

2003

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES

NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS

**REFORMED CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES**

**Special Meeting
October 22, 2002
Harvest Reformed Church
Minot, North Dakota**

**18th Annual Spring Meeting
March 3-4, 2003
Hope Reformed Church
Pierre, South Dakota**



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2003 Delegates:

Front Row - Rod De Jong, Tracy Gruggett, Milbert Kappes, Mike McGee,
David Dawn, William Haddock, Ralph Kusler
Back Row - Norm Jones, Steve Richert, Dan Schnabel, Dale Clark, Tom
Ochsner, Chester Beck, Tim Rott
Not Pictured: Lynn Goehring

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**NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS
 REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
 Special Meeting
 October 22, 2002
 Minot, North Dakota**

OFFICERS OF CLASSIS

PRESIDENT: Rev. Dale Clark
VICE-PRESIDENT: Rev. Herman Van Stedum
STATED CLERK: Elder Rod De Jong
TREASURER: Elder Ralph Kusler

ROLL OF CLASSIS

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

- Clark, Rev. Dale (Eureka RCUS, Eureka)**
 309 H Ave., PO Box 276, Eureka, SD 57437
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- Dawn, David (First RCUS, Aberdeen; Oranien RCUS, Leola)**
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 PH: 605/229-5953; e-mail: rcus@usa.com
- Gruggett, Rev. Tracy (Covenant RCUS, Watertown)**
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- Haddock, Rev. William (Hope RCUS, Pierre)**
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- Jones, Rev. Norman (retired, Hope RCUS, Pierre)**
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- Richert, Rev. Steven (Salem RCUS, Ashley; Hosmer RCUS, Hosmer)**
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 PH: 701/288-3682; e-mail: richrts@charcterlink.net
- Schnabel, Rev. Dan (First RCUS, Herreid)**
 PO Box 316, Herreid, SD 57632
 PH: 605/437-2813; e-mail: dschnabel@valleytel.net

LICENTIATES

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ELDERS

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- Dockter, Mr. Allen (Harvest RCUS, Minot)**
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- Dockter, Mr. Reinhold (Salem RCUS, Ashley)**
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 PH: 701/288-3884
- Fickbohm, Mr. Alan (Hope RCUS, Pierre)**
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- Kappes, Mr. Milbert (Oranien RCUS, Leola)**
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- Kusler, Mr. Ralph (First RCUS, Aberdeen)**
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- Ochsner, Mr. Tom (First RCUS, Herreid)**
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 PH: 605/437-2262
- Rau, Mr. Alwin (Kassel RCUS, Denhoff)**
 540 20th St. NE, Kief, ND 58747-9339
 PH: 701/626-7312

I. SERVICES

A Special Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis convened on Tuesday, October 22nd, 2002, at Harvest Reformed Church of Minot, North Dakota, at 10:05A.M. Rev. Dale Clark opened the session with prayer and led the assembly in song, using Hymn #10 of the Trinity Hymnal. Afterwards, he conducted the opening devotion, using II Tim. 2:1-13 as the text, and then prayed.

II. ORGANIZATION

President Dale Clark called the assembly to order. The roll was called after the devotion which showed 4 ministers, 4 elders and 1 licentiate present, a quorum. The President defined the bar of the house as being the first 3 pews on either side of the church. Rev. Tracy Gruggett was appointed teller by the President.

Rev. Gruggett and Rev. David Dawn were seated and placed on the roll as new members of Classis. The right hand of fellowship was extended to them by the body. Rev. Dan Schnabel prayed for the new ministers.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA, ORDERS OF THE DAY, SPECIAL ORDERS

The Agenda, Services, Order of the Day and Special Order were adopted.

**IV. WELCOME & SEATING OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES;
WELCOME & SEATING OF VISITORS**

Elder Jim Snyder of Harvest Reformed Church of Minot was seated in the bar of the house and was given the privilege of the floor.

V. ANNOUNCEMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Examination & Licensure: Dan Schnabel, Rod De Jong
Excuses & Overtures: David Dawn, Dale Clark, Alwin Rau
Finances: Tracy Gruggett, Chester Beck, Allen Dockter

VI. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Note: All recommendations in the Standing Committee reports appear in their final, amended form, and were adopted unless otherwise noted.

A. Examinations & Licensure

Recommendations:

1. The examination of Mr. Mike McGee be sustained.
2. Confirmation of call for Mike McGee.
3. Ordination and Installation be as follows:
 - a. Date - October 31, 2002 - 7:30 P.M.
 - b. Place - Harvest Reformed Church, Minot, North Dakota
 - c. Officiating - Rev. Dan Schnabel
 - d. Charge to the Pastor - Rev. Steve Richert
 - e. Charge to the Congregation - Rev. Dale Clark
 - f. Installation Committee - D. Clark, D. Schnabel, A. Dockter, J. Snyder

B. Excuses

The Excuses committee was combined with the Overtures committee.

C. Finances

We bring the following recommendations:

	Miles	Rate	Total
David Dawn	570	\$0.04	\$ 22.50
Chester Beck	400	\$0.20	\$ 80.00
Alwin E. Rau	140	\$0.20	\$ 28.00
Dale Clark	400	\$0.04	\$ 16.00
Dan Schnabel	400	\$0.04	\$ 16.00
Rod De Jong	770	\$0.20	\$ 154.00
Tracy Gruggett	385	\$0.40	\$ 154.00
Total			\$ 331.90

T. Gruggett, A. Dockter

D. Overtures

Your Committee has received the following overtures:

1. Request from Harvest Reformed Church arranging an installation service for Michael McGee.
2. Overture from Elder Rod De Jong to excuse Rev. Steve Richert and the Ashley & Hosmer elders from all sessions of Classis.
3. Overture from Rev. David Daw to excuse Elders Ralph Kusler and Ferdinand Opp (Aberdeen) and Elder Milbert Kappes (Leola) from all sessions of Classis.
4. Overture from Rev. William Haddock to excuse himself and Elders Allan Fickbohm and Lynn Goehring (Pierre) from all sessions of Classis.
5. Overture from Dale Schick asking to be excused from all sessions of Classis.
6. Overture from Rod De Jong asking to excuse Tom Ochsner from all sessions of Classis.

Recommendations:

1. That all requests for excuses in overtures 2-4 be granted.
2. That overture 1 be referred to the Examinations & Licensure Committee.
3. That all request for excuses in overtures 5-6 be granted.
4. That Classis direct the following paragraph be placed in Sunday's bulletin of the Harvest Reformed Church:

The Northern Plains Classis extends their gratitude to the members of the Harvest Reformed Church during their recent Classis meeting. The providing of food and lodging was lovingly provided. We thank God for your fellowship in the Gospel.

