

Abstract of the Minutes



of the
COVENANT EAST CLASSIS
Reformed Church in the United States

Special Classis Meeting

March 30th, 2023

Video Conference Meeting

38th Annual Session

March 6th-7th, 2023

St. Paul's Evangelical
Hamburg, MN

INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

OFFICERS of Covenant East Classis

President	Elder Dennis Luquette
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 Hermman
(952) 288-4364
14620 County Rd 31
Hamburg, MN 55339

PERMANENT CLASSIS COMMITTEES

Executive: Luquette, Carr, Lorence

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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Ministers of the Word

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thealtmans@sbcglobal.net
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18 Pine View Road, Platte City, MO 64079,
campbellcj@gmail.com
- Carr, Rev. Steve..... (479) 372-1108
3318 N. 2nd, St., Rogers, AR 72756
srutherford77@gmail.com
- Groseclose, Rev. Win..... (724) 709-0592
436 Vista Dr., Butler, PA 16001
preacherwin@gmail.com
- Grossmann, Rev. James..... (605) 284-2396
7411 Center Road, Manitowoc, WI 54220
jmsgrssm@gmail.com
- Kron, Rev. Ryan..... (612) 751-2096
8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington, MN 55438
ryankron@hotmail.com
- Larson, Rev. Mark (Retired) (803) 522-0736
78 Demedicis Blvd. Warrenville, SC 29851
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
- Rodriguez, Rev. Samuel (717) 253-6591
89 Deatrick Drive, Gettysburg, PA 17372
rodriguezsam6@gmail.com

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3101 Virginia Avenue N., Crystal, MN 55427
sawtellejim@gmail.com

Schnabel, Rev. Daniel (952) 467-3872
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dm7schnabel@gmail.com

Sorensen, Rev. Kyle (920) 901-4463
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702 Hopkins St. Defiance, OH 43512
calebfrankart@yahoo.com

Gilman, Andrew (612) 206-7002
321 Aster Dr., Northfield, MN 55057
andyegilman@gmail.com

Larson, John (515) 341-5113
2854 165th St. Hardy, IA 50545
jandclars@gmail.com

Lorence, Drake (952) 402-6144
13555 Essex Place, Minnetonka, MN 55305
drakelorence@yahoo.com

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

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 2781 Farm Rd 1120, Monet, MO 65708
sandramankins30@gmail.com

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

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 1831 Campfire Dr. E. Waconia, MN 55387
carverpit@wmmueller.com

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 2821 Elkdale Road, Clifford Township, PA
 18470
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Secundus Elders

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 11450 65th 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

Demland, Jason(419) 438-5867
 Defiance, OH 43512
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 8849 Ideal Rd. Glencoe, MN
rkroells03@yahoo.com

Lau, Graydon(641) 843-6116
 2035 Nash Ave. Britt, IA,
graydonlau1273@gmail.com

Rothwell, Dustin 651-285-5517
 7410 W. 112th St. Bloomington, MN
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Stuebbe, Steve..... (920) 213-7769
2313 Hickory LN New Holstein, WI 53061
stuebbe14@gmail.com

Wiersma, Marc (913) 991-4756
14100 NW 73rd St. Parkville, MO 64152
wiers99@gmail.com

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: prcgarner@gmail.com

Pella, IOWA

Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, 50219
612 Franklin St. Pella, IA 50219
..... (641) 295-9264
Pastor: Rev. Charles Muether (Wife: Kristie)
Service Times: Worship: 9:30 am Sunday School: 11 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. 9:30 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

Email: thealtmans@sbcglobal.net Web site: www.peacercus.com

Gettysburg, PENNSYLVANIA

Covenant RCUS, 17325

1495 Biglerville Road..... (717) 398-2603

Pastor: Rev. Sam Rodriguez

Mail: 330 Montclair Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325

Service Times: Worship: 11:00 am; S.S. 10:00 am; Wed. Study
/prayer 7:00 pm

Email: Knoyse@gmail.com Web site: www.rcusgettysburg.org

Waymart, PENNSYLVANIA

Heritage RCUS, 18472

200 Belmont Turnpike (lower level of Waymart Presbyterian Church)

..... (570) 785-4012

Pastor: Rev. Ron Potter (Wife: Sharon)

Mail: 136 Grand Ave. Forest City, PA 18421

Service Times: Worship: 10:30 am; Bible Study 9:30 am; Wed.
Study/prayer 7:00 pm

E-mail: hrc@nep.net Web site: www.heritagercus.org

Manitowoc, WISCONSIN

Salem Ebenezer RCUS, 54220

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

Pastor: Rev. James Grossmann

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

E:mail: info@salemebenezer.org Web site: www.salemebenezer.org

Abstract of the Minutes
of the
Covenant East Classis
Special Meeting
March 30th, 2023

Services and Organization

The President, Elder Dennis Luquette, called the meeting to order at 7:04/8:04 pm CDT/EDT. He led the body in devotions by reading from 1 Peter 2:9-12 and praying. The Stated Clerk, Rev. Steve Carr, called the opening roll showing 8 ministers and 10 elders present, a quorum. No one was appointed as reporter for the Reformed Herald. The President noted that voting would be by show of hands.

Adoption of Agenda and Order of the Day

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

Business tabled from Classis Spring Meeting March 7-8, 2023

A. Ron Potter Report on the Status at Heritage RCUS, Waymart, PA.

Rev. Ron Potter gave a brief oral report on the status at Heritage RCUS, Waymart, PA, and his impending retirement and need for financial support.

B. Discussion of sermon links and documents provided to Classis by the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee according to approved motion to remand the sermon requirement portion to that committee.

Questions were asked Rev. Samuel Rodriguez from the floor.

The Classis found the sermon portion of Rev. Rodriguez's examination satisfactory.

The report of the Permanent Examination and Licensure Committee was received as a whole.

Classis declared all the outstanding requirements for the licensure of Rev. Sam Rodriguez to be satisfactory.

Classis received Rev. Rodriguez's dismissal from the Hills and Plains Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) and added him to rolls of Covenant East Classis of the RCUS.

Rev. Rodriguez was informed that the sermon portion of his exam was found satisfactory. He read the oath of licensure and signed it.

Classis constituted Rev. Chuck Muether and the elders at Covenant Reformed Church as the installation committee for Rev. Rodriguez.

Classis constituted Rev. Dan Schnabel and the elders at Salem Ebenezer as the installation committee for Rev. James Grossmann.

C. Constitutional Questions to the Elders (Article 81 with relevant discussion to follow)

Each Elder was asked Individually

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 Garner, Gettysburg, Waymart, and Manitowoc which answered "No."

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” except Garner which answered, “No,” and Gettysburg which answered, “Needs improvement.”

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 NW Arkansas which answered “No” and Garner which answered “Not applicable.”

Questions were asked from the floor.

D. Reports of Special Committees, Sub item B, which is the Special Committee for advising the Light of the Resurrection Reformed Church work.

It was moved and carried that Rev. Campbell assume the chair since the Vice President was also a member of the special committee.

The President vacated the chair to give the report and Rev. Christopher Campbell assumed the chair.

Elder Dennis Luquette gave the report.

Note: The recommendations of the report were not acted upon based upon new information that Light of the Resurrection Reformed Church is seeking affiliation with another denomination.

It was moved and carried that the Classis receive the report as a whole.

Excuses

The following were excused from all sessions of Classis: Rev. Steve Altman and Rev. Kyle Sorensen.

Reading of Minutes, Roll Call, Devotions, and Adjournment

The Clerk read the minutes and corrections were made on the floor. The President approved the minutes as corrected.

Classis was adjourned at 9:55 pm.

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

The President relinquished the chair and the Vice President assumed the chair and closed by praying and pronouncing a benediction.

Spring Meeting

CLERK'S NOTE:

On March 6, 2023, the night before the Spring Classis Meeting convened, the delegates of Classis gathered for a pre-Classis discussion led by Rev. Christopher Campbell based on the book *Gaining By Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send* by J.D. Greear.

**Abstract of the Minutes
of the Covenant East Classis**
of the Reformed Church in the United States
37th Annual Session—March 7-8, 2023
St. Paul’s Evangelical Reformed Church, Hamburg, MN

Services

The President, Rev. Christopher Campbell, led the body in devotions by reading and preaching from Psalm 75, “The Cup Is Empty,” praying, and singing Hymn #455 “And Can It Be.”

On Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm, classis delegates, along with members and guests from St. Paul’s Evangelical Reformed Church gathered for a scheduled worship service. Rev. James Grossmann conducted the service and Rev. Samuel Rodriguez preached a sermon on Hebrews 12:1-3 titled “Looking unto Jesus.”

On Wednesday morning, Rev. James Sawtelle led the body in devotions by reading and preaching from Psalm 71, “The Need for Elderly Members,” and praying.

Closing devotions were led by Elder Mori Willemsen who read from Psalm 146, commented on the text, and prayed.

