

CLASSIS CENTRAL US

AGENDA MATERIALS

Table of Contents

	Page
Agenda	2
Lodging Information	3
Credential	4
Interim Committee Report by Convening Consistory	5
Stated Clerk Report	6
Consistory Supervising Classis Website Report	8
Church Visitor Reports	
Sanborn	9
Des Moines	10
Orange City	11
Doon	12
Schererville	13
Rock Valley	14
Fraternal Observer Report	15
Consistory Supervising CPAC Report	16
CPAC Report	17
Report on Chicago Heights, IL	18
Report on Quito, Ecuador	25
Missions Committee Representative Report	29
CERCU Representative Report	30
CECCA Representative Report	32
WOC Representative Report	34
Appeals Committee Representative Report	35
Overtures	
Pella Overture	36
Orange City Overture	44
Classis Functionaries List	46

AGENDA

The 49th Meeting of Classis Central U.S. URCNA

Convening at **Covenant Reformed Church** in Pella, IA
Monday, **March 9, 2020**, at 1:00 p.m.
Convened by Providence Reformed Church, Des Moines, Iowa

1. Opening Devotions – By Member of Convening Consistory serving as Chairman *Pro Tem*
2. Presentation of the Credentials and Roll Call of the Delegates
3. Reading of the *Form of Subscription* and the Delegates' Response of Agreement
4. Declaration that Classis is Duly Constituted.
5. Seating of Officers: Chairman from Oak Glen URC and Vice-chairman from Lynwood URC.
6. Adoption of Agenda, including the following Time Schedule: 15-minute breaks at 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. One-hour breaks at 12:00 noon and 5:30 p.m. Evening session to end at 8:30 p.m. Morning session to begin at 8:30 a.m.
7. Appointment of Committee to Examine the Credentials of the Delegates
8. Classis Reports:
 - a. Interim Committee
 - b. Stated Clerk
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Consistory supervising Classis website
 - e. Church visitors
 - f. Fraternal Observers and Fraternal Delegates
 - g. Ecumenical activities by the churches
 - h. Consistory supervising CPAC
 - i. CPAC
 - j. Consistories concerning church plants or chaplains
9. Federation Reports:
 - a. Missions Committee
 - b. Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU)
 - c. Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA)
 - d. Website Oversight Committee (WOC)
 - e. Appeals Committee
10. Fraternal Greetings
11. Overtures:
 - a. Pella re Missions Committee
 - b. Orange City re Classis Minnkota
12. Elections & Appointments:
 - a. Church Visitor West – Joel Vander Kooi's term expires
 - b. CPAC – Micah Van Manaan's first term expires
 - c. CECCA – Mr. Gerard Swets' first term expires
 - d. Mission Committee – Rev. Jody Lucero's second term expires
13. Determination of Stated Clerk's remuneration (Currently \$1,200 per year).
14. Credentials Committee Report
15. Next Meeting:
 - a. Date for next Meeting. (*Rules of Procedure* I.B., "Two meetings shall be held each year: in the second full week of April and in the second full week of September.")
 - b. Place – Doon URC is next in rotation to convene and host classis

16. Closing Matters:
 - a. Thanks to Host Church
 - b. Concept Minutes
 - c. Prayer and Adjournment
-

DEVOTIONS SCHEDULE:

As listed below, please prepare to lead devotions during the upcoming Classis. This schedule goes beyond the anticipated length of classis, just in case.

- ❑ Opening of Classis Monday, 1 pm (*Scripture, Prayer, Song*) Chairman *Pro Tem*
 - ❑ Closing of Session #1, Monday prior to Evening Meal (*Prayer*) Wellsburg
 - ❑ Opening of Session #2, after Evening Meal (*Scripture, Prayer, Song*) Beecher
 - ❑ Closing of Session #2 Monday evening (*Scripture, Prayer, Song*) De Motte
 - ❑ Opening of Session #3 Tuesday morning (*Scripture, Prayer, Song*) Des Moines
 - ❑ Closing of Session #3, prior to Noon Meal (*Prayer*) Doon
 - ❑ Opening of Session #4, after Noon Meal (*Scripture, Prayer, Song*) Dyer
 - ❑ Closing of Classis (*Scripture, Prayer, Doxology*) Chairman
-

Lodging Information Baymont by Wyndham, Pella

Classis is being hosted by **Covenant Reformed Church**, Pella located at 2805 Fifield Road, Pella, Iowa.

Twenty motel rooms have been reserved at the **Baymont** at 2104 Washington Street, Pella (about **one mile** from Covenant Reformed Church) at the group rate of \$74 for two double beds, for Monday night, March 9 only. The room must be reserved by **February 9th** - by phone, or the rate and reservations do not apply. Internet reservations may not be applied to this reservation rate. **Phone 641-628-0085** to make a reservation. Ask for the rate reserved for Covenant Reformed Church.

Remember that in March there is always the possibility of inclement weather and hazardous driving conditions. Even if we are able to finish Monday night (which may or may not happen) you may wish to have a room reserved should night driving threaten to be reckless endangerment.

Click on the three underlined, bold face, embedded links above for further information.

Print this page separately, fill it out and bring the hard copy to classis.

Please e-mail the correct spelling of the delegates' and alternates' names to the clerk ASAP at classisCentralUS@gmail.com

CLASSICAL CREDENTIAL

To Classis Central US of the United Reformed Churches in North America, to convene on _____ (date), at _____ (place).

The Consistory of _____, member congregation of the United Reformed Churches in North America, has appointed brothers _____ and _____ as delegates to represent said church at the meeting of the classis. The alternate delegates are: _____ and _____.

We hereby instruct and authorize them to take part in all the deliberations and transactions of the classis meeting regarding all matters legally coming before the meeting and transacted in agreement with the Word of God, as interpreted by the Three Forms of Unity, and applied in the Church Order.

By the order of the Consistory,

Done in Consistory on

_____ (date)

Chairman

_____, Clerk

Church Order Article 26 Questions

1. Are Consistory and diaconal meetings held regularly? _____
2. Is the Word of God faithfully preached? _____
3. Are the sacraments faithfully administered? _____
4. Is church discipline exercised? _____
5. Are the poor cared for? _____
6. Is God-centered schooling promoted? _____
7. Does the Consistory need the advice or help of the classis for the proper government of the church? _____ If yes, use the reverse side.

Done in Consistory on

_____ (date)

_____, Chairman

_____, Clerk

PROVIDENCE REFORMED CHURCH

*A congregation of the United Reformed Churches in North America
3615 University Ave, Des Moines, Iowa 50311
www.ProvidenceRC.org • (515) 707-8022*

January 15, 2020

Dear Fathers and Brothers of Classis Central US,

The Consistory of Providence Reformed Church has served as the convening consistory for the spring meeting of classis (March 2020). We note that we received no requests from the churches of classis; and since there will be no examinations, we had very little to do. Here is a summary of our work:

- Corresponded with Covenant-Pella to confirm their hosting this meeting of classis and providing meals for the delegates and visitors.
- Made lodging arrangements for the delegates at a hotel in Pella (Baymont by Wyndham).

We are very thankful for the generous hospitality of Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, and for the helpful direction provided by Rev. Doug Barnes and by Rev. Ralph Pontier, the clerk of classis. It has been our privilege to serve the Lord and His church.

Humbly submitted,
The Consistory of Providence Reformed Church

CLASSIS CENTRAL U.S.

of the

UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA

Rev. Ralph A. Pontier
Stated Clerk of Classis
641-230-3880

118 Holland Drive
Pella, IA 50219
ClassisCentralUS@gmail.com

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

January 27, AD 2020

Dear Brothers,

Since my last report, I have attended to the following matters:

1. I prepared the minutes and report of our last classis meeting which was held on September 9-10. They were distributed to the classis mailing list on September 11 and to the rest of the federation on September 16. Subsequent to distribution, three minor typos were discovered in the minutes by alert readers (who will be rewarded for their diligence by being asked to proofread the next minutes before distribution). A perfected copy of the minutes is available for download on the classis website along with the report of the meeting.
2. I updated both the classis and federation websites with the date, time, and place of our next meeting and set up a classis forum notice to go out weekly reminding recipients of the agenda deadline for the March meeting. I approved a new recipient of classis forum notices, an elder from Sanborn.
3. I forwarded to the classis mailing list, on the date indicated, the following materials:
 - a. 9/17 The provisional agenda of Classis Eastern US scheduled to meet October 16.
 - b. 9/21 The minutes of Classis Southwestern Ontario which met on September 11.
 - c. 9/23 The minutes of Classis Ontario East which met on September 19.
 - d. 10/16 The minutes and classis report of Classis Michigan which met on October 15.
 - e. 10/21 The minutes of Classis Pacific NW which met on September 24.
 - f. 11/2 The minutes and report of Classis Eastern US which met on October 16.
 - g. 11/2 The Acts of Classis Manitoba of the CanRC which met on September 27.
 - h. 12/26 The minutes of Classis Ontario East which met on December 12.
 - i. 1/20 A summary of the minutes of the OPC Presbytery of Ohio held October 18-19.
 - j. 1/20 The November 2019 report of El Pacto de Gracia.
 - k. 1/20 The agenda for Classis Western Canada meeting February 12.
4. Fraternal Matters
 - a. A note of appreciation was received from Mr. Jacob Kuik of Classis Manitoba of the CanRC for the presence at their recent classis meeting of our fraternal delegate, Rev. John Vermeer.
 - b. I corresponded with Mr. Kuik regarding attending this meeting. I think he is planning on coming to our Fall meeting instead since the travel in the Fall will be much more convenient to him.
 - c. I received from Larry Oldaker notice of the next meeting of the OPC Presbytery of Ohio to be held March 13-14, 2020 at Covenant OPC, Vandalia, OH.
5. With the assistance of the convening and hosting consistories, I compiled the agenda for this meeting. Regarding the agenda:

