

The Northern Plains Classis

2016 Abstract of the Minutes



Special Meeting
July 11th, A.D. 2015
First Reformed Church
Herreid, South Dakota

Spring Meeting
March 14th & 15th, A.D. 2016
First Reformed Church
Aberdeen, South Dakota

Classical Guideline for Giving

Classical Dues:	\$21.00
Missions:	\$56.00
Total:	\$77.00

Officers of Classis

<i>President:</i>	<i>Rev. David Dawn</i>
<i>Vice President:</i>	<i>Rev. George Syms</i>
<i>Stated Clerk:</i>	<i>Rev. James Grossmann</i>
<i>Treasurer:</i>	<i>Elder Matthew Fickbohm</i>

Permanent Committees of Classis

(Underline indicates Chairman)

Auditing

J.P. Mosley, W. Haddock, B. Davis

Camp

M. Fickbohm, J. Grossmann, C. Schwichtenberg, N. Arbach

Candidates and Credentials

J.P. Mosley, G. Syms, P. Poe, W. Brice, J. Snyder, R. Meidinger

Christian Education and Publications

D. Clark, W. Brice, E. Mehlhaff

Diaconal

D. Clark, S. Sapp, G. Opp

Executive

D. Dawn, J. Grossmann, M. Fickbohm

Home Missions

J.P. Mosley, D. Dawn, D. Haak, P. Poe, R. DeJong

Interchurch Relations

D. Clark, W. Brice, C. Mehlhaff, R. DeJong

Assistant to the Clerk

D. Haak

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Ministers of the Word

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Churches in North Dakota

- Anamoose, ND 58710.....(701) 626-7429**
Kassel RCUS, meeting at St. Martin Lutheran Church in Anamoose
 (Mail: 540 20th St NE, Butte, ND 58723)
 Bible Study: 10:30 AM
- Ashley, ND 58413.....(701) 288-3265**
Salem RCUS, 209 1st Ave SW (Mail: PO Box 345)
 Worship: 9 AM
- Minot, ND 58701.....(701) 838-6050**
Harvest RCUS, meeting at Grand International Hotel, Norse Room
 (Mail: PO Box 804, Minot, ND 58702-0804)
 Worship: 10:30am Bible Study: 6:30pm @ Parsonage
 Pastor: Phil Poe (wife, Karen)

Chapels in North Dakota

- Dickinson, ND 58601.....(701) 974-4321**
First RCUS, Meeting at Dickinson Holiday Inn Express
 (Mail: PO Box 60, Taylor, ND 58656-0060)
 Worship: 10:00 AM; SS: 11:30 am
 Website: www.FRCofD.com
 Pastor: Wesley Brice (wife, Ginger)

Churches in South Dakota

- Aberdeen, SD 57401.....(605) 229-5953**
First RCUS, 818 9th Ave. S.E.
 (Mail: 316 17th Ave SE, Apt 111)
 Worship: 9:00 AM Sunday School: 10:15am
 Website: www.aberdeenrcus.org
 Pastor: David Dawn (wife, Colleen)
- Eureka, SD 57437.....(605) 284-2396**
Eureka RCUS, 310 F Ave. (Mail: PO Box 456)
 Worship: 9:00 AM; Sunday School: 10:15 AM
 Pastor: James Grossmann (wife, Michelle)
- Herreid, SD 57632.....(605) 437-2209**
First RCUS, 601 N. Main St. (Mail: PO Box 212)
 Worship: 10AM; Sunday School 11AM
 Pastor: Cody Schwichtenberg (wife, Angela)

Hosmer, SD 57448.....(605) 577-6604
Hosmer RCUS, 202 West 5th St (Mail: 11704 343rd Ave)
Worship: 11:00 AM Every Other Week

Pierre, SD 57501.....(605) 224-7846
Hope RCUS, 317 S. Garfield
Worship:9:30 AM; SS 10:45AM
Website: www.hopercus.com
Pastor: J.P. Mosley, Jr (wife, Francesca)

Watertown, SD 57201.....(605) 878-4567
Covenant RCUS, 15 12th Ave NE (Mail: 434 30th St. NW)
Worship 10AM; Sunday School: 11:20AM
Website: www.watertownrcus.org
Pastor: George Syms (wife, Deborah)

Radio Programs of the Northern Plains Classis

Church	Radio Station	Time
Aberdeen – Pause for Thought	KGIM – 1420 AM	Sundays, 8:30 AM
Salem – Start the Week	KSJB – 600 AM	Sundays, 7:45 AM
Eureka – Worship Service	KOLY – 99.5 FM	Sundays, 9:00 AM

Church Websites

- First RCUS – Aberdeen, SD.....aberdeenrcus.org
- Covenant RCUS – Watertown, SD.....watertownrcus.org
- First Reformed Chapel – Dickinson, ND.....www.FRCofD.com
- Hope Reformed Church – Pierre, SD.....hopercus.com
- SermonAudio.....www.SermonAudio.com/npcrcus

Northern Plains Classis
Reformed Church in the United States
Special Meeting – July 11th, A.D. 2015
First Reformed Church, Herreid, South Dakota

I. Services

David Dawn opened the meeting with prayer. Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg led the Assembly in a devotion entitled: Boasting in Christ, using Galatians 6:12-15 as his text, and closing with prayer.

II. Organization

The Special Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis convened at 8:30am on Saturday, July 11th A.D. 2015 at First Reformed Church of Herreid, South Dakota.

Following the devotion, President David Dawn called the Assembly to order. The roll was called and there were 7 ministers, 6 elders, and one licentiate present, a quorum.

The President defined the Bar of the House as the first 5 pews of the church and appointed Elder Doug Haak and Elder James Snyder as tellers for the meeting. Rev. J.P. Mosley was appointed to be the *Reformed Herald* reporter.

**III. Adoption of the Agenda, Orders of the Day,
Special Orders.**

The Agenda, Services and Orders of the Day were adopted as amended.

**IV. Welcome & Seating of Fraternal Delegates;
Welcome & Seating of Visitors**

The President welcomed Elder Nathan Arbach, Elder Vern Oschner, Elder LeRoy Neifer, and Elder Raymond Schnable. These men were all seated in the bar of the house and given the privilege of the floor.

V. Announcement of Standing Committees

Examinations and Licensure G. Syms; W. Haddock; D. Clark; J.P. Mosley; P. Poe; J. Grossmann; D. Haak; J. Snyder; G. Opp

Excuses D. Dawn; D. VanderVliet; R. DeJong; R. Jung

Finances D. Dawn; D. VanderVliet; R. DeJong; R. Jung

**VI. Presentation of Overtures, Permanent Committee
Reports & Communications**

The Stated Clerk presented the overtures and communications to the Standing Overture committee. The Permanent Candidates & Credentials committee report was distributed to the Standing Committee on Examinations & Licensure.

Candidates and Credentials Committee

Proposed Order for Licensure Exam of Cody Schwichtenberg: July 11, 2015

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Introduction of the Candidate (i.e., personal history/testimony) | |
| 2. Prolegomena | Rev. P. Poe |
| 3. Theology proper | Rev. P. Poe |
| 4. Anthropology | Rev. D. Clark |
| 5. Christology | Rev. G. Syms |
| 6. Soteriology | Rev. G. Syms |
| 7. Ecclesiology | Rev. G. Syms |
| 8. Eschatology | Rev. D. Clark |
| 9. TFU | Elder J. Snyder |
| 10. Constitution | Rev. J. P. Mosley |
| 11. Practica | Rev. G. Syms |
| 12. English Bible | Rev. D. Clark |
| 13. Apologetics | Elder J. Snyder |
| 14. Hermeneutics | Rev. J. P. Mosley |
| 15. Philosophy | Rev. J. P. Mosley |
| 16. Church History | Rev. D. Clark |
| 17. Biblical Languages | [During Tom's Exam] |

Brethren: Each area of examination is to be limited to fifteen minutes, giving us a total of about 3.75 hours. The question and answer period will simply be open-ended. When examining make sure that your questions are sharp (*i.e.* to the point) and pertinent. Out of fairness to the candidate, we will use Berkhof's Systematic Theology as a guide for our questions. What we want to know is where the candidate stands on a particular truth or doctrine and how well he understands it. This is a full licensure examination. What we're looking for is a clear understanding and commitment to the teachings of Holy Scripture as we confess them in the TFU. The chairman will conduct the meeting.

Proposed Order for Ordination Exam of Thomas Walters: July 11, 2015

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. TFU | Elder J. Snyder |
| 2. Philosophy | Rev. J.P. Mosley |

A theological paper has been assigned to Mr. Walters a part of his ordination exam on the "republication controversy" that has arisen in Reformed and Presbyterian churches. The paper will be forthcoming in the next month or so and will be submitted to the committee members for review and evaluation; recommendation will be made, *D.V.*, via Classis circular.

The time frame for this exam probably should not exceed 20 minutes per locus.

VII. Special Orders

The Special Orders of the Classis were two examinations: the examination of Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg for the purpose of licensing him to preach in the Reformed Church in the United States, and the examination of Mr. Thomas Walters for the purpose of ordaining him to the Christian Ministry within the Reformed Church in the United States.

VIII. 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.

1. Examinations and Licensure

Recommendation #1 That Licentiate Thomas Walters examinations in the ares of TFU and Philosophy be sustained.

Recommendation #2 That Licentiate Walters be required to affirm that he has memorized the Heidelberg Catechism before Ordination.

Recommendation #3 That Licentiate Walters present his paper on the “republicaiton controversy” to the 31st Spring meeting of the Northern Plains Classis, to be distributed to the delegates 4 weeks in advance of the meeting.

Recommendation #4 That Licentiate Walters be appointed Stated Supply of Salem Reformed Church, Ashley, North Dakota for 2015.

Recommendation #5 That the Licensure examination of Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg be sustained.

Recommendation #6 That the Ordination examination of Mr. Schwichtenberg be in the area of Ecclesiology.

Recommendation #7 That Licentiate Schwichtenberg be required to affirm that he has memorized the Heidelberg Catechism before Ordination.

Recommendation #8 That Licentiate Schwichtenberg present papers on the following topics to the 31st Spring meeting of the Northern Plains Classis, to be distributed to the delegates 4 weeks in advance of the meeting.

1. Outlining Reformed Church in the United States History
2. Comparing Historic Pre-Millennial Eschatology to Dispensational Eschatology.

Recommendation #9 That Rev. James Grossmann be appointed to oversee the internship of Licentiate Schwichtenberg.

Recommendation #10 That Licentiate Schwichtenberg be appointed Stated Supply of First Reformed Church, Herreid, South Dakota for 2015

George Syms, William Haddock, Philip E. Poe, J.P. Mosley, Glenn Opp, Dale Clark, James B. Snyder, Doug Haak

Rev. Syms informed Mr. Walters of the decision of the Classis.

Rev. Dawn informed Mr. Schwichtenberg of the decision of the Classis. Mr. Schwichtenberg read the Oath of Licensure and signed and dated the form. Rev. Haddock offered a prayer of thanksgiving. Following the prayer, the right hand of fellowship was extended to Mr. Schwichtenberg.

2. Excuses

Items Received: Items 1-2, excuses from Elder Tim Rott and Elder Ray Jung.

Your Committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1 That the Excuses be Granted.

Recommendation #2 That an Excuse be granted to Elder Fickbohm. Grounds, his wife is expecting a child at any time now.

Recommendation #3 That an excuse be granted to Elder Rau due to health reasons.

Recommendation #4 That the Northern Plains Classis express their thanksgiving to the First Reformed Church, Herreid, South Dakota for Hosting this special meeting:

The Northern Plains Classis wishes to thank First Reformed Church for hosting their special meeting. Our every need was met, we were particularly well fed, for which we are grateful.

