

ABSTRACT
of the
MINUTES
for the
WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States



37th Annual Session
March 1-3, 2022

Meeting at
Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2022 WESTERN CLASSIS DIRECTORY	3
Ministers	3
Primarius Elders	4
Secundus Elders.....	5
Licentiates.....	6
Students Under Care	6
Treasurer.....	6
36 th ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL	7
INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY	8
DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS.....	9
ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES.....	13
SERVICES	13
ORGANIZATION.....	13
RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS	14
STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS	14
PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS	14
A. Executive Committee of Classis	14
B. Permanent Home Mission Report.....	15
C. Christian Education in the Church (Including Heidelberg West Youth Camp).....	22
D. Candidates and Credentials.....	24
E. Interchurch Relations.....	26
F. Publications	27
G. Diaconal Ministries.....	28
REPORTS OF OFFICERS	28
A. President’s Report on the State of the Church	28
B. Stated Clerk’s Report	33
C. Minutes of Synod.....	34
D. Treasurer’s Report	36
PAROCHIAL REPORTS.....	41
A. Rev. Valentin Alpuche.....	41
B. Rev. Gil Baloy.	42
C. Rev. Eric Bristley.....	44
D. Rev. Sam Powell.....	44
E. Rev. Tracy Gruggett	46
F. Elder Larry Lynch – Grace Lancaster.....	48
G. Rev. Gary Mancilas	49
H. Rev. Jonathan Merica	51
I. Elder Tim Curtis – Trinity Modesto	52
J. Rev. Vern Pollema.....	53
K. Rev. Neale Riffert.....	54
L. Rev. Doug Schlegel	55

M. Rev. Paul Treick	57
N. Rev. Frank Walker.....	59
O. Rev. Ruben Zartman.....	61
CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ELDERS	62
MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS	63
REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES	63
ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS	63
REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.....	64
A. Benevolences	64
B. Missions.....	65
C. Examination and Licensure	66
D. Judicial.....	66
E. Nominations.....	67
F. Finances	67
G. Excuses	69
H. Minutes	69
MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS	69
A. Expression of Appreciation	69
B. Adoption of Stated Clerk's, and Executive Committee's Reports.....	69
C. Other Business	69
D. Adoption of Standing Minutes Committee Report.....	69
ADJOURNMENT	70
A. Roll Call.....	70
B. Devotions.....	70
C. Close	70
MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS	72
NECROLOGIES	74
STANDING RULES OF THE WESTERN CLASSIS	76
INDEX OF POSITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS.....	78

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1213 Live Oak Lane, Auburn CA 95603
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Treasurer

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36th ANNUAL WESTERN CLASSIS ROLL*For the Classical Year beginning March 2, 2021*

Minister	Primarius Elder	Secundus Elder	Charge
Tracy Gruggett	Todd Crabtree	John Guinn	Grace, Bakersfield, CA
Gary Mancilas	David Helseth	Jim Gochnauer	Covenant, Chico, CA
Jonathan Merica	(Associate Pastor, Modesto)		Calvary, Stockton, CA
Vacant	Larry Lynch	Mark Reyna	Grace, Lancaster, CA
Neale Riffert	(Pastor Emeritus, Lancaster)		Retired, Lancaster, CA
Douglas Schlegel	Jerry DeYoung	Wayne Lingenfelter	Providence, Lodi, CA
Vacant	Tim Curtis	Mark Crook	Trinity, Modesto, CA
Paul Treick	(Pastor Emeritus, Modesto)		Retired, Modesto, CA
Dennis Roe			Retired, Newcastle, CA
Frank Walker	Chris Fellersen	Tom Lagomarsino	Covenant, Sacramento, CA
Jim West	(Pastor Emeritus, Sacramento)		Retired, Sacramento, CA
Guillermo Baloy	Alfred White	N/A	Covenant, San Diego, CA
Ruben Zartman	Raymond Williams	Eric Merz	Ebenezer, Shafter, CA
Valentin Alpuche	(Associate Pastor, Shafter)		Valle de Gracia, Shafter, CA
Vernon Pollema	(Pastor Emeritus, Shafter)		Retired, Bakersfield, CA
Vacant	Joe Gross	N/A	Grace, Willows, CA
Eric Bristley	(Pastor Emeritus, Willows)		Fremont, OH
Sam Powell	Ernest Sawtelle	N/A	First, Yuba City, CA

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS

President – Rev. Tracy Gruggett
 Vice-President – Elder Jerry DeYoung
 Stated Clerk – Rev. Douglas Schlegel
 Treasurer – Mr. Nathan Schlegel

CLASSIS GUIDELINE FOR GIVING

(per communicant member)

Classis Dues	\$1.00
Benevolences	\$71.00
Home Missions	\$33.00
Diaconal	-0-
Home Missions Building Fund	-0-
Publications	-0-
<u>Heidelberg West Youth Camp</u>	<u>\$5.00</u>
TOTAL	\$110.00

Treasurer: Mr. Nathan Schlegel
 P. O. Box 898., Lodi, CA 95241
 Ph. (916) 607-1002 E-Mail: wctreasurer1@gmail.com

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Underline Indicates Convener

1. **Executive Committee:** T. Gruggett, D. Schlegel, J. DeYoung
2. **Candidates and Credentials:** N. Bouwkamp (3yr), R. Zartman (2yr), D. Roe (2yr), F. Walker (1yr)
3. **Christian Education in the Church:** M. Crook (3yr) P. Treick (2yr), J. Gochnauer (2yr), T. Curtis (1yr)
 - a. **Heidelberg West Youth Camp:** T. Crabtree (3Yr), R. Williams (1yr), G. Baloy (2yr), Deacon C. Hekman (1yr)
4. **Missions:** E. Sawtelle (3yr), S. Powell (2yr), A. White (1yr), G. Mancilas (1yr)
5. **Interchurch Relations:** M. Reyna (3yr) S. Powell (2yr), T. Lagomarsino (2yr), J. Merica (1yr), R. Spitzer (1yr),
6. **Publications:** M. Crook (3yr) P. Treick (2yr), J. Gochnauer (2yr), T. Curtis (1yr)
7. **Diaconal:** V. Alpuche (3yr), Deacon C. Hekman (2yr), V. Pollema (1yr), T. Crabtree (3yr), , N. Riffert (1yr)
8. **Finances Committee:** D. Helseth (3yr), R. Williams (2yrs), K. Snow (1yr)

DIRECTORY OF CONGREGATIONS**BAKERSFIELD, CA - Grace Reformed Church**

Church Location: 420 Columbus Street, Bakersfield (north on Union Ave. to Columbus St., east on Columbus to the church)

Church Mailing Address: 420 Columbus St., Bakersfield, CA 93305

Church Phone: (661) 587-3723

Services: Worship 9:30 AM; Sun. Sch. 11:00 AM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Tracy Gruggett / Michelle / Samantha, Angela, Lydia, Corissa

Home Address: 7016 Rhone Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93308

Home Phone: (661) 587-3723 E-Mail: tgruggett@charter.net

Church Web Page: bakersfieldreformed.org

CHICO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: : Meeting at 3612 Hicks Ln. (Seventh-day Adventist building): From CA-99 headed north, take Exit 389 toward Eaton Rd. (0.3 miles); turn right onto Eaton Rd. (0.0 miles), turn left onto Hicks Ln. (0.5 miles). From CA-99 headed south, take Exit 389 toward Eaton Rd. (0.3 miles), turn left onto Eaton Rd. (0.2 miles), turn left onto Hicks Ln. (0.5 miles).

Church Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1612, Chico, CA 95927-1612

Church Phone: (530) 345-2732

Service Times: Worship 10:30 AM

Pastor/Wife: Gary Mancilas / Gloria

Home Address: 701 E. Lassen Ave., Unit 168., Chico, CA 95973

Home Phone: (530) 345-2732 E-Mail: gmancilas@comast.net

Church Web Page: chicorcus.org

LANCASTER, CA - Grace Reformed Church (Antelope Valley)

Church Location: 121 Carriage Lane, Suite 111, Lancaster, CA 93534

Church Mailing Address: 121 Carriage Lane, Suite 111, Lancaster, CA 93534

Church Phone: (661) 965-3906

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 10:45 AM

Pastor/Wife:

Home Address:

Home Phone: E-Mail:

Church Web Page: lancasterreformed.com

LODI, CA - Providence Reformed Church

Church Location: 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi

Church Mailing Address: 245 E. Vine St. Lodi, CA 95240

Church Phone: (209) 367-0552

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 10:45 AM; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 pm.
Prayer Meeting 9:30 AM every first Sunday. Hymn-sing 9:30 AM every fifth Sunday.

Pastor/Wife: Doug Schlegel / Cheryl

Home Address: 8135 Pixley Way, Sacramento, CA 95828

Home Phone: (916) 690-4555 E-Mail: contramundum1517@gmail.com

Church Web Page: www.prcloidi.com

MODESTO, CA - Trinity Reformed Church

Church Location: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto (Briggsmore east; right on Coffee, right on E. Fairmont 2 blocks.)

Church Mailing Address: 960 El Terino Ave., Modesto, CA 95350

Church Phone: (209) 523-3220

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM; Worship 10:00 AM; Bible Study 5:30 PM – Second and Fourth Sundays; Hymn Sing every fifth Sunday at 5:30 PM.

Pastor/Wife:

Home Address:

Cell Phone:

Church Web Page: trinitymodesto.org

Assoc. Pastor: Jonathan Merica (See Stockton - Calvary)

SACRAMENTO, CA – Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: 2020 16th Avenue, Sacramento (from Hwy. 99 take 12th Ave./ Sutterville Rd. Exit. Go west to Freeport Blvd., left to 16th Ave. and left to 2020 16th Ave. From I-5 Hwy take Sutterville Exit, go east on Sutterville to Freeport Blvd., left on Freeport and right on 16th Ave. to 2020 16th Ave.

Church Mailing Address: 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822

Church Phone: (916) 451-1190

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM

Pastor/ Wife: Frank Walker / Christine

Home Address: 6121 Pine Vista Way, Elk Grove, CA 95758

Home Phone: (916) 320-0548 E-Mail: drfhwalker@gmail.com

Church Web Page: covenantreformedchurch.org

SAN DIEGO, CA - Covenant Reformed Church

Church Location: Norman Hall in Trinity Church, 3902 Kenwood Dr., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Church Mailing Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Church Phone: (619) 460-1321

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 11:30 AM; Worship 12:30 PM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Gil Baloy / Maricar / Ezra, Ethan

Home Address: 757 Maria Ave., Spring Valley, CA 91977

Mobile Phone: (619) 948-8527

E-mail: sdrcr2012@gmail.com

Church Web Page: covenantrcus.org

SHAFTER, CA - Ebenezer Reformed Church

Church Location: 235 James Street, Shafter (next door to the City Library, Fire, and Police Depts.).

Church Mailing Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Church Phone: (661) 776-5075

Service Times: Worship 10:00 AM; Fellowship 11:15 AM; Sun. Sch. 11:45 AM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Ruben Zartman / Heidi

Home Address: 13602 Foyers Falls, Bakersfield, CA 93314

Home Phone: (661) 447-3151

E-Mail: rzrcus@gmail.com

Assoc. Pastor: Valentin Alpuche (See *Valle de Gracia*)

Church Web Page: ebenezerreformed.org

SHAFTER, CA – Valle de Gracia

Church Location: 235 James Street, Shafter

Church Mailing Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Church Phone: (661) 910-2898

Service Times: Worship 6:00 PM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Valentin / Betty / Moises, Jade, Matias, Grace, Ethan

Home Address: 235 James St., Shafter, CA 93263

Home Phone: (661) 910-2898

E-Mail: valpuche@gmail.com

Church Web Page: www.valledegracia.org

STOCKTON, CA – Calvary Reformed Chapel

Church Location: 5380 West Lane, Stockton, CA 95210

Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 692426, Stockton, CA 95269

Church Phone: (209) 470-7174

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM; Thurs. Bible Study 7:00 PM

Mission Pastor/Wife: Jonathan Merica / Marsha

Home Address: 9311 Snow Creek Circle, Stockton, CA 95212

Home Phone: (209) 472-7941

E-Mail: jonathanmerica@yahoo.com

Church Web Page: calvaryreformedchapel.com

WILLOWS, CA - Grace Reformed Church

Church Location: 148 W. Sycamore St. (corner: Butte & Sycamore – Exit Hwy 162; head east, right on Butte to Sycamore).

Church mailing Address: P.O. Box 225, Willows, CA 95988

Church Phone: (530) 591-5382

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:00 AM (Sept. to June); Worship 10:00 AM;

Sun Bible Study - 5:00 PM

Pastor/Wife/Children:

Home Address:

Home Phone: (530) 591-5382

E-Mail: gracercus@gmail.com

Church Web Page: gracercus.org

YUBA CITY, CA - First Reformed Church

Church Location: From Yuba City head south on Hwy. 99 12 miles. Turn left on Wilson Rd. to Garden Hwy. 1/2 mile north of Wilson Rd. on Garden Hwy.

Church Mailing Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991

Church Phone: (530) 674-8797

Service Times: Sun. Sch. 9:30 AM; Worship 11:00 AM

Pastor/Wife/Children: Sam Powell / Susan

Home Address: 9882 Garden Hwy., Yuba City, CA 95991

Home Phone: (530) 674-8797 E-Mail: sampowell365@gmail.com

Church Web Page: reformedyubacity.org

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES WESTERN CLASSIS

Reformed Church in the United States
37th Annual Spring Meeting
March 1-3, 2022
Meeting at Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

SERVICES

The Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States convened its 37th Annual Session via video conference on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, at 1:00 PM.

Rev. Frank Walker led the body in singing *Lord of the Worlds Above*. Rev. Walker read from Psalm 84 and presented a devotional under the theme, *The Psalm of Sweet Contentment*.

The Tuesday evening worship service was held at 7:00 PM with Rev. Baloy conducting the service. The Scripture reading was I Peter 4:7-13, and Rev. Zartman preached a sermon titled, *Stewarding God's Manifold Grace*.

The Wednesday morning devotion was led by Rev. Munive (URCNA) who read Matthew 14:22-33 and brought a devotion under the theme, *Keeping Our Eyes on Jesus* and closed in prayer. Rev. Gruggett led in the singing of *Rock of Ages*.

Elder Chris Fellersen closed the meeting with the reading of Psalm 127 and led the body in prayer.

Each session was opened and closed with prayer and song to praise God and seeking His blessing and guidance for this work of the Church. At other times prayer was called for individuals and the needs of the congregations.

ORGANIZATION

Rev. Tracy Gruggett, President of the Executive Committee of The Western Classis, called the meeting to order at 1:23 PM on March 1, 2022.

The initial roll call showed 10 ministers and 8 elder delegates present. The President declared a quorum was present and the meeting was opened for business.

The following men were nominated and elected to office for this Classical year: Rev. Tracy Gruggett, President; Elder Jerry DeYoung, Vice President; Rev. Douglas Schlegel, Stated Clerk; and Deacon Nathan Schlegel, Treasurer.

The President appointed Elder Raymond Williams as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

The Agenda, Services, and Order of the Day were adopted including a Special Order for Tuesday, March 2nd immediately after organization for the purpose of examining Elder Tim Curtis and Rev. Jeff Munive.

FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND VISITORS

There were no visitors or fraternal delegates present.

Elders Wayne Lingenfelter, Mark Crook, John Heerema, Wayne Johnson, and Tom Lagomarsino were present and given the privilege of the floor.

RECEPTION OF NEW MINISTERS

No new ministers were received in the Western Classis this year.

STANDING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The President made the following appointments for the Standing Committees:

- A. Benevolence: *Baloy, Powell, Lodi, Bakersfield
- B. Missions: *Powell, Baloy, Bakersfield, Lodi
- C. Examination and Licensure: *Walker, Bristley, San Diego
- D. Judicial: *Zartman, Lancaster, Chico
- E. Nominations: *Merica, Lancaster
- F. Finances: *Sacramento, Baloy, Shafter, Mr. Nathan Schlegel (Treasurer - *ex officio*)
- G. Excuses: *San Diego, Schlegel
- H. Minutes: *Modesto, San Diego

PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF OVERTURES, REPORTS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

All pertinent overtures and materials were assigned by the Executive Committee and the Clerk place them in an online shared folder. Some items from Permanent Reports, Reports of Officers, and Parochial Reports were read and if needed, acted upon or referred to the appropriate Standing Committees. The results of the Classis' actions to the various recommendations concerning these reports are printed in this Abstract as they were adopted.

PRESENTATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive Committee of Classis

Honorable Western Classis
Reformed Church in the United States

Your committee did not have much business to engage in during the most of the year. Towards, the end, however, we attended to two matters.

Your committed made itself available to the brethren of Rehoboth Reformed Church as they went through the process of deciding whether or not to close their doors. Apart from email exchanges and phone conversations we (via video conferencing) sat in on two congregational meetings that they held. We were present as observers, giving counsel and

procedural advice. At the second of these meetings, held November 28, the congregation voted to petition Classis to close as a particular congregation of the Western Classis no later than December 31, 2021. On November 29, your committee sent the delegates of Classis an executive circular with the stated petition. We received no objections. Thereafter, we continued to advise the leadership of Rehoboth Reformed Church in the decisions and process of disposing their various properties.

A second matter came to our attention in January of 2022 concerning the status of Rev. Eric Bristley as the minister of Grace Reformed Church of Willows, Calif. We received a letter from Elder Joe Gross stating that on November 14, Rev. Bristley had submitted his resignation from said church as well as his retirement from the ministry. He did this in order to move to Ohio to take care of his elderly mother. The Willow’s Consistory asked that the pulpit be declared vacant as of November 17, 2021. On January 25, your committee wrote to Rev. Bristley informing him that this action is out of order at two points relative to Article 30 of the RCUS Constitution. We would, therefore, find it hard to recommend classis approval via an executive circular. We asked him to communicate with us to clear the matter up. He responded promptly and appropriately. However, rather than deal with the matter via a circular your committee thought it wiser for this matter to be attended to during the Classis meeting. Your committee has referred the matter to the standing judicial committee.

We also received a communication from the “Welcoming Committee,” a request to interact with a group in Idaho interested in joining the RCUS. We referred this matter to the Permanent Home Missions Committee. We relate this because it was something we had never encountered. There were questions about whether it was properly before the PHMC. We concluded that this action was in keeping with the Home Missions Manual.