D. Dawn, D. Clark, A. Rau

VII. READING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes were read and corrected. The President asked: "Shall the minutes be now approved as amended?" Since there were no objections, he declared the minutes approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

On motion, the body adjourned until the 2003 Spring Meeting of Classis. The final roll call showed 4 ministers, 4 elders and 1 licentiate present. Allen Dockter led the Assembly in the closing devotion from Psalm 146. The President, Dale Clark, led the Classis in confessing the Apostle's Creed, in praying the Lord's Prayer, and then pronounced the Benediction.

2003 DIRECTORY NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS (RCUS)
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NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS
REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
Spring Meeting
March 3-4, 2003
Pierre, South Dakota

CLASSICAL GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

Classical	
Dues	\$3.00
Missions	<u>\$38.00</u>
Total	\$41.00

OFFICERS OF CLASSIS

- PRESIDENT: Rev. Dale Clark
 VICE-PRESIDENT: Rev. Steve Richert
 STATED CLERK: Elder Rod De Jong
 TREASURER: Elder Ralph Kusler

PERMANENT COMMITTEES

(underline indicates chairman)

- AUDITING: D. Dawn, M. Kappes, J. Bender
 CAMP: D. Schnabel, M. McGee, C. Beck, J. Snyder
 CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS: D. Dawn, D. Schnabel, S. Richert, F. Opp
 CHRISTIAN ED. & PUB.: W. Haddock, N. Jones, J. Hieb, D. Schnabel
 DIACONAL: D. Clark, C. Beck, M. Kappes
 EXECUTIVE: D. Clark, R. De Jong, R. Kusler
 HOME MISSIONS: S. Richert, D. Clark, T. Rott, T. Ochsner
 INTERCHURCH RELATIONS: T. Gruggett, N. Jones, L. Goehring

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

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**2003 DIRECTORY
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS (RCUS)**

**2003 DIRECTORY
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS (RCUS)**

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**2003 DIRECTORY
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS (RCUS)**

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PH: 605/437-2772

**2003 DIRECTORY
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS (RCUS)**

CHURCHES

Aberdeen, SD
57401.....605/225-6120
First RCUS, 9th Ave. and Dakota S. St. (Mail: 1214 S. McCoy St.)
Worship: 9:00 AM; Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Pastor: David Dawn (wife, Colleen)

Ashley, ND
58413.....701/228-3682
Salem RCUS, 209 1st Ave. SW (Mail: PO Box 345)
Worship: 9:00 AM or 11:00 AM (alternating monthly, please call)
Pastor: Steve Richert (wife, Nancy)

Denhoff, ND
58430.....701/768-2892
Kassel RCUS, 14 miles N. and 3½ miles W. of Denhoff
(Mail: 540 20th St. NE, Kief, ND 58747-9339)
Worship: 10:00 AM

Eureka, SD
57437.....605/284-2396
Eureka RCUS, 310 F Ave. (Mail: PO Box 276)
Worship: 9:00 AM; Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Pastor: Dale Clark (wife, Sandra)

Herreid, SD
57632.....605/437-2414
First RCUS, Highway 83/ north end of town
(Mail: 201 Dyke St., PO Box 316)
Worship 9:00 or 11:00 AM (please call); Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Pastor: Dan Schnabel (wife, Marie)

**2003 DIRECTORY
NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS (RCUS)**

Hosmer, SD

57448.....605/283-2222

Hosmer RCUS, 2 blocks south of the water tower (Mail: PO Box 88)
Worship: 9:00 AM or 11:00 AM (alternating monthly, please call)
Pastor: Steve Richert (wife, Nancy)

Leola, SD

57456.....605/439-3537

Oranien RCUS, Hwy. 10 and Burtis (Mail: 1214 S. McCoy St., Aberdeen, SD 57401)
Worship: 11:00 AM
Pastor: David Dawn (wife, Colleen)

Minot, ND 58701.....701/838-

0605

Harvest RCUS, 5200 7th. Ave. SW
(On Highway 2, one mile west of the Highway 83 bypass)
Worship: 10:30 AM; Sunday School 9:15 AM
Pastor: Michael McGee (wife, Jennie)

Pierre, SD

57501.....605/224-7846

Hope RCUS, 317 S. Garfield
Worship: 9:00 AM; Sunday School: 10:25 AM
(for information, call 605/224-5170 then press 3985)
Pastor: William Haddock (wife, Ferne)

Watertown, SD

57201.....605/882-9704

Covenant RCUS, 905 7th Ave. NE (Mail: 434 30th St. NW)
Worship: 10:00 AM; Sunday School: 11:20 AM
Pastor: Tracy Gruggett (wife, Michelle)

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES FOR 2003 SPRING MEETING

**NORTHERN PLAINS CLASSIS
REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES**

**Spring Meeting
March 3-4, 2003
Pierre, South Dakota**

I. SERVICES

The 18th Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis convened on Monday, March 4th, 2003, at Hope Reformed Church of Pierre, South Dakota at 1:05 P.M. Rev. Steve Richert opened the Classis with a hymn, devotion and prayer, using John 10:7-18 as the text.

The Classis met for a worship service with the congregation of the Hope Reformed Church on Monday evening at 7:30 p.m. Rev. Dan Schnabel conducted the worship service and Rev. David Dawn preached a sermon titled "Pride," using Philippians 1:12-20 as the sermon text.

On Tuesday, March 4th, the Northern Plains Classis opened the second day of session with a devotion conducted by Rev. Mike McGee, using Philippians 2:12-18 as the text.

II. ORGANIZATION

The President, Rev. Dale Clark called the assembly to order. The roll was called after the devotion which showed 8 ministers, and 7 elders, a quorum. The President defined the bar of the house as being the first 4 pews on either side of the church. The President appointed Rev. Mike McGee and Elder Tim Rott as tellers and appointed Rev. David Dawn the *Reformed Herald* reporter.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Rev. Dale Clark
Vice-President: Rev. Steve Richert
Stated Clerk: Elder Rod De Jong
Treasurer: Elder Ralph Kusler

**III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA, ORDERS OF THE DAY, AND
SPECIAL ORDERS**

The Agenda, Orders of the Day and Special Orders were adopted by the Classis.

IV. WELCOME & SEATING OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES; WELCOME & SEATING OF VISITORS

The President welcomed Rev. Darin Thole, pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Hamill, South Dakota, who represented the Orthodox Presbyterian Church Presbytery of the Dakotas as a fraternal delegate.

V. RECEPTION OF NEW CHURCHES

There were no new congregations to be received.

VI. RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS

Rev. David Dawn and Rev. Mike McGee were received as new ministers on the roll of Classis.

