate with the respective stated clerk of your likely attendance. Below is a working list of classes/presbyteries:

RPCNA: Atlantic Presbytery, Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery, Midwest Presbytery

OPC: Presbytery of Central Penn, Presbytery of the Midwest, Presbytery of Ohio, Presbytery of Philadelphia

RCUS: Covenant East Classis

URCNA: Classis Central U. S., Classis Eastern U.S.

CanRef: Classis Niagara, Classis Ontario West

### **I. Regional Meetings**

Again, if you are interested and able to attend a classis/presbytery meeting, please indicate so to this committee, and we will send the appropriate correspondence to the body's clerk/chair ahead of your visit.

As the committee receives invitations after our March meeting, we will pass them on to the Classis. Given some of the continued Covid regulations imposed by states and provinces, we expect to have more invitations in the fall from judicatories that hold two meetings annually. At that time, social distancing restrictions will likely be further lifted.

### **II. Fraternal Invitations and Correspondence**

Invitations to attend our 36<sup>th</sup> annual Spring Classis, hosted by Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, including the pre-classis book discussion, were sent to our

neighboring classes/presbyteries. A question was raised if we were going to offer a Zoom teleconference option to fraternal delegates. It was decided by the Classis Executive Committee that our meeting would be an in-person session with a Zoom option for those RCUS delegates unable to attend for approved reasons. As is often the case, multiple sister classes/presbyteries from the same federation/denomination will defer to the classis/presbytery that is closer to our meeting site. Because of the more rural locality where we are meeting this year, we likely will only have representatives from the local OPC URCNA fellowships.

### **III. Fraternal Visits**

Rev. Kyle Sorensen visited the Presbytery of the Midwest of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on September 18 and 19, 2020. He addressed the body and his observations are included in this report.

Rev. Richard Stetler met with the brothers from Classis Central U.S. on September 14 and 15, 2020 and greeted them on behalf of our classis. His report is attached.

### **IV. Reports/Synopses/Press Releases of Previous Meetings Fraternal Delegate Report of the Fall Meeting of the Presbytery of the Midwest (Oostburg, WI), September 18-19, 2020, by Rev. Kyle Sorensen**

This Presbytery had to meet entirely by Zoom in late March, 2020, but they were able to meet in a hybrid-fashion at this September 18-19 meeting. There were 18 delegates joining over Zoom, while there were 55 attending in person. Several additional delegates were excused. I was welcomed and seated as a corresponding delegate.

They had many administrative matters to handle, as well as the establishing and dissolving of a variety of pastoral relationships. After a brief “faith and life” exam, a seminary student was taken under care. In the area of missions, one congregation was organized, one mission was closed, and a new mission work was begun. The new mission work was an Evangelical Free Church in Kendall, WI, that was received and declared a mission work.

The matter which brought the greatest debate was handled after I had to leave the meeting. While the OPC at the denominational level has begun the process of looking into modernizing the Westminster Standards, an overture was received that asked for the Presbytery to go on record against such a move, especially in light of an accompanying paper on Matthew 6:13b, arguing for the longer ending of the Lord’s Prayer, or what is commonly called the ‘doxology.’ The final action of the presbytery was to deny the overture.

A few interesting items are that the presbytery was reminded that when a pastoral call is written it is supposed to explicitly address health insurance in some way, according to the General Assembly’s guidance. Also, a large packet of documents was sent to all delegates, but not to fraternal delegates (I was given a basic agenda and one report from the Missions Committee). Nearly all reports were not read on the floor, yet the motion was repeatedly made and carried on each of these to “take the report ‘as read.’” I found that ironic.

I was given time to address the body and my remarks were well received. I continue to maintain several personal relationships with members of this presbytery. One person unable to attend the meeting was Dr. Alan Strange, who was at home recovering from COVID-19, which led to pneumonia and a short hospitalization. We praise God that he is doing well now. The former Regional Home Missionary, Rev. Jim Bosgraf, was honored with a lengthy resolution granting him emeritus status and noting the many ways he has served in Christ's Church within the OPC for 52 years. I was able to express our thanksgiving and prayers for each of these men on behalf of our Classis.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen

### **Fraternal Delegate Report of the Fall Meeting of Classis Central U.S. (Doon, IA), September 14-15, 2020, by Rev. Richard Stetler**

On September 14 and 15, 2020, your fraternal delegate attended the 50th meeting of Classis Central US of the URCNA at the Doon URC in Doon, Iowa. Classis convened at 6:30 p.m. on the 14th with a devotional by Rev. John Vermeer from Psalm 34. Upon the Classis being duly constituted Rev. Nick Alons, Lynwood URC assumed the chair with the vice chair being provided by Rev. Harold Miller of First URC, Oak Lawn, IL.

Your fraternal delegate was given an opportunity to address Classis. I greeted Classis on behalf of Covenant East Classis and addressed the delegates, encouraging them to continue to remain strong in the Lord in these challenging times; to evangelize the lost; and to remain steadfast in upholding the authority of Scripture, especially as it relates to the Genesis account of creation. Compromising on creation will lead a church or a denomination down the road to liberal teaching and a perverted view of the gospel. I gave a brief report on our Classis meeting in March highlighting certain items of interest, including noting that Rev. Win Groseclose was received into Classis as a minister of the word. I will not detail all that took place, except to highlight a few of the matters that occurred.

First, after committee appointments and election of vacant offices; a Colloquium Doctum was conducted examining Rev. Marvin Leese, who sought to move his emeritus credentials to the URCNA from the Christian Reformed Church, who also desired to move his church membership to Sioux Center URC, Sioux Center, IA. Rev. Leese's exam consisted of 5 areas: Practica - Rev. John Vermeer conducting the exam, 30 minutes in duration with questions from the floor; Church Polity – Rev. Spencer Aalsburg conducting the exam, 20 minutes in duration with questions from the floor; Confessional Knowledge – Rev. Jacques Roets conducting the exam, 20 minutes in duration with questions from the floor; Reformed Doctrine – Rev. Harold Miller conducting the exam, 20 minutes in duration with questions from the floor; Ethics – Rev. Todd DeRooy conducting the exam, 20 minutes in duration with questions from the floor. After each area examined a vote to proceed to the next area was done. A positive report was given by Rev. Jon Bushnell of Sioux Center URC that evaluated a sermon by Rev.

Leese. After some discussion where some concerns were expressed regarding a couple of procedural irregularities, Classis voted whether Rev. Leese sustained each area in which he was examined; his exam was sustained.

The various Classis reports were then given from the Stated Clerk, Treasurer and the Church Planting Advisory Committee. One note of interest regarding the Treasurer's Report: it was reported that giving was down. However, it was also noted that expenses were down. I note this because during this time when worship services have been interrupted or attendance has been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic many churches are experiencing a decrease in giving.

Notwithstanding, the treasurer encouraged the Clerk of Classis to send out reminders for churches to pay their dues and guidelines in a timely manner so as to meet its financial commitments. It is also noted that its church plants seem to also be struggling; especially during this time because of the restrictions that have been put in place this year; however, as these are lifted it is expected that improvements should begin to be experienced.