All other work of your committee involved personal communications from various brothers, but none of these led to any official work as such.

Respectfully Submitted

Rev T. Gruggett (President); Rev. D. Schlegel; Elder J. DeYoung

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

B. Permanent Home Mission Report

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers.

Your committee members visited, either live or by zoom, with the representatives of Calvary Reformed Chapel of Stockton, CA; Valle de Gracia of Shafter, CA; and two members of the RCUS who live in Weiser, Idaho.

We received correspondence from each organization and from Grace Reformed Church of Lancaster, CA, which is attached.

Your committee met as a whole on February 3rd, 2022, via Zoom and discussed the year's labors. Also joining our meeting were members of the permanent Synodical Committee, Rev. Vernon Pollema and Elder Raymond Williams. Our recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1: That Classis grant Valle De Gracia their request in the amount of 15984.00 for the coming Classical year.

Recommendation 2: That Classis petition Synod for support for Valle De Gracia in the amount of 16872.00 for the coming Synodical year.

Recommendation 3: That all Classical funding of Calvary Reformed Chapel of Stockton cease, effective December 31st, 2022

Recommendation 4: That Synod be notified that Classis is no longer funding Calvary Reformed Chapel of Stockton. Take note.

Recommendation 5: That the request for financial aid from Grace Reformed Church of Lancaster be referred to Standing Benevolence.

Recommendation 6: That the permanent Home Missions committee remain in contact with Mr. Derek Reis and Mr. Lyle Van Houten in Weiser, Idaho to assist them with advice and support.

Please see the attached correspondence.

**Permanent Home Missions Committee Meeting
with Calvary Reformed Chapel, Stockton, CA**

November 16th, 2021

On Tuesday, November 16th, 2021, the appointed members of the Home Missions Committee, Pastors West and Mancilas and Elder Helseth, met with Pastor Merica and Elder Goehring of Calvary Reformed Chapel, Stockton, CA (CRCS).

After the opening prayer, a commendation was offered to CRCS for the faithful labors of the church in the Stockton area.

From the reports in the Classis Abstracts, the committee began its interview by giving a brief overview of the history of the work of the church during its home mission status from the years 2015-2021, which was followed by inquiries regarding the progress in communicant membership growth and denominational financial support through the year 2021.

The first inquiry regarded the decline in the communicant and baptized membership and number of families. (The 2015 abstract recorded twenty (20) communicant members, twenty-eight (28) baptized members, and thirteen (13) families, which numbers have not increased through 2021.) In order to allow the opportunity for the representatives to respond to the decline in communicant membership since 2015, we reviewed each year of the abstracts through 2021; thereby, demonstrating historically that the communicant membership never exceeded that of 2015.

The second inquiry concerned the serving officers in the church. At present there is one elder serving and no deacons. There are no current male members that qualify for either office. CRCS is under the oversight of Trinity Modesto.

The third inquiry was into the current membership and visitors. A directory of CRCS was provided for the committee. A current communicant membership that is included on the 2021 “Membership Statistics” form will be published in the 2022 Western Classis Abstract.

The directory shows that the current CRCS membership reveals there are eleven (11) families, twenty-four (24) baptized members: fifteen (15) communicants, and nine (9) covenant children. It was confirmed that the membership list is all-inclusive.

After reviewing the membership roll, the discussion proceeded with the evaluation of the church life of each family member and each listed visitor. Specifically, it focused on worship attendance on the Lord's Days and the active involvement of members serving in the church. This showed that six (6) families of the eleven (11) families recorded were inactive or irregular in their attendance on the Lord's Day worship for various reported reasons. The inconsistent attendance of these families is a serious concern.

From the above evaluation, it appears that Lord's Day attendance falls short of the 12-15 estimated number of communicate members reported in worship each Lord's Day. In fact, it was made clear that the estimated number of communicant members in attendance falls within the range of seven (7), not including visitors. Also, four (4) of the listed unconfirmed members live with their mother out of state.

There were five (5) visitors listed on the handout membership roll. None of them attend regularly and some not at all. One visitor completed the membership instruction class and promised to attend worship services when it becomes more convenient with his work schedule.

In Reverend Merica's report dated November 16th, 2021, he reports on a family that is not listed on the all-inclusive membership roll or list of visitors. The report states the following, “We are thankful for Mr. and Mrs. Banov and their six children. Kim played the piano in the worship services.” Perhaps not listing this family on the membership roll or visitor list handout was an oversight. In Reverend Merica's report in 2020 to the Permanent Home Missions Committee he reports “We are also blessed with a young couple who have six children. The mother plays the piano for us as well.” This family was given special consideration in the report again this year, yet there was no indication during the conversation on visitors that the family is attending worship services or is interested in membership.

The fourth area of inquiry was denominational financial support. In the Western Classis Abstracts from 2015-2021, it documents the ongoing financial support for CRCS. According to the abstracts in the years 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, the delegates of Classis reduced the Permanent Home Missions committee's recommended support for CRCS.

During the interview, it was inquired if the congregation had been prepared for the possibility that financial support could end in 2022, to which Reverend Merica responded that there is no need for the congregation to be informed. Then, the question was posed to Reverend Merica, “Are you prepared for the possibility that the financial support could end

in 2022,” to which he responded that he is prepared and he will continue his ministry in Stockton without denominational support.

All of the following material will be shared with the Western Classis Permanent Home Missions Committee and the Permanent Synodical Home Missions Committee members who are in the Western Classis. At a future date, recommendations will be formulated and presented to the 37th meeting of the Western Classis.

Stockton Visitation of Calvary Reformed Chapel

Sunday, January 30th, 2022

On January 30th Elder's Krall and Helseth from the WCHMC and Elder Williams from the SHMC were present to attend Sunday School and the Worship Service of Calvary Reformed Chapel (CRC) for a final visitation prior to the 37th Western Classis meeting.

The adult Sunday School had six in attendance, of which one was a member of another church. Three children also had a separate Sunday school class with one adult teacher. For worship, an additional four adults were in attendance. The majority of members remained for the fellowship meal and subsequent visitation.

Any report may leave out details which are best witnessed. But this report aims to cover general information and critical specifics regarding CRC's future. It was obvious to the committee members that there is a loving and caring attitude within what is the “core group”. The loss of members in the not so distant past produced a sorrow of care. Concerned that they “the church” had in some way failed, this did not seem to be the case as they reviewed the issue before the committee members. The desire for this work to continue was vocalized/validated by each one in attendance.

Calvary added no new members this past classical year. One significant observation which was also present in our November visitation is the prevalence of inconsistent or irregular attendance of members, though no one member is under discipline. The process of dealing with this situation will require continued diligence.

Calvary Reformed Chapel is faced with the additional challenge of changing locations for worship. The cost of doing business at the present location is unsustainable. Their current lease expires in June of 2022. The counsel of the committee encouraged them to immediately address this issue with the landlord. Perhaps he might work with them to reduce the rent, etc. If not, the search for a new location should begin as soon as possible. Ample time was given to address outreach plans, increased fellowship with the body and similar ideas. The congregation was dismissed with prayer.

The committee members asked Pastor Merica and Elder Goehring to remain for a few minutes for further discussion. It seems that major changes are inevitable, maybe a complete reset financially. This was a sobering exchange, but also a great deal of hope in what our faithful Father will provide. It is difficult to capture the many year history of CRC in such a brief report, but the permanent WCHMC as well as the SHMC working with CRC can provide counsel, direction and support with an eye to the future. Pastor Merica's Sunday School lesson on the definition of faith was so applicable. The WCHMC and members of the SHMC will address all of this with recommendations on February 3rd, 2022.

Report of the visitation to Valle De Gracia

Elder Frank Krall and Rev. Sam Powell met with the representatives from Valle De Gracia on Friday, December 10th, via Zoom.

Rev. Alpuche reports that the church continues to meet every Lord's Day. Ebenezer Reformed has English speaking services on Sunday morning, with some of the families from Valle De Gracia in attendance.

Valle de Gracia meets at 6:00 PM, with Spanish speaking services. There are about 20 to 25 in attendance, including about 15 children. Moises Alpuche plays the piano for the services.

There is one elder in the congregation. He is diligent and capable, and gives generously of his time and efforts to the success of the gospel in Shafter. There are regular visitors, and regular "attenders" via the internet in Peru and other Spanish speaking areas.

Rev. Alpuche is diligent in the catechizing of the children and active in the community.

The work there in Shafter is having an impact on the Spanish speaking world in ways that far exceed the bounds of Shafter. Rev. Alpuche reports that he and his network of translators translate and publish one to three works *each month!* We have asked if a list of these works could somehow be distributed to our churches so that we know that they are available.

Rev. Alpuche and Rev. Zartman, in cooperation with City Seminary in Sacramento, are making Seminary courses available in Spanish through the internet. I am sure that the specific reports will be made at the appropriate time by the appropriate people, so I will not repeat the details here.

In our visit with Valle de Gracia, it was very clear to Elder Krall and me that the impact of our commitment to this work is bearing tremendous fruit around the world and should continue. The local congregation is growing, and the light of the gospel is shining clearly.

Sometimes the fruit is 30 fold and sometimes it is 100 fold. The harvest is up to the Lord. But God is blessing that work. It is not being done by anyone else in the area, and we should continue to support it.

Both Ebenezer, Shafter and Grace, Bakersfield, are committed to continuing the support of this worthy endeavor.

The three year budget plan is attached.

Here is the update on Spanish publishing:

1. Five books have appeared so far:

- a. Frank Walker, *El Gobierno Bíblico de la Iglesia* (Biblical Church Government)
- b. Frank Walker, *La Teología del Pacto* (Covenant Theology)
- c. Louis Berkhof, *La Expiación Vicaria a través de Cristo* (Vicarious Atonement through Christ)

d. Cornelis Van Dam, *Divorcio y Nuevo Matrimonio* (Divorce and Remarriage)

e. Cornelis Van Dam, *Consuelo y Esperanza en el Libro de Job* (Comfort and Hope in the Book of Job)

2. Louis Berkhof's *Introduction to the New Testament and Biblical Archaeology* are in process.

3. The publisher's website where our books (among others) appear is: <https://editorialdoulos.com/apps/webstore/products?utf8=%E2%9C%93&query=&sort=newest>

4. Since we spoke, we have received some direct support of the translation ministry in answer to the Foreign Ministries' Committee recommendation to the churches.

5. An additional project is an audio version of the Heidelberg Catechism, for which we have a reader in mind.

Email Correspondence from the Synodical Welcoming Committee

The RCUS Welcome Committee received an inquiry from Derek and Lyle Reis, former members and officers at Trinity Reformed in Modesto (I think Derek said he is still on the rolls). I spoke to them today on the phone. They want to plant a church in Weiser, Idaho. They are in a Reformed Baptist church (20-30 people) who might switch to the RCUS. It sounds promising, and the timing might be right as the current pastor is in his 70s and has health issues. He may soon step down. They want to locate the church in Payette, in the middle of a tri-city area, with one of the cities in Oregon. There are about 30-40,00 people in the area. They said the closest Reformed church is an URCNA church an hour away.

As I am new to this welcoming stuff, I am not sure exactly the best way to proceed. My initial thought was to schedule a Zoom call with the Western Classis Executive and Home Missions Committees with the two brothers to evaluate their plans, and possibly present any recommendations to the Classis this March. They are available to meet next Friday (Jan. 28th) at 6:30 pm or Saturday afternoon or evening.

But perhaps the Home Missions committee would prefer to do their own investigations, taking a closer look to see if this is worth pursuing.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed.

(end of communications)

NOTE: A zoom meeting was scheduled on January 28th. Mr. Derek Ries and Mr. Lyle Van Houten were in attendance, as were most of the members of the Home Missions Committee. It is the thinking of the committee that it is premature for any official classical action, but we will keep in contact with them as they continue fellowship with the Reformed Baptist congregation.

Correspondence from Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster, CA

To the Western Classis Home Missions Committee,

We are communicating with you regarding Rev. Jeff Munive. Our congregation unanimously voted to extend a call to him, contingent upon passing the examination, and obtaining financial support from the Classis/Synod. Rev. Munive has accepted the call.

Rev. Pollema serves on the Synod Home Missions Committee and said the following:

“This past Thursday the Synod Home Missions Committee met via Zoom, of which I am a member. I apprised them of your present situation and Rev. Jeff Munive. They suggested that in lieu of your need of financial aid, you might want to consider returning to Home Missions status for a designated period of time rather than requesting benevolent aid. In the past and present, benevolent aid has become an unending thing. Returning to Home Missions status would require some accountability.”

It is our desire to request financial support in whatever way best suits the Classis/Synod. We welcome the accountability.

It will be six years in March that we have been without a full-time pastor. Rev. Pollema and Rev. Riffert have been helping us get through this time. Six years ago, we only had 2000 dollars left in our bank account. In response, we thoroughly revamped our budget and essentially started over. We have not taken any money from Classis or Synod over this six-year period. At the same time, we have paid our Classis dues and guidelines in full, over the same time frame. We were only able to partially pay our dues to Synod.

Our desire was to rebuild completely without financial support; however, we have found it difficult to do so. We have had quite a few Reformed families visit our church, who live in the Antelope Valley; however, we believe they did not want to become members because we did not have a full-time pastor.

We have built up our finances and our current financial situation is as follows:

Average Monthly Tithe – \$4,862

Building Rent - \$2,500 per month

Various Expenses (electricity, insurance, etc.) - \$861 per month

Full Time Pastor Salary - \$5,500 per month

Pastor Savings Fund - \$73,000

Monthly Budget with a Pastor - \$8862 per month.

I know finances are a difficult issue, but our desire is not to be on un-ending support. We are asking for the following support from Classis/Synod:

2022 - \$1250 / \$1250 per month

2023 - \$1000 / \$1000 per month

2024 - \$750 / \$750 per month

2025 - \$500 / \$500 per month

2026 - \$250 / \$250 per month

2027 - \$0

Our plan is to make up the shortfall in this budget with our pastor savings fund.

Inflow with Pastor:

Tithe - \$4862

Pastor Savings Fund - \$1500

Classis - \$1250

Synod - \$1250

Total: \$8862

If we are able to get off of support sooner, we will do so. Our congregation is committed to evangelism and fellowship. This has led to two new young families that will become members on the first Sunday in December. That leaves us with five young families, three of which have young children, as a foundation for the future. We are growing slowly but surely and this has been a blessing to the congregation.

Please let me know whatever information you need to start this process or if you have any questions. My hope and prayer is the Classis/Synod will be able to support us.

In Christ,

Elder Mark Reyna

Elder Larry Lynch

Deacon Bobby Denton

(End of correspondence)

Respectfully submitted,

Elder David Helseth, Chairman, Pastor Gary Mancilas, Pastor Jim West, Pastor Sam Powell, Elder Frank Krall

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

C. Christian Education in the Church (Including Heidelberg West Youth Camp)

Esteemed Brothers,

Your committee received no instructions or requests from the Western Classis during this past year. The Christian Education in the Church Committee, therefore, was not convened nor conducted any business.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul H Treick, convener, Elder Jim Gochnauer, Elder Lawrence Lynch, Elder Mark Crook

Heidelberg West Youth Camp Report

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Heidelberg West Youth Camp was able to meet in 2021! We praise and thank the Lord that, despite the many obstacles we all were facing, He saw fit that this time of fellowship and learning for His covenant youth and the camp staff alike would come to pass.

Our particular topic this year was Living in God's Grace, with lessons focused on understanding and recognizing God's grace toward us as individuals, His grace applied to others, and how that grace should be demonstrated in our own lives and actions. We were blessed to hear teaching from Revs. Tracy Gruggett, Jonathan Merica, and Ruben Zartman. Rev. Merica also led our Wednesday evening service. We also had daily devotionals led by the camp counselors for each cabin individually.

The other activities of the camp were well attended and much appreciated by our campers. We were able once again to offer a variety of crafts, fishing, archery, swimming (for only the bravest), campfire times, and several field activities. The older campers often stepped up to help in orchestrating some of these activities and assisting the younger campers. For the first time in many years, we had to run our own camp shop, as the shop at the campground was converted to an office. This was an interesting learning experience for the staff, but was also much appreciated by the campers.

There were some struggles this year as well. Both our staff and camper numbers were down. This was due to a combination of factors that I believe all stem from the pandemic in one or more ways. We were not able to confirm until very late that we would even have a campground to meet at. On top of that, some lines of communication were broken due to movement in congregations. As we are all with much sadness aware, some of our congregations faced particular challenges in losses to membership which also impacted the number of campers and staff. On top of all that, there were some that could not attend by way of health concern, or lingering specific health impacts, or even just the practicality of getting a ride.

We had 29 campers, 6 counselors, 1 cook, 1 kitchen help, 2 directors, and 3 pastors. Both the camp director and activities director also had to serve as cabin counselors this year, putting extra burden on whichever counselor was in the cabin with them, as their director duties consumed a good portion of their time. I believe these are, quite possibly, the absolute minimum numbers we could have and still hold camp.

Camp Finances 2021

Carryover Balance

\$ 2,358.47

Camper Fees Paid

2,712.00

Guidelines Received

962.00

Interest Paid

0.29

Camp Expenses

5,238.82

New Carryover Balance

\$793.94

Specific notes leading into HWYC 2022

1) Heidelberg West Youth Camp 2022 is expected to take place June 13-17 at Sierra Christian Campground.

2) We need pastors. This year was the lowest I've ever seen, at three men able to be there, and none were able to be there the whole time. I know that there were a variety of reasons that several ministers could not join us this last year, and I'm sure there will be obstacles again this year for some. But I plead with you, if it is at all possible, especially knowing that some cannot, please find a way to be at camp this year. This is important for the edification of our youth, but I believe it is also important for you, to have time set aside to meet and interact with the future generations of this denomination; not only the campers, but the staff as well. I personally met several of our ministers at camp both as a camper, and as a counselor. I may have seen them in a pulpit, or at a conference, but I met them at camp. That time will be edifying to you, and it will be edifying to them, for years to come.

3) We need counselors. We had three men that were able to be counselors last year, and one of them was unable to make it last minute. We need at a minimum four counselors on each side of camp, often six. I hope our three can return again, but that still leaves us needing at least one more, possibly three. On the women's side I already know we are going to lose three of our regular counselors this year due to life changing events. They want to be there, but cannot. I have one other that will likely return, and one that I hope will return. Again, we need at least two more, possibly four, to meet our minimum capability of holding camp.