- a. I received a request from Mr. Dave Vander Meer of Word and Deed Ministries to address classis. I advised him that our rules (II.C) prohibit representatives of causes from speaking to classis. I referred him to the host church for the possibility of setting up a display table.
- b. I was notified that a church visit was planned for February 5 at Oak Glen. The report will not be ready for distribution with the agenda which must be distributed by January 27. But I will forward it to the churches when I receive it.
- c. Since October 5, 2019, a weekly reminder of the agenda deadline for this classis meeting was sent to all the churches through the automated system of the classis website. The agenda deadline was also included in the minutes of the last meeting and posted on both the federation and classis websites. The day after the agenda deadline, I sent a reminder to numerous classical functionaries who had not yet submitted anticipated items. Over the next five days, I received 11 additional reports for inclusion in the agenda. I have included them with the agenda even though they were late because not to do so would unnecessarily hinder the work of classis by requiring more time at classis for these reports to be read in full. I hope by so doing I have not encouraged classical functionaries to think that being late is OK. I would encourage all classical functionaries to program their own electronic calendars with due dates and reminders.

It is a privilege to serve the churches of Classis Central US as clerk. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this way.

Respectfully submitted, your servant,
Ralph A. Pontier

OVERSIGHT CONSISTORY FOR THE CLASSIS WEBSITE

January 15, 2020

Esteemed brothers,

The Consistory of the Grace United Reformed Church (Waupun, Wisconsin) presents this report to Classis Central US for our duties as the Oversight Consistory for the Classis Central US website listed at <http://www.ClassisCentralUS.info>

The only actions taken since the last Classis report were to pay for items related to the operation of the website and then to be reimbursed by the Classical treasurer. We also provided technical support to Rev. Pontier in how to edit the web site.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve the Lord of the churches in this capacity.

Sincerely, in Christ,

Elder Larry Van Den Berg
Clerk
Grace United Reformed Church (Waupun, Wisconsin)

CHURCH VISITORS' REPORT

Church Visited: Cornerstone United Reformed Church in Sanborn, IOWA
Date of Visit: 5 June 2019
Visitors: Rev. Harold Miller & Rev. Joel Vander Kooi

On the evening of June 5, 2019 Rev. Harold Miller and I had the privilege of meeting with the Council of Cornerstone United Reformed Church in Sanborn. We came at their invitation as official visitors on behalf of Classis Central US in compliance with our Church Order Art. 27.

The Chairman of Council welcomed us and opened with a reading from Romans 15 and prayer. The Council had no requests for advice or matters of concern at this time. Of the 16 total Council members, only 8 were present for our meeting. Three were busy with field work due to an extremely late, wet spring. Two were out of town on business. And one member had severely injured his ankle earlier that day.

Our visit was conducted by Rev. Harold Miller who read from Acts 2 and led the questioning along the themes found in this passage. The members of Council were very positive about the life and ministry of the Cornerstone congregation. The church members are faithful in their attendance at worship AM and PM. There is a spirit of unity in the congregation which enhances the spiritual growth of members and strengthens their efforts to reach out in their community. Finding ways to reach the unchurched is an ongoing challenge as it is for all churches. Council members were confident that newcomers would be welcomed by their members.

Much appreciation was expressed for Cornerstone's Pastor, Rev. Dan Donovan, who faithfully leads the congregation in Word centered worship of the Living God. Pastor Donovan faithfully preaches the Gospel from the Holy Scriptures and faithfully preaches from the Three Forms of Unity. Pastor Donovan is very engaged with the congregation, and his ministry is fruitful and effective among them.

The considerable size of the Cornerstone congregation poses both challenges and opportunities. The Council is very aware of both and is handling these as God enables them. The Elders are faithful in prayer and in governing God's church both in discipling and discipline. They report no major crisis at this time. The deacons also are faithful in prayer and in their ministry of mercy and in challenging the congregation in their stewardship of resources for the support of God's Kingdom. The Sanborn Congregation is also enthusiastic in their support of missionaries at home and abroad.

A very thorough educational program is offered at Cornerstone featuring Sunday School and Catechism classis K – 12th grade and several adult study programs are offered as well.

During the course of the meeting, the official minutes of the Deacons, the Consistory, and the Council were examined and found to be thorough and in good order with proper signatures. The council was asked and answered the Synodically mandated questions satisfactorily.

We were encouraged by the sincerity and enthusiasm of the brothers at Cornerstone and by their faithfulness in performing their duties with joy, adhering to sound doctrine, observing the adopted Church Order and promoting the edification of the congregation. May the King of the church enable them to continue His work to the Glory of God our Savior.

Sincerely, in Christ, *Rev. Joel Vander Kooi*

CHURCH VISITORS' REPORT

Church Visited: Providence Reformed Church of Des Moines
Date of Visit: 18 June 2019
Visitors: Rev. Joel Vander Kooi & Rev. Doug Barnes

On June 18, 2019, Rev. Joel Vander Kooi and I had the privilege of meeting with the Council of Providence Reformed Church, at the request of its Consistory, on behalf of Classis Central US. This visit was held in compliance with Art. 27 of our Church Order.

We were warmly welcomed by the brothers, with all members of the Council being present.

Rev. Vander Kooi led the visit, opening with a reading from Philippians 2:1-18 and then questioning the brothers according to the requirements specified in our Church Order.

At the time of the printing of the 2018 URCNA Archive Directory, this congregation comprised 19 families, with 82 members. Recent departures, largely due to work-related moves, have brought this number down to less than 70. This necessitated a decrease in the number of office-bearers, as many of the men who have departed had served as elders and deacons. Currently, the congregation is served by just two elders, one deacon, and their minister.

This decrease in size has fostered concern and even a measure of discouragement among the brothers. However, they also recognize that God has blessed them with young men who are able to be disciplined and trained for leadership; and they rejoice to see their young people growing in the faith and coming forward to make public profession of faith.

The smaller size of the congregation does, however, foster a closeness among the members, and it fosters an urgency to outreach that can be a blessing. On the whole, the church is united around a shared vision, and the saints rejoice to be faithfully fed by God's Word both in the preaching and through Catechism lessons and Bible studies.

During the course of the meeting, we also examined the minutes of their Consistory and Council, finding these to be in excellent order.

Special attention was given to the synodically required questions. The church is contributing to the retirement needs of its minister, and he has been provided with both disability and life insurance. The brothers anticipate no need for outside assistance in meeting these obligations. In short, we found them to be in compliance with the synodical recommendations.

The Council voiced no notable requests for advice or matters of concern.

We are pleased to report that the brothers at Providence Reformed Church appear to be faithfully performing their duties, adhering to sound doctrine, observing the adopted order and promoting the edification of the congregation, unto God's glory.

We pray that the Lord of the Church will continue to sustain and use these men as instruments in His hand.

Sincerely, in Christ,
Rev. Doug Barnes

CHURCH VISITORS' REPORT

Church Visited: Redeemer United Reformed Church in Orange City, IOWA
Date of Visit: 4 September 2019
Visitors: Rev. Doug Barnes & Rev. Joel Vander Kooi

On the evening of September 4, 2019 Rev. Doug Barnes and I had the privilege of meeting with the Council of Redeemer United Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa. We came at their invitation as official visitors on behalf of Classis Central US in compliance with our Church Order Art. 27.

The Chairman of Redeemer's Council welcomed us and invited us to conduct our visit. The Council had no requests for advice, nor did they have particular matters of concern at this time. Of the 16 total Council members, all 16 were present for our meeting.

Our visit was conducted by Rev. Doug Barnes, who read from Matthew 28:16-20 and led the discussion guided by the themes found in this passage. Rev. Barnes asked the office bearers about the priority of prayer in the life of all Christians especially those who hold office in Christ's church. Questions were also asked about the centrality of the Word of God in worship services, the frequency of worship services on the Lord's day (AM and PM) special services for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Annual Day of Prayer, all of which Redeemer Church observes. The members of Council confirmed that Word centered worship is their practice and much appreciation was expressed for the preaching ministry of their Pastor, Rev. Todd De Rooy, who has faithfully lead them as Pastor for the past eleven years. The church members are faithful in their attendance at worship. And there is a spirit of unity in the congregation.

Redeemer's Education program includes Sunday School and Catechism 3rd – 12th grade in which their children and young people are being catechized. They have an active youth group with annual participation at the RYS convention. Profession of faith classes are offered and their young adults are making profession of their faith. Their education program also includes adult Sunday School, men's and women's Bible studies, and a couples Bible study.