Next, disciplinary actions by a number of churches were brought before Classis. However, these weren't brought on appeal before the Classis, but rather as a matter of procedure to seek advice on whether the action by the Consistory (our Spiritual Council) should proceed to the next level of discipline. I thought this was odd since in my mind it would prejudice Classis on a case that may later be brought before it on appeal; but perhaps this would help to prevent or reduce the number of cases being appealed, since the handling of a case by the Consistory would be checked if not being conducted properly, which was the case in a couple of instances.

Because of Synodical deadlines for 2021, it was agreed that the next Classis would be held March 15th and 16th in Hills, Mn, about a month before it would normally be held. The meeting was closed with a reading from Ephesians 4:1-4 and a few comments related to it by the Chairman, Rev. Alons. Respectfully submitted, Rev. Richard Stetler

## **V. Fraternal Invitation Follow-Ups**

At the filing of this report, we have not received word of any fraternal delegates planning to attend our Classis meeting, but it is not uncommon for delegates to decide to attend a few days before the meeting.

## **VI. Ecumenical Challenge**

With Covid-19 causing meetings to be postponed, moved to a teleconferencing platform, or to have the meeting location moved to a state where it is permissible to congregate in larger numbers, the fraternal visiting was down in 2020 for all NAPARC fellowships. Likely for the first half of 2021, we won't anticipate a dramatic increase in fraternal observing, but as Classes and Presbyteries that meet twice a year, we will have more opportunities to break bread with our fellow brothers in Christ. May we be willing to grow together in our mutual faith, learn from one another, and challenge each other, and that begins by knowing the other

and attending the meetings of our neighboring judicatories with whom we have fraternal ties.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chuck Muether, Dustin Rothwell, Jay Fluck, Win Groseclose, and Ron Potter

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Classis Action: The report was adopted.

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

Dear Brothers,

The members of your committee performed visits with the three ongoing works in our Classis—Immanuel Reformed Fellowship (in-person), Grace Reformed Church and Reformation Church Blue Bell (via zoom). Following these meetings your committee met as a whole to discuss our reports on, and recommendations concerning, these works. The following is the summary and results of these meetings.

#### **Report on Mission Work Immanuel Reformed Fellowship**

Members from both Classis Home Missions Committee (Rev. Christopher Campbell and Elder Jay Liesveld) and Synod Home Missions Committee (Rev. Harvey Opp and Elder David Jacobsen) travelled to Pella, IA on January 22, 2021 to perform an in-person assessment. During this assessment we met with Rev. Chuck Muether and his wife Kristie, along with two families who are communicant members of Immanuel Reformed Fellowship. We also had email and phone communication with the two NAPARC works in Pella, Hope OPC and Covenant URCNA. Both of these churches support the work which Rev. Muether is doing and have no objections to an RCUS church plant in the area. Rev. Muether, although in Pella, IA at this time, is looking to move this church plant to the west. Some possible locations include Newton, Pleasant Hill and Altoona, IA.

Following these meetings, the assessment committee of Classis and Synod provided a positive assessment of Immanuel Reformed Fellowship. Members of your committee agree with this assessment and are willing to recommend Immanuel Reformed Fellowship receive support from Classis and Synod (see below recommendations). One concern raised during this process by a member of our committee was the unresolved question about an overall Classis strategy for Home Missions and the implications for support of works like Immanuel. Lord willing, Classis will address this concern as we implement better controls for receiving and supporting future mission works (see below answer to question on strategic planning).

Oversight for this work is provided by the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church, Gettysburg, PA. Rev. Muether attends their monthly meetings via Zoom and the treasurer of Covenant Reformed Church is overseeing the funds for this mission work. Financial support for this work will come from local offerings

(\$12,000 to \$15,000 annually), Covenant Reformed Church (\$5,000 annually) and from Classis and Synod (see recommendations #2 & #3 below)

### **Report on Mission Work Grace Reformed Church**

Rev. Christopher Campbell and Elder Jay Liesveld met with Rev. Steve Carr via Zoom on Friday February 12, 2021. Rev. Carr has been serving the congregation at Rogers since August 2015. Presently the congregation has 12 communicant members and 15 baptized members. In addition, one family recently arrived from Florida and is looking to join.

In recent years Grace Reformed Church has struggled with having enough qualified men to serve as church officers. Long time elder Bobby Duncan stepped down from this role and former deacon Steve Mankins has been ordained to the office of elder, taking his place on the Consistory and Spiritual Council. The congregation has one elder, but no deacons.

During the past five years the church has been able to come off Synod support (in 2015) and has reduced Classis Support from \$4,860 to \$3,969 per year. Presently the congregation has two property loans outstanding, totaling around \$78,000. Giving has remained stable, although one member recently retired from Walmart, which is expected to reduce giving.

Rev. Carr reports that the church is meeting his needs and those of his family. He has both health and life insurance and is presently working to pay down student loan debt in order to invest more in retirement. His wife Crystal and their five children are doing well. In addition to his labors as pastor Rev. Carr has been faithfully laboring as the Stated Clerk of Covenant East Classis, an assignment which he has been able to balance with his other duties.

### **Report on Mission Work Reformation Church Blue Bell**

Over the past year Rev. Christopher Campbell has been in communication with Rev. Ron Potter and elders Dan Wright and Ken Hanko, via email and phone, with regard to the Classis request for a strategic plan. Rev. Campbell met with Rev. Potter, and Elders Wright and Hanko via zoom on January 26, 2021 to discuss this strategic plan. On February 2, 2021, the finished strategic plan was received by your committee. Subsequently your committee met with Ron, Dan and Ken on February 24, 2021 to discuss continuation of the work of Reformation Church Blue Bell. Based on the information gathered from the strategic report and in these meetings, your committee is recommending to Classis that Reformation Church Blue Bell no longer be considered a mission work of Covenant East Classis (see Recommendation #4 below).

In addition to providing oversight for our Classis mission works, your committee was also tasked with two recommendations from the Standing Home Missions Committee, as follows:



**Regarding Standing Home Missions Committee recommendation #3, “That Heritage Reformed make a strategic plan with goals for the next three years concerning their work at Blue Bell and submit it to the Permanent Classis Home Missions Committee before Spring Classis 2021:**

Your committee provided guidance to Rev. Ron Potter and Elders Dan Wright and Ken Hanko in their preparation of a strategic plan for Blue Bell. The strategic plan submitted may be found in appendix #1 at the end of this report.

**Regarding Standing Home Missions Committee recommendation #9, that questions 3 and 4 from the 2020 Classis Presidents Report be referred to the Permanent Home Missions Committee:**

Your committee members discussed these two questions and came to the following conclusions:

**Regarding question #3:** “Do we have a strategy? We are supposed to have a 3-5 year strategy reported here and passed along to the Synod Home Missions Committee (Synod Abstract 2008:74, Rec. 10). We have done so in the past but have been lax in recent years. More than simply putting a report together, what are the goals and parameters we might follow in seeking to encourage our brothers who are providentially involved in small mission works with few prospects for the future?”

