

**2020
Abstract
of the Minutes**



of the

COVENANT EAST CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States

35th Annual Session

March 3rd-4th

Hosted by

Covenant Reformed Church

Gettysburg, PA

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS of Covenant East Classis

President	Rev. Kyle Sorensen
Vice President	Rev. Christopher Campbell
Stated Clerk	Rev. Steve Carr
Treasurer	Elder Jim Drewes

CLASSIS GUIDLINE FOR GIVING

General Fund	\$5.00
Missions Fund	\$45.00
Benevolence Fund	\$10
Student Aid Fund	\$0
TOTAL per communicant member	\$60

CLASSIS TREASURER

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

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive:	<u>Sorensen</u> , Carr, Wiersma
Candidates and Credentials:	<u>Fluck</u> , M. Larson, S. Altman, Wright, Hanko
Church Camp:	<u>Kron</u> , Sawtelle, Schnabel, Nelson, Stuebbe, Stetler
Interchurch Relations:	<u>Muether</u> , Fluck, Potter, Rothwell, Groseclose
Missions:	<u>Campbell</u> , Van Heest, Schnabel, M. Altman, Luquette, Liesveld
Publications:	No committee was formed
Special Study Committee:	<u>Campbell</u> , Sawtelle, Fluck, Carr, Luquette, Hanko
Special Advisory Committee:	<u>Schnabel</u> , Muether, S. Altman, Rothwell, Liesveld, Luquette, Sawtelle

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2019 Directory for Covenant East Classis

Ministers of the Word

- Altman, Rev. Steve (419) 356-2095
J153 County Road 15, Napoleon, OH 43545
thealtmans@sbcglobal.net
- Campbell, Rev. Christopher (816) 527-6197
18 Pine View Road, Platte City, MO 64079
campbellcjc@gmail.com
- Carr, Rev. Steve (479) 372-1108
3318 N. 2nd, St., Rogers, AR 72756
srutherford77@gmail.com
- Fluck, Rev. Jay (717) 398-2603
330 Montclair Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325
jefluck@msn.com
- Groseclose, Rev. Win (724) 709-0592
436 Vista Dr., Butler, PA 16001
preacherwin@gmail.com
- Kron, Rev. Ryan (612) 751-2096
8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438
ryankron@hotmail.com
- Larson, Rev. Mark (641) 923-3060
1907 200th St., Garner, IA 50438
larsonmark57@gmail.com
- Marinelli, Rev. Tim (763) 614-9785
10542 103rd Avenue N., Maple Grove, MN 55369
debtor2mercy.eph2@gmail.com
- Muether, Rev. Charles (641) 295-9264
310 Prairie St Pella, IA 50219
chuckmuether@thekirkside.com
- Potter, Rev. Ron (570) 785-4012
136 Grand Avenue, Forest City, PA 18421
reformed@nep.net
- Sawtelle, Rev. James (763) 417-9835
3101 Virginia Avenue N., Crystal, MN 55427
sawtellejim@gmail.com

Schnabel, Rev. Daniel (952) 467-3872
15470 County Road 31, Hamburg, MN 55339
dm7schnabel@gmail.com

Sorensen, Rev. Kyle (920) 726-4464
7411 Center Road, Manitowoc, WI 54220
kydoso@gmail.com

Stetler, Rev. Richard (Retired) (605) 281-0678
PO Box 65, Sioux Center, IA 51250
hrstetler@yahoo.com

Primarius Elders

Altman, Mike (419) 266-4316
K519 Co Rd 14, Napoleon, OH 43545
mpaltman@bright.net

Duncan, Bobby (479) 381-2987
1109 NE 3rd St., Bentonville, AR 72712
bobbyduncan1959@gmail.com

Herrmann, Orrin (952) 467-2915
13250 County Road 50, Norwood, MN 55368

Kroese, Jay (612) 751-7922
11325 47th Ave N, Plymouth, MN 55442
jay_kroese@cargill.com

Lau, Graydon (641) 860-1273
2035 Nash, Britt, IA 50423
graydonlau1273@gmail.com

Liesveld, Jay (816) 877-1172
5105 N. Cleveland, Kansas City, MO 64119
wjliesveld@aol.com

Luquette, Dennis (717) 528-4155
1189 Mud Run Rd., York Springs, PA 17372
knoyse@gmail.com

Rothwell, Dustin (651) 285-5517
7624 W 100th St., Bloomington, MN 55438
dustinrothwell@yahoo.com

Stock, Larry (920) 726-4695
7405 S. Union Rd., Manitowoc, WI 54220
larryshellystock@gmail.com

Wright, Dan (570) 702-1404
2821 Elkdale Road, Clifford Township, PA 18470
dwfarm@nep.net

Secundus Elders

Blank, Lee (816) 507-8772
6517 Claret, Parkville, MO 64152
lee.blank@gfgagservices.com

Buysse, Don..... (717) 528-8043
50 Wendy Dr., York Springs, PA 17372
15covrefmc@gmail.com

DeBoer, Mark..... (612) 770-7123
3029 Jersey Ave. S., St. Louis Park, MN 55426
markde12000@yahoo.com

Drewes, Jim (419) 438-3660
13033 Road L2, Napoleon, OH 43545
jimdkhdbright.net

Hanko, Ken (484) 612-8820
125 S, Schuylkill, Ave., Eagleville, PA 19403
kenhanko@icloud.com

Hommes, Dale (952) 393-9194
13787 Fordham Ave., Apple Valley MN 55124
dalehommes@gmail.com

Larson, Don..... (515) 379-1037
2673 120th St, Livermore, IA 50558
delarson@wmtel.net

Kroells, Richard..... (952) 467-3890
15530 CO Rd. 31 Hamburg, MN 55339
RMKLLK@Embarqmail.com

Mittelstaedt, Ron (920) 773-2157
7733 Lax Chapel Rd., Kiel, WI 53042
remittel@tds.net

Students Under Care

Anderson, Ryan (616) 292-5402
3141 W 45th Place, Gary, IN 46408
Rande541@gmail.com

Churches and Mission Works

Northwest ARKANSAS

Grace RCUS, 72756

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

Pastor: Steven Carr (Wife: Crystal)

Service Times: Worship: 10:00 am.

E-mail: pastor@gracereformednwa.org Web site: www.gracereformednwa.org

Garner, IOWA

Peace RCUS, 50438

1907 200th Street, Garner, IA

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

Pastor: Rev. Mark Larson (Wife: Cynthia)

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

E-mail: peacereformedchurch@gmail.com Web site:

www.peacereformedchurch.org

Oskaloosa, IA

Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, 52577

212 North I St. Oskaloosa, IA (641) 295-9264

Pastor: Rev. Charles Muether (Wife: Kristie)

Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am

Email: chuckmuether@thekirkside.com

Eden Prairie, MINNESOTA

Emmaus Road RCUS, 55438

Meeting at Minnetonka Seventh Day Adventist Church

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

Pastor: Rev. Ryan Kron (Wife: Colleen)

Mail: 8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438

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

E-mail: pastor@emmausroadrcus.org Web site: www.emmausroadrcus.org

Hamburg, MINNESOTA

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339

15480 County Road 31 (952) 467-3878

Pastor: Rev. Dan Schnabel (Wife: Marie)

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

E-mail: Stpaulsrcus@gmail.com Web site: www.stpaulsrcus.org

Minneapolis, MINNESOTA

Redeemer RCUS, 55427

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

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

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

Kansas City, MISSOURI

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

Napoleon, OHIO

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

Gettysburg, PENNSYLVANIA

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

Waymart, PENNSYLVANIA

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

Manitowoc, WISCONSIN

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

Abstract of the Minutes
of the
Covenant East Classis
Special Classis Meeting
May 20th, 2019

Services and Organization

The President, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm. He led the body in devotions reading from Romans 10:14-17 and prayed. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr, called the opening roll showing 11 ministers and 7 elders present, a quorum. The President appointed Rev. Steve Altman as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

Elders Marc Wiersma and were welcomed, seated in the bar of the house and given privileges of the floor. Rev. Win Groseclose and Deacon Nathan Fenby were also welcomed.

Examination of Candidate

Examination of Rev. Win Groseclose for Licensure, Resumed on the Sermon Portion Only

The Classis entered executive session. After discussion regarding Rev. Groseclose's sermons, the Classis voted that the sermon portion be declared satisfactory and move to licensing.

After arising from executive session, the President announced to Rev. Groseclose that his sermon portion was declared satisfactory.

The President reported the decision of Classis to Rev. Groseclose, who then read the Formula of Licensure and subscribed his name to it.

The Classis gave Rev. Groseclose the right hand of fellowship.

Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee Report

1. That Classis receive the letter from St. John's Church (December 4, 2018) as a certificate of dismissal of Rev. Groseclose's ordination credentials to the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS.
2. That Rev. Groseclose be received as a minister of the Covenant East Classis and be added to the roles of Classis.
3. That Classis request St. John's receive a delegation of Classis for the purpose of introduction and discussion around oversight matters.

Excuses

Classis voted to excuse Rev. Ron Potter, Elders Bobby Duncan, Dustin Rothwell, and Graydon Lau from all sessions.

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

The Stated Clerk read the minutes which were declared approved as read and corrected by the President. The roll was taken showing 12 ministers and 7 elders present, a quorum. The President closed the meeting by leading the Classis in reciting the Lord's Prayer and pronouncing a benediction.

Spring Meeting

CLERK'S NOTE:

On March 2nd, 2020, the night before the Spring Classis Meeting convened, the delegates of Classis gathered for a pre-Classis presentation led by Rev. Richard Stetler regarding the work of Reformation Gospel Ministries.

**Abstract of the Minutes
of the Covenant East Classis**
of the Reformed Church in the United States
35th Annual Session—March 3-4, 2020
Covenant Reformed Church, Gettysburg, PA

Services

The President, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, called the 35th annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis to order at 8:03 am. The President led the body in devotions by preaching from Psalm 133, “Truly Together,” and singing Hymn #2, “O Worship the King.”

On Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm, classis delegates, along with members and guests from Covenant Reformed Church gathered for a scheduled worship service. Rev. Campbell conducted the service and Rev. Altman preached a sermon on Luke 7:1-10 titled “What Faith Does.”

On Wednesday Morning Rev. Larson led the body in a devotional titled “The Biblical Pastor: Reflections from John Calvin” and praying.

Closing devotions were led by Elder Luquette from Covenant RCUS, who read from 1 Corinthians 3:12-16, commented on the text, and prayed.

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

Organization

The 35th 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 Rev. Kyle Sorensen. Following opening devotions, the Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr, called the roll of Classis which showed 14 ministers and 8 elders present, a quorum. The bar of the house was defined as the first five rows. Revs. Tim Marinelli and Christopher Campbell and Elders Dustin Rothwell and Ben Nelson were appointed as tellers. The reading of the standing rules was suspended by two-thirds vote.

The following delegates were elected to serve as officers of Classis for the year: Rev. Kyle Sorensen as President, Rev. Christopher Campbell as Vice President, Rev. Steve Carr as Stated Clerk. There were no nominations for a new Treasurer.

The President appointed Rev. Win Groseclose as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

Rev. Leo Frailey from the Ohio Presbytery of the OPC, Rev. Robert Godfrey of Classis East of the URCNA, and Rev. Howard Sloan of an Independent Church were welcomed.

Elders Jim Drewes and Ken Hanko were also welcomed.

Reception of New Ministers and New Churches

No new ministers or new churches were received.

