

# **Abstract of the Minutes**



of the  
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS  
Reformed Church in the United States

**Special Classis Meeting**  
December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Mason City, IA

**37<sup>th</sup> Annual Session**  
March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

Grace Reformed Church  
Rogers, AR

## **INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY**

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

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

### **CLASSIS GUIDLINE FOR GIVING**

General Fund:	\$5.00
Missions Fund:	\$40.00
Benevolence Fund:	\$15.00
Student Aid:	\$0

**TOTAL Per Communicant Member: \$60.00**

### **CLASSIS TREASURER**

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

### **PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES**

**Executive:** Campbell, Carr, Gilman

**Candidates and Credentials:** Altman, Luquette, Groseclose, Wright

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

**Interchurch Relations:** Potter, Stetler, Kloempken, Stock

**Missions:** Kron, Schnabel, Van Heest, Baas, Oberhaus

**Communications and Publications:** Muether, Schnabel, Mankins

**Special Committee for Manitowoc:** Sawtelle, Potter, Wiersma

**Special Committee for Light of the Resurrection Reformed:** Luquette,  
Muether, Wright

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## 2022 Directory for Covenant East Classis

### Ministers of the Word

- Altman, Rev. Steve ..... (419) 356-2095  
J153 County Road 15, Napoleon, OH 43545  
thealtmans@sbcglobal.net
- Campbell, Rev. Christopher ..... (816) 527-6197  
18 Pine View Road, Platte City, MO 64079,  
campbellcjc@gmail.com
- Carr, Rev. Steve..... (479) 372-1108  
3318 N. 2nd, St., Rogers, AR 72756  
srutherford77@gmail.com
- Groseclose, Win..... (724) 709-0592  
436 Vista Dr., Butler, PA 16001  
preacherwin@gmail.com
- Hall, Jimmy John..... (916) 202-5549  
560 Middle Pike Rd,  
West Jefferson, OH 43162  
pastorjimmyjohn2028hall@gmail.com
- Kron, Rev. Ryan..... (612) 751-2096  
8701 Woodcliff Road,  
Bloomington, MN 55438  
ryankron@hotmail.com
- Larson, Rev. Mark..... (641) 923-3060  
1907 200th St., Garner, IA 50438  
larsonmark57@gmail.com
- Muether, Rev. Charles ..... (641) 295-9264  
310 Prairie St Pella, IA 50219  
chuckmuether@thekirkside.com
- Potter, Rev. Ron..... (570) 785-4012  
136 Grand Avenue, Forest City, PA 18421  
reformed@nep.net

- Sawtelle, Rev. James ..... (763) 417-9835  
 3101 Virginia Avenue N., Crystal, MN 55427  
 sawtellejim@gmail.com
- Schnabel, Rev. Daniel ..... (952) 467-3872  
 15470 County Road 31,  
 Hamburg, MN 55339  
 dm7schnabel@gmail.com
- Sorensen, Rev. Kyle ..... (920) 726-4464  
 7411 Center Road, Manitowoc, WI 54220  
 kydoso@gmail.com
- Stetler, Rev. Richard (Retired) ..... (605) 281-0678  
 PO Box 65, Sioux Center, IA 51250  
 hrstetler@yahoo.com

**Primarius Elders**

- Baas, Michael ..... (816) 550-2854  
 3023 NE 124<sup>th</sup> Terr. Kansas City, MO 64166  
 Elder.b445@gmail.com
- Gilman, Andrew ..... (612) 206-7002  
 321 Aster Dr., Northfield, MN 55057  
 andyegilman@gmail.com
- Jacobsen, David ..... (515) 368-3000  
 390 120<sup>th</sup> St. Dows, IA 50071  
 davidj@peacereformedchurch.org
- Luquette, Dennis ..... (717) 528-4155  
 1189 Mud Run Rd., York Springs, PA 17372  
 knoyse@gmail.com
- Kloempken, Lance ..... (952) 467-3004  
 16223 158<sup>th</sup> St. Hamburg, MN 55339  
 oldguyfarm@gmail.com
- Mankins, Steve ..... (530) 632-1100  
 2781 Farm Rd 1120, Monet, MO 65708  
 sandramankins30@gmail.com

- Oberhaus, David .....(419) 579-0047  
 10906 County Road P Napoleon, OH 43545  
 oberhausda@gmail.com
- Stock, Larry .....(920) 726-4695  
 7405 S. Union Rd., Manitowoc, WI 54220  
 larryshellystock@gmail.com
- Van Heest, Walt .....(612) 384-1164  
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 walt.m.vanheest@gmail.com
- Wright, Dan .....(570) 702-1404  
 2821 Elkdale Road,  
 Clifford Township, PA 18470  
 dwfarm@nep.net

**Secundus Elders**

- Blauw, David .....(612) 963-0632  
 11450 65<sup>th</sup> Place N.  
 Maple Grove, MN 55369  
 d.blauw.mn@gmail.com
- Buysse, Don.....(717) 528-8043  
 50 Wendy Dr., York Springs, PA 17372  
 15covrefmc@gmail.com
- Frankart, Caleb .....(419) 980-2164  
 702 Hopkins St. Defiance, OH 43512  
 calebfrankart@yahoo.com
- Lorence, Drake .....(952) 402-6144  
 13555 Essex Place, Minnetonka, MN 55305  
 drakelorence@yahoo.com
- Steubbe, Steve .....(920) 213-7769  
 2313 Hickory LN New Holstein, WI 53061  
 steubbe14@gmail.com
- Willemsen, Mori.....(952) 913-3760  
 840 Park Ave Hamburg, MN 55339  
 moriw@wmmueller.com



Witt, Luther ..... (816) 808-1151  
547 Hawthorne Dr., Liberty, MO 64068  
ljwitt@swbell.net

**Students Under Care**

None

**Churches and Mission Works**

*Northwest ARKANSAS*

Grace RCUS, 72756  
3320 N. Second Street, Rogers, AR ..... (479) 372-1108  
Pastor: Steven Carr (Wife: Crystal)  
Service Times: Worship: 10:00 am.  
E-mail: pastor@gracereformednwa.org Web site:  
www.gracereformednwa.org

*Garner, IOWA*

Peace RCUS, 50438  
1907 200th Street, Garner, IA (3 miles south of Garner on US 69)  
..... (641) 923-3060  
Pastor:  
Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am; S.S. 9:30 am.  
E-mail: peacereformedchurch@gmail.com Web site:  
www.peacereformedchurch.org

*Pella, IOWA*

Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, 50219  
612 Franklin St. Pella, IA 502.....(641) 295-9264  
Pastor: Rev. Charles Muether (Wife: Kristie)  
Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am  
Email: chuckmuether@thekirkside.com

*Eden Prairie, MINNESOTA*

Emmaus Road RCUS, 55438  
Meeting at Minnetonka Seventh Day Adventist Church,  
3510 Williston Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55345 ..... (612) 751-2096  
Pastor: Rev. Ryan Kron (Wife: Colleen)  
Mail: 8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438  
Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am. S.S. 9:10 am (Sept. through May)

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

*Hamburg, MINNESOTA*

St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS, 55339  
15480 County Road 31 .....(952) 467-3878  
Pastor: Rev. Dan Schnabel (Wife: Marie)  
Service Times: Worship: 9:30 am; S.S. 8:30 am  
E-mail: Stpaulsrcus@gmail.com Web site: www.stpaulsrcus.org

*Minneapolis, MINNESOTA*

Redeemer RCUS, 55427  
1300 Lilac Drive North, Golden Valley, MN .....(763) 417-9851  
Pastor: Rev. James Sawtelle (Wife: Thelma)  
Mail: 3101 Virginia Ave., N. Crystal, MN 55427  
Service times: Worship 10:15 am & 5:00 pm; S.S. 9:00 am (Sept.-  
May)  
E-mail: sawtellejim@gmail.com  
Web site: www.redeemerrcus.org

*Kansas City, MISSOURI*

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

*Napoleon, OHIO*

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

*Gettysburg, PENNSYLVANIA*

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

*Waymart, PENNSYLVANIA*

Heritage RCUS, 18472

200 Belmont Turnpike (lower level of Waymart Presbyterian Church)  
..... (570) 785-4012

Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)

Mail: 136 Grand Ave. Forest City, PA 18421

Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am; Bible Study 9:30 am; Wed.

Study/prayer 7:00 pm

E-mail: [hrc@nep.net](mailto:hrc@nep.net) Web site: [www.heritagercus.org](http://www.heritagercus.org)

*Manitowoc, WISCONSIN*

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 54220

6524 Hwy C..... (920) 726-4940

Pastor: Vacant

Service Times: Worship 10:00 am; S.S. 8:45 am

E-mail: [info@salemebenezer.org](mailto:info@salemebenezer.org)

Web site: [www.salemebenezer.org](http://www.salemebenezer.org)

**Abstract of the Minutes**  
of the  
**Covenant East Classis**  
**Special Meeting**  
December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Services and Organization**

The President, Rev. Christopher Campbell, called the meeting to order at 1:11 pm. He led the body in devotions by reading from Gal 5:7-26, commenting on the text, and praying. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr, called the opening roll showing 10 ministers and 7 elders present, a quorum. No one was appointed as reporter for the Reformed Herald.

Elders Ron Mittelstadt was approved as the elder delegate from Manitowoc, WI, and was seated in the bar of the house and given the privileges of the floor. Elder Matthew Dudley was welcomed and seated in the bar of the house and given the privileges of the floor.

**Adoption of Agenda and Order of the Day**

Classis adopted the agenda and order of the day as amended.

**Handling of Complaint from Garner, IA**

**Classis adopted the following recommendations:**

1. To remove Ground f from Specification 1 of the Complaint.
2. To remove the further explanations and footnotes on pages 7 through 9 of the Complaint.

Classis found the complaint regular and ready for hearing.