VII. THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF CLASSIS

(Chairman are underlined)

Education, Student Aid, and Publications: Dawn, Jones, Goehring, Kappes

Examination and Licensure: Schnabel, Richert, Kusler, De Jong

Excuses: Jones, Clark, Rott

Finances, Benevolence and Ministerial Aid: Richert, McGee, Kusler, Goehring

Judicial: Haddock, Schnabel, Rott, De Jong

Missions: McGee, Haddock, Hieb, Beck

Nominations: Jones, Dawn, Ochsner

Overtures: Gruggett, Haddock, Hieb, Beck

Services and Interchurch Relations: Gruggett, Clark, Kappes, Ochsner

VIII. PRESENTATION OF OVERTURES, PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk presented overtures and communications to the Standing Overture Committee. The following Permanent Committee Reports were referred to these Standing Committees:

- Auditing - to Finances, Benevolence and Ministerial Aid
- Camp - to Education, Publication, and Student Aid
- Candidates and Credentials - to Examinations and Licensure
- Christian Education - to Education, Publication, and Student Aid
- Diaconal - to Finances, Benevolence and Ministerial Aid
- Home Missions - to Missions

Interchurch Relations - to Services and Interchurch Relations AUDITING COMMITTEE

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your Committee met to audit the Treasurer's books on 6th February, 2003. We have found them to be in order.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. David A. Dawn, Elder Ferdinand Opp, Elder Milbert Kappes

CAMP COMMITTEE

Members Present: Elder Roger Gallimore, chair; Rev. Ron Morris of South Central Classis and Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Tracy Gruggett representing Northern Plains Classis.

1. Roger called the meeting to order viz conference call. Ron opened the meeting in prayer.
2. Highlights of the 2002 finance report showed a net loss of \$36.21. The ending balance is \$3,898.59.
3. The proposed 2003 budget includes moderate increases in expenses, which will increase camper fees to \$113 per camper. This follows a decrease in camper fees last year. The most significant increase in expenses over budget last year was for production of a video slide show and for video productions of the lessons. The other substantial increase was in administration, which was caused by the conference call for the camp committee. Expanding the call from three to four people required the use of conference call services. Note that Heidelberg Youth Camp pays all expenses for the committee meeting, the quarterly HYC Fire publication and video production of the lessons. These costs are not borne by the Classis.
4. Eileen Gallimore, longtime camp head cook, will no longer be able to manage the food service for HYC for health reasons. Eileen provided a valuable service for camp as her efforts saved on huge costs to campers. Reviewing an alternate budget for 2003 with Camp Bob Marshall providing the food service revealed that camper fees for 2003 would be \$159 per camper. Consequently, discussion was held regarding possible replacements. Rev. Ron Morris will lead the search for a possible replacement.
5. Evaluations from HYC 2002 were reviewed with the following suggestions: Maintain last year's schedule that allowed for more free time, limit soap box responses to one pastor per question allowing for

one counter-point if needed, and conduct the Sylvan Lake outing only if weather permits.

6. Discussion was held regarding the talent show and the overall applicability of silliness and fun in a Christian camp. It was agreed that the Reformed view of recreation applied that allows for fun and enjoyment. However, it was noted that Counselors were responsible for the content of skits and talents and that a measure of sensitivity was on order for those who do not desire to be the object of jokes.
7. The theme of HYC 2003 is *Return of the King*. Continuing with HYC as largely focused on lessons applying the Biblical world view to contemporary issues, this theme continues to play on the currently popular movie and book trilogy, *Lord of the Rings*, while giving an eschatological backdrop.
8. Rev. Ron Morris will coordinate those teaching the camp lesson, which will include:

Return of the King - An overview lesson aimed at the truth that Jesus Christ will come again in glory. (Juniors and Seniors)

What Will It Be Like? Part One- One of the most common questions received from campers has to do with either Heaven or Hell. This lesson is a review of what the Scriptures have to teach us of Heaven along with discrediting popular, but untrue, beliefs regarding Heaven. (Juniors and Seniors)

What Will It Be Like? Part Two -This is the counterpart to part one. This lesson answers the question of what awaits the unbeliever as well as shattering popularized concepts of Hell. (Juniors and Seniors)

What's War Got To Do With It? - As of this writing, war appears to be imminent for the United States. This lesson teaches the Biblical world view of war and the Christian's response to our country engaging in war. (Juniors and Seniors)

Living Between the Times - Part of the Christian life is the tension of living both in this world and not of this world, as both saint and sinner. This lesson will help the campers understand the struggle to daily fight the good fight against all our enemies: Satan, the world and our own flesh. (Juniors and Seniors)

Suicide - The taking of one's own life is a serious matter to be handled with a great deal of sensitivity. That will be the approach as this lesson provides the Biblical perspective in this crucial topic. (Seniors only)

Left Behind? - The Christian culture in the U.S. is saturated with the popular Left Behind series of books and movies. This lesson will dispel many of the precepts offered by the Left Behind folks through a historical and Biblical study. (Seniors only)

Honest To God - Commonly overlooked in studies is the fact that cheating among those who call themselves Christians is not that much different from those who are unbelievers. This lesson provides an overview of truth and honesty in the life of the Christian. (Juniors only)

Don't Worry, Be Happy - Gripped by the fear of impending doom in the end times, many Christians occupy themselves with looking for signs that will surely bring on Armageddon. This lesson will teach how we are to live in light of the promise of Christ's return. (Juniors only)

9. Rev. Ron Morris will coordinate those who will lead the evening worship services. The offering from the evening worship services will go to RCUS foreign mission work.
10. Rev. Dan Schnabel will coordinate the dissemination of videos from HYC.
11. HYC 2003 dates are July 21-25. Please note future organizers of the family camp and any other denominational function, that HYC dates will always be the last full week of July. Camp Bob Marshall is reserved 5 years in advance each year.
12. In an effort to help with organization and getting the proper T-shirt sizes for campers, registrations and fees must be received by June 27. A late fee of \$15 will be added to those registrations received after June 27.
13. Rev. Dan Schnabel closed the meeting in prayer.

The Heidelberg Youth Camp Committee recommends that:

1. Classis approve the 2003 Heidelberg Youth Camp proposed budget and camper fees.
2. Classis approve the report as a whole of the Heidelberg Youth Camp Committee.