David Dawn, Nathan Arbach, David Vander Vliet, Rod DeJong

3. Finances

Your committee received the following items: Thank You from Aaron Rau. Requests for mileage reimbursement for the Special Meeting of the Classis:

1.	Rev. Clark	\$121.80
2.	Elder DeJong	\$140.00
3.	Elder Haak	\$70.00
4.	Rev. Mosely	\$76.30
5.	Rev. Poe	\$142.80
6.	Lic Walters	\$35.00
Total		\$585.90

Recommendation #1 Take Note for the Thank You

Recommendation #2 Approve Mileage reimbursement according to the above noted schedule

David Dawn, Nathan Arbach, David Vander Vliet, Rod DeJong

IX. Reading of the Minutes

At the end of the business meeting, the minutes for the day were read and corrected by the Stated Clerk. The President asked, "Shall the minutes be now approved?" Since there were no objections, he declared the minutes approved.

X. Adjournment

Rev. Clark moved that the Classis adjourn to the 31th Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis on March 14th, A.D. 2016 at a time and place to be determined and circularized by the executive committee of classis.

The Final roll call showed 7 ministers, 5 elders and 2 licentiate present. Elder Vander Vliet lead the Assembly in a devotion, reading from I Timothy 1:3-11, closing in prayer.

The Assembly stood and united in reciting the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The President pronounced the Benediction and led the Assembly in the singing of the Doxology.

The Classis adjourned at 4:23pm.

31st Annual Spring Meeting – March 14-15, AD 2016

First Reformed Church – Aberdeen, South Dakota

I. Services

For the opening devotion, Rev. David Dawn opened in prayer, reading from Psalm 133 and giving a devotion about Fellowship and Unity in the Church.

On Monday evening at 7:00pm, the Classis met for a worship service with the congregation of First Reformed Church of Aberdeen, South Dakota. Rev. J.P. Mosley conducted the worship service and Rev. George Syms preached a sermon entitled “*Repent and Believe the Gospel*” using Mark 1:14-15 as his text.

II. Organization

The 31st Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis convened at 1:23pm on Monday, March 14th, A.D. 2016, at First Reformed Church of Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Following the opening devotion, the President, Rev. David Dawn, called the meeting to order. The roll was called and there were 6 ministers, 6 elders, and 1 licentiate, a quorum.

The President defined the Bar of the House as the center left section, the first 7 pews of the church. The President appointed Rev. L. Dale Cark and Rev. J.P. Mosley, Jr. as tellers and Rev. Syms as the *Reformed Herald* reporter.

Election of Officers: Election by ballot was held for men to serve in the following capacities: President: Rev. David Dawn; Vice-President: Rev. George Syms; Stated Clerk: Rev. James Grossmann; and Treasurer: Elder Matthew Fickbohm.

III. Adoption of the Agenda, Orders of the Day, Special Orders

The Agenda, Services, Orders of the Day and Special Order were adopted as presented by Classis President Dawn.

IV. Welcome & Seating of Fraternal Delegates; Welcome and Seating of Visitors

The Classis welcomed Elder Brian Davis of the Hope Reformed Church, Pierre, South Dakota, Elder John Bender and Elder Craig Mehlhaff both of the First Reformed Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota. These men were seated in the bar of the house and given the privilege of the floor.

V. Reception of New Churches

There were no new congregations to be received.

VI. Reception of New Ministers

Rev. Wesley Brice was received, given the right hand of fellowship and Rev. Clark offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

VII. Announcement of Standing Committees

The chairman of the committee is underlined.

Education, Publications, Student Aid, Services & Interchurch: Clark, Dawn, Meidinger
Examinations and Licensure: Syms, Clark, Mosley, Haak, Fickbohm
Excuses: Grossmann, Meidinger, DeJong

Finances, Benevolences, and Ministerial Aid: Brice, Dawn, DeJong, Fickbohm

Judicial: Brice, Mosley, Haak Opp, Arbach

Missions: Dawn, Mosley, Opp, DeJong

Nominations: Grossmann, Syms, Haak

VIII. Presentation of Overtures, Permanent Committee Reports & Communications

The Stated Clerk presented overtures and communications to the Standing Overture Committees. The following Permanent Committee Reports were referred to these Standing Committees: *Auditing* – to Finances, Benevolence & Ministerial Aid; *Camp* – to Education, Student Aid, Publications, Services & Interchurch; *Candidates and Credentials* – to Examinations & Licensure; *Christian Education* – to Education, Student Aid, Publications, Services & Interchurch; *Diaconal* – to Finances, Benevolence & Ministerial Aid; *Missions* – to Missions; *Interchurch Relations* – to Education, Student Aid, Publications, Services & Interchurch.

AUDITING COMMITTEE

Esteemed Brethren:

The Auditing Committee audited the financial books of the Northern Plains Classis as they were kept by the treasurer, Elder Matt Fickbohm. Your committee met with Elder Fickbohm on February 10, 2016. Your Committee found the books to be in order. We make the following recommendation:

1. That the Northern Plains Classis commend Elder Matt Fickbohm for his work as Treasurer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. J.P. Mosley, Jr., Rev. William Haddock, Elder Nathan Arbach

CAMP COMMITTEE

Esteemed Brothers,

Your joint committee of Northern Plains and South Central Classis met by teleconference Monday February 8. Attending were Revs. Fagrey, Grossmann, Henry, Johnson, and Mosley along with Elders Fickbohm and Hofmann.

The meeting opened with prayer by Rev. J.P. Mosley.

The budget was discussed and agreed to by common consent. HYC Camp lost \$2,606.28 last year, but still has \$5,785.59 in the bank. The camper fees are included in the budget and have increased by \$6 on account of declining camp attendance. It will be \$165 if received before June 1, and \$195 afterwards. Counselors and pastors continue to be free. The need for donations to keep costs down was also discussed and opportunities to help should be shared with the churches.

Last year's camp was discussed. Last year's new night time schedule was reviewed and it was decided to continue the new format. The HYC Cup was discussed, and camper evaluations were reviewed. No real changes were needed or warranted

The theme for this year was discussed and it is decided to be "The Seven Sayings" and will be covering the seven final sayings of Christ on the cross. Rev. Scott Henry will be in charge of assigning topics to the ministers. Discussion on T-shirts and making sure possibly offensive iconography was avoided was addressed.

The recipient of the nightly offerings was discussed. David Voytek, son of Rev. Michael Voytek, is

serving as an assistant to OPC missionaries in China, and is need of raising support. It was decided David Voytek would be the recipient of the offering.

Rev. Henry closed in prayer.

Thus your committee brings the following recommendations.

Recommendation #1: TAKE NOTE that the dates of camp are as follows: 2016 - July 18-22, 2017 – July 24-28, 2018 – 23-27, 2019 – July 22-26, 2020 – July 20-24.

Recommendation #2: That the Budget for HYC 2016 be approved.

Note: This includes the camper fees.

Recommendation #3: TAKE NOTE that the churches be encouraged to donate items or money to HYC to help keep costs down.

Recommendation #4: That the Report as a whole be adopted.

Note: This includes approval of theme and offering recipient.

J.P. Mosley, J. Grossmann, M. Fickbohm, C. Mehlhaff

Balance Forward		\$8,391.87		
Revenue	Budget 2015	Actual 2015	Difference	Budget 2016
Camp Fees	\$17,000.00	\$13,418.00	-\$3,582.00	\$15,510.00
Gifts		\$475.00	\$475.00	
Worship Offering	\$1,200.00	\$1,315.25	\$115.25	\$1,000.00
Interest		\$0.57	\$0.57	
Camp Store Sales	\$900.00	\$438.75	-\$461.25	\$600.00
Total Revenue	\$19,100.00	\$15,647.57		\$17,110.00
Expenses				
Facility Use	\$11,000.00	\$10,334.78	-\$665.22	\$10,656.00
Food	\$3,800.00	\$2,784.32	-\$1,015.68	\$3,500.00
T-Shirts & Counselor Gifts	\$3,000.00	\$2,424.96	-\$575.04	\$2,500.00
Crafts	\$200.00	\$216.79	\$16.79	\$200.00
Supplies & Equipment	\$1,000.00	\$358.34	-\$641.66	\$500.00
Promotion	\$200.00		-\$200.00	\$200.00
Custer State Park Fees	\$100.00		-\$100.00	\$100.00
Administration	\$100.00	\$387.24	\$287.24	\$100.00
Camp Store Supplies	\$800.00	\$431.67	-\$368.33	\$500.00
Worship Offering	\$1,200.00	\$1,315.25	\$115.25	\$1,000.00
Total Expenses	\$21,400.00	\$18,253.35		\$19,256.00
Revenue Less Expenses				
			-\$2,605.78	-\$2,146.00
Ending Balance		\$5,786.09		

Heidelberg Youth Camp Financial Report and Proposed Budget for 2015

Rental Cost: \$600 (kitchen use) + [\$19 (daily rate/person) X 4 (days) X 125 (people) + 5.5% tax

Proposed 2015 fees: \$165 per camper if registration and fee are received by June 1 (\$6 increase).

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\$195 per camper if received June 1 or after (\$6 increase) No fee for adult volunteers. Proposed budget is based upon 85 campers and 40 adults.

CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

March 9, 2016

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

In comparison to last year, the past classical year has been rather quiet for one for your committee. There were no meetings *via* conference call and the committee conducted no business. With the departure of Licentiate Thomas Walters from the Salem RCUS in Ashley, the need for another pastor has arisen. We had begun to make arrangements for an examination in Orthodoxy and Intention of Mr. Craig Phelps, a graduate of Puritan Reformed Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI. The Ashley congregation is interested in this man as a candidate for their pulpit.

Mr. Phelps contacted the chairman and regretfully informed him that he would not be able to do any of the exams at the present time.

The committee is also preparing for the ordination examination of Licentiate Cody Schwichtenberg at this meeting of Classis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. George Phil Poe, J. Snyder

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & PUBLICATIONS

No Report was produced

DIACONAL

Your committee has had one responsibility this past year. Classis required, your committee to keep in contact with Elder Rau concerning his financial and other needs. Revs. Poe and Clark have visited or spoken to Elder Rau on various occasions.

Elder Rau has seen some improvement in his physical condition, but he will not regain his prior abilities. He is thankful to God for what he has been able to recover. As you can imagine this has been a very hard time in his and Margie's lives as well as the rest of the family. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.

This past summer was not the best for renting out pasture land. He had hoped to be able to pay off a loan from this avenue of income but came short. He was also able to do some work with his manure spreading business though Jacob, Aaron's youngest son, had to do much of it for him due to his disabilities. There remains about \$3,000 on this loan.

Further Aaron has conveyed that there is a \$750 medical bill that he was not expecting.

Recommendations:

Your committee recommends that Classis provide Elder Rau with \$3,000 to pay off his loan and encourage the congregations of Classis to aid the Rauses through their own diaconal funds.

Respectfully in Christ,

Dale Clark; Phil Poe; Steve Sapp; Raymond Jung

HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Esteemed Brothers,

(This report was late due to circumstances beyond our control. Our committee had asked and received permission from the executive committee not to be held to the deadlines given in the standing rules.)

This past year, the concerns of your committee has again centred around First Reformed Chapel, Dickinson, ND. This work is under the oversight of the First Reformed Church, Aberdeen, ND.

In terms of actual membership numbers, we have experienced a downturn. At the beginning of 2015, there were three families that comprise the core of this work, in addition to Rev Dale Clark and his wife, Sandra. We lost one family, the Logans, due to God's good hand of Providence. Having discovered that their unborn child would be born with a serious heart condition, the Logan's moved to Denver, Colorado to be near their medical specialists.

(The Lord graciously gave them a safe birth last fall. In February 2016, the First Reformed Church release them to the care of the covenant Reformed Church PCA in Wheatridge, Colorado.)

In August, Rev Dale Clark, our home missionary, left the Dickinson work. The next month, Rev Wes Brice arrived to take up the work. At this time, Rev Brice is not serving as a home missionary. His technical position is that of stated supply. In practice, however, he is doing the work of a home missionary.