Rev. Sawtelle, counsel for the defendants, made an objection, stating that the complaint was not in order since the Consistory was not named as the defendants.

The papers and records in the case were read in proper order and the parties were heard, the complainant opening and closing (Const. Article 169)

Rev. Kyle Sorensen, counsel for the complainants, gave his statement (45 minutes).

Sawtelle, counsel for the defendants gave his statement (60 minutes).

Sorensen, counsel for the complainants, gave his closing statement (15 minutes).

Members of Classis were given opportunity to ask questions from the floor.

Motion was made and carried to reconsider the regularity of the complaint.

Motion was made and carried to proceed with the complaint even though it is irregular on this point: that the Consistory should be named as the defendant.

Classis voted on Specifications 1 and 2.

The President declared that Specification 1 of the complaint was not sustained and that Specification 2 was sustained.

**Classis adopted the following recommendations:**

1. That in light of hearing this complaint, the Covenant East Classis provides the following pastoral guidance to the saints at Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA, that a member of Classis chosen by the Executive Committee be invited to moderate the upcoming annual meeting of Peace Reformed Church.
2. That, regarding Specification 2, members who have been cautioned not to take the Lord's Supper but are in good standing be told by the Spiritual Council what their proper status is as of this date.
3. That, regarding Specification 2, no more communications be sent out from Consistory or Spiritual Council without prior knowledge of all members of that body.
4. That, regarding Specification 2, the pastor, Consistory, and Spiritual Council discontinue the practice of bulletin announcements and mass communications related to COVID statistics and related matters.

5. That, with regard to the Covid pandemic, Classis encourages all parties to be gracious to one another and give one another the benefit of the doubt. Do not assume the worst about others or about their motives, but rather assume the best. For example, do not assume that just because a person is cautious they are fearful or somehow not trusting in God. Likewise, do not assume that just because a person is not as cautious that they do not love their neighbor.

6. That a report of the action of Classis be communicated to all parties of the complaint by the Clerk and request that it be placed in the bulletin this Sunday.

7. That in the communication to the parties the Clerk inform them of their right to appeal and counsel.

### **Excuses**

The following were excused from all sessions of Classis: Rev. Mark Larson, Elder Randy Schroeder, Elder Steve Mankins, Rev. Ron Potter, Rev. Jay Fluck, and Rev. Jimmy John Hall.

Rev. Richard Stetler was excused from 6:30 pm to the end of the meeting.

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

The reading of the minutes were approved by circular. Classis was adjourned at 12:50 am.

The Clerk read the roll. 9 ministers and 7 elders were present, a quorum.

The President closed by praying and pronouncing a benediction.

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## **Spring Meeting**

### **CLERK'S NOTE:**

On February 28, 2021, the night before the Spring Classis Meeting convened, the delegates of Classis gathered for a pre-Classis discussion led by Rev. Steve Carr on the book *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* by Carl R. Trueman.

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**Abstract of the Minutes  
of the Covenant East Classis**  
of the Reformed Church in the United States  
37<sup>th</sup> Annual Session—March 1-2, 2021  
Grace Reformed Church, Rogers, AR

**Services**

The President, Rev. Christopher Campbell, called the 37<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Covenant East Classis to order at 8:03 am. The President led the body in devotions by singing from Hymn #101, “Come Thou Almighty King,” reading and preaching from Luke 12:41-48, “Are We Faithful and Wise Stewards,” and praying.

On Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm, classis delegates, along with members and guests from Grace Reformed Church gathered for a scheduled worship service. Rev. Carr conducted the service and Rev. Kron preached a sermon on Matthew 5:5, “Blessed Are the Meek.”

On Wednesday morning, Rev. Muether led the body in devotions by preaching from Romans 12:10-19, “Live Peaceably with All,” singing Hymn #691, “It Is Well with My Soul,” and praying.

Closing devotions were led by Elder Steve Mankins who spoke on the need to love our wives and families and prayed.

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

**Organization**

The 37<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was called to order at 8:03 am by President Rev. Christopher Campbell. Following opening devotions, the Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr, called the roll of Classis which showed 9 ministers and 7 elders present, a quorum. The bar of the house was defined as the first five rows on both sides. The President appointed Elders Michael Baas, Steve Stuebbe, Lance Kloempken, and David Oberhaus as tellers.



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

The President appointed Rev. James Sawtelle as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

### **Fraternal Delegates and Visitors**

Rev. Muether welcomed Rev. Paul Moureale of the Midwest Presbytery of the OPC. Rev. Moureale was seated in the bar of the house and given the privileges of the floor. Elder Alan Hermann was also welcomed and seated in the bar of the house and given the privileges of the floor. Other visitors welcomed: Elder Ron Lutz from Light of the Resurrection Reformed Church, Graydon Lau and John Larson.

### **Reception of New Ministers and New Churches**

There were no new ministers or churches.

### **Standing Committees**

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

<i>Benevolence/Examination and Licensure:</i>	<u>Sawtelle</u> , Van Heest, Stuebbe,
<i>Excuses/Minutes of Synod:</i>	<u>Stetler</u> , Groseclose, Mankins
<i>Finances:</i>	<u>Schnabel</u> , Luquette, Gilman (Hermann advise)
<i>Judicial:</i>	<u>Altman</u> , Schnabel, Baas
<i>Minutes of Classis/Services:</i>	<u>Groseclose</u> , Oberhaus (Carr Advise)
<i>Missions:</i>	<u>Kron</u> , Baas, Kloempken
<i>Nominations:</i>	<u>Muether</u> , Altman, Kloempken

### **Presentation of Overtures, Reports, and Communications**

The items were referred and distributed to the Standing Committees as determined by the Executive Committee, which informed the Classis in writing of these referrals before the meeting (See Appendix #1). The actions

taken on these documents are found in the section of this abstract that contains the Standing Committee reports.

## **Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports**

### **A. Executive Committee on Their Minutes**

Esteemed Brothers,

Since the Spring Classis meeting of 2021, your committee fulfilled its responsibilities as per Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution. Those duties included but were not limited to the following: organizing one special classis meeting to handle a complaint, sending two members of Classis to moderate the annual meeting of one church, providing counsel to the churches of Classis as requested, providing counsel to individual members and groups of concerned members from the churches of Classis, and providing advice regarding the resignation and retirement of two ministers.

Your president, this being his first year on the job, was forced to “hit the ground” running as the baton was passed to him. Most, if not all, of our time as a committee was spent assisting two churches with internal issues. One church experienced division among both the membership and the leadership. The second church experienced division within a large family in the church, which spilled over into the general membership. Despite our attempts to encourage these congregations to put their differences aside, forgive one another as God has forgiven them, and be reconciled as brothers and sisters in Christ, that did not happen. As a result, both congregations have lost many members, seen their pastors resign and retire, and have experienced a reduction in active church officers (in one church, the entire consistory resigned, in the other only two elders remain). Our recommendations below propose actions we believe are necessary for Classis to take regarding these two congregations.

Peace Reformed Church of Garner made a change to Article 4 of their local constitution as follows:

Previous wording: “The Pastor, two or three Elders and two or three Deacons of the congregation shall constitute the consistory. The number of Elders and Deacons on the consistory may be changed, by a majority vote, to the effect that two or three may be elected to each office.”

Updated wording: “The pastor, two or more elders, and one or more deacons of the congregation shall constitute the consistory. The number of Elders and Deacons on the consistory may be changed, by a majority vote, to the effect that two or three may be elected to each office.”

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

### **Executive Circular 36.1**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following matters:

**Recommendation 1:** That Covenant East Classis approve Rev. Jay Fluck’s resignation from his charge at Covenant Reformed Church (Gettysburg).

Grounds: His resignation is due to his and the Consistory’s belief that he should retire due to his health issues.

**Recommendation 2:** That Covenant East Classis Overture Synod for ministerial aid for Rev. Fluck for \$2000 a month for the Synodical year 2021-2022.

Note: The recommendation for the overture for ministerial aid is based upon the request from Covenant RCUS’s Consistory and their evaluation of Rev. Fluck’s needs.

### **Executive Circular 36.2**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee informs the members of classis that the President of Covenant East Classis (per Article 90) has called a Special Meeting of Covenant East Classis on Wednesday, December 8, 2021, at 1 p.m. Central Time.

The stated purpose of this meeting is to hear the complaint brought by fifteen members of Peace Reformed Church against members of the Spiritual Council of Peace Reformed Church.

Note: The Executive Committee is working on arranging a place to meet either in Garner or Mason City, IA. As soon as arrangements are made, Classis will be notified as to the location of the meeting. The Executive Committee proposes that we do not allow for attendance via zoom at this meeting.

### **Executive Circular 36.3**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you for your consideration the following item of business for the Spring 2022 Classis Meeting.

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

The 37<sup>th</sup> annual Spring Classis Meeting will be hosted by Grace Reformed Church, Rogers, AR. **March 1-2, 2022**. The Meeting will convene at 8:00 am on March 1<sup>st</sup> and continue through March 2<sup>nd</sup> to the completion of business. Please make travel plans accordingly.

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

The Executive Committee has once again called for an organized discussion to run from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Monday evening February 28, 2022. Rev. Steve Carr will lead us through a discussion of *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*, by Carl Trueman. Please read the book and come prepared to share your insights.

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

The forms necessary for this Classis Meeting are included with this Circular. Please send the Clerk the membership statistics, financial statistics, and certification of delegate elders as soon as possible. The Statistics Form is an editable form to facilitate using a computer to fill it out. If you hand write the statistics, please write clearly and legibly. Please print the names when they are signed as well so the clerk can tell who is signing. The deadline for the reception of these forms is **February 15, 2021** (standing rules # 3-4). In addition to these forms please include any necrologies and/or overtures. Overtures received by **February 8<sup>th</sup>**, will be circulated with their supporting grounds so the delegates and their Consistories may consider them before

the Classis meets (standing rule #15). The clerk also kindly asks that your reports be free of graphics for ease of reproducing them in the docket.