**Heidelberg Youth Camp
Proposed Budget 2003**

Balance Forward is \$3,934.80

	(111 Campers 38 adults)	(111 Campers 38 adults)
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Revenue

	<u>Actual 2002</u>	<u>Budget 2003</u>
Camp Fees	\$11,987.00	\$12,540.00
Gifts	\$116.00	\$150.00
Worship Offering	\$462.34	\$500.00
Interest	\$5.95	\$10.00
T-Shirts Sales	\$43.50	\$0.00
Camp Store Sales	<u>\$540.42</u>	<u>\$550.00</u>
Total Revenue	\$13,065.21	\$13,750.00

Expense

Facility Use	\$7,766.50	\$7,800.00
Food	\$1,910.31	\$2,000.00
T-Shirts	\$1,244.80	\$1,250.00
Crafts	\$194.84	\$200.00
Supplies	\$108.72	\$150.00
Promotion	\$419.99	\$500.00
Custer State Park Fees	\$132.00	\$150.00
Postage	\$0.00	\$50.00
Administration	\$320.90	\$350.00
Equipment	\$0.00	\$100.00
HYC Fire	\$269.34	\$400.00
Camp Store Supplies	\$271.68	\$300.00
Worship Offering	\$462.34	\$500.00
Total Expense	\$13,101.42	\$13,750.00

Revenue – Expense	(\$36.21)	\$0.00
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Summary

Balance Forward	\$3,934.80	\$3,898.59
Total Revenue	\$13,065.21	\$13,750.00
Total Expense	\$13,101.45	\$13,750.00
Ending Balance	\$3,898.59	\$3,898.59

Proposed:

2003 fees @ \$113 per camper.

Adult volunteers continue to be free.

\$50 fee per child not attending as campers.

Each non-participating congregation in Northern Plains and South Central Classis set out a plate for contributions to the camp.

If the camp provides the meals, then the camper fee would be \$159.

Respectfully Submitted,

T. Gruggett, D. Schnabel

CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Esteemed Brothers:

The Candidates and Credentials Committee dealt with three items this last year. The examination and ordination of Licentiate Tracy Gruggett into the ministry, the examination concerning intent of Rev. David Dawn, and the examination and ordination of Licentiate Mike McGee.

Concerning Licentiate Tracy Gruggett: Licentiate Tracy Gruggett who had been serving Covenant Reformed Church in Watertown, S.D., was examined for ordination at the Spring Classis meeting. Tracy sustained a successful exam and was ordained for the ministry of our Lord late in March of 2002.

Concerning Rev. David Dawn: Since the pulpits of First Reformed Church in Aberdeen and the Oranien Reformed Church in Leola were in the process of being vacated by the transfer of Rev. Herman Van Stedum, the congregations invited Rev. David Dawn to preach a trial sermon. In May 2002, Rev. David Dawn's examination concerning intent by the Candidates and Credentials Committee was sustained. Rev. David Dawn was then called by the congregations and after acceptance, Rev. David Dawn was installed in August of 2002.

Concerning Licentiate Mike McGee: Licentiate Mike McGee, who had been serving Harvest Reformed Church, was examined for ordination. Mike sustained a successful exam at the fall meeting of the Classis in October, 2002, and was ordained for the ministry of our Lord later that October.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dan Schnabel, Chairman

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Your committee reports the following:

1. The Reformed Doctrine of Justification.

Your committee is concerned about recent trends in the Reformed world that are confusing the doctrines of justification and sanctification. These trends have their recent origin in the "Norman Shepherd Controversy," and have expanded into efforts by some to completely reinterpret the Pauline doctrine of justification in a way quite different from the Reformed confessions. Your committee believes that Synod needs to address this matter with a teaching document and position statement that can be used in the RCUS.

2. The Northern Plains Chronicles

Rev. Norman Jones faithfully served as the editor of our Northern Plains Chronicles last year. He reports that he is willing to serve as editor for another year.

3. The NP Classis Video Library/Rev. Jones Library

Rev. Jones also serves as the librarian for the NP Classis Video Library. The Classis has a good selection of videos that are available to our congregations. simply by contacting Rev. Jones. In addition to this, Pastor Jones has also made his personal library available to our churches for use. Please contact him for information.

Your Committee Recommends:

1. That the Northern Plains Classis overture the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States to erect a Special Committee to study the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone in light of the current "Shepherd Controversy."

Grounds:

- a. Such a study, with a position statement, will be a valuable teaching aid to our members in dealing with this controversy.
- b. An official position of the RCUS on this matter will be beneficial to Spiritual Councils for use in potential discipline cases.
- c. Such a paper will be very helpful to the Classis when examining candidates for the ministry in the areas of justification and sanctification.

2. That the Northern Plains Chronicles be continued under the editorship of Rev. Jones, and that he be given a \$200.00 stipend for his labors on the newsletter.

3. That the NP Classis Video Library and the personal library of Rev. Norman Jones be promoted in our churches, and that Rev. N. Jones continue to serve as librarian.

Respectfully Submitted,

N. Jones, W. Haddock, A. Fickbohm

DIACONAL COMMITTEE

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Your committee did not meet, conducted no business, and makes no recommendations.

Respectfully Submitted,

D. Clark, C. Beck, M. Kappes

HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Esteemed Brethren:

Your committee met with Rev. Tracy Gruggett on Monday, February 3, 2003, in Aberdeen.

Rev. Gruggett reports that God has continued to bless the congregation in Watertown. They received two families into membership by letter of transfer. Two more families have committed to joining. Two families associated with the Fargo work have been dismissed. They currently have 23 members. Average weekly attendance is 24.

Another blessing is that the members have been generous givers. Offerings were up \$4,500 over the previous year. The congregation is experiencing great harmony and unity.

Rev. Gruggett continues his radio ministry on KWAT. Outreach includes flyers placed on bulletin boards and invitations left at homes in the neighborhood. Evangelism classes are being conducted for the congregation. Plans are being made to develop a brochure that will be distributed through a local organization called the Watertown Greeter.

Your committee was encouraged by Rev. Gruggett's report. We believe the work in Watertown is still viable and worthy of support.

Your committee also discussed the ways and means of starting new mission works. We think that a Missionary-At-Large is needed. Funds for such a missionary would have to be raised over time. After some discussion we decided on taking a preliminary step. That step would be to hire a summer intern for Classis. The intern would be available to supply the pulpits in Classis for vacationing pastors. He would get to know our Classis and we him. He could also foster more missions-mindedness in our congregations.

Recommendations:

- 1) That the NPC budget \$16,000 for Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, SD for 2003 and 2004 and request \$8,145 from Synod for 2004.
- 2) That the NPC budget \$9,000 for future mission works.

Respectfully Submitted:

Steven Richert, Dale Clark, Tom Ochsner, Tim Rott

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Dear Brothers of the Northern Plains Classis,

Your committee reports the following concerning our activity this past classical year:

- July 5, 2002: An email invitation was received from Rev. Richard Aasman of Classis Alberta (Can. Ref. Churches) to send a fraternal delegate to their Classis meeting in Calgary, Alberta, Oct. 8, 2002.
- July 7, 2002: We replied to the invitation from Classis Alberta, regretting that we had to decline their invitation, and in turn invited them to send a delegate to our Spring Meeting in March, 2002.
- September 3, 2002: An invitation was received from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Dakotas (POD) to send a fraternal delegate to their meeting in Volga, SD, Oct. 1, 2002. (The Minutes of their April 2-3 meeting in Denver were enclosed.

