2016
Abstract
of the Minutes

of the

COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

31st, Annual Session

March 1st, -2nd, 2016

Hosted by

St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church

Hamburg, MN

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS of Covenant East Classis

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

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

General Fund	$22.00
Missions Fund	$32.00
Benevolence Fund	$ 9.00
Student Aid Fund	$ 3.00
TOTAL per communicant member	**$66.00**

CLASSIS TREASURER

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

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive: Sorensen, Potter, Rothwell
Candidates and Credentials: Fluck, Larson, Kroese, Wright
Church Camp: Stuebbe, Marinelli, J .Sawtelle, Mark Bruckschen* (*Deacon)
Interchurch Relations: Sawtelle, S. Altman, Campbell
Missions: Kron, Schnabel, Opp, Smith, Buysse
Publications: no committee formed

(Underlined serves as chairman)

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CHURCHES AND MISSION WORKS

Northwest ARKANSAS

Grace RCUS, 72756
3320 N. Second Street, Rogers, AR.....(479) 202-5550
Pastor: Supply Licentiate Steven Carr (Wife: Crystal)
Worship: 10:00 a.m. ; SS: 11:30 a.m.
E-Mail: srutherford77@gmail.com Web: www.gracereformednwa.org

Garner, IOWA

Peace RCUS, 50438
1905 200th St. (3 mi. south of Garner on US 69).....(641) 923-3060
Pastor: Rev. Mark Larson (Wife: Cynthia)
Worship: 10:30 a.m.; SS: 9:30 a.m.
E:mail: larsonmark57@gmail.com ; Web: (formulating new site)

Eden Prairie, MINNESOTA

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

Hamburg, MINNESOTA

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339
15470 Co Road 31.....(952) 467-3878
Pastor: Rev. Dan Schnabel (Wife: Marie)
Worship: 9:30 a.m.; SS: 8:30 a.m.
E-mail: dm7schnabel@gmail.com Web: www.stpaulsrcus.org

Minneapolis, MINNESOTA

Redeemer RCUS, 55422
1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley, MN…… (763) 417-9835
Pastors: Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)
E-mail: sawtellejim@gmail.com
Rev. Tim Marinelli (Wife: Renita)
E-mail: debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com
Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55427
Worship: 10:15 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; SS: 9:00 a.m. (Sept- May)
Web: www.redeemerrcus.org

Kansas City, MISSOURI

Northland RCUS, 64164
2901 NW Cookingham Dr.....(816) 420-9700
Pastor: Vacant
Worship: 9:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
E-mail:info@northlandreformed.org Web: www.northlandreformed.org

Napoleon, OHIO

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

Gettysburg, PENNSYLVANIA

Covenant RCUS, 17325
149 Centennial Rd., ...(717) 521-9382
Pastor: Rev. Jay Fluck (Wife: Loretta)
Mail: 330 Montclair Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325
Worship: 11:00 a.m.; S.S. 10:00 a.m. Wed. Study /Prayer 7:00 p.m.
E-mail: jefluck@msn.com Web: RCUSGettysurg.org

Waymart, PENNSYLVANIA

Heritage RCUS, 18472 (in Lower Level of Waymart Presbyterian Church)
200 Belmont Turnpike.....(570) 785-4012
Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)
Mail: 136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421
Worship: 10:30 a.m.; B.S. 9:30 a.m.; Wed. Study/Prayer 7:00 p.m.
E-mail: hrc@nep.net Web: www.heritagercus.org;

Manitowoc, WISCONSIN

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 54220
6524 Hwy C .....(920) 726-4940
Pastor: Rev. Kyle Sorensen (Wife: Donielle)
Worship: 10:00 a.m.; SS 8:45 a.m.
E-mail: info@salemebenezer.org Web: www.salemebenezer.org;

Abstract of the MINUTES
of the
Covenant East Classis
Special Fall Meeting
September 14th-15th, 2015
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa

Services and Organization

The Special Fall Meeting of the Covenant East Classis was called to order by President Rev. Randy Klynsma at 7:00 PM September 14th, 2015. Licensure candidate Rev. Dr. Mark Larson led in devotions from 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 entitled *New Covenant Ministers* and then prayed. The opening roll call showed 8 ministers and 8 elders present, a quorum. The bar of the house was defined as the first 7 rows and tellers were appointed.

On Tuesday September 15th immediately following the call to order at 8:00 AM Licentiate Tim Marinelli led the body in a devotion from 1 Peter 5:1-5 entitled *An Exhortation to the Elders* and led in prayer. Elder Don Larson closed the Special Classis meeting at 4:00 PM with the reading of Psalm 121, prayer and the singing of Hymn #53 stanzas 1 & 4.

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

No fraternal delegates were present. Several guests and visitors were welcomed including a number of elders from Peace RCUS, Garner, recent MARS graduate Mr. Steven Carr and Mr. Christopher Campbell both students under care of Classis, Licentiate Tim Marinelli and Ministerial candidate for Peace RCUS, Garner, Rev. Mark Larson.

Standing Committees

The President announced the following Standing Committees:

Examination and Licensure: Fluck, Luquette, Schnabel.
Excuses/Services: S. Altman, Hermann, Liesveld.
Finances: Van Heest, Drewes, Morton.
Judicial: Stuebbe, Sorensen, Fluck.
Minutes of Classis: Schnabel, Sawtelle, Larson, Opp.

Examination of Candidates

Examination of Rev. Mark Larson for Licensure.

Rev. Jay Fluck, Chairman of the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee, presented the proposed examination schedule for Rev, Mark Larson which was adopted by Classis. Fluck reported on the review of papers written by Rev. Larson and on the orthodoxy and intentions examination given earlier in the year. These were found in order. Fluck also reported on the ministerial call extended to Rev. Larson by Peace RCUS Garner, IA and his acceptance of that

call pending the sustaining of his licensure examination and his dismission from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) Presbytery of New Jersey (see standing judicial report).

The examination of Rev. Larson extended from the evening session of September 14th into the September 15th, 2015 session of Classis. Rev. Jim Sawtelle examined the candidate in apologetics (10 minutes); Rev. Dan Schnabel examined in prolegomena and scripture (10 minutes); Elder Dennis Luquette examined in theology and soteriology (20 minutes); Rev. Randy Klynsma examined in eschatology (10 minutes); Fluck examined in ecclesiology and practica (10 minutes) and RCUS history (10 minutes) and Rev. Ron Potter examined in RCUS constitution (10 minutes). Questions were received from the floor in all these areas following which the exam was arrested by Classis.

The Classis then went into closed session to consider the examination and the sermon. A partial report from the Standing Committee on Examination and Licensure was brought with two recommendations (see standing committee on examination and licensure) which were adopted by Classis thus sustaining his examination following which the Classis arose from the closed session.

President Klynsma advised Rev, Larson that he had successfully sustained his licensure examination. Rev. Larson then read the formulae for licensure to the Classis, signed and dated it. He was then presented with a certificate of licensure by the Clerk.

The Standing Judicial Committee brought a partial report recommending that the call of Peace RCUS to Rev. Larson and his acceptance of that call be found in order and also recommending he be placed on the Roll of Covenant East Classis, following which the Classis extended the right hand of fellowship to Rev. Larson. Rev. Larson's installation as pastor of Peace RCUS is pending dismission from the OPC Presbytery of New Jersey (Clerks note: subsequently received) and confirmation by Synod according to the provisions of RCUS Constitution article #84 which is expected at the annual Synod meeting in May of 2016.

Examination of Mr. Tim Marinelli for Ordination.

Fluck read portions of article 24 of the RCUS Constitution and explained that the examination of Licentiate Tim Marinelli would be based on the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dort.

Fluck examined in apologetics (10 minutes); Schnabel examined in prolegomena and scripture (10 minutes); Fluck examined in theology and soteriology (10 minutes each), Klynsma examined in eschatology (10 minutes) Fluck examined in ecclesiology and practica (10 minutes each) and in RCUS history (10 minutes) and Potter examined in RCUS constitution (10 minutes). The exam was arrested.

The Classis entered closed session where testimonials and a report on Marinelli's summer internship were considered as well as his call to Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley and his acceptance of that call. Upon the adoption of the

partial Standing Committee on Examination and Licensure recommendations germane of Mr. Marinelli, Classis voted to sustain the ordination examination of Marinelli, to find his call and the acceptance of that call to be in order and to place his name on the Roll of Covenant East Classis pending his ordination. Action was taken to establish a committee consisting of Rev. Kyle Sorensen and the Consistory of Redeemer RCUS to install Marinelli upon completion of his internship requirements.

Upon arising from closed session the President announced to Mr. Marinelli his successful completion of his ordination examination. After prayer the right hand of fellowship was extended to Marinelli by the Classis.

Ratification of Constitutional Changes.

The Classis took up the matter of the constitutional changes passed down to the Classis by the 2015 Synod of the RCUS for ratification as follows:

1. That Covenant East Classis concur with the proposed Synodical notation to be placed in the RCUS Constitution in place of Articles 40-42 and that the numbering of the articles of the Constitution from Article 43 on remain unchanged.

2. That Covenant East Classis concur with the proposed Constitutional amendment that Article 84 of the RCUS Constitution be amended to read as follows: An ordained minister or a licentiate shall not be received by Classis until he has presented a regular certificate of dismission from the Classis to which he belongs. The reception and installation of a minister from another denomination shall not be final until it is confirmed by Synod. Classes shall forward to Synod its actions concerning ministers from other denominations; and also provide a resume regarding the new minister.

3. That Covenant East Classis concur with the proposed Synodical amendment to Article 195 of the Constitution of the RCUS: "Marriage has been instituted by God. The Reformed Church in the United States defines "marriage" as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by The Reformed Church in the United States only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of "marriage" found in these Articles.

   Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as "porneia") including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. (Leviticus 18-20; I Corinthians 5:1-5; 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:3-7; Heidelberg Catechism 108,109) Further, lascivious

conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the biblical witness.

Every officer, employee, or volunteer of the church shall affirm their agreement with this definition of marriage and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith. This shall be a prerequisite, and continual condition, for these positions."

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. Examination and Licensure:

Regarding Rev. Mark Larson:

1. That his sermon be sustained.
2. That his examination and its parts be sustained.

Regarding Mr. Tim Marinelli:

3. That his sermon be sustained.
4. That his examination and its parts be sustained.
5. That the call from Redeemer RCUS be found in order.
6. That the Classis appoint Rev. Kyle Sorensen and the Redeemer Consistory to be the committee to ordain and install Mr. Marinelli (at a date to be determined) upon the completion of his internship, which will conclude September 30th, 2015.

Jay Fluck, Dennis Luquette, Dan Schnabel

B. Excuses

1. That excuses from all sessions of Classis be granted to: Elder Dan Wright; Elder John Grimm; Rev. Wesley Brice; Rev. Ryan Kron.
2. That the excuse from Rev. Harvey Opp from all sessions of Classis after the noon meal on Tuesday September 15th, 2015 be granted.
3. That the Clerk be instructed to send a letter to the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church of Northwest Arkansas reminding them of their duty to provide written excuses to the Classis explaining their inability to attend any Classis meeting.

Steve Altman, Alan Hermann, Jay Liesveld.

C. Finances

1. Travel expenses for Fall Classis meeting at Garner, Iowa, Peace Reformed Church:

Alan Hermann	$100.00	John Morton	$145.00
David Blauw	160.00	Jim Drewes	250.00
Harvey Opp	166.00	Jay Fluck	986.00
Steve Stuebbe	113.64	Kyle Sorensen	20.00
Ron Potter	529.20	Steve Carr	226.00
Randy Klynsma	320.00	Tim Marinelli	148.00

2. The Classis Treasurer reports a possible short fall in the General Fund by the end of the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The need for two Classis meetings combined with increased travel costs to support Grace Reformed Church in Arkansas and Peace Reformed Church in Iowa have resulted in an increase in General Fund expenses. The Treasurer will update the Executive Committee of the General Fund status prior to the Spring Meeting of Classis in March 2016. The estimated short fall could be in the range of $1500 to $3,000. [Classis action was: Take note**.**]

John Morton, David Blauw, Jim Drewes

D. Judicial

1. In light of his successful examination and subscription to the Form of Licensure, that Covenant East Classis receive Rev. Mark Larson as a ministerial member and place him on the rolls of Classis. This action shall be in force upon the reception of the pending letter of dismission from the Presbytery of New Jersey of the OPC. The Executive Committee shall inform the Classis when the proper dismission letter has been received.

2. That Covenant East Classis find in order the call to Rev. Mark Larson from Peace Reformed Church of Garner, Iowa, and approve its terms.

3. That our Stated Clerk shall inform the Presbytery of New Jersey of the OPC as soon as possible that Covenant East Classis is prepared to receive Rev. Larson when he is dismissed to us.

Kyle Sorensen, Steve Stuebbe, Jay Fluck

E. Minutes of Classis

1. That the Minutes of the Covenant East Classis Fall Meeting be approved as corrected up to page 6.

Dan Schnabel, Jim Sawtelle, Don Larson, Harvey Opp

F. Services

1. That the following words of gratitude be extended to the congregation of Peace RCUS of Garner, Iowa: The delegates of Covenant East Classis would like to express our sincere gratitude for the generous hospitality that you have extended toward us at our 2015 Special Meeting of the Covenant East Classis. The saints at Peace Reformed Church at Garner have graciously provided for our needs and have blessed us with loving fellowship. We are grateful to God for your service to us, through which He has been glorified. And we pray that the LORD will continue to bless you as you seek to honor His name.

Expression of Appreciation to Host Congregation

See Standing Services Committee.