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

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

Permanent and Special Committee reports need to be mailed to Consistories by **February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022** (standing rule #15).

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

We will send out a separate email with information about an area hotel as soon as possible.

**Note:** Grace Reformed Church of Northwest Arkansas has neither the technology nor the bandwidth to support a hybrid meeting with videoconferencing such as was done last year.

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**Recommendation #1:** that Classis appoint a special committee to work with the Peace Reformed Garner congregation over the next year to assist them in recruiting a pastor, restructuring their consistory, and rebuilding their congregation.

**Recommendation #2:** that Classis appoint a special committee to work with Covenant Reformed Gettysburg over the next year to assist them in recruiting a pastor, restructuring their consistory, and rebuilding their congregation.

**Recommendation #3:** that Classis instruct the Home Missions Committee to evaluate the present capability of Covenant Reformed Church Gettysburg to continue serving as overseeing consistory to the Immanuel Reformed mission work in Iowa.

Respectfully Submitted

Christopher Campbell, Steve Carr, Andy Gilman

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Recommendations 1 and 2 were referred to the Standing Judicial Committee  
Recommendation 3 was referred to the Standing Missions Committee

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

Brothers of Covenant East Classis,

Your committee did not need to meet for any formal meeting this year. We did have one inquiry into licensure and ordination from a man who was looking into the possibility of holding his credentials in the RCUS. However, that never materialized into anything beyond his initial discussion with the chair of our committee and an informal discussion over lunch at Synod. We have nothing to bring before this classis by way of recommendation. We would ask that Executive Committee would consider adding a couple of members to our committee. With the loss of Ken Hanko and the retirements of Rev. Larson and Rev. Fluck, we are now down to only three members.

Your Brothers in Christ,

Steve Altman, Dan Wright, Dennis Luquette

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Classis Action: The report was adopted

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## **C. Interchurch Relations Committee**

Esteemed Brethren:

The Interchurch Relations Committee of Covenant East Classis conducted the bulk of its business via e-mail. Your Committee received six invitations to send delegates to fraternal Classes and Presbyteries and was able to send delegates to five in the U.S. and a letter of greeting to the sixth in Canada. Border restrictions between the U.S. and Canada prevented sending an actual delegate north to the CanRC.

Your Chairman herein acknowledges the good work and co-operation of the entire committee for the willingness of its members to act as actual fraternal delegates themselves or to help acquire one, as well as their willingness to assist the Chair in decision making.

Thus far in 2022 two invitations to attend spring meetings of fraternal Churches have been received. Given the fact that we sent delegates to these churches in the fall of 2021 we opted not to send delegates at this time and thus have advised these churches accordingly. A third invitation was received from an OPC Presbytery to attend their spring meeting in the twin cities area. We expect to have a delegate present.

Invitations to observe Spring Classis 2022 have been sent to the following six fraternal churches: URCNA Classis Central U.S.; Classis Niagara CanRC; Presbytery of the Midwest OPC; Presbytery of Ohio OPC; URCNA Classis Eastern U.S.; Midwest Presbytery OPC.

The following are the reports and or communications of the delegates to fraternal churches in 2021.

### **1. Classis Central U.S. United Reformed Churches in North America**

September 21, 2021

Classis Central U.S. of the URCNA met in Kansas City, Missouri at Covenant Reformed Church on Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday September 14<sup>th</sup>. I was able to join Classis for all sessions on Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. Also in attendance from the RCUS was Dr. Kevin Carrol (as delegate from RCUS Classis South Central). Classis on Tuesday begin at 8:30 and adjourned at 11:30. Rev. Todd De Rooy was seated as chairman and Rev. Ralph Pontier as clerk. After a morning devotion by Rev. Harold Miller the Classis handled what they call “Credentials.” This process involved the reporting from the elders of each church as to the health of the congregation along with any requests for advice from the Classis. Many churches had requests for advice which they presented to Classis. After this was finished, I was given an opportunity to address the Classis. After greeting them on behalf of Covenant East Classis, I brought a word of encouragement to them from Isaiah 52:7, that they ought not to lose heart, remembering that no matter how ugly it gets out there, or even in the church, our feet are beautiful because we bring a beautiful message about a beautiful Savior.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve our committee in this way.

In Christ,

Rev. Christopher Campbell

## **2. Classis Niagara Canadian Reformed Churches**

Letter of greeting to Classis Niagara.

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Rev. Frank Ludwig,

Classis Niagara,

Canadian Reformed Churches,

Dear Rev. Ludwig:

Greetings in the name of our Lord the great Head of the Church.

Thank you for the invitation to send a fraternal delegate from Covenant East Classis RCUS to your forthcoming Classis meeting in Smithville, ON. The pandemic grip you referenced in your invitation, regrettably, still has a hold on border crossings into Canada and will therefore preclude our sending a delegate, at least to this Classis meeting.

We, as a Covenant East Classis, deeply appreciate our fellowship and interaction with Classis Niagara and will miss being with you. We sincerely hope and pray that as you press forward into this darkening culture that our Lord will be pleased to use you and your deliberations as a Classis to further the work and light of the Gospel in your region.

We would sincerely appreciate receiving the published Minutes of your Classis meeting and continue to entertain the hope that we shall enjoy personal fellowship with you in the near future.

At present our next Classis meeting is scheduled for the first week of March of 2022 at a time and place yet to be determined. An invitation will be forthcoming to you and hopefully crossing the border will be much easier.

Respectfully yours,

Rev. Ron Potter

## **3. Presbytery of the Midwest Orthodox Presbyterian Church**

The Presbytery of the Midwest met on September 17, 2021, in Orland Park, IL. I was welcomed and seated as a corresponding delegate. I was allowed time to address the body and my remarks were well received. This was a very historic meeting for the presbytery, with a spirit of bittersweet



emotions hanging over the brethren. Because of the blessing of God upon the presbytery, they have grown to the point that they needed to split into two. It was interesting that the reference often was made to the “north” and the “south” presbytery. However, there is no civil war going on! At the conclusion of this meeting, they renamed the continuing presbytery as the Presbytery of Wisconsin and Minnesota and the new presbytery was named the Presbytery of the Midwest. So, they go by the acronyms the PMW and the PWM.

There is one area where the two presbyteries will continue to directly work together. They will share their Regional Home Missionary, who will work within both regions as needed. This pastor, Rev. Bruce Hollister, is an excellent pastor whom I have known since my seminary days and he is doing well in his first year on the job. He would be a great contact for our RCUS Missions Committee personnel to interact with for fellowship and mutual encouragement and advice as we seek to improve our missions strategies.

One mission church particularized at this meeting and another one is being planned, making 6 total mission works. The newest mission is on the south side of Sheboygan, just 30 miles down the road from our RCUS church in rural Manitowoc. This idea was further complicated by the fact that several OPC churches are in the Sheboygan area, and the proposed mother church had not consulted with the others before the proposal went to presbytery. Reconciliation is in process on the interpersonal level, and it seems that the nature of the church plant will be much more focused on people with completely unchurched backgrounds.

At this meeting, First CRC of South Holland, Illinois, was received into the OPC, and is now called First OPC. An interesting presentation was made by I.T.E.M. on its international ministry to provide theological training to pastors and elders around the world, especially in the former Soviet Union. It was mentioned that less than 10% of church leaders around the world have sufficient theological training. They are attempting to be one of many seminaries and parachurch ministries which are filling that void. A very intriguing overture was brought to add a change to their standing rules which would create a new “Ministerial Care Committee.” This committee would establish a mentoring relationship with new pastors to the presbytery (regardless of the years of their experience) on a regular basis of month 3, 6, 9, 12, 24, and 36 of their membership in the presbytery. This committee also would oversee a schedule of at least yearly contact with each

minister. Those conversations would cover topics such as the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the pastor and his family; the financial well-being of the pastor and any diaconal needs; and any personal or church-related crises or conflicts for which counsel is needed. This proposal is something I believe the RCUS should seriously consider adapting for our purposes. Such a committee would answer the need that has been identified in recent years in our Classis to assist the Executive Committee with more personnel to provide ongoing spiritual nurture to our pastors.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Kyle Sorenson

#### **4. Presbytery of Ohio Orthodox Presbyterian Church**

It was my pleasure to represent Covenant East Classis as a Fraternal Delegate on Friday, October 15, 2021. I was greeted warmly by the brothers and seated in the bar of the house for the duration of my time at their meeting. I greeted them with the words from Philemon 4-7 and spoke of how our common fellowship has the effect of "refreshing the saints."

The majority of Friday's meeting was consumed by the examination of three men for licensure within the denomination. The first minister, TE Clayton Hutchins, from the PCA was seeking to transfer into the OPC, having received a call to serve Immanuel OPC in Coraopolis, PA. Immanuel meets in the facility of the famed Greystone Institute. The other two men were recent graduates from seminary who were preparing for calls to the ministry. In each case, the men were examined on their theological views and questions were given to the floor. In each case, the men held to a symbolic view of Creation aligned with what is commonly called the framework view of creation. There was a challenge from the floor, in each instance, to rethink their perspective. One man also held to a view of the Sabbath that permitted for recreation, and was again challenged to rethink this view. In each case, the exams were sustained without debate and the men were asked to take the vows associated with licensure. It was also reported that Pastor Geoffrey Willour wished to dissolve his pastoral relationship with Lake OPC as he had received a call to serve Grace OPC in Sewickley, PA. This was approved.

In addition to the examinations, reports were given of the successful growth and development of the OPC mission works in the Presbytery and a time of prayer was dedicated to these works as well as to the established

congregations. Due to having a full docket, regular business was accomplished in a remarkably succinct way. I could not return for the second portion of the Presbytery meeting, scheduled the following day, but one issue of interest on the docket was the question of whether or not to recognize the baptisms which were officiated by those not lawfully ordained by the church. Given our own denomination's history and how the baptisms of J.P. Boehm were retroactively recognized upon his ordination, it will be interesting to hear their conclusions.