Based on information gathered last year, I believe this year could bring another influx of first-time campers, and several repeats. We have also had a few of our regular campers "age out" over the last few years. It is sad to see them go, but good to see them growing into responsible men and women in Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

Elder Raymond Williams, chairman, Rev. Gil Baloy, Deacon Chris Hekman

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

D. Candidates and Credentials

Fathers and Brothers of the Western Classis:

Your committee began this year with three students under care: Deonte Walters, DeMauri Young and Mathew Davis. Tim Curtis, a licentiate, is also preparing for his ordination exam. In late 2021, the committee was informed that Rev. Jeff Munive desired to transfer his credentials and accept a call to serve in the RCUS. Here is our report concerning these individuals.

Mr. DeMauri Young informed the chairman of this committee several months ago that he wanted to withdraw his student under care status. While he still desires to serve the Lord in full-time Christian service, he no longer believes that he is called to the pastorate.

Mr. Deonte Walters accepted a call to pastor a local independent congregation and was dismissed to its care by the Sacramento Spiritual Council. Although we hated to see him go, we believe that he's been a tremendous blessing to the saints he serves. We should also note that his long-range goal is to lead this congregation into the RCUS.

Mr. Matthew Davis is not pursuing licensure at this time. During the past year, the Sacramento Spiritual Council encouraged him to consider whether the Lord is really calling him to the pastoral ministry. His plan at present is to move to southern California later this year and look for service opportunities there. Your committee believes that Mathew has many gifts and will serve the Lord well, though his area of service may be something other than regular pulpit ministry.

Mr. Tim Curtis is still supplying the pulpit in Modesto and will complete his ordination exam, Lord willing, at this meeting of Classis. Attached is Pastor Treick's assessment of his internship. We should also note, per last year's recommendation, that the committee will be hearing Tim's recitation of the required catechism questions and answers about a week prior to our meeting.

The Lancaster congregation recently voted to call Rev. Jeff Munive as its new pastor. Rev. Munive had previously served the Los Angeles congregation, and is a graduate of Providence College and Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MDiv). The Candidates Committee, having interviewed him extensively by Zoom, recommends that he be examined for licensure. The Clerk already has his credentials in hand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the names of Deonte Walters and DeMauri Young be removed from the list of students under care.
2. That Mathew Davis be encouraged to use his gifts and seminary training as the Lord may lead him; and if he believes that the Lord is calling him to pastoral ministry, that he pursue it more vigorously and invest himself in preparing for licensure trials.
3. That Tim Curtis be examined as follows for ordination to the gospel ministry:
 - a. Church history — Walker (15 minutes)
 - b. RCUS history — Walker (15 minutes)
 - c. History of doctrine — Bristley (15 minutes)
 - d. History of creeds and confessions — Bristley (15 minutes)

- e. RCUS Constitution — Zartman (15 minutes)

(Questions from the floor)

- f. That Rev. Jeff Munive be examined as follows with the prospect of accepting a call to the Lancaster church:

- g. Intent — Walker (10 minutes)

(Questions from the floor)

- h. Prolegomena — Zartman (15 minutes)
- i. Theology Proper — Bristley (15 minutes)
- j. Anthropology — Zartman (15 minutes)
- k. Christology — Walker (15 minutes)
- l. Soteriology — Zartman (15 minutes)
- m. Ecclesiology — Walker (15 minutes)
- n. Eschatology — Bristley (15 minutes)

(Questions from the floor)

- o. Apologetics — Bristley (15 minutes)
- p. RCUS Standards — Walker (15 minutes)

(Questions from the floor)

In behalf of the committee,

Frank Walker, Chairman

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Candidates and Licensure Committee.

E. Interchurch Relations

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The Western Classis Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee continues to endeavor to maintain communications with our fraternal churches. Some fraternal churches did not send the Western Classis an invitation to attend their ecclesiastical assembly. The hindrance may have been due to the restrictions imposed by Covid in 2021. However, the Western Classis did send out five “letters of greeting” to our fraternal churches with the intent that our greetings would be read at their assembly. A Western Classis fraternal delegate was sent to the Classis Pacific Northwest of the URCNA. A report of that visit shall be given by the delegate at the 37th Western Classis meeting. (See the Interchurch Relations Committee communications below.)

I. “Letters of greeting” from the Western Classis were sent out to five (A-E) of our fraternal churches, and a visitation (F) by a Western Classis delegate:

- A. The Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- B. The Presbytery of Southern California and of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- C. The Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA.
- D. The Classis Pacific East of the Canadian and America Reformed Churches.
- E. The Classis Southwest U. S. of the URCNA.
- F. The Classis Pacific Northwest of the URCNA. (Western Classis delegate)

II. The Western Classis fraternal churches were invited to attend the 37th Western Classis, RCUS on March 1-3, 2022. The following churches were notified via email of the 37th Western Classis meeting:

- A. The Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- B. The Presbytery of Southern California and of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- C. The Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA.
- D. The Classis Pacific East of the Canadian and America Reformed Churches.
- E. The Classis Southwest U. S. of the URCNA.
- F. The Classis Pacific Northwest of the URCNA.

May the Lord bless the ecclesiastical fellowship we are privileged to have with our fraternal brethren. Let us pray that the Lord may grant us grace and mercy to continue to be “all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” (1 Peter 3:8)

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jonathan Merica, Chairman, Rev. Sam Powell, Elder Ryan Spitzer, Elder Mark Reyna, Elder Tom Lagomasino

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

F. Publications

Your committee received no instructions or requests from the Western Classis during this

past year. The Publications Committee, therefore, was not convened nor conducted any business.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul H Treick, convener, Elder Jim Gochnauer, Elder Lawrence Lynch, Elder Mark Crook

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

G. Diaconal Ministries

The following communication was sent to the Committee:

The Consistory of Providence Reformed Church (PRC) in Lodi gave \$3000 to Carolyn Mayville to assist with Funeral expenses for the late Rev. Thomas Mayville. Due to the time-sensitive of the case, this was done immediately as the need appeared.

Although the finances of PRC can handle this expense temporarily, we are not in a position to be able to sustain this \$3000 hit to our budget.

We, the Consistory of PRC, request that the Diaconal Committee reimburse this emergency expenditure out of the Diaconal Fund of the Western Classis.

Thank You for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jerry DeYoung, Stated Clerk of the Consistory

The following response was sent to Treasurer Nathan Schlegel, dated May 13, 2021:

The Diaconal Committee of the Western Classis approves the request of the Consistory of the Providence Reformed Church, Lodi, CA, to reimburse said church the \$3000 given to Carolyn Mayville to assist with the funeral expenses for the late Thomas Mayville.

Rev. Vernon Pollema, Chairman, Rev. Valentin Alpuche, Rev. Neale Riffert, Elder Todd Crabtree, Deacon Chris Hekman

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

A. President's Report on the State of the Church

Esteem Fathers and Brethren,

Our Lord calls us to faithfully shepherd his flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). I thank our Lord Jesus Christ for his abundant grace toward us. In the past year he has given us sufficient grace to face the many trials that he led us through. We have not lacked what we needed for each moment. Indeed, each moment was met with his abundant grace. Above all we have had grace and opportunity to sustain his flock, which he has committed to our care. I am thankful to him to be part of a denomination that is committed to biblical pastoral care.

What follows is my state of the church report, beginning with a summary of the parochial reports.

Parochial reports

Retired Ministers

Retired ministers may submit a report to classis if they wish to do so. This year we received two such reports.

Rev. Paul Treick brings warm greetings to Classis. In his report he relates that his current health issues are affecting his ability to serve the church. Nevertheless, each week he puts together the bulletins, and he teaches the adult Sunday school and the Sunday night Bible studies as he is able. He and Karen greatly benefit from the warm fellowship of the congregation. In his report he also seeks to maintain a true Presbyterianism by sounding warnings against the dangers of creeping congregationalism on the one hand or a trend toward ‘super committees’ on the other.

Rev. Vern Pollema reports of his labors for the church. The Lord provided opportunity for him to preach each month at Grace Reformed Church of Lancaster, as well as occasionally filling in for Rev. Tracy Gruggett. He serves on two permanent committees, one of Classis, the other of Synod. And he also serves on the board of Heidelberg Theological Seminary. He remarks that his health is relatively good, and he and Betty are enjoying their children and grandchildren and the fellowship of the church. We can only thank God that he continues to bless us with the labors of his faithful servant.

Active Ministers

Though in the second year of the Pandemic, Rev. Sam Powell reports that the congregation of First Reformed Church in Yuba City is getting its health back after several extremely challenging years. He reports of faithful ministry in a difficult context and describes the Lord’s grace in sustaining the congregation and meeting their financial needs. He encourages classis that in the midst of these changing times that we rely of the Rock who does not change. Moreover, new changes, he counsels, are “OK” so long as God is doing it.

Things are returning to normalcy at Grace Reformed Church in Bakersfield. The congregation worshipped outside at a local school in the beginning of the year but came back to their facilities in early Spring. The remodel project is both a source of joy and frustration. They’re using it, but the work remains incomplete. Rev. Gruggett relates that they took the Lord’s Supper only two times in 2021, due to a combination of Covid and the sanctuary not being ready. The congregation will be short one elder for 2022. The Spiritual Council will be comprised of the pastor and two elders. In addition, the congregation has a small number of children. But there is good number of young adults, and new families being started. Generally, the congregation is encouraged.

Rev. Valentine Alpuche lists his labors during the year. He relates that the congregation is comprised of four families, and visitors regularly attend. Among his labors Valentine also teaches at *Seminario Reformado de las Américas*. I will note that he carries out his labors while experiencing extreme, sometimes debilitating, lower back pain. Still the work goes on, and the Lord is blessing it.

Rev. Douglas Schlegel says that impact of Rev. Thomas Mayville’s absence has been deeply felt by himself and by the congregation. He reports that the congregation, due to Covid-19 met only twice in 2021 through virtual means. On the use of this technology he writes, “I am pleased that those who need to use this technology can do so, when necessary, but I also continue to insist that while it is a good tool, it will never, ever replace the indispensable physical gathering for worship.” The church was well served with faithful preaching, teaching, and shepherding. And I suppose it can be said that when you produce a handbook on church discipline, you become a sought-after-man. Rev. Schlegel thus finds

himself serving the broader church as a consultant for pastors and councils on difficult cases of church discipline. We thank the Lord for his gifts.

Pastor Gil Baloy reports that for Covenant Reformed Church in San Diego 2021 was a better year than the previous one. Most importantly, they returned to in-person worship as well as to other in-person activities. One gets a sense that congregation values and enjoys loving fellowship with the members engaging in many activities to be with and to encourage one another. Some members moved out of state. But they have installed two men as church officers. Rev. Baloy continues his evangelism efforts; twice a week going out to make known the good news. The congregation is being sustained under solid teaching and wise leadership.

Rev. Frank Walker details his labors at Sacramento Covenant Reformed Church and is encouraged by the congregation's growing maturity. He reports that congregation has returned fully to their pre-Covid activities. They did lose members during Covid for various reasons, but things have stabilized. Indeed, new members have been received. He reports that the loss of his daughter has frequently left him feeling broken, and the several health issues have prevented him from preaching and from other forms of ministry. The ongoing work, the growing maturity of the members, and the addition of new members is a great delight to him. May our Lord continue to provide comfort for he and Christine.

Rev. Gary Mancilas relates his work and the state of Covenant Reformed Church of Chico. He describes his numerous pastoral labors in conjunction with the members of Consistory in what appears to be well functioning program of spiritual oversight and instruction. They are very diligent to maintain and exercise the three marks of the church along with catechetical instruction of the youth. In addition, they lead the congregation to observing Synodical days of prayer. We can see that the congregation is well served by these faithful under-shepherds. As we all know, Gary and Gloria lost their daughter, Melanie, this past August. They want to express their deeply felt thanks to everyone in Classis for all your prayers and words of encouragement.

Rev. Ruben Zartman relates what was a year of blessing for the congregation of Ebenezer Reformed Church. Along with regular preaching and teaching, he finds that "remaining in touch with the congregation remains a rewarding element of the work." The congregation's enthusiastic support of *Valle De Gracia* remains unabated. Indeed, their involvement with the work has been beneficial to the health of ERC. During the year the Lord added to the number through transfers, public profession of faith, and baptisms. He is also encouraged by the ways members find ways to serve one another and show hospitality. In addition, to his inside labors with both congregations, his outside labors as the synodical clerk take a significant amount of time and energy as we might imagine. Rev. Zartman's hope for the coming year is that the congregation will remain faithful in doctrine as well as grow in prayer and in evangelism.

Rev. Jonathon Merica states that, "The goal of the ministry of Calvary Reformed Chapel is to declare the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to sinners and faithfully preach the Word of God to His people for His honor and glory." His report reflects his faithful and dedicated labors to this end. On a Weekly basis he preaches God's Word, teaches the adult Sunday school, and leads a midweek Bible study. The Lord's Supper was administered twelve times. He mentions various other endeavors, including an emphasis on prayer. As to numerical growth, one person has been taking membership class, and one couple in the

congregation is expecting. He expresses his gratitude to the Western Classis and to the congregation of Trinity Reformed Church, Modesto, the overseeing congregation.

Rev. Eric Bristley relates that much of his ministry to Grace Reformed Church of Willows was complicated by his need to go to Ohio to attend to the care of his elderly mother, who is 91 and no longer able to care for herself on her own. It was a difficult year. Much of the first half the year he resided in Ohio, yet ministered to the congregation through virtual means. This was something they were accustomed to due to the pandemic. In the latter half of the year, he was able to intermittently minister in person to the congregation in a variety of ways. During all of this he kept in frequent contact with the Consistory and was able to preach all but three Sundays. That he may care for his mother full time, he made the decision to resign from Willows and to retire from ministry. In November, he submitted to the consistory his request to resign and retire, and the consistory accepted both, and the congregation voted to make him Pastor Emeritus.

Elder's Reports

Elder Tim Curtis presented the parochial report for Trinity Reformed Church of Modesto. The church returned to in-person worship services for most of 2021. He reports that he preached 50 times, and the Lord's Supper was served once. They broadcasted their worship services online, and this has been a source of ministry to the hospice patients he serves as a chaplain. The Congregation engages in an adult Sunday school and a Sunday evening Bible study. The congregation enjoys close fellowship and is blessed by their corporate prayer.

One feels a sense of excitement in reading the report from the elders Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster. Elders Larry Lynch and Mark Reyna write that for six years now the Lord has sustained the congregation through the work of the elders and through no small contribution from Rev. Neale Riffert and Rev. Vern Pollema. Now at last they have called a man to serve as their pastor, Rev. Jeff Munive. They have prayed that the Lord will send a laborer, and it appears that He is doing so. In addition, the congregation has grown in their faith and in numbers with addition of six new members. These men express their joy, saying, "Our hope for the future of this congregation grows day by day."

Evaluation

Statistics

I hate to bear bad news, but as with all classis delegates I am concerned with continuing decrease in membership, especially communicate members. The overall total of our communicant membership decreased by 66 members. Most of these loses were sustained by Sacramento and Yuba City congregations, and in measure reflect the impact of the pandemic. Such losses have leveled off and both churches are in a rebuilding phase. The remainder of the churches of classis either remained the same or took in or lost a new family or two. Some of these losses were due to folks moving away. We should also be aware that eleven members of Rehoboth Reformed Church remain in the Western Classis until they are dismissed or erased. It is reasonable that these members will move to other churches in the Los Angeles area where there are no other RCUS churches.

No doubt this trend is concerning to all of us, perhaps even discouraging. The ministers and Consistories put in a lot of effort to serve and grow the churches. Even so, last year,

we again saw decreases, and sadly another church closed. In past meetings and in numerous conversations, we have sought various explanations for this trend. To be sure, coming off two difficult years of Covid has contributed to our lower numbers. Perhaps our Lord has been purifying our churches during this season (John 15).

It seems to me that the reports reflect what we can call seasonal ministry. Coming out of the pandemic I see efforts to resume and renew in-person worship and fellowship. Several reports relate a closeness among the members with a desire to serve each other. Others reveal an emphasis on prayer. And one report exhorts us to be more open to change where in fact God is leading it. Though our numbers have not increased as we would desire, there is health in our midst. And this is no small thing. Let us be committed to health first. This calls for pastoral wisdom. In the end we must echo the words of Paul: May we grow with the increase that is from God (Col. 2:19).

Ministry in Season

As stated above, ministry must take regard the seasons that churches find themselves in. To this end, I want to mention three areas to think about in the current season. I am sure you could think of more.

1. I think that we would all agree that the current season calls for emphasis on in-person worship, bible studies, *et al.* Virtual technologies are a wonderful medium, but they cannot replace in person activities. As John says, *Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full* (2 John 1:12).
2. At the current time and probably from here on, we need to take stock of the powerful influences upon our people coming from the news media. By news media I include all media iterations of *both* the left and right. These media and the personalities coming through them are having a powerful, formative, indeed, catechetical influence upon our people yet many are biblically ignorant and know little to nothing of the kingdom of Christ and the way of the cross.
3. The current season calls for instruction in the upcoming elections both of 2022 and in 2024. I've never been a doomsayer and I usually ignore alarmists. But the political climate of the nation does not bode well for the upcoming elections. Maybe these will be normal election cycles; I do not know. But if they are as tumultuous as the previous one, then our people will need instruction and guidance on how to think biblically about political matters and be taught how to trust in our ascended Lord rather than the princes of men (Psalm 2; Is. 30).

Presbyterian church government

The esteemed fathers of our denomination—men that I have served alongside for my 20 years of ministry have passed onto us a legacy of faithfulness to the Reformed faith, with a strong devotion to presbyterian church government. We do well to carry on these principles and heed this legacy. We do well to heed warnings against encroachments that violate norms of sound church government. To be sure, classis governs as a body while in session or in circularized recommendations. It is not governed by any committee, nor are its delegated powers to be usurped by any one person, church, or group of congregations. To that end, I believe we are quite careful to keep the constitution and polities that are

meant to govern the Western Classis. Nevertheless, we can make mistakes, or we can fail to see that a trend in a bad direction is underway. Therefore, let us be careful and humble to maintain sound ecclesiastical governance and submission.