Outreach is a challenge in a community with so many churches and a denominational Christian University. There are still many who do not attend church and finding ways to reach them is a challenge. Council members were confident that visitors would be welcomed in their fellowship.

The Elders are faithful in governing Christ's church both in discipling and discipline. They report no major crisis at this time. The deacons also are faithful in their ministry of mercy and in challenging the congregation to grateful stewardship of resources for the support of God's Kingdom. The Orange City Congregation is also faithfully & prayerfully engaged in the support of missionaries at home and abroad.

During the course of the meeting, the official minutes of the Deacons, the Consistory, and the Council were examined and found to be thorough and in good order with proper signatures. The council was asked and answered the Synodically mandated questions satisfactorily.

We were encouraged by our visit with the brothers at Redeemer Church: by their joy in Lord, their faithfulness in the performance their duties, their adherence to sound doctrine, their observance of the adopted Church Order, their support of the Gospel ministry, and their love for God's people. May the King of the church enable them to continue His work to the Glory of God!

Sincerely, in Christ,
Rev. Joel Vander Kooi

CHURCH VISITORS' REPORT

Church Visited: Doon URC
Date of Visit: 4 September 2019
Visitors: Rev. Joel Vander Kooi & Rev. Doug Barnes

On September 4, 2019, Rev. Joel Vander Kooi and I had the privilege of meeting with the Council of Doon United Reformed Church, at the request of its Consistory, on behalf of Classis Central US. This visit was held in compliance with Art. 27 of our Church Order.

We were warmly welcomed by the brothers, with all but one member of the Council being present. (The absent member was out of the country for the adoption of a pair of children.)

Rev. Vander Kooi led the visit, using the requirements specified in Church Order Art. 27. The resultant discussion was deeply encouraging, as the brothers attested to the work of the Lord in His church at Doon. The men clearly love the members whom the Lord has entrusted to their care and feel deeply the responsibility of providing spiritual care to them.

The men have rejoiced at the participation they have seen in Bible studies and catechetical instruction, as well as a spate of recent professions of faith. A warm discussion was held concerning teaching materials, as well as communication and fellowship within the church.

We were deeply encouraged by the testimony of Doon's office-bearers concerning the unity and spiritual growth of the church.

During the course of the meeting, we also examined the minutes of their Consistory, Council, and Deacons meetings, finding all to be in good order.

Special attention was given to the synodically required questions, which were asked and answered. The church is contributing to the retirement needs of its minister, and he has life insurance. Like nearly all of the members of the congregation, the minister does not have disability insurance.

The Council voiced no special requests for advice or matters of concern.

We are pleased to report that the brothers at Doon United Reformed Church appear to be faithfully performing their duties, adhering to sound doctrine, observing the adopted order and promoting the edification of the congregation, unto God's glory.

We pray that the Lord of the Church will continue to sustain and use these men as instruments in His hand.

Sincerely, in Christ,
Rev. Doug Barnes

CHURCH VISITORS' REPORT

January 15, 2020

United Reformed Churches in North America
Classis Central US

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

On the evening of November 20, 2019, Rev. Ed Marcusse of Oak Glen United Reformed Church (Lansing, IL) and I conducted a church visit with the council at Community United Reformed Church (Schererville, IN).

At 7:00 pm the president of the council opened the meeting with reading Psalm 27, singing, and prayer. Rev. Marcusse then led the meeting through a series of questions designed to inquire whether the office-bearers were faithfully performing their duties, adhering to sound doctrine, observing in all things the adopted order, and properly promoting the edification of the congregation (per church order article 27).

We found Community URC to be in full compliance with the church order. It appeared to us that a relationship of mutual respect, love, and encouragement exists between the pastors, elders and deacons. They practice mutual censure every three months, and strive for a positive and encouraging environment during that time.

They provide ably for their pastor, both financially (in line with CO article 10 and the recommendations of Synod Visalia) and also in other ways (e.g., providing time for “extra-curricular” activities, conferences, and seminars). There is a “mentoring committee” that also meets regularly with the pastor.

We had a good discussion about how the deacons handle offering monies from collection to bank deposit which revealed a well thought through procedure, and the visitors offered some suggestions for further checks and balances in that process to which the deacons expressed a willingness to consider. We were especially impressed to hear how quick the deacons were to describe the use of Scripture in their diaconal work (per CO article 15).

We commended the council of Community URC for their diligence and encouraged them to stay the course in their ministry.

The visit ended at 8:00pm and a word of prayer was offered before the visitors dismissed themselves to allow the council to proceed to their ordinary meeting agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. R. Andrew Compton
Redeemer United Reformed Church (Saint John, IN)

CHURCH VISITORS' REPORT

Report of Church Visitors to Rock Valley, Iowa April 9, 2019

Your servants Revs. Doug Barnes and Harold Miller were able to conduct a visit with the council of the Rock Valley Untied Reformed Church immediately following the classis meeting there. The time was well appreciated by the visitors and the council. All council members were present except for one elder.

The visit was announced ahead of time to the congregation. No issues were brought forth to the visitors needing attention, allowing Rev. Barnes to lead a “normal” Church Order visit.

Rev. Barnes led well using Colossians 1.1-29 as guidance to query the council members in all the required areas. No deficits were detected, and each officer gave a good account of the work being done there by Christ’s leading. The “required” questions were also asked and answered in a church orderly way. The congregation does not need outside support to meet its financial obligations.

The amount of detail recorded in the various minutes and records books is impressive. Of particular note is the “family visitation” book which includes a separate page for each family. This allows for a year to year tracking of issues within the families of the congregation. This is helpful for shepherding.

In every area the consistory and council show and speak of excellent care being given to the flock in Rock Valley and your visitors departed being very encouraged by the time we spent with the brothers.

Rev. Doug Barnes

Rev. Harold Miller

Fraternal Delegate Report: Visit to Classis Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches

On Friday, September 27, 2019, I had the privilege of attending a meeting of Classis Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The last time I had visited the classis had been March 23, 2007, and while over twelve years had passed since I had last visited, I was able to recall my previous visit with fondness and appreciation. This visit was no different for me, as the brothers at the classis meeting welcomed me warmly and invited me to fully participate in their meeting with all privileges, save, of course, for the right to vote.

One of my observations from the meeting was similar to my previous visit and that was the thorough job of reporting by church visitors, where one was able to get a vivid picture of what was happening in the life of each church that was visited.

What had developed since the last time I had visited was the kind of time that was devoted to address ecumenical interactions. The classis has a committee devoted to visiting other churches with which they have some measure of ecumenical ties. Whereas our classis relies on volunteers to visit those in fellowship with us in North America, Classis Manitoba has given themselves a mandate to make periodic visits to the classes and presbyteries of their ecumenical brothers, which helps to maximize official ecumenical interaction.

Besides these inter-denominational reports, others ecumenical matters were discussed. The American Reformed Church in Denver, which is part of Classis Manitoba, sought advice as to whether it was within their consistory's parameters to permit a local minister from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America to preach for them, considering that the CanRC is yet to be in fellowship with the RPCNA. The Denver church had hoped for an adoption of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal, but will now wait for the next synod in 2022 to adapt psalms and hymns from the Trinity Psalter Hymnal into the Book of Praise. Since the Denver church is geographically tied to our Classis Southwest, Classis Manitoba will seek to open up dialogue with that URCNA classis.

The tenor of the meeting itself is more informal from what we would expect for a classis meeting with many adoptions coming by way of common consensus rather than formal voting. Much prayer is brought to bear on matters brought before classis.

It was edifying to see how the churches seek to be of financial assistance to the Denver congregation in order that the financial needs might be able to be met sufficiently.

The classis also reports on how the local churches are doing in exhorting men to consider a pursuit of the gospel ministry.

I was permitted to address classis for about 10 to 12 minutes, reviewing and introducing Classis Central US, where it was that I served pastorally, discussing some of the highlights from our previous synod, recalling my previous time with them and anticipating the opportunity to lead worship at the Redeemer CanRC in Winnipeg on the upcoming Lord's Day of September 29.

Whether at the classis meeting or at worship on September 29, both the leadership and the membership of the Canadian Reformed received me well and fraternally. I was grateful to serve on behalf of our classis and look forward to further encounters with our brothers in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Respectfully submitted,

John Vermeer

**REPORT TO CLASSIS CENTRAL U.S.
FROM THE OVERSEEING CONSISTORY OF
THE CHURCH PLANTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Dear Fathers & Brothers,

The consistory of Immanuel United Reformed Church, DeMotte is privileged to continue to serve classis as the overseeing consistory of the Church Planting Advisory Committee. CPAC has faithfully provided us with its meeting minutes which are reviewed at our consistory meetings. CPAC's Chairman and our consistory committee representative are responsive to our inquiries and guidance.

We approved the work of CPAC and continue to uphold them in our prayers as they seek to assist the churches in their work of missions and advancing the Kingdom of Christ in Classis Central.