For much of 2015, there was an atmosphere of real pessimism in Dickinson. It appeared for a while that the mission work would have to close. In God's good providence, this has all changed. The congregation, although composed of only two families, is now enthusiastic and motivated. This can be seen, for instance, in the fact that the offerings in Dickinson totalled \$41,199.91 in 2015.

The First Reformed Church in Aberdeen, SD has been able to exercise a large degree of supervision for this mission work. This is mostly because one of their elders, Elder Craig Mehlhaff, is frequently in the area, working as a salesman for Truss Pros, a building supplies company.

We thank God for the ministry Rev Brice continues to exercise in Dickinson. We are also grateful for the commitment of the congregation. The mission work has a steady trickle of visitors who come and hear the Gospel. In addition, Rev Brice conducts a Bible study in Taylor, where the parsonage is located. Several men from local churches attend this meeting.

In every way, this mission work has completely turned around. We praise God for mercifully allowing the Gospel to continue to go forth in Dickinson. Attached to this report please find a copy of the proposed three-year budget for Dickinson.

When the missions committee had a recent conference call, it voted to recommend to classis that further efforts of church planting be considered in our territory. The committee did not desire to limit consideration of further church plantings to specific cities. However, Jamestown and Fargo were mentioned as real possibilities.

The missions committee also discussed the funding of Start The Week, the radio programme founded by our Ashley church. At this time, Rev David A Dawn of Aberdeen is the speaker on this broadcast. This arrangement is likely to continue until Ashley has a settled pastor. The committee voted to recommend classis continue to fund 75% of the broadcast charges.

May God continue to prosper the preaching of the Gospel in the Northern Plains Classis.

Recommendations

1. That's the classis approve the three-year budget for Dickinson.
2. That the classis budget \$2,000 for travel expenses to be used by the consistory of the First

Reformed Church in Aberdeen to visit Dickinson.

3. That classis investigate the possibility of starting another mission work, possibly in Jamestown or Fargo.

4. That classis continue to fund 75% of the broadcast costs for Ashley's radio programme, Start The Week.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David A Dawn, Acting Chairman; Rev. Phil Poe; Elder Doug Haak; Elder Rod DeJong

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

Esteemed Brothers,

Your committee has received invitations to:

Classis Central U.S of the United Reformed Churches in North America

September 14-15, 2015 in Schererville, Indiana

The Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

September 22, 2015 in Elizabeth, Colorado

The Midwest Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

November 3-5, 2015 in Westminster, Colorado

Classis Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches

October 9, 2015 in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Classis Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches

March 11, 2016 in Winnipeg, Manitoba

The Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

April 5, 2016 in Denver, Colorado

Unfortunately, your committee was unable to send delegates to any of these meetings.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Grossmann; Dale Clark; David Vander Vliet, Earl Mehlhaff, Craig Mehlhaff

IX. Reports of Officers

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

Esteemed Brothers,

Once again the time has come to consider the state in which we find the Northern Plains Classis. As we look back on the past year, we see the Lord's hand at work in our midst. This does not mean we have been free from trials. However it does mean that Christ is still building his church in our midst. The evidence of our eyes often tell us that things are dire, and total ruin is just around the corner. It was Jonathan who said in I Samuel 14.6, "it may be that the Lord will work with us: for it is not hard to the Lord to save with many, or with few." Therefore, let us not be dismayed by our lack of great numbers. Let us be encouraged by the words of the Psalmist. He wrote these words in both Psalm

16.12 and in Psalm 108.13, “through God we shall do valiantly: for he shall tread down our enemies.”

Having said that, the purpose of this report is to give the state of the church. Therefore, with trust in and thankfulness to God, we have to with knowledge our classis took a bit of a hit this past year. Our total communicant membership fell from 434 to 401. This was quite a drop. It does have to be said that, of the total number of members lost, 16 were because of death. This is uniquely and exclusively due to the providence of the God who numbers our days. We can take comfort in the fact that these 16 souls are now rejoicing in the presence of God. Our loss is their gain. Another figure I always consider in the statistics is the number of communicant members received by profession of faith. By and large, this figure represents those received into our membership who were not previously members of the Reformed Church. Sadly, this figure dropped from 15 in 2014 to 6 in 2015. To me, this indicates we are not reaching the population living within the bounds of our classis with the Gospel. This is what concerns me the most.

Turning to the parochial reports, Rev Dale Clark reports having difficulty finding employment since leaving Dickinson and moving to Anchorage, Alaska. He and his wife currently have part-time jobs. Rev Clark has been interviewed for the Clinical Pastoral Education course that is offered at one of the hospitals in Anchorage. As of the writing of his report, he has not heard whether he has been accepted into this programme. Should Dale be accepted in this course and complete it successfully, he will be qualified to serve as a hospital chaplain.

Reporting from Minot, Rev Phil Poe reports that his church has lost a significant number of members due to moving away to take advantage of job opportunities. Still, they have been able to continue their support to various Reformed causes, as well as giving out several thousand dollars in diaconal aid. The Minot church is also working with an architect with a few to building a facility that can see 100 people. It is good to see this church, in the midst of discouragement, pressing ahead, walking by faith and not by sight.

Rev Wes Brice, reporting on our Dickinson mission work, is very cheerful and optimistic. Coming to Dickinson at a low point in their history, Rev Brice testifies to the grace of God in the congregation there. Although the membership of the mission work consists of only two families, the mood of the small congregation is very upbeat. There have been visitors to the services. The Brices have engaged in outreach in various ways.

The situation in our Ashley church is very serious. The sudden departure of licentiate Thomas Walters was a surprise to many. This is not the place to comment more. However, we are thankful for the prospect of another man who has expressed interest in Ashley and the ministry of the RCUS.

Licentiate Cody Schwichtenberg in Herreid reports that the church there is receiving his ministry very well. He also has opportunities to minister to the youth of the church. Much of his time has to be given to study for his ordination exam which, God willing, will take place at this classis meeting. We thank God that he has provided Cody to minister to this congregation and trust that he will continue to provide godly ministry in his local church and wisdom to our classis.

Rev James Grossmann writes from Eureka, giving an account of his busy ministry there. In addition to preaching in Eureka, he has also ministered numerous times in Herreid and Ashley. He also serves as our Stated Clerk. Perhaps the climax of his year was serving as a fraternal delegate to the synod meetings of our sister denomination in the Congo. Rev Grossmann consistently handles a very heavy schedule with patience and grace.

This writer continues to serve as the pastor of our Aberdeen church. God willing, I will complete my fourteenth year in the pastorate there at the end of June. In addition to my pastoral ministry, I currently serve as speaker for two radio broadcasts, Start The Week and Pause For Thought. Much of my ministry centres around the nursing homes in Aberdeen. The Lord has been pleased to grant our church a period of unity and peace. We do not take this for granted, but we do praise God for allowing us both to worship the Lord and spread the Gospel in our city.

Although 2015 saw many trials for Rev George Syms of Watertown, his parochial report shows a full range of activities in the church there. His report indicates at least one talent which is not universally shared by ministers. I refer to his ability to engage the congregation in times of fellowship and recreation. Teaching God's people to enjoy each other's company in informal situations is neither frivolous nor unimportant. It encourages us to treat each other as friends. In addition, Rev Syms has chaired the Candidates and Credentials Committee during the year when numerous exams were given and different men were interviewed. We are thankful that the Lord has improved his health and enabled him to continue ministering in Watertown.

Rev J.P. Mosley writes from Pierre that this has been a difficult year in the life of the church. There have been losses to the membership from various causes which have been discouraging. For all of this, one senses a note of optimism in his report. This optimism is not simply wistful thinking, but faith in the promises of God. It is in this certain hope that we, along with Rev J.P. Mosley, look expectantly to the future with confidence. The Lord will build his church.

The Candidates And Credentials Committee reports that Licentiate Cody Schwichtenberg will be examined for ordination at our classis meeting this week. This is good news for the congregation in Herreid. We are also pleased that Mr Craig Phelps, currently a licentiate in the United Reformed Churches, is interested in pursuing ordination in the RCUS. It was hoped that he would be able to take a licensure exam at our meeting. Unfortunately, he had to inform the committee he would be providentially hindered from attending.

Another committee whose report showed significant activity was the Home Missions Committee. This report was mainly taken up with the situation in our mission work in Dickinson, North Dakota. The committee was thankful to God for turning around the circumstances in that work. The congregation, which had been very discouraged, is now optimistic and enthusiastic to see a Reformed Church established in their town. The arrival of Rev Wesley Brice as stated supply to the work has been greatly blessed by the Lord. There have been numerous opportunities for outreach. The committee also recommended that the classis consider investigating the possibilities of establishing other mission churches within the classis. Although Jamestown and Fargo were mentioned by name, the committee was open to considering a work in any city in which there appeared to be an opportunity.

It is the conclusion of this writer that the state of this classis should not be evaluated on the basis of statistics. The various parochial reports show that each minister is earnestly seeking both to minister to his congregation and to proclaim the gospel outside the walls of the church. Speaking of his own ministry, the apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3.6, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." This is the key to both numerical growth and spiritual growth. We must faithfully plant and water the seed, but we must never lose sight of the fact that it is God who gives the increase. Therefore, we must not be defeatists. We must carry on doing that work to which God has called us. Let us remember the exhortation given by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6.9, "Let us not therefore be weary of well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Respectfully submitted,

Rev David A Dawn
President, Northern Plains Classis

B. Stated Clerk's Report

Esteemed Brethren,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as your Stated Clerk over the course of the past year. I will be reporting on my labors since our 30th Annual Spring Meeting of Classis.

Duties Performed:

1. Completed the Minutes from the 30th Annual Spring as well as the February 7th Special Meetings of the Northern Plains Classis and presented them to the 269th Synod of the Reformed Church of the United States. (There were a few exceptions noted by the Committee on the Minutes of Classis, they are being corrected.)
2. Prepared the Abstract of the 30th Annual Spring Meeting of Classis and the February 7th Special Meeting and delivered copies of them to the churches of the RCUS at the Synod meeting held in Menno, South Dakota.
3. Prepared the Statistical Report, Stated Clerk's Report, as well as any items needed for this meeting.

Correspondence Sent and Received:

1. An email to Anamoose requesting their answers to the Article 81 Constitutional Questions.
2. Five items to the Stated Clerk of Synod:
 1. Statistical & Membership Report for the NPC
 2. Writ of Certification for Classis Delegates to the 269th Synod of the RCUS
 3. Addresses of the Churches and Delegates of the NPC
 4. Report of Changes
 5. Three Overtures from the NPC to the Synod of the RCUS
3. Forms for Membership and Financial Statistics, as well as the Form for the Credentials of Elders to Classis to the churches of the NPC to be completed prior to our 31st Annual Meeting.
4. Four Executive Circulars to the Delegates of Classis sent via email and the US Postal Service.

Items for your consideration:

Timeliness of Reports:

In contrast to previous years, statistics and credentials were received for the most part on time this year! I am VERY thankful to the congregations for this. I am also thankful to the assistant to the clerk for encouraging a couple of churches who were slightly behind on this.

Hosting Classis:

For the past two years, we have left it to the executive committee to find a host for Classis. There are a couple of churches which have not hosted Classis in quite some time. I know that it is impossible for certain churches to host Classis. I would commend to you to consider when the last time your congregation hosted classis.