- September 16, 2002: Rev. Tracy Gruggett was appointed by your committee to attend the POD meeting as our fraternal delegate in Volga, SD, Oct. 1, 2002. His report of that meeting is appended to this report.
- October 3, 2002: An invitation was sent to Classis Alberta about the special meeting of the NPC to examine Mr. Mike McGee for ordination. We understand that someone from Classis Alberta did attend.
- February 9, 2003: We e-mailed an invitation to Classis Alberta to send a fraternal delegate to our Spring Meeting of the NPC that will be held in Pierre, SD, March 3-4, 2003.
- February 10, 2003: We were notified by Classis Alberta that Rev. Theo Lodder has been appointed as fraternal delegate to our Spring Meeting, if he desires to come.
- February 11, 2003: An e-mail invitation was sent to the Stated Clerk of the POD (Rev. A. Allison) to send a fraternal delegate to our Spring Meeting in Pierre.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Jones, Tracy Gruggett, Alwin Rau

IX. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

A. PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE CLASSIS

"From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." (Acts 14:26-27)

Again it is time to give an evaluation of our faithfulness to our Savior and Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. By what standard are we make this evaluation? Clearly, we must start with the three marks of the church. But Article 29 of the Belgic confession also speaks of the marks of believers. The parochial reports of the pastors give us some ideas of what is happening in this regard throughout the Classis.

The first mark is that of the preaching of the Gospel. Each report has indicated that the Word of God is being preached each Lord's Day. Many of the reports also indicate additional opportunities to give the Gospel to those we normally don't see. Whether it is over the radio, in newspapers, or public forums, the Gospel is being declared in our communities, not just our congregations. The various series and topics that are being delivered also indicate that not just favorite ideas are being preached, but the whole counsel of God.

Less has been stated concerning the Lord's Supper and Holy Baptism. From what is stated, these precious sacraments are being faithfully administered in our churches. From what has been stated regarding the last mark, discipline, it would appear that where necessary, the appropriate actions are being taken. The three marks would seem to be actively practiced within the churches of the Classis.

As for the makers of the Christians, this is a more difficult matter to ascertain from this distance from the congregations. Some of the parochial reports do mention the growth in grace of the members.

With respect to those who are members of the Church, they may be known by the marks of Christians; namely, by faith, and when, having received Jesus Christ the only Savior, they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor, neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof. But this is not to be understood as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion, and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they have remission of sins, through faith in Him.

May we as the people of God truly reflect these works for the glory of our Savior.

There is one last item which I wish to raise concerning the health of our Classis. In many of the reports, a reference was made to the declining membership of an aging and declining population. As a Classis, we need to be thinking of missions here at home more than we do. The Home Missions report is presenting an idea to encourage us to get beyond our usual thinking, in preparation for a more concerted effort in missions. We need to do this, however, not out of concern for our survival, but for Christ (James 4:3). Our needs come second to the needs of others. Our comforts may need to be sacrificed for others to hear the Good News in its purity. We possess a treasure that will simply rot if we seek to keep it to ourselves. Our Classis is last in terms of the guidelines for missions. Is it time for us to give sacrificially to the Gospel proclaimed throughout our boundaries? Western and South Central Classes have been committed to missions and this is seen in their giving for missions. Our commitment is also seen in how much we give for this purpose. I say this to spur us on in righteousness. We must be about our Savior's work in this area.

May our faithful God and Lord work in and through us to build and strengthen His church here at this time and in this place.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Clark

B. STATED CLERK'S REPORT

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the delegates for entrusting me with the duties of the Stated Clerk this past year. It has been a learning experience and I would be willing to serve another term if you see fit.

Over the past year, the duties performed were:

4. Prepared the Abstract for the 18th Annual Session with distribution by mail to the Churches of Classis and delivery at the Synod meeting.
5. Presented the Classis Meeting Minutes to 256th Synod of the Reformed Church of the United States. There were a number of items noted in the review of the minutes and I will take these into account in future minutes.
6. Prepared the Statistical Report and Stated Clerk's Report for this year's meeting.

Correspondence Mailed:

1. 7 Executive Circulars to the Delegates of Classis.
2. Dismissed Rev. Herman Van Stedum to South Central Classis.
3. Mailed Reception of Rev. David Dawn to South Central Classis.
4. 6 items to the Stated Clerk of Synod which were:
 - a. Statistical & Membership Reports of the NPC
 - b. Writ of Certification for Delegates to the 256th Synod
 - c. Addresses of the Churches and Delegates of the NPC
 - d. Report of Changes
 - e. One overture from NPC to Synod
 - f. Three Necrologies
5. Sent two Testimonials of Ordination, one for Rev. Tracy Gruggett & one for Rev. Michael McGee

Correspondence Received:

1. Documents related to the resignation of Rev. Herman Van Stedum.
2. Documents related to the call of Rev. David Dawn.

In Christ

Rod De Jong

C. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON SYNOD

February 13, 2003

Brethren:

Report of the Executive Committee of Synod to the Classes

The purpose of the Report of the Executive Committee of Synod is to apprise the Classes of the decisions of Synod that require action by the Classes. It usually consists of such things as proposed amendments to the Constitution or Directory of Worship, or items of a similar nature.

In reviewing the minutes of Synod, the clerk finds that there are no items requiring action from the Classes. Classes, however, might want to consider a "take note" item. The last recommendation of the Standing Finance Committee reads: "20. [Take note] That the Synod encourage delegates from parent churches overseeing daughter churches or chapels to report their membership and financial statistics separately in order to ensure uniform reporting practices." (2002 Abstract, p. 64).

The Classes are also reminded that Mr. Clayton Greiman, Treasurer of Synod, has already announced his retirement as of the forthcoming Synod. Delegates are encouraged to consider possible replacements, realizing that the position requires not only accounting skills but also a large investment of time. The Stated Clerk has also indicated that he may not be able to produce the Abstracts of Synod as quickly as in the past. Although he is willing to continue in his position (if the Synod desires), Synod should consider nominations for Stated Clerk with a full understanding of the present Clerk's limitations.

In behalf of the Executive Committee,

Rev. Frank H. Walker

Stated Clerk

D. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON THEIR MINUTES

Esteemed Brethren:

Your Executive Committee brings this report as a summary of the business conducted by the Northern Plains Classis via circular letters this past year.

The Classis issued seven (7) circular letters last year and all recommendations of the Executive Committee became actions of the Classis, as no objections were received. The following recommendations from the circulars became actions of the Classis:

Executive Circular Vol. 17, No. 1

1. That the budget for Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, SD, be set at \$16,000.00 for the fiscal year 2003.