Standing Committees

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

<i>Benevolence; Minutes of Synod:</i>	<u>Sawtelle</u> , <u>Fluck</u> , Lau
<i>Examination and Licensure; Excuses:</i>	<u>Larson</u> , Muether, Nelson
<i>Finances:</i>	<u>Kron</u> , Stetler, Kroells (Drewes)
<i>Judicial:</i>	<u>Altman</u> , Groseclose, Luquette, Wright
<i>Minutes of Classis; Services:</i>	<u>Kroells</u> , Sorensen
<i>Missions:</i>	<u>Campbell</u> , Schnabel, Potter, Rothwell, Oberhaus
<i>Nominations:</i>	<u>Marinelli</u> , Stuebbe

Presentation of Overtures, Reports, and Communications

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

Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee on Their Minutes

Esteemed Brothers,

Since the Spring Classis meeting of 2019, your committee fulfilled its responsibilities as per Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution. Those duties included but were not limited to the following: organizing a special classis meeting, providing counsel to the churches of Classis as requested, providing counsel to individual members and to groups of concerned members from the churches of Classis, providing pastoral counsel to ministers of Classis, and aiding two of our ministers on matters related to seeking a call suitable for their ministry. We contacted our counterparts from other RCUS Classes to discover vacant pulpits and help pass on information about potential pastoral candidates.

At the special meeting held on May 20, 2019, classis examined and then licensed Rev. Win Groseclose. The classis then decided to send a delegation to the church he serves to introduce ourselves and explain our relationship with their minister now that we had received him into the RCUS. Your Executive Committee received this report from that delegation and provide it here for your information.

“Fathers and Brethren, Greetings in Jesus’ name.

On July 27, 2019, Elder Dennis Luquette and Pastor Jay Fluck traveled to Rochester, PA, to visit with St. John’s Burry’s Church, an independent congregation with RCUS roots back to its inception in 1835. Rev. Win Groseclose the newest member of our Classes and denomination is its pastor. We were designated to represent Classis to that congregation, explaining the relationship the Classis has to Rev. Groseclose and to that congregation. Rev. Potter, also designated to represent Classis, was unable to come with us.

We met with the “Church Council”, Elders, Deacons, and Trustees from 6:00 to 8:00 over dinner and with the Pastor and Elders from 8:00 until 10:00. We reviewed the history of the relationship with Rev. Groseclose assuring them that Rev. Groseclose sought us for “peer” contact and would receive from us fellowship, advice as asked, counsel as asked, and prayer. We assured the Council and Elders that they have a court of appeal if they believe that Rev. Groseclose is in error or sin; that first they must follow Matthew 18, going to him personally, and if not satisfied to come to us as individuals and if still not satisfied to ask us formally for help. We explained to them that we had no oversight over them nor would we give them orders.

We reviewed the history of the RCUS and their place in that history.

Sunday morning we were able to speak briefly to the congregation. Elder Luquette encouraged them to listen to and trust their pastor. He explained that we had examined him thoroughly and pronounced him orthodox and trustworthy as evidenced by our reception of him. Pastor Fluck explained that we were “long lost cousins” and explained to the congregation, briefly, the family and the separation. He also rejoiced to be able to make their acquaintance and assure them that the Classis would be available to encourage them.

We were well received and even introduced to a descendant of John Phillip Boehm.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Jay Fluck”

Per Standing Rule #14, Northland Reformed Church (Kansas City, MO) announced the following change to its constitution at a congregational meeting on January 12, 2020:

To amend the local constitution, “Article 16, which currently reads as follows: “Every male member, twenty-one years and older, and all married men, in good and regular standing of the congregation, shall be entitled to vote at all elections for pastor and officers, and on any question submitted to the Congregation for action, provided they have signed the official copy of this constitution” by replacing

the words “Every male member, twenty-one years and older, and all married men,” with the words “Every communicant member, twenty-one years and older.”

No other churches reported any changes.

It should be noted that in the Executive Committee interactions with the Northland Consistory, Elder Marc Wiersma participated as a member of the local Consistory, but not as a member of the Executive Committee (since there would be a conflict of interest in such a case). It should also be noted that while the congregation voted to change their constitution at their annual meeting in January 2020, the Consistory informed the Executive Committee in October 2019 when they had decided to put this question before the congregation. This allowed a window of time for interaction with the Executive Committee on the matter, specifically on advising of the proper process to follow in light of Synod’s new decision in May 2019.

To our knowledge, this was the first time in the history of the RCUS that the process spelled out at last year’s Synod had the opportunity to be implemented. The Executive Committee had both private and formal conversations with representatives of the Consistory of Northland RCUS in Kansas City. To guide this conversation, we walked through together the Synod Ruling on when a church may take an action that is contrary to a position of the RCUS (see *Abstract* 2019:72-73). Item ‘c’ mentions that Synod positions are not to be ignored. We were impressed with their diligence in studying the matter over four Sunday School sessions, their interaction with the various Synod papers in these sessions, and their careful and pastoral concerns for their own church members, including those who have differing opinions with each other.

We noted that they had followed items a, b, and c, but had not yet followed or considered item ‘d.’ Upon further review and reflection, the representatives saw that what ‘d’ stated is both binding upon them as well as pastorally wise, since they agreed that it was their privilege and responsibility to maintain the peace and purity of the RCUS and promote and practice mutual submission. After the Executive Committee conversation, their Consistory decided upon a set of overtures to send to this year’s Classis which they hope will assist in this, and is in fulfillment of item ‘d,’ along with the RCUS Constitution Articles 22, 49, and the 5th vow at the installation of elders and deacons.

The Executive Committee communicated to the Consistory our prayer for God’s blessings upon them and the congregation and our desire that they would continue to be zealous to be faithful to God’s Word in such a way that strives for peace and purity with the church, both the local church and the entire RCUS.

In late summer of 2019, your committee became aware of some developments in the life of the Redeemer congregation (Minneapolis, MN), particularly among the Consistory. We were informed that the Consistory had asked one of its pastors, Rev. Marinelli, to seek another call, yet they did not ask for his resignation. Since the pastoral relationship between any pastor and the congregation is established (and dissolved) by the action of a classis, this was a matter which was within the

jurisdiction of classis. Furthermore, this is a change which must have come from somewhere. Our concern as an Executive Committee was for the reputation and the ministry of each pastor and of the Consistory and of the congregation. Rather than focus on simply one procedural matter which was in question, we decided the best course was to call for a face-to-face meeting in order to assist all of our brothers there. While we offered to travel to Minneapolis in person, the Consistory declined that and did offer to have several representatives meet with the Executive Committee over videocall.

We were grateful to be able to have that meeting in September with both pastors and one elder and one deacon. What we did not do, and what we were not able to do, was to assist in the resolving of the dispute(s) at the core of the matters within the Consistory and its leadership of the congregation. Rather, we assisted in providing an avenue for all sides to speak to each other and then to advise them on where to go from there in terms of making plans for the future of dissolving their relationship and of communicating to and pastoring the congregation through the transition. Our interaction with the Consistory and with the pastors has continued since that meeting, as necessary. We only wish we would have been able to assist much earlier, before things got this far. We do not know if some of the results would have been different, but they definitely would have arrived differently and the strained relationships and regrets would likely be much fewer. Our forefathers were wise to foresee this possibility that even among Christians we can face roadblocks in our working relationship and pastoral strategies. We are never alone, and are provided the wisdom of the Body of Christ in the higher courts when we face local challenges. Thus, Article 91 of our RCUS *Constitution* states that the Executive Committee “shall also serve as advisors in the amicable adjustment of disputes in the administration of the affairs of the congregations.”

At other points at this Classis meeting we will have opportunity to provide counsel, encouragement, and feedback to our brothers from Redeemer, as well as to listen to them more fully. We do urge continued prayer for all the members of Redeemer, that their witness to the Lord Jesus would not dim amid this season of trial.

In addition to the above, your committee sent out the following executive circulars, which were approved.

Executive Circular Volume 34, Number 1, April 29, 2019

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

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

1. We recommend that Covenant East Classis take Mr. Ryan Anderson, a member of Salem Ebenezer in Manitowoc, WI, as a student under-care.
2. We recommend that Classis overture Synod for student aid for Mr. Ryan Anderson, a student at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, in the amount of \$9,960 for tuition and fees and \$400 for books for the 2019-2020 academic year.

3. We recommend that Rev. Richard Stetler be received from the Western Classis as a retired minister and added to the rolls of Covenant East Classis.

Note: we have received the proper dismissal papers from the Western Classis regarding Rev. Stetler, dated April 8, 2019, and our action to receive him fulfills both his and their desire for spiritual oversight of a retired minister who is living within our geographical boundaries, in Sioux Center, IA.

4. The Executive Committee hereby calls a Special Meeting of Covenant East Classis on Monday, May 20, 2019, at 3:00 p.m., to be held at Northland Reformed Church in Kansas City, MO. The purpose of this meeting shall be to discuss the sermon portion of the licensure examination of Rev. Win Groseclose. If that is found satisfactory, we will proceed immediately to the licensure of Rev. Groseclose, along with any relevant concluding recommendations which the Candidates and Credentials Committee has prepared. The length of the meeting should last no longer than one hour.

Executive Circular Volume 34, Number 2, January 21, 2020

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you for your consideration the following item of business for the Spring 2020 Classis Meeting.

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

The 35th annual Spring Classis Meeting will be hosted by Covenant Reformed Church, Gettysburg, PA, **March 3-4, 2020**. The Meeting will convene at 8:00 am on the morning of March 3rd and continue through March 4th to the completion of business. Please make travel plans accordingly.

2. Pre-Classis Fellowship and Discussion.

The Executive Committee has once again called for an organized discussion to run from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Monday evening March 2, 2020. Rev. Richard Stetler will present his work at Reformation Gospel Ministries. There is no specific reading or preparation needed before the discussion.

3. Forms for Classis Meeting.

The forms necessary for this Classis Meeting are included with this Circular. Please send the Clerk the membership statics, financial statistics, and certification of delegate Elders as soon as possible. The Statistics Form is an editable form to facilitate using a computer to fill it out. If you hand write the statistics, please write clearly and legibly. The deadline for the reception of these forms is **February 17, 2020** (standing rules # 3-4). In addition to these forms please include any necrologies and/or overtures. Overtures received by **February 10th**, will be circulated with their supporting grounds so the delegates and their Consistories may consider them before the Classis meets (standing rule #15).

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

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

Permanent and Special Committee reports need to be mailed to Consistories by **February 10, 2020** (standing rule #15).

4. Travel and Accommodations.

Rev. Jay Fluck has blocked off rooms for us at the Hampton Inn at 1280 York Rd. Gettysburg, PA 17325; the phone number is (717) 338-9121. The Fosters also have an Airbnb available to rent. Their phone number is (717) 321-4479. The Fosters need to know by the end of January if you plan to stay there. Rev. Fluck also has noted that it is cheaper to fly into the Baltimore airport, if you are planning to fly. Let him know if you need arrangements to be picked up. His phone number is (717) 398-2603.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the consistories of Covenant East Classis be encouraged to seek the advice and counsel of the Executive Committee of Classis in a timely manner regarding significant or potentially divisive issues (Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution).

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Kyle Sorensen, Rev. Steve Carr, and Marc Wiersma

Classis Action: The report was adopted. Classis took note of the recommendation.

B. Candidates and Credentials Committee

Fathers and Brothers,

With the election last year, your committee consists of Rev. Steve Altman, Dr. Mark Larson, Rev. Tim Marinelli, Elder Mark DeBoer, and Elder Ken Hanko. First, allow me to apologize for the lateness of our report, but in the providence of God a number of matters for us to address came to our attention within the last couple of weeks. Due to scheduling conflicts, we were unable to meet to address one of these issues until last week.