Assisting Our Churches in Need

Brothers, it is our duty to help those churches which are in need. We are to bear their burdens. Anamoose has no pastor and one of their elders is trying to hold the church together while dealing with brain cancer. Ashley and Hosmer just lost what seemed to be a good fit for a licentiate and have been greatly wounded by his departure. Please consider how you can help these and other brothers and sisters in their need.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Grossmann

C. Report of the Executive Committee's Report of Synod

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In reviewing the minutes of the 269th Synod, there are some items that the Classes should take note of:

1. Classes should take note of the corrections that should be made to their minutes as adopted by the Synod (269th Abstract, pp. 84-85).
2. Both membership statistics and financial statistics should be according to the calendar year.
3. Standing rules #2 and #3 which respectively read: “The statistics of the Classes for the calendar year shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod May 1”; “The writ of certification for delegate elders shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk May 1.”
4. That the Stated Clerk of each Classis regularly provide the webmaster, in electronic form, an updated roll of ministers, elders, and churches following their spring Classis meeting.
5. Standing Ministerial Aid recommendation 8 (2013 Abstract page 76), that pursuant to Article 28 of the RCUS Constitution, Classes shall not consider a pastoral call letter as “adequate support” to the temporal needs of the called pastor, unless retirement is addressed and funded in the terms of the call.
6. The Treasurer’s request that the treasurers of the various churches be reminded to comply with Synod standing rule 8 with regard to designating for which fund the monies delivered to the RCUS are to be attributed.
7. Per Article 197 of the RCUS Constitution, the following amendments to the Constitution were adopted by two-thirds vote of the 269th Synod and need the concurrence of two-thirds of the Classis [*So far, only one Classis has taken action: I received a communication from Covenant East Classis that at a Special Fall Classis meeting (2015) they concurred with amendments herein labeled 7a, c, and d*]:
 - a) That the notation “Articles 40-42 were removed by the 269th Synod” be placed in the RCUS Constitution in place of Articles 40-42, and that the numbering of the articles of the constitution from Article 43 on remain unchanged.
 - b) That “Teacher of Theology” be retained as a valid Ministry of the Word.
 - c) That Article 84 of the RCUS Constitution be amended to read as follows: An ordained minister or a licentiate shall not be received by Classis until he has presented a regular certificate of dismissal from the Classis to which he belongs. The reception and installation of a minister from another denomination shall not be final until it is confirmed by Synod. Classes shall forward to Synod its actions concerning ministers from other denominations; and also provide a resume regarding the new minister.
 - d) That Article 195 of the RCUS Constitution be amended as follows: “Marriage has been instituted by God. The Reformed Church in the United States defines “marriage” as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government’s sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by The Reformed Church in the United States only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of “marriage” found in these Articles. Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as “porneia”) including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and

pedophilia are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. (Leviticus 18-20; I Corinthians 5:1-5; 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:3-7; Heidelberg Catechism 108, 109). Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the biblical witness. Every officer, employee, or volunteer of the church shall affirm their agreement with this definition of marriage and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith. This shall be a prerequisite, and continual condition, for these positions.”

8. No Classis action needs to take place on the following motion, but each Classis should be aware that it was postponed by the 269th Synod until the 270th Synod, partly because it came as an overture from an individual delegate rather than from a Classis: “Every human being, regardless of mental or physical infirmity, is created in the image of God. It is never acceptable as a matter of medical practice or familial care to facilitate or assist an act of suicide. While an individual may refuse “heroic” medical procedures which they deem to be an artificial extension of biological life, suicide or any assistance provided to assist suicide is a violation of the law of God. The Reformed Church in the United States formally rejects any and all attempts to legalize this pernicious and immoral practice, and encourages our elected leaders, especially to do all in their power to protect the disabled, the feeble, the poor and the infirm from those who would pressure them into taking their own lives.” [Cf. 269th Synod Abstract, page 89]
9. The Classes are reminded that the 270th Annual Session of the Synod of the RCUS is scheduled to meet May 16-19, 2016, at Grace Reformed Church, Bakersfield, CA.

Respectfully submitted, David Fagrey Stated Clerk, RCUS

D. Executive Committee's Report on the Minutes

Esteemed Brethren,

Four (4) circulars were sent out this past year and the following is a summary of that business. Because no objections were received to the circulars, all the recommendations brought by the Executive Committee became actions of the Classis.

Volume 30, Number 1

The Northern Plains Classis approved a special meeting on Saturday, July 11th at 8:30 AM, at First Reformed Church of Herreid, South Dakota, in order to administer a licensure exam to Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg according to the manner prescribed in Article 20 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

An ordination exam was also scheduled for that meeting for Lic. Thomas Walters according to the manner prescribed in Article 24 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

It was scheduled that the Northern Plains Discuss Lic. Thomas Walters being stated supply for the Hosmer Reformed Church, Hosmer, South Dakota.

The Permanent Candidates and Credentials committee was augmented by the addition of Rev. J.P. Mosley.

Volume 30, Number 2

The resignation of Rev. L. Dale Clark from the associate pastorate of First Reformed Church, Aberdeen South Dakota and the acceptance of that resignation was declared in order.

A severance package was allotted for \$4,000 per month to Rev. L. Dale Clark.

\$500 was allotted for travel for the oversight of the Dickinson work.

Volume 30, Number 3

Rev. Wesley Brice was approved to be Stated Supply of the First Reformed Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota for the mission work in Dickinson, North Dakota beginning September 21, 2015 for the 2015 Classical year. That the Church will pay his moving expenses to Dickinson and that his salary will be \$48,000 dollars per year in 12 equal payments together with the use of the parsonage belonging to the mission work.

Volume 30, Number 4

The location of the 31st Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis was set to be at First Reformed Church of Aberdeen, South Dakota. We will convene at 1:00pm on March 14th, A.D. 2016.

The transfer of Rev. Wesley Brice's ministerial credentials from the Covenant East Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States to the Northern Plains Classis was approved.

Respectfully Submitted, The Executive Committee

E. Treasurer's Report and Auditing Committee Report

See the Appendix of this Abstract for the Treasurer's Report.

X. Special Order

The Special Order of the Classis was to examine Licentiate Cody Schwichtenberg for the purpose of ordaining him to the Christian Ministry within the Reformed Church in the United States.

XI. Parochial Reports of Ministers

Parochial Report of Rev. Wesley Brice

Brethren,

First I want to express my deepest appreciation to the Consistory and Spiritual Council of First Reformed Church in Aberdeen South Dakota for their kind and most helpful oversight. For instance Elder Craig Mehlhaff took time on one of the coldest days of this winter to help and direct the brethren here, Dan Aune, John and Justin Huizinga to put up a car port for us. It has been a great help, no more scraping ice off the windshield.

The visits of both Elder Craig Mehlhaff and Elder John Bender to our church in order to provide a Communion service for the flock here is another example of their thoughtful care for the mission work here in Dickinson. I know the flock here definitely appreciates these visits and have express that appreciation to me.

As you are aware I arrived here to serve as both pulpit supply and to also serve pastorally to the flock here in Dickinson. Thus far my time here has been a great blessing to both myself and my wife Ginger. The folk have graciously received us and we have deeply enjoyed the fellowship. Although at this present time there are only two families in the congregation we have been able to have them over for dinner several times in order to get better acquainted with them and to better serve them.

I began the ministry here preaching on the church and it purpose, especially of the need of a faithful reformed ministry here in this area. During the Christmas season, I spent time preaching from Luke one and two on the Messiah, who He is and why He came. I have now begun a series from 1 Peter and am in the third week of that series.

Attendance has been quite good, the families are most faithful. The only time they or one of the family members miss our worship has been when they were away on vacation or illness. This is

always a blessing when the members are faithful. Also I would report that although they have expressed disappointment at the loss of several families over the their few years in existence they are most desirous to see a faithful church of the Reformed Faith established here in the Dickinson area. Thus although they have been disappointed but they assure me they are not discourage, and this has been an great encouragement to me as my burden is the same.

When we first arrived Dan Aune's parents were faithful in attendance and expressed deep appreciation for the fellowship. They are wintering in Arizona but we look forward to their return in the Spring. Also our neighbor, Kenny Christenson, has been attending. He comes from a Lutheran background, a member of the Lutheran Church here in Taylor, but in discussing the differences we have with the Lutheran Church regarding the Lord's Table, i.e. the presence of the body of the Lord, in with and under the elements I was please when he responded that he would be in full agreement with us that we only feast upon the Lord in a spiritual manner and that he differs with Lutheran teaching on that position. He expresses that he deeply appreciates the proclamation of the Word and the kindness and friendliness of the church family. We are praying that in time God will bring him to join as a member. Of course we wait upon the Lord to add to His church as He has purposed.

Ginger and I went door to door prior to Christmas passing out a tract entitled, "What is Christmas all About?" and a brochure about First Reformed and what we believe with an invitation to visit us. First time we've gone door to door with snow on the ground.

I have been visiting Lisa Aune's dad who presently is residing in a convalescent home here in Dickinson, he has express a desire to begin attending as soon as he is able. Do pray with us that God will grant him a full understanding of true faith.

Dan Aune contacted a gentleman, James Marcus, here in Taylor concerning having a Bible Study here in the Taylor area. As a result we have begun a Bible Study with several men here in the Taylor area in attendance. In the study I am going through the Belgic Confession with them. The two churches that the men in attendance are from is the Lutheran Church which left the denomination over the weaknesses they observed in doctrine and also from a former German Reformed Church that had left with the merger with the Evangelical Lutheran church in the 1930's but had left after observing the serious doctrinal errors when that body became part of the United Church of Christ. I would say they are evangelical in attitude but I am trusting that God may in time bring them both back to the understanding of the teaching of the Reformation. In other words I am praying that God will bring them into our denomination. I am free to teach God's word fully and faithfully to them and thus far they have been quite receptive to the teaching. I do ask your prayers that God will bless this endeavor and use it as a means of bring them to the reformed faith.

I have prepared and made available a directory of the friends and members of our congregation here, explaining that it is good to be in close contact, sending birthday wishes to each other, etc. Trust that this will be a means of praying for one another and strengthening the closeness they do have toward each other.

A member here Sue Huizinga recently met with Christine Roller who had been a member in the past, we are hoping that this may develop into further contact with them. She reported that they are content where they are, but if it be God's will our prayer is that God may once again they will be encouraged to see the need of a faithful Reformed Church here in the area.

The Huizinga's also had a home school family over for dinner recently. Again we are hoping to reach out to many homeschoolers as most of them are what we would call Biblically conservative in their thinking. Please pray with us that these outreaches will result in God bringing in new families to our Congregation.

We did have a guest two Sunday's past who have been attending Calvary Chapel and are not pleased with the church. We have had them over for dinner, and he differs with us on the issue of the church as the continuing church from the Old Testament. He has been told that we hold to replacement theology, I had opportunity to explain what we actually believe and why. I am trusting that God will continue to grant me opportunity to have studies with him on the subject. Again, may it please the

Lord to add that family to His church here.

We continue to be in good spirits trusting God to add to His church here in Dickinson and deeply appreciate the support of Classis and their continued prayerful support.

If you have any further questions please do give me a call.

Yours in His service,

Wesley Brice, Pulpit Supply for First Reformed Church, Dickinson, North Dakota

Parochial Report of Rev. Dale Clark

Paul writes in Philippians 4:12 “I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” This is the lesson I have been learning this year.

This has been a very difficult year. The leaving of the Dickinson work has taken its toll. Sandra and I have moved to “the Last Frontier” and have started to get acquainted with the State. At present both of us have found part time work. This has happened after many dozens of applications. We are thankful for Laura and Thomas in their aid and encouragement, as we live with them.

I have had an interview for the Clinical Pastoral Education course that is offered at one of the hospitals in Anchorage. I have not received any word about its outcome to date. If this avenue of ministry works out I may need to seek advice from the Classis on how to meet various requirements to be a Certified Chaplain. Since August I have preached one time and two other opportunities have been scheduled for the end of February and late May.

Sandra and I have jumped in with both feet in the local PCA congregation. They have been most supportive and encouraging in this time of grief and soul searching. We thank all who have been in prayer for us.

I am not sure how often I will be able to be at Classis and Synod with costs being the main factor.

Sincerely in Christ, Dale Clark

Parochial Report of Rev. David Dawn

Esteemed Brothers,

We read in Psalm 46.1-5, “God is our hope and strength, and help in troubles, ready to be found. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains fall into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof rage and be troubled, and the mountains shake at the surges of the same. Yet there is a River, whose streams shall make glad the city of God: even the Sanctuary of the Tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of it: therefore shall it not be moved: God shall help it very early.”