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

Organization

The 38th annual session of the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States was called to order at 8:00 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 9 elders present, a quorum. The bar of the house was defined as the first eight rows on both sides of the aisle. The President appointed Elders Caleb Frankhart and Drake Lorence as tellers.

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

The President appointed Rev. Chuck Muether as reporter for the *Reformed Herald*.

Agenda, Services, and Orders of the Day

The agenda was approved as amended.

Fraternal Delegates and Visitors

The President welcomed Rev. Samuel Rodriguez. Elder Caleb Frankhart welcomed Elder Tim Demland. The Classis seated him in the bar of the house and gave him the privileges of the floor. Schnabel welcomed Elder Alan Hermann. The Classis seated him in the bar of the house and gave him the privileges of the floor. Schnabel welcomed Elder Andrew Gilman. The Classis seated him in the bar of the house and gave him the privileges of the floor. Schnabel welcomed Mr. Dale Schmiege.

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):

Benevolence/Examination and Licensure: Groseclose, Frankart
Nominations/Excuses/Minutes of Synod: Muether, Larson, Mankins,
Campbell
Finances: Schnabel, Gilman, Willemsen
(Hermann advise)
Judicial: Sawtelle, Lorence, Baas
Minutes of Classis/Services: Stetler, Campbell (Carr
Advise)
Missions: Kron, Stuebbe

Presentation of Overtures, Reports, and Communications

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

Examination of Rev. Samuel Rodriguez

The President relinquished the chair at 9:12 am. The Vice President assumed the chair.

It was moved and carried that the examination proceed as proposed.

Luqutte examined on Piety (10 Minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

The Vice President relinquished the chair at 9:31 am. The President resumed the chair.

Rev. Win Groseclose examined on Historical Philosophy (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Sawtelle examined on Apologetics (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Muether examined on Prolegomena (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Groseclose examined on Theology Proper (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

The President relinquished the chair at 10:57 am. The Vice President assumed the chair.

Luquette examined on Anthropology (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

The Vice President relinquished the chair at 11:10 am. The President resumed the chair.

Campbell examined on Christology (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

The President relinquished the chair at 11:28 am. The Vice President assumed the chair.

Luquette examined on Soteriology (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

The Vice President relinquished the chair at 11:48 am. The President resumed the chair.

Carr examined on Ecclesiology (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Schnabel examined on Eschatology (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Schnabel examined on English Bible (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Kron examined on Ecclesiastical/RCUS History (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Schnabel examined on RCUS Standards (20 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

Groseclose examined on RCUS Constitution (10 minutes). Questions were asked from the floor.

It was moved and carried to arrest the exam.

Presentation of Permanent Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee on Their Minutes

Esteemed Brothers,

We are thankful to report that, after a few years of turbulence, the past year has seen a settling in the churches of our classis. We pray that the God of

peace will continue to bring peace to the churches of Covenant East Classis and to all their members.

Since the Spring Classis meeting of 2022, your committee fulfilled its responsibilities, per Article 91 of the RCUS Constitution. The duties performed in this fulfillment included handling the resignation of Rev. Kyle Sorensen; providing advice to Salem Ebenezer, Manitowoc, regarding their pastoral transition and search; providing counsel to Peace Reformed, Garner, working with Covenant RCUS, Gettysburg, as they pursued a new minister; and advising the Candidates and Credentials Committee, along with prospective ministerial candidates Rev. James Grossman and Rev. Sam Rodriquez, as they pursue entrance into Covenant East Classis.

Redeemer Reformed Church of Minneapolis reported the following change to Article 11 of their local constitution:

Previous wording: “Every male communicant member over twenty-one (21) years of age, and every married man, who is in good and regular standing, and has signed this Constitution is entitled to vote at all elections....”

Updated wording: “Every communicant member over twenty-one (21) years of age, who is in good and regular standing, and has signed this Constitution is entitled to vote at all elections....”

In addition to the above, your committee sent out the following three executive circulars:

Executive Circular 37.1

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

The Executive Committee brings before you the following matters:

The first four recommendations are from the Special Committee for Manitowoc (See their report).

Recommendation 1: That Classis, through the Executive Committee, appoint one minister and one elder as accountability partners and advisors to Kyle until the Spring Classis meeting March 2023. The minister, elder and Sorensen will determine an agreed upon meeting schedule.

Recommendation 2: That Classis advise Rev. Sorensen to refrain from participating in any active pastoral labors, including neither in the Manitowoc area nor anywhere else, and performance of official ministerial acts, such as preaching, administering sacraments, officiating in marriages, funerals, Bible Studies, Classis and Synodical work until at least the Spring Classis meeting March 2023. At that meeting further assessments should be made regarding Sorensen's ministerial prospects.

Recommendation 3: Rev. Sorensen has come forward as his own accuser in the matters reported above. He has expressed his repentance before God for his sins and his desire to put them to death. For these reasons, Classis does not need to proceed to a trial. We do not consider at this time the recommendation #2 above to constitute an official censure. However, if Rev. Sorensen were to disagree with, or refuse to comply with, the advice recommended in #2 above, we believe official censure by adjudication may be warranted.

Recommendation 4: That the Special Committee be dissolved upon reception of this report and that the Consistory of Salem Ebenezer going forward be advised as per the provisions of RCUS Constitution Article 91.

Recommendation 5: That Covenant East Classis finds in order the letters regarding Rev. Kyle Sorensen's resignation from Salem Ebenezer RCUS, Manitowoc, WI. We hereby dissolve the pastoral relationship between Rev. Kyle Sorensen and the Salem Ebenezer congregation and declare the pulpit vacant to be effective as of April 27th, 2022.

Executive Circular 37.2

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

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

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

The 38th annual Spring Classis Meeting will be hosted by St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church, Hamburg, MN. **March 7-8, 2023**. The Meeting will convene at 8:00 am on March 7th and continue through March 8th to the completion of business. Please make travel plans accordingly.

2. Pre-Classis Fellowship and Discussion.

The Executive Committee has again called for an organized discussion to run from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Monday evening March 6, 2023. Rev. Christopher Campbell will lead us in a discussion based on the book *Gaining By Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send* by J.D. Greear. From Christopher: “I know that you are very busy, so I am not asking you to have read this book prior to Classis (although if you choose to read it, I believe it will benefit your understanding of, and participation in, the discussion). It is my hope that through this discussion we will be encouraged in our work of making disciples, learn how that work ties into organic, “from the ground up” church planting, as well as gain some practical ideas we can take back to our individual congregations.”

3. Forms for Classis Meeting.

You will note a change in how membership and financial statistics are reported. The Stated Clerk of Synod has sent out links to online forms on Google Docs to each church. The entries are the same as the original forms. I have included with this circular the elder delegate form, which is still in paper form. 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 21, 2023** (standing rules # 3-4). If you have any questions or need any help in filling out the forms, do not hesitate to contact your Stated Clerk for assistance.

In addition to these forms, please include any necrologies and/or overtures. Overtures received by **February 14th**, 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 completed and sent to Consistories by **February 14th, 2023** (standing rule #15).

4. Licensure Examination.

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez from the Hills and Plains Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) has been examined by our Candidates and Credentials Committee for orthodoxy and intent, and they have requested that our Classis conduct an examination for him that he might enter the RCUS and be eligible to receive a call and be installed as pastor at Covenant RCUS in Gettysburg, PA (*The Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States*, Article 35).

5. Travel and Accommodations.

There are two hotels nearby. One is Bevens Creek Inn Stay Suites in Norwood Young America (about a 7 minute drive), and the other is AmeriVu Inn and Suites in Waconia (about a 20 minute drive).

Bevens Creek Inn Stay and Suites:

640 Railroad Dr Ste 100, Norwood Young America, MN 55368

Phone: (952) 467-6897

AmeriVu Inn and Suites:

550 Cherry Dr, Waconia, MN 55387

Phone: (952) 442-8787

Executive Circular 37.3

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

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

1. Examination of Rev. James Grossmann.

The Executive Committee is calling a video conference meeting on Monday, February 27, 2023 at 7:00 pm CST/8:00 pm EST for the purpose of examining Rev. James Grossmann from the Northern Plains Classis in fulfillment of our duty in line with Standing Rule #21 before he enters the Covenant East Classis and be able to receive a call to Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church in Manitowoc, WI. This meeting will be held by Zoom, and the information for the meeting will be delivered by separate email.

Recommendation 1: That the Covenant East Classis confirm the call of Rev. James Grossmann to Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI, and make provisions for his installation as pastor.

Recommendation 2: That Rev. Jimmy John Hall be dismissed from Covenant East Classis to the Northern Plains Classis since he has received and accepted a call to Eureka Reformed Church, Eureka, SD.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Christopher Campbell, Elder Andy Gilman, Rev. Steve Carr

Recommendation 1 was referred to the Standing Judicial Committee.
Recommendation 2 was seconded and carried.