I close this report with a citation from the Apostle Peter:

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away (1 Peter 5:1-4).

In 2022, may our exalted Lord be pleased to supply grace to sow and to water the seed of his Word. And may he grant much fruit.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Classis Action: The report was received and a motion passed to have it spread upon the Abstract of the Minutes of Classis, and to submit it to the *Reformed Herald* for publication.

B. Stated Clerk's Report

Honorable Western Classis

Reformed Church in the United States

Esteemed Brothers in Christ,

The past year has been busier than what has been the norm in recent years for your clerk. I would like to once again express my gratitude for the trust given to me. Below you will find a summary of my activities.

The minutes of the 36th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis were typed, indexed, and placed in a permanent binder along with all reports, overtures, and pertinent information. Normally, the minutes are corrected according to the Synod's Committee on the Minutes of Classis. The Abstract of the minutes was sent to the RCUS Website. After finishing the Abstract, I was preparing to send it to the printer when I remembered that the distribution of the physical paper Abstract the previous year (after the previous year's digital distribution) was done by setting aside the Standing Rule. Standing Rule 9 states, "The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an abstract of the Classical minutes and shall email a PDF copy to each delegate to the Classis within 60 days. A pdf copy shall be sent to the Webmaster of the RCUS to be made available on the RCUS website...." While my intention is to follow the current reading of the Standing Rule, it may be wise to revisit this issue and I ask the delegates to do so at this meeting. It is my recollection that the primary reason for adopting the current language in 2019 was the cost and due to the financial status of the classis. If it is the desire of the delegates to resume the printing of the Abstract, the Standing Rule should be changed. The Abstract was distributed to the delegates and churches of the Western Classis and the RCUS Webmaster in compliance with current language of Standing Rule 9.

The President's Report on the State of the Church was included in the Abstract and submitted to *The Reformed Herald*. Required information regarding delegate credentials, church directory and changes to the roll of ministers was sent to the Synod Clerk. Your clerk also sent letters of acknowledgement and thanks to members of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches who sent support funds for the work of missions in the classis as well as acknowledgement of the changes in our point of contact with that fraternal communion

There were three Executive Circulars sent during the classical year:

36:1 – A request for Ministerial Aid for Carolyn Mayville

36:2 – A petition to close Rehoboth Reformed Church, Cerritos

36:3 – The proposal for the services of the 37th meeting of the Western Classis

To date, I have received the necrologies of Rev. Thomas Mayville and Rev. Gene Sawtelle.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Douglas L. Schlegel, *Stated Clerk, Western Classis, RCUS*

[The necrologies reported separately]

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Judicial Committee.

C. Minutes of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 275th Synod, there is one item that requires action by the Classes, and several other matters of note:

1. The adopted recommendation of the Standing Judicial Committee (concerning Overture 3 from the South Central Classis, to amend Article 79 of the RCUS Constitution) will need to be acted upon by the several Classes in their respective meetings.

With reference to Overture #3 From South Central Classis to amend Article 79 of the RCUS Constitution:

The SCC overtures Synod to amend Article 79 of the RCUS Constitution as follows:

Current Article 79:

The annual meeting of a Classis shall be opened with religious services, including the preaching of a sermon by the President, or by one of its members designated by him or by the Classis, after which the roll shall be called; if a quorum is present, the officers for the ensuing year shall be elected, and the business shall proceed according to the Rules of Order prescribed by the Synod.

Proposed changes:

The annual meeting of a Classis shall be **preceded by a prayer of invocation and** opened with religious services, including the preaching of a sermon by the President, or by one of its members designated by him or by the Classis, after which the roll shall be called; **the roll being called.** If a quorum is present, the officers for the ensuing year shall be elected, and the business shall proceed according to the Rules of Order prescribed by the Synod. **Classis shall conduct religious services either during or before its annual meeting, which shall include** the preaching of a sermon by the President, or by one of its members designated by him or by the Classis.

Amended Article 79 would read as follows (above changes included):

The annual meeting of a Classis shall be preceded by a prayer of invocation and opened with the roll being called. If a quorum is present, the officers for the ensuing year shall be elected, and the business shall proceed according to the Rules of Order prescribed by the Synod. Classis shall conduct religious services either during or before its annual meeting, which shall include the preaching of a sermon by the President, or by one of its members designated by him or by the Classis

Reasons:

1. The goal of this amendment is to allow the Classes greater liberty when scheduling required religious services for their annual meetings, rather than requiring that a service be scheduled to begin the meeting.
2. There are occasions when it may be convenient for a Classis to begin its annual meeting with an afternoon or morning session; e.g., when a licensure examination is on the agenda. However, afternoons and mornings are usually not the best times to schedule worship services since many members of the host church are not available to attend. The proposed amendment would permit greater flexibility to the Classes to open their meetings and conduct business in the afternoon or morning, and still schedule an evening worship service as is typical.
3. The amendment resolves a logical difficulty in Article 79's current wording. The article states that the annual meeting "shall be opened" with a religious service; however, is it logically consistent to suggest that a Classis meeting can begin *before* the presence of a quorum has been determined? Current practice argues that the answer to this question is no, since at present a Classis delegate may miss the entire opening service and not be considered late to the meeting, provided he is present for the roll call. This observation illustrates what is already implicitly understood: that Classis meetings in fact open only when the roll is taken and a quorum has been determined. The amended article clears up the difficulty, yet without eliminating the option of scheduling a worship service before the opening roll call.

4. It is appropriate for men of God to call upon the Lord before attending to the business of His church, which is why the amended article calls for a prayer of invocation to be offered before the opening roll is taken.
5. The proposed amendment still requires religious services to be conducted as part of the annual meeting of Classis, and does not require any Classis to discontinue its current practice of scheduling a worship service before the meeting.

[This overture was deemed non-essential business by the 274th Synod and was therefore left to be taken up by the 275th Synod.]

We concur with South Central Classis in their proposed amendments to Article 79.

[This recommendation passed with the required majority, but the Classes will need to vote on this constitutional amendment at their 2022 annual meetings.]

(Abstract 2021:80–82)

2. The 276th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 16–19, 2022, at Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI.
3. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the calendar year.
4. Please review the Standing Rules of Synod (*2021 Synod Abstract*, pp.91–94).
5. 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.
6. Please remember to send necrologies to the Synod clerk in time for Synod.
7. It should be observed that in the printed version of the 2021 Abstract there was an error in the statistics for Ebenezer Reformed Church, where the total members should have read **91** rather than **101**. This will have an impact on the percent of change figure.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruben Zartman, Stated Clerk, RCUS

Classis Action: The report was referred to the Judicial Committee.

D. Treasurer’s Report

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers of the Western Classis:

It was again my honor and privilege to serve as your treasurer this past year. Last year was another year with a number of changes and issues which affected both myself and the classis as a whole. I would like to express my gratitude to you all for your continued patience with me as well as the care you take to reach out to me throughout the year as the business of the various committees is conducted. You see the numbers before you. Overall the finances of the Western Classis are strong and we had a good year. The Classis was in the black again this year.

HMBF Loan – Grace Reformed in Dickinson

Our loan with Grace Reformed Church in Dickinson is proceeding as planned, and they have been faithful to remain current with their loan payments. They did submit a request for a reduction of the interest rate from 4% to 3% matching their loans with the Synod. I am in favor not only this reduction, but I believe that a reduction for this and all future loans to the minimum Applicable Federal Rate would be the right course of action. There will be more details in the Permanent Finances Committee report.

Sale of Anderson Church Building

You will notice a large influx of cash into the general fund. This came in large part from \$50,000 sent from the sale of the Anderson church building this past year.

Permanent Finances Committee

At our 2021 meeting, a permanent finances committee was formed, partially at the request of yours truly. This has been very helpful on a number of different fronts. Their insight, wisdom, and ability to help facilitate certain business has been invaluable, and I am truly grateful for their help.

Signatories on the Classis Bank Account

One of the changes this past year was that we had to remove Thomas Mayville as a signatory on the F&M bank accounts. Due to the paperwork requirements of F&M bank this process was made exponentially easier by being able to run this change through the Permanent Finances Committee. Elder Greg Goehring was gracious enough to accept being the 3rd signatory on the accounts, and I would like to extend my thanks to him as well. On a personal note, Pastor Mayville was a tremendous blessing to me in my work. Not only was he willing to help in any way that he could (including being a signatory), but he was relentless in his positive encouragement and support for me in my duties. I will miss him terribly.

HMBF Investment

Another area in which the committee has been helpful has been looking into the desired investment of the HMBF funds. A significant portion of their report will be dedicated to this issue, so I will only say that I am in full support of their recommendations.

Fiscal Year Issues

The committee also took up the issue of the Classical and Synodical fiscal years. While I believe that changing the classical fiscal year may not be the most prudent course of action, I also believe that changing the start date of all outgoing benevolence and home missions

payments to July 1st would be the best course of action. It will achieve most of the positives of potentially changing the fiscal year while avoiding the negatives. Again, the committee will have more details to take up in their report.

Classical Guidelines

Our guidelines this past year were set at a very low \$75/CM, and this seemed to be a good number both for participation from our congregations as well as meeting our expenses as a whole. While I expect the need to add in a small amount for Heidelberg Camp, Diaconal, and Benevolences in our budgeting process, I do believe that we will be able to keep this number quite low.

Overview Notes

In closing, I would like to note that we had a very high percentage of full participation in our annual guidelines from our congregations. Overall, the Classis finances are in a strong position and all thanks goes to God for his blessings to us. I would also like to thank you all once again for your patience with and trust in me. I will, by the grace of God and with His help, continue to serve you to the best of my abilities. It is my prayer that God's blessings will continue to be evident in our churches.

WESTERN CLASSIS
REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
BALANCE SHEET
DECEMBER 31, 2021

	12/31/2021	12/31/2020	CHANGE
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ASSETS:			
Cash	242,779.88	188,688.82	54,091.06
Loan	46,553.72	48,909.02	(2,355.30)
	<u>289,333.60</u>	<u>237,597.84</u>	<u>51,735.76</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	289,333.60	237,597.84	51,735.76
LIABILITIES:			
Accounts Payable	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0.00	0.00	0.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	289,333.60	237,597.84	51,735.76
	<u>289,333.60</u>	<u>237,597.84</u>	<u>51,735.76</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & SURPLUS	<u>289,333.60</u>	<u>237,597.84</u>	<u>51,735.76</u>
FUND BALANCES:			
General	57,928.54	3,497.41	54,431.13
Home Missions Building Fund	170,135.06	167,550.27	2,584.79
Home Missions	6,934.88	5,852.60	1,082.28
Benevolence	0.00	0.00	0.00
Publications	0.00	0.00	0.00
Diaconal	6,951.45	9,948.84	(2,997.39)
Heidelberg Camp	829.95	2,358.47	(1,528.52)
	<u>242,779.88</u>	<u>188,688.82</u>	<u>53,572.29</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>242,779.88</u>	<u>188,688.82</u>	<u>53,572.29</u>

WESTERN CLASSIS
REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES INCOME STATEMENT
FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

INCOME:	C.M. 1-01-2021	Dues	Bldg Fund Home Mission	Benevolence	Publications	Diaconal	Heidelberg Camp	Total Per Church
Regular Guideline Giving								
Grace Reformed-Bakersfield	111	\$1,100.00	\$0.00	\$6,930.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$220.00	\$8,250.00
Covenant Reformed-Chico	18	\$180.00	\$0.00	\$668.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$36.00	\$884.50
Grace Reformed-Lancaster	32	\$320.00	\$0.00	\$2,016.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$64.00	\$2,400.00
Providence Reformed-Lodi	18	\$180.00	\$0.00	\$1,134.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$36.00	\$1,350.00
Rehoboth-Los Angeles	19	\$190.00	\$0.00	\$1,197.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$38.00	\$1,425.00
Trinity Reformed-Modesto	29	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Covenant Reformed-Sacramento	150	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$9,450.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$11,250.00
Covenant Reformed-San Diego	28	\$308.00	\$0.00	\$2,576.00	\$308.00	\$28.00	\$0.00	\$3,332.00
Ebenezer Reformed-Shafter	67	\$670.00	\$0.00	\$4,221.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$134.00	\$5,025.00
Grace Reformed-Willows	29	\$290.00	\$0.00	\$1,152.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$58.00	\$1,500.00
First Reformed-Yuba City	45	\$450.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$450.00
Regular Guideline Giving Sub-Total		\$5,188.00	\$0.00	\$29,344.50	\$308.00	\$28.00	\$998.00	\$35,866.50
Non-Guideline Giving								
Grace Reformed-Dickinson	0	\$1,917.10	\$2,520.98	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,438.08
Canadian Reformed Churches	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Clarissa/Nathan Chase	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Faith Reformed Anderson	0	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Non-Guideline Giving Sub-Total		\$51,917.10	\$2,520.98	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$55,638.08
Interest Allocated Per Fund								
F&M Bank		\$21.73	\$63.81	\$2.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2.61	\$91.05
TOTAL INCOME	546	\$57,126.83	\$2,584.79	\$30,547.10	\$308.00	\$28.00	\$998.30	\$91,595.63

INCOME AND EXPENSE STATEMENT BY FUND

WESTERN CLASSIS
 REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
 INCOME STATEMENT BY FUND

FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021

FUND:	General	Home Mission Bldg Fund	Home Mission	Benevolence	Diaconal	Publications	Heidelberg Camp	Total
INCOME:								
Giving	57,105.10	2,520.98	30,544.50	308.00	0.00	28.00	998.00	91,504.58
Allocated Interest	21.73	63.81	2.60	0.00	2.61	0.00	0.30	91.06
Total Income	57,126.83	2,584.79	30,547.10	308.00	2.61	28.00	998.30	91,595.64
EXPENSE:								
Stated Clerk	1,000.00							1,000.00
Exec. Comm	324.74							324.74
Inter Church	288.20							288.20
Benevolences				900.00				900.00
Home Missions			29,464.82					29,464.82
Homes Missions Bldg								0.00
Diaconal					3,000.00			3,000.00
Publications								0.00
Heidelberg Camp-Net							2,526.82	2,526.82
Total Expense	1,612.94	0.00	29,464.82	900.00	3,000.00	0.00	2,526.82	37,504.58
Income (Loss) Yr	55,513.89	2,584.79	1,082.28	(592.00)	(2,997.39)	28.00	(1,528.52)	54,091.06
Balance 12-31-20	3,497.41	167,550.27	5,852.60	(284.49)	9,948.84	(234.28)	2,358.47	188,688.82
Subtotal 12-31-21	59,011.31	170,135.06	6,934.88	(876.49)	6,951.45	(206.28)	829.95	242,779.88
Balance 12-31-21	57,928.54	170,135.06	6,934.88	0.00	6,951.45	0.00	829.95	242,779.88

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan L. Schlegel

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

PAROCHIAL REPORTS

A. Rev. Valentin Alpuche

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:7).

This is my parochial report:

1. I preached every Sunday in our worship services in 2021. I was able to preach sermons from different books of the Bible: Genesis, Hosea, Acts, etc.
2. I taught a Bible study every Wednesday.
3. I taught a class every Tuesday on the Belgic Confession of Faith.
4. I recorded for our radio program every week.
5. I was able to preach several times at Ebenezer RCUS once a month.
6. I taught a Sunday school class for the young people from Ebenezer RCUS.
7. I taught the Doctrine of God for Seminario Reformado de las Américas every Tuesday from 5-7pm (October-December). This seminary is working together with City Seminary, Sacramento. Currently I am teaching Introduction to the New Testament. We have students from Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, and Argentina.
8. I was able to meet new people in Shafter and Wasco with whom I shared the Gospel several times.
9. I was able to translate and revise translations of reformed books into Spanish.
10. By God’s grace we have people from Peru, Mexico, and the US who actively participate in our worship services and Bible studies via zoom.
11. Several people came to visit our church activities last year and we were able to minister to them for some time.

Dear brothers, our mission work is made up of four families faithfully attending our church services. We are so thankful to our Lord for sustaining us one more year. We are very encouraged to continue working in Shafter, and we are also very grateful to Western Classis for your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Valentín Alpuche

Classis Action: Take note

B. Rev. Gil Baloy.

Esteemed Brethren in Christ,

This past year proved to be better than the previous year in that we met regularly in person as a church. “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 122:1) This year, the menu has been completing the Gospel of John, starting the book of Ephesians, as well as a sprinkling of holiday and special messages. We started again our fellowship eating after the worship service, alternating between

meals and finger foods. The preaching is still being brought into the home via sermonaudio.com. Credit must be given to Maricar Baloy and Eric Lontoc for their technical help online; and the others who help to set up each Lord's Day. Sheila White faithfully assists the pastor with the Sunday hymns and the prayer requests for the weekly Ladies Prayer time.

Last Fall, we started the adult Sunday School on the "Providentially Preserved Text" which seem to catch the students' attention judging by their attentiveness to this vital matter. The King James Bible has continued to be the pulpit and pew Bible version of Covenant RCUS. Now the topic is on the importance of a personal Quiet-Time" each day. The children are most responsive in the children's class regularly taught by Maricar Baloy with the assistance of a mom or grandma.

Our Thursday Bible study and prayer time is "zoomed." We studied the book of James, Psalm 119, the three stages of Salvation (Justification, Sanctification and Glorification), and lately started the "Lord's Prayer." We have had some visitors to it and a new regular attendee, Marie Medeles, who is coming along in her profession of faith. Hopefully, more will attend this revitalizing time for the soul.

The brothers and sisters got together for fellowship at a restaurant on a few occasions. Though masked, we could easily recognize one another's smiling eyes and happy voices. The ladies still pray on Saturday, but mostly by phone; joined by a long-time friend living deep in the heart of Texas. The congregation enjoyed our Thanksgiving Dinner with so many scrumptious vittles; not to mention budding young (and one-not-so-young) talent singing, dancing and reciting Scripture on stage. The annual event drew in families and friends we had not seen in a long time. Some of us would like to have more outdoor church events in 2022 like our one-time fellowship on Coronado Beach last summer. We were delighted to have Alfred White's daughter Natasha and her nephew Emit come out from the east coast. It was a providential blessing for the Whites in that Natasha passed later in the year.

The Lord's Supper went from monthly to bi-monthly celebrations. There were no baptisms this year. There was one judicial erasure and one dismissal of a member. One dear member of many years Joe Deleon went home to glory early in spring. We are praying for the Lord of the harvest to bring forth more laborers and their sheaves into the church.