Rev. Win Groseclose

## **5. Classis Eastern U.S. United Reformed Churches in North America**

Your delegate attended the Classis Eastern U.S, of the URCNA on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The meeting was held in the former RCUS Church in Carbondale PA of which I was Pastor for 8 years. I had not been officially in that church building for 18 years. I was able to meet and fellowship with many former parishioners and noticed that they seemed to have aged. The Classis extends geographically all along the east coast from Vermont to Florida and as far west as Cincinnati and consists 13 churches plus plants. I have visited this Classis as a delegate on several occasions and was able to renew acquaintances with many Ministers and Elders. On two previous occasions my car broke down either before leaving for Classis or on the way. This time Classis was held 7 miles from my home. In my remarks I thanked them for accommodating me.

The Classis began with a *Semper Reformada* conference featuring Dr. David Innes, and OPC member who is professor of Politics at the Kings College in New York City. He spoke in three sessions on *The Blessings of Political Life: Design and Delusions: the purpose, pitfalls and prospects for American politics*. Dr. Innes is author of *Christ and The Kingdoms of men: Foundations of Political Life; Francis Bacon;* and *the Christian Citizen: Faith Engaging Political Life* and co-author of *Left, Right and Christ: Evangelical Faith in Politics*.

The lectures generated good discussion and the undersigned found them extremely edifying.

Classis had one candidates for an ordination exam lined up but he ran into unexpected Covid border restrictions coming from Canada into the U.S. and

could not be in attendance. A Colloquium Doctum exam was held for a candidate from Cincinnati. He was examined in practica, church polity, confessional knowledge, Reformed doctrine and ethics. In executive session he was judged to have very ably and successfully sustained his examination. The normal business of Classis was conducted in an orderly fashion inclusive of the election of officers. The Classis is in very good financial condition and has ample funds nearing two million dollars available for church planting. At present their church planting activity is focused on Cincinnati, Jersey City, NJ and the Pocono Mountain region of PA. The Church Visitors Committee reported on their visits to four Classis Churches ranging from Vermont to North Carolina. This Committee of Classis is an attempt to get ahead of the curve with respect to potential church problems. The Fraternal Relations Committee reported that they had sent out six invitations to fraternal churches. We were the only fraternal church to have a delegate present.  
Respectfully,

Rev. Ron Potter

Addendum:

About a month after this Classis meeting the host Pastor, Rev. Richard Miller, who I had come to know and respect, died unexpectedly in hospital because of Covid complications. I attended his funeral service on behalf of our Committee and our Committee sent a letter of condolence to his wife Maria and family. – RP

## **6. Midwest Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.**

This Presbytery was attended by Elder Luther Witt from our Kansas City Church. No report is available at this time due to our delegate's illness. If it is available before Classis an amended IRC report will be sent.

Respectfully,

Rev Ron Potter, Rev. Chuck Meuther, Rev. Win Groseclose, Rev. Richard Stetler, Elder Marc Wiersma Chairman.

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Classis Action: The report was adopted

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## **D. Missions Committee**

Dear Brothers,

Members of your Classis Home Missions committee had an in person visit with Rev. Chuck Muether at Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, Pella, Iowa. We also had visits via phone and zoom with Rev. Howard Sloan, Rev. Win Groseclose, Rev. Steve Carr (Grace Reformed Church), and Randal Kleitsch.

### **Report on Mission Work Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, Pella, Iowa**

On October 11, 2021, Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Ryan Kron traveled to Pella, Iowa for an inperson visit. We were warmly welcomed and shown hospitality by Rev. Muether and his wife, Kristie. We met at the rental facility where they are meeting for worship. We had a wonderful ravioli lunch with Rev. Muether and Kristie. We wanted to encourage Rev. Muether and Kristie as we visited with them. Kristie said she was encouraged by the “family” aspect of the RCUS, and of Immanuel Reformed Fellowship. She said that their financial needs are being met. She works full-time. Rev. Muether also works for his company, Kirkside Media.

We then spent some time talking with Rev. Muether about the mission work in Pella. Rev. Muether provided us with a very organized, helpful packet of information about the mission work. The rental facility allows them a place to gather for worship, and also for fellowship. It is on the main street of downtown Pella, Iowa. It is in a good location. It allows them to have a presence in the community, and is a good place to use for outreach. For example, during the annual Tulip festival in May, the church building is a place for visitors to have a “family rest stop.”

Rev. Muether is very involved in the community. He is well-connected with the other pastors in the area. He has contacted other NAPARC pastors, and they are supportive of the work he is doing. They are involved in outreach through the internet (including facebook), and they might do some advertising on Christian radio. He also serves as a hospital chaplain, and spends time with those who are “disenfranchised.” Rev. Muether writes: “what is unique about this mission work is a chaplaincy program called Mariaska Ministries. This program allows the church planter to visit various institutions from elderly residence facilities to first-responder departments to

schools to courthouse and juvenile holdings from two counties: Marion and Mahaska.”

We also spoke with him about their goals. They are doing Bible studies both in East Des Moines (led by Matt Dudley on “covenant baptism”) and in Pella (led by Rev. Muether). The church plant could end up in a location west of Pella or east of Des Moines. They want to go to where God is leading them and to “where the sheep are calling.”

Rev. Muether just finished a sermon series in the psalms and is resuming an expository series on the Gospel According to Matthew. They have had an elder from Garner coming to help with serving the Lord’s Supper, and IRF is in the process of having a man ordained and installed to the office of ruling elder. The challenges they have faced these past number of months are COVID and construction taking place outside their rental facility which blocked off their road. Before COVID, the attendance was growing. Currently they have two member families (not including the pastor’s family), three strongly interested families, and six “shown interest” individuals/families.

The oversight is being provided by the consistory at Gettysburg, PA. Rev. Muether said “this oversight involves ‘monthly consistory meetings via zoom.’ Rev. Muether also provides monthly reports on the progress of the mission work. Zoom is used to meet and interview potential members. When possible, a delegation from Gettysburg has also made on-site visits. Rev. Muether has also made three visits to Gettysburg.”

In the early afternoon we spent time visiting with Matt and Lois Dudley. Rev. Kron opened with devotions from Philippians 4:1-7 and prayer. The Dudleys live in Pleasant Hill (about 40 minutes from Pella). Lord willing, Matt will be ordained and installed as an elder soon. Matt is also going through counseling training with ACBC. They commented on the unity and fellowship at Immanuel, which include fellowship dinners twice a month. They also talked about the importance of building relationships in the church and of reaching out to the “disenfranchised.” One of the themes of our visit was the care they have for one another and the “church family atmosphere” at Immanuel.

Late in the afternoon we visited with Ty and Megan Gross. It was a joy to meet them and their children, Evie and Aleya. Our visit with them was very encouraging, as they too talked of how this church cares for the

disenfranchised, including those who are “medically complex” and the elderly. They were blessed by the “family” atmosphere of life at Immanuel. They commented on how the family of God at Immanuel is “authentic” (not ‘fake’). They said it is a relief to be at Immanuel, and that they “trust” Rev. Muether to care for them, shepherd them, and feed them with the Word of God. We spent time visiting with Rev. Chuck Muether individually. We also spent time with Rev. Muether and his wife, Kristie. Then we visited with other families who are a part of the work.

We want to be in prayer for the continued growth of this mission work. By God’s sovereign grace, we are hopeful that the Lord will bless their efforts and that a church will be established in South Central Iowa.

### **Report on Phone Call with Rev. Howard Sloan**

On September 13, 2021, Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Ryan Kron had a phone call with Rev. Howard Sloan. Currently Howard is the Assistant Field Secretary for Pakistan with Westminster Biblical Missions (WBM). He says he has been “working with a small group who would be interested in planting a Confessional Reformed church in Bedford County Pennsylvania.” Following our phone call with Howard, as a committee we responded to Howard with this message: “Thank you for talking to us. We are thankful for this potential opportunity and appreciate your reaching out to us. We still need to see what the Lord may providentially bring about as there are still some hurdles. First, there is the issue of the examination for you to come into the denomination. This is something that our candidates and credentials committee could look into. Second, there is also the issue that technically to be a missions pastor, a man would need to be in the denomination for a time. Third, the next hurdle would be to find a church which is able to oversee you. Currently there isn’t a church looking to do this, nor is there a church that is in the position for this type of oversight. At the same time as the process progresses we will pray that the Lord may open a door.”

By way of follow-up, on February 15, 2022 Howard wrote: “The church plant is still small, around 10. We are working with the URCNA Classis East Church Planting committee. We are not an official plant yet, but hope to be soon.”

### **Report on Zoom Meeting with Rev. Win Groseclose**

On January 10, 2022, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Elder Walt Van Heest, and Rev. Ryan Kron had a zoom meeting with Rev. Win Groseclose. Win serves at Light of Resurrection Reformed Church (LORR) in Zelienople (Butler County), Pennsylvania. This is 28 miles north of Pittsburgh and 30 miles south of Grove City. They have a couple who will join soon, which will be their fourth family in membership. They will then have 8 total members. They also have 4 regular visitors.

The closest Reformed church to them is a couple of RPCNA churches. Within 20 miles are some OPC churches. Win has been in this community for close to 10 years, as he served in a

previous congregation. The current congregation is 3.5 miles away from his previous congregation. The church covers the rent and health insurance for Win. Win is working bivocationally.

As a note, the executive committee of classis asked Win to talk with us as a classis home missions committee. They have one elder and one deacon who were ordained in a previous Reformed denomination. Win says they are both faithful in serving. Win says “we aren’t a church plant. We are a church.” Win has been both preaching and administering the sacraments. Win says: “It is still my hope to see LORR make an appeal in writing to Classis by our Spring meeting that they might be accepted into the RCUS under Article 8 of the constitution.” LORR then would enter the RCUS as an established church (not as a mission work). Win is not making any request for funding for the church as he is willing to be bi-vocational for this season.