Executive Circular Vol. 17, No. 2

2. That the resignation of Rev. Herman Van Stedum from the two charges of First Reformed Church of Aberdeen and the Oranien Reformed Church of Leola; and the acceptance of the resignation by the First RCUS of Aberdeen and Oranien RCUS Consistories be declared in order.
3. That the pulpits of First Reformed Church of Aberdeen and Oranien Reformed Church of Leola be declared vacant as of June 30, 2002.
4. That Rev. Herman Van Stedum be transferred to the roll of ministers of the South Central Classis.

Executive Circular Vol. 17, No. 3

5. That the renumbered and re-organized Standing Rules be approved.

Executive Circular Vol. 17, No. 4

6. That the two (2) calls from First Reformed Church of Aberdeen and Oranien Reformed Church of Leola to Rev. David Dawn and supporting documents be declared in order.
7. That Rev. David Dawn be placed on the rolls of the Northern Plains Classis.

Executive Circular Vol. 17, No. 5

8. That the committee to install Reverend David Dawn be approved and that Rev. David Dawn be installed on August 4, 2002, at 7 P.M.

Executive Circular Vol. 17, No. 6

9. That Northern Plains Classis convenes a special meeting at 10:00 A.M., October 22, 2002, at Harvest Reformed Church of Minot, North Dakota, to conduct an exam of Mike McGee..

Executive Circular Vol. 17, No. 7

18. That the Northern Plains Classis convene the 18th Annual Spring Meeting at 1:00 PM, March 3rd, 2003 at the Hope Reformed Church of Pierre, South Dakota.”

Respectfully submitted,
Dale Clark, William Haddock, Rod De Jong

E. TREASURER'S REPORT

See Appendix A of the Abstract.

X. PAROCHIAL REPORTS OF MINISTERS

Rev. Dale Clark

Eureka Reformed Church, Eureka, South Dakota

“For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?” (2 Corinthians 2:15, 16) As I reflect on the past year, this verse does come into sharper focus. I am reminded of my own failures and shortcomings, hence the missed opportunities. Yet, our God is sufficient and continues to lead us in victory through Jesus Christ.

This past year I have preached 47 Sundays in Eureka, as well as preaching on Good Friday, Ascension Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. I also preached 6 times in other congregations: Hosmer, Herried, Denhoff, for Mission Fest, Aberdeen for Rev. Dawn's Installation and Minot for Rev. McGee's ordination. I preached series on portions of Acts, the Book of Habakkuk, the Book of Colossians, assorted other passages appropriate to the season, and now I am preaching through 1 Samuel.

For most Sundays I have conducted Adult Sunday School, finishing 1 Corinthians and commencing with 2 Corinthians. We have had something for most Sunday evenings: Back to Basics (studying the Confession), Youth Fellowship, or a Hymn Sing. Youth Fellowship was better attended in the spring than this fall. Sunday school is being provided for those in K-9, 25 covenant children, with the expectation that those who have been confirmed come to the adult class. Each Wednesday I have conducted Catechism classes. There are currently 14 students, of which, Lord willing, 3 will be confirmed. As a Spiritual Council, the procedure for our examinations has

been changed. I am in the process of expanding and adjusting the Confirmation Handbook.

I have had other opportunities to proclaim the gospel by conducting services in the nursing homes in Eureka and in Hosmer. Also, I was privileged to be the Memorial Day speaker at the community service. Other activities I have been engaged in are visitation of the sick and shut-ins, and devotions for Ladies Aid both at their meetings and at the nursing home in Eureka. I have also been involved in the local ministerial as President since this fall. I hope to give some Biblical direction to this group.

The membership continues to decline. We added 8 members this year, 6 by transfer and 2 by birth. However, we lost 16 in the same period by death, dismission and erasure. There is still some work to be done in cleaning up the rolls and reconstructing them so that they are accurate. The congregation decided to go to a free will offering instead of having dues. We hope this will encourage the members to give joyfully and abundantly. There is one item for prayer. Like the other churches in Eureka, we received a gift of over \$74,000. The prayer need is for wisdom in its use and to do so for God's, not our, glory.

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Clark

Rev. David A. Dawn

First Reformed Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

It is with great thanksgiving to God I find myself pastoring the churches in Leola and Aberdeen. As you well know, a little less than a year ago, these churches found themselves without a pastor. At the same time, the future of my own ministry was in doubt. In the good providence of God, the Lord brought us together to serve him in the Northern Plains Classis. For this, I praise God for his mercy.

Aberdeen and Leola are churches with congregations which are predominantly older. Aberdeen, however, does have a fair number of younger families as well. This means that a good deal of time is spent in visiting the elderly in their homes and nursing homes. These have been good times of fellowship and seem to provide comfort. These visits are primarily carried out in the afternoon whilst those to younger families are an evening activity.

Aberdeen's confirmation class has five youngsters in it. I first met four out of the five students in July when I drove them to and from Heidelberg Camp. This was an excellent introduction to my class. Additionally, these students are all

in their first year of confirmation class. This meant that there was no discontinuity in their studies caused by a change of teacher. The classes continue apace on Thursday afternoons.

We have no adult Sunday School at Aberdeen, as I have to leave right after the service to drive to Leola. We do, however, have fortnightly Bible studies in Aberdeen on Sunday evenings. At this time, the only activity in Leola is the morning service. There has been some discussion of attempting a Bible study, perhaps on a monthly basis, but nothing has come of this yet.

In both Aberdeen and Leola, there is a desire to evangelize the communities in which the churches are located. We have explored various possibilities, but none have borne fruit as such. My consolation is that the best evangelism is not conducted by organized programs but by the lives and words of the congregation. We also know, of course, that the preaching of the Gospel is the primary means of evangelism. This I have endeavored to do. It is true that, especially in Aberdeen, we have had a steady trickle of visitors. For this we thank God. I am very concerned that our church in Leola continue not only to survive but prosper. At this time, we have not found avenues to accomplish this.

Reviewing the above, I feel I should emphasize my awareness that growth is not a matter of numbers. Spiritually, the churches are remarkably trouble free. There is strong unity in the congregations. The preaching of the Word is well accepted. I believe it would be fair to say that there is spiritual growth.

To summarize, God has been at work in the Leola and Aberdeen congregations. It is a delight to see God's people worshiping, living, and growing in unity.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David A. Dawn

Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Covenant Reformed Church, Watertown, South Dakota

Fathers and Esteemed Brethren,

We of Covenant Reformed Church thank God for the financial and spiritual support that the Classis provides for Covenant Reformed Church. We believe that you will be happy to hear that your backing has not been without fruit.

God Blessings

- 1) The three marks of the church were evident throughout the year. The sacrament of baptism was administered once, the Lord's Supper six times.

The Word was faithfully proclaimed and taught each Lord's Day. The process of church discipline is being carried out. All the families received some form of pastoral visitation.