As for your committee's report:

- I. Your committee reports that Mr. Ryan Anderson continues as a student-under-care of our Classis. On November 14, 2019, Rev. Marinelli contacted Mr. Anderson to learn how he and his family were adjusting to seminary life, how his academic work was progressing, to hear of any concerns or struggles, and to provide encouragement and prayer. At this point, Mr. Anderson intends to proceed with his plans to intern this summer at Salem-Ebenezer RCUS, to continue his studies at MARS in the coming Fall semester, and to remain under the care of our Classis.
- II. On February 25, 2020, your committee met with Rev. Richard Stetler via video conference to review his background in the ministry, to consider his current situation, and to examine him regarding his orthodoxy and intent.
 - a. As to his current situation: on February 2, 2020, Rev. Stetler received a call from Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Orange City, IA, to undertake the office of Associate Pastor for their congregation. According to the terms of this call, Rev. Stetler

would remain a ministerial member of the RCUS and his ministry at Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church would be without remuneration (except for the usual fee for leading worship services). Potential exists that he may receive a monthly stipend for his labors. On February 4, 2020, Rev. Stetler informed Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church that he accepted the call, pending Classis approval.

- b. Rev. Stetler sustained our examination regarding his orthodoxy and intent. It was encouraging to hear of his zeal to minister among the saints of Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church and to bring the light of the gospel to those who still sit in darkness in the surrounding community.

III. In light of these matters, your committee makes the following recommendations:

- a. Recommendation 1: That Covenant East Classis petition Synod to approve student aid for Mr. Ryan Anderson as follows: \$9,960 for tuition and fees and \$400 for books for the 2020-2021 academic year at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.
- b. Recommendation 2: That Covenant East Classis approve Rev. Richard Stetler as regular supply in the capacity of an Associate Pastor to a fellow NAPARC congregation (Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church, Orange City, IA).
 - i. Grounds:
 - 1. This call would be an appropriate use of his gifts for ministry.
 - 2. This call has a potential of greater service for Rev. Stetler and the potential of bringing a new congregation into the Covenant East Classis.
 - 3. Rev. Stetler's zeal to serve this congregation and community and the favorable reception of his gifts of ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Mark Larson, Rev. Steve Altman, Rev. Tim Marinelli, Elder Mark DeBoer, Elder Ken Hanko

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

C. Interchurch Relations Committee

Fathers and Brothers:

Your committee has continued the "recommitment" of visiting and corresponding with sister churches in our classis geographical region. This initiative was prompted by an ecumenical vision reboot in 2018. With the exception of Rev. Potter, the Interchurch Relations Committee had a complete turnover of members. Rev. Chuck Muether, who chairs the committee, had previously chaired the

Ecumenical Committee of the Presbytery of the Midwest (OPC) and served the denomination's Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations for several years. From his experience, Rev. Muether is encouraging the IRC to foster a spirit of ecumenical awareness within our classis by making known the fraternal bodies with whom we have previously engaged communication and those fraternal bodies whose territorial lines intersect with ours but have not corresponded with us. Given that we are a relatively small classis that spans over a large geographic area, we are not going to be able to make an abundance of fraternal visits. However, through increased fraternal correspondence and periodic reporting to the churches of Covenant East Classis, we can increase our sensibility toward sister judicatories and work toward closer relationships. Below is a working list of classes/presbyteries: RPCNA: Atlantic Presbytery, Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery, Midwest Presbytery, Presbytery of Central Penn; OPC: Presbytery of the Midwest, Presbytery of Ohio, Presbytery of Philadelphia; RCUS: Covenant East Classis; URCNA: Classis Central U.S. and Classis Eastern U.S.; CanRef: Classis Niagara Classis and Ontario West.

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

Fraternal Body: Presbytery of Central Penn (OPC)
Date/Location: 5/2 Danville, 9/19 Montoursville, 11/21 Hollidaysburg
Delegate: Rev. Fluck Classis

Fraternal Body: Eastern US (URCNA)
Date/ Location: 3/12 Wayne, NJ

Fraternal Body: Classis Central US (URCNA)
Date/Location: 3/9 Pella, IA
Delegate: Rev. Muether

Fraternal Body: Presbytery of the Midwest (OPC)
Date/Location: 3/19-20 Grayslake, IL

Fraternal Body: Presbytery of Ohio (OPC)
Date/Location: 3/13-14 Vandalia, OH Classis

Fraternal Body: Ontario West (CanRC)
Date/Location: TBD—Rev. Janssen (clerk) indicated a meeting in May

[RPCNA Presbys. have not yet issued invitations. When if/when received, notice will be emailed to you.]

II. Fraternal Invitations and Correspondence Invitations to attend our 35th annual Spring Classis, hosted by Covenant Reformed Church, including the pre-classis presentation by Richard Stetler about his work at Reformation Gospel Ministries, were sent to our neighboring classes/presbyteries. As is often the case, multiple sister classes/presbyteries from the same federation/denomination will defer to the

classis/presbytery that is closer to our meeting site. When invitations are received and we are unable to attend, your committee sends a letter of regret and appreciation.

III. Fraternal Visits Four men from our classis committed to visit specific classes/presbyteries, but two were providentially detained from making the meetings.

Rev. Kyle Sorensen visited the Presbytery of the Midwest of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on March 15, 2019. His observations are included in this report.

Rev. Muether met with the brothers from Classis Central U.S. on September 9, 2019 and greeted them on behalf of our classis. He shared synodical highlights and praised God for the faithfulness and labors of the United Reformed Churches in North America.

IV. Reports/Synopses/Press Releases of Previous Meetings In order to keep the delegates of Covenant East Classis informed on the actions of our sister regional churches, we have included in our report summaries of their meetings. These notes needs not be included in the 2020 Abstract of the Minutes, but the following should be included in the Abstract:

The IRC provided reports from the following meetings: Presbytery of the Midwest (OPC), Classis Ontario West (CanRC), Classis Central U.S. (URCNA).

Fraternal Delegate Report of the Spring Meeting of the Presbytery of the Midwest (Sheboygan, WI), March 15, 2019, by Rev. Kyle Sorensen

On March 15, 2019, your fraternal delegate visited the Presbytery of the Midwest of the OPC meeting in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. I spent most of the day at the meeting and was welcomed and seated as a corresponding delegate. The RCUS has many colleagues within this presbytery, and I have several personal connections.

The special committee called “Guide Division of Presbytery” presented a “Voter Guide” to the presbytery at the beginning of business. They reminded the presbytery that they are in a ‘test drive’ phase of preparing to divide. The previously approved plan was for this committee to suggest how to move toward dividing the presbytery into two, but to do so in stages. They noted that no actual vote has ever been taken by the presbytery to actually divide. The presbytery can put the brakes on the process at any time. Part of the preparation process was to create working subcommittees of every permanent committee so that there are equal numbers from both the south and the north sections of the presbytery. Interestingly, this meant that they had a challenge at how to properly add members to all their committees at this meeting. A motion to set up a nomination committee to propose members for each committee failed, although that would have certainly streamlined the process and sped up the meeting given how much floor time was

taken up with nominations from the floor, speeches for candidates, and then the vote.

A discussion was held on how to handle a complaint and a protest related to it which ministers and elders had made to a decision of the Presbytery at its previous meeting. It appeared that the committee which handled the matter between the meetings had not done their full diligence, and thus nearly an hour of motions, discussions, amendments, etc., ensued. Aside from this matter, most of the other committee recommendations made during my time there passed with very little deliberation or discussion. It seemed like the place for debate and information gathering took place by the smaller groups in their committees or in the previously sent out reports of those committees.

The denomination's General Secretary for Church Extension, Rev. John Shaw, reported on the home missions efforts of the OPC. They have established an endowment fund with special offerings and bequests to fund new denominational home mission works. They hold annual church planting seminars. They have also provided resources and tools to churches on missions strategies and education. He also described several mission works in places like Houston and Atlanta where the missionary is actively involved in hospitality and praying over meals in their home in Jesus' name, when some of those around the table are Hindu, Muslim, or other non-Christian religions.

A fascinating presentation was given of an opportunity to take a special offering as a Presbytery for a building project of one of their congregations which is 20 years old, Reedsburg, Wisconsin. I filled pulpit there as a student at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and the pastor is a former classmate of mine. On average, they have relocated every 3 years to different rental facilities. They had a very pleasant arrangement with an older PCUSA building, but the elders saw a complacency had set in and people were no longer thinking, planning, or saving for a building fund for a future building. They are taking a step of faith and purchasing a former Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah's Witnesses and were looking for help with the remaining debt.

I also witnessed a licensure examination of a seminary student. He did a fine job. When they discussed his sermon, it was interesting that they did not go into executive session. Both the candidate as well as other guests and visitors were present. Thus, there was no discussion except for one brave delegate who stood and said he was going to vote for the candidate, but he wanted it to be known that the sermon needed to be gospel centered not only in the final portion of the sermon but Christ-centered throughout.

I was given time to address the body and my remarks were well received. I mentioned the mission efforts of our Classis so that they knew the locations of our missions, which in some cases are close to theirs. I also mentioned some issues facing the Synod, including a report on Burial and Cremation. Several delegates came up to me afterward interested in that report and our findings, as well as how they can get a copy of it once Synod is finished with our decisions.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen

Summary of the Fall Meeting of Classis Ontario West of CanRC (Kerwood, ON),
November 20, 2019

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. Jeff Poort welcomed the delegates, deputies of Regional Synod, and guests attending, including Br. Arjen Vreugdenhil who was taking his peremptory examination. Rev. Poort opened with the reading of Psalm 48 and prayer, remembering the ordination of Dr. Jeff Temple in Providence (Hamilton), the vacancies in the churches of the classis, as well as the health of Prof. Geertsema. The credentials were in order and the classis was convened with two of the suggested officers from the last classis taking their place: Rev. Ken Kok as chairman and Rev. Arend Witten as clerk.

Since no minister from Cornerstone (Hamilton) was delegated, classis agreed to have Rev. Jeff Poort take the position of vicechairman. Newly ordained Dr. Jeff Temple signed the Classis Ontario West subscription form. Classis invited Br. Vreugdenhil to come forward for his peremptory examination. He presented his sermon proposal on Luke 2:25-35. Classis deemed the proposal sufficient to continue the examination and the Deputies of Regional Synod, Rev. Dick Wynia and Rev. Eric Kampen, were able to give concurring advice. Br. Vreugdenhil was examined in Old Testament Exegesis (Psalm 127 & Genesis 12, Rev. Witten), New Testament Exegesis (Romans 1-2, Rev. Poort), Doctrines and Creeds (Doctrine of the Covenant, Rev. Kok), Church History (Reformation, Dr. Temple), Scripture Knowledge (Rev. Poort), Ethics (Gospel of Matthew, Rev. Aasman), Diaconology (Rev. Witten), and Church Polity (Rev. Kok). In closed session, Classis declared the examination sustained with the concurring advice of the Deputies of Regional Synod.

Classis gave thanks to the LORD for his provision for this brother and the congregation in Chatham. Classis then approbated the call. The Fund for Needy Churches gave a recommendation proposing continued support for a needy church. This recommendation was adopted. Pilgrim (London) is scheduled to convene the next Classis meeting on March 4, 2020.

The next officers suggested are: Rev. Witten as chairman, Dr. Temple as vice-chairman, and a ministerial representative from Cornerstone as clerk. Question period was made use of and brotherly censure was judged to be unnecessary. After singing from Hy 22, the chairman gave thanks in closing prayer. On behalf of classis, Rev. Jeff Poort (vice-chairman at the time).

Summary of the Fall Meeting of Classis Central US of the URCNA, (Pella, IA)
September 9-10, 2019

Delegates to the 48th meeting of Classis Central US gathered in Pella, Iowa from points East and West for a two-day meeting beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Monday. The meeting was convened by the Immanuel United Reformed Church of De Motte, Indiana but was hosted by the Covenant Reformed Church of Pella. Two candidacy exams dominated the meeting's agenda. The Monday afternoon session began with welcoming numerous guests and visitors including most of the

elders from the Pella, Iowa consistory and the Beecher, Indiana consistory since candidacy exams require the presence and participation of each consistory which puts forward a man for that exam.