### **Report on Zoom Meeting with Rev. Steve Carr**

On February 17, 2022, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Rev. Ryan Kron, and Elder David Jacobsen had a zoom meeting with Rev. Steve Carr. Rev. Carr has been serving the congregation at Rogers since August 2015. Presently the congregation has 13 communicant members and 14 baptized members. The church is financially stable. They had one new family join last year, and they have two new families that might join soon. Typically, they have about 30 people in worship on Sunday mornings. They have visitors that come, often finding out about the church through the internet. Steve Mankins is still serving as an elder, and they also added a deacon this year (Chuck Barker). Rev. Carr continues to labor faithfully as a pastor, and also in his work as the Stated Clerk of Covenant East Classis. We give thanks to God for his blessings to the saints at Grace RCUS in Rogers, Arkansas.



## **Report on Phone Call with Randal Kleitsch**

On February 17, 2022, Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Ryan Kron had a brief phone call with Randal Kleitsch. Randal also contacted RCUS Pastor Michael Lassley. Randal is very desirous to start a confessionally Reformed church in Stevens Point, WI. Randal is a member of Apple Valley OPC in Neenah, Wisconsin, which is about 90 miles from Stevens Point. Randal is not an officer in the OPC. Stevens Point has a population of about 25,000. Randal has had some type of disagreement with the OPC about getting a church planted in Stevens Point. He is going to be meeting with some in the OPC and PCA within a week or two about a possible church plant. Randal does not have a core group but he says there are some people he knows who are interested in Reformed Theology. He said there might be 30 people who could be interested.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2,083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2022-2023 for the work in south-central Iowa.
2. That Classis overture Synod to provide Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2,083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2022-2023 for the work in south-central Iowa.
3. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with \$165.37 per month, a total of \$1,984.50 in the fiscal year 2022-23 beginning July 2022. This is half the amount as last year.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Kron, Dan Schnabel, David Jacobsen, Steve Mankins, Walt Van Heest

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The report was referred to the Standing Missions Committee

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### **E. Publications Committee**

No committee was formed

## **F. Church Camp Committee**

The 2021 church camp of Covenant East Classis, hosted by the volunteers from our Manitowoc, Wisconsin congregation at nearby Camp Sinawa in Valders, Wisconsin, was a huge success. In fact, we set a number of records. For some historical perspective, Covenant Youth Camp was begun in July 1991. That first year there were representatives from 2 churches with an attendance of 2 pastors, 2 women counselors, and 16 campers. In July 2021, thirty years later, we had representatives from 9 churches with an attendance of 6 pastors, 2 adult male counselors, 8 women counselors, and 78 campers. Two of the churches who sent students are not even RCUS, so it was a special blessing to branch out and get to create potential long-term connections with those of life-precious faith.

We had our first ever power outage (during a lesson on how to deal with anxiety and panic attacks!), lots of rain, and our first egg-bake breakfast. The fellowship was first-rate and the annual Talent Show is always a special treat.

The theme for the lessons this year was “Answering Hate with Biblical Love.” Our theme verse is found in the words of Jesus, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35) The pastors gave lessons titled, “Answering Hate with Biblical Love: Defining our Words,” “Loving Who You Are in Christ: Answering the Hatred that leads to Suicide,” “Loving God: Answering the Hatred that comes Natural,” “Loving the Circumstances God gives You: Answering the Hatred that leads to Anxiety,” and “Loving Your Enemies: Answering the Hatred that leads to Fighting.” Along with the lessons and the fellowship, campers enjoyed many games, boating, tubing, campfires, and more.

We praise God for the successful camp this year and look ahead to next year. If you know of someone interested or looking for a camp with solid Biblical teaching and great Christian friendship, plan now to attend Covenant Youth Camp in Wisconsin on July 5-8, 2022!

Dr. Kyle A. Sorensen

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Classis Action: The report was adopted

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## Reports of Officers

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

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

It has been an honor to serve as your president over the last year. As this was my first year on the job, I was forced to “hit the ground running” as the baton was passed to me. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who assisted me in my first year as president through emails and phone calls, especially outgoing president Rev. Kyle Sorensen, who provided me with what I needed to make a successful transition into this role, and Rev. Steve Carr and Elder Andy Gilman, who refined my thinking and encouraged me in the work.

In keeping with RCUS practice, condolences were brought on behalf of Classis to the families of deceased ministers Gene Sawtelle (via a letter of condolence) and Wes Brice (via Rev. Kyle Sorensen, who preached at Wes Brice's funeral).

The Heidelberg Catechism (Q. 28) teaches us to be “thankful in prosperity, and patient in adversity.” As I reflect upon the churches within our Classis, I see the need for both, as the past year has been one of blessing and burdens. Let us give thanks to God for the blessings and look to God to sustain us under the burdens.

The blessings we have experienced as a Classis in the last year, as reported by the parochial reports of ministers and statistics reports are that our ministers have been faithful in preaching the word, in season and out of season. In doing so, many of our ministers report a joy in the simple week to week feeding of the flock and the resulting spiritual growth of their members. Along with the spiritual growth and maturity of our current members, God has been pleased to add new members to our congregations. Over the past year 33 covenant children were added by baptism—almost a 50% increase from 2020. Praise God for these little blessings! In addition to these, over half of our churches reported receiving new members by either letter of dismission or profession of faith, with one congregation reporting and overall increase in membership of 27% (from 91 to 126 baptized members). I am also thankful to report that this year we have seen and increase in overall giving in our churches, which is remarkable given the struggles that some of our churches experienced.

Along with these blessings, we have also experienced many burdens. We have seen conflict and division within two congregations (with one congregation losing 47% of its communicant members over the past year and another seeing its entire consistory resign). We have also witnessed the closing of a mission work, the retirement of two pastors for health reasons, and another pastor take a leave of absence. And, although we have seen growth in certain congregations, there has been an overall reduction of the number of communicant members within our Classis by 7%.

As I reflect upon the needs of our Classis, and our denomination, one thing rises to the surface—our need to look to the future. Not only must we concentrate our efforts on missions outside the walls of our present churches, but we must also strengthen the ministries within our present churches (for if we do not have strong churches, there will be no churches to plant mission works). To do this, our local churches would be wise to develop, not only plans for external growth, but also plans for internal stability and succession. “Who will be the next pastor?” should be asked long before the present pastor desires to retire, or as we have seen this year, is forced to retire for health reasons. As a church we must be proactive as our ministers age. We also must consider pastoral burnout, which we have seen in our Classis this past year. One way both issues, an aging ministry and pastoral burnout, might be addressed is by our larger churches taking on a second pastor, who, in addition to gaining experience in the ministry and familiarity with the RCUS, would be prepared to take a call, either in a new mission work or in a church whose minister is retiring. This would also offset the labor of pastors in larger congregations in the hopes that they would not face periods of burnout.

The Interchurch Relations Committee made visits this year to two Classis meetings of the United Reformed Churches in North America (Classis Eastern U. S. and Classis Central U. S.) and Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Presbytery of the Midwest and Presbytery of Ohio) and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (Midwest Presbytery).

The Missions Committee was able to personally visit with Rev. Chuck Muether and the work Immanuel Reformed Fellowship in Pella, Iowa, as well as conduct visits with Rev. Win Groseclose and Rev. Steve Carr and Rev. Howard Sloan via Zoom.

The Church Camp Committee reports this year's camp was a huge success with record numbers. When the camp began in 1991, it did so with 16 campers from 2 churches. In 2021, 9 churches were represented by 78 campers. We are thankful to all those who labor so hard to put this camp together, especially the volunteers from our Manitowoc, Wisconsin congregation.

From west to east, a selective summary of the parochial reports follows.

In Kansas City, Rev. Campbell reports that the congregation is growing in love for one another and in size, reporting a record number of new members (32) which includes the birth of 10 new covenant children. Although the congregation has seen new faces, he also recounts the difficulty of saying goodbye to a young 36-year old mother who died of COVID. As they continue to surround this young husband and his two boys, he reports "we are learning what it means to comfort others with the comfort with which God has comforted us."

In Northwest Arkansas, Rev. Carr reports "As I think of the congregation here in NW Arkansas, I echo the sentiments of the Apostle Paul when he said, 'I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. 1:4)" noting that "when Paul burst forth into thanksgiving, it wasn't because their budget was balanced and their pews were full. Rather, it was because God's grace was evident in the life of God's people." He reports that God's grace is indeed evident in the life of God's people in Northwest Arkansas.

In Hamburg, Rev. Schnabel reports that, although "there were many stresses in the church for all of us the last couple year" it remains a "privilege to proclaim the Gospel which is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16)." He is "thankful that fellowship times were able to be started again as well as the elders visiting families in the church." He concludes reminding us that "Martin Luther rightfully said, "prayer, study, and suffering makes a pastor" and that "God is reminding us through this we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Hebrews 11:13)."

In Garner, Rev. Larson reports that this past November 2021 marked the seventh year of my ministry at Peace Reformed Church." His days and weeks have been filled with "study, prayer, sermon constructing, preaching, teaching, catechizing, administering the sacraments, counseling, comforting, encouraging, writing, and visiting the sick and shut-ins at hospitals and

nursing facilities.” He reports that “the time has come for me due to health issues to announce my retirement from the ministry.”

In South Central Iowa, Rev. Church Muether reports that “the make-up of Reformed Fellowship presently is three committed families, three considering families, and about six curious families.” He reports the recent ordination and installation of Elder Matthew Dudley as week as the beginning of the framing of a local constitution. The work is “expanding our WEBS (Wednesday Evening Bible Study) and moving toward a Sunday Evening Worship.” Additionally, he reports “our East-Des Moines Bible study is thriving, and we are developing after-school programs.”