Once again, our church looks back with thankfulness to the Lord’s blessing during 2014. This was a year of change for the congregation as we took over the supervision of the mission work in Dickinson, ND. We have to confess that God is good. We began 2014 with a communicant membership of 89. Filtering out the statistics from Dickinson, our church grew by six communicant member. We gained ten new members. Five students were confirmed, three were transferred from Eureka, and two were received by profession of faith. On the other hand, we lost two members through death and two through erasure. This brings our local membership in Aberdeen to 95. If you count the 13 members we transferred in from Ashley (our Dickinson members), then our membership stands at 108. We had no baptisms. We do thank the Lord for prospering our congregation numerically, as well as spiritually.

The most significant development in our church life was bringing our mission chapel in Dickinson under the supervision of our consistory. The congregation voted to inform classis of our willingness to do this on 4 May. On 10 August, Rev Dale Clark candidated in Aberdeen for the position of associate pastor, responsible for our Dickinson work. He was installed on September.

We have been able to give close supervision to our Dickinson Chapel. Providentially, one of our elders, Craig Mehlhaff, visits Dickinson regularly for his job as a salesman for Truss Pro's. He has been able to meet with all the families in the church, as well as attending Bible studies and at least one church service.

Our choir once again joined with the choirs of Eureka and Ashley to present an Easter cantata. The Cantata was performed in Ashley, Eureka, as well as Aberdeen. As in other years, this was a great time of worship and fellowship.

On 3 August, our radio programme, Pause For Thought, celebrated its 10th anniversary on the air. Later in the autumn, I was asked to resume my role as host of our classis radio broadcast, Start The Week. This was a pleasant task to undertake, as I had originally begun this broadcast in the late 1980s. I anticipate continuing to speak on Start The Week until Thomas Walters, our licentiate in Ashley, is prepared to take it on.

Sadly, I have one problem I wish to report. Our confirmation class is not going well. We have three students in the second year of a three-year programme, and one in the first year. After extensive testing, it has become obvious that these students show little familiarity with the Heidelberg catechism or the most commonly known Bible stories. Progressively, over the years, we have had to simplify our confirmation training because our students simply were not digesting the material. The choice was between teaching a comprehensive confirmation curriculum, of which only a fraction would be retained, and teaching less in the hope that what was taught would be remembered.

When, in a few minutes, we proceed to the questions to the elders, our delegate is going to say yes to question two: "is careful attention given to the instruction of the youth for confirmation, the reception of members and to the church, and the Christian nurture of the members?" This will be a truthful answer. We have paid careful attention to the instruction of the youth for confirmation. Those of us involved in this training have, I believe, laboured long and hard. However, although careful attention has been paid, this does not mean we have been as successful as we would have liked. Had we been asked whether we have fulfilled the requirements of the RCUS Constitution, section 4, article 192, I am afraid the answer would have had to be no. I personally would appreciate any counsel the brothers might have for us.

Given what I have just said, there is a certain irony that, over the past year, the Lord has prospered another project of mine in Christian education. Last year, the superintendent of our Sunday school asked me if I could prepare Sunday school lessons for our youngest two classes. Since then, I have been preparing lessons on the New Testament at the rate of one a week. To my surprise, these have gone quite well, and I am seriously considering sending the material prepared thus far to the synodical Christian education committee, in case it should prove useful to the wider church. Thus far I have completed 31 lessons. I would be prepared to devote more of my time to this project if it would be profitable.

I have been deeply grateful to God for allowing me another year in the Christian ministry of the RCUS. Apart from walking difficulties, I am in good health. The ministry of our church has been prospered by the Lord, and I am humbled to have a part in this.

Respectfully submitted, Rev David A Dawn Pastor, First Reformed Church Aberdeen, SD

Parochial Report of Rev. James Grossmann

Esteemed Brothers,

It has been my privilege and joy to serve as God's minister at Eureka Reformed Church over the past

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year. I have been blessed to preach for 48 regular services, as well as for the Easter Cantata, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Thanksgiving, our Christmas program, and Christmas Day services. My Sermons have been largely in series format from Mark, Hebrews, Romans, Exodus, and Matthew. Our worship services are broadcast weekly on KOLY, 99.5 FM radio. I regularly hear from people tuning in to hear our worship services.

Over the past year, we lost eight members to death: we sorrow at the loss of Esther Delzer, Iona Koerner, Ruth Kappes, Frieda Trautman, Charles Neuharth, Lawrence Stroh, Emilia Mehlhaff, and Rhonda Schaeffer. At the same time, we rejoice in their entering into eternal blessedness.

While they have not yet asked for the transfer of their membership, our numbers were also reduced by the moving of Charles and Bonnie Koerner to Fargo. With these losses, our membership stands at 118 Communicant and 6 baptized members.

We have celebrated the Lord's Supper four times this year, on each occasion, shut-in communion was offered to our shut-ins in the Eureka Health Care Center, the Assisted Living and to those in their own homes. A total of 99 members or 80% of our membership partook of the Lord's Supper this year.

We again held Vacation Bible School this summer. It was well attended, with 22 attending the whole week. That is an increase of 6 over last year! Praise the Lord! I am thankful for those who assisted in this. Please pray that we can build on this success with VBS this coming summer.

I also rejoiced to be able to travel to the Congo for the RCUS. It was a great opportunity and I pray that I will be able to bring benefits to ERC from what I learned there.

This year as a congregation, we upgraded the furnace system of the church. We are thankful that it has already been paid for through contributions. It is already saving us money as a congregation while we are able to maintain the temperature at a much more comfortable level.

My duties as Stated Clerk of the Northern Plains Classis continue, and have been similar to previous years. With Ashley and Herreid gaining pastors throughout the year, my labor in support of our neighboring congregations has greatly diminished. I pray that I have accomplished an acceptable job for the glory of our Savior and for the help of His Church. On all of these items, I request your prayers that I may balance my labors for Classis and Synod with faithfully ministering to God's Church here locally.

We have had a difficult couple of years since my arrival here in Eureka. As I have had the opportunity to work with God's people through these trials, I have been encouraged by their reactions to these hardships. I praise the Lord that they draw together and seek to encourage one another in faith through trials.

In a related area, one thing I have suggested to our congregation that it be more intentional about discipleship. I have seen that there is discipleship going on within the congregation. I recommend that we intentionally seek those whose Christian walk we admire, seeking to work with them in learning to imitate their faith. I also recommend that we be willing to be used in this way, seeking those we could disciple.

I continue to encourage us in evangelism. The church is always a mission field. I pray that God would use the broadcast of our worship services, our VBS, our Mid-Winter Conference, among other opportunities He would supply, to reach out into our community with the Word of God.

May God richly bless His Church in Eureka in the coming year.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. James Grossmann

Parochial Report of Rev. J.P. Mosley

Dear Fathers and Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Preparing for this report and reflecting upon this past year, the only passage that continued to come to mind was **Job 1:20-21** ²⁰Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

Job practically had everything taken away from him, and yet he still praises the Lord. The beautiful passage shows us the Christian's Spirit-filled response to our severe losses and crosses. The reason this passage is brought to mind is due to the level of difficulty this year has been. We have seen a number of our congregation leave, one to glory Ruby Ochsner, others back home, others left due to marriage and moving on with their lives, and others were excommunicated from our communion. This causes any minister to become severely depressed, raising questions of whether God is blessing his work, and feelings of what is the point in all this preaching and teaching. But once the self-pity party ends, the reminder comes back...It is God who tears down and God who builds up His church.

With all of the losses and crosses Elder Fickbohm and I experienced this year, nothing compares to the fact that Elder Fickbohm became a father this past year. One of the highlights of this past year was baptizing his daughter into the church of Jesus Christ. With that, my wife and I found out we too were getting ready to add a daughter to our family as well. Again, through the losses and crosses, God's covenantal faithfulness continues today in His church.

God's growth continued to take place with the preaching and teaching in the church. Through the year the sermons focused on the Genesis narratives on Jacob and Esau, the Beatitudes, the book of James, and closing out the year focusing on the Lord's Prayer. For the year we celebrated the Lord's Supper five times. A total of 21 communicate members that participated during the five times totaled twenty-one. Even more exciting was the number of visitors who shared in the Lord's Supper, twelve. In Sunday School, we considered the Church Government, Worship Music, and the Doctrine of Scripture. For our Reformation Conference, we were blessed with the teaching on Sola Scriptura by Rev. Kevin Carroll. Our MissionFest gave us the opportunity to hear Rev. James Grossmann. It was my goal over the past two years to study Covenant Theology and the Three Forms of Unity. We closed out that endeavor this year with studying the Canons of Dort. Shortly after finishing the Canons, we picked up a study on the extremely relevant prophetic book Habakkuk.

The ministry of Hope Reformed continues to reach into the community. The Jail Ministry is growing. I have been moved from every fifth Sunday to the fourth Sunday and the following Tuesday. I continue to go and work with the juvenile in the jail too. Over the course of the past year I have been able to open up the meetings for both the Pierre City Commission and the State Legislature.

This past year has been one of amazing growth in both mine and Elder Fickbohm's lives. While we struggled alone in the offices, we were forced to rely upon the Lord entirely for His care and wisdom. I hope and pray I look back on this year and reflect on how great is my God.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. J.P. Mosley, Jr.

Parochial Report of Rev. Phil Poe

Esteemed Brethren,

It has now been almost six years since we moved to Minot to take up the pastoral ministry of Harvest Reformed Church. The time has gone by so quickly! My wife, Karen, and I are both quite happy in the ministry with the congregation. I praise God for the peace and unity He has given us as a congregation of Reformed believers.

Statically, the past year in Minot has been one of loss rather than gain. We had several individuals

and families move away for job opportunities. The Adam Arndt family moved to Bismarck and joined with the OPC work. The Michael Lassley family moved to Jackson, MS and joined a PCA congregation. Alex Snyder moved to San Antonio, TX and has joined with Grace OPC. Ryan Snyder, a pre-seminary student at Geneva College in Pennsylvania, joined with the PRCNA congregation. The loss of just the Arndts and Lassleys leaves a void of 15 souls. We did add one covenant child through baptism, Ian James Hoverson, son of Sam and Molly Hoverson. We have presently one adult preparing to join by profession of faith. We are praying for at least two Reformed families to join and help strengthen the church in 2016.

With the loss of members comes some loss in income. However, the giving remains fairly strong at this time. God be thanked! We continue to meet all our bills and dues. In addition, we are able to continue supporting Rev. Nap Narag's Reformed work in the Philippines (\$50.00 per month) and Westminster Biblical Missions (\$200.00 per month) and we have given in support of Heidelberg Theological Seminary. We also gave out \$4,000 to families in need from the diaconal aid fund thanks to the oversight by our deacon, Elton Dockter.

We also have a Building Committee in place and are working with an architect in view of buying the right property in terms of size. We hope to build a facility that will seat 100 for worship.

I have been preaching a long series through Romans which is about to conclude. I am now preparing to preach through the Book of Acts with an emphasis on God's sovereign grace in the spread of the gospel and the planting of churches. For Sunday night Bible study we have finished Ezra-Esther-Nehemiah and are beginning a study of the book of Joshua and God's mighty acts in the conquest of Caanaan.

Our Consistory is very faithful in taking care of the needs of the church at all levels. We have also been able to provide auxiliary service to the Kassel Reformed Church in their times of need.

We currently have a Confirmation Class consisting of three young people: Leann Milam, Cody Fuchs and Hunter Fuchs. We are using Jones' workbook which is a little difficult for them in some places, but so far all three have successfully memorized the answers to over seventy questions.

The men meet twice a month for Bible studies and the women meet once a month.

The Friends of Phoebe are quite active in their acts of ministry within the body and even to others who have moved away in their times of need be it meals or care packages.