Our church was blessed with the installation of Mr. Jeremy Smith as a new elder February 21, 2021. Also, Mr. Angel Lontoc was conferred with the status of Deacon Emeritus July 11, 2021 after over two decades of steadfast service in that office. Three families have moved away to yonder parts as sometimes happens in the life of a congregation. A fourth family of Elder Jeremy Smith, Joselin and their five children just left for Bartlett, Tennessee. They came to us over ten years as a new household in the faith. We will surely miss them. But like they say in the military: "carry on..." We believe God to provide other officers in His good time and order.

I rejoice that the Lord sustained Elder Alfred White and his wife Sheila in their sickness (Covid) and used Alfred to supply the pulpit in my absence. We lost our long-time

accompanist Laura Foster to another Covenant RCUS in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. God was wonderful in providing Shirley Woodson as our new accompanist who is a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church and their pianist. Shirley initially said it was her desire to get to know us better and regularly attends both churches' services. We are thankful for her and other regular visitors too.

The pastor continues with twice weekly outreach evangelism: at the start of the Pandemic at the beach boardwalks, then at SDSU when the campus reopened, and now Balboa Park. We tried some innovative ways to spread the gospel in the community around the church via door-hangers and gift bags with the precious seed. He is considering going to the Philippines with Dr. Maynard Koerner for Heidelberg Seminary's graduation of up to nine ministerial students. That will depend if the government there discontinues mandatory quarantine for tourists without a vaccination passport (now it's five days in a hotel). The Pastor made it to the annual Western Classis last year—virtually. He turned up sick, along with his wife, with Sars Covid II in early May, and was unable to make it to the RCUS Synod in Sioux Falls.

All in all, 2021 has been a blessed year in spite of some discouragements. May more come to the worship service. May we begin to meet in homes again for our weekly Bible study. May more go out with the gospel. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full." (3 John 1: 2 ; 2 John 1: 12) We desire that all of God's people prosper in every way in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Baloy

Classis Action: Take note

C. Rev. Eric Bristley

[The report of Rev. Eric Bristley is redacted by the request of Rev. Bristley. The original report is filed in the records of the Western Classis.]

Classis Action: Take note.

D. Rev. Sam Powell

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

We are now in second year of this pandemic.

This is to be a report on the state of the congregation. I believe that the congregation is getting some of its spiritual health back, after several extremely challenging years.

Over the last few years, I have challenged the congregation to embrace those who might think differently, and that we endeavor to keep the unity in the bond of peace.

Unfortunately, there were many who chose not to do so. The divisiveness of the political climate spilled over. And like it always does, talk tends to escalate, grudges are nursed, and soon it gets to the point where the pastor can do nothing right.

But the congregation is still here, despite the seeds of division and strife sown by the Evil One. In hindsight, I wish that I had been more aware of the seeds that were being sown. But that is in the past, and now we are called to put it behind us and move forward.

The consistory met in the spring of 2021 and pared down the budget taking into account those who transferred their membership out. Despite some prognosticators who predicted that we would shut our doors, God has tremendously blessed us financially beyond all expectation and we continue to pay the bills. The lights are still on.

We continued to meet outdoors until May. In the summer, almost everyone was able to receive the vaccine and we felt we could safely move indoors. We continued our service times at 10:00, as that seemed to do better for the congregation.

In June, we met for lunch under the trees and discussed moving forward as a congregation. For the most part, it was a fruitful discussion, though it was often painful.

I started catechism classes with the children following the service and it has been a tremendous blessing for me.

I preached 50 times this past year. The other two Sundays, I was travelling to Synod. Although I was unable to take any vacation time, I was able to take a day or two here and there, for which I am thankful.

Mrs. Powell and I took over the weekly cleaning and Deacon Michael Opie has taken over the lawn care.

We are beginning new traditions and starting to rebuild. It seems as if the fog is lifting.

I taught Bible Study each Wednesday evening by Zoom, and recorded the lessons to be posted on SermonAudio. I continued to write from time to time on my blog.

The services are streamed live each Lord's Day by way of Facebook and videos are recorded almost every Sunday for posting on SermonAudio.

Technology has been challenging for me and at the same time rewarding. It was good to have tools to keep everyone together and worshipping together, even if those tools were sometimes very frustrating to get to work right.

Steve Moore has faithfully served as our treasurer for many, many years. I cannot express enough how much he and Judy mean to me and the labor of love that they both have poured into our congregation. Much of what we have here is because of their efforts, their sacrifice, and their labor. Steve, thank you so much for everything you have done.

Steve is retiring. Michael Opie will be taking over the books. He is stretched pretty thin, but there is no one else to do it. Please pray with me that the Lord will send laborers to assist in the work here, and in the meantime, we are thankful for Michael's willingness to step up.

We don't know what is around the corner. We know that times are changing, but the Rock on which we build never changes. The kingdom of heaven is like a householder bringing out of his store room old things and new things (Matt. 13:52). Sometimes the new makes us uncomfortable and it is always scary to face it. But our sanctification means that all things are being made new. It is what we long for and what we press towards. But when the new arrives it is scary because it is unfamiliar. But we can't avoid it.

Sometimes the storms come crashing through and everything that we were used to is broken apart and shattered and we are left trying to pick up the pieces, and then we see the new thing that God is doing, shining in the rubble like a jewel of great value.

New is OK when it is God that is doing it. Instead of being afraid of what the future might bring, we should remember our confession: *“for what is future have good confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love, since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.”* (Heidelberg Catechism #28)

And a reminder from my report from last year,

“We are in a situation that we cannot control. But we can control how we respond to it. I would encourage us all to embrace those who may think differently, for of such is the kingdom of God. We all hold to the same confession and the same Lord and have been baptized with the same baptism. This is our unity. The church is to be united in love, for we are all baptized into the same family.

“As the Apostle instructs us:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

² *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

³ *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

⁴ *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

⁵ *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

⁶ *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Eph. 4:1-6)*

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Sam Powell

Classis Action: Take note.

E. Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

I bring you greetings from the brothers and sisters of Grace Reformed Church. We hold you all in high esteem, and we want you to know that we remember you in our prayers.

While in some ways 2021 was a difficult year, in other ways it was encouraging. We began the year still worshipping outside at Country Christian School. In March, we moved back to the fellowship hall, and in October, we transitioned back to our sanctuary. Though the facility is not fully complete, it has nevertheless, been good to worship in our own building. In short order, we will see it all finished up soon, and we intend to have a service to celebrate this accomplishment.

In all these locations and moves, the Lord brought us together to worship, and He maintained our fellowship. Each Lord's Day, the Word was preached, and the Sunday schools were taught. Other forms of fellowship have been a little slower to return to normalcy. Once the remodel is done, we want to see "Women of Grace" resume, and we are beginning to restart our carry-in fellowship meals.

We took the Lord's Supper only two times last year, once at CCS and once in our own facility. To be sure, two times is too infrequent. I, for one, did not want to administer the Lord's Supper in the fellowship hall during the Covid surges of the summer months. When we able to move over to the larger facility, we resumed the Lord's Supper in conjunction with the confirmation of two covenant youth. I don't like these decisions, but in the end, I think they were prudent.

There were no disciplinary actions in 2021. Nor were there any baptisms. We did not see any of our people pass from this world. We dismissed two communicant members, but we received two new members through public profession of faith. Our communicate members increased by two to 113; incommunicate [*sic*] membership decreased by two to 15. I had the joy of officiating two weddings and met with three couples for pre-marital counseling. I conducted a Women's Bible Study throughout the year. In addition, I taught catechism through zoom. Currently, I meet with three youth for catechism class. We started a new fellowship group in the Fall for our College and Career aged adults. My wife, Michelle, served the church as one of its musicians, playing the piano.

The new facility set up is serving us well. The sanctuary and lobby are meant to serve the churches' worship and outreach. Structurally, we flipped the sanctuary and created a new lobby for the purpose of fellowship, as well as to direct folks over to the fellowship hall, where we conduct adult Sunday School. We have a new pulpit, which I am thoroughly pleased with. We've installed an excellent audio/visual system which is already proving its worth. Several volunteers now operate this system and are perfecting it as we go along. We have a retractable screen that we intend to use for several purposes.

As of this year GRC will be short one elder. Given our numbers, this situation falls short of the requirement of our congregational constitution. We approached four men to serve in that office, but each man doesn't believe that he is yet ready. This is understandable. Our plan is that we make do with two elders for this year, with a view to gaining a full complement in 2023. I have exhorted the men of our congregation to consider whether he may wish to service as an elder or deacon in the coming years.

Over the last several years, we have taken a hit with the loss of young people. The Sunday School program is operating, but the children's classes are sparsely attended. Likewise, we

did not conduct a Christmas program nor have a Vacation Bible School. We did, however, have several youth attend Heidelberg Youth Camp last Summer. To be sure, we all want to see more children in the church. But I think the church has a good foundation for the future, in that we have a good number of young adults who are beginning their careers and forming families. As mentioned, I meet with these for once-a-month Bible study. I find them thoughtful, committed, open to learning, desirous to serve the church, and to work toward its growth. Eventually, the baton of leadership will pass to them. I encouraged the congregation to consider how can we invest in them, stand beside them, and train them for future leadership?

I have now been the minister at Grace Reformed Church for a little over 14 years. In this long relationship, I have worked to bring the Word to God's people, and they have been open and receptive. We have a good relationship. Again, the congregation is supportive of me and my family.

I wish thank Classis for your support and prayers. May God shine His face upon in the coming years.

Respectfully submitted.

Rev. Tracy Gruggett

Classis Action: Take note.

F. Elder Larry Lynch – Grace Lancaster

Romans 8:15-16, “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Our congregation has much to be grateful for. Six years ago, we found ourselves without a pastor and without the means to call another. We were fearful that the Lord was removing our lampstand here in the Antelope Valley, but the Lord reminded us that He is our heavenly Father who perfectly cares for His adopted children.

One of the Lord's provisions for us during this time period has been two retired ministers, Reverend Pollema and Reverend Riffert. Through their preaching and teaching, we have grown in the faith, and our congregation has grown in numbers. We witnessed the Lord's building of His church by adding six new members to Grace this year. Four adults came by profession of faith and their two young children were baptized into the covenant. We had the pleasure of celebrating the Lord's Supper with these two couples after they professed their faith. Reverend Riffert also served the Lord's Supper on five Lord's days this year and taught a new members' class for these new families.

This year also marks a special significance in the life of our congregation because the Lord has answered our fervent prayers concerning an under-shepherd. We officially called Reverend Jeff Munive to become our pastor, contingent upon his approval from Classis. Our anticipation and excitement continue to grow in the meantime, as he provides pulpit supply for us. We rest in the almighty, everywhere present power of God, for we trust that He so governs all things by His providence.

The Lord has graciously given our members the desire and tenacity to engage in evangelism and outreach, inviting people to come and worship our Triune God in Spirit and in truth. Our hope for the future of this congregation grows day by day. We are striving to be earnest in meditating on the Scriptures, praying for one another, and building each other up in the Lord.

As we reflect on our previous years and look forward to the coming years, we cannot help but cry out, “Abba, Father” as we remember His care and love for us, through the Person and work of His only begotten Son and the indwelling witness of the Holy Spirit.

In Christ’s Service,

Elders Larry Lynch and Mark Reyna

Classis Action: Take note.

G. Rev. Gary Mancilas

Esteemed Brethren,

In keeping with the call for the RCUS Day of Prayer, on Lord’s Day January 9, 2022, my sermon was themed, “Pray the Lord Send Laborers,” from Matthew 9:35-38. *Jesus went about all the cities and villages, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.* Relative to the discourse of the *Harvest*, the Lord has given our church the harvest in which we must labor, however few we might be, that when the gospel is offered to the world, and that when people are invited to hear the faithful preaching of the *Word of God*, that the *Lord of the harvest* would bless our work in Chico through faith in Christ. Through prayer and the preaching of the Gospel, there should always be expected progressive growth in the *kingdom of God*.

Accordingly, it is my purpose to demonstrate in this parochial report that my labors and those of the members of Covenant Reformed Church in Chico (CRC) are progressing organically and spiritually. Herein, I offer the following account of my labors and of the spiritual and temporal condition of the charge:

This past February marked my twentieth (20) year serving CRC. At age 74, it is by the grace of God that I am sustained and enabled to serve the church. Further, my serving this congregation is only at the pleasure of the *Lord of the Harvest*, and I humbly count it an honor to have preached the council of our Sovereign God to the saints and to have labored among them in the kingdom. My pastoral duties were discharged by teaching and conducting Men’s Bible studies and prayer meetings, alternating with the elders; by managing and providing personal visitations, *Elders’ Visitations*, and counseling sessions; by organizing the congregational prayer meetings and special events; by instructing six catechumens in Confirmation Class; and by teaching the Heidelberg Catechism Instructions Class to children under confirmation age.

In 2021, corporate worship was held each Lord’s Day during the Covid-19 pandemic. How blessed it is that our God has been pleased to grant us the freedom of holding worship services each Lord’s Day, wherein the saints of God praise to excel His Majesty. Through the preaching of the Word of God, I have encouraged the members to avail themselves of

the dispensed *means of grace*; and it is with thankfulness to God that the congregation devotedly continues in the observance of public worship. The Spiritual Council provides oversight of the preaching and teaching of God's Word, of the proper administration of the Sacraments, and of the exercise of Christian discipline. On the preaching of the Gospel, in my forty-eight Lord's Days sermons, other than for special events, my focus was mainly on the Doctrine of Sanctification. On the first Lord's Day of each month, the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* was administered, and sermons were focused on the Lord's Table.

For the well-being of the congregation, the officers diligently demonstrated the proper care of the members' privileges and comforts, so that they should be able to serve God with cheerfulness and freedom of spirit. Presently, the Consistory functions with the pastor, two elders and one deacon, who collectively remain encouraged by the spiritual growth evidenced in our faithful members, who use their gifts readily and cheerfully to minister to one another. The deacon is doing a commendable job managing the temporal affairs of the church by assisting and supporting the Consistory and by promoting the general welfare of the congregation as he labors among the people in making known to them the needs of the church. Devotedly serving the congregation, the elders carry out "Elders' Visitation," family visitations, and visitation with prayer for the sick. When their pastor is on vacation, they either supply the pulpit or secure pulpit supply. The elders support their pastor in exercising the Office of the Keys, and *Church discipline* has been properly exercised for the correcting of the soul.

With respect to the denomination, my labors on behalf of Classis include serving on the Home Missions Committee; and on behalf of Synod, I was appointed to the Archives Committee. In observance, the congregation has been edified by the Synodical calls for an Annual Day of Prayer for Missions and a Special Day of Prayer for Foreign Ministries of the RCUS. In each Lord's Day bulletin, either a designated mission work or a specific RCUS guideline is provided with a request for prayer. For the 2021 RCUS *Special Day of Prayer and Fasting*, the Spiritual Council provided practical directions for the member families in order to organize the congregation; I preached on *prayer and fasting*; and prayer was offered that the Lord would raise up faithful men to pursue the gospel ministry, for the RCUS students under care, and for the approved seminaries of Synod.

To conclude, the discourse of the *Lord of the Harvest* is a call to prayer, and Christ did not merely invite His *Disciples* to pray, He commanded them to pray that the *Lord of the harvest send out laborers into His harvest*. May our church be in constant prayer to the Lord that He send laborers into His spiritual harvest.

For me personally, as an expression of gratitude, I warmly thank you for your extended prayers and ardent words of encouragement over these many years concerning our daughter, Melanie, and her rare illness and recent death on August 21. Although it pleased our Sovereign God to take her from this temporal world, our Lord has not left us comfortless. Following ten years of *chronic illness*, having passed from this temporal state of suffering and pain, Melanie has now entered into her eternal state of peace and blessedness.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,

Rev. Gary Mancilas

Classis Action: Take note.

H. Rev. Jonathan Merica

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

Calvary Reformed Chapel is thankful for the prayers, and support of the Western Classic and the RCUS Synod, as well as the Consistory oversight of Trinity Reformed Church in Modesto, CA. As we labor together for the furtherance of the Kingdom and the glory of God, we pray without ceasing to the Lord to send His blessings upon our labors for the furtherance of the gospel in the Stockton area.

The goal of the ministry of Calvary Reformed Chapel is to declare the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to sinners and faithfully preach the Word of God to His people for His honor and glory.

Your servant preached the Word of God during the morning worship services from the Book of II Corinthians, as well as preaching other sermons as the occasion warranted. These messages are recorded and uploaded to Sermon Audio where they reach a large listening audience. In the adult Sunday school class, I have focused upon the doctrine of salvation; especially, as it is laid out in the “Ordo Salutis.” I am continuing a systematic study of the biblical doctrines of our Christian faith. Also, that we may be standing firmly in the faith of the gospel, I am conducting a Thursday evening Bible Study from the Gospel of John.

The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was administered twelve times during the past year. We receive the Lord’s Supper on the first Lord’s Day of each month. Truly, it is a means of grace as we are edified in the faith knowing that the first Adam’s curse is removed from us and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us for our salvation. On the Lord’s Day of the Lord’s Supper, we also enjoy a fellowship meal together.

One membership class was held by your servant for a gentleman who is currently working with his employer to get his Lord’s Days completely free to attend worship services more regularly. A few Lord’s days ago, he attended the services with his daughter. We have four children in Sunday School. We anticipate the blessing of a new covenant child any day, with the birth of a baby boy to Elder and Mrs. Greg Goehring.

As a means of outreach and spiritual edification, I endeavor to post on my personal Facebook page and church Facebook page, Monday through Friday a Scripture Text or quotes from Reformers and great preachers who have gone before us. With a boost on the post on the church Facebook page, I have picked up more regular responses.

This past year I have been keeping busy with the work of Interchurch Relations Committee of Western Classis as chairman. I am also honored to serve as a member of the Westminster Biblical Missions Board. At the end of October and the beginning of November, I along with Howard Sloan were scheduled to attend The BBLCC, Lahore, 2021 Pakistan Convention However, the Convention was cancelled because of terrorists’ threats at that time.

The necessity of our website was evidenced on January 16, 2022 when the Lord granted us a visitation of the Ontario Christian High School girls basketball team from Ontario, CA.