Reading of the Minutes, Roll Call, Devotions and Adjournment

The Clerk read the remaining Minutes which were declared approved as read and amended by the President. The Roll was called by the Stated Clerk which showed 7 Ministers and 8 Elders present, a quorum. Elder Larson closed the Classis with scripture reading and prayer. The President led in the recitation of the Apostle's Creed and the saying of the Lord's Prayer, then pronounced the benediction and led in the singing of the Doxology. Classis adjourned at 4:00 PM.

SPRING MEETING 2016

CLERK'S NOTE:

On February 29th, 2016, the night before the Spring Classis meeting convened, the delegates of classis gathered in a closed door session between 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. for a discussion led by Rev. Jim Sawtelle on the subject of *Managing the Consistory / Pastoral Relationship.*

Abstract of the MINUTES
of the Covenant East Classis
of the Reformed Church in the United States
31st, Annual Session -- March 1-2, 2016
St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church, Hamburg, MN

Services

After the President *pro tem*, Rev. Ryan Kron called the body to order on Tuesday, March 1, 2016, at 8:03 am, he read Ephesians 4:31-5:2, prayed and led in devotions entitled *Fighting Bitterness* and closed in prayer.

On Tuesday evening at 7:00 PM Classis delegates, along with members and guests from St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church gathered for a scheduled worship service conducted by Rev. Mark Larson. Licensure candidate Steven Carr preached a sermon entitled *Jars of Clay* from 1 Corinthians 4:7-12.

On Wednesday morning at 10:15 AM Rev. Steve Altman led in devotions from Romans 12:9-10 entitled *Love Without Hypocrisy* and prayed.

Closing devotions were conducted by Elder Robert Smith who read Psalm 100 and led in prayer.

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

Organization

The 31st annual session of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was called to order at 8:03 AM by President *pro tem* Rev. Ryan Kron. Following opening devotions the Stated Clerk, Rev. Ron Potter, 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 six rows of pews. Elders Chris Campbell and Dustin Rothwell were appointed Tellers by the President. The President read the Standing Rules of Classis.

The following delegates were elected to serve as officers of Classis for the year: Rev. Kyle Sorensen as President, Rev. Dan Schnabel as Vice-President, Rev. Ron Potter as Stated Clerk and Elder Jim Drewes as Treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Tim Marinelli as *Reformed Herald* reporter.

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

Rev. Shane Lems, fraternal delegate from the Presbytery of the Midwest of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was introduced and seated in the Bar of the House and given the privilege of the floor. Licensure candidate Steven Carr and his wife Crystal and their four children, as well as his parents, Rev. Kevin and Mrs. Kathy Carr, were introduced to the Classis during its proceedings. Present also were several first time Elders whose presence was acknowledged, Dustin Rothwell, Christ Campbell and Royce Gray. As well, visitors Rev. Dylan Rowland and Emmaus RCUS member John Camp were introduced by the President.

Reception of New Ministers and New Churches

Rev. Tim Marinelli was received by the Classis and given the right hand of fellowship by the delegates. No new churches were received.

Standing Committees

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

Benevolence; Excuses:	R. Kron, M. Larson, T. Bessette.
Examination & Licensure:	J. Fluck, M. Larson, D. Wright, M. Altman
Finances:	S. Altman, J. Kroese, R. Smith, (J. Drewes adviser).
Judicial/Minutes of Synod:	J. Sawtelle, S. Stuebbe, D. Buysse.
Minutes of Classis/Services:	K. Sorensen, T. Marinelli, R. Smith, D. Schnabel.
Missions; Nominations:	H. Opp, C. Campbell, D. Rothwell

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 Brethren:

Your Committee brings before you the following report together with one recommendation.

Since the Spring Meeting of Classis in 2015 your Committee fulfilled its responsibilities to the Classis as per Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution. These duties included but were not limited to organizing a Fall Classis meeting for the purpose of examining a Minister and a Licentiate for licensure. providing counsel to the Churches of Classis as requested, overseeing the dismission and reception of Ministers and Licentiates, advising the Consistory of a vacant charge, helping a Consistory of a vacant charge secure pulpit supply, overseeing the Consistory and Spiritual Council meetings of a Church through a special executive sub-committee, consulting with a Church experiencing difficulties through a special executive sub-committee, interviewing and approving a student under care to fill a vacant pulpit, assigning the oversight of the completion of a student Internship to a Consistory, advising various officers on constitutional matters, assisting a vacant congregation in interviewing a man nominated for the office of Elder, assisting the Candidates and Credentials Committee in interviewing a candidate for student under care, fielding a inquiry about ministry in the RCUS, plus numerous other items requiring a plethora of correspondence, telephone and conference calls.

A great deal of the work of your Committee was our involvement with the Rogers, AR congregation. An executive sub-committee formed by your Executive Committee to assist this Church. This sub-committee which reported to your Executive Committee was comprised of officers from our Kansas City Church and consisted of Rev. Randy Klynsma, Elders Jay Liesveld and Marc Wiersma. Their report to the Executive Committee of Classis follows:

Report to the Executive Committee of Covenant East Classis
Meeting March 1, 2016 in Hamburg, MN
SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO GRACE REFORMED CHURCH IN ROGERS, AR

The Committee sent to Grace Reformed Church in Rogers, AR began its work late January of 2015. During the past year they have spent time with the consistory and on two occasions conducted congregational meetings to hear concerns and answer questions. The work in Arkansas is progressing and at this time is a viable and thriving church with a bright future.

Congregational meetings were conducted by Pastor Klynsma on two occasions to address concerns about past relationships and how the church with classis was working to resolve lingering issues. Questions were raised about classis and why they didn't address issues with Pastor Brice. This came from a misunderstanding of how church discipline works. It was explained that a member of the church body needed to bring a complaint. The classis could not act on hear-say. Everyone wanted to put the matter behind them and look to the future. Many discussions and phone calls followed with concerned individuals to assure they were at peace moving forward. A very positive congregational meeting was held in July attended by a member of the mission committee [Bob Smith] again conducted by Pastor Klynsma. At this meeting one family representative that had left the church attended. There was an atmosphere of reconciliation, and expressions of love for one another. Many hugs and tears shared. Yet in the end this family has elected not to rejoin the fellowship at Grace Reformed Church. The apparent reason being the perceived mistreatment of Pastor Brice. There were many rumors and false accusations that could not be overcome. Many phone calls were made by Elder Bessette that were not returned. Neither have they responded to correspondence that was sent.

The resignation of Pastor Brice was a sad day in the life of Grace Reformed Church. This resignation was accepted and approved by the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church. Before the resignation church attendance had fallen to two families and two single gentleman. The consistory consisted of one elder and two deacons. They forged ahead determined to fill the pulpit with pulpit supply for the coming months. Working with the Executive Committee they were able to have pulpit supplied faithfully each Sunday. Over the summer months they had Pastor Klynsma and the seminary students from Northland Reformed Church fill in as needed. They also brought in three potential candidates to meet the congregation.

Steven Carr was among these candidates who had come and exhorted at Grace Reformed Church. At the time he was planning on fulfilling his internship in Minneapolis. The timing proved providential, Grace Reformed needing to fill their pulpit each Sunday and Mr. Carr needed a place to live and a source of income for his family. The consistory voted to have Mr. Carr come for stated supply with a possibility of a call in the future. The special committee to Arkansas and the executive committee also approved of this vote and encouraged the consistory to enter into this relationship.

Since Mr. Carr has been ministering in Arkansas, the situation in Arkansas has stabilized. The congregation has been pleased with the messages they been hearing. Steve has started a Bible study and his wife has started a Ladies Bible Study. Mr. Carr has reached out to all the members of the congregation and visited with each of them personally. He is currently working with a family that is looking to begin membership classes soon.

As a Committee we are grateful for the time and effort of Elder Jay Liesveld. He has encouraged the brethren there and provided an example of shepherding leadership to them. We are grateful for the work of Mr. Steve Carr and believe that he was able to provide what they, the congregation, desperately needed: stability and the clear teaching of God's Word.

Executive sub-committee: Randall Klynsma, Jay Liesveld, Marc Wiersma

Addendum: to the executive sub-committee to Rogers, AR

Report from Home Missions Committee that Visited
Grace Reformed Church of Rogers, AR on July 28, 2015

On July 28 members of the home missions committee traveled to Rogers, Arkansas. Committee members attending were Rev. Randy Klynsma (Kansas City), Elder Jay Liesveld (Kansas City), and Elder Robert Smith (Hamburg). After a lunch of "down south BBQ" a short informal meeting was held with Elder Tim Bessette to get an understanding of some of the problems that have befallen Grace RCUS in Rogers.

A meeting of the congregation was held that evening with Rev. Klynsma leading with devotions. Where we began there were three or four families in attendance and during the meeting another family arrived.

Among the families present was Bobby Duncan's, who was one of the former elders who resigned and a respected leader among those present. During the meeting a number of concerns were discussed. There were words passionately spoken in favor of and in opposition to, Rev. Brice and his ministry. Some spoke in opposition to those who were thought to be responsible for his departure. Others raised concerns about Rev. Brice and how he had dealt with the rumors and accusations made about his son, Matthew. There was concern that

Rev. Brice was not as forthcoming as he could have been when asked about why the elders had resigned. Some thought it might have been contentions between the elders, while others figured it had to do with other concerns.

It was a disagreement over the best way to deal with aberrant behavior Matthew Brice that led the former elders to tender their resignations. While the Visitation Committee from Covenant East Classis has already voiced their disapproval of these resignations, they understand the breakdown of relationships and don't believe the elders acted with malice but were seeking to deal with the situation as they thought best.

The resignation of the elders and the eventual retirement (and departure) of Rev. Brice, left even more questions unanswered for the congregation. Through all these events, several members stopped attending, leaving a sad situation for elder Bessette, the deacons and the rest of the congregation to deal with.

A long discussion ensued with tearful, heartfelt statements of how this congregation is hurting and how to get back to learning about and praising God's Word. It was stated that repentance and forgiveness are the only ways put this behind and return to the business of God's work. It was felt by the committee that this was expressed by all in attendance.

There have been a few men that have filled the pulpit at Grace in the past several weeks and they were all considered to be a "good fit" by the congregation however being a Mission work they are unable to call a minister with less than five years' experience according to the RCUS constitution. This rule was unknown to any of the members of the congregation. A few options were discussed with the most positive being having someone fill the pulpit for a few months until the Classis meeting is held.

By that time they could ask to be taken off mission support or to be given an exception of the rules could be made to allow a man to serve there with less than the five years' experience. There are men scheduled to fill the pulpit for the next few weeks and it is anticipated that some members that left may return in that time to help make a decision on how to proceed.

The meeting closed with a prayer by elder Liesveld. After some fellowship, handshakes and hugs another short meeting was held with elder Bessette and Deacon Sam Hilliard. We shared some papers, bulletins, manuals, and copies of by-laws that they may want to use as examples as they go forward. Also the positive, forgiving attitude of the congregation was discussed and agreed by all that things appeared to be ready to move in a positive direction. This meeting closed with a prayer by Elder Smith.

Robert Smith Randall Klynsma Jay Liesveld

In addition to the above your Executive Committee sent out ten Circular letters this year which follow:

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 1, April 1st, 2015

Your Executive Committee received the following request from the Consistory of Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa:

We, the Consistory of Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa, on behalf of the congregation, request the classis delegate the Rev. Mark J. Larson, to be the stated supply for said church for a period of six months commencing April 17, 2015 and expiring October 17th, 2015.

Your Executive Committee offers the following explanation for this request.

1. It is the intent of Peace Reformed Church to call Rev. Larson to be its Pastor upon his sustaining his licensure examination before Classis.

2. Peace Reformed Church has been using Rev. Larson to fill its pulpit periodically over the last few months and had plans to continue to do so until he is licensed and can be called.

3. Rev. Larson has successfully sustained an orthodoxy and intentions examination by the Candidates and Credentials Committee of Classis.

4. Upon Rev. Larson notifying his employer, Cono School, that he would not be renewing his contract for the next school year in anticipation of sustaining his Classis examination and receiving a call to Garner, the school suddenly terminated his employment effective April 1st, 2015.

5. Rev, Larson is required to give up his residence effective April 1st, 2015 and if permission is given by Classis to serve as stated supply pursuant to article 28 of the RCUS Constitution he could be housed in the Peace Reformed parsonage.

6. The six months request will give classis time to call a special meeting to examine Dr. Larson while meeting the current needs of both Peace Reformed Church and Dr. Larson.

7. A Committee appointed by the Executive will be meeting with the Consistory and members of the Peace Reformed Church, at their invitation, April 9-11th, 2015.

Recommendation: That the Rev. Mark J. Larson, be appointed the Stated Supply for Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa for a period of six months commencing April 17, 2015 and expiring October 17th, 2015.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 2, April 21st, 2015

Your Committee received the following request from the Consistory of Peace

RCUS, Garner Iowa:

> The Consistory of Peace Reformed Church Garner, Iowa requests a special Classis meeting be called on May 18 at 1:00 p.m. for the purpose of examining Rev. Mark Larson pursuant to serving as our pastor.

Note: This would mean that the delegates from Covenant East Classis who will be attending the 2015 Synod Meeting in Garner, Iowa, which convenes May 18th, 2015 will need to be present for this Special Classis Meeting which will convene at 1:00 PM at the Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD.

Recommendation: That the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS convene in Special Session at Zion Reformed Church, Menno, SD at 1:00 PM Monday May 18th, 2015, for the purpose of examining Rev. Mark Larson for licensure in the RCUS pursuant to his receiving a call to pastor the Peace Reformed Church of Garner, Iowa.

Grounds:

1. Matters of concern regarding the Garner congregation that the Spring 2015 Classis wanted resolved before the examination of a candidate for the Garner Church could go forward have been substantially dealt with by a Special Reconciliation Committee who met with the Garner Consistory and others April 9-10, 2015. (*See information below)

2. By holding this Special Meeting in conjunction with Synod, time and travel expenses for a fall meeting of Classis will be saved.