Reports were received and work approved for the convening consistory, the clerk, and the treasurer. Fraternal greetings were brought on behalf of the Midwest Presbytery of the RPCNA by Rev. Jonathan Y. Haney, pastor of the Manhattan Reformed Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, Kansas. Also present to bring greetings was Rev. Chuck Muether, Associate pastor of Covenant Reformed Church, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and a church planter in Oskaloosa, Iowa. He brought greetings on behalf of Covenant East of the RCUS. Brief notes of greeting from other presbyteries and classes with whom we have fraternal contact were also brought to the attention of the assembly by the clerk. Later in the afternoon the two candidacy exams began. Examined were Mr. Bryce De Zwarte, a member of Covenant Reformed in Pella and a recent graduate of Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and Mr. Ryan Swale, a member of Faith United Reformed in Beecher and also a recent graduate of Mid-America. Mr. De Zwarte had spent his summer as intern at the Redeemer URC in Orange City, Iowa and Mr. Swale did the same at First URC in Oak Lawn, Illinois. Their credentials were judged to be in good order and sermon reports were discussed in executive session as required by the classis Rules of Procedure. Throughout the evening and again on Tuesday morning, the exam proceeded methodically as both men were examined together in the required areas of Practica (by Rev. Roberto Rossi), Bible Knowledge (by Rev. Jody Lucero), Biblical Exegesis (by Rev. Jacques Roets), Confessional Knowledge (by Rev. James Oord), Reformed Doctrine (by Rev. Ed Marcusse), Church History (by Rev. Nick Alons), Ethics (by Rev. Jon Bushnell), and Church Polity (by Elder Mark Van Der Molen). At the conclusion of the exam, the respective consistory of each man met separately to determine if, in their opinion, their man had sustained his exam. When they each brought back to the full assembly a positive report, the classis then voted to concur with the decisions of each consistory. Both men were declared to have sustained their exam and their consistories are now authorized to declare them candidates for the ministry and eligible for a call. Their services are much needed since there are now about 20 congregations in the URCNA without active, full time pastors. Also on Tuesday, 12 requests for advice on discipline matters were taken up in executive session. One of the last items of business was the election of five classical functionaries. With one exception, the men currently holding the positions were reappointed to the same position.

Rev. Harold Miller ably chaired the meeting and at the conclusion thanked the delegates for their diligent work in the service of the churches and thanked the host church for their warm and generous hospitality. Classis adjourned at 3:40 p.m. Classis is scheduled to meet again on March 9, AD 2020. The Providence Reformed Church, Des Moines is next in rotation to convene the meeting and they plan to ask Pella to host the meeting.

V. Fraternal Invitation Follow-Ups

At the filing of this report, we have received a reply from the Classis Eastern US (URCNA). Rev. Robert Godfrey, Pastor of Zeitenreich URC in New Holland, PA, is planning to attend our meeting and deliver fraternal greetings on its classis' behalf. This particular URC congregation has a unique history that includes German Reformed roots.

VI. Ecumenical Challenge

The IRC understands that we are immensely occupied with business of the local church. However, it is also our privilege and duty to engage with like-minded brothers of surrounding ecclesiastical bodies. The ultimate goal of the unity of the church is nothing less than one world-wide faithful-to-God's-Word-church. Sin, traditions, histories, and other distinctives have yielded varied expressions of church polity and practice within the Reformed and Presbyterian community. Pursuing ecumenicity, that is, desiring to become one in Christ, requires mutual engagement and a genuine love for one another, and the result is a most glorious catholicity. May we not give lip service to brotherly unity, but may we boldly pursue it. To that end, please consider attending one of our sister's regional meetings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Chuck Muether, Rev. Jay Fluck, Rev. Ron Potter, Elder Orrin Hermann, Elder Dustin Rothwell

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

D. Missions Committee

Brothers,

Members of your Classis Home Missions committee made visits to Redeemer Reformed Church in Minnesota and to Grace Reformed Church in Rogers, Arkansas. We also had some conference calls. We attempted a visit to Oskaloosa but after consultation with Rev. Muether we decided to wait on a visit until later in 2020. We also have a scheduled visit to Blue Bell in early March of 2020. There will be a supplement to this report related to a visit to Blue Bell. Oskaloosa, Iowa On September 17, 2019 three members of the classis home missions committee visited with Rev. Chuck Muether via a zoom conference meeting. Those attending were Rev. Christopher Campbell (Kansas City), Elder Dennis Luquette, and Rev. Ryan Kron (Eden Prairie). Rev. Muether and Rev. Jay Fluck were also in attendance. Rev. Kron opened the meeting by reading from Romans 12:9-13 and in prayer. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss some thoughts that Rev. Muether has about exploring the possibility of repositioning the plant from Oskaloosa to Pella, Iowa. Right now there are about 15 souls who are attending the Sunday morning services in Oskaloosa. The work in Oskaloosa is currently under the oversight of Covenant Reformed Church in Gettysburg. This potential move would be about 20-30 minutes down the road, although this would still be a South-Central Iowa work. Rev. Muether's ultimate goal is a building in the South-Central Iowa region. Rev. Muether has indicated that a rental facility has

become available to them in Pella. A CREC currently rents the facility and they will potentially be leaving. The possible rental facility in Pella would provide them with advantages, such as being able to use the facility throughout the week and being able to store things in the facility. Rev. Muether lives very close to this potential rental facility. Currently the core families who are a part of this RCUS work in Oskaloosa live in Pella. They also have a group in East Des Moines and in the north central area, which would be closer to Pella than to Oskaloosa. Rev. Muether also told us that he has begun Mariaska Ministries to those in retirement homes and senior centers in Marion and Mahaska County, Iowa. Rev. Muether told us that the OPC in Pella is a few blocks away from this potential location, and the URCNA is about one mile away from this location. Rev. Muether will reach out to our NAPARC fellowships in keeping with the comity agreement, which states in part, "we will be sensitive to the presence of existing churches and mission ministries of other NAPARC churches and will refrain from enlisting members and take great care in receiving members of those existing ministries." The committee encouraged him to do so. Rev. Muether says that he intends to visit with two men from the Presbytery that would be from the local OPC fellowship. Rev. Christopher Campbell closed the meeting in prayer.

Oskaloosa, Iowa On December 12, 2019 three members of the classis home missions committee visited with Rev. Chuck Muether via a zoom conference meeting. Those attending were Rev. Christopher Campbell (Kansas City), Rev. Dan Schnabel (Hamburg), and Rev. Ryan Kron (Eden Prairie). Rev. Jay Fluck (Gettysburg) also joined the meeting. Rev. Kron opened the meeting by reading from Psalm 67 and in prayer. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the work of Immanuel Reformed Fellowship in Oskaloosa, Iowa. The bulk of Rev. Muether's work is visiting with people from different contexts. They are a kind of "mission station" at this point. The group varies from 1240 people, and on any given Sunday they can have up to three worship services. Rev. Muether is still doing tentmaking, working at Heidelberg Theological Seminary, as a chaplain, and at Kirkside Media to support the mission work.

At this point, it is looking like the move to the facility in Pella will happen in January. The facility is in a central location in Pella. One of the benefits of this facility is they will be able to use it all week long. At the same time, they will be working in other areas surrounding Pella as it is their desire to serve "south-central Iowa." By moving to Pella, they will also be closer to the larger population area of Des Moines. Rev. Muether has enthusiasm and passion, and a heart to bring the gospel to the lost and to show compassion to the broken in south-central Iowa. He has lived in Pella for 30 years, and he knows the area well.

Rev. Muether is thankful that the classis has been supporting the costs of \$700 a month for rent. The Gettysburg Consistory will make a decision soon to ask our committee for financial support, including (but not limited to) the support of rent that will now be \$1,000 a month. They will have to wait until the Gettysburg congregational meeting in January for final approval. Rev. Dan Schnabel closed the meeting in prayer.

Golden Valley, MN On November 19, 2019 Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Ryan Kron attended Redeemer Reformed Church's monthly consistory meeting. This meeting was to evaluate and assess the viability of their mission work plans based on their original 3-5 year timeline that began in 2015. Currently they are roughly at the 4 ½ year mark of their timeline. They began by discussing the statistics in the congregation. Nine of their 54 families are not able/viable to be a part of any potential mission work. Since Rev. Marinelli arrived in 2015, some families have moved away, others have become new members, and still others are in membership classes. There is also the possibility that other families will move away in the future.

Then we discussed "where are we now?" and "what has been done?" They have been involved with VBS (including canvassing) and an outreach to Chinese scholars at the University of Minnesota. They talked about projects that the church has been involved with, including improvements to the church and parsonage. Next they discussed specific efforts made by pastors. They had two outreach classes to introduce the Christian faith to unbelievers. Rev. Marinelli also has done some neighborhood (door-to-door) and street evangelism. He has visited over two-hundred homes to date in the neighborhood around Redeemer, including sending out 15-20 follow-up letters to those he visited. He has passed out gospel tracts as well.

Then they discussed some objective criteria related to membership, giving, and worship attendance. Currently they have nine visiting families in the month of November, including two families in membership classes. The giving has been faithful and over budget for the 2019 year.

To start another church they would want Redeemer to continue to be viable. As was mentioned in the first paragraph, 9 of their 54 families are not able/viable to be a part of any potential mission work. Right now they also do not think there is enough momentum to allow them to continue the mission work plans. Rev. Marinelli also spoke at the meeting, agreeing that the numbers and momentum was not what they hoped for.

To sum up, they didn't meet the goal they set out to meet in 2015. At this meeting, the consistory at Redeemer voted to return to a one-pastor church and they do not desire to call a different man to begin a mission work. Rev. Jim Sawtelle will be the pastor who continues to serve at Redeemer. They plan to inform the congregation of their decision via a letter and at an upcoming informational meeting of the congregation on December 10, 2019. Redeemer will support Rev. Marinelli financially through the end of June 2020 or until he receives a call.

Update on the RCUS Mission work, Grace Reformed Church in Rogers, Arkansas

On Thursday, February 6, 2020, Rev. Christopher Campbell and Elder Jay Liesveld travelled to Rogers, Arkansas as representatives of the Classis Home Missions Committee. We met with Rev. Steve Carr and Elder Bobby Duncan.

We are pleased to report that the church is doing well. Although they still have a single elder serving the congregation, Mr. Bruce Wilkinson has been identified as having the necessary qualifications for elder and is starting to attend consistory meetings in order to become familiar with the responsibilities of the office. On February 9, 2020, a second deacon, Brandon Smith, was ordained and installed, bringing the total number of deacons up to two (Brandon Smith and Steve Mankins). Rev. Carr informed us that Elder Duncan, due to his many outside obligations, desires to take a break from serving as an active elder as soon as another elder is ordained and installed.

Bobby Duncan reports that Steve's preaching is good and faithful to the Word of God, and that he is impressed by Steve's patience in ministering in a time when growth appears to be slow.

Congregational giving is good, and the church is in the black financially, with assets, both in property and cash, above what is presently owed to the bank. The church plans to continue to ask for the same support from Classis and Synod. Starting next year they plan to take a 10% reduction.

Presently there are two children enrolled in the confirmation class that Rev. Carr is teaching. Elder Duncan is teaching the adult Sunday School, and the women of the church are teaching the younger children's Sunday school.

Fellowship at the church is good and they continue to have a weekly meal after the morning service, followed by a time of prayer led by Mr. Bruce Wilkinson. Rev. Carr wishes that he could have more opportunities during the week to engage with church members, but presently there is not much interest.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Christopher Campbell & Elder Jay Liesveld

Recommendations:

1. That Covenant East Classis of the RCUS be overtured to provide Reformation Church, Blue Bell, PA, mission funding of \$866.67 per month, a total of \$10,400 for the Classis fiscal year 2020-21 beginning July 1st, 2020, for remuneration for sermons preached in the morning and afternoon services of Reformation Church, Blue Bell, PA. [Same as last year.]
2. That Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with \$3,000 for outreach through Reformation Church Blue Bell if needed. [Same as last year.]
3. That Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$1,250 a month, a total of \$15,000, in 2020-21 for the work in Pella, IA.
4. That Classis overture Synod to provide Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$1,250 a month, a total of \$15,000, in 2020-21 for the work in Pella, IA.

5. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with \$330.75 per month, a total of \$3,969 in the fiscal year beginning July 2020. [This is the same as last year].

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Ryan Kron, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Rev. Christopher Campbell, Jay Liesveld,
Dennis Luquette, Mike Altman

Addendum: Report for Blue Bell Church Planning & Mission Work - visit scheduled
March 1, 2020

Blue Bell is a mission work of Heritage Reformed Church, Waymart, PA. Blue Bell is located in the Valley Forge area outside Philadelphia.

Official beginning of RCUS ministry was in Aug 2012 when Rev Potter and Fluck began leading afternoon services after the Canadian Reformed Church disassociated with the congregation and released care to the RCUS as current members had an interest in joining our denomination. Presently, Blue Bell is a mission work of Heritage RCUS, Waymart. The financial support for Blue Bell comes from offerings and Classis.

Elder Ken Hanko continues to be the regular pulpit supply and provide church leadership. He is dependent on funds from the Missions Committee to do this work. Last year Elder Hanko decided not to pursue licensure with the RCUS even though he has served as an ordained minister in the past in the Protestant Reformed Church.

Currently there are 12, which is the same for the past three years. With one of the members away in college and another struggling to make the service the regular attendance is 10. Visitors continue to be irregular in attendance. When visitors come they are invited to a home for lunch after the service. The members remain strongly committed to the work of the church.

There are two services every Sunday; one in the morning and one late afternoon. Most members are attending both services. Prayer meetings are at the church building and replace the weekly Bible Study on the evenings held. Blue Bell has a rent free church building to meet. They maintain the building but do not have to pay any rent. They also have a large parking area that is maintained by neighboring office complexes. Their expense is limited to advertising, utilities, salary, maintenance, travel, insurance, and miscellaneous. There continues to be a desire for visit from other RCUS churches as well as prayer and interest in the work.

As mentioned in last year's report they put together posters and business cards. They posted a realtor's type box outside the door of the church to hold Three Forms of Unity and various other pamphlets. All sermon are posted to Sermon Audio and a church website is maintained.

Elder Hanko and David Sawyer have completed most of the work to versify the psalms and put them to metrical tunes. All 150 psalms are now available for singing in the congregation, though the book is undergoing further revisions. Blue Bell's current overseeing relationship is with Heritage RCUS Waymart. Heritage is facing a substantial loss of members. With this loss it leaves one pastor and one elder being the only voting members and presents challenges regarding the oversight Heritage provides. This includes if Heritage would need to be put in a mission church status with oversight from another RCUS church. Having one mission church with oversight of another mission church is problematic. Ken Hanko's communication with Heritage remains strong. Pastor Potter visits once a month to administer the Lord's Supper and preach. Phone calls occur at least once a week to keep current with each other, and hold each other accountable and in prayer. Ken attends Heritage's spiritual council for the matters related to Blue Bell. Over all the relationship with Heritage is very good.

Conclusion:

In summary, this mission work faces some serious challenges. The congregation desires to continue as a church. The Blue Bell Church is in a unique area that is highly populated, and with a strong economy. The church is meeting in a historic building with no rent. At the same time the church has not seen any growth in the past three years. The Word of God is faithfully preached, the biblical practice of worship and sacraments continues, and the dependencies on the triune God for all their provisions, forgiveness, and care are present.

At the time of submitting this report a visit is planned on March 1, 2020, by Elders Dennis Luquette and Jay Liesveld. prior to Covenant East Classis meeting.

Submitted by, ^[1]_[SEP] Elders Jay Liesveld and Dennis Luquette

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

E. Publications Committee

No committee was formed.

F. Church Camp Committee

Dear Brothers,

Covenant East Heidelberg Youth Camp met again in 2019 at Camp Sinewa, July 9-12. The theme of the camp continued building on the teaching of petitions of the Lord's Prayer using the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day as a basis. The theme this year was: Faith Under Fire—Lead Us Not Into Temptation.

Overview of goals and objectives: To provide clear biblical instruction about the reality of temptation, the place of the devil the world and our own flesh in temptation, our sovereign God's relation to temptation, why He allows it, and the

power and grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ in relation to temptation for the believer whose faith is under fire.

The camp was hosted, as always, by the capable and dedicated servants from Salem Ebenezer. Carolyn Hackmann was the local organizer. She and the members of Salem Ebenezer go above and beyond the call in making the camp work smoothly. We want to thank them for their gracious hosting.

For the first time in years we made the decision to raise the cost of camp to \$70 per camper. Hopefully this helped alleviate financial costs a bit.

There was a total of 46 campers this year. Six ministers and five women counselors were also in attendance as well as Carolyn, Connie, and Janell. It was great to have extra female adults helping out. Hopefully we can keep that trend going. The bulk of the attendees were Juniors (age 10-13).

Total camp expenses were \$6760.12. Total income, \$6046.92. The income includes a number of donations from churches and individuals, without which we would not be even close to keeping up with expenses. So we thank those who contributed these donations. The balance on hand before camp was \$884.65. The ending balance stands at \$371.45. We would take this opportunity to ask churches to consider cash donations between now and June to boost the cash balance for those preparing for the camp.

We would urge the churches, pastors and elders, to spread the word among your members to encourage camp attendance.

The dates for the 2020 camp are July 7-10.

Finally, we would mention some needs that would contribute to a successful camp this year: 1) we are in need of female counselors for the girls' dorm and cabins. In particular it would be wonderful if we could have some mature college age women present. 2) We would be well served by having some mature men present to help with chaperoning. Ideally, having some college age men would be a great service, but fathers are welcome too. 3) Timely response to the call for numbers of attendees from each church is crucial for food and t-shirt purchases. 4) We need pastors to participate in teaching and general interaction with campers. 5) Anyone with EMT certification is a huge bonus. 6) Financial contributions would be helpful to keep us in the black.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sawtelle, Dan Schnabel, Ron Mittelstaedt, Graydon Lau
(with thanks to Steve Stuebbe for assistance)

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

Reports of Officers

A. Presidents Report on the State of the Church

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

It was an honor to serve as your president this past year. My labors along with the rest of the Executive Committee are reported elsewhere. You should also know that in keeping with RCUS protocol and from a heart of sincere thanks and deep respect, I attended the funeral of Rev. Lloyd Gross as a representative of our classis.

I heard it said that nobody you meet today will be suffering from too much encouragement. As I read the parochial reports this year, that is very obvious. Whatever suffering we have had this year in classis—it is not from too much encouragement. There are plenty of encouraging details in the work of Classis in its committees and congregations this year, but there are plenty of challenges and heartaches reported too, either directly or behind the scenes.

Many of us can relate to these words from John Stott. “Seminary taught me about sound theology, effective evangelism, sermon preparation, discipleship methods and much more. But I didn’t learn how to deal with my own emotionality or that of others in the church. I didn’t learn how my brain contributes to my anxiety or how I fit into emotional processes. What do I do when the board treats me unfairly? How do I handle nasty rumors? How should I respond when I get an angry email or a scathing unsigned letter?” (cited in <https://dashhouse.com/the-abiding-value-of-pastoral-friends/>. Accessed 2-27-2020)

How can we weather these storms? Part of the answer is that we weather them through opening up to fellow Christians. We do this individually. What we sometimes forget, though, is God has also provided for us within the structure of His Church. The local church officers can and ought to confide in one another, submitting to one another in love and patience. If that breaks down, they are not at the end of the road, but are given the brothers at the Classis level, either on various oversight committees or informally or as the whole classis together, as the situation warrants.

I mention this as a general reminder that we all need to be encouraged, and to be encouragers. Sometimes in the same day, and in the same conversation. This year saw an increased criticism of the pulpit ministry of a few of our pastors. In some cases, help was sought locally and eventually from brothers in classis. In other cases, that help was not sought or encouraged. Encouragement can happen. The value of the communion of the saints is a blessing we should gladly participate in.

The marks of the Church are alive and well within Covenant East Classis. Nearly every pastor is preaching sermon series through both the OT and the NT during the year. This is very good, showing the unity of the gospel message. The

sacraments are faithfully administered. In fact, we had a baby boom which brought a 33% increase in infant baptisms! One unique and important thing happened this year which should encourage the church members of classis. While it was very sad that it was necessary, two of our churches had to discipline one of their office-bearers. Church rulers are not above the rules. Also, one congregation reports a pending case of excommunication, while at the same time a different person is in the process of being restored to membership after having been excommunicated in the past. May God continue to bring home His prodigal sons and daughters!

Part of the work of classis is done through our classis Treasurer. We are grateful to Jim Drewes for his 15 years of faithful service. He will be sorely missed. We are also grateful for his willingness to assist the new treasurer in the transition period. The Interchurch Relations Committee visited our fraternal church assemblies when possible. The Church Camp Committee reports another good year with covenant youth and many volunteers growing in grace.

The Candidates and Credentials Committee has not yet submitted a report for this meeting. However, that is partly due to some late-breaking developments. The chairman has been in touch with me regularly through the year, and I am pleased that they have been proactive to finish the examination of Rev. Groseclose, to contact our Student-Under-Care, and to meet with a pastor who has questions about his credentials.

The Special Committee on the Biblical teaching about the office of believer in the church has provided an outline of the paper they are working on. We look forward to considering the full report when it is completed, perhaps next year.

The Missions Committee has been active this year, as their report shows. But I think they need further direction and the entire classis needs to grow in being more intentional in our work to spread the gospel of Christ through home missions.

I have a series of questions and concerns for our classis in the area of missions. Some of these were expressed in last year's President's report, but they are more urgent now. I hope these will be referred to the missions committee to begin a discussion and propose real solutions and perspectives for us to consider.

- 1) Can we start treating mission reports like we have done with our parochial reports or the elders' answers to the Article 81 questions? Can we have a 'heart-to-heart' time of conversation and encouragement and counsel? We are all together already, and the committee is having a hard time visiting in person all the works, so any conversation we have is going to build on their visits, not replace them. Right now, the Classis Missions report isn't even read on the floor—it is referred to a standing committee and tends to 'go away' practically speaking, apart from requests for funding.

- 2) Does receiving missions funds imply that a work is a classis mission work? Does the Home Missions Manual, with all the agreed upon policies for expressing that oversight, guide and govern whenever funds are disbursed from the missions fund of a Classis? We have come into a snag several times on this in recent years, and it is only compounding with more and more regularity. Are the Missions committee members invited to attend local church discussions as a courtesy? Do they function as nothing more than 'yes' men? Is there any oversight and supervision happening when a work isn't designated a mission work? How can we better express the mutual submission and love for the saints in our mission relationships between classis and local congregation/missions?
- 3) Do we have a strategy? We are supposed to have a 3-5 year strategy reported here and passed along to the Synod Home Missions Committee (*Synod Abstract* 2008:74, Rec. 10). We have done so in the past, but have been lax in recent years. More than simply putting a report together, what are the goals and parameters we might follow in seeking to encourage our brothers who are providentially involved in small mission works with few prospects for the future?
- 4) We have a mission closing in a huge metropolitan area—one of the largest within driving distance of any of our classis churches. We have several other missions or mission outposts or stations which are very small, yet they are seeking funds to survive. Is there something unusual about this picture? We tried the strategy of building up one congregation so that they would be able to plant a daughter church and also remain healthy and viable themselves in the process. That didn't work, at least this time around. But there are other strategies. And there are many people in the area. We have three churches within the greater area. Is Classis willing to seize this providential opportunity for missions? When might we try?
- 5) As Calvinists, we believe in BOTH God's sovereignty and human responsibility. We must, as much as we are able, explore what our responsibility is for a mission work's failure or a congregation's lack of growth or stagnation. Let us be open, humble, and honest.