The girls basketball team played St. Mary's High School in Stockton the previous day. They searched the internet for a Reformed church to worship on the Lord's Day. They found our website and our church! We were blessed with 27 visitors, filling up the building, for a total of 41 souls in attendance.

Our congregation encourages evangelization by making gospel literature available. Each Lord's Day one of the RCUS Home Missions works are placed in the church bulletin and members are encouraged to be praying for the specific RCUS home missions work throughout the oncoming week. We know that prayer is essential as well as faithful preaching the Word of God to spiritual and numerical growth; and thus, prayer is emphasized during the week. I am convinced that unless we have a genuine moving of God the Holy Spirit in preaching our labors are in vain.

I ask that you continue to pray that our Lord Jesus Christ will be pleased to pour out His grace and Holy Spirit upon the preaching of God's Word that we may bring forth much fruit pleasing to God. We know that if we would successfully build up the Kingdom of God, we must depend upon the power of the Spirit of God.

"My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen." (1 Cor. 16:24) "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Corinthians 13:14)

In Christ's service for God's glory,

Rev. Jonathan Merica

Classis Action: Take note.

I. Elder Tim Curtis – Trinity Modesto

Brothers in Christ,

As we face the continuing challenge of uncertain times, with the continued threat of Covid-19, I find that there is great encouragement in my ministry at Trinity Reformed Church, as well as in my employment as a hospice chaplain as it is sustained by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is an amazing blessing to know that through the saving grace of Christ Jesus, that He can work through me, though I am a sinner, saved through no merit of my own. It is to God alone, that I look to make me effective in ministry and not through any merit of my own.

Worship has been held in person for the majority of 2021 at Trinity Reformed Church, and we continue to broadcast our worship services over Facebook live. This has been a blessing, as I have been able to share TRC's Facebook with some of my hospice patients, and though they are home bound, they have expressed joy at being able to participate in worship. We have also had viewers from around the world, as well, which is steadily growing. A couple of my patients has been writing down questions to ask me concerning my sermons when I visit in person, and it has been a chance to bear witness to the gospel and open up the Holy Scriptures in a meaningful way, sharing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have been preaching through the Gospel of Matthew this year, with breaks for Easter, as well as a short series from Zechariah during advent and Christmas, preaching on 50 Lord's

days this year and the Lord's Supper was served one time. On Sunday mornings our congregation is blessed by corporate prayer, and continuing through Rev. Paul Treick's Old Testament study, "Our God and His Promise." We also continue our book study of R. B. Kuiper's, "The Glorious Body of Christ," which we will be concluding soon.

Our elders have an ongoing commitment to the feeding of Christ's flock, and continue to serve as faithful under-shepherds of Christ's flock in faith, witness and prayer. It is with constant and abiding hope that I look forward to continued service in 2022

Yours in Christ

Timothy A. Curtis

Classis Action: Take note.

J. Rev. Vern Pollema

Esteemed Brethren:

Article 81 of The Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) states that "at the spring meeting every pastor shall present a written parochial . . . report and every minister, though without a charge, a report of his labors." Whether this includes retired pastors is not clear. Nonetheless, I submit this report.

Much of 2021 continued to be plagued by the covid pandemic. However, in the closing months and in the beginning of 2022, the pandemic began to wane, the issues becoming less political and more medical. Throughout that time, God's enabling grace being sufficient, worship services continued regularly, and we did not "*forsake the assembling of ourselves together*" (Heb. 10:25). My labors were largely limited to supplying the vacant pulpit of Grace RCUS, Lancaster, CA, the last Sunday of each month and Grace RCUS, Bakersfield, CA, on those Lord's Days when the pastor was on vacation. My service at Lancaster ended at the beginning of the new year when a young man began to supply the pulpit with the prospect of becoming their pastor, contingent upon a successful examination and approval of financial aid. I've enjoyed and appreciated those opportunities to remain active in the preaching and teaching of God's Word, as well as the fellowship of the dear saints at Lancaster.

I also continue to serve on permanent committees of Classis and Synod and on the board of Heidelberg Theological Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD. There are currently three students being taught in class at the Seminary and the same number online, who eventually intend to move to Sioux Falls to attend classes. In the Philippines there are numerous students enrolled in the HTS Master of Theological Studies via Zoom at two centers (two islands) where the students are taught through the virtual classroom. The first class of students is ready to graduate within the next year, which will be of great benefit to the Pearl of the Orient Covenant Reformed Church. This method of teaching has recently been expanded to Africa where three courses were provided to ten students in Kenya. Due to this additional teaching, a third full-time faculty member is under consideration.

My wife and I are deeply grateful for the Lord's financial provision through the supplemental ministerial aid we receive each month due to the generous care and love of His people. We remain in relatively good health as we observed 56 years of blest wedded

life. My A-1c number (diabetes) remains at an acceptable level. Praise the Lord! During our retirement years, we continue to experience the joy and blessing of our children and grandchildren, all of whom have graduated from high school and gone on to college; some have graduated from college and are now gainfully employed; two were united in marriage this past year and reminded of the biblical exhortation “*to be fruitful and multiply*” (Gen. 1:28). (We are looking forward to great grandchildren!) We especially enjoy the blessing of being together for worship & fellowship on the Lord’s Day, as well as family dinners & other family events.

Though my wife and I may feel the aches and pains that come with age, we continue to know that God is and always will be our strength, and with David, call out to God, “*Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone, . . . I will always have hope; I will praise You more and more. My mouth will tell of Your righteousness, of Your salvation all day long*” (Ps. 71:9, 14, 15).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Vernon Pollema

Classis Action: Take note.

K. Rev. Neale Riffert

Esteemed Brothers:

For the past six years I’ve had the privilege to take part in filling the pulpit or Grace Reformed Church, Lancaster California along with Rev. Pollema and the the elders of the Church. That came to an end in January when the Church’s call to Rev. Munive was accepted (contingent to his examination at this year’s classis session). I’ve enjoyed the past six years helping out with the preaching as well as administering the sacraments, teaching the catechetical class, new members classes, a class for prospective elders and deacons. During the past few years the church has received nine new adult members, three baptized children, and one child due sometime in April.

Our family has enjoyed the fellowship of the Grace Reformed family, first when we served the congregation earlier in this century, and again as members for the past six years. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.”

We will be leaving California in the spring of this year as we join with our daughter, Idelette and her husband Larry and their son Larry III in an adventure to Sioux Falls, S. D., where Larry will complete his seminary education at the Heidelberg Seminary. We covet your prayers.

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;

I will praise your name forever and ever.

I will praise You forever,

Because You have done it;

And in the presence of Your saints

I will wait on Your name for it is good.**(Psalm 52:8 & 9)**

Respectfully submitted,

Neale R. Riffert

Classis Action: Take note.

L. Rev. Doug Schlegel

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Most pastors are encouraged in seminary to avoid using clichés but I think I will violate that practice now. It is a common cliché to say that time flies and clichés are common because they usually speak to a truth as this one does. The swiftness of life is a subject addressed many times in the Scriptures. One example is David's prayer in I Chronicles 29. In verses 13 through 16 we read, "Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You. For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, As were all our fathers; Our days on earth are as a shadow, And without hope. O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own." July 1 this past year marked the 10-year anniversary of my full-time service at Providence Reformed Church. (The 10-year anniversary of my ordination and installation will be next month.) It seems to me that the decade has passed very quickly. As I consider David's prayer, it is a good reminder that whatever we enjoy or whatever we set our hands to, all is in God's hands even if our days pass as a shadow.

This report will cover many of the usual matters spoken to in such settings. Yet, it seems that I must begin with what was perhaps the most significant providence during my tenure. When the Lord took Pastor Mayville to Himself last March, that passing had a tremendous impact on the life of the church. I feel his absence every week. During his time as an associate pastor, I greatly appreciated his gifts and especially those which filled in my personal gift gaps. Nevertheless, we ought to remember that as David prayed, "we are all aliens and pilgrims" and we share David's assurance that the Lord provides all that is needful for the building of the house where He has placed His holy name.

The ministry of the Word at Providence Reformed Church continues as it has. I had the honor of preaching the gospel 39 times at Providence Reformed Church during 2020. We returned to remote video conference meeting for two Lord's Days in late February when I and many others in the congregation contracted the Sars-Cov-2 virus. I am pleased that those who need to use this technology can do so, when necessary, but I also continue to insist that while it is a good tool, it will never, ever replace the indispensable physical gathering for worship. The ministry was primarily a continuance verse by verse through the Gospel of John. After preaching through some of the Psalms in the beginning of the year, I resumed preaching through John in chapter 17 and completed the Gospel of John on Reformation Day. I completed the year preaching through selected penitential Psalms. There were also occasional sermons from other parts of the Scriptures as occasion required. I believe that each year of my service at Providence I have noted how encouraging it is to

me to labor in and preach the Word, and to know how engaged the congregation is in hearing the Word of God and are edified when it is preached. My plan in 2022 is to preach through the Book of Romans with occasional pauses to preach from other texts as circumstances require. I also had the opportunity to preach six times at Covenant Reformed Church in Sacramento. We continue to post the audio of sermons on Sermon Audio, but the numbers have fallen somewhat over the past year. It is unclear why this is the case, but we will continue to use this helpful tool. There is a desire to post video and livestream, but it is not possible presently with our limited resources.

Having completed the worldview study of the Book of Job during Sunday School, we began a study of the Fruit of the Spirit which is ongoing. As is our custom, every four years we confess the Canons of Dordt responsively during the worship service. I will be teaching from the Canons, following the weekly portion, during the Adult Sunday School. (The Fruit of the Spirit study will move to the mid-week study.) I am personally eager for this and I do believe it will help us in confessing our faith with more knowledge. I plan to resume our Old Testament survey during the mid-week bible study once the Fruit of the Spirit study is complete.

While we did not have to exercise formal discipline this past year, there were two members who left under less than positive circumstances and were erased. The Lord's Supper was regularly administered and our recent adoption of the pouring of the wine is, in my opinion, an improvement over our previous practice (as well as being more consistent with the Directory of Worship). It is not that what we did before was in error, but the pouring of the wine reinforces the same truth as the breaking of the bread. It is with a large degree of thankfulness that there continues to be peace and spiritual growth.

Apart from the usual work of the local congregation, I have also been involved in consulting with pastors and Spiritual Councils in matters relating to church discipline and even travelled to the meeting of the South-Central Classis meeting in Menno, South Dakota, to serve as council for a very difficult judicial case. I am still contacted by fellow pastors and other Spiritual Councils regarding discipline matters and to ask questions about my handbook. While the circumstances of these contacts is often grievous, I am thankful to be of use to the broader church.

I continue to pursue my doctoral studies at Heidelberg Theological Seminary and reached the half-way point of class instruction in August. After the class in January, there are only three remaining and the writing of my dissertation is looming. I am also now serving as an adjunct professor at the seminary and finished my first semester of teaching in December. By the time this report is read, I will have begun teaching the Spring semester. I taught Prolegomena (Introduction to Systematic Theology and the Doctrine of God's Word). This semester I am teaching Theology Proper (The Doctrine of God). I am very thankful that the Consistory is supportive of these activities and I firmly believe that the congregation is benefitting even if it is not always obvious. I continue to serve on the board of Westminster Biblical Missions and particularly as the Field Chairman for Central and Eastern Europe as well as Stated Clerk for the Western Classis.

Overall, the spiritual health of the congregation is good in my judgment although we all sense the inherited corruption of our father, Adam. I am constantly encouraged by the high participation of the congregation in the life of the church. I am also encouraged by the visitors we have received and am particularly thankful that some have remained and

become members. All of these things point to an overall health of the congregation. There was great loss this past year, yet, each Lord's Day, we confess that we are not without hope and that we place our trust wholly in the Lord's good purposes toward us. When Solomon completed the building project over which his father prayed, he also prayed when the temple was dedicated. As he closed his dedicatory prayer, Solomon said, "Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and let Your ears be attentive to the prayer made in this place. "Now therefore, Arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength. Let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, And let Your saints rejoice in goodness. "O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed; Remember the mercies of Your servant David." (II Chronicles 6:40-42) We rightly rejoice that the Lord does hear our prayers and that He has not forgotten His mercies through His anointed. And as quickly as the time passes, we also know that those mercies extend into a sinless and glorious eternity.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Douglas Schlegel

Classis Action: Take note.

M. Rev. Paul Treick

Dear brothers in Christ,

Warm greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and indeed of all things. These are challenging times and often result in changes both in society and in the Church. We can all be so very grateful for our eternal God, who does not change, as the prophet says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob." (Mal. 3:6)

Physical life for me has changed in the past year. With both advanced COPD and spinal osteoporosis problems, my daily functions are quite diminished. I understand what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "when I am weak, then I am strong." (II Cor. 12:10) The basis for that statement is declared by God Himself when He said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (v. 9) Therefore, it is not in me, but in God's grace and strength that I continue my journey and bring this report to you.

I have been able to be of some help to the church in a limited capacity. I still do the weekly bulletins, teach Sunday School as I am able and involve myself in the Sunday night Bible Studies. I can take my oxygen generator with me, but I have had to miss several Sundays due to my back pains. With limited physical activity, I have spent enjoyable time reading in church history and in editing some things that I have written in past years.

The fellowship in the church, however small the group, has been a real blessing to my wife and me. We are both so thankful for the monthly help that is given to us from the Synodical Ministerial Relief funds – much of which unfortunately goes to support the lives of folks in the medical community.

I would be remiss if I did not thankfully acknowledge all the help my wife, Karen, has been to me again this past year. He who has a good wife, has a good life. By the grace of God, both of us have remained Covid-free during the past year. Karen has not worked as a

substitute teacher this past year, mostly because of the covid protocols and the fear of bringing it home from the classroom. We see our own children on zoom every Sunday evening for over an hour. What a blessing!

I thought I might be able to attend this year's Classis meeting, but recent health issues are preventing this from happening. So, my prayers are with you, and I very much cherish yours for me in these difficult days.

Since I am not going to be at this classis meeting, I want to also address a matter that has been on my mind for a couple years now. This is something that I have shared with some elders and other retired pastors and I have agreed to bring this matter to the body in some way. I certainly do not want to create any animosity or division in the body, but I simply ask the Classis to consider and pay greater attention to the matter of ecclesiastical governance. With the recent no-read protocol proposed for these reports, I am requesting that at least this portion of the report be read to the body.

When I entered the RCUS ministry 52 years ago, I entered a denomination that was consistently presbyterian in government and one that faithfully followed the RCUS constitution. I have perceived a departure in two different areas on the classical and synodical levels. I bring this up simply as a warning that we pay closer attention to our RCUS constitution to avoid both a heirarchical or a congregational mindset.

The RCUS has created what many have called "super-committees" that leave the impression that the tail is wagging the dog. It has followed a business model, but I do not consider the church a business in the secular sense. While business is conducted, the business of the church is totally different because it must submit to an unchanging biblical authority and acts in faith. We should avoid like the plague the various "Boards" that ruled the RCUS before 1934. Then classis/synod were rubber-stamping the work of these boards. At times today Executive Committees have acted on their own without circularizing for approval. Recent examples are the decisions not to print the last Abstract of the minutes, or not to read Parochial reports on the floor which are customarily followed by prayer. This proposal was not circularized for approval, but simply sent out for information. Articles 91 and 111 appear to differ with that approach. Once the meeting convenes the President has no authority to enact such a change. The Executive Committee only exists between meetings, and even then is limited in its power.

It is my perception that in past years there have been various attempts to shorten the meetings by eliminating some of the structure and parliamentary procedures. While a shorter meeting is desirable, it should never be at the expense of good order or adequate consideration. Classis and Synod meetings are important works of the church. It may be that the recent pandemic has affected some administration, but we should strive to stay in line with the constitution.

The second area that concerns me is in the opposite direction toward congregationalism. Recently we were informed that consistories have taken it upon themselves to do the work of administering foreign mission funds. I'm not aware that Synod asked for this beyond the diaconal funds that were previously administered. I'm certain that there was no bad intent in this, but just that it sets a questionable precedent which does not reflect the authority of our constitution. Both Classis and Synod have Diaconal Committees where this should be done.

Our church government is not consistorial, congregational, or federated. We are not the Reformed “churches” in the U. S., but a “church” composed of many congregations with what is known as a presbyterian government. While the local Spiritual Council is primary in bringing overtures, it is not the highest judicatory. Local congregations are under the oversight of the Classis in which they reside. For example, we have struggled with the matter of women voting in congregational meetings recently. We have three reports over the years that came to the same conclusion, yet this matter continually comes before the Synod, not because the Bible has changed, but because of pressures from the local churches. One delegate was reported to say that it wouldn’t really matter what Synod decided, their local church would not follow it. How many more issues might this apply to in the future if this attitude is ignored? Church officers do vow to submit to the lawful authority of the church at ordination.

I have been surprised at the handling of some synod reports recently. The Cremation Report was passed by Synod yet was not approved to be published. Why? Every other report done by Synod is published for all to see. Must the Synod be ashamed of or obscure its work?

I’m not bringing up specific issues here to point the finger at anyone or stir up trouble, but I detect a drift away from the view of church government as set forth in our constitution and our history. I am the fifth generation of our family in the RCUS. Over those 173 years our family saw tragic changes in our church that our descendants should never have to experience. What I am suggesting is that each congregation spend some time studying the proper way to conduct business in a Reformed denomination which is presbyterian in government.

These are troubling times where the church is under attack in our nation as never before. This is not a time to wobble or lack unity. The RCUS needs to stand together on a solid footing as we have for the past 275 years.

May God be with us that we may continue to do His will.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul H. Treick

Classis Action: Take note.

N. Rev. Frank Walker

Fathers and Brothers of the Western Classis:

During the last calendar year, the one thing that has impressed me about Covenant Reformed Church is the degree to which its members exemplified the pattern given in Ephesians 4. Paul wrote, *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love* (vv. 15–16). Members rejoice that other members have comforted them, encouraged them, challenged them or prayed for them. And most of this comforting and encouraging was done by individuals who probably didn’t think they had these gifts. I suspect that most of

them weren't even aware of how much they had helped others. Yet, their ministry was real and the mark of a mature church striving toward greater maturity.

And these ministries took place while our resolve to serve our crucified and risen Savior continued to be tested. We began and ended 2021 with the Covid-19 pandemic still a force to be reckoned with. From January through March, we continued with three Sunday services (two in the morning and one in the evening). This almost wore me out. Other activities remained on pause. In April, we resumed Sunday school and thereafter gradually added more and more activities. I'm glad to report that we're now fully functional.