In Minnetonka, Rev. Kron notes “the year 2021 marked ten years since we began to meet together for corporate worship at Emmaus Road Reformed Church.” He reports thanksgiving for the corporate worship, leadership, times of prayer, discipleship, missions, and fellowship of the congregation. Financially the congregation is strong, and “missions giving went up this year, and also our mercy ministry (benevolence fund is health). In closing he remarks, “As we look back on the past ten years of life at Emmaus Road, may we not be proud, presumptuous, or discouraged. But, instead, may the family of God at Emmaus be encouraged by looking back in thankfulness and looking forward in hope.”

In Minneapolis, Rev. Sawtelle expresses his “heartfelt gratitude to the classis for your stated concerns and prayers for me” as he went on sabbatical leave from March to June 2021. He thanks God “for giving me healing and renewal mentally, emotionally and spiritually in this time of rest.” He reports that the congregation has “experienced a substantial decrease in membership in the last year and a half” but that of those who remain “all save one returned to in person worship by the end of 2021.” Financially, the church was able to “send funds to numerous mission works, Mid America Reformed Seminary, and to Heidelberg Seminary for their instruction efforts in the Philippines.”

In Manitowoc, Rev. Sorensen reports that weekly worship services, Bible studies and church functions are regularly taking place and that the church continues to have regular visitors, including a few new families who came as recently as December and January. He also reports that the Consistory of Salem Ebenezer has graciously granted him a leave of absence through April 30, 2022.

In Napoleon, Rev. Altman reports “we have been blessed to have added to our covenant community two more beautiful children through the sacrament of baptism” and that “in them, we have the next generation of worshippers here in Napoleon each Lord’s Day morning.” Although they have “rejoiced at the additions to our congregation this past year, through both baptisms, and visitors who have been returning regularly, three of our members were erased from our rolls” and “we also had to say goodbye to two dear sisters of our congregation, Esther Bockelman and Gay Grant.” He notes that “It has been wonderful to see the faith of some of our members who have been called to suffer difficulties this past year. Their hold of Christ during the storms of life encourages me more than they will ever know.”

In Gettysburg, Elder Luquette reports that “Rev. Jay Fluck, who served the first five years of our existence as a congregation of the RCUS, and six years prior to during our transitional state, retired for health reasons on May 24, 2021.” He reports that “in 2021 we experienced a 47% loss, having now 24 communicant members, which is less than when we first started.” Elder Luquette reports that he exhorted from the word 15 times and Rev. Terry Gorden of the RPCNA has preached 13 times. Elder Luquette is hopeful that in 2022 Covenant Reformed Church will be able to secure a new pastor, provide officer training to men suited for office, and bring reconciliation where needed regardless of church affiliations.

In Waymart, Rev. Potter takes comfort in the fact that “God is the author, agent, and end of all things” which he states is “the definition of the Reformed faith in a nutshell and an essential truth to give meaning and purpose to life and ministry.” He reports “our Spiritual Council terminated our relationship with Blue Bell upon the advice of Classis and with counsel of the Executive Committee.” Financially “we continue to hold our own though our finances are steadily declining. Members are committed to giving to using their gifts and abilities and are cooperating together to do what needs to be done especially since we do not have a deacon.” He rejoices that they have had “9 regular visitors, some of whom we expect to see entering the membership process this year.”

In Fombell, PA, Rev. Groseclose continues to labor bi-vocationally and reports “God has been providing for our needs through a combination of my carpet installation, occasional freelance writing jobs, and also the generosity of LORR (which pays for our medical insurance).” He rejoices that at Light of the Resurrection “we are growing.”

Rev. Richard Stetler reports that he “was able, by the grace of God, to work with various churches in different ways to reach out to not only their members with Lord's Day services, but also reach out to the broader communities.” Rev. Stetler filled the pulpit 27 times at various churches and continues his on-going evangelism work, laboring under the banner of Reformation Gospel Ministries (RGM).

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Christopher Campbell (President)

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

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### **B. Stated Clerk's Report**

Esteemed Brethren,

It continues to be my honor to serve you as Stated Clerk, and it is a great joy to do so. If elected again, I hope I can continue to serve you well.

As your Stated Clerk, I have formatted, indexed, and placed in permanent binders all of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 5, 2020 and August 4, 2020 and the Spring 2021 Meeting of the Covenant East Classis, along with all of the reports, overtures, and other relevant information.

These Minutes have been submitted to the Standing Minutes of Classes Committee at the 2021 Synod and their corrections have been made. The President's Report on the State of the Church was spread in the Minutes, printed in the 2021 Abstract, and sent to the *Reformed Herald*.

I prepared the 2021 Abstract, which included the Special Meetings of May 5, 2020 and August 4, 2020. I distributed the printed copies to all the churches of our Classis at Synod and by mail. A PDF copy of the abstract was also sent to the website master to be published on the RCUS website.

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

I kept and formatted the minutes of the Special Meeting on December 8, 2021. These minutes will be recorded in the Abstract of this 2022 Spring



Meeting. I sent out three circular letters and participated in the work of the Executive Committee as detailed in that report.

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Carr

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Classis Action: The report was adopted.

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### **C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod**

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 275<sup>th</sup> 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 276<sup>th</sup> 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

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The report was referred to the Standing Minutes of Synod Committee

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### D. Treasurer's Report

#### **2020-2021 CEC YTD Financial Report**

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

#### **Detailed Income Report**

Guidelines Total: \$66.00

	<u>Members</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Benevolence</u>	<u>Student Aid</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Totals YTD</u>	<u>Due By 6/15/20</u>
NW Arkansas	16	\$51.20	\$428.80	\$160	\$ -	\$960	\$640	\$320
Eden Prairie	98	\$518.40	\$4341.60	\$1620	\$ -	\$5880	\$6480	\$ -
Garner, IA	41	\$93.60	\$783.90	\$292.50	\$ -	\$2460	\$1170	\$1290
Gettysburg	46	\$220.80	\$1849.20	\$690	\$ -	\$2760	\$2760	\$ -
Hamburg, MN	192	\$921.60	\$7718.40	\$2880	\$ -	\$11,520	\$11,520	\$ -
Kansas City	76	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$4560	\$ -	\$4560
Manitowoc	121	\$580.20	\$4864.20	\$1815	\$ -	\$7260	\$7260	\$ -
Minneapolis	116	\$278.40	\$2331.60	\$870	\$ -	\$6960	\$3480	\$3480
Napoleon, OH	66	\$316.80	\$2653.20	\$990	\$ -	\$3960	\$3960	\$ -
Waymart, PA	<u>18</u>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$1080	\$ -	\$1080
Other *		<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>		<u>\$ -</u>		<u>\$ -</u>	
	<b>790</b>				<b>\$47,400</b>	<b>\$37,270</b>	<b>\$10,730</b>	

**Income Jul 19-Feb 20 \$2981.60 \$24,970.90 \$9317.50 \$ - Total \$ 37,270**

**Year to Date Report**

**Balance July 1, 2021 February 25, 2022**

Beginning Balance July 1, 2021 \$81,644.56

**General Fund** Balance July 1, 2021 \$8,916.94

Receipts \$2,981.60

Expenses \$4,120.23

Balance 02/25/2022 \$7,778.31

**\*\* Missions Fund** Balance July 1, 2021 \$56,886.12

Receipts \$24,970.90

Expenses \$20,562.64

Balance 02/25/2022 \$61,294.38

**Benevolence Fund** Balance July 1, 2021 \$5,443.26

Receipts \$9,317.50

Expenses \$-

Balance 02/25/2022 \$14,760.76

**Student Aid Fund** Balance July 1, 2021 \$10,398.24

Receipts \$-

Expenses 0 \$10,398.24

Balance 02/25/2022 \$94,231.69

**End Balance June 30, 2021**

**\*\* \$19,144.30**

**available for future CEC Mission works**

**Year to Date Report**  
**Expense July 1, 2021 - February 25, 2022**

**General Fund Expenses**

Classis Meeting	\$-
Clerk/Printing Supplies	\$-
Travel	\$4,099.48
Honorarium	\$-
Postage/Phone/Checks	\$20.75
Total	\$4,120.23

**Mission Fund Expenses**

Covenant Reformed PA. (Iowa)	\$16,666.64
Grace Reformed Church	\$2,646.00
Covenant Reformed(2020)	\$1,250.00
Travel	\$-
Total	\$20,562.64

Benevolence	\$-
Total	\$-

Student Aid	\$-
Total	\$-

**Expense Total                    \$24,682.87**

Total Classis Income July 1, 2021 - February 25, 2022  
\$37,270.00

Total Classis Expense July 1,2021-February 25, 2022  
\$(24,682.87)

Net so far	\$12,587.13
Income due	\$10,730.00
Encumbrances	\$9,556.36

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Hermann

## **Parochial Reports of Ministers**

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

### **Constitutional Questions to the Elders**

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

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

3. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation:

a. Is visitation faithfully performed?

All churches answered “Yes,” except NW Arkansas which answered “Yes, but needs improvement,” and Waymart, which answered “Some, but not all due to pandemic.”

b. Is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution? All churches answered “Yes.”

4. Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the Constitution?

All churches answered “Yes.”

5. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship:

a. Are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?

All churches answered “Yes.”

b. Are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer? All churches answered “Yes.”

c. Are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving?

All churches answered “Yes.”

d. Are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer?

All churches answered “Yes.”

6. Are the Church records properly kept? All churches answered “Yes.”

7a. Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge? All churches answered “Yes.”

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

All churches answered “Yes,” except Napoleon which answered, “No.”

Questions were asked from the floor.

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

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

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Classis Action: The report was adopted.

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

Reports were read in the Interchurch Relations Committee report (see Interchurch Relations Committee report above).

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

Rev. Paul Mourreale gave an address on behalf of the Midwest Presbytery of the OPC.