B. Candidates and Credentials Committee Report

Fathers and Brethren,

Your Candidates and Credentials committee has met several times throughout this past year. On Friday, September 30th, 2022, via a Zoom meeting, Rev. Steve Altman and Elder Dan Wright from our committee, and Rev. Christopher Campbell from the Executive Committee, met with Rev. Samuel Rodriguez from the PCA who is interested in ministering in the RCUS, specifically at Covenant RCUS in Gettysburg, PA. The purpose of this meeting was to establish both the Orthodoxy and Intention of Rev. Rodriguez. At the close of the meeting, it was unanimously agreed that Rev. Rodriguez had clearly established both his orthodoxy and intention and should be considered for Licensure at the Spring 2023 meeting of Covenant East Classis. We have received testimonials, Original Language papers, and a transcript from Greenville Theological Seminary. All of them have been found in order by the committee and are available upon request.

We also received communications this year regarding Rev. James Grossman's desire to answer a call to go to Salem-Ebenezer RCUS in Manitowoc, WI. We discussed a zoom meeting to satisfy the requirement of Standing Rule #21 of the Covenant East Classis and we have a recommendation regarding it included in this report.

Finally, we received a communication from Rev. Dan Schnable regarding a member of the Hamburg Church named Dale Schmiege, who is now attending Heidelberg Theological Seminary, and hopes to become a student under care of Covenant East Classis, with his sights set on ministering within the RCUS upon completion of his education. Your committee plans on sitting down with Mr. Schmiege at the Spring meeting of Classis to establish a clear path moving forward.

As a result of our activity this past year, we bring you the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1 That the clerk be instructed to circularize the information regarding a meeting of Covenant East Classis to satisfy standing rule #21 with regards Rev. James Grossman taking a call to Salem-Ebenezer RCUS in Manitowoc, WI. The meeting will take place on February 27th, 2023, via zoom at 8 PM EST.

Recommendation #2 That the following licensure examination schedule of Rev. Samuel Rodriguez be placed on the docket for the Spring 2023 meeting of Covenant East Classis:

1. Piety (10 minutes) Elder Dennis Luquette
2. Historical Philosophy (20 minutes) Rev. Win Groseclose
3. Apologetics (20 minutes) Rev. Jim Sawtelle
4. Prolegomena (20 minutes) Rev. Chuck Muether
5. Theology Proper: God (20 minutes) Rev. Win Groseclose
6. Anthropology (20 minutes) Elder Dennis Luquette
7. Christology (20 minutes) Rev. Christopher Campbell
8. Soteriology (20 minutes) Elder Dennis Luquette
9. Ecclesiology (20 minutes) Rev. Steve Carr
10. Eschatology (20 minutes) Rev. Dan Schnabel
11. English Bible (20 minutes) Elder Dan Wright
12. Ecclesiastical/RCUS History (20 minutes) Rev. Ryan Kron
13. RCUS Standards (20 minutes) Rev. Dan Schnabel
14. RCUS Constitution (10 minutes) Rev. Win Groseclose

Respectfully Submitted, Steve Altman, Win Groseclose, Dennis Luquette,
Dan Wright

C. Interchurch Relations Committee

Esteemed Brethren:

The work of the Classis Interchurch Relations Committee in this past Classical year was fairly routine and did not necessitate anything other than e-mail correspondence between committee members and a couple of phone calls. Invitations to attend Presbytery / Classis meetings of fraternal denominations were received and invitations to attend this spring meeting of Covenant East Classis were sent. How these were handled is reported below.

The following invitations were received in the Fall of 2022 from the Classis Central US, URCNA meeting Monday evening and Tuesday September 12th -13th in Lynwood, IL ; Classis Eastern US, URCNA meeting September 13th, Newton, NJ; Classis Niagara, CanRC, meeting September 14th in Grassie, ON; Classis Ontario West meeting via Zoom September 14th; Presbytery of the Midwest, OPC meeting September 16-17 in Wheaton, IL; Presbytery of Ohio, OPC meeting October 21st – 22nd, in Harrisville, PA; Midwest Presbytery of the RPCNA meeting November 3rd and 4th, in Colorado Springs, CO

With one exception we were unable to send a delegate to these Classis / Presbytery meetings. The reasons are varied, running the gamut from having been in recent attendance, scheduling, distance and late reception of an invitation. But the principle reason is your committee could not find brothers willing to represent our Classis at meetings we could have attended. There was one exception. Rev. Win Groseclose graciously represented the CEC at the Presbytery of Ohio OPC.

Each of these fraternal Churches were advised of our inability to obtain a delegate and fraternal greetings were send instead.

The report of Rev. Groseclose follows:

**Presbytery of Ohio
Of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
October 21-22, 2022**

Once again it was my pleasure to represent Covenant East Classis as a Fraternal Delegate on Friday, October 21, held at Calvary OPC in Harrisville, PA. It was a double pleasure for me as Calvary OPC is a mere 30 minutes up the road from where my family and I live. I was greeted warmly by my brothers there and seated in the bar of the house for the duration of their meeting. I was joined by a Rev. Pritts, a fraternal delegate from the ARPC, as well as two delegates from the PCA. I greeted them from 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 on the theme of “constantly giving thanks for you.”

The hosting pastor, Rev. Puliatti greeted us all with a devotion on the Tree of Life and its significance in Genesis 2 and 3. As I have observed in the past, their meeting was run expeditiously and nearly all of the business was complete by Friday evening, so much so that it did not necessitate a return on Saturday.

As there were no exams to give, the majority of the meeting revolved around reports and prayers for the various churches and missions works in the Presbytery. With great sadness, though, they elected to dissolve their relationship with their church in Lake Mentor, Ohio and transfer the church’s remaining membership into local area churches. One point of joyous news was that of the particularization of Yamagata Presbyterian Church in Japan, part of the OPC’s sister denomination in that country.

In the early evening the presbytery needed to address some matters of serious concern with one of their local congregations. It was at this point that I opted to bow out, assuring the brothers that I would keep them in my prayers. As always, the hospitality was gracious and the conversations had over meals was a joy. One of the brothers shared that he had been the delegate to the Classis meeting when I was examined back in 2020 and we shared some fellowship speaking about the different approaches that our denominations have toward the examination process. It was good to fellowship with these brothers again and I look forward to being able to do so in the future.

Rev. Groseclose

Invitations to attend our Covenant East Classis Spring 2023 Meeting were sent to all of the above fraternal churches. As of this writing no definite confirmations of attendance have been received by your Committee partially due to the close proximity of their meetings to our own Classis meeting. A few invitations were also received but again, because of close proximity to

our own Classis dates, your committee has not thus far been able to line up a delegate able to attend.

Your Committee is grateful that our fraternal contacts at the Classis / Presbytery level are much better than they have ever been. That said however your Committee believes some that in the management of these relationships some fine-tuning is required for these reasons:

First, most of these Classes /Presbyteries meet twice a year and we often get invitations to attend twice a year. Securing delegates, given our chronic shortage of men to attend these meetings on behalf of Classis, has proved, and will continue to prove, increasingly difficult unless there is a sea change in co-operation.

Second the geographical distances between fraternal churches caused by the size of our own Classis will increase travel expenses and lodging costs for our delegates at a time when restraint ought to be exercised if we were to attempt to respond to all the invitations we receive. This geographical is heightened when we consider our relationship with two CanRC Classes in Canada. For example in the Fall of 2022 we had invitations stretching from NJ to CO in the U.S. and from Canada.

Moreover geography is also a factor in inviting delegates from other fraternal churches since they have the same travel and budget issues which prevented a delegate from the CanRC from attending our Spring 2022 meeting.

In light of the above your Committee advises the Classis that in the management of our fraternal relations going forward, the Interchurch Relations Committee of the Classis will continue to maintain regular contact with fraternal churches either by the sending and receiving of delegates or the sending of fraternal greetings as each situation warrants and do so no more frequently than annually, and in some cases perhaps as infrequently as every two years (i.e. Canada), all the while bearing in mind travel and lodging costs

Your Committee would also bring to the attention of Classis that since we have an IRC established by Classis, with the expectation of maintaining and furthering these fraternal relations, that the Elders and Ministers of Classis

feel some obligation to respond to the IRC when it is seeking for a delegate to represent us at a fraternal body.

You Committee is very grateful to those who have responded to our requests in the past and for those not part of our Committee who have helped us find willing delegates.

Respectfully,

Rev Ron Potter, Richard Stetler, Lance Kloempken, Larry Stock

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

D. Missions Committee

Dear Brothers,

Members of your Classis Home Missions committee had a zoom visit with Rev. Chuck Muether at Immanuel Reformed Fellowship, Pella, Iowa and a zoom visit with Rev. Steve Carr at Grace Reformed, Rogers, Arkansas. Your committee had also planned to have one of our committee members going to an on-site visit to Pella during a Sunday morning worship service but due to sickness it didn't work out.