The preaching of the Word of God is central to the life and ministry of the congregation. I have endeavored to the best of my ability to proclaim it faithfully in all services. In the morning services, I completed the book of Job, did a series on public worship, continued a series on the gospel of Mark, and focused on seasonal passages as needed. Evening sermons were based mostly on Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. I also preached the gospel at one wedding (Jonathan and Lebeka West) and one memorial service (my daughter, Tari Stewart), and officiated at both.

Throughout the year, I taught catechism class and church history to disciple our younger members. I've always found this to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of the gospel ministry and one that I missed while teaching in the seminary. I also held one membership class and started a men's Bible study last summer, which has seen good participation (often fifteen or more).

I administered the sacraments faithfully for the edification and growth of our members. The Lord's Supper was observed twelve times. Four children received the sign of God's gracious covenant. I'm also pleased to report the baptism of one adult who professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Stephani Leigh), even as I crave and pray for more adult baptisms in the future.

As you can see from the statistics, our membership is down ten from the previous year. This reflects the addition of ten members and the loss of twenty. Our membership losses from Covid have now stabilized, though a few names of persons who left still need to be removed from our rolls. We should also note that the Lord called two of our members into heavenly joy and glory in 2021. The one not mentioned thus far is Dolores Davis, Matt Davis' mother. Yet, the future looks bright, since we continue to have between fifteen and thirty non-members in attendance each week. This year, as of the writing of this report, we've already added four adult members and seven children.

The Consistory has busied itself with various improvements to the building to accommodate more worshipers and to make our facilities more functional. By the time I read this report at Classis, you will have no doubt taken note of our work. Other improvements are still in the planning stages.

Last year was the fiftieth anniversary of our congregation. We had planned a special dinner that was to take place in the fall, but we had to postpone it when the Covid infection rate increased. Since then, we've rescheduled it for April 29 of the current year.

Regarding the broader work of the church, I served as chairman of the Candidates and Credentials Committee of the Western Classis and as President of the Synod. As I reported

last year, I resigned from teaching at City Seminary in early 2021 and the board conferred on me the honorary title of “Professor Emeritus.”

I must admit that, although I preached approximately ninety-six times in 2021, I wasn’t in the pulpit as often as I wanted to be. But I’m thankful for the army of preachers who proclaimed the glory of our risen Redeemer in my place. One reason for my absence was my daughter’s death in September. Though I rejoice that she is now with the Lord and my confidence in his mercy has never failed, I must admit that I feel broken more often than not, and this has made it hard to want to preach or do anything else. But I keep plugging away, begging our mighty Savior for his continued help.

My health was the other consideration that kept me out of the pulpit. My maladies started the first of July with kidney stones, which were too large to pass on their own. A couple of days later, I developed shingles in the same area. This made for some excruciating nights, as both conditions flared up between midnight and 4 AM. Later, I had three colonoscopies to remove several polyps and adenomas. Thankfully, although three of the adenomas were considered very large and one was labeled gigantic, none were cancerous. In December, things finally cleared up enough to have Extracorporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy for the kidney stones, which was successful in breaking them up, but since they were located in the lower pole of my kidney, they were reluctant to leave. A recent x-ray shows that they’re finally making their way out. I was also scheduled to have a prostate procedure done two days before the lithotripsy, but my urologist thought it best to re-evaluate the possibility of cancer before proceeding. An MRI in early January ruled out cancer but found a lesion on my left femur. A subsequent CT confirmed this and showed significant bone abnormalities in both hips. Since my primary care doctor doesn’t consider the bone problems to be an immediate threat, she’s recommending that I have my prostate procedure (Feb. 14) and hopefully last colonoscopy (Mar. 23) before looking into them further. And finally, in late January my wife had to take me to the ER because of severe heart palpitations and a sustained elevated heart rate. At this point, it looks like my heart is fine and the problem is something else. I just don’t know what. This is still being looked into. I have a follow-up test scheduled for next week.

Even with the trials, my wife and I remain thankful for the opportunity to serve our Savior in Sacramento. The saints here have been a tremendous blessing. I do not doubt that they’ve ministered to us more this past year than we’ve ministered to them.

In the service of Christ,

Frank Walker

Classis Action: Take note.

O. Rev. Ruben Zartman

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Each year the details of the work of the ministry may change a little. In retrospect some years contain more public teaching and others contain more private consultation, for instance. But this variety is a question of emphasis. Underneath it all there is the undeserved faithfulness of God, and the ongoing priorities of prayer and the ministry of the word.

In terms of my labors, regular preaching and teaching continued. Remaining in touch with the congregation remains a rewarding element of the work. It's also a privilege to be able to support Valle de Gracia by participating in its worship services, and preaching and teaching there also from time to time. With regard to labor outside my own congregation, the role of Synod Clerk has proved to be a significant commitment of time and energy, but it has also been possible to support a local classical Christian school by teaching at some of their chapel services.

The congregation has experienced many blessings this year, including a modest increase in our overall membership. In terms of communicant members, our numbers remained steady although the composition changed somewhat. We lost one member to death, one member transferred due to a move out of state, and church discipline removed two (one judicial erasure and one excommunication). These losses were offset by four new communicant members, two received by transfer and two by profession of faith. We added significantly to our baptized members, however, with the wonderful joy of baptizing six children from three different families.

There is such a tremendous need for the power of God unto salvation in the Gospel to be made known and experienced, in our congregation as well as in our community. It is greatly encouraging that the enthusiasm for the work of the Gospel through Valle de Gracia remains high throughout the congregation. Rev. Alpuche's example of perseverance through much pain and resultant weakness has been good for all of us to see, and I believe that being closely involved with mission work is healthy for the congregation.

We face the significant challenge many have, of families having moved, planning to move, or feeling pressured to move away from California. It is easy to sympathize, and certainly there are cases where it is best, although sad. The natural concern felt about the future will prove to be a blessing, if it stirs us to prayer and to evangelistic outreach. At the same time as there are a variety of challenges facing us, there are also encouraging signs. It has been a blessing to see members finding ways to serve, showing hospitality to one another, and inviting others to church. Furthermore, three young ladies are in catechism class, and we have had several visitors at the services. My hope for 2022 is that the church will remain faithful in doctrine and discipline, and that we will be growing in prayerfulness and fellowship with one another.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Ruben Zartman

Classis Action: Take note.

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ELDERS

The Stated Clerk addressed the Questions of Article 81 of the Constitution to the Elder Delegates of each congregation. The answers are as follows:

1. Are the doctrines of the gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the Word of God? All 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 answered yes.
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3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:
 - a. Is visitation faithfully performed? All answered yes except for Sacramento, San Diego, and Willows, answering no.
 - b. Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution? All answered yes.
4. Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution? All 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 answered yes except for Chico, Stockton, Willows, and Yuba City answering no.
 - b. Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis Treasurer? All answered yes except for Stockton answering no.
 - c. Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? All answered yes, except Chico, Lancaster, Lodi, Stockton, Willows, and Yuba City answering no.
 - d. Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer? All answered yes except for Stockton answering no.
6. Are the Church records properly kept? All answered yes except Willows answering needs improvement.
- 7a. Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge? All answered yes except for Yuba City answering no; the vacant charges answering not applicable.
- 7b. Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs? All answered yes except, and Lodi, and Yuba City answering no; Lancaster answering not applicable.

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The Stated Clerk provided a table of membership and financial statistics. It appears in the Appendix.

Classis Action: The Report of Membership and Financial Statistics was adopted.

REPORTS FROM CLASSIS' FRATERNAL DELEGATES

[See the report from the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee.]

Classis Action: The classis took note of the report of classis' delegates.

ADDRESSES BY DELEGATES FROM OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES AND VISITORS

Mr. Jim Iwema addressed the body and presented the work of Reformed Mission Services.

Mr. Jose Fabila addressed the body and presented the work of *Seminario Reformada de las Américas*.

Elder Tom Lagomarsino addressed the body regarding a work in Myanmar.

Rev. Merica read a letter of greeting from the Classis Pacific Northwest of the United Reformed Churches in North America.

Rev. Schlegel read the greetings from The Pacific Coast Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

Classis Action: The report of Elder Lagomarsino was referred to the Synod Foreign Ministries Committee. Rev. Powell led the body in prayer for the Pacific Coast Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

The following committee motions and their dispositions reflect the final form of the motions including all amendments made to the committee's recommendations, and any additional motions that may have come from the floor relative to the committee's report. Unless otherwise noted, the motions below were adopted by the Classis.

A. Benevolences

Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for retired Rev. Paul and his wife Karen Treick to be continued in the amount of \$1,200.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 2. The Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for retired Rev. Dennis and his wife Julie Roe to be continued in the amount of \$1,500.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Carolyn Mayville in the amount of \$750.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 4. The Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for retired Rev. Jim and his wife Elaine West to be continued in the amount of \$1,500.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 5. The Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for retired Rev. Neale and his wife Elizabeth Riffert in the amount of \$2,500.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 6. The Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for Mrs. Sharon Sawtelle to be continued in the amount of \$2,000.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 7. The Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid for retired Rev. Vern and his wife Betty Pollema to be continued in the amount of \$1,000.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 8. Pending the Classis approval of his retirement, the Committee recommends that Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for ministerial aid up to the amount of \$2,000.00 per month for retired Rev. Jonathan and his wife Marsha Merica. (FYI, Ministerial Relief Fund Application Worksheet must be properly completed and submitted to the Permanent Finance Committee.)

Recommendation 10. That Western Classis grant Benevolent Aid for Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, California, in the amount of \$1,750.00 per month from April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022.

Recommendation 11 That Western Classis grant Benevolent Aid for Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, California, in the amount of \$1,750.00 per month from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

Recommendation 12. That Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for Benevolent Aid for Grace Reformed Church in Lancaster, California, in the amount of \$1,750.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

Recommendation 13. The Committee recommends that Western Classis grant Benevolent Aid for First Reformed Church in Yuba City, California, in the amount of \$ 750.00 per month from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

Recommendation 14. That Western Classis overture the RCUS Synod for Benevolent Aid for First Reformed Church in Yuba City, California, in the amount of \$250.00 per month for the 2022-2023 synodical year.

B. Missions

Recommendation 1: That Classis grant Valle De Gracia their request in the amount of \$15,984.00 for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

Recommendation 2: That Classis petition Synod for support for Valle De Gracia in the amount of \$16,872.00 for July 1st, 2022 through June 30th, 2023.

Recommendation 3: That all Classical funding of Calvary Reformed Chapel of Stockton cease, effective December 31st, 2022, or the date when the pulpit is declared vacant, whichever comes first.

Recommendation 4: That Synod be notified that Classis is no longer funding Calvary Reformed Chapel of Stockton. Take note.

Recommendation 5: That the Western Classis create a Reformed Home Group Network (RHGN) subcommittee of the Western Classis Home Missions Committee.

Recommendation 6: That the subcommittee be chosen by the Permanent Home Missions Committee from among willing and able volunteer members of Western Classis churches.

Recommendation 7: That the RHGN sub-committee work with Western Classis churches to develop standards for a Western Classis RHGN to become a sponsoring church.

Recommendation 8: That the RHGN develop online Sunday School videos and other resources for use by RH groups.

Recommendation 9: That the Western Classis overture Synod to create a RHGN to be overseen by the Synodical Welcoming Committee.

Recommendation 10: That should Synod create a RHGN subcommittee chosen from among willing and able volunteers of the appropriate committee, that the Classical RHGN sub-committee be subsumed in that effort.

C. Examination and Licensure

Recommendation 1: That the names of Deonte Walters and DeMauri Young be removed from the list of students under care.

Recommendation 2: That Mathew Davis be encouraged to use his gifts and seminary training as the Lord may lead him; and if he believes that the Lord is calling him to pastoral ministry, that he pursue it more vigorously and invest himself in preparing for licensure trials.

Recommendation 3: That Licentiate Tim Curtis' ordination examination be declared satisfactory.

Recommendation 4: Take note that Tim Curtis has completed all the requirements for the M.Div. minus two or three classes.

Recommendation 5: That Tim Curtis' ordination be delayed until he recite the required questions and answers from the Heidelberg Catechism. When this requirement has been satisfied, the Executive Committee will circulate the date, time and committee of ordination and installation.

Recommendation 6: That Rev. Jeff Munive's examination be declared satisfactory and that he sign the licensure formula, per Article 35.

Recommendation 7: That the call of the Lancaster church be approved with the notation that the salary is very low considering student loans and the likely cost of housing in Lancaster, that it fails to provide medical insurance or retirement savings, and that it doesn't specify annual vacation time.

Recommendation 8: That Rev. Munive's acceptance of the call from Lancaster be approved if it's redated and its contingency is extended to include Synodical financial support.

Recommendation 9: That Rev. Munive be added to the roll of ministers of the Western Classis upon confirmation of his reception by Synod, and that the Executive Committee at that time circulate the date, time and committee of installation.

(NOTE: The Stated Clerk will notify the URCNA of the reception of Rev. Munive.)

D. Judicial

Recommendation 1: That Standing Rule 9 be modified to read:

The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an abstract of the Classical minutes and shall distribute a PDF copy via email to each delegate of the Classis within 60 days, submit a copy to the RCUS webmaster to be posted on the RCUS website, and send a copy to the Synodical Publications Committee to be uploaded as a print-on-demand document. The Stated Clerk shall receive a gratuity of \$1,000 per year. (1991, 2010, 2019, 2022) Move adoption.

Instead of:

The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an abstract of the Classical minutes and shall email a PDF copy to each delegate to the Classis within 60 days. A pdf copy shall be

sent to the Webmaster of the RCUS to be made available on the RCUS website. The Stated Clerk shall receive a gratuity of 1,000 dollars per year. ('91, '10, 19)

Recommendation 2: That the resignation of Rev. Eric Bristley from the pastoral charge of Grace Reformed Church in Willows be accepted, that the pastoral relationship be dissolved, that the pulpit be declared vacant, and the matter of imperfect compliance with Article 30 of the RCUS Constitution be considered now closed.

Recommendation 3: That the Western Classis vote in favor of amending the RCUS Constitution Article 79 as set out and passed at the 276th Synod of the RCUS.

Recommendation 4: That the resignation of Rev. Merica as of July 1, 2022 be accepted and the pastoral relationship with the congregation of Calvary Reformed Chapel in Stockton be dissolved.

Recommendation 5: That Standing Rule 19 be deleted from the Standing Rules of the Western Classis, and replaced with an editorial note that it was so deleted.

Recommendation 6: That the Executive Committee be directed to consider the propriety of Standing Rule 4, and bring a recommendation concerning that to the next Classis meeting through the Executive Committee Report.

E. Nominations

Recommendation #1. That the Permanent Committees be as follows (the underlined name indicates the convener).

1. **Executive Committee:** T. Gruggett, D. Schlegel, J. DeYoung
2. **Candidates and Credentials:** N. Bouwkamp (3yr), R. Zartman (2yr), D. Roe (2yr), F. Walker (1yr)
3. **Christian Education in the Church:** M. Crook (3yr) P. Treick (2yr), J. Gochnauer (2yr), T. Curtis (1yr)
 - a. **Heidelberg West Youth Camp:** T. Crabtree (3Yr), R. Williams (1yr), G. Baloy (2yr), Deacon C. Hekman (1yr)
4. **Missions:** E. Sawtelle (3yr), S. Powell (2yr), A. White (1yr), G. Mancilas (1yr)
5. **Interchurch Relations:** M. Reyna (3yr) S. Powell (2yr), T. Lagomarsino (2yr), J. Merica (1yr), R. Spitzer (1yr),
6. **Publications:** M. Crook (3yr) P. Treick (2yr), J. Gochnauer (2yr), T. Curtis (1yr)
7. **Diaconal:** V. Alpuche (3yr), Deacon C. Hekman (2yr), V. Pollema (1yr), T. Crabtree (3yr), , N. Riffert (1yr)
8. **Finances Committee:** D. Helseth (3yr), R. Williams (2yrs), K. Snow (1yr)

F. Finances

Recommendation 1: That Classis rescind Recommendation No. 3A including Parts Nos. 1 and 2 of the Standing Finance Committee of the 35th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis in 2020 (Western Classis Abstract 2020:83-84).

Recommendation 2: That the investable fund ceiling be raised to \$175,000.00.

Recommendation 3: That Classis adopt an investment objective to guide the Permanent Finance Committee's selection of securities like stocks, bonds, money market instruments and other assets. "That the Permanent Finance Committee invest Classis monies to capture consistent income and minimize defaults and principal loss".

Recommendation 4: That Classis change the default interest rate on loans to the Minimum Applicable Federal Rate (AFR) for the start date of the loan.

Recommendation 5: That the interest rate on the Dickinson loan be adjusted down to 1.17% effective May 1, 2022, reflecting the AFR when the loan was first issued.

Recommendation 6: That the Treasurer's Report for December 31, 2021 be adopted.

Recommendation 7: (From Overture No. 7) That Classis adopt a Spending Year of July 1st - June 30th.

Recommendation 8: To transfer the \$50,000.00 received from Faith Reformed Church from the General Fund to the Home Missions Building Fund.

Recommendation 9: That travel expenses be paid to delegates to the 34th Annual Session of Western Classis as follows:

				AIR FARE/	
	MILES	RATE	AMOUNT	RENTAL/MISC	TOTAL
Baloy		\$0.45	\$0.00	\$787.50	\$787.50
Bristley	176	\$0.45	\$79.20		\$79.20
Crabtree	586	\$0.45	\$263.70		\$263.70
Helseth	200	\$0.45	\$90.00		\$90.00
Lynch	650	\$0.45	\$292.50		\$292.50
Zartman	552	\$0.45	\$248.40		\$248.40
TOTAL	2,164		\$973.80	\$787.50	\$1,761.30

Recommendation 10: That the following guidelines be approved:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Dues	\$1.00	\$10.00
Benevolence	\$71.00	-0-
Home Missions	\$33.00	\$63.00
<u>Diaconal</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Total Guidelines	\$110.00	\$75.00

G. Excuses

Recommendation 1. That the requests to be excused from some or all of the meetings of classis be granted:

Elder Ernest Sawtelle from all sessions on Tuesday and Thursday.

Rev. Valentine Alpuche from all sessions.

Rev. Gary Mancilas from all sessions.