The main work of our classis is done through the local congregations. The Parochial Reports reveal the clear focus on the 3 marks of the Christian Church.

From West to East, a selective summary of the parochial reports follows.

In Kansas City, Rev. Campbell reports many baptisms and new members. Yet there were also several tragic deaths and diseases suffered by close family members of the church. He writes, "may our trials be a reminder to us who are called to the ministry that every day may be the last opportunity we get to preach

the gospel, for our life is like a vapor, as the grass of the field, here today and gone tomorrow.”

In northwest Iowa, Rev. Richard Stetler gave his first report as a member of Covenant East Classis. He was received as a retired minister from the Western Classis. Due to his wife’s disability, he is unable to pursue a full-time pastoral call. He did fill pulpits most Sundays last year in a variety of NAPARC churches. He is also involved in evangelism and conference planning through Reformation Gospel Ministries. He will present this ministry to us at our pre-Classis discussion time.

In Northwest Arkansas, Rev. Carr reports some development in that a confirmation class now exists. He also explains how a new family joined, which had left the congregation in the past, but had a death in the family and needed someone to do the funeral. They reached out to him, experienced gospel preaching and the love of the communion of the saints at Grace Reformed, and they were drawn in. Who says funerals can’t be evangelistic tools in God’s hands?

In Hamburg, Rev. Schnabel reports an increase in the number of meetings of church leaders. They have also increased in visitation of the members. He has led the congregation in seasons of focused prayer and teaching on church growth. The Lord has answered these prayers.

In Garner, Rev. Larson reports an attempt to be missions minded, even in a rural community. They have hopes for the future, with a few singles in the congregation. They also have the stability of life-long saints, including seven people over 90, one is 106 years old.

In Eden Prairie, Rev. Kron’s report focused on what it looks like when a congregation matures in Christ. He identified five markers: ministry of word and sacrament, prayer, hospitality, love for each other, and love for missions. He then illustrated how these are at work in the congregation.

In Minneapolis, both pastors report the extremes of joy and deep sadness which the congregation experienced this past year. Regular discipleship in the life of the congregation occurred. A few notable items were a number of Table Talk gatherings on parenting, based on a sermon series through Proverbs preached by Rev. Sawtelle. Each pastor was involved in short-term evangelistic attempts in the summer. The Consistory spent a tremendous amount of spiritual and physical energy in regular and additional meetings, making tough decisions related to the mission work. The closing of that mission work, along with an impasse regarding Rev. Marinelli and a philosophy of preaching, has led to great heartache and loss within the congregation. Rev. Marinelli states he is seeking the Lord’s will for the future and is confident that somehow through this Christ will build His Church. Rev. Sawtelle notes that a sense of failure is a real struggle for the congregation and all the officers. There is a challenge to move forward with love and commitment to Christ and one another. Here is where the rest of the Classis can step in, it seems to me. Let us promise our prayers and our presence, where able. The saints at Redeemer have been such a source of joy and inspiration to the rest

of the classis and Synod these past few decades. Now, in their time of hurt, we hurt with them. Yet the hurt will not last forever. Let us remember that our times are in God's hand, so we can be of good courage, and He shall strengthen our heart. Therefore, we hope in the Lord.

In Manitowoc, Rev. Sorensen reports the connection of theology to life. His advanced studies in the D.Min. program at Heidelberg Theological Seminary provided material for extended Bible studies on the missionary focus of the creeds and also a Christian response to the immigration crisis. He also explains the various ways new members came to join this year. Some had no prior contact with the church, but were searching for Biblical preaching and worship. Others were invited by members. Others came because members promised prayer and offered fellowship, which drew them in.

In Napoleon, Rev. Altman reports continued diligence in the use of the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments as the ordinary means of grace. He hastens to add, "Though we call these ordinary, we can all attest to the fact that they prove to be extraordinary to us as God uses these very things to feed us as His sheep and to nourish and strengthen faith within our body." He does mention that the congregation replaced the 40 year old carpet which had become a tripping hazard. But conspicuously absent is any mention of what color the carpet is, or how that was decided. Inquiring minds want to know---is there still peace at Peace?

In Rochester, PA, Rev. Win Groseclose gave his first report as a member of the RCUS. He reports a busy year with internal attempts to bring reformation to the independent congregation he serves. He accommodated his ministry to some demands of the people, but ultimately the leadership and he have agreed it is necessary to part ways. He plans to remain in the area to serve those from the church who are interested in a Reformed presence, and perhaps a RCUS mission work will develop down the road.

In Gettysburg, Rev. Fluck reports the celebration of 40 years of ordained ministry and also of his 50th wedding anniversary. The congregation had a few baptisms and weddings and is also going through some transitions as newer elders and/or deacons are brought on while some have retired due to age. Gettysburg provides oversight to its mission in the greater Pella-Oskaloosa, Iowa area. Rev. Chuck Muether lives there, and is very proactively involved in the community, with four areas of focus. He explains the strategy this way, "What if instead of waiting, one remains with the people, that is the church goes to the people and not simply the church waiting for the people to come?"

In Waymart, Rev. Potter reports shrinking numbers, yet financially stable situation. He also reports increased criticism, but personal growth in seeing that criticism through the lens of Scripture. His perspective is that all criticism comes from God's hand for some purpose, no matter how pure or correct the criticism is expressed to him. The church's Blue Bell mission in greater Philadelphia continues to maintain a gospel witness.

Finally, let me note the series of overtures from the Kansas City Consistory regarding voting privileges in the congregational meeting. It is notable that while they have taken an action contrary to a position of the RCUS, they have done so with great care, in line with the procedures spelled out for such a rare occasion (see 2019 *Synod Abstract*). In fulfillment of that ruling of Synod, the overtures they present are certainly worth discussing. They come as the result of the study of the Scriptures. Of course, the position of the RCUS also comes as the result of the study of the Scriptures. I look forward to hearing the Biblical argumentation and discussion. I do believe that we are getting closer to a way forward in greater unity within the RCUS on this matter.

Your Servant in Christ,

Rev. Kyle A. Sorensen

Classis Action: The report was to be spread in the minutes and printed in the Abstract.

B. Stated Clerk's Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Brethren,

I continue to enjoy being your Stated Clerk and thank you for your continued support and reassurances.

As your Stated Clerk, I have formatted, indexed, and placed in permanent binders all of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 21, 2018 and Spring 2019 Meeting of the Covenant East Classis, along with all of the reports, overtures, and other relevant information. These Minutes were submitted to the Standing 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 2019 Abstract, and sent to the *Reformed Herald*.

I prepared the 2019 Abstract, which included the Special Meeting of May 21, 2018. I distributed the printed copies to all the churches of Synod in compliance with standing rule #10 by mail (Covenant East Classis and several retired or without charge ministers) to the remaining Classes and retired ministers. A PDF copy of the abstract was also sent to the website master to be published on the RCUS website.

I sent the required forms, communications, and overtures to the Synod Clerk on time. All Classis records are kept in hard copy and in electronic form and backed up on a second hard drive and on a memory stick. The old memory stick was damaged, but thankfully I was able to recover the data through a data recovery service.

I kept and formatted the minutes of the Special Meeting on May 20, 2019. These minutes will be recorded in the Abstract of this 2020 Spring Meeting. I sent a letter to the Synod Clerk informing him of our reception of Rev. Win Groseclose. I sent out two circular letters and participated in the work of the Executive Committee as detailed in that report. I also sent a letter to the Western Classis informing them of our reception of Rev. Richard Stetler as a retired minister. Other duties I participated in as Stated Clerk are mentioned in the Executive Committee Report.

For this meeting, I have organized all the overtures, communications, and reports, and placed them all in their proper folders for distribution at Classis. I received no necrologies for this year.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Steven J. Carr (Stated Clerk)

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 273rd Synod, there are some items that the Classes should take note of:

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

4. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the calendar year.
5. Standing rules #2 and #3 which respectively read: “The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod May 1”; “The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk May 1.”
6. That the Stated Clerk of each Classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring Classis meeting.
7. Standing Ministerial Aid recommendation 8 (2013 Abstract page 76), that pursuant to Article 28 of the RCUS Constitution, Classes shall not consider a pastoral call letter as “adequate support” to the temporal needs of the called pastor, unless retirement is addressed and funded in the terms of the call.
8. That treasurers of the various churches be reminded to comply with Synod standing rule 8 with regard to designating for which fund the monies delivered to the RCUS are to be attributed.
9. Please remember to send necrologies to me in time for Synod.
10. The Classes are reminded that the 274th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 11-14, 2020, at Trinity Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. David Fagrey, Stated Clerk, RCUS

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

D. Treasurer's Report

2019-2020 CEC YTD Financial Report

July 1, 2019-February 29, 2020

Detailed Income Report

Guidelines Total: \$66.00

	<u>Members</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Benevolence</u>	<u>Student Aid</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Totals YTD</u>	<u>DueBy 6/15/20</u>
NW Arkansas	13	\$75.07	\$425.43	\$ -	\$ -	\$858.00	\$500.50	\$357.50
Eden Prairie	108	\$1082.70	\$6135.30	\$ -	\$ -	\$7128	\$7218	\$ -
Garner, IA	49	\$242.55	\$1374.45	\$ -	\$ -	\$3234	\$1617	\$1617
Gettysburg	45	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$2970	\$ -	\$2970
Hamburg, MN	185	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$12,210	\$ -	\$12,210
Kansas City	65	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$4290	\$ -	\$4290
Manitowoc	119	\$589.05	\$3337.95	\$ -	\$ -	\$7854	\$3927	\$3927
Minneapolis	119	\$589.05	\$3337.95	\$ -	\$ -	\$7854	\$3927	\$3927
Napoleon, OH	60	\$594.00	\$3366.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$3960	\$3960	\$ -
Waymart, PA	<u>25</u>	\$247.50	\$1402.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$1650	\$1650	\$ -
Other *		<u>\$39.60</u>	<u>\$224.40</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>		<u>\$264</u>	
	788							

Income Jul 19-Feb 20 \$3459.52 \$19,603.98 \$ - \$ - Total 23,063.50

Income Mar 19-Jun 20

* Rev. Win Groseclose 4 family members

YTD Report

Balance July 1, 2019-February 29, 2020

Beginning Balance July 1, 2019

\$ 75,767.23

General Fund	Balance July 1, 2019	\$	15,362.27
Receipts		\$	3,459.52
Expenses		\$	1,936.90
Balance 02/29/2020			\$ 16,884.89

**Missions Fund	Balance July 1 2019	\$	44,369.06
Receipts		\$	19,603.98
Expenses		\$	26,154.50
Balance 02/29/2020			\$ 37,818.54

Benevolence Fund	Balance July 1, 2019	\$	6,337.66
Receipts		\$	-
Expenses		\$	-
Balance 02/29/2020			\$ 6,337.66

Student Aid Fund	Balance July 1, 2019	\$	10,398.24
Receipts		\$	-
Balance 02/29/2020			\$ 10, 398.24
	End Balance 02/29/2020		<u>\$ 71.439.24</u>

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

YTD Report

Expense July 1, 2019-February 29, 2020

General Fund Expense

Classis Meeting		0
Clerk/Printing Supplies	\$	-
Travel	\$	1,936.90
Honorarium	\$	-
Postage/Phone/Checks	\$	-
Total		\$ 1,936.90

Mission Fund Expenses

Covenant Reformed Iowa rent	\$	5,600.00
Double Entry \$700 lost check2018-2019	\$	700.00
Grace Reformed Church	\$	2,649.00
Reformed Church Blue Bell	\$	6,932.00
Redeemer Reformed Church	\$	10,000.00
Travel	\$	273.50
Total		\$ 26,154.50

Benevolence

Total	\$	-
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Student Aid

Total	\$	-
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Expense Total

Total Classis Income vs Expense July 2018-February 2019	<u>\$ 23,063.50</u>
	<u>\$ 28,091.40</u>

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Drewes, Treasurer

Parochial Reports of Ministers

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

Constitutional Questions to the Elders

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

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

3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:

a. Is visitation faithfully performed?