Elder Jim Snyder is presently teaching the congregation through the Heidelberg Catechism in a 5 to 10 minute section of the morning service which we call "Our Confession of Faith". He does a thorough job in keeping us on track as a confessional church. Elder Snyder also very ably exhorts the congregation in my absence.

Jeff Milam also runs our sermon audio ministry which has helped me become "world famous." Seriously, it is amazing how many responses come from different parts of the world. God's providence has provided a wonderful tool for reaching believers in isolated places.

The Lord continues to bless Harvest Reformed Church. With the slow-down in the oil industry we do not have the influx of visitors that we have had but we still get a few and for this we are thankful.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Phillip E. Poe

Parochial Report of Rev. George Syms

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren,

The undersigned finds a great deal of delight in reporting the activities of the last classical year. The 4th of January 2016, marked the third anniversary of my labors here in the Covenant Reformed Church of Watertown. Your servant was able to preach God's Word on forty-nine Lord's Days during the last year, with two additional sermons preached for MissionFest at Harvest Reformed Church,

Minot, N. D., where the Rev. Mr. Phillip Poe is pastor. Due to a serious leg injury in early October 2015, I was providentially relieved from ministerial duties on Oct. 11th and 18th. Mr. Thomas Walters of Ashley was our MissionFest speaker on the 11th, and on the following Lord's Day, the Rev. Mr. Herman Van Stedum kindly supplied the pulpit. On one occasion I was able to preach and administer the Lord's Supper in the Salem congregation at Ashley, N.D. During the last classical year Catechetical instruction has been conducted for three catechumens on a bi-weekly basis. Bible Studies were conducted on the Biblical Basis of the Canons of Dort on a bi-weekly schedule. The congregation observed the Lord's Supper six times in the last year. It is our practice to have a Fellowship Meal after we celebrate the Lord's Supper. These times prove to be a blessing for us as we are able to visit and spend time in conversation that we normally do not have. A minimally taxing task is being Vice-President of Northern Plains Classis, your servant has also been actively involved with the Classis Candidates and Credentials Committee of which he is the chair. All of the candidates that have come forward in the last classical year received communication via e-mail, the postal service and telephone. The sad reality of this activity is that very few men are able to subscribe to the confessions and Constitution of the RCUS with conviction. We do not believe that this warrants any change in the way that we examine candidates for our pulpits in the Northern Plains Classis. It rather underlines our resolve to continue with serious thoroughness. A special meeting was held in the Covenant Reformed congregation to enact additional by-laws for the local congregation's Constitution regarding same-sex marriage. This was in response to the advice of Synod that congregations protect themselves by having a written standard with which pastors and elders must comply. There were several surgeries required by members of the congregation, one being back surgery received by two members. One of our members had an operation dealing with cancer. We are thankful to the Lord that all of these have recovered well and are back to their normal daily routines. One of the events we enjoy as a congregation is a monthly Fellowship Night usually on a Friday evening. Another activity in which the congregation has participated is a Christmas program presented to a local Assisted Living Center here in Watertown. This involved all of our members young and old. On December 24th, 2015, we also held a Christmas Eve service which was well attended. For the most part the weather throughout the winter months has been rather mild, for which we are thankful. We continue to enjoy musical accompaniment in our services provided by three pianists, Mrs. Lori Sapp, Mrs. Roxanne Towles, and Mrs. Debbie Syms. On occasion we have also enjoyed the musical contributions of Andrea Sapp, violinist, and young pianists Jane and Micah Ardry. We count it a true blessing that the Lord has provided so many musicians in our small congregation. Our young people supported the annual Heidelberg Camp in the Black Hills of SD, with Andrea Sapp serving as a Counselor, and James Sapp and Jane Ardry attending as campers. Our Adult Sunday School has been ably led by Mr. Brian Ardry, and the young children are taught by Mrs. Paula DeJong. The older youth receive instruction from Mrs. Lori Sapp.

The economic outlook for our area continues to be strong, and our members have no problem with employment in comparison to other areas of the nation. The congregation continues to be faithful in its giving to the cause of Christ in the local church, as well as Classis and Synod. We are hopeful of a benefit in outreach ministry as we have begun to air a radio program from KWAT AM radio here in Watertown. The broadcast is called "Gospel Forum," as we hope to proclaim the Gospel of Christ in our region with the pastor and other members involved in a dialogue-type format. It has been our blessing to welcome a covenant child into our midst as a baby boy was born to one of our young families in January. In addition, two other member families welcomed covenant grandchildren during this time.

As pastor I have made an effort to preach from many different books of the Bible through the last year and have not fixed on one particular book series or another. I've made a concerted effort not to preach topical sermons, but rather sermons based on the different texts of Scripture. Most of the preaching on redemptive events is taken from the Gospels, especially since the incarnation, birth, death, resurrection and ascension are recorded in these accounts. Generally speaking we find a positive response to worship services on the days set aside for remembering these events, and there is an appreciation in learning their significance for doctrine and practice. There is a good morale in the congregation and we have been encouraged by some generous contributions to our building fund from people outside of the congregation. This fund holds out the possibility of someday obtaining

our own facility and encouraging the congregation to that end. We can only be thankful to God for his provision through people that are not directly connected to our churches. Their zeal for the Lord's cause is a reason for encouragement. It is well that we mention the activities of the Consistory and Spiritual Council. Both meet monthly and there is gratitude for a very brotherly conduct of the business of the congregation. Elders Rod DeJong, Steve Sapp and Deacon Paul Maassen, along with Pastor Syms, have enjoyed the mutual responsibility of governing the church. These brethren continue to care for the pastor and his wife in an exemplary manner. Our deacon, who is treasurer for the congregation is diligent in providing financial reports for us each month. The elders' participation in the life of the congregation, as well as giving counsel to the Pastor, is also a reason for thankfulness. With the permission of the Covenant Reformed Consistory, I have begun the Doctor of Ministry degree study in Heidelberg Theological Seminary, of whose board I am vice-president. The pastor's temporal contract is sufficient for his needs and those of his wife, including enough for obtaining health insurance. I would be remiss if I did not state that it is good to be here in Watertown, and trust that God willing, he will keep me in this congregation for some years to come.

Respectfully submitted, (Rev.) George J. Syms

Licentiate Report of Cody Schwichtenberg

Esteemed Brothers in the Lord,

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (Jas. 5:13-14) With my short period of time at First Reformed Church, this is the passage that has come to my mind the most. Why? Because the Lord has answered our prayers for those who have been suffering and sick within the congregation and for those who have close ties to this congregation. From the more severe ailments to minor surgeries, the Lord has been quite gracious to us in His healing mercies.

Preaching and teaching has also been a great joy as the congregation is eager to learn. I have mainly preached from 1 John and Isaiah 9:6-7, but there has also been a few sermons preached from the Gospel of Mark and Proverbs. In Sunday School, the emphasis has been the Heidelberg Catechism using Norman Jones' Workbook. It has been here where much of the discussion and teaching has taken place. Although, I shouldn't be surprised by this, in a short period of time, the lessons have correlated well with the Canons of Dort to the point that I wish we could do a study on them right now, but I have decided to deal with the five points of Calvinism as they come.

The youth have likewise had great opportunity to learn the importance of the Word of God and the Reformed confessions in Sunday school and catechism class. During the fall, the women had a fairly extensive Bible study using John MacArthur's book *Twelve Extraordinary Women*. The study was well received and well attended. The hope is that the women can have a Bible study each fall.

In October, Rev. Bill Haddock preached for Mission Fest and blessed us with two sermons from the Gospel of John. I also preached at a Mission Fest for the Ashley congregation and had opportunities to fill the pulpit for Rev. James Grossmann in Eureka when needed. I thoroughly enjoy having the privilege to preach and have fellowship with other RCUS churches. It reminds me of my time in seminary traveling to numerous churches to exhort God's Word. Other pastors who have filled in for me when needed included Rev. Herman Van Stedum and Rev. James Grossmann. Rev. J.P. Mosely also conducted a funeral service at First Reformed Church for Ruby Ochsner who had grown up in the Herreid area and was related to a number of our members.

The winter has sent many of our members down south. They have been missed and we look forward to all of them returning by the end of March. Attendance for worship and Sunday school has been consistent and have had a few non-members worship with us regularly too. The regular visitors have not only been encouraging for me, but I believe to the congregation as a whole. We do have a number of shut-ins who I have visited frequently, and my hope is to find the best ways to make sure

these members are fed by the Word of God even though they are providentially hindered from attending worship.

I have been quite pleased with the congregation's willingness to use their gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ. Although, there will always be room for spiritual growth and sanctification, the overall spiritual health of the congregation is well despite being technically vacant for some time. This has been primarily attributed to King Jesus who governs and preserves His people by His Word and Spirit, yet He has used Rev. James Grossmann and the devoted elders of First Reformed Church to make sure the members were fed by the Word.

I do look forward to working with the consistory as well as getting to know this congregation more so that I can properly shepherd them and apply the Word of God to their lives with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Words cannot describe how thankful I am, for our Heavenly Father's providence in bringing me and my wife Angie to Herreid, SD.

Thanks be to God and His great blessings in Christ Jesus. Respectfully Submitted,

Licentiate Cody Schwichtenberg

Elders' Report from First Reformed Church, Herreid, SD

It has been a wonderful year for us at the Herreid First Reformed Church. We have grown with two new babies added to our covenant children. We were able to celebrate 2 baptisms, and 2 Lord's Suppers. We spent the first half of the year interviewing Cody Schwichtenberg for our pulpit need. The trial sermon went great, we extended a call to Cody, and he is now settling in nicely as our Licentiate minister.

We were blessed to have Pastor James Grossmann fill in for us on alternating weekends while we were without a minister. He was able to preach through many chapters of Genesis. During the off weeks, we Elders would fill the pulpit and carry on the service. Cody was also able to fill the pulpit monthly while still going to school.

The church still remained strong through our search and placement of Cody and Angie, and we are eager to grow with them through faith in our church.

In Christ, Elders Nathan Arbach and Dave Vander Vliet

XII. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO ELDERS

The President asked the Elder delegates that were present the Constitutional Questions from Article 81 of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. The following are the questions that were read and the answers that were given:

1. Are the doctrines of the Gospel preached in your charge in their purity, agreeably to the word of God? All Elder delegates 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 Elder delegates answered Yes with the exception of the Written answers from Hosmer which indicated that this question is not applicable.

3a. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation, is visitation faithfully performed? All Elder delegates answered Yes, except the Elder from from Herreid, who answered No.

3b. In providing spiritual nurture for the congregation, is Christian discipline faithfully exercised according to the Constitution? All Elder delegates answered Yes.

4. Are the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly administered in accordance with the constitution? All Elder delegates answered Yes.

5a. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are the apportionments for the Classis paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? **All Elder delegates answered Yes, except the Elders from Ashley, Hosmer and Pierre.**

5b. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are these monies sent promptly to the Classis treasurer? **All Elder delegates answered Yes.**

5c. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are the apportionments for the Synod paid according to the Guidelines for Giving? **All Elder delegates answered Yes except the Elders from Ashley, Eureka, Hosmer, and Pierre.**

5d. In providing for the furtherance of Christian stewardship, are these monies sent promptly to the Synod treasurer? **All Elder delegates answered Yes.**

6. Are the church records properly kept? **All Elder delegates answered Yes.**

7a. Is the temporal contract between minister and people fulfilled in your charge? **All Elder delegates answered Yes, except that the written answers from Hosmer indicated that this question is not applicable.**

7b. Is the temporal contract between minister and people adequate to meet his temporal needs? **All Elder delegates answered Yes, except that the written answers from Hosmer indicated that this question is not applicable.**

The president instructed the Stated Clerk to communicate with the consistory of Anamoose to provide a signed document containing their answers the Article 81 Questions, to be circularized. Those answers have yet to be received.