Report on Mission Work Immanuel Reformed Fellowship (IRF), Pella, Iowa

On October 24, 2022, Rev. Dan Schnabel and Rev. Ryan Kron had a zoom meeting with Rev. Chuck Muether, Elder Dennis Luquette (Gettysburg), and Rev. Sam Rodriguez (Gettysburg).

Rev. Kron opened the meetings with devotions from Colossians 4:2-6 and prayer. Rev. Muether then gave a very thorough and helpful presentation on the history of the church plant and where things are at today.

It was helpful to have Elder Luquette and Rev. Rodriguez with us in this meeting, as they are members of the overseeing consistory at Covenant Reformed Church (Gettysburg, PA). There are challenges at Gettysburg, but they are still committed to overseeing this work in Pella. Rev. Muether says there is good oversight and "transparency and trust." And there is an excitement, anticipating Rev. Rodriguez being called to Gettysburg and continuing with the oversight of Immanuel in Pella. Rev. Muether writes: "Oversight from the overseeing Consistory is carried out in a number of

different ways. Monthly Consistory meetings include the church planter via Zoom teleconferencing. The church planter provides monthly reports on the progress of the mission work. Zoom teleconferencing is also used to meet and interview potential members.”

Peace Reformed, Garner, Iowa has also helped with the work in Pella. And Rev. Muether has aided the church in Garner, as well as providing aid to the church in Gettysburg. Rev. Muether says: “A ruling elder from Peace Reformed Church (Garner, IA, the closest RCUS fellowship to the work) assists in the administration of the sacraments and augmenting attendance. When possible, a delegation from the Covenant Reformed Consistory makes an on-site visit and the church planter has thus far made three visits to Gettysburg, PA.”

Rev. Muether also gave an update on the families at IRF. During our on-site visit in 2021, we met Matt Dudley. Elder Matt Dudley was ordained in November 2021, and he was doing well in leadership in the church. However, due to health reasons he had to resign. Matt and his wife, Lois, have transferred their membership to Grace Reformed (OPC) in Des Moines. They continue to have a positive relationship with IRF, as all are reminded that this is Christ’s church.

The Gross family remains as core members at Immanuel. They have a “medically complex child” (Evie), and they have had challenges with how this child was treated by other churches. Rev. Muether asked us to pray for Evie. The Gross family are thankful to be at Immanuel and they are praying for growth at the church. And they want a church “centered on God’s Word, outreach, and good fellowship.”

IRF is thankful to be able to continue to meet at the facility in downtown Pella. In terms of the future of the work, due to the Dudley family leaving they will be refocusing on the Ottumwa area. They have been getting visitors to the southeast. Rev. Muether writes: “The targeted area had been Pella-Pleasant Hill/Altoona, but due to providential reasons, the focus has shifted to what was the original demographics—Oskaloosa/Ottumwa. With the emergence of a new PCA (formerly EPC/dependent) church on the western side of Des Moines and the loss of a key core family in East Des Moines and new interest further east and south, IRF has adjusted its sites.”

Rev. Muether continues to labor faithfully in the word and sacrament ministry. They also meet each Wednesday night for Bible Study and a Prayer Meeting. And Rev. Muether is very involved in the community. He is the secretary and treasurer of the Pella Ministerial Association. And he helps

to lead various forms of outreach. This includes things like an after-school outreach to children, Sola Soupa (inviting people to their home in fall and winter), IRF Diner's (dinner and watch a conference), WELL (food shelf), Crossroads (working with needy families), and Mariaska Ministries. Rev. Muether also preaches at various nursing homes on Sunday afternoons. This was very encouraging to hear, as they are doing outreach and "going into areas nobody else wants to go." They want to see "non-churched" families coming.

They are "very excited about being a part of the RCUS." They continue to get regular visitors. They are working on follow-up. Rev. Muether says: "At IRF the attendance has ranged from 12 to 40. We are still being "checked out" by families that are not yet ready to commit. As is often the case with outreach programming, IRF receives a lot of attention through its community engagement and church activities, but the results based just on worship attendance is only finally picking up albeit slowly. The loss of our ruling elder, who suffered from debilitating mental health slowed down the collaborative evangelistic efforts as he was unable to commit to the outreach that was planned."

They want to see God give them growth with the goal of being self-supporting. In addition to the giving of the congregation and the support of classis and synod, the church in Gettysburg has also been helping support them financially. Financially, the Muether family has their needs being met. Kristie works full-time, and their insurance needs are being met.

Rev. Muether is excited about the work and is thankful for the support from classis and synod. They are progressing, and they hope to grow in terms of steady attendance. Those who come to Immanuel can expect to receive, as Rev. Muether says, the "proclaiming of God's Word, a strong family atmosphere, fellowship, and love."

Report on Grace Reformed, Rogers, Arkansas

On February 1, 2023, Rev. Dan Schnabel, Rev. Ryan Kron, and Elder Michael Baas had a zoom meeting with Rev. Steve Carr.

Rev. Kron opened the meeting with devotions from Psalm 61 and prayer. Rev. Carr then talked with us about the financial situation at Grace Reformed in Arkansas. They lost one family in the spring of 2022, and then toward the end of the year another man retired from his work. As a result, they are in a difficult financial situation. At this point, Rev. Carr needs to take a cut in his salary and get a second job, which he said he is willing to

do. He says he has been bi-vocational before, and he thinks he can get work pretty quickly. Also, to help with the financial situation the consistory at Grace Reformed is asking classis to double the amount of support from last year to \$3,969 a year.

Rev. Carr says the membership and health of the church is sound. They have had a lot of turnover. They are still at 16 members (8 families total). They are getting regular visitors. They will be doing more outreach by going door to door, going to the Bentonville farmer's market with a booth and information about the church and greeting people. They also meet a lot of people through their homeschooling group. Rev. Carr meets with people often, and they have people over to their home. Rev. Carr also has a message on the radio each week. Their consistory is meeting every week to pray and asking God to bless them with more families. The consistory is also very involved in the outreach.

Recommendations:

1. That Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2,083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2023-2024 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 2023-2024 for the work in south-central Iowa.
3. That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with \$331 per month, a total of \$3,972 in the fiscal year 2023-24 beginning July 2023. This is double the amount as last year.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Kron, Dan Schnabel, Michael Bass, Dave Oberhaus, Walt Van Heest

The report was referred to the Standing Missions Committee

E. Communications and Publications Committee

Fathers and Brothers: Per Recommendation 1 of the Standing Nominations Committee of the 37th Annual Session of Covenant East Class (that Classis reactivate the Publications Committee and rename it the Communications and Publications Committee), your committee has labored in three areas with respect to two synodical Permanent Committees (Communications and

Welcoming) and one subcommittee of the synodical Finance Committee (Endowment).

RCUS Welcoming Committee

Welcoming Committee member Rev. Steve Carr communicated to Classis last year: “The Welcoming Committee of the Synod of the RCUS overtures Covenant East Classis that their 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 a RCUS church in their community.”

The Home Missions Committee recommended that the selected liaison should be designated by the Communications and Publications Committee. Rev. Muether was appointed as the liaison, and at the subsequent meeting of Synod, he was appointed to serve on the Permanent Welcoming Committee. Your C & P Committee followed up on two inquires from Iowa (Ackley and Wellsburg), one from Indiana (Vincennes), and one from Georgia (Lawrenceville). Other more recent inquiries from Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia, South Carolina, and Missouri are developing.

RCUS Communications Committee

The synodical Communications Committee has requested that newsworthy content and media from Covenant East Classis and its congregations be sent to the chair of the Comms Committee to be posted on various social media platforms and the RCUS website. Your C&P Committee sent media from last year’s Classis meeting, updates from one mission work, and some congregational news from a couple of congregations. This year the C&P Committee hopes to showcase our youth camp and encourage more congregations to share news of baptisms, confirmations, anniversaries, officer installations, etc.

MISSION 2025

Your C&P Committee has contributed toward the Endowment Subcommittee of the Permanent Finance Committee in the designing of brochures and PowerPoint presentations. More about this will be shared at the Classis meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Elder Steve Mankins, Rev. Chuck Muether (chair), Rev. Dan Schnabel

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

F. Church Camp Committee

Dear Brothers,

Covenant East Youth Camp met at Camp Sinewa July 12-15, 2022. The theme of the camp was "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ: A Study through the Book of Ephesians". Unsearchable Riches . . . 1:1-23 - The Riches of the Godhead in Salvation; 4:1-5:16 - The Riches Applied to our walk, battle with sin; 5:17-6:9 - The Riches Applied to our Relationships; 6:10- 24 - The Riches as our Armor in Spiritual Warfare (Spiritual Warfare and the Armor of God). The kick off lesson the first night was Ephesians 6:12 about The Great Smackdown. Only four ministers participated, so one had to do two lessons. Seminary student Mr. Matthew Dawn participated by doing devotions for the young men in the evenings, and in whatever other ways he could fill in. He was a great help.