3. The Candidates and Credentials Committee is prepared to conduct this examination and has already been reviewing exegetical papers submitted by Rev. Larson.

*For Information: Following the visit of the Special Reconciliation Committee to Garner April 9-10, 2015 the following was submitted by the Committee for presentation by the Consistory to the Congregation on the LORD's Day following:

> Grace and peace to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
>
> As most of you know over the last year there has been some ongoing differences and divisions among some of the membership and leadership of Peace Reformed Church. Some of these resulted in the resignations of your former Pastor Harvey Opp and Elders Bob Anderson and Dean Strommer, and some of these took place as a result of these resignations.
>
> This week a committee from Classis visited Peace Reformed Church and we're happy to report that tangible steps were taken toward reconciliation and peace. In every instance there were clear confessions of sin and forgiveness freely given. Through this whole trial (over the last year) many hearts and lives have

been grieved and burdened. By God's grace there was a spirit of meekness and godliness displayed by all.

We recognize that this is just a beginning and that there will likely be trials in the future. However, we are also hopeful that progress has been made and that a spirit of reconciliation and peace will be long standing. Let us all remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Matthew 5:9.

This information was read to the Garner congregation April 12, 2014.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 3, April 21st, 2015

Your Executive Committee is in receipt of the report of the Special Reconciliation Committee to Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA, April 9-10, 2015. It is herein passed on to you for your information.

To the CEC Executive Committee:

April 17, 2015

Dear Brothers,

As many of you know, the Garner Reconciliation Committee, including Revs. Jim Sawtelle, Randall Klynsma and Elders Jay Liesveld, and David Blauw (David Sawtelle was not able to make it) appointed by the Executive Committee returned to Garner on April 9 and 10, 2015. In the days prior to this visit and even when we first arrived in Garner, there was concern from the Peace Reformed Consistory and Spiritual Council that we as a committee were coming with a biased opinions and were coming to undermine their past work and current efforts among the flock.

We told them repeatedly that this was not the case. We apologized to whatever may have given them that impression. We told them that we had not taken any one's side in the controversy and subsequent divisions. Somewhat ironically, as we talked this out on Thursday evening, their bias and misperception of our intentions and motives became a remarkably clear teaching point. Just as they had for a time doubted our motives and intentions, to some degree they might well have also done the same in their dealings with their offended brethren.

Our principle point, was that in the breakdown of relationships, both with their previous pastor, Rev. Harvey Opp and the resignation of former elders Bob Anderson and Dean Strommer, there is plenty of blame to go around. Some may have responded in particular situations with anger, frustration, or cynicism; others might have kept quiet when they should have spoken up, and still others might have spoken when they should have kept quiet. We were of the mind that everyone had a piece of the responsibility.

In the end, we were brought to a remarkable singleness of heart and the recognized that sins needed to be confessed and confessed sins needed to be forgiven.

The next morning, we had scheduled visits with Bob Anderson, Dean Strommer, Bob and Cheryl Anderson, and then Grant and Brenda Anderson. Each of these visits went remarkable well. There were clear confessions of sin, forgiveness and reciprocal confessions of sin and forgiveness returned. There were many tears shed and affirmations of love and concern.

It is not our opinion that those who have left will necessarily return, in fact it was clear that in some cases this was not going to happen. There was, however, a door opened to continued fellowship and the restoration of friendships that had been greatly stressed.

One of our principle regrets was that this meeting hadn't taken place shortly after our October meeting. Yet, even in this we yield to the Hand of Providence and thank the Lord for the fruits of grace and forgiveness that have been witnessed.

The following announcement was read the following Sunday morning:

> Grace and peace to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
>
> As most of you know over the last year there has been some ongoing differences and divisions among some of the membership and leadership of Peace Reformed Church. Some of these resulted in the resignations of your former Pastor Harvey Opp and Elders Bob Anderson and Dean Strommer, and some of these took place as a result of these resignations.
>
> This week a committee from Classis visited Peace Reformed Church and we're happy to report that tangible steps were taken toward reconciliation and peace. In every instance there were clear confessions of sin and forgiveness freely given. Through this whole trial (over the last year) many hearts and lives have been grieved and burdened. By God's grace there was a spirit of meekness and godliness displayed by all.
>
> We recognize that this is just a beginning and that there will likely be trials in the future. However, we are also hopeful that progress has been made and that a spirit of reconciliation and peace will be long standing. Let us all remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Matthew 5:9.

So, from the perspective of your committee, while there remains much work to done, rebuilding and strengthening relationships in the Peace Reformed Church of Garner, we believe the work of our committee is completed.

We pray God's blessing on Peace Reformed Church and their consistory, and hope their efforts to fill the pulpit and call a new pastor will be successful.

Grace and Peace to you all.

Randall Klynsma, Jim Sawtelle, Jay Liesveld, David Blauw and David Sawtelle

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 4, April 24th, 2015

Your Executive Committee is in receipt of a written objection to Executive Circular 30.2 calling for a Special Classis Meeting to be held May 18th, 2015 at Menno, SD. The reasons for this objection are as follows:

1. It is imprudent to call these special meetings just before synod, forcing classis to work under constraints of time. We need time to deliberate and work carefully through matters. These special meetings immediately prior to synod do not offer that time.

2. The proposal is for examination of a minister. This is one of the more important things we do as classis. We are not offering this minister time to review and prepare in a sufficient way. We are not doing right by him, nor by Peace Reformed Church, nor by the churches of classis and synod. As far as I can tell, there is no emergency here. So why press for a meeting in this time frame. Yes, we have done this sort of thing before. However, we were examining men who were a known quantity to us. Mr. Larson is not. Let's take time to get to know him.

3. If the overture for funding for Redeemer RCUS in Minneapolis is passed by synod, Redeemer intends to call a man and have him on the field by June. Thus Redeemer will have a man in need of an examination by classis. The need for a fall classis meeting is still likely going to be a reality. We therefore save nothing by having this proposed meeting at synod. We only add to the exhaustion of synod.

4. If a number of the reports and overture pass at synod, classis will have matters referred to it from synod for action. Again, this speaks for the desirability of a fall meeting, and thus argues against the stated reason for having a May 18 meeting in order to avoid the cost of a fall meeting.

Your Executive Committee finds this objection and its reasons to be in order according to Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution and it finds that the reasons stated are neither "arbitrary or capricious' and it is "unanimous" in its decision (Synod Abstract, 1987 p. 69, Standing Judicial #6.) Therefore the objection is sustained. There will be no Special Classis Meeting May 18th, 2015.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 5, June 20th, 2015

Your Executive Committee herein brings before you the following business item.

1. Resignation and retirement of Rev. Wes Brice, Rogers, AR

Your Executive Committee is in receipt of correspondence from Rev. Wesley Brice dated June 6th, 2015 to the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, RCUS, Rogers, AR , expressing his desire to retire from active ministry and presenting his resignation effective June 14th, 2015. Your Committee also received correspondence from the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church dated June 14th, 2015 acknowledging receipt and acceptance of Rev. Brice's retirement and resignation and advising that him that his normal pay schedule will be continued until 9/14/2015. To date no request has been received for Ministerial Relief funds after the 9/14/2015 date.

Recommendation #1: That the pulpit of Grace Reformed Church, Rogers, AR be declared vacant as of June 14th, 2015 according to the provisions of Articles 30 and 91 of the RCUS Constitution.

[Clerks Note: According to Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution your Executive Committee is currently working with the Grace RCUS Consistory to secure pulpit supply, to counsel and advise the Consistory and Spiritual Council and to help in securing a Pastor.]

2. Special Fall Classis Meeting

Whereas, a request was received from Peace Reformed Church RCUS, Garner, IA (see Executive Circular 30:2) to convene a Special Classis Meeting to examine Dr. Mark Larson for licensure in the RCUS, in conjunction with the 2105 Synod Meeting of the RCUS, as a prelude to receiving a call to the Garner Church, and

Whereas this request was subsequently objected to on grounds that a Fall Classis meeting would be preferred for reasons stated in Executive Circular 30:4, and

Whereas your Committee is in receipt of documents verifying that a call has been extended to RCUS South Central Classis Licentiate Tim Marinelli, by Redeemer RCUS, Golden Valley, MN and subsequently accepted by Mr. Marinelli, thus requiring a Classis ordination examination, and

Whereas items from Synod 2015 germane to ratification of changes to the RCUS Constitution are now before Classis (Article 89) your Executive Committee brings the following recommendation:

Recommendation #2: That a Special Fall Classis Meeting of Covenant East Classis, RCUS, be convened at Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA at 7:00 PM on the evening of Monday September 14th, 2015 and continue to the completion of the above stated three items of business on Tuesday September 15th, 2015.

Note from the Clerk: In reviewing the Minutes of the 2015 meeting of the Covenant East Classis I found that the addition to Classis Standing Rule #19, approved by Classis, adding the sentence: "The President shall be paid and honorarium of $500 annually." did not make it into the final printing of the 2015 Classis Abstract under the Standing Rules p.67.

Your Clerk humbly apologizes for this oversight. The addition does appear in the Minutes and will appear in subsequent Abstracts. Please pencil that change into your copy of the 2015 Abstract. Thank you.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 6, October 2nd, 2015

The Executive Committee brings before you the following two items for information.

1. Classis adopted the following recommendation #3 of the Standing Judicial Committee (Minutes page 4): *That our Stated Clerk shall inform the Presbytery of New Jersey of the OPC as soon as possible that Covenant East Classis is prepared to receive Rev. Larson when he is dismissed to us.*

   Your Clerk carried out this instruction and a Dismission Certificate on behalf of Rev. Mark Larson from the Presbytery of New Jersey, of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, dated September 28th, 2015, was received by your Executive Committee.

   Classis also adopted the following recommendation #1 of the Standing Judicial Committee:

   In light of his successful examination and subscription to the Form of Licensure, that Covenant East Classis receive Rev. Mark Larson as a ministerial member and place him on the rolls of Classis. This action shall be in force upon the reception of the pending letter of dismission from the Presbytery of New Jersey of the OPC. The Executive Committee shall inform the Classis when the proper dismission letter has been received.

   Pursuant to the above, Rev. Mark Larson is now officially received as a ministerial member of Covenant East Classis with his name placed on its rolls.

2. At the Special Fall Classis Meeting on September 14-15th, 2015 Classis approved the following motion: *That Classis appoint Rev. Kyle Sorensen and the Redeemer Consistory to be the committee to ordain Mr. Tim Marinelli (at a date to be determined) upon completion of his internship, which will conclude September 30th, 2015.*

   Your Executive Committee has been advised by Rev. Sorensen that an ordination service for Mr. Tim Marinelli is planned for Sunday November 1st,, 2015, at 5:00 PM at Redeemer, RCUS Golden Valley MN. The Committee has been augmented by Rev, David Fagrey who will bring the charge to Mr. Marinelli. Rev. Kyle Sorensen will bring the charge to the Congregation. Rev. Jim Sawtelle will conduct the Service.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 7, October 5th, 2015

The Executive Committee brings before you the following:

Recommendation: That Rev. Mark Larson continue as regular supply for Peace RCUS, Garner Iowa, until he receives synodical confirmation (Article 84) and is installed as Pastor in the Garner congregation.

Grounds:

Executive Circular 30.1, as approved by Classis, authorized Rev. Larson to serve the Garner congregation until October 17th, 2015. Since Rev. Larson is now on the rolls of Covenant East Classis, but needs synodical confirmation before being installed, the above recommendation extends his regular supply service until the Constitutional process is completed.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 8, December 30th, 2015

The Executive Committee brings before you, for your consideration, the following items of business together with their recommendations as well as information germane to the Spring 2016 Classis Meeting.

1. **From Mr. Austin Reed requesting to be taken under care as a student for the ministry.**

A letter was received from Mr. Austin Reed on 11/25/2015 requesting that he be taken under care as a Student for the Ministry pursuant to RCUS Constitution Article 17. Mr. Reed is a communicant member in good standing of Northland Reformed Church in Kansas City, MO. He is currently studying at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, in Taylors, SC. Previous to this letter from Mr. Reed the Consistory of Northland RCUS on 7/15/2015 certified by letter that Mr. Reed is a member in good standing, testified to his Christian character and qualified him as worthy to prepare for Christian Ministry.

On December 22nd, 2015 the Chairman of the Classis Candidates and Credentials Committee advised the Executive Committee of Classis by letter that on the evening of December 18th, 2015, the Committee (Rev. Fluck, Elders, Dan Wright and Dennis Luquette augmented by Rev. Ron Potter) met with Mr. Reed by conference call and examined him as to orthodoxy and intentions as per Article 17 and recommended that he be taken under care by Classis as a Student for the Ministry. The Committee also advises that Mr. Reed anticipates no request for student aid at this time.

Mr. Reed is married to his wife Elizabeth, is the father of 3 children with a 4th expected soon. He is employed full time and is studying by distance learning with the goal of carrying a full academic load and graduating in four years.

Recommendation #1: That Mr. Austin Reed be taken under care of Covenant East Classis as a Student for the Ministry.

2. **From Mr. Steven Carr requesting to be examined for licensure.**

A letter dated December 15th, 2015, from Mr. Steven Carr, a student under care of Classis and currently serving Grace RCUS in Rogers, AR, was received by the Executive Committee. Mr. Carr, a recent graduate of Mid-America Reformed Seminary (5/21/15) is requesting that he ". . . be examined for both licensure and ordination at the next stated meeting of Classis" pursuant to RCUS Constitution Articles 20ff. A transcript from MARS was also received by your Executive Committee.

Since Mr. Carr has not to date received a call to the Ministry, which is necessary before an ordination examination can be taken (Article 24), your Committee recommends the following:

Recommendation #2: That Mr. Steven Carr be examined for Licensure in the RCUS at the Spring Meeting of the Covenant East Classis

3. From Rev. Randy Klynsma requesting to be dismissed to South Central Classis.

Your Executive Committee received the following documents germane to Rev. Randy Klynsma.