Questions were asked from the floor and Rev. Carr prayed for the Midwest Presbytery of the OPC.

### **Reports of Special Committees**

No special committee was formed.



## **Reports of Standing Committees**

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

### **A. Examination and Licensure**

The committee had no business to report.

### **B. Benevolence**

Recommendation 1: regarding Overture #4: that Classis overture Synod on behalf of Mrs. Joan Vance the amount of \$1200 per month for the Synodical year 2022-2023.

Recommendation 2: regarding Overture #1: that Classis provide \$3500 per month for March, April, May, and June 2022 for Rev. and Mrs. Mark Larson.

Recommendation 3: regarding Overture #2: that Classis provide \$500 per month for the fiscal year of 2022-2023 (beginning July 1, 2022).

Recommendation 4: regarding Overture #3: that Classis overture Synod for \$2000 per month for ministerial aid for the synodical year 2022-2023 for Rev. and Mrs. Mark Larson.

Respectfully submitted,

Sawtelle, Van Heest, Steubbe

### **C. Excuses**

Recommendation 1: that Classis excuse Rev. Ron Potter, Rev. Kyle Sorensen, the Elders of Emmaus Road, Elder Dan Wright, Rev. Jimmy John Hall, and Rev. Mark Larson from all sessions of Classis.

Respectfully submitted,

Stetler, Groseclose, Mankins

## **D. Minutes of Synod**

Recommendation 1: that Classis ratify the Amendment of Article 79 of the RCUS Constitution as submitted by Synod.

Respectfully submitted,

Stetler, Groseclose, Mankins

## **E. Missions**

Recommendation 1: that Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2,038.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2022-2023 for the work in South Central, IA.

Recommendation 2: that Classis overture Synod to provide Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2,083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000, in 2022-2023 for the work in South Central, IA.

Recommendation 3: that Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with \$165.37 per month, a total of \$1,984.50, in the fiscal year of 2022-2023. This is half the amount as last year.

Recommendation 4: from the Executive Committee of Classis to the permanent Home Missions Committee: that Classis instruct the permanent Home Missions Committee to evaluate the present capability of Covenant Reformed Church, Gettysburg, PA, to continue serving as overseeing consistory to the Immanuel Reformed mission work in Iowa.

Kron moved recommendation 5: From the Welcoming Committee of Synod of the RCUS: to select a liaison who will serve as a regular member of the Welcoming Committee: move to the Communications and Publications Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Kron, Baas, Kloempken

## **F. Nominations**

Recommendation 1: that Classis reactivate the Publications Committee and rename it the Communications and Publications Committee.

Recommendation 2: that Classis approve the following nominations:

Executive: Campbell, Carr, Gilman

Candidates and Credentials: Altman, Luquette, Groseclose, Wright

Church Camp: Sawtelle, Kron, Hall, Stuebbe

Interchurch Relations: Potter, Stetler, Kloempken, Stock

Missions: Kron, Schnabel, Van Heest, Baas, Oberhaus

Communications and Publications: Muether, Schnabel, Mankins

Special Committee for Manitowoc: Sawtelle, Potter, Wiersma

Special Committee for Light of the Resurrection Reformed:

Luquette, Muether, Wright

Respectfully submitted,

Muether, Altman, Kloempken

## **G. Services**

Recommendation 1: that the following words of appreciation be expressed to the congregation of Grace Reformed Church of NW Arkansas: “The delegates of Covenant East Classis, express our most sincere gratitude for your loving and generous hospitality at our 2022 Spring Classis meeting. Your gracious hospitality provided us with delicious food, wonderful fellowship, and a place to gather for our labors. Your service has truly refreshed the saints. As you have blessed and encouraged us with your attention to our needs, we would like to encourage you and we pray that the Lord will continue to bless you and meet your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Respectfully submitted,

Groseclose, Oberhaus

## **H. Finances**

Recommendation 1: Take note: the Consistory of St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church has audited the 2021-2022 year to date treasurer's report and found it to be in order.

Recommendation 2: that travel reimbursement for the Classis meeting be as follows:

Richard Stetler:	\$632
David Oberhaus:	\$1529
Steven Stuebbe:	\$852
Dennis Luquette:	\$377.70
St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church:	\$680
Chuck Muether:	\$486
Michael Baas:	\$235
Total:	\$4,764.70

Recommendation 3: That Classis adopt the following guidelines:

General Fund:	\$5.00
Missions Fund:	\$40.00
Benevolence Fund:	\$15.00
Student Aid:	\$0
Total:	\$60.00

Respectfully submitted,

Schnabel, Luquette, Gilman

## **I. Minutes of Classis**

Classis approved that the minutes be distributed by circular within the next 48 hours, and after any corrections are received, the President shall notify the Classis that he has declared them approved.

## **J. Judicial**

Recommendation 1: that Classis approve the call to Rev. Mark Larson from Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA as Pastor Emeritus (This call came from the duly called Annual Meeting).

Recommendation 2: that Covenant East Classis approve Rev. Mark Larson's resignation from his charge at Peace Reformed Church Garner, IA, dissolve the pastoral relationship, and declare the pulpit vacant effective immediately.

Grounds: The Congregation and the Classis did receive Rev. Mark Larson's resignation. (Constitutionally: Art. 82, 91 The Executive Committee has the power to dissolve the relationship, pertinent health issues, he has cleared the 5 year requirement and it is because of health issues).

Recommendation 3: that Covenant East Classis give a letter of dismission for retired minister Rev. Jay Fluck to the South Central Classis.

Recommendation 4: concerning the status of Rev. Jimmy John Hall, he was received November 2020 via Executive Circular into Covenant East Classis.

Recommendation 6: Concerning Executive Committee's recommendation #1: that the body at Peace Reformed Church Garner, IA, be encouraged to evaluate their ability and desire to continue as a church. Their responses to this are to be communicated to the Executive Committee of Classis.

Recommendation 7: that Classis consent to Rev. Win Groseclose laboring out of bounds at Light of the Resurrection Reformed Church in Zelienople, PA with the intent of starting the process of bringing the Light of the Resurrection Reformed Church into the RCUS.

Recommendation 8: that Classis erect a study committee to serve as advisors to Light of the Resurrection Reformed Church and schedule a visit as they look forward to the process of affiliating with the RCUS.

Recommendation 9: that the Executive Committee will continue to come alongside the Consistory at Covenant Reformed Church Gettysburg, PA.

Respectfully submitted,

Altman, Schnabel, Baas

## **Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business**

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

This was handled by the Standing Services Committee

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

The Stated Clerk's report was previously adopted.

The Executive Committee report was adopted as a whole.

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

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

### **Adjournment**

The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis was adjourned at 1:21PM until the next Stated Meeting to be held at Hamburg, MN on March 7-8, 2023.

### **A. Roll Call**

The final roll call showed 9 ministers and 7 elders present, a quorum.

### **B. Devotions**

Elder Steve Mankins from Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas, led the Classis in devotions about loving our wives and families and praying.

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

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

Respectfully submitted and chronicled for Christ's glory,

Rev. Steve Carr, Stated Clerk

# Appendix for the 2022 Abstract follows:

#1 - List of Overtures and Communications

#2 – Necrologies

#3 – Statistics

#4 – Standing Rules

## Appendix #1 – List of Overtures and Communications

### Overtures

**Overture 1:** February 7, 2022. From Rev. Mark Larson, that Classis provide him with benevolent aid of \$3,500.00 per month for March, April, May, and June of 2022 (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE).

**Overture 2:** February 7, 2022. From Rev. Mark Larson, that Classis provide him with benevolent aid of \$500.00 per month for the Classis fiscal year 2022–2023, beginning July 1, 2022 (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE).

**Overture 3:** February 7, 2022. From Rev. Mark Larson, that Classis overture the Synod of the RCUS for Ministerial Aid for Reverend and Mrs. Mark Larson in the amount of \$2,000.00 per month for the Synodical year 2022–2023, beginning July 1, 2022 (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE).

**Overture 4:** February 15, 2022. From Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI, that Classis overture Synod for \$1200 per month in Ministerial Aide for Mrs. Joan Vance for the Synodical Year 2022-2023 (TO STANDING BENEVOLENCE).

**Overture 5:** February 23, 2022. From the Welcoming Committee of the RCUS Synod, that the Home Missions Committee select a liaison who shall serve as a regular member of the Welcoming Committee. Such individuals should be willing and able to work patiently with those inquiring about planting a RCUS church in their community (TO STANDING MISSIONS).

### Communications

**Communication 1:** January 10, 2022. From the Stated Clerk of Synod: Minutes of Synod Report (TO STANDING MINUTES OF SYNOD).

**Communication 2:** January 29, 2022. From Rev. Ron Potter, requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis on March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (TO STANDING EXCUSES).

**Communication 3:** February 4, 2022. From Rev. Jay Fluck requesting that his membership be transferred from the Covenant East Classis to the South Central Classis of the RCUS (TO STANDING EXCUSES).

**Communication 4:** February 23, 2022. From Rev. Kyle Sorensen requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis on March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (TO STANDING EXCUSES).

**Communication 5:** February 27, 2022. From the elders at Emmaus Road requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis on March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (TO STANDING EXCUSES)



**Communication 6:** February 28, 2022. From Elder Dan Wright requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis on March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (TO STANDING EXCUSES).

**Communication 7:** February 28, 2022. From Rev. Jimmy John Hall requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis on March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (TO STANDING EXCUSES).

**Communication 8:** March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. From Rev. Mark Larson requesting to be excused from all sessions of Classis on March 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 (TO STANDING EXCUSES).

## **Appendix #2 – Necrologies**

There were no necrologies this year.