All churches answered "Yes," except Manitowoc which answered "Yes, but 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."

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

temporal needs?

All churches answered "Yes."

Report of Membership and Financial Statistics

The Stated Clerk provided a table of statistics based upon 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

Addresses by Delegates from Other Reformed Churches or Visitors

Rev. Godfrey addressed the Classis on behalf of the Eastern US Classis of the URCNA. Kron prayed.

Rev. Frailey addressed the Classis on behalf of the Ohio Presbytery of the OPC. Muether prayed.

Reports of Special Committees

A. Special Committee to Discuss Office of Believer

Brothers,

Your committee met twice this year over video conference and at various times as needed via email. We have organized the paper as follows:

- I. The Office of Believer Defined
 - A. How Does the Bible Define the Office of Believer?
 - B. How Do Our Confessions Define the Office of Believer?
- II. The Office of Believer Applied
 - A. How Is the Office of Believer to Be Applied to Men and Women in the Church?
 - B. How Is the Office of Believer to Be Applied to Age Groups in the Church?

Individuals have been assigned in pairs to work on each main and sub-section and have started to write. We had hoped to have a draft for Classis to review at this meeting, but we were unable to make that deadline. It is our intention as a committee to complete this paper over the next year and submit it to Classis 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Classis Action: The Committee will continue its work and report to Classis 2021

B. Special Committee Advisory Committee

Esteemed brothers and Fathers,

Your committee was constituted after the following motion:

“Sawtelle moved that Classis refer the viability of Heritage RCUS to the Nominations Committee to erect a special committee to give advice and counsel until the next Classis meeting. Seconded. Carried”

Your committee had two formal zoom meetings, one as a committee and one meeting with Rev. Ron Potter and Elder Dan Wright also participating. Members of your committee also individually contacted both Rev. Ron Potter and Elder Dan Wright throughout the year, giving counsel concerning any issues which were brought up by those who left and Heritage Reformed Church's continued outreach. Elder Dennis Luquette also visited the church speaking with those remaining as well as many of those who left. In the final meeting we discussed if they had considered the different ways forward of either coming under another consistory as a mission work or continuing as a preaching station. We also discussed and were thankful for many of the things that Rev. Potter has been doing to reach out to the region. We are thankful for the strength the Lord has given to Rev. Potter, including bringing him through a variety of health struggles. With this we also touched on things which might aid in preparing for a transition if needed or possible ways to bring in help which may indirectly benefit the church there. Overall the handful remaining (Rev. Ron Potter and Elder Dan Wright being the only adult male members, along with many women and a few children) do seem to have a strong commitment and desire to have the faithful preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ remain there. The problem with their current situation is having only 2 voting members they are unable to have a congregational meeting. We are thankful how so far they are finically viable but they did have some expenses coming up and would need to see an improvement in their overall financial position.

Overall the question of viability is lingering. Unless our sovereign gracious Lord changes something at Heritage Reformed Church soon, they are not able to operate as a church. Currently they cannot have a congregational meeting since there are only two voting members for the Heritage Reformed Congregation. Your committee acknowledged that there has not been a lack of effort or creativity in reaching out to the community by Rev. Ron Potter and Elder Dan Wright. Another lingering question for the committee is if the area is able to support a Reformed church. We also discussed the state of the efforts of the OPC and the URCNA in that area, where they also are struggling or in decline in that region.

Sincerely Submitted,

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

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. Minutes of Synod

1. That the Stated Clerk had properly addressed all the items of the 273rd Abstract.
2. That the Classis take note of items 3-10.

Sawtelle, Fluck, Lau

B. Benevolence

1. Regarding Overture #6, That Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1200 per month for the Synodical year 2020-2021.
2. Regarding Overture # 3, from Grace RCUS NW Arkansas, that Covenant East Classis provide Grace Reformed Church \$956 to pay for Rev. Carr's Life Insurance plan for the remainder of fiscal year 2020 and the entirety of fiscal year 2021 (same as last year).
3. Regarding Overture #4, that Classis provide a one-time gift of benevolent aid to Rev. Richard Stetler in the amount of \$9000 to be paid against his largest credit card debts (which were incurred due for medical expenses).

Sawtelle moved that Classis instruct the Treasurer to disperse the funds to Rev. Stetler as soon as possible.

Sawtelle, Fluck, Lau

C. Missions

1. Regarding the Permanent Missions Committee report recommendation #1 and Classis Overture #1, that Covenant East Classis of the RCUS be overtured to provide Reformation Church Blue Bell, PA, mission funding of \$866.67 per month, a total of \$10,400 for the Classis fiscal year 2020-2021 beginning July 1st, 2020, for

remuneration for sermons preached in the morning and afternoon services of Reformation Church, Blue Bell, PA (Same as last year).

2. Regarding the Permanent Missions Committee report recommendation #2, that Classis provide Heritage RCUS of Waymart, PA with \$3000 for outreach through Reformation Church Blue Bell if needed (Same as last year).

3. That Heritage Reformed make a strategic plan with goals for the next three years concerning their work at Blue Bell and submit it to the Permanent Classis Home Missions Committee before Spring Classis 2021.

4. Regarding the Permanent Missions Committee report recommendation #3, that Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$1250 a month, a total of \$15,000, in 2020-2021 for the work in Pella, IA contingent on an assessment of the work by Classis and Synod Home Missions Committee members.

5. Regarding the Permanent Permanent Missions Committee report recommendation #4, that Classis overture Synod to provide Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$1250 a month, a total of \$15,000, in 2020-2021 for the work in Pella, IA contingent on an assessment of the work by Classis and Synod Home Missions Committee members.

6. Regarding Permanent Missions Committee report recommendation #5, that Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with #330.75 per month, a total of \$3969 in the fiscal year 2020-2021 beginning July 2020 (This is the same as last year).

7. Regarding question #1 of the President's Report, that each year the Permanent Home Missions Committee report be presented on the floor of Classis for discussion as well as referred to Standing Missions.

8. Regarding question #2 of the President's report, that receiving Classis missions funds does imply a work of missions, making the policies of the Synod Home Missions manual apply to the work.

9. Regarding questions 3 and 4 from the President's report, that these two items be referred to the Permanent Home Missions Committee.

Campbell, Schnabel, Potter, Rothwell, Oberhaus

D. Examination and Licensure

1. That Covenant East Classis approve Rev. Richard Stetler laboring out of bounds as an Associate Pastor at Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA), Orange City, IA. Grounds: 1. Rev. Stetler has received a formal call from the congregation and has accepted the call contingent upon the approval of Covenant

East Classis. 2. This call would be an appropriate use of his gifts for ministry. 3. This call has potential of greater service for Rev. Stetler and the potential of bringing a new congregation into the Covenant East Classis. 4. Rev. Stetler has shown zeal in serving this congregation, and there has been a favorable reception of his ministerial gifts.

2. That Covenant East Classis petition Synod to approve student aid for Mr. Ryan Anderson as follows: \$9,960.00 for tuition and fees and \$400.00 for books for the 2020-2021 academic year at MARS. This aid is contingent on the commendation of the Candidates and Credentials Committee this coming August following his summer internship with Rev. Kyle Sorensen and the Consistory of Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, WI. It is also contingent on the Committee receiving a report from Mr. Anderson regarding the progress of his studies and a copy of his transcripts from MARS and Heidelberg Theological Seminary.

Larson, Muether, Nelson

E. Excuses

1. That Classis excuse Elder Jay Liesveld from the Classis meeting.
2. That Classis excuse Rev. Marinelli at noon today from the meeting of Classis.

Larson, Muether, Nelson

Sawtelle moved to excuse Elder Bobby Duncan

F. Judicial

1. That the overture from Northland Reformed Church be sent back for revision to the consistory and be resubmitted to the annual Spring meeting of Covenant East Classis 2021. Grounds: 1. The consistory is truly seeking unity with the brethren of the RCUS over this matter, and after a lengthy discussion with one of the members of that consistory, we believe that there may be other avenues that would be more beneficial if perhaps given more time to be perfected by this consistory. 2. This overture does not provide Biblical, confessional, and constitutional arguments as required by Synodical ruling letter d., 2019 Synod Abstract, page 73.

2. That Rev. Winthrop Groseclose be advised that according to our constitution Article 32, as a minister without a call, he has three years in which to seek a call.

Altman, Groseclose, Luquette, Wright

G. Nominations

1. We recommend the following permanent committees:

Executive: Sorensen, Carr, Wiersma
Candidates and Credentials: Fluck, M. Larson, S. Altman, Wright, Hanko
Camp: Kron, Sawtelle, Schnabel, Nelson, Stuebbe, Stetler
Interchurch Relations: Muether, Fluck, Potter, Rothwell, Groseclose
Missions: Campbell, Van Heest, Schnabel, M. Altman, Luquette, Liesveld
Special Study Committee
Office of Believer: Campbell, Sawtelle, Fluck, Carr, Luquette, Hanko
Special Advisory Committee to Heritage Reformed: Schnabel, Muether, S. Altman, Rothwell, Liesveld, Luquette, Sawtelle.

Marinelli, Stuebbe

H. Finances

1. The standing committee on finances has audited the 2019-2020 year to date treasurer's report and found it to be in order.

2. That travel reimbursements for the classis meeting be as follows:

Richard Stetler:	\$675.63
Win Groseclose:	\$207
Chuck Meuther:	\$515
Steve Carr:	\$369.49
Redeemer Reformed Church:	\$511.20
Kyle Sorensen:	\$1396.04
Ryan Kron:	\$226.60
Christopher Campbell:	\$390.97
Ken Hanko:	\$147.60
David Oberhaus:	\$350
Dustin Rothwell:	\$345.60
St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS:	\$621.87
Dan Wright:	\$210
Mark Larson:	\$1046
Graydon Lau:	\$1118
Tim Marinelli:	\$400

Total \$8,531

3. That Classis adopt the following guidelines:

General Fund:	\$5
Missions Fund:	\$45
Benevolence Fund:	\$10
Student Aid:	\$0
Total:	\$60

Kron, Stetler, Kroells (Drewes advise)

The President expressed thanks on behalf of Classis to the Treasurer for his work.

I. Services

1. That Covenant East Classis express the following word of gratitude to the congregation of Covenant Reformed Church of Gettysburg, PA by including it in the Sunday Bulletin: The delegates of Covenant East Classis express our sincerest gratitude for your loving and generous hospitality at our 2020 Spring meeting. Your efforts and labor to provide us with delicious food, fellowship, and facility to conduct the work of the church was ultimately done in service to Christ Himself. 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.

Kroells, Sorensen

J. Minutes of Classis

Kroells moved that the minutes be circularized and approved by circular.

Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

A. Expression of Appreciation to Host Congregation

This was handled by the Standing Services Committee

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

The Stated Clerk's report was previously adopted.

The Executive Committee report was adopted as a whole.

Reading of the Minutes and Their Approval

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

Adjournment

The 35th Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis was adjourned at 2:25 pm until the 36th Annual Meeting the time and place of which to be determined by Executive Circular.