1. Call letter dated December 13th, 2015 from the Consistory of St. John's RCUS, Lincoln, NE to Rev. Randy Klynsma to serve as Associate Pastor with responsibility for planting an RCUS Church in Omaha, NE.
2. Resignation letter dated December 14th, 2015 to the Consistory of Northland RCUS, Kansas City, MO from Rev. Klynsma effective February 1st, 2016.
3. Acceptance of call letter from Rev. Klynsma dated December 16th, 2015 to the Consistory of St. John's RCUS.
4. Letter to Covenant East Classis dated December 26th, 2015 from Rev. Klynsma advising of his acceptance of the Lincoln call and requesting that he be dismissed to the South Central Classis of the RCUS effective February 1st, 2016.
5. Letter to Covenant East Classis from the Northland Consistory dated December 27th, 2015 advising that on December 14th, 2015 they accepted the resignation of Rev. Klynsma effective February 1st, 2016.

Recommendation #3: That pursuant to RCUS Constitution Article 30 the resignation of Rev. Randy Klynsma be approved and that the pastoral relationship between Rev, Klynsma and the Northland RCUS be dissolved effective February 1st, 2016.

Recommendation #4: That Rev, Randy Klynsma be dismissed effective February 1st, 2016 to the South Central Classis of the RCUS.

Recommendation #5: That the pulpit of Northland RCUS, Kansas City, MO

be declared vacant as of February 1st, 2016.

4. Information for Spring Classis 2016

1. With the resignation of Rev. Klynsma and his dismission to SCC the Vice–President of Classis, Rev. Ryan Kron will assume his duties until the elections at Classis.

2. Spring Classis 2016 will convene at St. Paul's Evangelical Church Hamburg, MN on Tuesday March 1st, 2016 at 8:00 AM. A pre-Classis discussion will be held for office bearers on Monday evening February 29th, 2016 at a time to be announced. This discussion will be led by Rev. Jim Sawtelle. The topic will be *Managing The Consistory / Pastor Relationship.*

3. Assuming the licensure examination of Mr. Carr it is expected, at this time, that Classis will not adjourn until sometime on the evening of Wednesday March 2nd, 2016.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 9, January 11th, 2016

The Executive Committee brings before you for your consideration the following items of business germane to the spring 2016 Classis Meeting.

1. Host, time and place of Spring Classis Meeting

The 31st Annual Spring Classis Meeting will be hosted by St. Paul's Evangelical Church, RCUS, Hamburg, MN. Classis will convene as per Standing Rule #20 at 8:00 AM on Tuesday March 1st, 2016 and continue to the completion of business on Wednesday March 2nd, 2016. It is expected that Classis will continue into the evening of March 2nd, 2016.

2. Pre-Classis fellowship and discussion

The Executive Committee has arranged for an organized pre-classis discussion February 29th, 2016. This discussion will run from 7:00 PM through 8:30 PM. It will be led by Rev. Jim Sawtelle on the subject of *Managing the Consistory / Pastoral Relationship.*

3. Forms for Classis

The forms necessary for the Classis Meeting are all included with this Circular. Please send the Clerk the membership statistics, financial statistics, and the delegate credential forms not later than 2 weeks prior to the meeting thus by **February 16th, 2016** (Standing Rules 3 & 4). In addition to these, please also include any necrologies. Please check carefully the math on your financial statistics reporting as well as changes on your membership statistic reporting from the previous year.

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

Reports and recommendations of Permanent and Special Committees, as well as Overtures (if possible) with their supporting grounds are to be sent to the Stated Clerk three weeks prior to the stated meeting thus by **February 9th, 2016** to facilitate circulation (Standing Rule 15).

Parochial Reports are to be sent to Vice President Kron (acting as President *pro tem*) by **February 16th, 2016** (Standing Rule 3)

Article 81 Questions to Elders. Please note Standing Rule #14 and the provision to send written answers to questions to the Stated Clerk prior to the Classis Meeting if an Elder delegate from your Church will not be present at Classis.

4. Examination of Candidate for Licensure.

Student Steven Carr will be examined for licensure at this meeting and if in receipt of a Call to the Ministry by the time Classis meets, possibly for ordination as well.

5. Accommodation and travel information.

A letter is attached providing accommodation, meal and travel information. You are requested to get any pertinent information to Rev. Schnabel at St. Paul's RCUS, as soon as possible. A meal will be served at St. Paul's for arriving delegates at 5:30 PM Monday February 29th, 2016.

Executive Circular Volume 30, Number 10, January 15th, 2016

The Executive Committee brings before you for your consideration the following items of business.

1. Credentials to Classis

Please find attached the Credentials to Classis Form. This was inadvertently left out of Circular 30.9. This completed Form needs to be returned to the Clerk of Classis by February 16th, 2016 at the latest.

2. Request for Dismission:

Attached is a request from Rev. Wesley Brice to be dismissed to the Northern Plains Classis.

Recommendation: That Rev. Wesley Brice be dismissed from Covenant East Classis of the RCUS to the Northern Plains Classis of the RCUS.

Grounds: Rev. Brice is a Retired Minister now residing in the bounds of Northern Plains Classis for the foreseeable future, is transferring his Church membership to the Aberdeen congregation of the NPC, RCUS, is serving as Regular Supply in the Dickinson, ND, RCUS Church and therefore ought to be under the oversight of the NPC.

Your Executive Committee, in the light of the report concerning Grace Reformed Church, Rogers, AR above, recommends the following:

Recommendation: That the Northland Reformed Church Consistory assist Grace RCUS, Rogers AR, as needed, during the next year and that they report to the Executive Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Randy Klynsma, President (Dismissed to South Central Classis Feb. 1st, 2016)
Rev. Ryan Kron, President *pro tem*
Elder Jay Liesveld.
Rev. Ron Potter (Stated Clerk)

Classis Action: The report and its recommendation was adopted.

B. Candidates and Credentials Committee

Fathers and Brethren,

With the election of Rev Ron Potter to the office of Stated Clerk at the 30th annual meeting, of the Classis, he was excused from this committee.

With the departure of Rev Wes Bryce from the Classis to the Northern Plains Classis, he was removed from the committee.

Therefore your committee consists of Elder Dennis Luquette of Covenant Reformed Church of Gettysburg, Elder Dan Wright of Heritage Reformed Church of Waymart, and Rev. Jay Fluck. We are augmented "almost willingly" by Rev. Ron Potter.

The committee took up the task of arranging and compiling paperwork for and scheduling examinations for Rev. Dr. Mark Larson and Mr. Tim Marinelli, at our special meeting of September 14 & 15, 2015 in Peace Reformed Church of Garner, Iowa.

Having sustained his examinations and presented the appropriate paperwork according to Article 35 of the Constitution, including the promise of the Presbytery of New Jersey of the OPC to transfer him to us (which was received in due course) Dr. Larson was received into our Classis and given permission to serve as Stated supply until he can be received by Synod.

Mr. Marinelli also sustained his examination for Ordination and was received from the South Central Classis of the RCUS. The appropriate paperwork according to Article 24 of the Constitution including the call from Redeemer Reformed Church of Minneapolis, the South Central Classis along with his transcript from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and testimonials written and oral. His ordination took place after the completion of

the required internship and was conducted November 1, 2015 at Redeemer Church.

Mr. Christopher Campbell, a student under care and member of Northland Reformed Church of Kansas City, MO, continues at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary where by distance education he carried eight classes in the past year maintaining an A average. He reports that he is currently enrolled in five classes and expects to have only one year remaining in his seminary training after this semester. His current transcript is available on request. He has had opportunity to exhort at Northland Reformed Church, at Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA) and Covenant Reformed Congregation (URCNA). He requests the following financial support for the 2016-2017 school year: Tuition $2,000.00; books $400.00.

Mr. Austin Reed, a member of Northland Reformed Church of Kansas City, Missouri, and currently studying by distance at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, requested to be enrolled as a Student Under Care of the Classis. The consistory of Northland Reformed Church concurred and corresponded with the Executive Committee. The Candidates and Credentials Committee augmented by Rev. Potter, examined him by conference call in orthodoxy and intent according to Article 17 of the Constitution. The committee commended him to Classis and asked that the action concerning him be circularized. That circular was sent out and no objections were raised.

Mr. Steve Carr, a member of Northland Reformed Church of Kansas City, a graduate of Mid-America Theological Seminary (MDiv), has finished his second internship in Rogers, Arkansas under the consistory of Northlands Reformed Church (his first was in First Reformed Church of Yuba City, CA under Rev. Sam Powell) has petitioned to be examined for licensure. His transcript is in hand, his exegetical papers on Isaiah 11:6-9 and Matthew 11:25-30, were deemed by the committee to be acceptable and along with his grades in the languages constituted sufficient evidence of his competence in the languages. His Greek is a Greek Minor from Kuyper College and his Hebrew grades averaged A- at Mid America. His Theological essay was also deemed acceptable.

There is also extant a proposed call to him from Grace Reformed Church of Northwest Arkansas.

Mr. Dylan Rowland is a congregationally ordained pastor of an independent congregation, Grace Community Church, in Waverly, Ohio. He is serving as its pastor, but it is the daughter of a larger congregation in Portsmouth, Ohio. He has come to the place where he believes that he should be in a Paedo Baptist denomination. He investigated on line, corresponded with Rev Matthew Powell who referred him to our Executive Committee who referred him to me. He plans to be with us and be available for interview. His Under grad degree is a BA in History, he has an Mar from Reformed Theological Seminary on line and is currently enrolled in a PhD program through Whitfield Seminary on line.

Mr. Johnny Camp, a member of Emmaus Road Reformed Church has appealed to us to be approved as a student under care for the ministry. The Consistory of Emmaus Reformed Church has forwarded it to us with its recommendation. The committee plans to examine in orthodoxy and intent at this meeting.

Recommendations:

1. That Mr. Campbell's request for financial aid be commended to Synod.
2. That if Mr. Carr is sustained in his licensure examination that we proceed to the ordination exam.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Jay Fluck, Chairman, Elder Daniel Wright, Elder Dennis Luquette

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

C. Interchurch Relations Committee

Dear Brothers,

Your committee's activity this past year was routine. Letters of invitation to attend our Spring classis meeting were sent to one OPC presbytery, two URCNA classes, two CanRC classes. We received invitations from the same, namely Classis Ontario West and Niagara Classis (CanRC), the Presbyter of the Midwest (OPC), the Classis Central and Eastern Classis (URCNA).

We were only able to delegate men to Classis Ontario West (CanRC), Eastern Classis (URCNA), Presbytery of the Midwest (OPC). We hope to send a delegate to Classis Central US (URCNA) in March.

Attendance at these fraternal bodies is crucial for us in upholding our commitment to encourage and watch over one another's doctrine and stand in the faith. It is good to get to know the brothers and their specific challenges, struggles and joys in service our Lord. Their challenges and labors are much the same as ours as we serve the Lord in our North American context of moral, ethical and religious chaos. One thing that is common to our experiences at these meetings is that though all of us are greatly pressed in our desire and labor to remain faithful to Christ, the Lord is faithful to His people and is building His church.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. James Sawtelle, Chairman, Rev. Ryan Kron, Mr. Walt Van Heest

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Classis Action: The report was adopted.

D. Missions Committee

Brothers,

Members of your Classis Home Missions committee made two visits to Rogers, AR this past classical year. After this report is received your committee

will be visiting Blue Bell and with the consistory of Waymart, PA. Since Rev. Tim Marinelli was not ordained and installed until November 1st no visit was made to Redeemer RCUS. We have also received 3 year budgets from Grace Reformed Church, Northwest AR and Heritage Reformed Church Waymart PA.

Grace RCUS, Rogers AR

On July 28, two members of the Classis Visitation Committee and one from the home missions committee traveled to Rogers, Arkansas. Those attending were Rev. Randy Klynsma (Kansas City), Elder Jay Liesveld (Kansas City), and Elder Robert Smith (Hamburg). After a lunch of "down south BBQ" a short informal meeting was held with Elder Tim Bessette to get an understanding of some of the problems that have befallen Grace RCUS in Rogers.

A meeting of the congregation was held that evening with Rev. Klynsma leading with devotions. Where we began there were three or four families in attendance and during the meeting another family arrived. Among the families present was Bobby Duncan's, who was one of the former elders who resigned and a respected leader among those present. During the meeting a number of concerns were discussed. There were words passionately spoken in favor of and in opposition Rev. Brice and his ministry. Some spoke in opposition to those who were thought to be responsible for his departure. Others raised concerns about Rev. Brice and how he had dealt with the rumors and accusations made about his son, Matthew. There was concern that Rev. Brice was not as forthcoming as he could have been when asked about why the elders had resigned. Some thought it might have been contentions between the elders, while others figured it had to do with other concerns.

There was a disagreement over the best way to deal with aberrant behavior of Matthew Brice that led the former elders to tender their resignations. While the Visitation Committee from Covenant East Classis has already voiced their disapproval of these resignations, they understand the breakdown of relationships and don't believe the elders acted with malice but were seeking to deal with the situation as they thought best.

The resignation of the elders, the eventual retirement and departure of Rev. Brice, left even more questions unanswered for the congregation. Through all these events, several members stopped attending, leaving a sad situation for elder Bessette, the deacons and the rest of the congregation to deal with.

A long discussion ensued with tearful, heartfelt statements of how this congregation is hurting and how to get back to learning about and praising God's Word. It was stated that repentance and forgiveness are the only ways to put this behind and return to the business of God's work. It was felt by the committee that this was expressed by all in attendance.

There were a few men that filled the pulpit at Grace in July and they were all considered to be a "good fit" by the congregation**.** However being a Mission work they are unable to call a minister with less than five years' experience according to the RCUS Home Missions Manual. This was unknown to any of the members of the congregation. A few options were discussed with the most positive being having someone fill the pulpit for a few months until the Classis meeting is held.