**Responses:**

- “Do we have a strategy?” Presently our strategy is reactive, not proactive. We react when a local church communicates to Classis that they wish to start a new work.
- “What are the goals and parameters we might follow in seeking to encourage our brothers who are providentially involved in small mission works with few prospects for the future?”
  - Classic ought to encourage local congregations to be familiar with the process outlined in our missions manual and to communicate early with the CHMC when starting any mission work within the bounds of Classis.
  - RCUS Synod 2019 erected a special committee for strategic planning. The report of that committee is being submitted to Synod this year and would be worth studying for use by our Classis.

**Regarding question #4:** “We have a mission closing in a huge metropolitan area—one of the largest within driving distance of any of our classis churches. We have several other missions or mission outposts or stations which are very small, yet they are seeking funds to survive. Is there something unusual about this picture? We tried the strategy of building up one congregation so that they would be able to plant a daughter church and also remain healthy and viable themselves in the process. That didn’t work, at least this time around. But there are other strategies. And there are many people in the area. We have three churches

within the greater area. Is Classis willing to seize this providential opportunity for missions? When might we try?

**Responses:**

- “Is there something unusual about this picture?” No. Church planting is very “location specific.”
- “Is Classis willing to seize this providential opportunity for missions?” Classis ought to be willing to seize every providential opportunity in the right time.
- “When might we try?” Your committee believes it would be best to draft a “lessons learned” from both Emmaus and the second Redeemer church plant before moving forward with another work. Furthermore, we believe that Redeemer should be given time to heal from this last church plant attempt.

**Recommendations:**

1. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with \$330.75 per month, a total of \$3969 in the fiscal year 2021-2022 beginning July 2021 (This is the same as last year).
2. Based on the positive assessment of Classis Home Missions Committee, that Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2021-2022 for the work in south-central Iowa.
3. Based on the positive assessment of Classis Home Missions Committee, that Classis overture Synod to provide Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2021-2022 for the work in south-central Iowa.
4. That Classis no longer consider Reformation Church Blue Bell as a mission work of Covenant East Classis. Ground: Reformation Church Blue Bell does not meet the requirements for a Classis mission work per the RCUS Missions Manual.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Campbell, Dan Schnabel, Mike Altman, Jay Liesveld, Dennis Luquette, Walt Van Heest

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

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**E. Publications Committee**

No committee was formed.

## **F. Church Camp Committee**

Dear Brothers,

Covenant East Heidelberg Youth Camp met again in 2020 at Camp Sinawa on July 7-10. It was a wonderful week of fellowship, study in the Scriptures, fun, and great food. The theme of the camp was Knowing What You Believe And Why You Believe It. Our theme verse was Romans 10:9.

We covered topics on different articles in the Heidelberg Catechism related to the Apostles Creed. The opening night talk was on Heidelberg #21-22 (what do you believe?). Lecture #1 was on providence (#26-28), lecture #2 was on confessing Christ (#29-32), lecture #3 was on the Holy Spirit (#53), and lecture #4 was on heaven/resurrection/life everlasting (#57-58).

The camp was hosted, as always, by the capable and dedicated servants from Salem Ebenezer. Carolyn Hackmann was the local organizer. She and the members of Salem Ebenezer go above and beyond the call in making the camp work smoothly, including a lot of work with setup and sanitizing. The camp committee wants to give thanks to the congregation at Manitowoc for their gracious hosting and their faithful and joyful service.

The cost of camp was \$70 per camper. There were a total of 61 campers this year. Six ministers, one male counselor, and three women counselors were also in attendance (as well as Carolyn and Connie).

The Camp balance began 2020 with \$171.45. Total camp expenses were \$5,321.07. Total income was \$6,399.77. The income includes donations from churches and individuals, for which we give thanks. The current balance stands at \$1,078.70.

The dates for the 2021 camp are July 6-9. By God's grace, this will be the 30th year of Covenant Church Camp (D.V.). We would urge the churches, pastors and elders, to spread the word among your members to encourage camp attendance.

Finally, we would mention some needs that would contribute to a successful camp again in 2021:

- 1) We are in need of female counselors for the girls' dorm and cabins. It would be wonderful if we could have some mature college age women present.
- 2) We would be well served by having some mature men present to help with chaperoning. Ideally, having some college age men would be a great service, but fathers are welcome too.
- 3) A timely response to the call for numbers of attendees from each church is crucial for food and t-shirt purchases.

4) We need pastors to participate in teaching and general interaction with campers.

5) Anyone with EMT certification is a huge bonus.

6) If any of the churches have extra money in the deacons fund, please think about giving to the camp. Financial contributions would be helpful to keep us in the black.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Kron, Jim Sawtelle, Dan Schnabel, Ben Nelson, Steve Stuebbe, Richard Stetler

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Classis Action: The report was adopted.

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## **Reports of Officers**

### **A. Presidents Report on the State of the Church**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

It was an honor to serve as your president this past year. My labors as part of the Executive Committee are summarized in their report. You should also know that in keeping with RCUS protocol, I attended the funeral of Rev. Dr. Robert Grossmann to give condolences on behalf of our classis.

We gathered last night for our annual pre-Classis discussion. This year, the topic was timely: coping with criticism in the ministry. One fitting quote from our book was this old Dutch saying, "He who stands in the front will soon be kicked in the rear." It is common for one or two pastors/congregations to have had a particularly rough year as they head to the annual classis meeting with wounds needing to be nursed and hearts awaiting the encouragement of the brethren. This year, nearly every one of us come "having been kicked in the rear," feeling bruised and reporting that this past year was perhaps the hardest ever. Most of the reasons are not directly related to the pandemic and economic turmoil of our nation, although the dominoes of criticism and unrest within society have led to social and spiritual unrest within congregations.

After reading the suffering described in our parochial reports I think we could rename ourselves "the Job Classis." Several pastors report struggles with their health. A few pastors report bouts with depression, perhaps in response to criticisms faced. Several pastors specifically highlight the work of the Consistory and their support this year in all sorts of trials. One pastor's Consistory even took steps to provide a 15 week sabbatical for him for the purpose of recovery and renewal.

In fact, long before reading the parochial reports, only half-way through the Classis year, I was aware of two pastors who had been accused of scandalous activity, one pastor/Spiritual Council faced intense threats over church discipline administered in the past, four pastors seriously considering getting out of the ministry or leaving their current charge, and every local Consistory facing conflict in some way from members (including one another) on how to rightly respond to the pandemic, lockdowns, church-state issues, etc. Since the start of 2021, it became clear that this week's meeting could have included hearing as many as two complaints against local Spiritual Councils and an additional set of charges against a minister, along with another set of accusations against another pastor of scandalous activity. I do not mention all this so that people can go try to discover who each of these situations refers to. Rather, I mention it to bring to light the very reality that Christ promised—in this world we will have tribulation.