Respectfully submitted,
Clarence Oudman
Clerk, Immanuel United Reformed Church , DeMotte, Indiana

Approved in consistory January 7, 2020

The Church Planting Advisory Committee (CPAC)
Report to Classis Central US
March 9, 2019

Dear Fathers and Brothers of Classis Central US,

CPAC has continued to hold monthly phone conferences, minutes for which are submitted to our overseeing consistory at Immanuel URC of DeMotte. A face-to-face meeting in Wellsburg, Iowa, was scheduled for Nov. 2019; it did not happen on account of Rev. Worries' needing to travel out of state for a family matter. At the end of January 2020, the Missions Committee of the URCNA will have its face-to-face meeting in Phoenix, AZ, which will overlap with the meeting of the "missions cohort" that has been gathering there for some years – with the consent of our overseeing Consistory, Rev. Aalsburg will be attending the cohort, the Lord willing. CPAC has had the pleasure of working with brother Micah Van Maanen these last three years. As his first term ends this spring, classis will need to appoint another elder to the committee.

We have been in communication with Rev. Zac Wyse of Cincinnati about a group that is meeting weekly for Bible study in Zionsville, IN, outside Indianapolis. He has been helping to establish a core group there for the last year, and is hopeful that a plant is taking root. Rev. Wyse has suggested that there may be opportunity for Classis Central churches to help in the future. The committee has also been asked to meet with church leaders at Cornerstone-Sanborn regarding the possibility of an outreach to Latino migrant workers in their area.

The members of CPAC are thankful for the opportunity to help the consistories of Faith-Beecher and Covenant-Pella to present to classis Annual Updates regarding their mission works in Chicago Heights, IL, and in Quito, Ecuador, respectively. These updates are the means by which Classis asks a series of questions that are intended to help our churches practice mutual accountability and effective cooperation in our mission efforts in accordance with Article 47 of the C.O. We respectfully request that consistories give due attention to the two Annual Updates that follow in the classis agenda. CPAC recommends that classis continue assisting these works.

The committee seeks advice from classis on one matter. With a view toward possibly revising the Annual Update form, we would like to know if the councils are satisfied not only with the questions it contains but also with the sort of answers that are typically provided. As we have reported in the past, it is typical for the committee to have trouble with Question #11, regarding the financial situation for the mission works. In numerous cases, the information provided is unclear and confusing, even after attempts have been made to clarify things.

Recommendations:

1. That Classis give advice for the improvement of financial reporting in the Annual Update.
2. That Classis continue assistance for El Pacto de Gracia in Chicago Heights, IL.
3. That Classis continue assistance for Luz de Vida in Quito, Ecuador.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jody Lucero, *clerk*

Rev. Spencer Aalsburg, *chairman*

Elder Micah VanMaanen

Elder Grant Diekevers

Rev. Joel Worries

Appendix B: Church Plant Annual Update Form

Classis Central Consistory Updating: Faith URC of Beecher, IL

Location of Church Plant: Chicago Heights, IL

Date of Report: December 2019

1. What is going on in the life of this church plant (studies, events, activities, worship services)? What has changed over the last year?

Our 5pm Sunday worship service meets at the First Presbyterian Church in Chicago Heights (El Pacto was meeting there before I arrived in June of 2016). I just finished my sermon series on the Psalms (1-18). I will probably resume the Psalms series later on. I just began a brief new sermon series because of the Christmas season. The next sermon series will be on James. During the worship service, we have an elder or a deacon from Faith URC (Beecher) worship with us. We have a bilingual bulletin, and an English manuscript of the sermon. During the service, I announce each part of the liturgy in English and Spanish. This is for the benefit of the Spanish speakers and English speakers present. We usually have several English speakers in attendance (an officer from Faith, our pianist, our Sunday School volunteers).

We have a time of fellowship immediately after the worship service and before Sunday School. Sometimes we have extended time of fellowship on Sundays. We recently had a Thanksgiving potluck (we have traditionally had it the Sunday before Thanksgiving).

After fellowship time, we have Sunday School for various age groups. The adults learn in Spanish, and the covenant children learn in English. In the adult class, we are almost finished with the Belgic Confession. Afterwards, I will begin teaching them the URC church order. None of our members grew up in Reformed churches so that our Reformed polity is totally new to them. It is a wonderful opportunity to teach them how a Reformed church is governed.

In our older children's catechism, they are using the *Life in Christ* curriculum. They are currently learning about church history. The name of their textbook is "Christ's Living Church." In the younger elementary class they are learning about "Pleasing God" from the Great Commissions Publications curriculum.

We are currently in the process of relocating our English class in Lansing which met at the PASS crisis pregnancy center. I am currently in communication with Wanda Rodgers, the program director of the Chicago Heights Park District. They offer programs for all the residents of the city, and they mail a catalog to every household. Wanda wants to partner with El Pacto in offering an English class because they currently do not offer one. This is quite a need since there are so many Spanish speakers in Chicago Heights. We have made tentative plans to offer a weekly class on Wednesday mornings at the Park District Building in downtown Chicago Heights which shares the same parking lot with the public library. Please pray for the advertising, good attendance, and the salvation of everyone in attendance.

I attend the monthly council and consistory meetings at Faith URC (Beecher, IL). I usually give an update on El Pacto at the council meetings (first Wed of the month). I provide a detailed report of my activities to the consistory (third Wed of the month). Every two months (on the third Monday) I meet

with the Joint Venture Committee (JVC) where I also provide a detailed report of my activities. The JVC is comprised of representatives from our supporting churches (Faith URC - our overseeing consistory; Lynwood URC, Oak Glen URC, Community URC, Redeemer URC).

On Friday mornings (twice a month) I lead a Bible study at Hector and Sonia Martorell's coffee shop. We are currently studying the book of Ruth. We average about 15+ in attendance. After the study, I stay for an additional hour so I can visit and pray with people.

On Saturday, March 7, 2020, we will have our Bean Bag tournament. This is a yearly fundraiser for El Pacto de Gracia. We are very grateful to Woldhuis Farms for hosting the event. We are thankful to the Hospitality Committee of Faith URC for coordinating the tournament and preparing the Mexican food. We had wonderful attendance at our last tournament with members from various local Reformed churches come out and join us.

2. How are your prayers being answered? What joys and growth (spiritual & numerical) are you experiencing? What struggles? What are your current prayer requests?

We are thankful for the profession of faith of Evangeline Sernas (my eldest daughter) and David and Ivone Arsenault. Whenever there is a profession of faith at El Pacto, El Pacto and Faith URC have a joint bilingual service. It was a wonderful opportunity for the mother and daughter church to worship together. We also had members of other supporting churches in attendance.

Every two months, El Pacto members worship at Faith URC on Sunday morning in order to partake of the Lord's Supper. On Sunday, December 1st, the members of El Pacto worshipped at Faith URC during the morning service.

We do have people from the Bible Study who occasionally visit our worship service during the year – Gregoria, Graciela Puente, Jesus Acosta, and Ana Solano. Graciela Puente has invited her granddaughters to our worship service; Graciela also attends the Bible Study. Ana Solano faithfully attends both the worship service and the Bible Study; she has brought along her two grandsons. Recently, her brother Cesar joined us for worship and took a copy of the Three Forms of Unity.

On Tuesday, December 3rd, I had my second meeting with the nephew and niece of Margarito Mosso. Margarito is one of our members who has several relatives who live in Chicago Heights. They come from a Pentecostal background, but they are very interested in learning about the Heidelberg Catechism. They are open to meeting with Margarito and myself to go through the catechism. Our next meeting is Monday, December 9th. The Lord willing, we will meet every week or two weeks. Please pray for them as they learn the Reformed confessions.

It is encouraging to get more invitations to meet the friends and family of our members and regular visitors. Whenever I meet someone for the first time, I know it is the first of many meetings over a period of months possibly years. This is normal because it takes time to build trust and meaningful relationships. As I meet new people and deepen current relationships, may the Lord guide and lead them to worship with us on Sunday.

3. How many people are involved with this work? How has composition changed?

I am thankful for the stability of our core group. Our core members have remained the same. They come to church to worship, fellowship and attend Sunday School on a regular basis. They faithfully attend Faith URC for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Mosso family consists of Margarito and Marta and their five children (Nicole, Jonathan, Ali Yasmin and Samuel). Marta is pregnant with child #6 coming in January 2020. The Cruz family consists of David and Elda and their two children (Jazzy and Joshua). It is great to have Jazzy worship with us. She is a college student who attends the local community college. Teo Garcia, a single man in his 50s, is very faithful. It is wonderful to consider Dave and Ivone Arsenault as part of our core group of families. They have faithfully attended for over three years. They are currently serving as Sunday School teachers for the younger children's class. My wife Leah and my five children (Evangeline, Sophia, David, Jonathan, and Carmen-Cristi) are one of the core families.

Most of our regular visitors are faithful as well. Samuel and Reyna Cuevas faithfully attend every Sunday. They are lovely couple who are committed to the church. Sonia and Hector Martorell have been a part of El Pacto before I arrived in June 2018. Don Hector has to work on Sundays, and he won't be able to retire until 4 years from now. They host our Friday morning Bible study at their coffee shop which is located in a Hispanic neighborhood. Irene Tijerina has also faithfully attended El Pacto before I began my ministry here. Irene's son, Steve, is married to Sonia's daughter, Sandra. Steve and Sandra are worshipping with us on a more regular basis. Please pray that they make a long term commitment to El Pacto. Steve is a computer programmer. Sandra is a kindergarten teacher at Lansing Christian School.