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

There were 13 adults helping out. This is a wonderful number and makes the camp work very well, as well as provides excellent engagement with and oversight of the campers. Fifty-five campers attended. There was a sizable group from the Waupun URC, as well as a returning group from Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church, Garner, IA, along with the Youth Pastor of that congregation. Seven of our classis churches participated by sending campers. The spirit of the kids was generally excellent.

One issue we ran into should be highlighted. The local Camp Ranger was unhappy with the fact that there was "noise" from the campers after 10 PM. This is a violation of the Camp rules, which rule is typical of State Campgrounds in Wisconsin. Our concern is that this is a Youth Camp, and the quiet time rule for 10 PM is a real "wet blanket" for a group of energetic youth who come to camp to have fun. This rule has never been enforced or raised to our attention in all the years we've used Camp Sinewa. We did the best we could to honor the rule, but we did violate it. We need to resolve this issue for the coming year.

Another issue has to do with the dates for the Camp. We used to have an automatic priority for the dates we've used for many years. When the new ranger took over a few years back we somehow lost that priority place and lost our preferred dates for camp. The new slot we have been in for a couple years now would require that this year we start Camp on July 4. The committee, as well as those church representatives present at camp last summer, agreed a July 4 start date is untenable. We have booked the camp for a June 20-23 this year, but we will be back to July again in 2024 (July 9-12).

The music booklet the camp has used for many years will need to be redone. The old copies are getting pretty frayed and dirty. We'd also like to cull the selection of hymns and add some new ones. This work is ongoing.

We were asked this past summer before camp if the counselors at camp each year have undergone background checks. We have not considered this before. But it appears there is some desire on the part of parents to have this layer of security in consideration of sending their youth to camp. Background checks are a growing standard for youth camps and other gatherings of youth around the country. It is no doubt a wise thing to do in terms of our liability in case, heaven forbid, there was an incident. But also as a deterrent and safeguard.

This is our proposal. We would like to use "*Protect My Ministry*" website for background checks. All we would need to do is send each church a link where they can access the *Protect My Ministry* page and pay \$13.95 per person for a check to be completed. Salem Ebenezer would then receive the background checks so we would have them directly on file. The website will notify us when each person's check needs to be re-done in the future (based on each state's laws—for example, Wisconsin is 4 years). We will be background checking every overnight counselor and pastor. We would like each church to pay the fee for the background checks for their pastor and members. We believe this is a reasonable cost to bear for this security.

Finances for Camp are steady. The current balance in the fund is \$1495.27. This is slightly up from 2021, but so are all the costs we will incur this year "slightly" up. We want to thank the various churches and individuals who donated to the fund to keep us in the black. Kayla Shillcox has a thorough income and costs spread sheet available if any church would like review it. There are donors listed in the income ledger who may not want their donation made public, so it is only available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Kron, Jim Sawtelle, Steve Stuebbe, Kayla Shillcox (ex officio)

Classis Action: It was moved and seconded that every volunteer staying overnight at Covenant Youth Camp be required to obtain a background check prior to attending camp. The report was adopted

Reports of Officers

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

Beloved Saints in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The Apostle Peter stirs us up by way of reminder when he writes, "do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:8-9). God's timing is not our timing. God defers judgement because he delights in mercy, or, in the words of John Calvin, "God regulates time to promote our salvation." Let us never forget the "riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering," for it is "the goodness of God that leads us to repentance." (Romans 2:4).

I am thankful God has been "regulating time to promote our salvation" by providing another year for our churches to faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have seen a relative stability in our churches this year. Pastors have reported increased attendance and more visitors, at a level not seen since before 2020. One of our churches started an evening service and reports that it is well attended. Another has identified a man who desires to study for the ministry. Although we began the year with three vacant pulpits, two of these churches are moving forward with the calling of pastors. And although membership has decreased slightly, overall giving has increased.

We have many things to celebrate in Covenant East Classis, but we are not without our challenges.

One of the challenges we face is an aging ministry coupled with the danger of pastoral fatigue. The pastoral ministry is not for the faint of heart! One minister has indicated that it will soon be time for him to retire. This year we also had two pastors take sabbaticals, one reporting that he is "very tired and weary of late."

Another challenge is declining membership. Although the decline was less than last year, every church in our Classis reported a loss of members. This year we also saw the resignation of a long time RCUS minister.

A third challenge, experienced presently by two of our churches (with a third potentially headed in this direction), is the inability to fully support their minister, necessitating they get secondary employment.

The Candidates and Credentials Committee has been busy assisting two churches as they seek to call Rev. James Grossmann to Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church, Manitowoc, WI, and Rev. Sam Rodriquez to Covenant Reformed Church, Gettysburg, PA.

The Camp Committee reports that Covenant East Youth Camp met at Camp Sinewa July 12-15, 2022. The theme of the camp was "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ: A Study through the Book of Ephesians." Fifty-five campers attended.

The Communications and Publications Committee, in conjunction with the Synod Welcoming Committee, followed up on two inquiries from Iowa (Ackley and Wellsburg), one from Indiana (Vincennes), and one from Georgia (Lawrenceville). Other more recent inquiries from Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia, South Carolina, and Missouri are developing. This year the committee hopes to showcase our youth camp and encourage more congregations to share news of baptisms, confirmations, anniversaries, officer installations, etc.

The Interchurch Relations Committee received invitations from the CanRC, OPC, RPCNA and URCNA. However, members were only able to attend one meeting, the OPC's Presbytery of Ohio, primarily due to geographical distance.

The Missions Committee visited with Rev. Chuck Muether of Immanuel Reformed Fellowship and Rev. Steve Carr of Grace Reformed Church, Rogers, AR. Both visits were by video conference.

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

In Kansas City, Rev. Campbell reports "God is sending people who are hungry for the pure water of God's grace, who have been bound by the law, who have not known the free grace of God in Jesus Christ. We are seeing people freed to love God and love others, true heart change. We continue to see new visitors, and many have become or are in the process of joining the church. As we look forward to the coming year, we hope to do more outreach to our community through small groups and other activities."

In Northwest Arkansas, Rev. Carr reports, "It is a comfort to know that "the LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Psalm 145:9). He continues to have many opportunities to preach the gospel, both within the church (having added an evening service this year) and outside the church (via radio broadcast). Two families joined the church this year, although one of them did not remain, for reasons unknown. Reflecting on this, Rev. Carr reminds us, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

In Hamburg, Rev. Schnabel reports "The Lord has enabled us to begin 20 years together here, as we press towards the goal of the upward calling of Christ (Philippians 3:14)." One of the highlights of his year is "having so many kids in VBS." As he reflects upon the past year, he says, "I am thankful that despite the insecurity, spiritual decline and craziness in our society, the Lord really has blessed this church, not just over the life of the church, but in the last year also!" In Garner, Elder Larson reports, "in May a new Consistory was installed, two elders and three deacons." The congregation is "very thankful to Rev. Stetler for filling our pulpit when he was able during the summer and very regularly through the fall and winter months" but does continue to seek "an under shepherd to tenderly lead the sheep here to the Glory of our Savior, Jesus."

In South Central Iowa, Rev. Chuck Muether reports, "Recently, we had our first young person confirm her faith." "We also had our first ordained and installed elder resign from office due to a significant health issue. I was reminded again that in all the busyness of church planting, the business of the church planter, as Thomas Goodwin would say, is to keep "hearts raised

up to heaven." We are to plant hope. We are to point to the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Minnetonka, Rev. Kron reports, "In both the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, which are God's gifts to us as the visible gospel, our hearts are directed "to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ" (2 Thessalonians 3:5). And when we gather as a church for worship, our prayer is that we would leave saying "surely God was in this place." He rejoices that in the congregation. "Our love for the Lord and each other has grown as we have gathered together to study the Scriptures as the family of God this past year."

In Minneapolis, Rev. Sawtelle reports that while there is still much work to do, "I am happy to observe that good progress in restoration to normalcy has been realized among us in 2022." In addition to this, Rev. Sawtelle notes great joy in holding "one-on-one intensive evangelism and discipleship meetings with a young man that led to his embracing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The first time he attended last April, he told me before the service that this was to be his first ever church service. He was 17 years old. Praise God for his saving mercies and power." He also reports a change to their local constitution: "The Consistory, after a number of months studying and discussing Redeemer's long held Male-only voting policy (which was reflective of the RCUS' position), decided to offer a study of this subject in Adult Sunday School also. Consistory subsequently voted 8-1 to call a special meeting of the congregation to vote on a proposed amendment to our Constitution allowing voting by all communicant members 21 years and older. The amendment passed by the requisite 2/3 majority vote."

In Napoleon, Rev. Altman reports "God has certainly been good to us. I am now closing in on fifteen years of actively being involved in ministerial work here with the Saints at PRC. That is a lot of time." He then notes "I am getting very tired and weary of late. I have now been working a second job for nine years. That has taken a toll on both me and my family." "In some ways, at least on a very surface level, it has been yet another normal year in the life of our church." We have also continued to move forward with our potential building project. The wheels of progress tend to move slow for us however, I am so grateful for the collective wisdom, and groundwork that our members have been able to give to this endeavor. We will continue to move forward in the coming year, Lord willing." As difficulties arise in the local church, he has been reminding his congregation that "We are all equally members of Christ's church, and there are no distinctions to be made

for time spent here. Love must be here. It's not a choice. It's a fruit of being transformed by the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ."