(And on the matter of accusations of scandal—we take any and all allegations made by any church member or officer seriously. Our Constitution lays down a process in Article 121 for such things. Those who rule in the Church must also submit to the rules and be held accountable. At the same time, we all must seek to promote and defend our neighbor's good name—all of our neighbors, those bringing their concerns and those who are the subject of the allegations. The Biblical proofs for these matters in 1 Corinthians 5 and Matthew 18 along with other relevant Scriptures have been followed or are in process of being followed, as the case may warrant)

As a Classis, we are going through a season of tribulation in our churches and especially among the officers. We come into this week battered and bruised. It is a call to be humble, to self-examination Page 2 of 5 where we may have erred in any way in method or substance. It is a call to be gentle and patient encouragers of one another as we press on, stirring up the gift that is within us. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and sound minds. Let us remember the words of one of the fathers of the faith, John Calvin. He wrote, "Whatever a person may be like, we must still love them because we love God."

In the face of criticism, Christ is still the Lord of His Church. The marks of the Church are alive and well within Covenant East Classis. Every congregation had to adapt to covid precautions and government-mandated lockdowns. Although the lockdowns began just a few weeks after we last were together for our Classis meeting in March 2020, nearly every congregation was back to in-person worship by the end of May (with live-streaming or digital recording available for those at home). One congregation did not resume until July, and then the Consistory suspended in-person gathering again for 2 months from November to January 2021. Several pastors report how eery and awkward the experience was of preaching to an empty church or a computer screen during those weeks. We are so glad to have that season behind us and ready to push on with a deeper appreciation for the value of public, gathered worship, as a testimony to the world of our faith in the midst of fear and unbelief.

Nearly every pastor is preaching through both the OT and the NT during the year. This is very good, showing the unity of the gospel message. The sacraments are faithfully administered. Despite the pandemic delaying the celebration of the Lord's Supper on one or two occasions, every congregation still celebrated the Lord's Supper multiple times in 2020. The third mark of the church (church discipline) was also practiced in 2020. Members were dismissed and received, erased and/or disciplined, where appropriate. While not often understood, the Bible teaches that the discipline of the church includes the process of membership class and oversight of new souls brought into the congregation. Despite a pandemic, many congregations reported new families coming and joining. In some cases, it is because of the faithful response of our churches to the pandemic and world events which drew these new members or visitors.

There is a need for additional help on the Executive Committee. The recommendation by that committee to authorize them to call on the Vice President as needed to fulfill their duties would greatly alleviate the stress and sheer number of crises that have to be managed in a busy year like we have had the past two years.

With the exception of the Camp Committee, all other permanent committee reports were quite late (see Standing Rule #15). Rather than wait for the finalized docket from the Clerk, which is not available until a few days before Classis meets, I suggest that each chairman simply reply by the deadline to the email list that the Clerk uses to announce the Spring Meeting. Then each delegate will have time to review and come prepared.

The Interchurch Relations Committee visited our fraternal church assemblies when possible. The Church Camp Committee reports another good year with covenant youth and many volunteers growing in grace. Most summer camps were closed down, but with some extra sanitizing and planning, we had the highest turnout of campers in years. The Candidates and Credentials Committee assisted with the credentials of a pastor and also provided counsel and oversight of our seminary student.

The Missions Committee has been very active this year. I want to personally commend them, especially since some of their work is related to the set of questions I put to them in my 2020 President's Report regarding our missions strategy and practices in recent years. It is clear that the men on the committee have reflected and prayed about these matters and then applied our denominational missions manual in wise and careful ways to the missions that exist in our classis. They make some recommendations which mark a change in some cases. They mention some work which needs to still be done for self-reflection as a classis. I pray that we will do that. I pray that we will all, even if we don't wear the label of 'missionary' or 'mission church,' view ourselves as ambassadors for Christ, going forth in obedience to His Great Commission, fulfilling God's mission to a lost and dying world.

The main work of our classis is done through the local congregations. From West to East, a selective summary of the parochial reports follows. In Kansas City, Rev. Campbell reports a series of trials which families in the congregation faced in 2020, and then reports that God has been gracious in the midst of those trials. Furthermore, several new families have joined in 2021 already. He concludes, "Therefore, as I reflect upon 2020 I rejoice, knowing that following every difficulty there is a "But God" which He has designed for our good, for He is rich in mercy."

In Northwest Arkansas, Rev. Carr reports an answer to our prayers as a classis for some time: another elder has been raised up within the congregation. He also reminds us of a saying of Christian martyrs from the 4th Century: "Without Sunday we cannot live." Both in their worship and in various church education settings the saints have participated in the lively faith of the Christian and the fellowship of the gathered saints.

In Hamburg, Rev. Schnabel explains that when a Bible study to the assisted living home was shut down due to covid restrictions a new Bible Study was begun in a senior apartment, studying the Psalms. While the year went on with a seemingly new crisis each week, he reports with a tone of hope and describes a congregation that is lovingly cared for by our Triune God.

In Garner, Dr. Larson reports a personal milestone reached in 2020 of thirty years in the ordained ministry of the gospel. He also mentions how the pandemic increased the workload in terms of comforting, counseling, and praying with the flock. A further challenge that he and the Consistory have had to navigate is how to proceed when an infectious disease is in the community while the pastor happens to have significant preexisting medical conditions.

In South Central Iowa, Rev. Muether serves in our newest Classis Mission Work, Immanuel Reformed Fellowship (under the oversight of the Gettysburg Consistory). Planting a mission work in a pandemic is difficult, to say the least. Yet God was gracious in bringing new families who are very mission-minded. The pandemic slowed the ability to have on-site assessment of the work by Classis and Synod Committees, but that has occurred now and fuller denominational support is on the horizon.

In Eden Prairie, Rev. Kron has led the congregation in teaching, conversation, and prayers against the dangers of becoming an ingrown church. One practical illustration of this is the practice of volunteers who prepare information to bring to the congregation for each prayer meeting about one of the missionaries they financially support. They then pray together with understanding.

In Minneapolis, Rev. Sawtelle describes the 11 'virtual Lord's Day gatherings' as surreal, done with heavy hearts, yet with constant adjustments to get closer to the norm of in-person gatherings. "It was a sincere effort to provide Christ's ministry through the gospel and offer praise to God in singing, Scripture reading, preaching

and prayer.” Several church members assisted with technology and came in-person to help make it better. Worship and most church education events are back now, with some precautions, which are constantly being re-evaluated by the Consistory.

In Manitowoc, Rev. Sorensen reports the struggle to adapt to the pandemic and yet the blessings of maintaining Christian worship and fellowship amid the risks of this world. In April 2020, legal counsel was sought in case of a lawsuit over having a funeral in the parking lot. The congregation members desired to show and experience Christian love such that they were willing to resume monthly fellowship meals, host the annual Church Camp, and have the traditional Christmas Eve program (all with limited precautions). Not being able to visit the shut-ins for months, dozens of members braved the cold and went Christmas caroling from outside the windows (to 8 different locations). The shut-ins joyfully sang along to Stille Nacht (Silent Night) and held up signs that said “Thank you and I love you.”

In Napoleon, Rev. Altman reports new members, new Bible studies, and a renewed involvement of all ages in church education classes. There is clear evidence of discipleship happening among the saints. Within the challenges, he writes that we move forward, “casting our burdens upon the God Who loves us and Who sustains us for His glory!”