XIII. REPORT OF NUMERICAL & FINANCIAL STATISTICS

See the Appendix of the Abstract for this Report.

XIV. READING OF THE STANDING RULES

The Stated Clerk Read the Standing Rules

XV. REPORTS FROM CLASSIS FRATERNAL DELEGATES

There were no reports from Classis Fraternal Delegates to be presented.

XVI. ADDRESS AND/OR REPORTS OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES & VISITORS

There were no addresses or reports.

XVII. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

There were no Special Committees to give a report to the body.

XVIII. 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. Education, Publications & Student Aid

Your committee received one item, the Heidelberg Camp Report. We bring the following recommendations:

1. Take Note that the dates of camp are as follows: 2016 – July 18-22, 2017 – July 24-28, 2018 – July 23-27, 2019 – July 22-26, 2020 – July 20-24.
2. That the Budget for HYC 2016 be approved.
3. That the committee communicate with each congregation what items are needed for donations.
4. That the Heidelberg Youth Camp report be adopted as a whole.
5. That \$600 be budgeted for Sermon Audio expenses.

Dale Clark, Ron J. Meidinger, David Dawn

B. Services & Interchurch

Your committee received the Interchurch Relations Report as our only item. We bring the following recommendations:

1. That the Permanent Committee send greetings when unable to attend the Classis or Presbytery meetings of Fraternal Denominations.
2. That the Permanent Committee seek to attend Classis or Presbytery meetings of Fraternal denominations when possible.
3. That \$250 be budgeted for travel.
4. That the following expression of thanks be read from the pulpit and printed in the bulletin on this coming Sunday:
 1. The Northern Plains Classis thanks our God for His gracious provision through our brothers and sisters of First Reformed Church of Aberdeen in hosting the 31st Annual Classis meeting again this year. Thank you for the great food and warm hospitality.

Dale Clark, Ron J. Meidinger, David Dawn

C. Examinations and Licensure

Recommendations:

1. That the ordination exam of Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg be sustained.
2. That the Classis approve the call of First Reformed Church, Herreid, South Dakota to Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg.
3. That the Ordination and Installation service for Mr. Cody Schwichtenberg be held April 3, 2016 at 7:00pm at the First Reformed Church, Herreid, South Dakota with Rev. Michael McGee leading the service, Rev. Travis Grassmid presenting the charge to the pastor, and Dr. Maynard Koerner presenting the charge to the congregation. The installation committee will also consist of Rev. Mosley and the elders of the First Reformed Church, Herreid, South Dakota.

George Syms, Dale Clark, J.P. Mosley, Doug Haak, Matthew Fickbohm

D. Excuses

Your Committee received the following: Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8, excuses from LeRoy Neifer, James Snyder, Raymond Jung, Glenn Opp, and Phil Poe.

Recommendations:

1. That Elders LeRoy Neifer, James Snyder, Raymond Jung, and Pastor Phil Poe be excused from all meetings of Classis and that Elder Glenn Opp be excused from the meetings of classis while he has to attend an ASPIRE board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

James Grossmann, Ron Meidinger, Rod DeJong

E. Finances, Benevolences, and Ministerial Aid

Your Committee received the following items: Item #1, Overture from Hope RCUS on behalf of Mrs. Norman Jones; Report of the Diaconal (Permanent) Committee; The following reimbursement requests: Salem RCUS (Meidinger) \$59.50, Hope RCUS (Fickbohm) \$112.00, First Chapel (Brice) \$196, Rev. Clark \$812.50, Covenant (DeJong) \$66.50, First – Herreid (Cody) \$69.30

Your Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. With regards to the reimbursement requests for the Spring Meeting, that all be granted in the total amount of \$1,315.80.
2. That Classis provide Diaconal Aid in the amount of \$3,000 to Elder Aaron Rau.
3. Take Note: That the Classis encourage congregations of Classis to aid the Raus through their own diaconal aid.
4. Wit regards to item #1, that the NPC Stated Clerk be directed to overture Synod of the RCUS for ministerial aid of \$1,400 per month on behalf of Mrs. Norman Jones.
5. That Rev. William Haddock be appointed as the Northern Plains Chronicles Editor and be paid \$200 honorarium.
6. That the dues for 2016 be set at Classical Dues: \$21 (\$8 increase) and Home Missions Dues: \$56 (\$1 increase).

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Wesley Brice, Rev. David Dawn, Elder Rod DeJong, Elder Matthew Fickbohm

F. Judicial

Your Committee has received the following: from the Report of the Executive Committee's Report of Synod. (Page 19)

Recommendations:

1. Take Note on Items #1-6, and #9.
2. Item #7a, Concurrence
3. Item #7b, Concurrence
4. Item #7c, Concurrence
5. Item #7d, Concurrence

J.P. Mosley, Wesley Brice, Glenn Opp, Nathan Arbach, Doug Haak

G. Missions

Your committee received the following documents: The Permanent Missions Committee Report; Item 7, An overture from Salem Reformed Church, Ashley, ND requesting funding for their radio programme, Start the Week.

Your Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. That Dickinson's three year budget AS AMENDED be approved.
2. That Classis allocate \$2,000 for Dickinson travel expenses to the Aberdeen Consistory.
3. That Classis allocate \$500 for Home Missions Committee travel expenses.
4. That the Home Missions Committee investigate the possibility of starting another mission work – perhaps in Jamestown or Fargo.
5. That Classis provide \$2,574 toward the expenses for Start the Week.

David Dawn, J.P. Mosley, Glenn Opp, Rod DeJong

H. Nominations

Your nominations committee makes the following recommendation: (convener is underlined)

Recommendation 1:

Auditing: J.P. Mosley, W. Haddock, B. Davis

Camp: M. Fickbohm, J. Grossmann, C. Schwichtenberg, N. Arbach

Candidates and Credentials: J.P. Mosley, G. Syms, P. Poe, W. Brice, J. Snyder, R. Meidinger

Christian Education and Publications: D. Clark, W. Brice, E. Mehlhaff

Diaconal: D. Clark, S. Sapp, G. Opp

Executive: D. Dawn, J. Grossmann, M. Fickbohm

Home Missions: J.P. Mosley, D. Dawn, D. Haak, P. Poe, R. DeJong

Interchurch Relations: D. Clark, W. Brice, C. Mehlhaff, R. DeJong

Assistant to the Clerk: D. Haak

Respectfully Submitted, James Grossmann, George Syms, Doug Haak

XIX. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

A. Expression of Appreciation to the hosting congregation

Already Adopted Under the Services and Interchurch Committee. (Page 32)

B. Adoption of the Stated Clerk's Report, Executive Committee's Minutes, and Overture Committee's Reports

The Stated Clerk's Report, Executive Committee's Minutes and Overture Committee's Report were all adopted by the Northern Plains Classis.

XX. Reading of the Minutes

At the end of the business meeting, the minutes for the day were read and corrected. The President asked, "Shall the minutes be now approved?" Since there were no objections, he declared the minutes approved as corrected.

XXI. Adjournment

Elder Fickbohm moved that the Classis adjourn to the 32nd Annual Spring Meeting of the Northern Plains Classis to begin on March 13th, A.D. 2017 at 1:00pm, at a place to be determined and circularized by the Executive Committee of Classis.

The Classis adjourned at 10:44pm on March 14, A.D. 2016.

A. Roll Call

The final roll call showed 6 ministers, 6 elders, and 1 licentiate present for a total of 13, a quorum.

B. Devotions

Elder Haak closed the meeting by reading I Peter 5:1-11.

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

The Assembly stood and united in reciting the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The President pronounced the Benediction and lead the Assembly in the singing of the Doxology.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. James W. Grossmann, Stated Clerk

APPENDIX

Treasurer's Report

Financial Position – Year Ended December 31st, 2015

	Unrestricted	2015 Total	2014 Total
Current Assets:			
Cash	\$ 20,609.22	\$ 20,609.22	\$ 24,236.57
Certificates of Deposit	9,495.37	9,495.37	9,475.88
Total Assets:	<u>30,104.59</u>	<u>30,104.59</u>	<u>33,712.45</u>
Current Liabilities:	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>\$ 30,104.59</u>	<u>\$ 30,104.59</u>	<u>\$ 33,712.45</u>

Statement of Functional Expenses – Year Ended December 31st, 2015

	Home Missions	Classis Business	2015 Total	2014 Total
Dickinson	\$ 18,000.00	\$ -	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Severance (NPC)	4,000.00	-	4,000.00	
Start the Week	2,425.50	-	2,425.50	2,574.00
Travel	1,798.98	2,108.05	3,907.03	1,056.62
Diaconal Aid	-	1,200.00	1,200.00	
Stipends	-	900.00	900.00	900.00
Sermon Audio	510.40	-	510.40	420.40
Abstracts	-	200.00	200.00	200.00
NPC Editor	-	200.00	200.00	200.00
Supplies	-	9.80	9.80	66.21
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 26,734.88</u>	<u>\$ 4,617.85</u>	<u>\$ 31,352.73</u>	<u>\$ 25,417.23</u>

Statement of Activities – Year Ended December 31st, 2015

		Donor	2015	2014
Dues:	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
Classical Dues	\$ 5,509.00	\$ -	\$ 5,509.00	\$ 3,987.00
Home Missions Dues (repeated)	22,201.00	-	22,201.00	21,693.50
Total Dues Revenue:	27,710.00	-	27,710.00	25,680.50
Other Income:				
Donation from Covenant RCUS	-	-	-	933.00
Interest: Classis	10.88	-	10.88	4.59
Interest: Home Missions	4.50	-	4.50	6.00
Interest: Foundation CD	19.49	-	19.49	19.40
Other Remittances	-	6,247.75	6,247.75	264.25
Total Other Income:	34.87	6,247.75	6,282.62	1,227.24
Total Income:	27,744.87	6,247.75	33,992.62	26,907.74
Expenses:				
<i>Home Missions:</i>				
First Reformed - Dickinson	18,000.00	-	18,000.00	20,000.00
Dickinson Severance (NPC Portion)	4,000.00	-	4,000.00	-
Travel - Classical Mission Oversight	331.00	-	331.00	339.92
Travel - Aberdeen Mission Oversight	1,467.98	-	1,467.98	-
Start the Week Radio	2,425.50	-	2,425.50	2,574.00
Sermon Audio	510.40	-	510.40	420.40
<i>Total Home Missions:</i>	26,734.88	-	26,734.88	23,334.32
<i>Meetings:</i>				
Special Meeting (Feb. 2015) Mileage	874.65	-	874.65	
Spring Meeting Mileage	647.50	-	647.50	716.70
Special Meeting (July 2015) Mileage	585.90	-	585.90	
<i>Total Meetings:</i>	2,108.05	-	2,108.05	716.70
<i>Diaconal Aid:</i>				
Elder Rau	1,200.00	-	1,200.00	-
<i>Total Diaconal Aid:</i>	1,200.00	-	1,200.00	-
<i>General Operating:</i>				
Abstracts - Printing & Printer	200.00	-	200.00	200.00
Stipends - Standing Rule 13	900.00	-	900.00	900.00
General	209.80	-	209.80	266.21
<i>Total General Operating:</i>	1,309.80	-	1,309.80	1,366.21
Total Expenses:	31,352.73	-	31,352.73	25,417.23
Transfer of Funds				
Monies designated for Dickinson		2,247.75	2,247.75	264.25
Synodical Aid - Severance		4,000.00	4,000.00	
Total Transfers:	-	6,247.75	6,247.75	264.25
Change in Net Assets:			(3,607.86)	1,226.26
Net Assets, Beginning of Year (As of December 31st)			33,712.45	32,486.19
Net Assets, End of Year			<u>\$ 30,104.59</u>	<u>\$ 33,712.45</u>

Note 1: The Classis operates on a calendar year fiscal year (January 1 - December 31).

Note 2: Beginning in calendar year 2012 the Classis implemented accrual basis accounting. Accrual basis accounting focuses on matching expenditures and revenues of the period to which they pertain. The financial activity of the Classis through January 31st, 2015 was evaluated to determine to which period the transaction applied.