Ana Solano regularly attends the worship service, and she brings her two grandsons along with her when they are available. This past year Ana lost her father, her son and a close friend who all died within a period of several months. Ana's mom has major health issues, and she receives dialysis. Ana suffers from pulmonary embolism. Please pray for the spiritual and physical well being of Ana and her family.

4. What efforts are being made to promote participation in this group?

We are thankful for our good relationship with Faith URC and our local supporting churches (Lynwood URC, Oak Glen URC, Redeemer URC, and Community URC). I have been able to preach twice at Faith. We are blessed by their financial and prayerful support.

This past year we had 5 joint services with our supporting churches. We had two joint services with Faith URC because of the professions of faith. We had an Easter evening joint service with Community URC. On September 1st, we had a joint service with Oak Glen URC. On November 3rd, we had a joint service with Lynwood URC. It is wonderful to express our unity as brothers and sisters in Christ by worshipping together. These bilingual services have been well attended. We look forward to more bilingual services in 2020, the Lord willing.

Oak Glen URC is sharing El Pacto materials at their English class in Lansing. They also invited me to their summer car show where I was able to share El Pacto material. It is encouraging when our local churches invite me to promote El Pacto at their church events.

On August 1st, we had a missions emphasis night at Community URC. Members from all the local URC churches came out to hear my presentation on El Pacto as well as a presentation by Divine Hope

Reformed Seminary. It was a good opportunity to give an update on the Spanish ministry as well as recruit volunteers.

In addition, El Pacto has been blessed by volunteers from our supporting churches. Cynthia Kramer (Faith URC) helps recruit and coordinate musical accompanists. Cynthia plays for El Pacto on a regular basis. Our musicians come from all five supporting churches (especially Faith URC and Oak Glen URC). We have also had a pianist from Immanuel URC (DeMotte, IN). There is also a family from First URC Oak Lawn who wants to volunteer by providing musical accompaniment.

Our Sunday School teachers are from Faith URC and Lynwood URC. We are very thankful for Ed Vander Woude who teaches the older children's Sunday School class. We are thankful for Leah Sernas, Dave and Ivone Arsenault, Bernice Haveman, who are on a rotation schedule to teach the younger children's Sunday School class.

This past summer we had a MARS intern, Arnold Lavaire. Arnold is in his final year at MARS. He is a native of Honduras. He attends a PCA Spanish ministry in West Chicago. Arnold and his family were a blessing to our church this past summer. He preached for us, taught Adult Sunday School, and led Bible Study. He also helped with our community dinner in July. I met with Arnold on a weekly basis to go over his duties and responsibilities.

Dave Kallemyn (the JVC representative from Lynwood URC) has done many projects involving printing: sandwich board signs, flyers, brochures, and mass mailers. Dave was a huge help with the signs and mass mailers for our community dinners this past summer.

5. How is the vision of this church plant being advanced or changing?

El Pacto de Gracia is a bilingual ministry. The adults are first generation immigrants who come from Latin America. Our covenant children either go to Christian School or are homeschooled. The parents prefer to speak Spanish, and the children prefer to speak English. For this reason, our service is bilingual (although the sermon is mainly in Spanish). Our adult Sunday School class is in Spanish, and our children's Sunday School classes are in English.

Rev. Richard Bout, our URC missions coordinator, recently visited us in November of 2019. He taught a class on evangelism and led our worship service. Rev. Bout wanted me to think about the long term future of El Pacto – specifically how to minister to covenant children after they graduate from high school. We would love our church to be multi-generational; in other words, we want them to continue worshipping at El Pacto as adults. If our covenant youth are more comfortable worshipping in English, perhaps El Pacto should consider having a completely bilingual service (something we already do this when we have a joint service with our supporting churches). This is an important topic to discuss with the consistory of Faith URC and the families of El Pacto.

6. What progress is being made in calling a minister?

I have been serving since June 10, 2016.

7. What progress is being made in training office bearers?

In order for El Pacto to train officers, we need to ground them in doctrine, and they must be knowledgeable about the church order. When Arnold Lavaire, our summer intern, was working at El Pacto, one of the big projects that he completed was the translation of the Church Order. We need to teach our people about ecclesiastical offices, assemblies, functions & tasks, and discipline. In addition, they need to know the foundational principles of church government. We will begin our study of the Church Order in 2020.

In the next few months, we hope to complete our study of the Belgic Confession. At the end of this study, El Pacto will have completed our study of the Three Forms of Unity. It is vital to catechize our members and show them how our doctrine is all grounded in Scripture. It is important to teach them God's Word and the Reformed Confessions in order to equip them to distinguish between truth and error.

In addition to doctrine and church polity, we want our future officers to be prayer warriors. At the end of December, we will begin our monthly prayer meetings. During the worship service and Sunday School, we offer our prayer requests to God. Most of our prayer requests deal with family or personal health issues. We want our prayer meeting to focus on the ministry of El Pacto, the residents of Chicago Heights and the salvation of family, friends, and neighbors. We want to grow in the area of personal and corporate prayer. Please pray that our prayer meetings are well attended.

8. What challenges have you experienced in faithfully shepherding this church plant?

There are some significant differences between being a church planter and being a pastor of an established church. As a church planter of a Spanish ministry, one is involved in every aspect of the ministry. It is hard to delegate work for two reasons: (1) El Pacto does not have its own officers (elders and deacons) and committees (worship, education, hospitality, evangelism, building & grounds). (2) One needs to be fluent in Spanish and English in order to communicate with all parties in certain situations. For example, I help the deacons when there is a benevolence need involving a Spanish speaker. In addition, I help facilitate communication between our families and our local Christian schools.

My job would be a lot harder without our many volunteers for musical accompaniment, Sunday School classes, and advertising. They have been a huge help. One of my duties is scheduling and coordinating volunteers for the Sunday School classes. The deacons of Faith URC have been wonderful in helping with the benevolence needs of El Pacto as well as providing tuition assistance for our families who send their children to Christian school.

Since El Pacto has been well supported financially, I can focus most of my time and energy in my mission field rather than making many trips to raise support. We are very thankful for the prayerful and financial support of the saints. I do write a quarterly newsletter to keep our supporters updated on the ministry. Rev. Bout sends out my prayer requests to the federation.

9. What kind of community outreach is occurring? How comfortable has the congregation been in embracing new visitors?

I explained our community outreach in answering the first question of this update. We are continuing our Bible study. Please pray for the salvation of everyone in attendance.

This past summer we had two community dinners in Chicago Heights: the first one at the Social Hall at the Chicago Heights Park District; the second dinner at Jirtle Park located on the Hill (the predominantly Hispanic neighborhood of first generation immigrants). We are thankful that 100 people came to Jirtle Park. We enjoyed Mexican food, gave away Christian literature in Spanish and English, and gave away school supplies and T shirts with the El Pacto logo. People filled out information cards so we can follow up with them concerning future events. It was a wonderful time to get to know our neighbors in Chicago Heights.

I was planning to participate in a marriage conference at Momence OPC, but this conference has been rescheduled for Valentine's Day in 2020. I am thankful for the invitation by Rev. Lane Keister. The Lord willing, I will address the Spanish-speaking participants who attend.

As far as our English class, please pray for the location, the advertising, the curriculum and for the salvation of the attendees. This is a wonderful opportunity to get know many people in the community. Pray the Lord would bless this partnership between El Pacto and the Chicago Heights Park District. Please pray for my future meetings with Wanda Rodgers, the program director of the Park District.

I am thankful for the Mosso family, Cruz family, Teo Garcia and our regular visitors who welcome new people at El Pacto. It is very natural for them to do so. I am thankful that our members and regular visitors introduce me to the members of their family circle as well as their circle of friends. Many visitors have been family and friends of our members this past year.

10. How have the proposed plans changed? What change have you seen in the group's assets and liabilities, strengths and weaknesses? How have you handled successes and failures?

When the Lord blesses us in a variety of ways, we know that every good and perfect gift comes from our Heavenly Father (James 1:17). We are thankful for our members and regular visitors. We are grateful to our generous supporters and faithful volunteers. We are thankful for the new people we are meeting. We pray that our relationships with them will continue to deepen this upcoming year.

With regards to ministry failures, we ask God for the grace to persevere. It is very humbling to invest so much time and energy in certain individuals only to see them visit once or walk away. We pray that the seeds that we are sowing will land on good soil (Matthew 13:1-23). We are trying to share the Gospel far and wide through our worship service, Sunday school, outreach activities, advertising, social media, home visits and hospitality.

As we do all of these things, we pray about every aspect of the ministry. It is so important to ask the Lord for guidance as well as to give the increase. This year I have definitely grown in my prayerfulness. It has been a blessing to get together with my fellow URC ministers once a month for prayer and study.