- 2) We received two families, via transfer, into membership. Another member was added through covenant baptism. In addition, another family is committed to becoming members in the not too distant future. One family has moved away. We dismissed two families, both associated with the work in Fargo. At present we have 25 members total. Average weekly attendance is at 24, up from 17 in 2001.
- 3) Giving by the members has been excellent. Our total from offerings was 4,500 dollars more than last year, exceeding this year's budget projection by the same amount. With significant help from Classis we were able to apply 16,500 dollars against our debts. One note was paid off. We now have one note remaining.
- 4) We have enjoyed great harmony and unity. There have been many expressions of friendship, sympathy, and service between the members of the body. The church is friendly to visitors; adults are attentive at the Bible studies and Sunday school classes. Two children's Sunday school classes were held for most of the year. The relation between the pastor and congregation seems peaceful. The elders and the pastor also get along well. One of our youth is being catechized by the pastor. The members are committed to the Reformed faith, and appear to appreciate the work of the ministry and the work of their particular pastor, in spite of his many flaws. For this I am thankful.
- 5) Outreach has occurred in the following areas. We continue the radio ministry, a 15 minute message each Sunday morning. How many people are listening in is presently unknown. I have heard of a family that had regularly listened. We got only one response in 2002. The fruit seems sparse, but we continue to think that it is a worthwhile ministry. In April we held a Sunday afternoon cantata that was advertised. We did receive a few visitors. I have placed flyers around town on bulletin boards advertising the church. As well on occasion I have placed invitations at homes in the neighborhoods. Evangelism classes are presently being conducted. Some of the members faithfully invite their friends and acquaintances. My wife and I have made efforts to establish friendships with our neighbors. I have been given opportunity to write several articles in the local paper, and attend the meetings of the local ministerial association.

We have men's and women's Bible studies. These are not specifically intended as outreach, but that is an implicit function. The women's study is attended by a few ladies who do not attend our church.

In the near future I will be making a church brochure, which will be placed in greeting packets that are sent to new-comers to Watertown. These are sent by an organization called the Watertown Greeter.

While there is much with us that is lacking to be sure, particularly in the area of personal evangelism, we believe that God continues to show His blessing. And given the numerical and financial growth it appears His blessing is increasing at least at the present time.

Our Needs

Prayer. Make a place for us in your regular prayers. In particular, pray that the Great Commission would be the high priority in shaping the life of our congregation. In keeping with that we need the grace of bold faith.

We could not exist without the gracious aid of Classis. As with last year we humbly request financial assistance in the sum 16,000 dollars. The delegates of Classis may remember that Classis last year decided to take on more of the financial load of supporting Covenant Church, inversely reducing the burden of Synod. We are asking the same amount from Classis for 2003, but are reducing our request for Synodical aid by 10%.

Thank you, brethren, for your support. May God bless you.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Tracy E. Gruggett

Rev. William Haddock

Hope Reformed Church, Pierre, South Dakota

Beloved Brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Once again it is time for your servant to report on the labors of another year of ministry within the bounds of the Northern Plains Classis. Last year the congregation of Hope Reformed Church in Pierre operated independently of financial aid from the Classis and Synod for the entire year. I am happy to report that God has provided the temporal blessings that we needed to maintain our ministry throughout the year. We have seen indication that we were able to do more than we had planned. We installed a new sign in front of our church building. The congregation had initially set aside \$3,000.00 for this project, but the final total was over \$4,200.00, \$1,200.00 of which we were able to provide above our budgeted goals last year. In addition to this, we needed to replace the furnace at the parsonage last year, an additional non-budgeted expense of over \$5,000.00. Despite these additional and substantial costs, the funds we received were sufficient for us to meet most of our needs. The one area where our congregation did fall short was in our

giving to the Synod, which came in at about 60% of our total obligation. The Consistory realizes that the other expenses we absorbed likely took away from our giving to the Synod, and we do hope to do better next year in meeting our Synodical Guidelines.

All in all, it does seem that the arrangement I have in working at the Office of the State Engineer will provide the means for Hope Reformed Church to support the ministry independent of financial assistance from the denomination. There are drawbacks to this arrangement in terms of the time demands upon my schedule, but this does seem to be the answer to our current needs. The Consistory has been very supportive in this situation. Last year I was able to take several timely vacations from the work, while Pastor Jones and the members of our Consistory provided for the ministry. The Consistory has promised such support for this coming year as well. Having worked a 40 hour-per-week schedule outside the church for nearly two years, I am able to report that the workload is something that I am currently able to manage. In some ways, the demands upon me seem less than when I served as pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church in Hamburg, the largest congregation in our denomination. I enjoy serving the Hope Reformed Church, I enjoy living in Pierre, and I have a good work situation at the State Engineer's Office. I can report to the Classis that I am where I believe God wants me to be.

The Hope Reformed Church continues to exhibit the marks of the Church as they are so confessed in Article XXIX of our Belgic Confession of Faith. The gospel preaching and teaching remains a strong point in our church. It is my goal each Lord's day to expound the Word of God in such a way that my sermons are faithful to the meaning of the text, that the points of the sermon arise from the text of Scripture itself, that the preaching is understandable, and the applications useful. We have many great opportunities to study the Scriptures at Hope Reformed. The Sunday School is a wonderful time of fellowship and instruction for all ages. The mid-week Bible study gives us an opportunity for an in-depth look at God's Word. We also have the monthly fellowship videos and the Calvin Society meetings (and here, Pastor Jones is once again a great help). I teach catechism class each Wednesday afternoon after my work with the state. I can say with assurance that my work outside the church has not detracted from the ministry of the Word. The Word is preached, and the sacraments are observed according to the command of Christ. The elders are faithful in performing congregational visits. Our concern for the spiritual welfare and discipline of our congregation was even noted by another congregation this past year. The Grace Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church in America) of Laconia, New Hampshire thanked us for the way in which our Spiritual Council dealt with their Session in a matter that concerned members from our respective congregations. We are seeking to be a

congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ that is faithful in the Word, the sacraments, and in church discipline. This is the primary reason I am convinced that there must continue to be a congregation here in Pierre, despite our inability to support a pastor's full salary.

God has been pleased to bless and preserve our congregation this past year. Last year was a very quiet year as far as hospital and sick calls are concerned. This is a tremendous blessing that we do not take lightly in a small congregation! We transferred one member, Aaron Goehring, to the Grace Reformed Church of Rapid City, and we anticipate receiving a new member by transfer from the Herreid RCUS. Last year my daughter, Chelsea Haddock, was received by confirmation. We have one new student in catechism class this year.

It is our joy to be able to host the Annual Meeting of our Classis this year. This has involved some effort on the part of a small church, but we rejoice in the opportunity to participate in the life of our denomination this way. We thank God for being able to continue to serve His kingdom. We pray that our God continues to use the Hope RCUS, and that He would be pleased to use our witness and expand our congregation by adding new souls to our midst.