Note 3: Accrual basis accounting includes the recognition of revenue not yet received and an amount determined to be uncollectible. As the Classis requires all dues to be received no later than November 30th, no recognition of dues not received is deemed necessary and has, therefore, not been performed. This represents a deviation from Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Note 4: The Classis holds three Certificates of Deposit with BankWest of Pierre, SD. The terms of each are as follows:

Fund	Amount	Date of Issue	Maturity	Renewal	Annual yield	Payment Frequency	Interest Treatment
General	\$1,000.00	March 23, 2015	March 23, 2016	Automatic	0.55%	Every 3 months	Deposited to General Fund
Home Missions	2,000.00	March 23, 2015	March 23, 2016	Automatic	0.55%	Every 3 months	Deposited to General Fund
Foundation	6,495.37	March 23, 2015	March 23, 2016	Automatic	0.55%	Every 3 months	Deposited to General Fund

Note 5: Accrual basis accounting includes the recognition of revenue not yet received and an amount determined to be uncollectible. As the Classis requires all dues to be received no later than November 30th, no recognition of dues not received is deemed necessary and has, therefore, not been performed. This represents a deviation from Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Note 5: The Classis collects dues from congregations for both Home Missions and Classical Funds. The following schedule reports the dues actually received from congregations for 2015 and late remittances for 2014 (as noted):

Congregation	Members	Type of Dues	Remitted	Full Remittance	(Variance)	Received
Aberdeen	97	Classical	\$ 1,235	1,261	\$ (26)	On-time
	97	Home Missions	5,225	5,335	(110)	On-time
Anamoose	15	Classical	156	195	(39)	
	15	Home Missions	660	825	(165)	
Anamoose (2014 Dues)		Classical	96			
		Home Missions	708			
Ashley	38	Classical	520	494	26	On-time
	38	Home Missions	490	2,090	(1,600)	On-time
Dickinson	11	Classical	143	143	-	On-time
	11	Home Missions	605	605	-	On-time
Dickinson (2014 Dues)		Classical	96			
		Home Missions	708			
Eureka	124	Classical	1,612	1,612	-	On-time
	124	Home Missions	6,820	6,820	-	On-time
Herried	51	Classical	572	663	(91)	On-time
	51	Home Missions	2,420	2,805	(385)	On-time
Hosmer	15	Classical		195	(195)	
	15	Home Missions		825	(825)	
Mnott	36	Classical	468	468	-	
	36	Home Missions	1,980	1,980	-	
Pierre	27	Classical	351	351	-	On-time
	27	Home Missions	1,485	1,485	-	On-time
Watertown	20	Classical	260	260	-	On-time
	20	Home Missions	1,100	1,100	-	On-time
			Classical Total	\$ 5,509.00	\$ 5,642.00	\$ (325.00)
			Home Missions Total	\$ 22,201.00	\$ 23,870.00	\$ (3,085.00)

Note 6: Due to the simplicity of the financial activity of the Classis, a Statement of Cash Flows has not been presented. This represents a deviation from GAAP.

2015 Membership & Financial Statistics

	Aberdeen (Includes Dickinson)	Anamoose (2013 Finances)	Ashley	Dickinson	Eureka	Herried	Hosmer
Number of Elders	3	2	3	0	3	2	2
Number of Deacons	3	1	3	0	3	2	1
Communicants Last Year	103	11	38	8	124	51	15
Received – Confirmation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Received – Transfer	2	0	2	0	2	0	0
Received – Profession	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Received	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total Old & New	105	11	40	8	124	51	15
Lost – Dismissal	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Lost – Erasure/Discipline	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lost – Death	2	2	2	0	8	0	1
Total Lost	3	2	4	0	8	0	2
Total Communicants This Year	102	9	36	8	116	51	13
Unconfirmed Members	24	1	0	6	7	12	0
Total Baptized Members	126	10	36	14	123	63	13
Number of Families	54	6	21	3	71	30	11
Children in Sunday School	22	1	0	6	5	10	0
Adults Baptized Last Year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infants Baptized	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Total Baptisms this Year	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Members' Lord's Supper	92	8	27	6	99	39	10
Lord' Supper Observed	8	1	3	4	4	2	2
Receipts – Sunday Offerings	\$133,323	\$11,426	\$34,738	\$41,199	\$106,272	\$53,262	\$2,079
Receipts – Special Offerings	\$6,711	\$0	\$5,439	\$4,896	\$0	\$4,509	\$0
Receipts – Other Sources	\$94,354	\$0	\$2,803	\$42,900	\$23,777	\$0	\$7,338
Total Receipts	\$234,388	\$11,426	\$42,980	\$88,995	\$130,049	\$57,771	\$9,417
Budgeted Synodical Funds	\$14,813	\$3,292	\$3,483	\$748	\$19,864	\$5,853	\$933
Budgeted Classical Funds	\$7,264	\$1,066	\$1,258	\$804	\$8,432	\$2,992	\$323
Non-Guideline Causes	\$325	\$0	\$248	\$325	\$0	\$270	\$0
Non-RCUS Benevolences	\$0	\$0	\$200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other General Expenses	\$153,264	\$2,040	\$44,770	\$76,328	\$72,476	\$31,925	\$9,165
Total Disbursements	\$175,666	\$6,398	\$49,959	\$78,205	\$100,772	\$41,040	\$10,421
Value of Church Buildings	\$350,000	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$40,000	\$25,000
Value of Parsonage	\$68,500	\$0	\$45,000	\$68,500	\$100,000	\$25,000	\$0
Property Improvements	\$1,802	\$0	\$5,543	\$1,802	\$21,040	\$2,613	\$0
Present Property Debts	\$56,074	\$0	\$0	\$56,074	\$0	\$0	\$0
Debt Paid Last Year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Synod Giving per Communicant	\$144	\$299	\$92	\$94	\$160	\$115	\$62
Classis Giving per Communicant	\$71	\$97	\$33	\$101	\$68	\$59	\$22
Total RCUS per Communicant	\$217	\$396	\$131	\$235	\$228	\$179	\$84

	Minot	Pierre	Watertown	Totals 2015	Totals 2014	Difference
Number of Elders	1	1	2	19	20	-1
Number of Deacons	1	0	1	15	17	-2
Communicants Last Year	36	29	20	427	413	14
Received – Confirmation	0	0	0	0	10	-10
Received – Transfer	0	0	0	6	20	-14
Received – Profession	0	0	6	6	15	-9
Total Received	0	0	6	10	45	-35
Total Old & New	36	29	26	437	458	-21
Lost – Dismissal	6	3	0	12	13	-1
Lost – Erasure/Discipline	2	5	0	8	4	4
Lost – Death	0	1	0	16	7	9
Total Lost	8	9	0	36	24	12
Total Communicants This Year	28	20	26	401	434	-33
Unconfirmed Members	11	7	10	72	64	8
Total Baptized Members	39	27	36	473	496	-23
Number of Families	14	12	12	231	241	-10
Children in Sunday School	6	5	7	56	50	6
Adults Baptized Last Year	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infants Baptized	0	1	3	7	2	5
Total Baptisms this Year	0	1	3	7	2	5
Members' Lord's Supper	36	21	24	90.27%	86.64%	3.64%
Lord' Supper Observed	12	5	6	43	41	2
Receipts – Sunday Offerings	\$75,524	\$41,580	\$85,048	\$543,252	\$625,672	-\$82,420
Receipts – Special Offerings	\$7,115	\$960	\$0	\$24,734	\$14,454	\$10,280
Receipts – Other Sources	\$6,088	\$5,826	\$0	\$140,186	\$90,184	\$50,002
Total Receipts	\$88,727	\$48,366	\$85,048	\$708,172	\$730,310	-\$22,138
Budgeted Synodical Funds	\$7,848	\$4,574	\$4,540	\$65,200	\$64,145	\$1,055
Budgeted Classical Funds	\$2,448	\$2,120	\$1,360	\$27,263	\$26,009	\$1,254
Non-Guideline Causes	\$3,429	\$0	\$0	\$4,272	\$4,307	-\$35
Non-RCUS Benevolences	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$4,200	\$4,831	-\$631
Other General Expenses	\$60,967	\$51,520	\$57,601	\$483,728	\$412,179	\$71,549
Total Disbursements	\$78,692	\$58,214	\$63,501	\$584,663	\$511,471	\$73,192
Value of Church Buildings	\$0	\$112,000	\$0	\$802,000	\$800,000	\$2,000
Value of Parsonage	\$300,000	\$90,000	\$150,000	\$778,500	\$778,500	\$0
Property Improvements	\$0	\$2,000	\$4,131	\$37,129	\$25,413	\$11,716
Present Property Debts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$56,074	\$56,074	\$0
Debt Paid Last Year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Synod Giving per Communicant	\$218	\$158	\$227	\$153	\$155	-\$3
Classis Giving per Communicant	\$68	\$73	\$68	\$64	\$63	\$1
Total RCUS per Communicant	\$381	\$231	\$295	\$227	\$229	-\$2

Standing Rules**Organization**

1. The Standing rules shall be read during the session of Classis.
2. That the Northern Plains Classis hold its annual meeting on the second Monday in March and shall meet each day until all business regularly brought before it has been disposed. (2009)
3. The worship services of Classis shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, and these proposed services shall be circulated before Classis.
4. 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.
5. Every charge that will not have an elder delegate at the yearly Spring meeting of Classis shall, before the date of the meeting, send the answers to the questions placed before the elder 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.

Correspondence

6. The statistics, Credentials of Elders to Classis and the Mailing Addresses of Delegates to Classis shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk by February 1st. (2010, 2012)
7. The reports and recommendations of the Permanent and Special committees of Classis shall be completed and mailed or emailed to the Consistories of all the Churches by February 15th before the Spring Meeting of Classis. Parochial reports from all Ministers and Licentiates are to be sent to the President by February 15th before the Spring Meeting of Classis. Excuses for these requirements are to be made by written request to the Executive Committee of Classis by the chairman of the committee involved, at least two weeks before the meeting of Classis. (2012, 2014)
8. Overtures sent to the Stated Clerk of Classis four weeks in advance of Classis shall be circularized, but overtures may be submitted to Classis at any time.
9. If pastors, elders, and members of congregations request information from the Executive Committee of Classis concerning constitutional matters and procedures, as provided in Article 91, the answer shall, if the request is in order and in written form, be presented in written form and relevant only to the item in question.
10. All documents submitted to Classis be written on sheets of white paper measuring 8.5 inches wide and 11 inches long. (2005)

Financial

11. The Classical dues shall be due on the first of November and are to be paid not later than the 30th of November of the current year. (2013)
12. The monies sent to the Treasurer shall be made out in check form to "Northern Plains Classis," and shall be designated for which fund and how much for each fund.
13. The President of Classis shall receive two hundred dollars (\$200.00), the Stated Clerk shall receive five hundred dollars (\$500.00), and the Treasurer two hundred dollars (\$200.00) for the Classical year. (2008, 2013, 2014)

14. Travel reimbursement shall be paid only to those delegates whose congregations have paid the Classical dues in full to the Classis Treasurer, and those delegates who have attended all sessions or have been properly excused by Classis.
15. The Treasurer shall reimburse travel to and from Classis, or for Classis business, at 35 cents (\$0.35) per mile per vehicle. When distance and time require public travel on public transportation to and from Classis, or for Classis business, they shall be granted full fare. (2007)

Examinations

16. It shall be the practice of the Classis before ordaining candidates for the ministry and before installing ordained ministers from other denominations, to require no less than an eight month internship for them under the supervision of a pastor of the Classis who has served in the Reformed Church in the United States for at least five years. During this internship particular emphasis shall be placed upon learning the peculiarities and practices of the RCUS. This internship requirement may be fulfilled either before or after the candidate has received a call or is licensed. (2010)