As a church planter, I focus on building relationships with people by visiting, teaching and praying

with them on a regular basis. Over a period of time, this builds trust. It is quite natural for them to come church and other events as well as bring their loved ones along. Please pray for me as I build many relationships within the Hispanic community. Pray for the salvation of everyone I meet throughout the year.

11. How has the last year been financially? Please include internal and external income, as well as current financial assets. What is your revised projected, estimated budget for the next three years?

Our fiscal year is July 2019 through June 2020. The “assets” reflect the bank account balance. There are no long-term liabilities.

	Fiscal YTD (Oct 2019)	2021 Estimated	2022 Estimated	2023 Estimated
Budget YTD	\$46,387.24	\$48,707	\$51,142	\$53,699
Income:	44,876.35	47,120	49,476	51,950
Internal Offerings:	9,391.16	9,861	10,354	10,871
External Support:	35,485.09	37,259	39,122	41,078
Expenditures:	48,909.49	51,355	53,923	56,619
Difference:	- 4,033.24			
Assets	51,730.96			

Appendix B: Church Plant Annual Update Form

Classis Central Consistory Updating: Covenant Reformed Church, Pella

Location of Church Plant: Quito, Ecuador

Date of Report: December 2, 2019.

1. What is going on in the life of this church plant (studies, events, activities, worship services)? What has changed over the last year?

Mission work in Quito continues after the arrival of Rev. Landázuri in June 2014, sent by Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA. The main event during 2019 was Rev. Donoso's retirement. This generated the need of consolidating all the work in just one site. Thankfully, all members and regular attendants of the work in Tumbaco are now attending Luz de Vida Quito.

Studies:

Saturday: Every Saturday our basic and membership courses are offered in Quito at 9:00 am. This course is led by Rev. Landázuri. Due to the interest in this course it is open all throughout the year.

Tuesday: Every third and fourth Tuesdays of the month we offer a course for elders and deacons at 7:30 pm.

Friday: On Fridays, pastoral visitation is made to all members of Luz de Vida by the Council.

Sunday: After worship, children and adults have Catechism and Sunday School in each location. Adults are currently studying differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism (book by Richard Ramsay), and children are being catechized in Quito and Cumbayá-Tumbaco.

Due to Rev. Landázuri's ThM studies and a greater load of preaching and pastoral duties since Rev. Donoso's retirement, Bible studies during the week and the one at Parque Bicentenario have been suspended.

Activities:

Saturday: Soccer Game at Parque la Carolina, 7:00 am.

Events:

Congregational Picnic: During Summer, Luz de Vida held its annual picnic.

Choir: Luz de Vida's choir performs after special services in Quito. These are good opportunities to invite friends and family.

Further Studies: Rev. Landázuri continues his studies at Puritan Reformed Seminary (ThM Biblical Studies). Some courses are taken online and the other half in Grand Rapids in an intensive fashion. Rev. Landázuri anticipates starting his thesis in January 2020.

Worship Services:

Two worship services are currently being offered by Luz de Vida-Quito (morning and evening). Christmas, Good Friday and Reformation Day were celebrated through special services.

2. How are your prayers being answered? What joys and growth (spiritual & numerical) are you experiencing? What struggles? What are your current prayer requests?

In general, it is a matter of great joy to see the growth the Lord has provided, especially when Luz de Vida does not follow missionary methods that focus on increase in numbers only, but tries to be faithful herald of the Word. In spite of poor efforts, current membership numbers are as follows:

Year	Professing Members	By baptism
2017	33	10
2018	49	12
2019	62	22
Increase	13 (26.53%)	10 (83.33%)

3. How many people are involved with this work? How has composition changed?

Luz de Vida is not a Church Plant. It has its own Consistory, which works in close coordination with Covenant-Pella through Rev. Landázuri. At this time Luz de Vida Council has one elder, one deacon (the Council is also working with one elder candidate and two deacon candidates). Rev. Landázuri serves as a missionary minister and Rev. Donoso remains in the Consistory as well.

4. What efforts are being made to promote participation in this group?

Luz de Vida offers open and frequent courses for those interested in the offices of elder and deacon twice a month. All Council attends as well.

5. How is the vision of this church plant being advanced or changing?

Our vision remains and is confirmed by the fruit we experience. As stated in the 2017 report, our missionary efforts seek to focus on Reformed church planting with a confessional, ordered identity.

6. What progress is being made in calling a minister?

Luz de Vida's plan is to call Mr. Cristian García once he finishes seminary and sustains an examination. This plan needs to be confirmed, as Mr. García has expressed an interest in planting a church in his hometown, approximately 5 hours north of Quito. The Consistory of Luz de Vida continues in prayer and remains in communication with Mr. García.

7. What progress is being made in training office bearers?

As mentioned, there is a permanent course open twice a month, and Luz de Vida has a candidacy program by which every candidate is evaluated by Consistory before being put up for a congregational vote.

8. *What challenges have you experienced in faithfully shepherding this church plant?*

Ever since Rev. Donoso retired a greater burden has fallen on Rev. Landázuri. A few activities have been suspended, yet the membership and attendance have increased in an important way.

9. *What kind of community outreach is occurring? How comfortable has the congregation been in embracing new visitors?*

Luz de Vida grows organically through its members' witness. The congregation definitely sees itself responsible for sharing and living out the gospel.

10. *How have the proposed plans changed? What change have you seen in the group's assets and liabilities, strengths and weaknesses? How have you handled successes and failures?*

Luz de Vida's Council is formed by mature leaders that have been serving for years. Any successes or failures are taken with care and godly prudence. At this point we are not sure Mr. Cristian García will be working with Luz de Vida as he has expressed desire to start ministry in a different city. Rev. Donoso's retirement has placed more of the work on Rev. Landázuri, and caused the work to contract in terms of preaching locations but not persons. The Council is waiting on the Lord to see where He will lead next.

11. *How has the last year been financially? Please include internal and external income, as well as current financial assets. What is your revised projected, estimated budget for the next three years?*

Luz de Vida owns its church building and funds its own day-to-day expenses in Quito except for Rev. Landázuri's salary, which is covered by Covenant Reformed Church of Pella. Potential future costs might include an additional church planter/missionary pastor or a second building at a church plant location.

	2019 Actual	2019 Budget	2020 Budget	2021 Estimated
Total Budget:	\$79,500	\$79,500	\$79,500**	\$82,000
<i>Income</i>				
Internal Offerings:	\$49,567.79*	\$49,500	\$54,500	\$55,000
External Support:	\$29,932.21	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$27,000
<i>Expenditures</i>	\$79,500	\$79,500	\$79,500	\$85,000

Covenant's fiscal year starts January 1

* Covenant is also supporting some expenses related to Rev. Landázuri's advanced courses at Puritan Theological Seminary. Those expenses are not included here.

** Budgeted expenses do not include travel expenses of missions committee members of Covenant-Pella visiting Ecuador.

**Report of Synodical Missions Committee Representative
to Classis Central U.S.
March 2020**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers of Classis,

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving on the synodical Missions Committee which seeks to encourage and assist the churches in the important work of missions. As a result of the decision of Synod Wheaton 2018, the committee is now comprised of two representatives of each classis, plus our coordinator, Rev. Richard Bout, for a total of 17 men. I continue as the vice-chairman; Rev. Greg Bylsma remains chairman and Rev. Casey Freswick is our clerk.

One year ago we enjoyed a successful Pastors & Missions Conference in Flat Rock, NC. It was followed by a face-to-face meeting of the expanded Missions Committee (March 28-29, 2019). The committee has continued its work by monthly conference calls; we seek to keep the churches informed of our work by sending out concept minutes.

The committee has been very busy with the challenge assigned us by Synod Wheaton 2018; namely, researching models of missions in NAPARC churches, with a focus on the old CRC approach to missions, the current OPC model, and our current JVC model. A sort of hybrid was drafted, then disseminated to the churches in the autumn. About twenty churches or individuals sent us their thoughts. At the end of January 2020 the committee is scheduled to meet in Phoenix in order to process the responses, with a view to presenting something to the next synod.

At the time of my writing this report, the committee is planning (again) to request Synod to split the committee in two so that we will have a foreign missions committee and a domestic missions committee, each with its own coordinator. If this is approved, the committee is proposing that there be subcommittees in each classis to work with calling/sending Consistories in the work of missions. Lively discussion is ongoing, both within the committee and amongst numerous other parties – nothing has been finalized yet. We pray that the Lord would guide us, and bring greater unity to our federation in this regard.

The Missions Committee reminds Classis Central of the responsibility our churches have to help each other in the work of missions (CO, Art. 47), and encourages each congregation to support with fervent prayer and generous giving the work of missions throughout the URCNA, especially those works within our own classis. Let's commit ourselves in Classis Central to regular prayer for our missionaries – Rev. Ruben Sernas at El Pacto de Gracia (Covenant of Grace) in Chicago Heights, and Rev. Pablo Landazuri at Luz de Vida (Light of Life) in Quito, Ecuador.