By that time they could ask to be taken off mission support or given an exception to the principle in order to allow a man to serve there with less than the

five years' experience. With men scheduled to fill the pulpit it was anticipated that some members that left may return in that time to help make a decision on how to proceed.

The meeting closed with a prayer by elder Liesveld. After some fellowship, handshakes and hugs another short meeting was held with elder Bessette and Deacon Sam Hilliard. We shared some papers, bulletins, manuals, and copies of by-laws that they may want to use as examples as they go forward. Also the positive, forgiving attitude of the congregation was discussed and agreed by all that things appeared to be ready to move in a positive direction. This meeting closed with a prayer by Elder Smith.

On November 16, 2015 Elder Jay Liesveld and Rev. Daniel Schnabel traveled to Rogers, AR to visit Grace Reformed Church. Elder Jay Liesveld has faithfully come alongside of the consistory of Grace Reformed attending their monthly meetings. The Classis Home Missions is very thankful for his diligent work along with the consistory of Grace Reformed Church. Mr. Steven Carr and his wife hosted us for a wonderful dinner with their family. Classis approved Mr. Carr for pulpit supply in the fall. We then met the families and consistory at the church. We were able to meet individually with the Wilkinson's and the Duncan's. We also met with the consistory members and Mr. Carr.

Rev. Schnabel began the meetings with a devotion from Ephesians 2:11-20 and prayer. The meetings went well. Things continue to settle down and there is a strong consistent desire to see a Reformed work continue there. Both families as well as the consistory were asked many of the questions for mission's visitations as well as about the current peace. We also inquired if there were lingering issues including those previously spoken of in this report and how they saw those could be biblically resolved for the glory of God. Concerns were voiced concerning past leadership, decrease of fellowship and miscommunication. The committee and others gave counsel from the Classis in conjunction with our meeting. The decision over all was an interest to move ahead along the grounds of Proverbs 17:9 ***He who covers a transgression seeks love.*** The members of the consistory are positive about the direction the church is headed and are thankful for the work of Mr. Carr. It does seem that a good bond has begun with Mr. Carr and the church.

While there has been some turnover the church is moving ahead with the help of Mr. Carr. Regular Sunday attendance at worship ranges from 15 to 25 people. The consistory also has also now has begun officer training first of all using the Heidelberg Seminary video series on church officers.

Respectfully submitted

Rev. Daniel Schnabel, Rev. Harvey Opp, Elder Bob Smith, Elder Mike Altman, Elder David Blauw.

Recommendations:

1. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with $367.5 per month, a total of $4,410 in fiscal year 2016, beginning July 2015. [A reduction of $450)

2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas, with $100.5 per month, a total of $1,206 in fiscal year 2016, beginning July 2016. [A reduction of $558.]
3. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA, with $350 per month, a total of $4,200 in fiscal year 2016, beginning July 2016, for rent and associated costs. [Same as last year.]
4. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with $3,000 for outreach through Reformation Church Blue Bell if needed. [Same as last year.]
5. That Classis support Redeemer RCUS of Golden Valley church building efforts with up to $1,666.66 a month, a total of $20,000, in classical year 2016-2017, as needed, for the purpose of building up the congregation with a view towards starting a mission work in the Minneapolis Metro area in around 3-5 years. (This is a reduction of $5,000 from last year)
6. That Classis overture Synod to provide Redeemer RCUS church building efforts with up to $1,666.66 a month, a total of $20,000, for Synodical year 2015-2016 as needed, for the purpose of building up the congregation with a view towards starting a mission work in the Minneapolis Metro area in around 3-5 years. (This is a reduction of $5,000 from last year)

COVENANT EAST CLASSIS
PERMANENT MISSIONS COMMITTEE
REPORT TO THE 2016 SPRING CLASSIS MEETING
ADDENDUM

Dear Brothers,

On February 20-21, 2016, two members of your Classis Home Missions Committee, Rev. Harvey Opp and Elder Mike Altman, visited Reformation Church of Blue Bell, PA. Please see the Classis Missions reports of the last two years for history of this congregation. As a summary, Rev. Ron Potter and Rev. Jay Fluck have been preaching in Blue Bell on a regular basis since August 2013, supplying 3 or 4 services each month, the majority by Rev. Potter. With the work involved and the hours of travel time (one-way) this has obviously been a major undertaking by our ministers who have much to do in their local congregations!

With our visitation, it was quickly apparent to Opp and Altman that this is a work which should have greater attention and support from Classis. Before visiting, we had the mistaken notion that Blue Bell was a small town separated from the metro Philadelphia area by some miles. Rather, it is a suburb with continuous population surrounding it and southward to Philadelphia, which is the 6th largest metropolitan area in the country. The Blue Bell church is situated just several miles from the two major interstates in the metro area. Also, it is the only Three Forms Church in the area.

As for the people of the congregation, they are diligent and attend the two services they have each Lord's Day. Six communicants and three children came into membership at Heritage RCUS, Waymart, PA in March 2014. While we attended the pm service on Feb. 21st, a family of four communicants joined the church. Rev. Potter and the Waymart elders were present for this and to

administer communion. A young family was also in attendance having expressed the intention to move to the area and attend regularly.

Your committee members attended the morning service which was led by Mr. Ken Hanko. He was previously a minister in the Protestant Reformed Church. After finishing seminary, he served a mission work in the area for 15 years. After that work closed, he served as an elder in the Blue Bell congregation when it came into the Canadian Reformed Classis Ontario. Mr. Hanko has been given administrative authority under Waymart, including the task of exhorting in the morning services. As for the message we heard, it was very edifying. We were quite impressed with the insight and application of the Scriptures. We talked with all the families, except one which had illness at the time. All had great appreciation for the preaching of Mr. Hanko. Rev. Potter has echoed this appreciation. We addressed the issue that Ken has led and preached in the morning services for all this time without financial remuneration, and that "the laborer is worthy of his wages." (I Tim. 5:18)

We were so impressed that our immediate thought was that they already had a man who could possibly serve as a missionary. We enjoyed lunch with Ken and his wife Mary, and afterward talked of their personal history in the ministry. We expressed understanding if there was some hesitancy to be back in full-time pastoral work after his past experience out of seminary. However, they only mentioned concern over the counseling aspects of pastoral work. We felt that was an ability that could be developed in greater measure, as is typical for pastors. He does enjoy preaching and would be interested in pastoral work if the Lord would so direct and provide for them financially to enable such a return. He currently does contract work in business, which could possibly vary to require less of his time. The responses of Rev. Potter and Rev. Fluck were that Mr. Hanko could be an ideal candidate to serve the church. They had only understood previously he had expressed doubt in having the necessary gifts. Rev. Potter said he would address the counseling issue with Mr. Hanko.

We also met with the congregation after the supper following the evening service. We encouraged them that the RCUS was a denomination that was stable and had particular characteristics suited to mission works. That is: We have members from many different backgrounds who would not want to be anywhere else; we hold to our creeds without deviation; we have careful oversight of our mission works; and that we do not abandon them. Several aspects of our Missions Manual were mentioned and that we have placed a priority on metropolitan areas for missions. In light of that, a plea from the Waymart Consistory was rightly made that this work could be supported in greater measure.

Your committee agrees with this request. Beyond what has been said already, we see submission and progress toward becoming an RCUS congregation in the following particulars:

1. They have studied and accepted our Constitution, government, and our translation of the Three Forms of Unity. They use the latter in their services.

2. They have accepted the counsel of the Waymart Spiritual Council and changed to have monthly observance of the Lord's Supper, as advised by Classis in 2014.

3. They have recently gained members, and it appears that another family may join before long.

4. They have expressed submission to our practices in other areas, including openness to possibly use another psalter. (Concerns were mentioned by several that the Book of Praise, used since their Canadian Reformed background, is difficult for newcomers, with its tunes, lack of harmonization, and notes separated from the words to be sung. They do not practice exclusive psalmody.)

5. They have a building to use for only the cost of maintenance and utilities. (That has amounted to about $10,000 yearly.)

6. They had offerings in the range of $37,000 last year, including those of the new family. They give the Waymart congregation $600 monthly which is used for the support of Rev. Potter.

Therefore, we recommend the following:
1. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with $867 per month, a total of $10,400 in mission funds for the Classical year beginning March 2016, to be used for remuneration for sermons preached in the morning services at Blue Bell. [This would be $200 per sermon.]

Grounds: There has been no remuneration for Mr. Ken Hanko who has been diligent in preparing excellent messages for the flock. With some financial support he could possibly do further work, such as preparation of Bible studies, which is desired in the congregation. Classis has funds available for new works. The outreach funds made available by Classis previously have not been used, as Rev. Potter was not able to stay overnight and have studies in the area. Also, it will be difficult for Rev. Potter to continue preaching as often as he has in Blue Bell. The work needs to be developed and the Lord has blessed with recent members and interest from others.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Daniel Schnabel, Rev. Harvey Opp, Elder Bob Smith, Elder Mike Altman, Elder David Blauw

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

E. Publications

No committee was formed.

F. Church Camp Committee

With Carolyn Hackmann again directing the early organizational aspects of

Summer camp 2015, things were well in hand by the onset of late spring. The early decision by camp pastors to follow up 2014's theme of "Hallowed be Thy Name" with "Thy Kingdom Come" as the 2015 theme eliminated some of the early drama that had slowed preparations the previous year.

Volunteer sign-up sheets were distributed in early June again, and T-shirts from Van-T's were ordered about the same time. Churches were asked to provide a final count of their campers by June 21st (being sure to designate senior and junior campers as well as the number of adult counselors).

One of the more important organizational changes in 2015 was the addition of Rev. Kyle Sorensen of the Manitowoc congregation to the church camp committee. This action streamlined communication and decision making among the churches and pastors as camp approached.

In response to camper and pastor suggestions following the 2014 camp, the official start time of camp in 2015 was moved before supper since usually everyone has been there for several hours with nothing official to do. This earlier arrival time was not wasted as Covenant Cup teams were chosen as soon as campers arrived and Donielle Sorensen led an exercise program at 4:00 that counted in the Cup competition. The atmosphere created was one of organization and purpose as supper time and the time for the opening night lesson approached.

Organization of the lessons under the heading of "Thy Kingdom Come" was complicated by the absence of camp regular Rev. Steve Altman. Pastors Sorensen, Sawtelle, Klynsma, and Schnabel divided up the teaching of the lessons, and experimented with a form of co-teaching in most sessions to ensure deeper questioning and consideration on the part of the campers. David Voytek (soon to be missionary associate in Asia) was present to lend assistance. Lessons were intended to follow a basic format, with direct Scriptural instruction, then discussion, integrating important questions throughout the lesson. According to Rev. Sorensen, hand-outs were provided to campers and counselors, and in general the desired format was followed although some tweaking will probably be done going forward.

Other important traditional aspects of Covenant East Camp made things enjoyable for all. Swimming and boating, Covenant Cup competition, the talent show (which again was recorded and made available on line), food (tacos were a new menu item), and, of course, evening devotions created the usual opportunities for fellowship, recreation and reflection.

The camp again depended heavily on volunteers for its internal operation. Cooks, counselors, EMT's, pastors, all gave willingly to make 2015 camp a success.

A few notes and observations looking forward to our 2016 camp:

1. The woman who has coordinated lifeguard services in the past, Jan Ross, will no longer be working with us, so Carolyn Hackmann is scrambling to deal with this.
2. The camp budget needs a serious boost. The unanticipated reduced number of campers this year (49 instead of the usual 60+) has helped create a circumstance in which the camp balance going forward is $193.81 as compared to $1410.68 the previous year. (Additionally, one of boater Jim Bruckschen's towing tubes burst and should be replaced by us.)

From the post camp evaluation responses:
1. The lesson format developed after the 2015 camp was generally successful, but probably needs some adjustment by pastors.
2. Camp continues to need women counselors.
3. Timely and more accurate responses from the churches in regard to the number of campers attending is critical to the ordering of food, T-shirts, etc.
4. Pastors and camp organizers need to brainstorm a solution or solutions to the somewhat disorganized atmosphere that has developed on the final Friday morning as campers prepare to head for home.

Chairman: Steve Stuebbe, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Rev. Steve Altman, Mark Bruckschen

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Classis Action:
The report was adopted by the Classis.

Reports of Officers

A. President's Report

Acts 2:42 says: *And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers*.

John Calvin comments on this verse and says: "Wheresoever the pure voice of the gospel doth sound, where men continue in the profession thereof, where they exercise themselves in hearing the same ordinarily that they may profit, without all doubt there is the Church." Our marching orders, given to us by Jesus Christ, are to shepherd the flock of God as we preach the whole counsel of God, faithfully administer the sacraments, and exercise church discipline (Belgic Confession, Article 29). I am thankful to God these "marks of the true church" continue to be present among the churches of the classis.

As President *Pro-Tem*, I am encouraged as I read the reports of the pastors of classis. God continues to fulfill his promise to build his church. Matthew 16:18 says: *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. We see this in the encouraging report of Rev. Potter and the work the Lord is doing to build his church in Blue Bell. We also see this in the reports we hear from Pastors Sawtelle and Marinelli in Golden Valley about the work at Redeemer and among the Chinese at the University of Minnesota. And we see this encouragement in Gettysburg. Rev. Jay Fluck writes: "2015 has been a year of answered prayer. We became a member congregation of the RCUS! That meant that we had oversight and responsibility to a body beyond ourselves. The involvement with and oversight by a faithful denomination is a great comfort."

I am also encouraged as I read of the faithfulness of the pastors of classis in preaching and teaching the word. God's sheep are being fed with the word as each of you labors diligently and faithfully. Rev. Altman writes: "I am very thankful to belong to a church and a denomination that places a premium on the Word of God as one of the means through which we come face to face with the wonderful grace of God each and every Lord's day."