In Waymart, Rev. Potter reports, "As of March of this year Heritage will have been in existence for 20 years. During approximately one-half of that time it was overseen by Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon and during the latter half under the oversight of its own officers. Our membership now stands at 9 communicant members and 2 covenant children all of whom are solidly committed to the Reformed Faith, the RCUS and Heritage. Visitors have come, stayed and then departed for several reasons, one of which is we are part of a denomination, another being our view of covenant baptism and yet another our view of original sin and its application to a child. I turn 80 in May of 2023. I am getting tired. At present, getting vacation time is not something we can depend on in our present situation as a Church. The Church will soon be beginning the discussion of transitioning to a new minister if it be that the Lord takes me home or if I simply get too wearied to continue. I must admit there are days when stepping down is very appealing except for one thing, "woe unto me if I preach not the gospel."

In Fombell, PA, Rev. Groseclose reports, "this year has seemed more encumbered by challenges than in previous years. When you are bivocational, it is easy to lose sight of your pastoral calling and begin to think of yourself as just a workman in the community who does some extracurricular things on the weekend. LORR has been a perpetual reminder that while I may install flooring to pay my family's bills, my vocation is spiritual and pastoral." "As to growth, it has remained slow. Sadly, just a few weeks ago, we lost one couple. On a more encouraging note, we have been joined by a new visitor on a consistent basis. Unbeknown to us, he had been watching online for a while and then decided it was time to start coming. Though this has been a harder year of ministry than others I have had, I have great hopes for what God has in store for us in the years to come."

Rev. Richard Stetler reports, "There is nothing the world can dish out to cause us such great suffering that can be compared to the glory of being told by our Master, "well done good and faithful servant" when standing in His presence when we die or when He comes again. During 2022, though carrying the official title of "retired," your servant was anything but retired. I preached 46 times (36 times at Peace Reformed Church, Garner, IA). I continue to be actively engaged in on-going evangelism work, laboring under the banner of Reformation Gospel Ministries (RGM).

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Christopher Campbell (President)

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

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 Spring 2022 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 2022 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 2022 Abstract, and sent to the *Reformed Herald*.

I prepared the 2022 Abstract and distributed the printed copies to all the churches of our Classis. 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 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.

The Home Missions Report and my own parochial report note that I will likely be needing to become bivocational for the time being. Having considered the matter, I am willing to continue as your Stated Clerk should you consider me again for election.

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

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Steve Carr, Stated Clerk

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

C. Report of the Executive Committee of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 276 th Synod, there are two items that require action by the Classes, and several other matters of note:

1. The adopted Recommendation 3 of the Standing Judicial Committee (to amend Article 8 of the RCUS Constitution) will need to be brought to a ratification vote at the annual meetings of the Classes, and the results communicated to me.

That Article 8 of the RCUS Constitution would be amended by removing: *A congregation, whether independent or belonging to another denomination, which conforms to the requirements of the Reformed Church in the United States, may be admitted to membership.*

And then replacing it with

To facilitate churches transitioning from another denomination, or seeking to leave independence, a church or group of churches may be received as provisional members of a classis. Such church or churches shall be organic members of the Reformed Church in the United States, subject to its Constitution and creeds, and entitled to all rights, responsibilities, and privileges thereof, except that they cannot propose or vote on constitutional amendments. Provisional member churches may elect to withdraw without consequence for a period of up to two years, after which conforming to the requirements of the RCUS, they may be received as regular member churches. A classis, presbytery or denomination may seek provisional membership in the RCUS by member churches applying to the classes within whose bounds they exist.

Grounds: This gives such churches time to acclimate, as well as a Classis the ability to court a church which has confessional affinity to us. It also allows us to come alongside them and give them time to align with the RCUS.

[This motion passed with the required two-thirds majority. The Classes will vote on this amendment at their Spring meeting and if 2/3 are in favor the Constitution will be amended.] (Abstract 2022:82)

2. The adopted Recommendation 9 of the Standing Judicial Committee (to amend Article 95 of the RCUS Constitution from requiring 4 to only requiring 3 classes) will need to be brought to a ratification vote at the annual meetings of the Classes, and the results communicated to me.

From the report of the Special Committee to Study Classis boundaries about Synod amending the language of Article 95 to state, “The Synod is composed of at least three Classes....” That Synod change Article 95 accordingly. (It is understood that any amendment will need to be ratified by two-thirds of the classes.)

Grounds: It is constitutionally in order for the Synod to review this change. [This motion passed with the required two-thirds majority. The Classes will vote on this amendment at their Spring meeting and if 2/3 are in favor the Constitution will be amended.] (Abstract 2022:83)

3. The 277 th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 8–11, 2023, at Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA.

4. The Finances Committee has developed a new process for reporting both membership and financial statistics. While they will still be reckoned from January 1 – December 31, 2022 they are now to be reported by filling out electronic forms. The membership and financial forms are accessible at the links below. Elder Gary Maassen of the Permanent Finances Committee is the point of contact for any questions or difficulties. These links will be distributed to the congregational clerks by email shortly.

Membership Statistics:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSceEhl6VbQ0QStndBQOPHrc_1T7WoAHc5A5_KMqZ5-eKMhZrQ/viewform

Financial Statistics:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScrX82Ki4-GPkR-9vC6ywgghnRy-4ARWcPqSh ocZjF7TLY96Q/viewform>

5. Please review the Standing Rules of Synod (2022 Synod Abstract, pp.90–93).

6. Be reminded that any requests for ministerial aid must be accompanied by the ministerial aid request form and be received at least 14 days prior to the meeting of Synod in order to be considered. 7. Please remember to send necrologies to the Synod clerk in time for Synod.

Respectfully submitted, Ruben Zartman, Stated Clerk of the RCUS

The report was referred to the Standing Minutes of Synod Committee

D. Treasurer’s Report

2022-23 CEC YTD Financial Report								
July 1, 2022 - February 28, 2023								
Detailed Income Report								
Guideline Total \$60.								
		8%	67%	25%				
		\$ 15.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 5.00		\$ 60.00		Due
	Members	General	Missions	Benevolence	Student Aid	Budget	Totals YTD	by 6/15/22
NW Arkansas	16	\$ 39.89	\$ 334.11	\$ 124.67	\$ -	\$ 960.00	\$ 498.67	\$ 461.33
Eden Prarie MN	98	\$ 470.40	\$ 3,939.60	\$ 1,470.00	\$ -	\$ 5,880.00	\$ 5,880.00	\$ -
Garner IA	34	\$ 93.60	\$ 783.90	\$ 292.50	\$ -	\$ 2,040.00	\$ 1,170.00	\$ 870.00
Gettysburg, PA	24	\$ 121.44	\$ 1,017.06	\$ 379.50	\$ -	\$ 1,440.00	\$ 1,518.00	\$ (78.00)
Hamburg MN	191	\$ 916.80	\$ 7,678.20	\$ 2,865.00	\$ -	\$ 11,460.00	\$ 11,460.00	\$ -
Kansas City MO	94	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,640.00	\$ -	\$ 5,640.00
Manitowoc WI	113	\$ 580.80	\$ 4,864.20	\$ 1,815.00	\$ -	\$ 6,780.00	\$ 7,260.00	\$ (480.00)
Minneapolis MN	97	\$ 465.60	\$ 3,899.40	\$ 1,455.00	\$ -	\$ 5,820.00	\$ 5,820.00	\$ -
Napoleon OH	60	\$ 316.80	\$ 2,653.20	\$ 990.00	\$ -	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,960.00	\$ (360.00)
Waymart PA	12	\$ 91.20	\$ 763.80	\$ 285.00	\$ -	\$ 720.00	\$ 1,140.00	\$ (420.00)
South Central Iowa	24	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	
	763					\$ 44,340.00	\$ 38,706.67	\$ 5,633.33

Year to Date Report			
<u>Expense July 1, 2022 - February 28, 2023</u>			
<u>General Fund Expense</u>			
Classis Meeting	\$ -		
Clerk/Printing Supplies	\$ 931.50		
Travel	\$ 438.68		
Honorarium	\$ -		
Postage/Phone/Checks			
Total		\$ 1,370.18	
<u>Mission Fund Expenses</u>			
Covenant Reformed PA. (Iowa)	\$ 25,000.00		
Grace Reformed Church	\$ 2,646.00		
Travel	\$ -		
Total		\$ 27,646.00	
Benevolence-Rev Mark Larson	\$ 6,000.00		
Total		\$ 6,000.00	
Student Aid	\$ -		
Total		\$ -	
Expense Total		\$ 35,016.18	
Total Classis Income July 1, 2022 - February 28, 2023			\$ 38,706.67
Total Classis Expense July 1,2022-February 28, 2023			\$ (35,016.18)
Respectfully Submitted		net so far	\$ 3,690.49
	Income due	\$ 6,000.00	
	encumbrances	\$ 4,000.00	