A. Roll Call

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

B. Devotions

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted and chronicled for Christ's glory,

Rev. Steve Carr, Stated Clerk

Appendix
for the
2019 Abstract
follows:

#1 - List of Overtures and Communications

#2 – Necrologies

#3 – Statistics

#4 – Standing Rules

APPENDIX #1

List of Overtures and Communications

Overtures

Overture #1: February 11, 2020. From Heritage RCUS, Waymart, PA, that Covenant East Classis of the RCUS provide Reformation Church, Blue Bell, PA, mission funding of \$866.67 per month, a total of \$10,400 for the Classis fiscal year 2019-2020 beginning July 1st, 2019, for remuneration for sermons preached in the morning and afternoon services of Reformation Church, Blue Bell, PA. (TO STANDING MISSIONS)

Overture #2: February 11, 2020. From Northland Reformed, Kansas City, MO, that Covenant East Classis overture Synod that Synod declare that each local RCUS congregation has the right to determine those allowed to vote in its congregational meetings, so long as those allowed to vote are communicant members in good and regular standing of that local congregation; that Synod instruct the Website Committee to remove the position papers on Women voting from the public "RCUS Position Paper" section on the RCUS website; that Synod remind the members of the RCUS that there are brothers and sisters who sincerely disagree on this issue and yet remain united in Christ with one another. Therefore, they must humble themselves before their brothers and sisters and in the sight of God and not cause any unnecessary division.

Overture #3: February 11, 2020. From Grace RCUS, Rogers, AR, that Covenant East Classis of the RCUS provide Grace Reformed Church with \$956 for life insurance for Rev. Steven Carr for the remainder of fiscal year 2020 and the entirety of 2021, the same as last year. (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE)

Overture #4: February 29, 2020. From Richard Stetler, that Covenant East Classis Overture Synod to provide benevolent aid to him for \$500.00 per month. (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE)

Overture #5: February 29, 2020. From Richard Stetler, that Covenant East Classis provide him with benevolent aid for \$500.00 per month. (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE)

Overture #6: March 3, 2020. From Salem-Ebenezer RCUS, that Covenant East Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for Ministerial Aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1200 per month for the Synodical year 2020-2021.

Communications

Communication #1: January 28, 2020. From the Stated Clerk of Synod: Minutes of Synod Report. (TO STANDING MINUTES OF SYNOD)

Communication #2: March 2, 2020. From Elder Jay Liesveld requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis 2020. (TO STANDING EXCUSES)

APPENDIX #2

Necrologies

No Necrologies were received this year.

APPENDIX #3: Statistics of Covenant East Classis covering 2018 reported in 2019 follows pp. 54-55

Statistics of Covenant East Classis: Covering 2019 reported in 2020						
	Northwest	Eden Prairie	Garner	Gettysburg	Hamburg	Kansas City
Category	Arkansas	Minnesota	Iowa	Pennsylvania	Minnesota	Missouri
1. No. of Elders	1	2	2	3	3	4
2. No of Deacons	1	5	3	2	3	4
3. Comm. Last Year	13	108	51	45	185	65
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	0	0	0	0	1	2
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	0	0	1
6. Rec'd by Prof.	4	9	0	2	9	7
7. Total Received	4	9	0	2	10	10
8. Tot. Old/New Mem	17	117	51	47	195	75
9. Lost by Dismissal	0	7	4	2	1	0
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	1	2	4	2	0	0
11. Lost by Death	0	0	0	0	2	0
12. Total Lost	1	9	8	4	3	0
13. Comm this Year	16	108	43	43	192	75
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	15	67	4	21	26	16
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	31	175	47	64	218	91
16. No. of Families	9	57	31	21	111	39
17. No. of S.S Child.	13	37	4	20	12	15
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	2	0
19. Infant Baptisms	3	14	2	1	10	2
20. Total Baptisms	3	14	2	1	12	2
21. No.L.S. Received	16	108	40	45	160	70
22. Times L.S. Served	12	12	4	12	9	6
23. Regular Offerings	\$ 113,993	\$ 364,224	\$ 128,264	\$ 101,111	\$ 186,957	\$ 209,181
24. Special Offerings	\$ 2,016	\$ 2,893	\$ 5,472	\$ 14,413	\$ 5,330	\$ 8,993
25. Other Sources	\$ 3,969	\$ -	\$ 2,044	\$ 6,300	\$ 30,000	\$ -
26. Total Receipts	\$ 119,978	\$ 367,117	\$ 135,780	\$ 121,824	\$ 222,287	\$ 218,174
27. Giv. To Syn. Guide.	\$ 4,221	\$ 27,000	\$ 13,471	\$ 9,176	\$ 47,474	\$ 17,250
28. Giv. To Clas. Guide.	\$ 1,056	\$ 7,218	\$ 3,399	\$ 2,442	\$ 12,408	\$ 4,554
29. RCUS non-budget	\$ 888	\$ -	\$ 2,209	\$ -	\$ 4,989	\$ 2,585
30. Non-RCUS causes	\$ 1,128	\$ 22,989	\$ 275	\$ -	\$ 5,330	\$ 7,402
31. Other Expenses	\$ 23,939	\$ 163,608	\$ 116,343	\$ 96,014	\$ 187,437	\$ 199,561
32. Total Expenses	\$ 31,232	\$ 220,815	\$ 135,697	\$ 107,632	\$ 257,638	\$ 231,352
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	\$ 112,636	\$ -	\$ 750,000	\$ -	\$ 3,570,900	\$ 2,000,000
34. Val. Of Parsonage	\$ 70,000	\$ 371,972	\$ 125,000	\$ -	\$ 425,600	\$ -
35. Impr. Of Property	\$ 17,636	\$ -	\$ 5,662	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,936
36. Property Debt	\$ 91,138	\$ 250,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 44,000
37. Debt Paid Last YR.	\$ 6,303	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 60,000
38. Synod Giving/Com.	\$ 325	\$ 250	\$ 264	\$ 204	\$ 257	\$ 265
39. Classis Giving/Com.	\$ 81	\$ 67	\$ 67	\$ 54	\$ 67	\$ 70
40. RCUS Giving/Com.	\$ 474	\$ 317	\$ 374	\$ 258	\$ 351	\$ 375

* - Statistics for Bluebell, PA are included in statistics for Waymart, PA.

Manitowoc	Minneapolis	Napoleon	Waymart	Bluebell*	Total 2019	Total 2018	% Change
Wisconsin	Minnesota	Ohio	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania			
3	3	3	2	1	26	25	4%
3	5	3	0	0	29	28	3%
119	119	60	25	10	800	815	-2%
1	2	0	0	0	6	9	-50%
0	2	0	0	0	3	10	-233%
4	0	0	0	0	35	15	57%
5	4	0	0	0	44	34	23%
124	123	60	25	10	844	849	-1%
0	0	0	5	0	19	18	5%
0	1	0	1	0	11	18	-64%
6	0	0	0	0	8	15	-88%
6	1	0	6	0	38	51	-34%
118	122	60	19	10	796	788	1%
14	63	29	7	2	262	224	15%
132	185	89	26	12	1058	1011	4%
73	54	37	10	5	442	436	1%
5	69	22	2	2	199	185	7%
0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0%
4	5	1	1	0	43	29	33%
4	5	1	1	0	45	31	31%
119	116	52	19	10	745	754	-1%
4	6	6	12	12	83	84	-1%
\$ 159,678	\$ 295,490	\$ 136,545	\$ 44,838		\$ 1,740,281	\$ 1,554,508	11%
\$ 4,820	\$ 32,289	\$ 793	\$ -		\$ 77,019	\$ 106,482	-38%
\$ 33,623	\$ 31,657	\$ 1,048	\$ 9,846		\$ 118,487	\$ 149,624	-26%
\$ 198,121	\$ 359,436	\$ 138,386	\$ 54,684	\$ -	\$ 1,935,787	\$ 1,810,614	6%
\$ 31,731	\$ 29,459	\$ 8,309	\$ 6,420		\$ 194,511	\$ 199,246	-2%
\$ 8,019	\$ 7,755	\$ 3,960	\$ 1,650		\$ 52,461	\$ 53,530	-2%
\$ 7,068	\$ 10,402	\$ 445	\$ -		\$ 28,586	\$ 28,956	-1%
\$ 1,569	\$ 23,349	\$ 2,953	\$ -		\$ 64,995	\$ 56,213	14%
\$ 131,578	\$ 288,740	\$ 108,365	\$ 44,027		\$ 1,359,612	\$ 1,458,923	-7%
\$ 179,965	\$ 359,705	\$ 124,032	\$ 52,097	\$ -	\$ 1,700,165	\$ 1,796,868	-6%
\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,927,000	\$ 275,000	\$ -		\$ 9,635,536	\$ 9,986,536	-4%
\$ 250,000	\$ 366,000	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 1,608,572	\$ 1,594,572	1%
\$ -	\$ 9,577	\$ 8,927	\$ -		\$ 53,738	\$ 746,164	-1289%
\$ -	\$ 327,172	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 712,310	\$ 1,288,867	-81%
\$ -	\$ 25,174	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 91,477	\$ 23,211	75%
\$ 267	\$ 248	\$ 138	\$ 257	\$ -	246	223	9%
\$ 67	\$ 65	\$ 66	\$ 66	\$ -	66	70	-6%
\$ 393	\$ 400	\$ 212	\$ 323	\$ -	349	343	2%

APPENDIX #4

Standing Rules of Covenant East Classis

1. The fiscal year of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. shall run from July 1st to June 30th of the following year. The Classical Dues shall be due on the first of June and are to be paid not later than the thirtieth of June of the current fiscal year. [2011]
2. The Consistory of the Church to which the treasurer belongs shall audit the final Classis Treasurer report in July. The Treasurer shall distribute their findings and his report to the Consistories of Classis. [2012]
3. The parochial reports shall be forwarded to the President and the statistics to the Stated Clerk of Classis two weeks before the Spring Session of Classis.
4. The writ of certification of delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two weeks before the Spring session of Classis.
5. All congregations shall present an annual report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school at the Spring Meeting of Classis. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire Heidelberg Catechism before confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Bible survey, Bible reading, Catechism, and also singing of “Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”
6. The Standing Rules shall be read immediately after defining the bar of the house.
7. If pastors, elders, or members of congregations request information from the Executive of Classis concerning Constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented to the parties concerned in written form and pertain only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
8. A pastor and his elder delegate to Classis shall be paid a maximum of fifty cents per running mile; when an elder or pastor drives his own car, he shall be paid fifty cents per mile; when a pastor or elder rides with another person he shall be paid \$20 per day. When distance and time require delegates to use public transportation to Classis, they shall be granted full fare. [2009]
9. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis at fifty cents per running mile, or, if several ride together in one car or travel by public transportation, the actual fare. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only to those delegates to Classis whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the

Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Classis or have been properly excused by Classis. [2009]

10. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.

11. The Classis shall designate the following Permanent Committees when needed as follows: Executive, Candidates and Credentials, Church Camp, Interchurch Relations, Missions, Publications. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. [2014] The members of the Executive Committee shall not be from the same congregation. [2016] 12. The complete Classis statistics shall be made part of the minutes at the Spring Meeting of Classis.

13. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.

14. Prior to the Spring Meeting of Classis, the Spiritual Council of each charge shall direct the elder delegate how to answer the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. Every charge that will not have an elder delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. This copy shall be signed by all the elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk. [2003] Whenever the congregation amends its constitution and/or bylaws, these amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee of Classis for its information. [2017]

15. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the Churches at least three weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis. If possible, overtures with their supporting grounds shall be submitted to the clerk of classis at least three weeks before the scheduled meeting for circulation among the churches of classis. [2006]

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

17. Students for the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend seminaries which are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.

18. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship of eight months for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the RCUS for at least five years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the peculiarities and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.

19. The Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of \$500.00 annually. [2005]. The President shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually [2015]. The Treasurer shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually. [2020]

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

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

[Standing Rule #22 was removed 2018.]