In Gettysburg, Rev. Fluck reports a few weddings and also a few new members. He describes the privilege for the congregation to have hosted last year’s Classis meeting. He personally endured two surgeries during the year, yet was able to maintain most of his duties throughout. He reports some intense conflict within the congregation, and prays that he and all the members would respond to the Lord’s testing by a growth in sanctification and a resolve to heal where needed.

In Waymart, Rev. Potter reports some members lost while new members were gained. He also reports that he has resumed duties on the Synod Interchurch Relations Committee, from which he had been relieved a few years ago. He has painstakingly researched all our actions in that area over recent decades to create 50 pages of notes. These will be developed into a handbook to provide continuity and purpose to the Synod in our ecumenical relations for decades to come.

We also have three pastors laboring without a pastoral call. Rev. Richard Stetler is retired, and yet continues to fill pulpit in many Reformed churches in the greater northwest Iowa area. Last year classis had approved his request to labor outside the bounds to serve as a part-time Associate Pastor at a PCA church. Sadly, that relationship did not last for long due to other issues and changes within that congregation. He continues to labor for Reformation Gospel Ministries, which has expanded outreach to 6 different countries now.

In Fombell, PA, Rev. Win Groseclose reports that he has had to enter a bi-vocational ministry to pay the bills. The Lord has been gracious to his family in this



way. For nearly a year he has been leading worship for a group of families calling themselves Light of Resurrection Reformed Church. They hope to be ready to request entrance as a congregation of the RCUS in about 12 months.

Rev. Jimmy John Hall, our newest member of classis, reports that he interacts with many people in his workplace (as the Clerk of a local municipality) and in the community where he resides near Columbus, Ohio. He regularly prays for unbelievers. He is hopeful that opportunities for a possible mission work may arise. He is also studying for a D. Min., with focus on the area of Biblical counseling.

The Kansas City Consistory has, as of this writing, chosen not to revise and resubmit its overture which was returned to it last year so that it could provide more detailed argumentation (Abstract 2020:48). While on a different, but related, topic, the Special Study Committee on the Office of Believer is proposing it be dissolved without having finished its work. We certainly all understand the loss of urgency on both these matters (the overture and the special committee) given the events of the past year and the several crises within our congregations. However, the issues that led to these matters are not going away. It is my prayer that we will continue to work toward a greater unity with one another and, perhaps at the Synod level as well as the Classis level, hammer out a way to handle both unity and diversity in ways that flow out of our mutual commitment to the Scriptures and to one another as covenanted members of the same church.

Classis is thankful to have found a new Treasurer. We are grateful for the kindness of Jim Drewes who continued his labors many extra months until we were able to find and elect Alan Herrmann. We look forward to working together with Mr. Herrmann in the years to come. Financially, the churches of classis and the classis itself are financially stable, for which we praise God.

Finally, this is my final report as your President. I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me to not only run the meetings, but to assist in organization, advice, and encouragement throughout the year. I love Christ's Church, and this has been a wonderful way to see the church up close and to come alongside pastors and elders as well as church members throughout the Classis.

A final word of exhortation for our "Job Classis." One of the devotions at last year's classis meeting pointed us to John Calvin's view of the gospel ministry. The handout from Dr. Larson's devotion reads, "Calvin was prepared to say concerning the Church of Geneva: 'the welfare of this church, it is true, lay so near my heart, that for its sake I would not have hesitated to lay down my life.'" Those words are still timely. Let us not shrink back in the face of conflict and suffering. We are to be Christlike before our congregations, laying down ourselves for their spiritual well-being. As we reflect on what we can and should do, whether we might get sick ourselves by doing it (physically or emotionally), or whether we might be persecuted by the governing authorities, or censored by technology, or criticized by our own flock, let us press on with the courage and the gentleness of Christ.

What can the world do to us? What can disease do to us? Like Job, we know that our Redeemer lives, and so we live for His glory. He is our source of strength. His voice is the one we long to hear above all others, when on that great day we hear Him graciously pronounce, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

Your Servant in Christ,

Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen

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Classis Action: The report was to be spread in the minutes, printed in the Abstract and submitted to the *Reformed Herald*.

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

Esteemed Brethren,

It continues to be my honor to serve you as Stated Clerk. As always, it's joy to hear your appreciation at the work being done. If elected again, I hope I can continue to serve you well.

As your Stated Clerk, I have formatted, indexed, and placed in permanent binders all of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 20, 2019 and Spring 2020 Meeting of the Covenant East Classis, along with all of the reports, overtures, and other relevant information. These Minutes have not yet been submitted to the Standing Minutes of Classes Committee at Synod due to the delegated Synod, but they are ready to be handed in to this year's Minutes of Classis committee at Synod. The President's Report on the State of the Church was spread in the Minutes, printed in the 2020 Abstract, and sent to the *Reformed Herald*.

I prepared the 2020 Abstract, which included the Special Meeting of May 20, 2019. I distributed the printed copies to all the churches of our Classis by mail and the rest will be distributed at this coming Synod. I apologize for the delay in your receiving of the Abstract which was due to a miscommunication between the printer, myself, and a packing/shipping company that I used for the first time this year. A PDF copy of the abstract was also sent to the website master to be published on the RCUS website.

I sent the required forms, communications, and overtures to the Synod Clerk on time. All Classis records are kept in hard copy and in electronic form and backed up on a second hard drive and on a memory stick.

I kept and formatted the minutes of the Special Meeting on May 5, 2020 and August, 4 2020. These minutes will be recorded in the Abstract of this 2020 Spring Meeting. I sent a letter of Dismissal for Rev. Tim Marinelli to the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and a letter of reception of Rev. Jimmy John Hall to the Southwest Classis of the RCUS. I sent out eight circular

letters and participated in the work of the Executive Committee as detailed in that report.

For this meeting, I have organized all the ovetures, communications, and reports, and placed them all in their proper folders for distribution at Classis. I received one necrology for this year.

Thank you once again for your timely submissions, your encouragement and your support.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Steve Carr, 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 273rd Synod, there are some items that the Classes should take note of:

1. Regarding the Minutes of Classis Committee, I sent our hard copies of the errors needing correcting to the Classis clerks; and did not publish these in the 2019 Synod Abstract.
2. In regards to the presentation of the Permanent Web-Site Committee Report, a motion from the floor, which was seconded and carried, (lines 191-192 of Synod Minutes) was inadvertently left out of the 2019 Abstract. It should have been Recommendation #3 of the Report: "That 5Q be looked into to manage the RCUS website and possibly each church's web-site if they so choose." I corrected the error in the electronic version of the 2019 Abstract. Please accept my sincere apologies for this error.
3. Regarding article 84 of the RCUS Constitution, Classis clerks need to remember that "Classis shall forward to Synod its actions concerning ministers from other denominations, and also provide a resume regarding the new minister. The confirmation of a new minister from another denomination may be accomplished by executive circular at the request of Classis, provided that the resume and the actions of Classis be included in the circular." When a man from the RCUS is ordained between Classis and Synod, the Classis clerk needs to notify the Synod Clerk, and then the Synod Clerk automatically includes him on the Roll of Synod.
4. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the calendar year.