Year to Date Report			
<u>Balance July 1, 2022 February 28, 2023</u>			
	Beginning Balance July 1, 2022		\$ 74,038.69
General Fund	Balance July 1, 2022	\$ 2,058.21	
Receipts		\$ 3,096.53	
Expenses		\$ 1,370.18	
Balance 02/25/2023			\$ 3,784.56
** Missions Fund	Balance July 1, 2022	\$ 58,505.73	
Receipts		\$ 25,933.47	
Expenses		\$ 27,646.00	
Balance 02/25/2023			\$ 56,793.20
Benevolence Fund	Balance July 1, 2022	\$ 3,076.51	
Receipts		\$ 9,676.67	
Expenses		\$ 6,000.00	
Balance 02/25/2023			\$ 6,753.18
Student Aid Fund	Balance July 1, 2022	\$ 10,398.24	\$ 10,398.24
Receipts		\$ -	\$ 38,706.67
Expenses		0	\$ (35,016.18)
Balance 02/28/2023			<u>\$ 77,729.18</u>
	End Balance June 30, 2023		
** \$19,144.30			
available for future CEC Mission works			

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.

It was moved and carried that

1. Classis commend Rev. Sorensen for his conduct with Salem Ebenezer over the past year and his willingness to abide by the agreement with Classis.

2. Classis, through the Executive Committee, appoint one minister and one elder as accountability partners and advisors to Rev. Sorensen until the Spring Classis meeting March 2024. The minister, elder, and Rev. Sorensen will determine an agreed upon meeting schedule.

3. Rev. Sorensen continue to refrain from participating in any active pastoral labors, including neither in the Manitowoc area nor anywhere else, and performance of official ministerial acts, such as preaching, administering the sacraments, officiating in marriages, funerals, Classis, and Synodical work until at least the Spring Classis meeting March 2024, and that he be strongly encouraged to attend a different church for the peace of Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church and for Rev. Sorensen's own well-being. This advice does not preclude Rev. Sorensen from exercising his duties as a chaplain.

Constitutional Questions to the Elders

[The Constitutional Questions to the Elders was tabled to the next called meeting of the Covenant East Classis of the RCUS. Note: The called meeting was held on March 30th, 2023. See above pages 13-14 of the Abstract].

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).

Classis Action: The report was adopted.

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

There were no delegates from other Reformed Churches or Visitors.

Reports of Special Committees

A. Special Committee: Rev. Kyle Sorensen

The report of the special committee for Rev. Kyle Sorensen was distributed to Classis. It was moved and carried to leave the special reports for Rev. Kyle Sorensen out of the Abstract.

B. Special Committee: Light of the Resurrection Reformed

[The report was tabled to the next called meeting of Classis. See above, pages 14-15 of the Abstract.]

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. Missions

Recommendation 1: That Classis support Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2,083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2023-2024 for the work in South-Central Iowa.

Recommendation 2: That Classis overture Synod to provide Covenant Reformed (Gettysburg, PA) with \$2,083.34 a month, a total of \$25,000 in 2023-2024 for the work in South-Central Iowa.

Recommendation 3: That Classis provide Grace RCUS of NW Arkansas with \$331 per month, a total of \$3,972 in the fiscal year 2023-2024 beginning July 2023. This is double the amount as last year.

Respectfully submitted, Ryan Kron, Steven Stuebbe

B. Judicial

Recommendation 1: With respect to recommendation 1 from the Executive Committee report: That the call to Rev. James Grossmann from Salem-Ebenezer Reformed Church be found in order, and that Classis proceed to Install him as their pastor, and added to the roll of Classis.

Recommendation 2: That Salem Ebenezer consult with Rev. Grossmann and a financial advisor as to an adequate retirement strategy and adequate life insurance coverage and disability insurance.

Recommendation 3: That the Clerk of Covenant East Classis notify Northern Plains Classis of our reception of Rev. Grossmann.

Respectfully submitted, James Sawtelle, Drake Lorence, Michael Baas

C. Examination and Licensure

Recommendation 1: That Classis receive Mr. Dale Schmiege as a Student under care of Covenant East Classis. Seconded. Carried.

Recommendation 2: That Classis provide Student aid to Heidelberg Seminary on Mr. Schmiege's behalf in the amount of \$3100 per year for tuition and \$400 per year for books for the 2023-2024 Synodical year.

Two other recommendations were brought forward:

Recommendation 3: That the examination be declared satisfactory.

Recommendation 4: that Classis remand the sermon requirement portion to the Permanent Candidates and Credentials Committee to hear another sermon and receive a written sermon.

Respectfully submitted, Win Groseclose, Caleb Frankart

D. Benevolence

Recommendation 1: That Classis overture Synod on behalf of Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1200 per month for the Synodical year 2023-2024.

Recommendation 2: That Classis provide Rev. Mark Larson with Benevolent aid in the amount of \$250 per month for the Synodical year 2023-2024.

Recommendation 3: That Classis overture Synod on behalf of Rev. Mark Larson in the amount of \$2218.50 per month for the Synodical year 2023-2024.

Respectfully submitted, Win Groseclose, Caleb Frankart

E. Minutes of Synod

Recommendation 1: Shall Classis ratify the proposed amendment to Article 8 of the RCUS Constitution? [Motion Failed.]

Recommendation 2: Shall Classis ratify the proposed amendment to Article 95 of the RCUS Constitution.

Recommendation 3: The 277th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 8–11, 2023, at Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA.

Recommendation 4: The Finances Committee has developed a new process for reporting both membership and financial statistics. While they will still be reckoned from January 1 – December 31, 2022 they are now to be reported by filling out electronic forms. The membership and financial forms are accessible at the links below. Elder Gary Maassen of the Permanent Finances Committee is the point of contact for any questions or difficulties. These links will be distributed to the congregational clerks by email shortly.

Membership Statistics:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSceEhl6VbQ0QStndBQOPHrc_1T7WoAHc5A5_KMqZ 5-eKMhZrQ/viewform

Financial Statistics:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScrX82Ki4-GPkR-9vC6ywgghnRy-4ARWcPqShocZjF7TLY96Q/viewform>.

Recommendation 5: Please review the Standing Rules of Synod (2022 Synod Abstract, pp.90–93).

Recommendation 6: Be reminded that any requests for ministerial aid must be accompanied by the ministerial aid request form and be received at least 14 days prior to the meeting of Synod in order to be considered.

Recommendation 7: Please remember to send necrologies to the Synod clerk in time for Synod.

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Muether, Christopher Campbell, John Larson, Steve Mankins

F. Excuses

Recommendation 1: That Classis excuse Rev. Steve Altman, Rev. Ron Potter, and Elder Dan Wright from all sessions of Classis, Elder John Larson from Tuesday afternoon through the duration of Classis, and Rev. James Grossmann from all meetings of Classis after noon on Wednesday.

It was also moved that Sorensen, Frankart, Stuebbe, and Luquette be excused from all remaining Classis sessions.

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Muether, Christopher Campbell, Steve Mankins, John Larson

G. Finances

Recommendation 1: The standing committee on finances has audited the 2022-2023 year to date treasurer's report and found it to be in order.

Recommendation 2: That travel reimbursements for the Classis meeting be as follows:

Caleb Frankart: \$416

Steven Stuebbe: \$383

Richard Stetler: \$172

Steve Carr: \$706

Dennis Luquette: \$895

Christopher Campbell: \$371

Win Groseclose: \$400

A Total of \$2927.

Recommendation 3: That Classis adopt the following guidelines:

General Fund: \$12.50
Missions Fund: \$40
Benevolence Fund: \$5
Student Aid: \$4.50
Total \$62.
Seconded. Carried.

Respectfully submitted, Dan Schnabel, Andrew Gilman, Mori Willemsen,
Alan Hermann

H. Nominations

Recommendation 1: That the Classis approve the following nominations:

Executive: Luquette, Lorence, Carr
Candidates and Credentials: Groseclose, Wright, Blauw
Church Camp: Sawtelle, Kron, Grossmann, Stuebbe
Interchurch Relations: Potter, Stetler, Willemsen, Larson
Missions: Kron, Schnabel, Baas, Frankart
Communications and Publications: Muether, Schnabel, Mankins, Campbell

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Muether, Christopher Campbell, Steve
Mankins, John Larson

I. Services

Recommendation. 1: That the following be read to the congregation of St. Paul's Evangelical RCUS: "The delegates of the 38th annual session of Covenant East Classis would like to express our most sincere appreciation to St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church for hosting our Classis meeting. Your hospitality expressed a brotherly love that brings honor to our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ; the meals far exceeded our expectations demonstrating your care for our physical well-being as we considered important matters of the church.