As I read the reports I was also reminded of the importance of prayer. Rev. Marinelli writes: "As I am charged not only to labor in the Word but also in prayer (Acts 6:1-4), I have continued in daily prayers for the needs of the church, of the families and of the individual members of Redeemer. Rev. Sawtelle and I also come together for weekly meetings which include a time of prayer for the needs of the church. Finally, I have been involved in Redeemer's monthly congregational prayer meetings, praying not only for the specific needs of this body but also for the RCUS, the church worldwide, and for various mission works." These words are an encouragement to us all to continue laboring in the word and in prayer individually, in our families, and in the congregation. If the church where you are serving does not have a regular prayer meeting, I want to encourage us all to think about beginning this important practice. From the very beginning, the monthly prayer meeting has been one of the most important aspects of the church where I am serving (Emmaus Road Reformed Church). Let us continue to devote ourselves to praying for each of the pastors and churches of classis, including Northland Reformed as they pray for God's will in providing their next pastor. May we remember to pray for our brother, Rev. Klynsma, as he has now begun to labor in Omaha. How thankful we are to Lord for bringing Mr. Steve Carr to Grace Reformed in Arkansas for "such a time as this." Let's continue to pray for the students under care of classis. And let us also keep Rev. Opp and his wife in our prayers "for guidance regarding his sense of calling and desire to serve in the church, however the Lord leads." The importance of prayer is especially seen in light of what Rev. Sawtelle writes: "I think the greatest challenge in the church today is the general lack of commitment that plagues our entire culture. People seem to want a church home with all that entails. But participating in worship, Bible studies, prayer meetings, youth group meetings, seems ever to take a back seat to whatever else they have going. Commitment to "self' is the defining spirit of our times. We find this spirit even among many life-long Christians. The culture has influenced the church in this area. Meeting this pastoral and spiritual issue will be something that we will be seeking to address more thoroughly in the coming year. Pray for us in this."

I also want to remind us of what Rev. Potter wrote in his report; namely, the words of Ephesians 4:3 where Paul urges the church to be *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* One of the important results of the work of the gospel in the church is unity. This unity is something we must pray for in each of the churches of classis. All of us have conflict in our various relationships because we are all sinners. Sadly, when conflict is not handled biblically people will sometimes abandon the relationship and leave the church. We all know examples of this kind of division. Handling conflict biblically is a way that we grow in holiness, and it is an important part of growing in our love for each other as we remember Paul's words that we are to *live in harmony with one another in accord with Christ Jesus* (Romans 15:5).

I am also thankful as I read your reports of the communion of the saints in the churches. It is important for us as pastors to set an example for the congregation as we shepherd the flock and show hospitality. What a blessing it is to spend time with the people of God in their homes, over a meal, or gathering together as families. Rev. Sorenson's words are important for all of us to remember as we pray that each congregation will grow in their love for each

other: “Last year I spoke in this report of the doctrine of the communion of the saints being seen as the “friendship of the saints.” As can be expected, there has been mixed progress in this regard. We all have room for growth. I have seen people excited and thriving because of the Christian friendship which is enjoyed in this congregation. I have seen others who see that same friendship in some places, but see a total lack of concern from other church members, and so they are turned off to any involvement with the congregation whatsoever. Let us recommit ourselves to love one another.”

May God continue to bless the preaching, teaching, sacraments, shepherding and fellowship that takes place in the churches of Covenant East Classis to the praise of his glorious grace (Ephesians 1:12).

In Christ’s service,
Pastor Ryan Kron

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

B. Stated Clerk’s Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Brethren:

Thank you for the privilege of serving as Stated Clerk of the Covenant East Classis this past year. Thank you also to Rev. Steve Altman who, following my election to office, graciously recorded the Minutes of the 2015 Spring Meeting and enabled my transition into the Stated Clerk’s office. In addition, thank you to Elder Randy Schroeder who navigated this pilgrim through the complexities of a statistical spread sheet and who set up the formulas and provided a template that eased the burden of entering statistics and calculating the percentages of change. And finally, thank you to Elder David Blauw who designed a fillable statistics and credentials form, something I have thought should have been done years ago. As a courtesy this was passed on to the other Clerks of the Classes by the undersigned.

Your Clerk formatted, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder all of the minutes of the 29th meeting of the Covenant East Classis, along with all of the report’s, overtures, and other relevant information. This was submitted to the Minutes of Classes Committee at Synod and their corrections were noted and the Minutes corrected accordingly. The President’s Report on the State of the Church was spread in the Minutes, printed in the abstract, and sent to the *Reformed Herald.* The 2015 Abstract was prepared, not without some glitches necessitating an update in software, and copies were printed and distributed to the churches of Synod in compliance with standing rule #10. All of the requisite forms and necessary communications were sent to the Synod Clerk, along with the overtures to Synod from our Classis. All Classis records are kept in hard copy and in electronic form and backed up on a second computer and on a memory stick

An agenda and relevant documents were prepared for a Fall Classis meeting. Minutes were recorded, licensure and ordination certificates were signed and sealed and delivered to the candidates as appropriate. The Minutes

of the Fall Classis meeting were distributed electronically and will be placed in the Abstract of this meeting's minutes.

Ten Circular letters were sent out his year, two Ministers were dismissed to other Classes, one Minister was received from a Presbytery of the OPC and a licentiate was received from the South central Classis of the RCUS. All paperwork germane to this was executed and an electronic and hard copy record kept. .

This year, in conjunction with the Executive Committee of Classis, arrangements were made for a pre-classis discussion on *Managing The Pastoral /Consistory* Relationship to be led by Rev. Jim Sawtelle. Your Clerk was also involved in serving with the various issues that were brought to the Executive Committee throughout the course of this past year and as well as served "semi-willingly" on the Candidates & Credentials Committee when asked.

For this meeting, I have organized all of the overtures, communications, and reports, and placed them all in their proper folders. I have received three Necrologies for this year. Also, along with the President *pro tem*, I helped to put together our Agenda and schedule for this meeting. The documents germane to the meeting will be sent to the delegates in a PDF file with numbered pages to facilitate reference.

Though notice was given earlier than usual several credentials, statistics overtures and reports did not all get into the Clerk's office on time. Delays in incoming documents means a delay in getting those documents turned around to you in a timely fashion. I would encourage consistories and committee chairman to mark your calendars so that the gathering of data for submission to the Clerk for the Spring Classis meetings can take place in a more timely fashion. For those of you who hand write statistics and credentials forms, please write legibly or, better, make use of the fillable form.

Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me in electing me to this office. I am willing to serve in the coming year unless there is someone who *really, really* would like to be Clerk. In that case I would happily defer to him.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Ron Potter

Clerk's Note: Necrologies for Elders Emil J. Broers, Stanley A. Peter and Clayton Greiman appear in Appendix #2

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 269th Synod, there are some items that the Classes should take note of:

1. Classes should take note of the corrections that should be made to their minutes as adopted by the Synod (269th Abstract, pp. 84-85).

2. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the *calendar* year.
3. Standing rules #2 and #3 which respectively read: "The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod May 1"; "The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk May 1."
4. That the Stated Clerk of each Classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring Classis meeting.
5. Standing Ministerial Aid recommendation 8 (2013 Abstract page 76), that pursuant to Article 28 of the RCUS Constitution, Classes shall not consider a pastoral call letter as "adequate support" to the temporal needs of the called pastor, unless retirement is addressed and funded in the terms of the call.
6. The Treasurer's request that the treasurers of the various churches be reminded to comply with Synod standing rule 8 with regard to designating for which fund the monies delivered to the RCUS are to be attributed.
7. Per Article 197 of the RCUS Constitution, the following amendments to the Constitution were adopted by two-thirds vote of the 269th Synod and need the concurrence of two-thirds of the Classis [*So far, only one Classis has taken action: I received a communication from Covenant East Classis that at a Special Fall Classis meeting (2015) they concurred with amendments herein labeled 7a, c, and d*]:
    a. That the notation "Articles 40-42 were removed by the 269th Synod" be placed in the RCUS Constitution in place of Articles 40-42, and that the numbering of the articles of the constitution from Article 43 on remain unchanged.
    b. That *"Teacher of Theology"* be retained as a valid Ministry of the Word.
    c. That Article 84 of the RCUS Constitution be amended to read as follows: An ordained minister or a licentiate shall not be received by Classis until he has presented a regular certificate of dismission from the Classis to which he belongs. The reception <u>and installation</u> of a minister from another denomination shall not be final until it is confirmed by Synod. <u>Classes shall forward to Synod its actions concerning ministers from other denominations; and also provide a resume regarding the new minister.</u>
    d. That Article 195 of the RCUS Constitution be amended as follows: "Marriage has been instituted by God. The Reformed Church in the United States defines "marriage" as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by The Reformed Church in the United States only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of "marriage" found in these Articles. Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as "porneia") including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. (Leviticus 18-20; I Corinthians 5:1-5; 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:3-7;

Heidelberg Catechism 108, 109). Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the biblical witness. Every officer, employee, or volunteer of the church shall affirm their agreement with this definition of marriage and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith. This shall be a prerequisite, and continual condition, for these positions."

8. No Classis action needs to take place on the following motion, but each Classis should be aware that it was postponed by the 269th Synod until the 270th Synod, partly because it came as an overture from an individual delegate rather than from a Classis: "Every human being, regardless of mental or physical infirmity, is created in the image of God. It is never acceptable as a matter of medical practice or familial care to facilitate or assist an act of suicide. While an individual may refuse "heroic" medical procedures which they deem to be an artificial extension of biological life, suicide or any assistance provided to assist suicide is a violation of the law of God. The Reformed Church in the United States formally rejects any and all attempts to legalize this pernicious and immoral practice, and encourages our elected leaders, especially to do all in their power to protect the disabled, the feeble, the poor and the infirm from those who would pressure them into taking their own lives." [Cf. 269th Synod Abstract, page 89]
9. The Classes are reminded that the 270th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 16-19, 2016, at Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA.

Respectfully submitted,
David Fagrey
Stated Clerk, RCUS

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

D. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Jim Drewes presented the following report.

Fund Balances (YTD July 2015 thru Feb 2016 YTD)				
Starting Balance – July 1, 2014				**$87,588.82**
General Fund 06/30/15	**Balance**	$ 748.15		
Receipts		$ 8,560.46		
Expenses		$ 4,159.75		
	Balance 2/28/16		$ 5,148.86	
***Missions Fund 06/30/15**	**Balance**	$77,313.54		

Receipts	$ 2,778.28		
Expenses	$25,343.78		
Balance 2/29/16		$75,748.04	
Benevolence Fund Balance 6/30/15	$ 4,075.87		
Receipts	12,840.00		
Expenses	$ 9768.00		
Balance 2/29/16		$ 7,147.87	
Student Aid Fund Balance 6/30/15	$ 5,451.26		
Receipts	$ 2,377.82		
Expenses	$ 00.00		
Balance 2/29/16		$ 7,829.08	
ENDING Balance February 29, 2016			**$ 95,873.85**
*Current $55,344.30 available for future CEC Mission works			

Detailed Income Report (July 2015 thru Feb 2016 YTD)

		18%	+ 50%	+ 27%	+ 5%	=100%		
Guideline Total $66		$ 12	+ $ 33	+ $ 18	+ $ 3	= $ 66		
	Members	**General**	**Missions**	**Benevolence**	**Student Aid**	**Budget**	**Totals YTD**	**Due 6/15/16**
NW Arkansas	25	$300	$825	$450	$75	$1,650	$550.00	$1,100
Eden Prairie, MN	76	$912	$2,508	$1,368	$228	$5,016	$5,016	$0.00
Garner, IA	85	$1,020	$2,805	$1,530	$255	$5,610	$5,610	$0.00
Gettysburg, PA	29	$348.00	$957	$522	$87	$1,914	$1,022.40	$891.60
Hamburg, MN	204	$2,448	$6,732	$3,672	$612	$13,464	$13,464	$0.00
Kansas City, MO	61	$732	$2,013	$1,098	$183	$4,026	$4,026	$0.00
Manitowoc, WI	138	$1,656	$4,554	$2,484	$414	$9,108	$9,108	$0.00
Minneapolis, MN	101	$1,212	$3,333	$1,818	$303	$6,666	$3,333.00	$3,333.00
Napoleon, OH	63	$756	$2,079	$1,134	$189	$4,158	$4,158.00	$0.00
Waymart, PA	19	$228	$627	$342	$57	$1,254	$1,254	$0.00

Totals	**801**	**$9,612**	**$26,433**	**$14,418**	**$2,403**	**$52,866**	**$47,541.40**	**$5,324**
							Other income and interest	$15.16
Income Total		**$8,560.46**	**$ 23,778.28**	**$ 12,840**	**$ 2,377.82**		**$47,556.56**	

Detailed Expense Report (July 2015 thru Feb 2016 YTD)

General Fund Expense			
Fall Classis Meeting Garner, IA		$ 3,278.82	
Clerk/Printing & supplies		$ 151.77	
Travel		$ 693.50	
Honorarium		$ -	
Postage/Phone/Conf Calls		$ 35.66	
	Total		**$ 4,159.75**
Mission Fund Expense			
Grace Reformed Church		$ 3,240.00	
Heritage Reformed Church		$ 2,800.00	
Redeemer Reformed Church		$ 16,200.00	
Travel		$ 3,103.78	
	Total		**$25,343.78**
Benevolence			
Heritage Reformed Church		$ 2,800.00	
Medical - Fluck		$ 3,168.00	
Medical - Potter		$ 3,800.00	
	Total		**$ 9,768.00**
Student Aid			
	Total		**$00.00**
			Expense Total **$39.271.53**

Total Classis Income vs Expense July 2015- Feb 2016 **$8,285.03**

Respectfully Submitted, Jim Drewes, Treasurer

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

Parochial Reports of Ministers

Each minister read his parochial report. Opportunity was given for delegates to ask questions about any report. Prayer was then offered for each of the pastors, elders, and their charges after their report was read.