5. 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.”
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. That 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.
9. Please remember to send necrologies to me in time for Synod.
10. The Classes are reminded that the 274th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 11-14, 2020, at Trinity Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. David Fagrey, Stated Clerk, RCUS

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

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**D. Treasurer's Report**

**2020-2021 CEC YTD Financial Report  
July 1, 2020-February 29, 2021**

**Detailed Income Report**

Guidelines Total: \$66.00

	<u>Members</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Benevolence</u>	<u>Student Aid</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Totals YTD</u>	<u>DueBy 6/15/20</u>
NW Arkansas	16	\$44.80	\$420.00	\$95.20	\$ -	\$960	\$560	\$400
Eden Prairie	108	\$518.40	\$4860	\$1101.60	\$ -	\$6480	\$6480	\$ -
Garner, IA	43	\$103.20	\$967.50	\$219.30	\$ -	\$2580	\$1290	\$1290
Gettysburg	43	\$ -	\$ -	\$	\$ -	\$2580	\$ -	\$2580
Hamburg, MN	192	\$921.60	\$8640	\$1958.40	\$ -	\$11,520	\$11,520	\$ -
Kansas City	75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$4500	\$ -	\$4500
Manitowoc	118	\$283.20	\$2655	\$601.80	\$ -	\$7080	\$3540	\$3540
Minneapolis	122	\$292.80	\$2745	\$622.20	\$ -	\$7320	\$3660	\$3660
Napoleon, OH	60	\$288	\$2700	\$612	\$ -	\$3600	\$3600	\$ -
Waymart, PA	<u>19</u>	\$91.20	\$855	\$ 193.80	\$ -	\$1140	\$1140	\$ -
Other *		<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>		<u>\$ -</u>		<u>\$ -</u>	
	<b>796</b>					<b>\$47,7600</b>	<b>\$31,790</b>	<b>\$15,970</b>

Income Jul 19-Feb 20 \$2543.20 \$23,842.50 \$5404.30 \$ - Total \$ 31,790  
Income Mar 19-Jun 20

**YTD Report**

**Balance July 1, 2020-February 29, 2021**

**Beginning Balance July 1, 2020 \$ 67,876.49**

**General Fund Balance July 1, 2020 \$ 10,895.47**  
Receipts \$ 2,543.20  
Expenses \$ 775.81  
Balance 02/29/2020 **\$ 12,662.86**

**\*\*Missions Fund Balance July 1 2020 \$ 49,245.12**  
Receipts \$ 23,842.50  
Expenses \$ 19,581.00  
Balance 02/29/2020 **\$ 53,506.62**

<b>Benevolence Fund</b>	<b>Balance July 1, 2020</b>	\$	(2,662.34)
Receipts		\$	5,404.30
Expenses		\$	-
Balance 02/29/2020			<b>\$ 2,741.96</b>

<b>Student Aid Fund</b>	<b>Balance July 1, 2020</b>	\$	10,398.24
Receipts		\$	-
Balance 02/29/2020			<b>\$ 10, 398.24</b>

**End Balance 02/29/2020      \$ 79,309.68**

\*\* \$19,144.30 available for future CEC Mission works

**YTD Report**

**Expense July 1, 2020-February 29, 2021**

**General Fund Expense**

Classis Meeting		0
Clerk/Printing Supplies	\$	775.81
Travel	\$	-
Honorarium	\$	-
Postage/Phone/Checks	\$	-
Total		<b>\$ 775.81</b>

**Mission Fund Expenses**

Covenant Reformed Iowa rent	\$	10,000.00
Grace Reformed Church	\$	2,649.00
Reformed Church Blue Bell	\$	6,932.00
Redeemer Reformed Church	\$	10,000.00
Travel	\$	-
Total		<b>\$ 19,581.00</b>

**Benevolence**

Total	\$	-
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**Student Aid**

Total	\$	-
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**Expense Total**

<b>Total Classis Income vs Expense July 2018-February 2019</b>	<b><u>\$ 31,790.00</u></b>
	<b><u>\$ 20,356.81</u></b>

Respectfully Submitted,

Alan Hermann, Treasurer

## Parochial Reports of Ministers

Each minister read his parochial report. Opportunity was given to 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.

### Constitutional Questions to the Elders

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 NW Arkansas which answered "Yes, but needs improvement," Gettysburg which answered "No," and Manitowoc which answered "As much as possible."

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

All churches answered "Yes."

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," except Napoleon which answered, "No."

Questions were asked from the floor.

### **Report of Membership and Financial Statistics**

The Stated Clerk provided a table of statistics based upon the information submitted by the churches of classis (see Appendix #3 of this Abstract).

This report was adopted as corrected.

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

Sorensen gave his report (See Interchurch Relations Committee report above).

Stetler gave his report (See Interchurch Relations Committee report above).

Carr gave an oral report.

### **Addresses by Delegates from Other Reformed Churches or Visitors**

No fraternal delegates were present to give reports.

### **Reports of Special Committees**

#### **A. Special Committee to Discuss Office of Believer**

Dear Brothers,

Your committee did not achieve what it had hoped with regard to the study of this subject. There are many reasons for this, chief among them being lack of interest and commitment from a majority of those involved.

Recommendation: 1. That Classis dissolve the special study committee to study the Office of General Believer.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Campbell, Steve Carr, Jay Fluck, Jim Sawtelle, Ken Hanko, Dennis Luquette

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Classis Action: The Committee was dissolved

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## **B. Special Committee Advisory Committee**

Esteemed Brothers,

Over the last past year with the lockdowns no in person visits were made to Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart PA. Various members of the committee did make contact with Rev. Ron Potter and Elder Dan Wright during the past classical year. No assessment was made.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Steve Altmann, Elder Jay Liesveld, Elder Dennis Luquette, Rev. Chuck Muether, Elder Dustin Rothwell, Rev. Jim Sawtelle, Rev. Daniel Schnabel(*Chairman*).

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Classis Action: The report was adopted.

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### **Reports of Standing Committees**

The following reports with their motions appear in the final form in which classis adopted them unless otherwise noted. 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. Nominations**

1. That the following men serve as the members of these Covenant East Classis Permanent Committees:

Executive: Campbell, Carr, Gilman

Candidates and Credentials: Altman, Fluck, M. Larson, Luquette, Wright

Church Camp: Sorensen, Hall, Sawtelle, Stuebbe

Interchurch Relations: Potter, Muether, Groseclose, Stetler, Wiersma

Missions: Kron, Schnabel, Van Heest, Jacobsen, Mankins

Publications: No committee was formed.

## **B. Judicial**

1. That the recommendation from the Executive Committee be judged out of order per Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution which allows only for 3 members on the Permanent Executive Committee.

Muether, Stetler, Wiersma

## **C. Missions**

1. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with \$330.75 per month, a total of \$3969 in the fiscal year of 2021-2022 beginning July 2021 (This is the same as last year).