Elder Joe Gross from all sessions.

Rev. Sam Powell from the opening of the Wednesday session.

H. Minutes

The minutes were approved as corrected by the Standing Committee. (See item “D” Below.)

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

A. Expression of Appreciation

The following expression of appreciation was adopted:

We, the delegates of the 37th annual Western Classis, hereby express our appreciation to the men and women of Covenant Reformed Church of Sacramento, who have given diligently of their time and resources to not simply satisfy, but to overwhelm us with the generous provision of food and wine and every good thing. May God bless your service to His people and may you continue to abound richly in God’s manifold gifts of grace.

B. Adoption of Stated Clerk’s, and Executive Committee’s Reports.

The reports of the Stated Clerk and Executive Committee were adopted.

C. Other Business

There was no miscellaneous other business brought before the classis.

D. Adoption of Standing Minutes Committee Report

The Draft Minutes were reviewed by the Standing Committee on Minutes of Classis and returned to the Stated Clerk for revision. These revisions were entered and then published as the Revised Minutes. The stated clerk read aloud the final items of business for which there was no time to complete this review process. After accepting further corrections, the President declared the minutes approved as corrected.

Classis Action: All of the above reports were adopted unless otherwise noted.

ADJOURNMENT

A. Roll Call

The roll call was taken at the beginning of each business day. The closing roll showed 9 ministers and 8 elder delegates present, for a total of 17.

On Thursday, March 3rd at 1:25 PM the 37th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis was adjourned in memory of Rev. Gene Sawtelle to the 38th Annual Meeting of the Western Classis to convene at Ebenezer Reformed Church, Shafter, California, on Tuesday, March 7th, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

B. Devotions

Elder Chris Fellersen led the body in the reading of Psalm 127. Elder Fellersen led the body in prayer.

C. Close

The President led the delegates in the confession of our catholic faith through the Apostles' Creed and in the Lord's Prayer. He then pronounced the Benediction and all joined in the singing of the Doxology.

Rev. Douglas Schlegel
Stated Clerk of the Western Classis

APPENDIX

to the

ABSTRACT

of the

MINUTES

MEMBERSHIP

and

FINANCIAL

STATISTICS

STANDING RULES

of the

WESTERN CLASSIS

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATISTICS

2021 Western Classis Statistics	Grace Bakersfield	Covenant Chico	Grace Lancaster	Provid- ence Lodi	Rehoboth Los Angeles	Trinity Modesto/ Stockton	Covenant Sacto
1. No. of Elders	3	2	3	2	1	3	5
2. No. of Deacons	3	1	1	1	1	0	6
3. Comm. Last Year	111	18	32	18	19	29	150
4. Rec'd by Confirm	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
6. Rec'd by Prof.	2	0	4	0	0	0	8
7. Tot. Received	4	0	4	2	0	0	10
8. Tot Old/New Mbr	115	18	36	20	19	29	160
9. Lost by Dismissal	2	0	1	1	2	5	7
10. Lost Eras/Disc	0	0	3	2	4	1	11
11. Lost by Death	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
12. Total Lost	2	1	4	4	6	6	20
13. Comm. this Yr	113	17	32	16	11	23	140
14. Unconfirm. Mbr.	15	18	3	1	2	9	72
15. Total Bapt. Mbr.	128	35	35	17	13	32	212
16. No. of Families	48	9	15	9	6	15	74
17. No. of S.S. Child.	10	0	0	1	0	4	41
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
19. Covenant Baptisms	0	0	2	0	0	1	4
20. Total Baptisms	0	0	2	0	0	1	5
21. No. Rec. LS	60	18	31	15	13	19	140
22. Times LS.Served	2	12	5	12	14	13	12
23. Reg. Offerings	\$247,695	\$53,558	\$53,511	\$61,000	\$45,297	\$78,416	\$362,306
24. Special Offerings	\$2,285	\$2,307	\$7,233	\$1,170	\$30	\$3,580	\$78,542
25. Other Sources	\$9,319	\$0	\$0	\$2,400	\$1,506	\$42,405	\$435
26. Total Receipts	\$259,299	\$55,865	\$60,744	\$64,570	\$46,833	\$124,120	\$441,283
27. Giv. to Syn Guidl.	\$26,460	\$993	\$4,041	\$288	\$5,533	\$4,492	\$37,166
28. Giv. to Clas Guidl	\$8,250	\$885	\$2,400	\$1,350	\$1,425	\$1,005	\$11,250
29. RCUS non-budget	\$15,700	\$0	\$505	\$0	\$30	\$0	\$27,655
30. Non-RCUS cause	\$2,300	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300	\$18,548
31. Other Expenses	\$0	\$49,631	\$47,819	\$0	\$68,148	\$140,459	\$209,909
32. Total Expenses	\$184,267	\$51,508	\$54,765	\$64,053	\$75,136	\$146,256	\$304,528
33. Val. of Ch. Bldg.	\$600,000	\$0	\$0	\$350,000	\$0	\$550,000	\$480,430
34. Parsonage	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
35. Impr on Prop'ty	\$110,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
36. Pres Prop'ty Deb	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
37. Debt Pd Last Yr	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
38. Syn guidl/comm	\$238	\$55	\$126	\$16	\$291	\$215	\$248
39. Clas guidl/comm	\$37	\$49	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$44	\$75
40. Tot. RCUS/Com	\$312	\$104	\$201	\$91	\$368	\$259	\$507

Covenant San Diego	Ebenezer Shafter/ ValleGra	Grace Willows	First Yuba City	2021 Totals	2020 Totals	% Change	Calvary Stockton	Valle de Gracia Shafter
2	3	1	1	26	26	-0-	1	1
0	4	2	2	21	23	-8.70	0	0
28	67	29	45	546	558	-2.15	19	7
0	0	0	2	4	7	-42.86	0	0
0	2	0	3	9	2	350.0	0	0
0	2	0	2	18	18	-0-	0	0
0	4	0	7	31	27	14.81	0	0
28	71	29	52	577	585	-1.37	19	7
1	1	0	7	27	19	42.11	3	0
0	2	0	10	33	10	230.0	1	0
1	1	0	0	6	10	-40.00	0	0
2	4	0	17	66	39	69.23	4	0
26	67	29	35	509	547	-6.95	15	7
6	30	13	11	180	178	1.12	9	9
32	97	42	46	689	734	-6.13	24	16
16	34	13	17	256	289	-11.42	11	3
6	19	10	5	96	100	-4.00	4	0
0	0	0	0	1	0	N/A	0	0
0	6	0	1	14	15	-6.67	0	0
0	6	0	1	15	15	-0-	0	0
28	61	29	35	449	482	-6.85	11	7
6	6	4	12	98	79	24.10	12	2
\$92,000	\$186,496	\$89,748	\$109,384	\$1,379,411	\$1,396,313	-1.20	\$39,230	\$12,253
\$0	\$7,425	\$400	\$3,640	\$106,612	\$122,696	-13.11	\$1,000	\$0
\$0	\$47,700	\$53	\$0	\$103,818	\$132,305	-21.53	\$39,998	\$71,700
\$92,000	\$241,621	\$90,201	\$113,024	\$1,589,560	\$1,651,314	-3.74	\$79,947	\$83,953
\$6,384	\$14,668	\$2,500	\$675	\$103,200	\$112,861	-8.56	\$1,984	\$992
\$3,332	\$5,025	\$2,500	\$450	\$37,872	\$55,403	-31.64	\$180	\$300
\$860	\$7,425	\$400	\$0	\$52,575	\$47,506	10.67	\$0	\$0
\$736	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$21,884	\$27,822	-21.34	\$300	\$0
\$74,594	\$225,919	\$70,746	\$105,838	\$993,063	\$1,049,478	-5.38	\$101,021	\$81,073
\$85,906	\$253,037	\$76,146	\$106,963	\$1,402,565	\$1,433,127	-2.13	\$103,485	\$82,365
\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$354,100	\$3,334,530	\$3,239,593	2.93	\$0	\$0
\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$143,000	\$343,000	\$341,837	0.34	\$0	\$0
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$110,000	\$490,000	-77.55	\$0	\$0
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-0-	\$0	\$0
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-0-	\$0	\$0
\$228	\$240	\$86	\$15	Avg. \$160	Avg. \$174	-8.05	\$110	\$248
\$119	\$82	\$86	\$10	Avg. \$66	Avg. \$88	-25.00	\$10	\$75
\$378	\$444	\$172	\$25	Avg. \$260	Avg. \$312	-16.67	\$120	\$323

NECROLOGIES**THOMAS BURTIN MAYVILLE**

Pastor, husband, father, and grandfather, Thomas Burtin Mayville, entered into the presence of his Lord on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 from COVID-19 complications. He was 64.

Thomas was born to Thomas M Mayville and Margaret Myrn in 1956. He married his wife, Carolyn, in July 1978 and together they raised 4 children. He was a mechanic and worked for

15 years in construction before receiving his Bachelor's degree in 1998 at Mid America Reformed Seminary. After graduating, he pastored Grace Reformed Church, Willows, CA for 9 years and during that time earned his Master of Divinity in 2002. In 2007, he spent almost 3 years as a Bible College Professor in Uganda, Africa. It was while in Africa that Thomas became an avid bird watcher and it continued the rest of his life.

In 2011, Thomas and his wife settled in Riverbank, California, where he was preaching and sharing the love of Christ to all he met. Praying for or with others after a phone call or visit, was just a part of Thomas' character. These last 5 years he worked part time for Home Depot and WBM (Westminster Biblical Missions) and was Associate Pastor of Providence RCUS in Lodi, California.

He enjoyed sharing day trips with Carolyn to old historic towns and the ocean. He loved growing fruits and vegetables and sharing the abundance with neighbors and friends. He loved spending time with his children, their spouses, his grandchildren and his huge extended family.

Thomas is preceded in death by his daughter, mother, brother, and grandson.

REV. GENE SAWTELLE

Gene Neville Sawtelle was born on May 10, 1938 at the Mother Lode Hospital in Jamestown, CA to parents Buck and Waughnetta Sawtelle. He was 6 pounds and 21 inches long. The Reverend Gene Sawtelle was promoted to the church triumphant on the evening of February 5th, 2022. He was the cherished husband of Sharon Sawtelle for over 61 years. A dear brother to his sister Shirley and half-brothers "Red," David, and Daniel. A beloved father of Jenette, David, Jim, Ernest, Juli, and John. The grandfather to 19 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. He was a dear uncle to many nephews and nieces and a beloved minister and friend to countless others. He's preceded in death by his parents Buck and Waughnetta Sawtelle, his sister Shirley, and half-brother "Red."

He grew up living all over Northern California during his childhood, but his family eventually settled in Cottonwood, California. Gene was not raised in a Christian family, as he always put it, he'd "never heard of Jesus except to hear his name used in vain." Gene and Sharon went to junior high in Cottonwood and high school together at Anderson Union High School, but they didn't go steady until Sharon's brother Roger became friends with Gene in college. Gene was "that Sawtelle boy" whom teenage Sharon was warned about.

In the late 1950's, Gene served in the US Army. He rarely talked about being a veteran, but his legacy lives on through the service of his son John and seven of his grandchildren.

One of Gene's first introductions to Christianity was in high school. According to his wife, "a Sunday school teacher challenged him and others to read the Bible for one year, and said if you read through it you get a thing of fudge." Gene's faith later developed into a desire to attend college to become a minister. He was, as they used to call it, a Bob Jones "Preacher Boy." During his college years at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, he married his sweetheart Sharon Gibbons and they welcomed their first child, Jenette, into the world. During his time in college, he enjoyed acting in plays, practicing public speaking and serving on the campus police force.

Gene was ordained as a minister of the gospel in 1963. He and Sharon moved several times during the early years of their marriage, ministering in churches in Colorado and Idaho while raising their growing family. They settled down in Anderson, California where Gene taught at Northstate Christian School. During that time, he instilled a love of the outdoors, from camping to hunting and fishing, in his children.

For many years Gene studied the Reformed faith through the mentorship of his dear friend the Reverend J.G. Duckett. He finally accepted a call to the gospel ministry in the RCUS in the late 1960s, along with his brothers-in-law Dorman Savage and Roger Gibbons. He worked as a church planter, preaching and shepherding at First Reformed Church of Yuba City and Grace Reformed in Greeley CO. As a minister of the gospel, he had a zeal that never rested; he preached the word "in season and out of season" for over 58 years, and faithfully prayed in careful detail for his family, loved ones and the work of the gospel ministry every day. In God's mercy, the fruit of his faithful service to his savior included bringing the gospel to his mother. One of Gene's fondest memories was baptizing his own mother and receiving her into the church. Although Gene will be sorely missed by all who loved him, he is even now in the presence of his Savior—free of pain, and joyful.

STANDING RULES OF THE WESTERN CLASSIS

1. Classical dues shall be paid not later than the first day of December of the current year. ('89)
2. The Parochial Reports and Reports of Statistics shall be submitted at least three (3) weeks before the Spring Meeting of Classis; the Parochial Reports to the President of the Executive Committee of Classis; the Statistics to the Stated Clerk of the Executive Committee of Classis. The statistics of the home mission congregation are to be included in the overseeing church's statistics when the congregation submits them to the clerk of Classis. ('87, '07, '09)
3. The writ of certification for Delegate Elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk two (2) weeks before the session of Classis.
4. All congregations shall present an accurate report on confirmation instruction, Sunday School and weekday school. The period of instruction shall, if possible, be so extended that the pupils memorize and are able to recite the entire Catechism before Confirmation. The course of instruction shall include Bible history, Catechism, Bible readings and the study of the books and contents of the Bible; also, singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
5. Any member may move to have the Standing Rules read after the defining of the bar of the house. Passage of the motion shall require a simple majority vote. ('15)
6. If pastors, elders, and members of congregations request information from the Executive Committee 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 only in written form and relevant only to the item in question. This correspondence shall be part of the official minutes of the Executive Committee.
7. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis, or for delegates to Classis, at forty-five cents (\$.45) per running mile per vehicle." ('07, '12)
8. 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.
9. The Stated Clerk of Classis shall prepare an abstract of the Classical minutes and shall distribute a PDF copy via email to each delegate of the Classis within 60 days, submit a copy to the RCUS webmaster to be posted on the RCUS website, and send a copy to the Synodical Publications Committee to be uploaded as a print-on-demand document. The Stated Clerk shall receive a gratuity of \$1,000 per year. (1991, 2010, 2019, 2022)
10. The Classis shall have Permanent Committees as follows: Executive, Missions, Christian Education in the Church, Candidates and Credentials, Interchurch Relations, Publications, Diaconal Ministries, Finances, and Heidelberg West Youth Camp¹. The

¹ At the 33rd Regular Spring Meeting of the Western Classis ('18), the Permanent Heidelberg West Youth Camp Committee was reorganized as a sub-committee of the Permanent Christian Education in the Church Committee.

Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees.² ('97)

11. The complete Classis statistics shall be made a part of the minutes at the spring meeting of Classis.
12. 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 of the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
13. 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 of the Reformed Church in the United States. This copy shall be signed by all elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk.
14. The report 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 (3) weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis. Special Committees writing study papers are to complete and submit their work to the consistories of all the churches by January 1. ('15)
15. The religious services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circularized before Classis. ('90)
16. Students for the Ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend only such seminaries as 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.
17. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the Reformed Church in the United States for at least five (5) years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the distinctives 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.
18. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Classis two (2) weeks in advance of Classis shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Classis at any time. ('90)
19. [Deleted by action of the 37th annual meeting of the Western Classis.] ('97, 2022)
20. All ministers licensed and ordained in any of the other Classes of the RCUS desiring to accept a call to a congregation of the Western Classis will undergo an examination in Orthodoxy and Purity of Intent. Such examination will take place either before the whole Classis or before the Committee on Candidates and Credentials, as that Committee shall determine in each case. If the examination is before the Candidates and Credentials Committee alone, the recommendation of the Committee must be approved via Executive Circular. ('01)

² At the 35th Annual Classis meeting the following policy was adopted: "That the members of the Permanent Christian Education in the Church and the Permanent Publications Committees be the same men and that the Stated Clerk provide this information in the Standing Committee Folder at the Classis Meeting."

INDEX OF POSITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

- BENEVOLENT AND DIACONAL AID**
 Guidelines: Three Year Budget Required – 09:73
 Guidelines for Benevolent and Diaconal Aid – 18:82
- CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS**
 Examinations on the Floor – 10:80
 Memorization of Catechism for Candidates - 08:78
 Partial Licensure Exams – 09:76
 Theological Training for Ministers - 86:71
- CONSTITUTION**
 Art. 113, 114, 118, 119 - 05:72
 Borrowing Elders - 05:74
- HEIDELBERG WEST YOUTH CAMP**
 Camp Policies and Rules - 04:27
 Fee Reduction for children of camp staff - 04:26
 Insurance Certificate by each congregation - 04:26
- INTERCHURCH RELATIONS**
 Fraternal Delegates to visit once a year - 87:90
 Limitation of reports by delegates - 04:80
- JUDICIAL**
 Bar of the House, Who may be seated - 88:124
 Current Constitutions to be filed with Clerk - 98:74
 Elders Officiating at Classis Worship Services - 13:80
 Minister's membership in local church - 86:78
 Notification of Parties in Appeal of Set time for hearing - 15:83
 Permanent Committee Work by Mandate Only – 09:76
 Procedure to Amend Local Constitution - 99:74
 KJV or NKJV use in Classis - 87:91, 90:4
- MISCELLANEOUS**
 Guidelines for Biblical Reconciliation - 88:122
- MISSIONS**
 Kenya Economic Development Fund Formation - 07:73
 New Mission Churches through Existing Churches – 09:74
 Strategic Five Year Plan Requirement – 09:74, 75
- SPECIAL POSITIONS TAKEN**
 Hyper-preterism - 97:74
- PUBLICATIONS**
 Pricing Policy - 97:28 (3)
 Royalty Policy - 97:28 (2)
- SPECIAL STUDIES**
 Adult Baptism in the Light of Article 185 - 14:73
 Child Safety in the Church – 16:77
 Harold Camping - 04:85
 View of the Church - 03:75, Return of Christ in 1994 - 93:67
 Operation Rescue - 90:28
 Paedocommunion - 03:72, 04:83
 Survey of Catechism Practice - 99:18
 Two Kingdoms Doctrine - 13:66, 16:71
-