Please continue to pray for our Missions Coordinator, Rev. Rich Bout. We thank God for his diligent work and for his desire to see us thrive in our missional calling to the glory of God.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Jody Lucero
Missions Committee representative for Classis Central
(515) 707-9065 / lucero.jody@yahoo.com

Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU)

Classis Central US of the URCNA

March 9-10, 2020

Rev. Todd De Rooy

Classis Representative to CERCU

January 15, 2020

Dear Brothers of Classis Central US,

Thank you for the privilege of serving the churches in the important work of ecumenicity. CERCU has continued its work in the ecumenical relationships established by Synod, especially in making contacts with delegates from those Reformed and Presbyterian federations and denominations at the recent meeting of NAPARC.

The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) is “a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, council, and cooperate in various matters with one another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are like faith and practice.” Ecumenicity is central to the discussions and coming-together at NAPARC. The meeting is held each year in mid-November and this year it was hosted by the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) at Rohthem Presbyterian Church in Anaheim, CA.

Each of the 13 member churches updated the delegates on the Lord’s work in their midst, their blessings and challenges, and time was spent in prayer for each of the representative churches.

Some reports echoed each other. Minister burnout is a reality NAPARC churches are experiencing and working through. Our churches were greatly impacted when Rev. Corey Dykstra committed suicide. The OPC has suffered the same kind of loss with the suicide of Rev. Jack Sawyer, a personal friend of mine, and a warm and familiar face at NAPARC over the years. Several churches reported membership losses and ministerial vacancies. Other churches reported struggles on mission fields, and facing the realities of a hostile world and sin within the church. It’s tough going out there. Our churches need each other and our world needs a united church bearing witness to Christ and Him crucified.

Our own ecumenical committee had time to meet together face-to-face. There are 11 members on our committee and 9 of the men were present. We have some work to do in the next few months, meeting with delegates of other churches over video conference meetings, and reporting to our next Synod. We had several meetings with delegations from the other NAPARC churches. We were able to meet with the RPCNA, HRC, OPC, CanRC, RCUS, and the Protestant Reformed (who are official observers to NAPARC at this point). All those meetings produced good fruit; we continue to pursue ways to enjoy our ecumenical fellowship, give expression to it, and share in the mutual blessings of worshiping, working, and living together in the bonds of our like and precious faith. As much as we need to be praying for opportunities and courage for faithful witness to Jesus Christ, we need to pray for more expressions of our unity in Christ as part of a faithful witness to Jesus Christ to the world.

As a reminder, brothers, this is a summary of our current ecumenical relationships:

Churches in Phase One – *Corresponding Relations*

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)
2. Free Reformed Churches (FRC)
3. Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)
4. Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)
5. Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Kosin (KPCA)
6. Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)
7. Presbyterian Reformed Church

Churches in Phase Two – *Ecclesiastical Fellowship*

1. Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)
2. Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)
3. Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)
4. Reformed Church of Quebec / L'Eglise reformee du Quebec (ERQ)
5. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)

As an additional reminder, Synod Wyoming 2016 adopted the following, which is in effect:

That synod urges the churches to make a regular part of the information they publish in weekly bulletins, church newsletters, church web-sites and other informational publications, our federation's membership in NAPARC and the ICRC, providing web addresses for each to encourage our members to learn about these ecumenical organizations and to help foster an awareness of the biblical ecumenical mandate to seek ever greater unity with those of like faith and practice. Just as the local church makes known its affiliation with the federation, so it should make known the federation's fraternal bonds.

Brothers, I have proposed questions to the consistories in other reports. I would welcome your comments on any of the following questions:

1. What challenges do you observe in the work of ecumenicity and could you provide any possible solutions?
2. How can CERCU better communicate both the joys and challenges of ecumenical work?
3. Are there any particular denominations or federations in NAPARC to which you believe CERCU could give closer attention?

You may answer any or all of these questions formally or informally at any time. My email is: pastorderooy@gmail.com or you may contact me by phone: 712-395-8933 or discuss these at Classis.

Humbly submitted,

Rev. Todd De Rooy

Committee Ecumenical for Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA)

January 23, 2020

Dear Brothers of Classis Central US,

Most of CECCA's labor has consisted in responding to emails, preparation for Synod Wellandport, maintaining our ecumenical relationships and having multiple conference calls. Some matters for your attention are:

1. We delegated a member to attend the General Assembly of the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
2. We delegated a member to attend the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland Continuing. He also attended the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland on that same visit.
3. We delegated a member to attend the Synod of the GGRI-NTT in Indonesia. He also attended the Synod of the Calvinist Reformed Churches (GGRC) on that same visit.
4. We delegated a member to write a letter of encouragement to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales in lieu of a visit.
5. We began to investigate concerns that have been brought to our attention about CECCA's recommendation to enter into Phase 1 relations with the Sudanese Reformed Churches. While this is ongoing, we have not been able to confirm the suspicions that were alleged. The SRC is a member of ICRC and has been well spoken of by members of other churches with whom we have fraternal relations. If anything noteworthy is found in this investigation, it will be reported at Synod Wellandport.
6. We approved a recommendation that the URCNA enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (phase 2) with the GGRI-NTT (Reformed Churches of Indonesia).

Beyond our ordinary committee labor, we also continued working on our response to Synod Wheaton and the question of benevolent support for foreign federations.¹ This work has led us to contact numerous domestic federations in NAPARC, foreign contacts with ICRC federations and interaction with our own mission committee. After much discussion, CECCA will be proposing the following to Synod Wellandport:

1. That synod authorize CECCA the amount of \$15,000 (to be reviewed at each synod), which CECCA is authorized to use at its discretion for the sole purpose of assisting foreign pastors and elders with travel and related expenses for the purpose of attending our synods.²
2. That all other diaconal assistance requests by needy churches abroad with which we have ecumenical relations be referred to Reformed Mission Services (RMS) or such other similarly capable organization as CECCA in its discretion may select for response. Grounds for choosing RMS for responding to diaconal requests are:

¹ That Synod direct CECCA to study how the URCNA might support needy churches abroad with which we have ecumenical contact (Phase 1) or fellowship (Phase 2) and to report back at our next synod. In its research, CECCA should consult with the URCNA Missions Committee, sister churches, and relevant organizations. That this be Synod's response to CECCA Recommendation #7

² This has been a need at every recent synodical meeting. Heretofore, individual members of the committee have sought to find ways to provide benevolent support by talking with their consistories or members they know financially capable of helping.

2.1. RMS is closely related to the URCNA;

2.2. RMS operates under the authority of a local consistory, viz. the Trinity URC, Caledonia, MI.

While our report to Synod Wellandport will include a fuller overview of our work, this is the recommendation we are bringing in light of the study we were asked to do by Synod Wheaton. Herein is an overview of our labors for our Savior and the building up of His kingdom. Humbly

Submitted,
Gerry Swets
CECCA Delegate Classis Central

Website Oversight Committee Report

Submitted by: Mr. Micah Van Maanen (WOC delegate) on January 14, 2020

Brothers,

The purpose of the Website Oversight Committee (WOC) is to maintain the federation's website located at <https://www.urncna.org>. The current Webmaster, Mr. Gary Fisher, does the majority of the work and keeps the Classical delegates informed of any major issues or developments throughout the year. The following is a summary of developments that have taken place since I started my term in September of 2019.

1. The Synodical decision to separate the gathering of statistics and preparation of the annual Directory from the Webmaster functions has worked out very well. Mrs. Jody Luth has proven to be extraordinarily competent in this task and having her spend the entire year on the project will result in a more complete Directory. It has also given the Webmaster time to make various improvements and additions to the website and to better assist the churches with access and utilization.
2. Every Synodical Convening Consistory/Interim Committee has had the (unenviable) task of creating a website for Synod. For reasons of familiarity and continuity as well as more attractive pricing, the Synod 2020 website will be hosted by Service-Life, the same provider as the federation's website. This will allow registration, communication, and collaboration functions to be integrated into our existing website platform. It will also allow the same site to be used for all future Synods.
3. We have been informed that Service-Life will be performing a major upgrade to the Content Management System that our website uses. In the past Service-Life has allowed the WOC to preview and test these upgrades. We have requested that we be permitted to do the same this year which will allow the committee to fast-track our site to the new technology.
4. Contact information for the Webmaster is publicly available on the website; as always, he welcomes your emails or calls if you have questions regarding the website.

As the WOC delegate for our Classis, I also encourage you to bring any feedback, concerns, or possible improvements for the website to my attention so that I may in turn inform the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Micah Van Maanen

APPEALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

As the representative appointed by Classis Central U.S. to serve on the URCNA Appeals Committee, I provide you the following report of our work:

As directed by Synod 2018, the representative from Classis Eastern U.S. was appointed as the convener of our first meeting. At that first video conference meeting, we reviewed our mandate and elected Rev. Cal Tuininga to serve as Chairman and Rev. William Godfrey as Clerk. At that time, there were no appeals pending for our committee review.

On December 20, 2019, the Committee held a second video conference meeting to review an appeal that had been submitted for adjudication at Synod 2020. Given that the appeal was submitted by the undersigned, I recused myself from any substantive discussion on the appeal during the meeting. The Committee reviewed the appeal and found it in order. It also was reported that other appeals pending in different classes may be forthcoming for our review, depending on the adjudication of those appeals by the classes.