2. Based on the positive statement of Classis Home Missions Committee, that Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2021-2022 for the work in South Central Iowa.

3. Based on the positive statement of Classis Home Missions Committee, that Classis overture Synod to provide Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2021-2022 for the work in South Central Iowa.

4. That Classis no longer consider Reformation Church Blue Bell as a mission work of Covenant East Classis. Ground: Reformation Church Blue Bell does not meet the requirements for a Classis mission work per the RCUS Missions Manual.

Kron, Van Heest, Stuebbe

## **D. Benevolence**

1. Regarding the request from Salem-Ebenezer, that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for Benevolent Aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1200.00 per month for the Synodical year 2021-2022. (Same as last year).

2. That the request for Classis benevolent aid on behalf of Rev. Richard Stetler in the amount of \$1000 per month for the period March 2021 to February 2022 be denied and the matter referred to the Consistory of Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA for consultation with Rev. Stetler as to his need.

Potter, Larson, Luquette, Wright

## **E. Minutes of Synod**

1. Regarding item #7 that the Stated Clerk of Classis take note of regularly providing the Web master, in electronic form, an up dated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring Classis meeting. Take note.

2. That Classis take note of items 1-6 and 8-10. Take Note.

Potter, Larson, Luquette, Wright

## **F. Excuses**

1. That the requests of Elder Wright and Elder Jacobsen be granted due to the necessities of their employment.

2. That the requests for excuse of Rev. Fluck, Rev. Larson, Rev. Potter, Rev. Schnabel, and Elder Luquette be granted for medically related reasons.

3. That the request of Rev. Groseclose be granted due to the necessity of his wife's care for her parents.

4. That the request of Rev. Sawtelle be granted due to the status of his sabbatical.

5. That the request of Rev. Hall be granted due to his summons to serve on Jury Duty.

Groseclose, Fluck, Jacobsen, Schnabel, Hall

## **G. Minutes of Classis**

Classis voted that the minutes be distributed within the next 48 hours, and after any corrections are received, the President shall notify the Classis that he has declared them approved. Carried by two-thirds vote.

## **H. Finances**

1. The Standing Committee on Finances has audited the 2020-2021 year to date treasurer's report and found it to be in order.

Altman moved recommendation 2. That travel reimbursement for the Classis meeting be as follows:

Steve Altman:	\$388
Marc Wiersma:	\$300
Richard Stetler:	\$458
Steve Carr:	\$440
Walt Van Heest:	\$300

Altman moved recommendation 3. That Classis adopt the following guidelines:

General Fund:	\$15.00
Missions Fund:	\$40.00
Benevolence Fund:	\$5.00
Student Aid:	\$0.00

Altman, Schroeder (Hermann advise)

## **I. Services**

1. That Covenant East Classis express the following words of gratitude to the congregation of Salem Ebenezer Church of Manitowoc, WI by including it in the Sunday Bulletin: "The delegates of Covenant East Classis greatly appreciate the hospitality offered to us by the congregation of Salem Ebenezer Church during our 2021 Spring Meeting. We experienced your love through the way you served us during our visit. We realize that a lot goes in to hosting Classis and want you to know that your work on our behalf has not gone unnoticed. May our God richly bless you all as a congregation in the year ahead."

## **Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business**

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

This was handled by the Standing Services Committee

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

The Stated Clerk's report was previously adopted.

The Executive Committee report was adopted as a whole.

## **Reading of the Minutes and Their Approval**

As noted, the minutes were circularized and approved by circular.

## **Adjournment**

The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis was adjourned at 2:25 pm until the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the time and place of which to be determined by Executive Circular.

### **A. Roll Call**

The final roll call showed 13 ministers and 8 elders present, a quorum.

### **B. Devotions**

Elder Dennis Luquette from Covenant RCUS, Gettysburg, PA, led the Classis in devotions by reading from 1 Corinthians 3:12-16, commenting on the text, and praying.

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

The President led the Classis in reciting the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced a benediction and led in the singing of the Doxology.

Respectfully submitted and chronicled for Christ's glory,

Rev. Steve Carr, Stated Clerk

Appendix  
for the  
2019 Abstract  
follows:

#1 - List of Overtures and Communications

#2 – Necrologies

#3 – Statistics

#4 – Standing Rules

## APPENDIX #1

### List of Overtures and Communications

#### Overtures

**Overture #1:** March 2, 2021. From Salem-Ebenezer RCUS, that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1200 per month for the Synodical year 2021-2022.

**Overture #2:** March 2, 2021. From Richard Stetler requesting benevolent aid in the amount of \$1,000 per month. (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE)

**Overture #3:** March 2, 2021. From Richard Stetler requesting that Classis overture Synod to consider adding Reformation Gospel Network to the list of works worthy of support.

#### Communications

**Communication #1:** January 14, 2021. From the Stated Clerk of Synod: Minutes of Synod Report. (TO STANDING MINUTES OF SYNOD)

**Communication #2:** February 8, 2021. From Rev. Ron Potter requesting that Rev. Potter and Elder Dan Wright be excused from all Classis sessions.

**Communication #3:** February 14, 2021 From Rev. Jim Sawtelle requesting to be excused from all Classis sessions. (TO STANDING EXUSES)

**Communication #4:** February 23, 2021. From Dan Schnabel requesting to be excused from all Classis sessions. (TO STANDING EXCUSES)

**Communication #5:** March 1, 2021. From Rev. Jimmy John Hall requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis sessions. (TO STANDING EXCUSES)

**Communication #6:** March 2, 2021. From Rev. Mark Larson requesting to be excused from all Classis sessions. (TO STANDING EXCUSES)

**Necrologies**

William Katter, Sr.

William Katter, Sr., 83, of Peace Reformed Church in Garner, Iowa, passed away on Tuesday, February 2, 2021.

William Kyhl Katter was the son of Arthur and Freda (Kyhl) Katter. He was born on May 30, 1937, on a farm west of Klemme, Iowa. William was baptized and confirmed at Peace Reformed Church. He served as both Deacon and Elder and was a faithful member of Peace Reformed Church his entire life. He attended country school in Liberty Township, Hancock County and graduated from Klemme High School in 1954.

On January 23, 1959, he was united in marriage to Alyce Ann Dahl at Trinity Lutheran Church in Ellsworth, Iowa. The couple was blessed with four children. They lived all their life on the farm south of Garner. While William was active in the community, farming was the love of his life. He was on the Board of Directors at Hancock County Coop Oil. He was also a Klemme Ell Township trustee and was also a seed corn company salesman.

William enjoyed fishing, raising his family, and traveling. He and Alyce traveled to Europe, Hawaii, Alaska, Niagara Falls, and the Canadian Rockies. They also took many trips to Missouri and Florida.

William is survived by his wife of sixty-two years, Alyce Ann Katter, and four children—Valerie (Ron) Heemstra of Sioux Center, IA; Vickie (Mark) Svendsen of Castle Rock, CO; Kelly (Kendra) of Oklahoma City, OK; and Bill Katter Jr. of Garner, IA. William and Alyce were blessed with nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Arthur Katter Jr; and brother-in-law Emil Broers.