Classis Action: The Classis took note of each report.

Constitutional Questions to the Elders

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

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

2. Is careful attention given to the instruction of the youth for confirmation, the reception of members into the Church, and the Christian nurture of the members?
   All churches answered "Yes."

3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:
   a. Is visitation faithfully performed?
      All churches answered "Yes," except Eden Prairie, which answered, "with reservations", Gettysburg which answered "needs improvement" and Manitowoc which answered "yes, needs improvement."
   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," except Rogers, AR which answered "N/A" (no pastor)

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

All churches answered "Yes" except Rogers which answered "N/A" (no pastor); Gettysburg which answered: Almost, we are still requesting partial assistance for Pastor's health insurance from Classis" and Waymart which answered "Yes, with Classis assistance.".

Report of Membership and Financial Statistics

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

Reports from Classis Delegates to Fraternal Bodies

Rev. Jay Fluck brought a report on his visit to the Eastern Classis of the United Reformed Churches in North America. Rev. Jim Sawtelle brought an oral report on his visit to the Midwest Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Questions were asked from the floor.

Addresses by Delegates from other Reformed Churches or Visitors

Rev. Shane Lems fraternal delegate from the Midwest Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church addressed the Classis. Sawtelle responded in prayer.

Examination of Candidate

Rev. Jay Fluck, Chairman of Standing Examination and Licensure presented the examination schedule for Licensure candidate Steven Carr. Each examiner was given 20 minutes per subject with questions asked from the floor.
Rev. Mark Larson examined in historical philosophy. Rev. Kyle Sorensen examined in apologetics. Rev. Jay Fluck examined in prolegomena and eschatology. Rev. Jim Sawtelle examined in theology proper. Rev. Tim Marinelli examined in Christology. Rev. Dan Schnabel examined in soteriology and ecclesiology. Rev. Ryan Kron examined in ecclesiastical history. Elder Dan Wright examined in English Bible.

The Classis went into Executive session to discuss the examination and evaluate the sermon preached in the worship service on Tuesday evening and voted to sustain Carr's examination. Upon arising from Executive Session the President announced to Steven Carr that he had successfully sustained his licensure exam. Steven read, signed and dated the *Form for Licensure* and was presented with a licensure Certificate. The Classis extended the right hand of fellowship to Licentiate Carr. The ordination examination was, at the request of the candidate scheduled for a later date.

A. Special Committee to ordain and install Licentiate Tim Marinelli

Rev. Kyle Sorensen summarized the following report:

On November 1, 2015, Rev. Tim Marinelli was ordained into the gospel ministry and installed as associate minister of Redeemer Reformed Church in Minneapolis, MN.

The apostolic laying on of hands is a Biblical practice that stretches back – UNBROKEN – through the centuries. Every minister is ordained the same way and into the same office as ministers like Charles Spurgeon, John Calvin, Martin Luther, Augustine, Titus, and Timothy. There is a sense in which gospel ministers even share in much of the office which was held by the Apostles and Prophets of old. At any one moment in history, most of the people who share in that office are not present in the room when a new minister is ordained. But those who are blessed to be present are welcome to come forward, along with every elder who has ever served, and lay hands on the man who is being inducted into office by Christ Himself. On November 1, 2015, about a dozen ministers and elders came forward to participate (including some from our fraternal denominations). Praise God that He cares for us by bringing up the next generation of gospel ministers. May He use Rev. Marinelli and the rest of His gospel ministers today to carry the torch in this generation!

You don't have to be a minister or from a minister's family to participate in and benefit from the gospel ministry. The worship service drove that point home in a number of ways. Rev. Jim Sawtelle began the 5 p.m. worship service on November 1st by calling the congregation to join in song, confessing that "God is our Refuge and Strength." We further prayed for God the Holy Spirit to "Shine Thou Upon Us, Lord." The Charge to the Minister was delivered by Rev. David Fagrey (who was Tim's pastor during his college and seminary years). He preached on "The Basic Qualities of a Faithful Minister" from Ephesians 6:21-22. Faithful ministers are faithful to the Apostle's Word and they also seek to comfort the hearts of God's people. The Charge to the Congregation was delivered by Rev. Kyle Sorensen. He preached from Ephesians 4:11-16 on the doctrine that Jesus gives His congregations pastors so that we will be "Equipped for YOUR Ministry." That ministry includes a true spiritual unity of faith, as well as a visible unity of the body of Christ as each member does its share.

The evening concluded with a time of fellowship and refreshments. After that, until noon the following day, the Consistory called for a special time of prayer and fasting for the members of Redeemer as they looked to the Lord of the harvest in faith for the new ministry just begun.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Rev. James Sawtelle
Elder David Blauw

Classis Action: The report was adopted by Classis.

Reports of Standing Committees

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

A. Benevolence

1. That Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid of $475 per month for Classical year 2016-2017 to Rev. Ron Potter, to assist with health care costs.

2. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of $1,200 per month for Synodical year 2016-2017.

3. That Covenant East Classis provide benevolent aid of $396 per month for Classical year 2016-2017 to Rev. Jay Fluck, to assist with medical insurance costs.

4. That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid for Mrs. Grace Ploeger in the amount of $1,200 per month for Synodical year 2016-2017.

5. A communication from Rev. and Mrs. Ron Potter expressing thanks for benevolent aid received was read.

Kron, M. Larson, Bessette.

B. Examination and Licensure

1. That Classis overture Synod to provide student aid to Mr. Chris Campbell in the amount of $2,000.00 for tuition and $400.00 for books for the academic year 2016-2017 at Greenville Theological Seminary.

2. That the Permanent Committee Report be adopted.

Fluck, M. Altman, Wright, M. Larson.

C. Excuses

No business came before this committee at this meeting.

Kron, M. Larson, Bessette.

D. Finances

1. The Standing Committee on Finances has audited the Final Treasurer's Report, Fiscal Year 2015, and found it to be in order.

2. We have audited the Treasurer's Partial Report for the period from July 1, 2015 - February 29, 2016 and find it to be in order.

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

Steve Stuebbe	$197.21
Jay Liesveld	$437.00
Dan Wright	71.00
Ron Potter	$538.40
Harvey Opp	$220.00
Tim Bessette	491.20
Kyle Sorensen	20.00
Jim Drewes	$252.00
Ryan Kron	$108.00
Jay Fluck	$556.20
Don Buysse	$669.10
Mark Larson	$163.00
Mike Altman	$1,605.60
Steve Carr	659.00
TOTAL:	**$5,987.71**

4. That the Classis adopt the following guidelines:

General Fund	$22.00
Missions Fund	$32.00*
Benevolence Fund	$ 9.00
Student Aid Fund	$ 3.00
TOTAL per communicant member	**$66.00**

5. That Classis authorized the treasurer to pay $500.00 honorarium to Rev. Randy Klynsma for Classis President work for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

6. That the Classis request of Synod to keep current financial information from being viewable for the general public on the Internet.

S. Altman, Kroese, Smith, (Drewes advise)

E. Judicial

1. With respect to Communication #2, we find the call from Grace Reformed Church to Mr. Steven Carr to be in order.

2. With respect to Communication #3, we find the acceptance by Mr. Steven Carr of the call from Grace Reformed Church to be in order, pending a successful completion of his classical examinations.

3. With respect to Overture #9, we recommend that classis amend Standing Rule #11 by adding the following sentence to the end of the current rule: "The members of the Executive Committee shall not be from the same congregation."

(Note: requires a 2/3 vote of the majority to pass). **Clerks note:** 2/3 majority received.

4. With respect to Overture #5, we recommend that Covenant East Classis overture Synod to add a new Financial Statistics line, “Other Assets.” The grounds for this proposal will be those attached to the original overture. [Classis action was: Defeated]

5. With respect to Overture #8, we recommend that Covenant East Classis overture the 270th Synod of the RCUS to make a ruling on the procedure of reception of ministers from another denomination, Article 84 of the Constitution. We ask that Synod declare that the confirmation required by the Constitution might be accomplished by Circular letter, as circumstances warrant.

Grounds:
1. It is entirely possible that a congregation that has been vacant for some time could call a Minister from another denomination after the annual Synod meeting. The candidate, after examination by Classis at a specially called meeting or at its fall meeting, would be placed on the rolls of Classis but could not be installed until confirmed by the next Synod meeting. Conceivably that could be close to a year away. When coupled with the time the charge was vacant that would stretch even more the time the church is without an installed Minister and hinder the church from moving forward.
2. The requirement of Synod that a résumé of the Minister be provided for confirmation purposes could be circularized rather than being simply read on the floor of Synod thus giving the delegates more time and more opportunity to know the candidate and to use the allotted response time to consider any just complaints. Such time is not as readily available under the present practice.
3. The present synodical practice while perhaps practical when it follows a Spring Classis meeting which licenses the candidate, does not meet the immediate need of the Church to install its Pastor when that licensure takes place after Synod.
4. The provision for a Circular would apply both the letter of the law and its spirit without requiring a Constitutional change.

J. Sawtelle, Stuebbe Buysse

F. Minutes of Classis

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

Marinelli, Sorenson, Smith, Schnabel

G. Minutes of Synod

1. With respect to communication #6 to the Minutes of Synod Committee, items #1-#7 we recommend the Classis Take Note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

2. With respect to Item # 8 we recommend the Classis Take Note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

3. With respect to item #9 we recommend the Classis Take Note. [Classis Action was: Take Note.]

J. Sawtelle, Buysse, Stuebbe

H. Missions

1. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with $367.50 per month, a total of $4,410 in the fiscal year beginning July 2016. [A reduction of $450.]

2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with $100.50 per month, a total of $1,206 in the fiscal year beginning July 2016. [A reduction of $558.]

3. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with $350 per month, a total of $4,200 in the fiscal year beginning July 2016, for rent and associated costs. [Same as last year.]

4. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with $200 per month, a total of $2,400 in the fiscal year beginning July 2016, for assistance in general expenses. [A reduction of $1800.]

5. That Classis provide Redeemer RCUS of Golden Valley, MN with $1,666.66 per month, a total of $20,000 in the fiscal year beginning July 2016. [A reduction of $5,000.]

6. That Classis overture Synod to provide Redeemer RCUS of Golden Valley, MN with $1,666.66 per month, a total of $20,000 in the fiscal year beginning July 2016. [A reduction of $5,000.]

7. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with $866.67 per month, a total of $10,400 in funds set aside for new works, in the fiscal year beginning July 2016. This money is to remunerate sermons preached in the morning services at Blue Bell.

8. That Classis adopt the permanent missions committee report and its addendum.

9. That Classis provide $866.67 per month, April thru June 2016, a total of $2,600 to Heritage RCUS, Waymart, PA, in funds set aside for new works for remuneration for sermons preached in the morning services at Blue Bell.
Opp, Campbell, Rothwell

I. Nominations

1. That the following permanent committees be approved [Clerk's note: underlined serves as chairman]:

Executive:	Sorensen, Potter, Rothwell.
Candidates and Credentials:	Fluck, M. Larson. Kroese, Wright
Camp:	Stuebbe, Marinelli, J. Sawtelle, M. Bruckschen* (*Deacon)
Interchurch Relations:	J. Sawtelle, S. Altman, Campbell
Missions:	Kron, Schnabel, Opp, Smith, Buysse
Publications:	no committee formed

Opp, Campbell, Rothwell.

J. Services

1. That Covenant East Classis accept the invitation from the Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church of Manitowoc, WI to host the Spring Classis meeting of 2017.

2. That the Covenant East Classis express the following words of gratitude to the congregation of St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church of Hamburg MN: The delegates of Covenant east Classis express our sincere gratitude for you loving and generous hospitality at our 2016 Soring Meeting. Your labours to provide us with food, fellowship and a facility to conduct the work of the Church were ultimately done in service to Christ Jesus Himself for which there is great reward. As you encouraged us so we would encourage you and pray that the Lord would bless you and meet your every need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Sincerely in Christ Covenant East Classis.

Marinelli, Sorensen, Smith, Schnabel.

Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation to Hosting Congregation

This was handled through the Standing Services Committee.

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

These reports were previously adopted.

On motion Classis authorized the Executive Committee to organize a retreat for Pastors and their wives and that the cost be covered by the local Church with assistance from the Classis Benevolence Fund as needed and the particulars be approved by Executive Circular.

Reading of the Minutes and their Approval

The "Draft Minutes" up to page 9 were reviewed by the Standing Minutes of Classis Committee and returned to the Clerk for revision. These revisions were

entered and then published as the “Revised Minutes,” which were distributed to all delegates as available. After appropriate time for review, the President called for any further corrections from the floor, and then declared them approved as corrected. The Stated Clerk read aloud the final items of business for which there was not time to complete this review process. Upon corrections from the floor, the President declared the minutes approved as corrected.

Adjournment

The 31st, annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS was adjourned at 7:10 PM on Wednesday, March 2nd, 2016, until the next annual meeting to be held on March 7th, 2017, at Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Chrucb in Manitowoc, WI.

A. Roll Call

The final roll call showed 10 ministers and 10 elders present.

B. Devotions

Elder Robert Smith from St. Paul’s Evangelical Reformed Church read Psalm 100 and led in prayer.