I would like to close my parochial report with a personal note. Last year I decided to make a serious effort to study the German language. I first became interested in doing this when I saw how some of my elders in previous congregations were able to communicate with the older members of the church in the German language when we would go on visits. Once I made the commitment to begin, it became a truly rewarding endeavor. I am gaining a tremendous appreciation for the theological heritage of the RCUS as I study the Heidelberg Catechism in German. Several of the German-speaking members of our congregation have been a great encouragement in this endeavor. This has also been a factor in helping me to assess that my gifts and calling from the Lord are suited to serving the older German-composed congregations in the Dakotas. The Northern Plains Classis is home to many of the original congregations of the Eureka Classis, and I am pleased to serve God by serving here.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. William W. Haddock

Rev. Michael McGee

Harvest Reformed Church, Minot, North Dakota

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

I am pleased to report to you that many things have occurred in my life in the past year; therefore, I have much to write in this Parochial Report.

The first occasion that stands out in my mind concerning my life is my marriage. As most of you know, my wife, Jenny, and I were married on May 11th, 2002. With this addition, I have been truly blessed with a great helpmeet. She has been of tremendous value in my work in the church in Minot and has shown much support and encouragement in my calling. Without her assistance, I do not think that I would have been able to accomplish half as much as I have been able to this past year.

Our life together has also been touched by sorrow. Jenny and I were filled with great joy when we discovered, that we were expecting our first child. However, the pregnancy that my wife endured was very difficult, and she miscarried on October 24th. This time was difficult, yet we are filled with the comfort of knowing, as David stated, that our little one will not return to us, but we will go to him.

I am also pleased to tell you that I stand before you an ordained minister. Through the course of the last year, I completed my internship, and was ordained and installed as Pastor of Harvest Reformed Church on October 31st. I am thankful to Rev. Dale Clark for all of his help and oversight in my internship. Without his guidance this past year, I'm afraid I would be lost in the processes of the RCUS.

I have also been actively involved in the life of the Classis and of Synod. As a licentiate, I attended Synod, participated in Heidelberg Youth Camp by preaching there, and also preached two Mission Fests: one in Ashley, ND and one in Eureka, SD. I have also filled the pulpit for Kassel Reformed Church on two occasions.

Concerning my work in Harvest Reformed Church, I have been quite busy. I have continued, as Pastor, to faithfully preach the Word of God. We have been concentrating on the book of First Corinthians, and are through the eighth chapter. The Lord has been faithful to continue to bless the preaching of His Word.

I have also been busy in the Confirmation of the youth at Harvest Reformed Church. Lord willing, by this summer, four young people will be added to the church as communicant members. I have been involved in the lives of the young people by teaching Sunday School and leading the "Youth Group". I pray that the Lord is using my times spent with these covenant young people to cause them to see that they can talk to their pastor at any time and hope they will feel comfortable to do so.

I am involved in guiding one of the members of the church through the mentorship program of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He and

I have been meeting to work through first year Greek, which he has almost completed. I have also been discipling another gentleman in order for him to become a member of the church by late spring. The Lord has been using these meetings to cause him to grow in his understanding of the Scriptures, as well as the Three Forms of Unity.

We have experienced great blessings in the life of Harvest Reformed Church. I was privileged to administer the sacrament of baptism to Leanne Desiree Milam, covenant child of Jeff and Laurel Milam. This was my first baptism, and the first the church had seen in over a year. Lord willing, we will see three additional baptisms in the coming year with the births of two covenant children and the baptism of a third child. I have also been blessed to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper on our regular schedule of the first Sunday of the month.

We have begun airing commercials on television in order to make our name known in the community. We pray that the Lord will use this mean to make people aware of the reformed church in town, and bring His sheep to a place where they will be fed. The facilities are continuing to be maintained. We have been able to have the fascia and soffits replaced on the building with a better quality material than what was previously there. We have also been able to light the external sign in the parking lot. This has been a valuable addition to our facility.

I am also very involved with the community here in Minot. I have begun to work as a volunteer chaplain with the Minot Police Department. I hope to be used, in this sphere, as a witness for the Lord. I also hope that by my counsel, people will receive comfort in their time of need. I am also actively involved with a group known as the Minot Area Homeless Coalition, in which I hope to be able to reach out to serve the community. MAHC is not a Christian organization, and I pray that I can be salt and light in their midst. I have also been preaching in a local nursing home, Somerset Court, once a month.

Finally, I will finish my report with two desires that I have for Harvest Reformed Church this coming year. First, I desire to see the life of this church grow with a greater realization and utilization of each member's gifts and talents. One of the ways I think this can take place is through greater organization of the way in which the church operates. Second, the Spiritual Council has designed a schedule for visitation which began at the end of February. It is the desire of the Spiritual Council to visit each member twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall, in order to be actively involved in the lives of the members of Harvest Reformed Church. In doing so, it is the Elder's purpose and mine, to see how we might better work in the lives of each and every member of the congregation.

Lord willing, my work at Harvest Reformed Church will cause the members of the church to grow in their sanctification for the betterment of the Kingdom of God.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael A. McGee

Rev. Norman Jones

Retired Pastor, Pierre, South Dakota

Dear Brothers of the Northern Plains Classis,

Greetings once again in the Name of our covenant God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. My parochial report can again be brief. Lena and I are thankful for the mercies of God which are new every day. We live and move and have our being in God Who sustains and protects us each moment. What a joy to live as the adopted children of God, knowing Him as a loving Heavenly Father!

Preaching engagements. I tried preaching only once this past year in a church other than our Pierre congregation, and found that I had to cut it short because of faintness. This experience convinced me that the Lord was telling me not to accept anymore outside preaching appointments. However, I did preach two successive Sundays in Pierre, and taught the S. School class. This was in late November, and I did not experience any stress problem. Oh yes, I also preached in a little Nazarene church across the street from where we live. Again, no problem. Other speaking engagements included a sermon at the State Gideon Convention in Pierre, a speech on Christian politics at the South Dakota Constitution Party held in Pierre, and two lectures that were given in Mitchell, SD to two conferences of Reformed ministers and elders. Apparently, I have more stress when I am away from home and am in formal worship services.

Health wise, I am still dependent on a handful of pills each day for my blood pressure and weak heart. (I am indebted to you taxpayers and the V. A. for these pills and a couple of trips to the hospital.) Lena and I both had cataract surgery this past summer, which, surprisingly, was a rather pleasant experience! I walked out from the operating room without even a patch over my eye, and could see better in spite of the macular degeneration. I highly recommend this surgery if it is needed. Lena's health continues to be relatively good. She still works part-time for New York Life and the Pierre Educational Foundation (both from the same office). She teaches children in our Sunday School, and takes off work to teach V. B. S.