**Appendix #3 – Statistics covering 2021 and reported in 2022 follows pp. 60-61.**

Statistics of Covenant East Classis: Covering 2021 reported in 2022						
	Northwest	Minnetonka	Garner	Gettysburg	Hamburg	Kansas City
Category	Arkansas	Minnesota	Iowa	Pennsylvania	Minnesota	Missouri
1. No. of Elders	1	4	3	2	3	3
2. No of Deacons	0	5	2	0	3	4
3. Comm. Last Year	16	98	41	46	192	78
4. Rec'd by Confirm.	1	3	0	1	3	0
5. Rec'd by Letter	0	0	0	0	2	6
6. Rec'd by Prof.	4	12	0	0	5	15
7. Total Received	5	15	0	1	10	21
8. Tot. Old/New Mem	21	113	41	47	202	99
9. Lost by Dismissal	1	2	3	23	2	4
10. Lost by Era/Dis.	4	13	0	0	7	0
11. Lost by Death	0	0	4	0	2	1
12. Total Lost	5	15	7	23	11	5
13. Comm this Year	16	98	34	24	191	94
14. Unconfirm. Mbrs.	13	63	2	7	28	32
15. Total Bapt. Mbrs.	29	161	36	35	219	126
16. No. of Families	8	51	26	14	111	36
17. No. of S.S Child.	13	63	5	7	13	21
18. Adult Baptisms	0	0	0	1	0	1
19. Infant Baptisms	1	10	0	0	3	11
20. Total Baptisms	1	10	0	1	3	12
21. No.L.S. Received	21	98	28	0	160	92
22. Times L.S. Served	12	12	2	7	7	12
23. Regular Offerings	\$ 75,537	\$ 410,777	\$ 94,105	\$ 115,431	\$ 237,118	\$ 282,989
24. Special Offerings	\$ -	\$ 48,146	\$ 2,448	\$ 6,878	\$ 12,053	\$ 11,148
25. Other Sources	\$ 3,303	\$ -	\$ 4,704	\$ 33,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -
26. Total Receipts	\$ 78,840	\$ 458,923	\$ 101,257	\$ 155,309	\$ 269,171	\$ 294,137
27. Giv. To Syn. Guide.	\$ 3,792	\$ 27,500	\$ 10,197	\$ 21,050	\$ 47,132	\$ 17,963
28. Giv. To Clas. Guide.	\$ 960	\$ 7,000	\$ 2,460	\$ 5,340	\$ 11,520	\$ 4,500
29. RCUS non-budget	\$ -	\$ 6,230	\$ -	\$ 480	\$ 12,301	\$ 1,312
30. Non-RCUS causes	\$ -	\$ 33,192	\$ 123	\$ 6,877	\$ 1,860	\$ 11,682
31. Other Expenses	\$ 79,215	\$ 240,324	\$ 99,895	\$ 105,507	\$ 183,724	\$ 221,154
32. Total Expenses	\$ 83,967	\$ 314,246	\$ 112,675	\$ 139,254	\$ 256,537	\$ 256,611
33. Va. of Ch. Bldg.	\$ 102,589	\$ -	\$ 750,000	\$ -	\$ 3,570,000	\$ 2,100,000
34. Val. Of Parsonage	\$ 102,589	\$ 371,972	\$ 125,000	\$ -	\$ 425,600	\$ -
35. Impr. Of Property	\$ 17,636	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 553	\$ 21,257
36. Property Debt	\$ 72,528	\$ 250,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 459,000
37. Debt Paid Last YR.	\$ 9,872	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 60,000
38. Synod Giving/Com.	\$ 237	\$ 281	\$ 249	\$ 458	\$ 245	\$ 230
39. Classis Giving/Com.	\$ 60	\$ 71	\$ 60	\$ 116	\$ 60	\$ 58
40. RCUS Giving/Com.	\$ 297	\$ 416	\$ 309	\$ 584	\$ 370	\$ 305

Manitowoc	Minneapolis	Napoleon	Waymart	South Central	Total 2021	Total 2020	% Change	
Wisconsin	Minnesota	Ohio	Pennsylvania	Iowa				
3	3	3	1	2	26	27	-4%	
3	5	3	0	0	25	29	-16%	
121	116	66	18	46	792	796	-1%	
1	0	0	0	1	9	11	-22%	
0	0	0	0	0	8	7	13%	
0	2	0	1	0	39	15	62%	
1	2	0	1	1	56	33	41%	
122	118	66	19	47	848	829	2%	
1	9	1	6	23	52	9	83%	
2	12	3	1	0	42	21	50%	
6	0	2	0	0	15	9	40%	
9	21	6	7	23	109	39	64%	
113	97	60	12	24	739	790	-7%	
10	42	34	2	7	233	253	-9%	
123	139	94	14	35	976	1043	-7%	
65	43	35	8	14	397	436	-10%	
3	37	23	2	7	187	201	-7%	
0	0	0	0	1	2	1	50%	
1	5	2	0	0	33	17	48%	
1	5	2	0	1	35	18	49%	
105	91	49	14	0	658	708	-8%	
4	6	6	12	7	80	66	18%	
\$ 175,382	\$ 310,813	\$ 141,895	\$ 37,886	\$ 115,431	\$ 1,881,933	\$ 1,766,646	6%	
\$ 2,343	\$ 13,399	\$ 1,531	\$ -	\$ 6,878	\$ 97,946	\$ 40,183	59%	
\$ 12,464	\$ 1,414	\$ 3,562	\$ -	\$ 33,000	\$ 78,447	\$ 43,407	45%	
\$ 190,189	\$ 325,626	\$ 146,988	\$ 37,886	\$ 155,309	\$ 2,058,326	\$ 1,850,236	10%	
\$ 29,107	\$ 28,260	\$ 15,360	\$ 4,684	\$ 21,050	\$ 205,045	\$ 197,309	4%	
\$ 7,170	\$ 7,140	\$ -	\$ 1,140	\$ 5,340	\$ 47,230	\$ 50,797	-8%	
\$ 6,420	\$ 14,647	\$ 5,616	\$ -	\$ 480	\$ 47,006	\$ 28,630	39%	
\$ 950	\$ 6,570	\$ 812	\$ -	\$ 6,877	\$ 62,066	\$ 58,860	5%	
\$ 117,773	\$ 246,829	\$ 116,171	\$ 42,082	\$ 105,507	\$ 1,452,674	\$ 1,269,752	13%	
\$ 161,420	\$ 303,446	\$ 137,959	\$ 47,906	\$ 139,254	\$ 1,814,021	\$ 1,605,348	12%	
\$ 1,500,000	\$ 2,095,000	\$ 300,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$10,417,589	\$ 9,826,536	6%	
\$ 300,000	\$ 398,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,723,161	\$ 1,625,572	6%	
\$ -	\$ 18,306	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 57,752	\$ 91,587	-59%	
\$ -	\$ 239,231	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,020,759	\$ 1,120,814	-10%	
\$ -	\$ 49,183	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 119,055	\$ 110,908	7%	
\$ 241	\$ 244	\$ 233	\$ 260	\$ 458	\$ 246	\$ 246	0%	
\$ 59	\$ 62	\$ -	\$ 63	\$ 116	\$ 66	\$ 66	0%	
\$ 353	\$ 431	\$ 318	\$ 324	\$ 584	\$ 349	\$ 349	0%	

## APPENDIX #4

### Standing Rules of Covenant East Classis

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

9. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel on behalf of Classis at fifty cents per running mile, or, if several ride together in one car or travel by public transportation, the actual fare. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only to those delegates to Classis whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions of Classis or have been properly excused by Classis. [2009]
10. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
11. The Classis shall designate the following Permanent Committees when needed as follows: Executive, Candidates and Credentials, Church Camp, Interchurch Relations, Missions, Publications. The Standing Committee on Nominations each year is to nominate men to serve on these committees. [2014] The members of the Executive Committee shall not be from the same congregation. [2016]
12. The complete Classis statistics shall be made part of the minutes at the Spring Meeting of Classis.
13. Nominations for all officers of Classis shall be made by secret ballot. All names appearing on the nominating ballot shall be candidates, and if there is not an election on the first ballot, only the names with the two highest totals of votes shall be candidates until there is an election.
14. Prior to the Spring Meeting of Classis, the Spiritual Council of each charge shall direct the elder delegate how to answer the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. Every charge that will not have an elder delegate at the Spring Meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send in the answers to the questions placed before the elders according to Article 81 of the Constitution. This copy shall be signed by all the elders of the charge, and sent to the Stated Clerk. [2003] Whenever the congregation amends its constitution and/or bylaws, these amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee of Classis for its information. [2017]
15. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special Committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed to the Consistories of all the Churches at least three weeks prior to the meeting in which these recommendations are being made to Classis. If possible, overtures with their supporting grounds shall be submitted to

the clerk of classis at least three weeks before the scheduled meeting for circulation among the churches of classis. [2006]

16. The services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circulated before Classis.
17. Students for the ministry of the Reformed Church in the United States shall be urged by Classis to attend seminaries which are listed as institutions receiving benevolent monies from the Reformed Church in the United States. Only students who attend institutions so listed shall be eligible for student aid while preparing for the Christian ministry.
18. It shall be the practice of Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry to require an internship of eight months for them to be spent with a pastor who has served in the RCUS for at least five years. During this internship, particular emphasis shall be placed on learning the peculiarities and practices of the Reformed Church in the United States. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed.
19. The Stated Clerk shall be paid an honorarium of \$500.00 annually. [2005]. The President shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually [2015]. The Treasurer shall be paid an honorarium of \$500 annually. [2020]
20. The Spring Meeting of Classis shall begin on the first Tuesday of March, and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed. [2002]
21. It shall be the practice of Covenant East Classis to examine ministers coming to it from other Classes of the RCUS to ensure that they have not departed from Reformed teaching or have developed major objections to the peculiar practices of the RCUS. Such examinations shall be completed before these candidates shall enter into a charge in Covenant East Classis and shall be conducted in such a way that each minister and delegate shall have opportunity to put questions to the candidate. [2003]

[Standing Rule #22 was removed 2018.]