C. Apostles’ Creed, Lord’s Prayer, Benediction, Doxology

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

Respectfully submitted and chronicled for the King’s Glory,

Rev. Ron Potter, Stated Clerk

Appendix for the 2016 Abstract follows:

#1 - List of Overtures and Communications

#2 - Necrology

#3 - Statistics

#4 - Standing Rules

Appendices

Appendix #1

List of Overtures and Communications

Overtures

1. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, PA, for benevolent aid in the amount of $200.00 per month for Classical year 2016-2017 for Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart, PA to assist with expenses in light of decline in membership. (Decrease of $150.00 per month) (To MISSIONS), with 3 year budget attached)

2. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, PA, for benevolent aid in the amount of $475.00 per month for Classical Year 2016-2017 for Rev. Ron Potter to assist with health care costs. (To BENEVOLENCE, with 3 year budget attached)

3. From Heritage RCUS in Waymart, PA, for $350.00 per month for Classical year 2016-2017 beginning July 2016 for church rent and associated building costs. Same as last year.(To BENEVOLENCE, with 3 year budget attached).

4. From Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, WI, to overture Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of $1200 per month for the Synodical year 2016-2017. (To BENEVOLENCE)

5. From Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, WI to overture Synod to add a new Financial Statistics Line, “Other Assets.” (together with grounds: see attached) (To JUDICIAL)

6. From Rev. Jay Fluck, request for benevolent aid .in the amount of $396.00 per month (same as last year) (To BENEVOLENCE

7. From Peace Reformed Church in Garner, IA, to overture Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Grace Ploeger in the amount of $1200 per month for the Synodical year 2016-2017.(To BENEVOLENCE)

8. From Rev. Ron Potter, Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart, PA to overture Synod to rule pursuant to Article 84 of the RCUS Constitution regarding the reception of a minister from another denomination, that the confirmation required by Synod may also be done by Circular letter. (together with grounds: see attached) (To JUDICIAL)

9. From Rev. Kyle Sorensen regarding an amendment to Standing Rule #11. (To JUDICIAL)

Communications

1. From the Consistory of Emmaus Road Reformed Church in Eden Prairie, MN recommending a student for the ministry to be taken under care of Classis

together with supporting documents including a request to be taken under care by the student, John Camp. (To EXAMINATION AND LICENSURE)

2. From the Consistory of Grace Reformed Church, Rogers, AR copy of document extending a call to the Ministry to Student Steven Carr contingent on his successful sustaining of a licensure exam. (To JUDICIAL)

3. From Student Steven Carr accepting the call to the Ministry contingent on successfully sustaining a licensure exam. (To JUDICIAL)

4. From the Consistory of Northland Reformed Church, Kansas City, MO reporting on their supervision of Student Steven Carr's Internship. (To EXAMINATION AND LICENSURE)

5. From Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, WI inviting the Covenant East Classis to hold their Annual Spring 2017 meeting at their premises. (To SERVICES).

6. From the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the RCUS – Minutes of Synod Report (attached) (To MINUTES OF SYNOD) [Note items 7.a.c.d. were acted on at the fall 2015 Classis meeting. Item 7.b. is yet to be acted on.]

7. From Rev. Ron & Sharon Potter thanking Classis for Benevolent Aid. (To BENEVOLENCE)

Appendix #2

Necrologies

Emil J. Broers, Jr.
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa

Emil J. Broers, Jr., 77, of Ventura was called home to be with the Lord on Friday, June 5, 2015 at the Good Shepherd Health Center in Mason City, Iowa.

Emil J. Broers, Jr. the son of Emil and Cecil M. Broers was born January 18, 1938 on a farm southwest of Mason City. Emil attended rural school in Cerro Gordo County and graduated from Rockwell High School in 1956. He furthered his education at Iowa State University where he received an agricultural education degree. On June 8, 1962 Emil was united in marriage to Anita Katter at Peace Reformed Church. The couple was blessed with three children. After teaching Voc. Ag in Ventura and LeMars, Iowa, Emil and his wife farmed south of Ventura. In his later years, during off season, Emil delivered motorhomes throughout the United States until his health would not allow it. He enjoyed his family, his church, farming and traveling.

He was a member of Peace Reformed Church where he served as an elder, deacon and a Sunday school teacher.

He is survived by his wife, Anita, of 53 years; three children, Twyla Doyle and her husband Bryant, of Highlands Ranch, CO, Troy Broers and his wife, Dana, of Sioux Center, IA and Tom Broers and his wife, Dawn of Bourbonnais, IL, eleven grandchildren; a sister-in-law and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; and brother, Billy Broers.

Stanley A. Peter
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa

Stanley A. Peter, 93, of Garner, Iowa went to be with the Lord on Sunday, July 19, 2015 at the Hancock County Memorial Hospital in Britt.

Stanley Alan Peter was born August 23, 1921 near Redfield, South Dakota. He was the son of Charles and Mable Peter. He received his early education in Spink County, South Dakota. In 1934, the family moved to a farm near Swaledale, Iowa. Stanley graduated from Swaledale High School in 1941 and farmed with his father and his brother. On September 10, 1955, he married Miriam Hueneman at Peace Reformed Church. The couple initially made their home in Swaledale. In 1962, they moved to the family farm near Garner. They were blessed with two children. Stanley was actively engaged in farming for over half a century. During this time, he also served as the church custodian.

Stanley served as an elder, deacon and Sunday school teacher at Peace Reformed Church. He was also a 4-H Club Leader.

Stanley is survived by his children: daughter, Rebecca Peter of Garner, son Douglas Peter of Clive and his wife, Kimberly and grandson Grant Peter of West Des Moines, two sisters, Melicient Ames and Elaine Taylor. He was preceded in death by his wife, Miriam in 2012; his parents and his brother, Marvin.

Clayton L. Greiman
Peace Reformed Church, Garner, Iowa

Clayton L. Greiman, 79, of Garner went to be with the Lord on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at the Edgewater Retirement Community in West Des Moines.

Clayton L. Greiman was born in Albert Lea, MN on January 25, 1936. He came to Garner at the age of three months to become the adopted son of Ben V. and Iris Greiman. He was baptized and confirmed at Peace Reformed Church south of Garner. Clayton attended the rural school near his home and graduated from Garner High School in 1953. He entered the U.S. Army in 1954 serving in Europe. Upon his discharge, he entered the Iowa Air National Guard retiring in 1977 with the rank of Senior Master Sergeant. On September 4, 1954 he married Mary Alice Baggs at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Garner. They lived in Germany from 1954 to 1956 while Clayton served in the U.S. Army. They then returned to Iowa and made their home on the Ben V. Greiman farm where they raised their three children. Clayton was a farmer, a Garner business man, a banker and a realtor during his career. In his retirement he helped his son with his farming operation.

Clayton was a life-long member of Peace Reformed Church where he held the office of Sunday school teacher, deacon and elder. He also served the RCUS as the treasurer of Synod for 13 years. He was very active in his community as a member of Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Crown Jewel Development, Garner Country Club and Hancock County Hospital board.

Clayton is survived by his three children: Bill (Christine) Greiman of Garner, Dr. Marshall (Cheryl) Greiman of Urbandale and Crystal (Brian) Kennedy of St. Louis, MO, nine grandchildren, and eleven great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife Mary Alice on June 28, 2014, and a great grandson, baby boy Berhow.

Appendix #3: Statistics of Covenant East Classis covering 2015 reported in 2016 follows pp. 64-65.

Statistics of Covenant East Classis: Covering 2015 reported in 2016						
	Northwest	Eden Prairie	Garner	Gettysburg	Hamburg	Kansas City
Category	Arkansas	Minnesota	Iowa	Pennsylvania	Minnesota	Missouri
1. No. of Elders	1	3	3	3	3	4
2. No of Deacons	2	6	3	1	3	4
3. Comm. Last Year	26	76	85	29	204	61
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	0	0	0	1	1
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	1	0	3	0	0
6. Rec'd by Prof.	0	15	0	1	0	5
7. Total Received	0	16	0	4	1	6
8. Tot. Old/New Mem	26	92	85	33	205	67
9. Lost by Dismissal	0	2	5	0	0	1
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	14	0	15	0	0	5
11. Lost by Death	0	0	4	0	3	0
12. Total Lost	14	2	24	0	3	6
13. Comm this Year	12	90	61	33	202	61
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	8	37	8	19	21	22
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	20	127	69	52	223	83
16. No. of Families	8	45	40	14	119	21
17. No. of S.S Child.	8	32	5	15	13	22
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	1	0	0
19. Infant Baptisms	0	8	1	5	1	2
20. Total Baptisms	0	8	1	6	1	2
21. No.L.S. Received	26	90	55	33	160	63
22. Times L.S. Served	6	12	5	12	9	7
23. Regular Offerings	$ 73,759	$ 239,644	$ 118,049	$ 64,636	$ 153,817	$ 197,455
24. Special Offerings	$ 15,000	$ 22,927	$ 7,694	$ 5,314	$ 2,416	$ 12,721
25. Other Sources	$ 10,519	$ 5,355	$ 4,542	$ 1,250	$ 35,000	$ -
26. Total Receipts	$ 99,278	$ 267,926	$ 130,285	$ 71,200	$ 191,233	$ 210,176
27. Giv. To Syn. Guide.	$ 5,375	$ 15,884	$ 18,274	$ 3,238	$ 42,071	$ 14,053
28. Giv. To Clas. Guide.	$ 1,650	$ 5,016	$ 5,643	$ 1,022	$ 13,794	$ 3,696
29. RCUS non-budget	$ 480	$ -	$ 1,244	$ -	$ 2,531	$ 2,275
30. Non-RCUS causes	$ -	$ 3,414	$ 7,710	$ 200	$ 3,452	$ 19,954
31. Other Expenses	$ 94,944	$ 169,518	$ 101,079	$ 69,662	$ 168,581	$ 158,410
32. Total Expenses	$ 102,449	$ 193,832	$ 133,950	$ 74,122	$ 230,429	$ 198,388
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	$ 113,000	$ -	$ 750,000	$ -	$ 1,300,000	$ 1,500,000
34. Val. Of Parsonage	$ 70,000	$ 321,972	$ 125,000	$ -	$ 300,000	$ -
35. Impr. Of Property	$ 5,024	$ -	$ 8,634	$ -	$ 35,000	$ 15,584
36. Property Debt	$ 12,292	$ 250,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
37. Debt Paid Last YR.	$ 7,045	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 39,392
38. Synod Giving/Com.	$ 207	$ 209	$ 215	$ 112	$ 206	$ 230
39. Classis Giving/Com.	$ 63	$ 66	$ 66	$ 35	$ 68	$ 61
40. RCUS Giving/Com.	$ 288	$ 275	$ 296	$ 147	$ 286	$ 328
* - Statistics for Bluebell, PA are included in statistics for Waymart, PA.						

Manitowoc	Minneapolis	Napoleon	Waymart	Bluebell*	Total 2015	Total 2014	% Change
Wisconsin	Minnesota	Ohio	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania			
4	3	3	2	0	29	28	3%
3	4	3	1	0	30	25	17%
138	101	63	19	6	802	784	2%
0	1	1	0	0	4	8	-100%
0	4	0	0	0	8	21	-163%
1	2	2	1	0	27	34	-26%
1	7	3	1	0	39	63	-62%
139	108	66	20	6	841	847	-1%
0	0	1	2	0	11	14	-27%
3	2	4	0	0	43	18	58%
3	1	1	0	0	12	14	-17%
6	3	6	2	0	66	46	30%
133	105	60	18	6	775	801	-3%
18	55	17	9	3	214	190	11%
151	160	77	27	9	989	991	0%
82	48	33	11	4	421	438	-4%
12	58	10	3	0	178	163	8%
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	100%
1	7	2	1	0	28	21	25%
1	7	2	1	0	29	21	28%
133	104	59	18	6	741	615	17%
4	6	6	12	12	79	73	8%
$ 166,481	$ 282,563	$ 121,721	$ 28,664		1446789	$ 1,291,906	11%
$ 1,389	$ 26,019	$ 1,412	$ -		94892	$ 53,320	44%
$ 6,461	$ 31,599	$ 371	$ 21,600		116697	$ 174,512	-50%
$ 174,331	$ 340,181	$ 123,504	$ 50,264	$ -	1658378	$ 1,519,738	8%
$ 42,831	$ 20,774	$ 12,663	$ 3,971		179134	$ 159,361	11%
$ 13,041	$ 6,666	$ 4,158	$ 1,254		55940	$ 50,296	10%
$ 815	$ 7,015	$ 593	$ -		14953	$ 26,365	-76%
$ 4,883	$ 29,828	$ 2,724	$ -		72165	$ 79,241	-10%
$ 117,540	$ 253,842	$ 105,651	$ 44,144		1283371	$ 1,125,706	12%
$ 179,110	$ 318,125	$ 125,789	$ 49,369	$ -	1605563	$ 1,440,969	10%
$ 800,000	$ 760,000	$ 275,000	$ -		5498000	$ 5,190,000	6%
$ 250,000	$ 285,000	$ -	$ -		1351972	$ 1,371,972	-1%
$ 10,645	$ 825	$ 3,599	$ -		79311	$ 96,781	-22%
$ -	$ 187,636	$ -	$ -		449928	$ 652,764	-45%
$ -	$ 46,599	$ -	$ -		93036	$ 91,862	1%
$ 310	$ 206	$ 201	$ 209	$ -	190	$ 211	-11%
$ 95	$ 66	$ 66	$ 66	$ -	66	$ 67	-2%
$ 411	$ 341	$ 276	$ 275	$ -	293	$ 313	-7%

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]

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 and honorarium of $500 annually. [2015]

20. The Spring Meeting of Classis shall begin on the first Tuesday of March, and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed. [2002]

21. It shall be the practice of Covenant East Classis to examine ministers coming to it from other Classes of the RCUS to ensure that they have not departed from Reformed teaching or have developed major objections to the peculiar practices of the RCUS. Such examinations shall be completed before these candidates shall enter into a charge in Covenant East Classis and shall be conducted in such a way that each minister and delegate shall have opportunity to put questions to the candidate. [2003]

22. In order to preserve the historic Reformed and Biblical practice of voting in congregation meetings by male heads of households, the Covenant East Classis shall neither start nor receive new congregations in which voting by women is practiced.