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

The minutes were circularized and approved by circular.

Adjournment

The 38th Annual Meeting of the Covenant East Classis was adjourned at 7:46 pm until the next called meeting.

A. Roll Call

The final roll call showed 7 ministers and 5 elders present, a quorum.

B. Devotions

Willemsen, the elder from St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church, led the body in devotions by reading from Psalm 146, commenting on the text, and praying.

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

The Vice 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 2023 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: From St. Paul’s Evangelical RCUS: Overturing Classis to take Mr. Dale Schmieg under care as student for the ministry (To Standing Examination and Licensure Committee).

Overture 2: From Salem Ebenezer RCUS: Overturing Classis for ministerial aid for Mrs. Joan Vance in the amount of \$1200 per month for the Synodical year 2023-2024.

Communications

Communication 1: January 23, 2023. From the Stated Clerk of Synod: Minutes of Synod Report (To Standing Minutes of Synod Committee).

Communication 2: January 30, 2023. From Rev. Ron Potter: Request to be excused from all sessions of Classis (To Standing Excuses Committee).

Communication 3: February 9, 2023. From Rev. Jimmy John Hall: Requesting to be transferred to the Northern Plains Classis (To Standing Judicial Committee).

Communication 4: February 21, 2023. From the Northern Plains Classis: Letter of Dismission to our Classis for Rev. James Grossmann (To Standing Judicial Committee).

Communication 5: February 24, 2023. From Rev. Mark Larson: Sending greetings to the Classis.

Communication 6: March 6, 2023. From Elder Dan Wright: Asking to be excused from all sessions of Classis (To Standing Excuse Committee).

Communication 7: March 6, 2023. From Elder John Larson: Asking to be excused from the afternoon sessions of Classis on Tuesday and all sessions on Wednesday (To Standing Excuses).

Communications 8: March 6, 2023. From Rev. Steve Altman: Asking to be excused from all sessions of Classis (To Standing Excuses Committee).

Appendix #2 – Necrologies

There were no necrologies this year.

Appendix #3 – Statistics covering 2022 and reported in 2023 follows pp. 58-61

Financial Statistics

Classis	Church	City, State	Receipts from REGULAR SUNDAY OFFERINGS	Receipts from SPECIAL OFFERINGS	Receipts from all OTHER SOURCES	TOTAL RECEIPTS	Budgeted Synodical Funds Disbursed	Budgeted Classical Funds Disbursed	Giving to other RCUS Causes	Giving to other Non- RCUS Causes
Covenant East	Emmaus Road Reformed Church	Minnetonka, Minnesota	513,843	893	846	515,581	27,500	7,000	5,500	12,181
Covenant East	Heritage Reformed Church	Waymart, PA	34,706	0	0	34,706	4,452	1,140	0	0
Covenant East	Salem Ebenezer Reformed Church	MANITOWOC, WI	169,928	3,145	4,218	177,291	31,970	7,260	2,000	8,740
Covenant East	Peace Reformed Garner, Iowa	Garner, Iowa	106,338	0	155	106,493	10,202	2,400	0	0
Covenant East	Covenant Reformed Church Gettysburg	Gettysburg, PA	100,548	950	3,062	104,560	5,566	1,518	6,230	217
Covenant East	St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church	Hamburg, MN	241,443	5,446	32,250	279,139	44,256	11,520	5,682	5,505
Covenant East	Peace Reformed Church Napoleon OH	Napoleon, OH	141,423	3,868	134,561	279,851	21,648	7,920	3,669	7,401
Covenant East	Redeemer Reformed Church	Minneapolis, MN	347,753	6,669	6,913	361,335	25,163	6,390	14,552	12,994
Covenant East	Northland Reformed	Kansas City, MO	297,820	15,122	0	312,942	18,150	4,560	1,996	14,107
Covenant East	Grace Reformed Church of NW Arkansas	Rogers, AR	82,211	0	2,977	85,188	3,225	829	0	0
			2,036,012	36,093	184,982	2,257,086	192,132	50,537	39,629	61,144

Other General Expenses	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	Value of Church Building	Value of Parsonage	Property Improvements	Present Property Debts	Debt Payments made in the Past Year	Total Communicant Members from Previous	Giving to Synodical Funds per Communicant Member	Giving to Classical Funds per Communicant Member	Total Giving to RCUS per Communicant Member
277,565	329,746	0	371,972	0	250,000	0	99	278	71	404
37,027	42,619	0	0	0	0	0	12	242	60	310
141,072	191,042	1,500,000	300,000	7,500	0	0	113	283	64	365
64,782	77,384	750,000	125,000	0	0	0	34	249	59	308
37,091	50,622	0	0	0	0	0	24	242	66	308
153,565	220,528	35,709,000	425,600	12,849	0	0	191	232	60	322
167,197	207,835	275,000	0	0	0	0	60	361	132	554
280,493	339,592	2,095,000	400,000	13,206	164,430	74,801	97	244	62	447
242,261	281,074	2,200,000	na	10,000	400,000	50,000	75	242	61	303
84,728	88,780	91,318	91,318	17,636	63,493	6,520	16	202	52	254
1,485,781	1,829,222	42,620,318	1,713,890	61,191	877,923	131,321	721	2,574	687	3,575

Membership Statistics

Church	Phone #	Pastor	Clerk	Mailing Address	Location	Number of Elders	Number of Deacons	from Previous year	Communicant Members Reported	Received by Confirmation	Received by Letter of Dismission
Emmaus Road Reformed Church	612-751-2096	Pastor Ryan Kron	Ian Gilbert	8701 Woodcliff Road, Bloomington 55438	Minnetonka, MN	3	4	99	1	1	
Redeemer Reformed Church	763-417-9835	James Sawtelle	Andrew Gilman	3101 Virginia Ave., Crystal, MN 55427	1300 Lilac Dr. N., Golden Valley, MN 55422	3	4	97	7	1	
Heritage Reformed Church	570-785-4012	Ron Potter	Ron Potter	136 Grand Ave., Forest City, PA 18421	200 Belmont Turnpike (lower level Waymart Presby	1	0	12	0	1	
Salem Ebenezer Reformed	19207264940	Vacant at this time	Steve Stuebbe	6524 Hwy C	Manitowoc, WI	3	3	113	1	0	
Peace Reformed Garner, Iowa	641-923-3060	Vacant	Jared Greiman	1907 200th St.	Garner, Iowa	2	3	34	0	0	
Covenant Reformed Church Gettysburg	7175284155	Samual Rodriguez	Don Buysse	1189 Mud Run Rd	Gettysburg Pa	2	0	31	0	0	
Peace Reformed Church, Napoleon	419-980-3164	Steven Altman	Tim Demland	638 Huddle Rd Napoleon Oh 43545	Napoleon OH	3	3	60	0	0	
St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed Church	952-240-0886	Daniel Schnabel	Mori Willemssen	Canverpit@wmmueller.com	Hamburg, MN	3	3	191	4	0	
Northland Reformed Church	816-420-9700	Christopher Campb	Mark Griess	2901 NW Cookingham Drive, Kansas City,	Kansas City, MO	3	6	92	0	0	
Grace Reformed Church of NW Arkansas	479-372-1108	Steve Carr	Chuck Barker	3320 N 2nd St. Rogers, AR 72756	Rogers, AR	1	1	16	0	2	
						24	27	745	13	5	

Received by Profession of Faith	TOTAL RECEIVED	Total Old and New Communicant Members	Lost by Dismissal	Lost by Erasure / Discipline	Lost by Death	TOTAL LOST	TOTAL COMMUNICANT MEMBERS THIS YEAR	UNCONFIRMED MEMBERS (baptized children)	TOTAL BAPTIZED MEMBERS	Number of FAMILIES now in congregation	Number of CHILDREN enrolled in Sunday School	Number of ADULTS BAPTIZED last year	Number of INFANTS BAPTIZED last year	TOTAL BAPTISMS last year	Number of members who received the LORD'S SUPPER last year	Number of times LORD'S SUPPER was given last year
12	14	113	2	8	0	10	103	57	159	52	45	1	2	3	103	12
5	13	110	5	0	2	7	103	38	141	45	32	2	5	7	95	6
0	1	13	2	2	0	4	9	2	11	6	2	0	0	0	9	12
0	1	114	0	0	3	3	111	11	122	76	3	0	1	1	105	3
0	0	34	0	0	2	2	32	2	34	20	1	0	0	0	22	3
0	0	31	4	0	0	4	27	10	37	10	10	0	0	0	24	12
0	0	60	2	3	0	5	55	30	85	32	18	0	2	2	48	6
2	2	197	0	4	4	8	189	21	210	119	13	0	3	3	150	7
1	1	93	4	1	0	5	88	28	116	45	23	0	1	1	83	9
2	4	20	2	2	0	4	16	15	31	8	13	0	1	1	16	12
22	36	785	21	20	11	52	733	214	946	413	160	3	15	18	655	82

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.]