**APPENDIX #3: Statistics of Covenant East Classis covering 2018 reported in 2019 follows pp. 58-59**

Statistics of Covenant East Classis: Covering 2020 reported in 2021						
	Northwest	Minnetonka	Garner	Gettysburg	Hamburg	Kansas City
Category	Arkansas	Minnesota	Iowa	Pennsylvania	Minnesota	Missouri
1. No. of Elders	1	4	3	2	3	3
2. No of Deacons	1	6	2	2	3	4
3. Comm. Last Year	16	108	43	43	192	75
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	0	0	0	3	3
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	3	3	0	0
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	4	0	0	0	0
7. Total Received	0	4	3	3	3	3
8. Tot. Old/New Mem	16	112	46	46	195	78
9. Lost by Dismissal	0	3	0	0	0	0
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	0	11	4	0	0	1
11. Lost by Death	0	0	1	0	3	1
12. Total Lost	0	14	5	0	3	2
13. Comm this Year	16	98	41	46	192	76
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	15	64	2	26	27	15
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	31	162	43	72	219	91
16. No. of Families	9	52	28	23	119	36
17. No. of S.S Child.	15	65	4	20	13	13
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	6	0	0	4	1
20. Total Baptisms	0	6	0	0	4	1
21. No.L.S. Received	16	98	36	46	160	69
22. Times L.S. Served	10	10	3	5	7	7
23. Regular Offerings	\$ 78,770	\$ 375,735	\$103,425	\$ 128,133	\$ 212,919	\$ 228,470
24. Special Offerings	\$ -	\$ 9,340	\$ 1,654	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 7,721
25. Other Sources	\$ 3,310	\$ -	\$ 1,678	\$ 14,413	\$ -	\$ -
26. Total Receipts	\$ 82,080	\$ 385,075	\$106,757	\$ 143,546	\$ 212,919	\$ 236,191
27. Giv. To Syn. Guide.	\$ 3,680	\$ 25,488	\$ 11,681	\$ 11,800	\$ 48,350	\$ 17,700
28. Giv. To Clas. Guide.	\$ 910	\$ 6,480	\$ 2,907	\$ 3,300	\$ 12,606	\$ 4,290
29. RCUS non-budget	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 290	\$ -	\$ 5,663	\$ 1,609
30. Non-RCUS causes	\$ -	\$ 26,000	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 1,377	\$ 7,240
31. Other Expenses	\$ 95,720	\$ 208,998	\$ 99,241	\$ 102,542	\$ -	\$ 226,398
32. Total Expenses	\$ 100,310	\$ 266,966	\$114,219	\$ 117,642	\$ 67,996	\$ 257,237
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	\$ 112,636	\$ -	\$750,000	\$ -	\$3,570,900	\$2,100,000
34. Val. Of Parsonage	\$ 70,000	\$ 371,972	\$125,000	\$ -	\$ 425,600	\$ -
35. Impr. Of Property	\$ 11,540	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33,707	\$ 23,695
36. Property Debt	\$ 82,400	\$ 250,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000
37. Debt Paid Last YR.	\$ 12,150	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 60,000
38. Synod Giving/Com.	\$ 230	\$ 236	\$ 272	\$ 274	\$ 252	\$ 236
39. Classis Giving/Com.	\$ 57	\$ 60	\$ 68	\$ 77	\$ 66	\$ 57
40. RCUS Giving/Com.	\$ 287	\$ 296	\$ 346	\$ 351	\$ 347	\$ 315

Manitowoc	Minneapolis	Napoleon	Waymart	South Central	Total 2020	Total 2019	% Change	
Wisconsin	Minnesota	Ohio	Pennsylvania	Iowa				
3	3	3	2	2	27	26	4%	
3	5	3	0	2	29	29	0%	
118	122	60	19	43	796	800	-1%	
2	1	2	0	0	11	6	45%	
0	1	0	0	3	7	3	57%	
5	0	5	1	0	15	35	-133%	
7	2	7	1	3	33	44	-33%	
125	124	67	20	46	829	844	-2%	
0	4	0	2	0	9	19	-111%	
2	3	0	0	0	21	11	48%	
2	1	1	0	0	9	8	11%	
4	8	1	2	0	39	38	3%	
121	116	66	18	46	790	796	-1%	
14	54	32	4	26	253	262	-4%	
135	170	98	22	72	1043	1058	-1%	
72	50	37	10	23	436	442	-1%	
5	40	24	2	20	201	199	1%	
0	1	0	0	0	1	2	-100%	
2	1	3	0	0	17	43	-153%	
2	2	3	0	0	18	45	-150%	
100	111	54	18	46	708	745	-5%	
3	5	4	12	5	66	83	-26%	
\$ 163,662	\$ 308,601	\$ 128,754	\$ 38,177	\$ 128,133	\$ 1,766,646	\$ 1,740,281	1%	
\$ 2,706	\$ 15,775	\$ 1,987	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 40,183	\$ 77,019	-92%	
\$ 5,344	\$ 16,717	\$ 1,945	\$ -	\$ 14,413	\$ 43,407	\$ 118,487	-173%	
\$ 171,712	\$ 341,093	\$ 132,686	\$ 38,177	\$ 143,546	\$ 1,850,236	\$ 1,935,787	-5%	
\$ 30,249	\$ 29,911	\$ 12,200	\$ 6,250	\$ 11,800	\$ 197,309	\$ 194,511	1%	
\$ 7,467	\$ 7,587	\$ 3,600	\$ 1,650	\$ 3,300	\$ 50,797	\$ 52,461	-3%	
\$ 5,916	\$ 13,165	\$ 1,987	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 28,630	\$ 28,586	0%	
\$ 3,456	\$ 16,487	\$ 4,200	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 58,860	\$ 64,995	-10%	
\$ 119,580	\$ 273,944	\$ 98,867	\$ 44,462	\$ 102,542	\$ 1,269,752	\$ 1,359,612	-7%	
\$ 166,668	\$ 341,094	\$ 120,854	\$ 52,362	\$ 117,642	\$ 1,605,348	\$ 1,700,165	-6%	
\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,018,000	\$ 275,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,826,536	\$ 9,635,536	2%	
\$ 250,000	\$ 383,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,625,572	\$ 1,608,572	1%	
\$ -	\$ 22,645	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 91,587	\$ 53,738	41%	
\$ -	\$ 288,414	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,120,814	\$ 712,310	36%	
\$ -	\$ 38,758	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 110,908	\$ 91,477	18%	
\$ 256	\$ 245	\$ 203	\$ 329	\$ 274	\$ 246	246	0%	
\$ 63	\$ 62	\$ 60	\$ 87	\$ 77	\$ 66	66	0%	
\$ 370	\$ 415	\$ 296	\$ 416	\$ 351	\$ 349	349	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] The members of the Executive Committee shall not be from the same congregation. [2016] 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] Whenever the congregation amends its constitution and/or bylaws, these amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee of Classis for its information. [2017]

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]. The President shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually [2015]. The Treasurer shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually. [2020]

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]

[Standing Rule #22 was removed 2018.]