The Appeals Committee plans to meet again prior to the deadline for the submission of material for Synod.

In His service,
Mark Van Der Molen, Immanuel URC, DeMotte

**OVERTURE TO CLASSIS CENTRAL US
FROM COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH OF PELLA
TO OVERTURE SYNOD 2020
TO ADOPT CHANGES TO THE URCNA MISSIONS COMMITTEE**

(Adopted 12/16/2019)

BACKGROUND

The rule of the church by Christ, through elders who serve locally: it's one of the emphases which distinguishes our federation of churches. In fact, we have enshrined it as one of the *Foundational Principles of Reformed Church Government* which is appended to our Church Order³ – a handy reminder of what we believe concerning the government of the church.

This is a refreshing distinctive, given the many examples in church history of power being entrusted to an individual or a small group; the holders of power embracing corruption; and the corruption spreading from those power-brokers to the church placed in their care.

When considering the establishment and supervision of missions, many of us – when serving in former denominations – have seen the fruit of entrusting the supervision and funding of missions to a denominational committee. Because it is easier for folks at the local level to allow the committee to “take care of it,” local church involvement in missions waned. Interest in events on the mission field likewise entered a slow decline. And rather than holding the missionaries accountable for maintaining and promoting faithful doctrine, the committees too-often introduced weak or false doctrine into the mission field.

Of course, supervising mission works locally can be quite difficult, making it seem attractive to simply entrust the work to a committee of men who specialize in missions. After all, it is difficult to develop and maintain a plan for missions. It is a significant undertaking to develop the necessary expertise in missionary oversight and in the targeted mission field. Finding volunteers to participate in the supervision process can be an ongoing struggle.

However: all of this is completely *do-able*. And, by God's mercy, local supervision of mission works can be a rich blessing!

Here in Pella, we supervise a brother who serves as a missionary and church planter in Quito, Ecuador. In preparing to call and send him, we faced a steep learning curve which demanded quite a bit of reading, interviewing, and discussing. But engaging in that work turned out to be a rich blessing! The process enabled us to learn and become more passionate about missions. It enabled us to spend time with the man whom we sought to call, so that the whole congregation came to know and deeply love both him and his family. And it convinced us that God is able and willing to equip His church for the mission work to which He has called us. As a result, we have seen the congregation grow in its zeal for *all* mission works, while cultivating a particular love for our missionary and the field in which we have called him to work.

However, in recent years, we have seen a drive on the part of our URCNA Missions Committee to centralize supervision of the mission works of our churches. While the committee's preliminary

³ “The Lord gave no permanent universal, national or regional offices to His church. The office of elder (presbyter/episkopos) is clearly local in authority and function; thus, Reformed church government is presbyterial, since the church is governed by elders, not by broader assemblies. Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; Titus 1:5.” *Foundational Principles of Reformed Church Government*, Principle #5.

proposal to Synod 2020⁴ emphasizes that sending consistories would continue to oversee “the life and doctrine of the missionary,” the Committee aims to delegate the work of “providing all mission works (foreign and domestic) with administrative oversight” to a committee beyond the consistory. As we read the latest proposal, this would remove the sending consistory from the task of supervising the day-to-day the work of the mission.

In addition, our URCNA Missions Committee is again proposing a “Federation Missions Fund,” similar to that which was rejected at Synod 2018. Again, this would remove the sending church from the task of supervising the mission – because he who controls the finances controls the work.

These proposals represent a substantial departure from the missions model that our churches have employed until this time. We would argue that it also is a substantial departure from the Reformed polity expressed in Foundational Principle #5, appended to our Church Order.

While we recognize that entering into and sustaining the supervision of a mission work can be a substantial task for a congregation, we already have the means of sharing that work through the use of joint venture committees, which have served well for several of our mission works. Joint venture committees have the added benefit of being initiated by the sending consistory, according to the perceived need locally. This preserves the consistory’s initiative in seeking cooperation in its supervisory task.

We do not mean to suggest that the churches are not called to cooperate in the work of missions. However, we strongly believe that supervision of the mission should be maintained at the local level – not delegated to a committee that is removed from the local church. As Reformed missions authority J.H. Bavinck wrote in *Introduction to the Science of Missions*,⁵

That the work of missions should be conducted by the local church is not only sound in theory, but also preferable on practical grounds. It is much easier to quicken love of missions in a relatively small group that has taken the responsibility of a very particular, concrete objective, than it is to inspire a larger group of churches to a large and therefore vague task. It goes without saying that it is necessary for local churches to work closely together and to consult each other on all important issues.

As originally conceived, our federational Missions Committee was to function in support of the mission works of the local churches – not as an intermediate step to creating supervisory structures that are removed from the local church. Thus the mandate of our Missions Committee was to serve “as an information hub for URCNA missions, encouraging communication among URCNA missionaries, church planters, councils, joint venture committees, and congregations.”⁶ This work was to include tasks focused on the gathering and dissemination of information that would assist *the churches themselves* in pursuing the work of missions. However, Synod Wyoming 2016 amended the *Policies for the Synodical Missions Committee and Missions Coordinator*, adding to its mandate the task to *facilitate cooperation* in the work of missions. This has been used to justify a much more active advisory role by our Missions Committee.

Our proposal would seek to revise the vision and calling of our URCNA Missions Committee to emphasize its role as a *support* for the *churches’ work of missions*, by disseminating information

⁴ This observation is based on the “URCNA Missions Plan 2020” communication which was distributed to the churches in November 2019.

⁵ Bavinck, J.H., *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, Trans. David Hugh Freeman (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960), p.60.

⁶ Acts of Synod Nyack 2012, Art. 85; Synod 2012 Agenda p.376.

(primary) and offering counsel only as requested by a particular church. That is the purpose of this overture.

It is our hope that the changes outlined below will serve to safeguard in our mission works the role of the consistories (or the joint venture committees they establish) in governing the missionary ventures of the churches.

OVERTURE

The Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church overtures Classis Central US to overture Synod 2020 to adopt the following measures.

OVERTURE PART A:

Dismiss the current members of the URCNA Missions Committee, with thanks for their diligent service.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. It seems clear from the proposals to Synod Wheaton 2018 and the draft proposals for Synod 2020 that current Missions Committee members are committed to a view of missions supervision that is more Presbyterian than Reformed in nature. Asking them to serve under revised guidelines could be regarded as asking them to compromise their beliefs, which would be unfair to them.
2. The drive of the existing URCNA Missions Committee for supervising and supporting missions at the level of the broader assemblies detracts from an important principle of Reformed polity: the direct authority of the Consistory (CO Art. 21). Scripture neither commands nor demonstrates supervision of the ministry by committees (*Foundational Principle #5*), but rather demonstrates calling and supervision of missionary and ministerial work through the local church (Acts 13:1-3). We honor that example by preserving the direct supervision by the consistories of our missionaries and mission works (cf. CO Art. 14 & Art. 47).
3. Article 47 of our Church Order reserves supervision of the missionary task beyond the field of an organized church to the consistories, which also are to call and support those missionaries. While the churches are urged to assist each other in the support of our missionaries, the current direction of our URCNA Missions Committee departs substantially from the view of missions and mission supervision that we have expressed in our Church Order.
4. The current members of the Committee have served honorably and honestly, and therefore their work deserves a hearty expression of our appreciation.

OVERTURE PART B:

Establish a new URCNA Missions Committee, with the Mandate set forth below.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. This Mandate would re-establish the Missions Committee on the foundation adopted in 2012, when the Missions Committee was created. That foundation emphasized fostering

communication concerning missions works, while offering no hint that our mission works were to submit to supervision apart from the consistories.

2. This Mandate re-establishes the Committee's focus on disseminating information, thereby helping to unify and equip the churches for their missionary task.
3. This Mandate preserves the calling of the consistories to supervise all aspects of the ministry of the Word.
4. This Mandate helps to alleviate the sense of standing alone that formerly plagued many of our member congregations, missionaries, and church planters.

Mandate for the URCNA Missions Committee:

The URCNA Missions Committee is to function as an information hub for URCNA missions, both foreign and domestic, encouraging communication among URCNA missionaries, church planters, consistories, councils, joint venture committees, and congregations.

OVERTURE PART C:

Adopt the Guidelines for the URCNA Missions Committee set forth below.

GROUND:

1. These Guidelines reflect and focus the Committee's prescribed focus on disseminating information, thereby helping to unify and equip the churches.
2. These Guidelines would preserve the calling of the consistories to supervise all aspects of the ministry of the Word.
3. These Guidelines would ensure that the churches were made aware of the financial needs of our missions works, so that we might better support those works.
4. These Guidelines would encourage the Committee to establish a repository of resources that could prove to be invaluable in teaching and guiding consistories that desire to engage in missionary work.
5. These Guidelines would ensure that the very helpful biennial missions conferences will continue to be organized.
6. The provision prohibiting the Committee from proposing changes to the Church Order or its own Mandate or Guidelines will protect against potential attempts to aggregate power by the Committee in future years.

Guidelines for the URCNA Missions Committee:

- (a) The Committee shall obtain regular updates from URCNA missionaries and church planters, from their respective consistories, and from any joint venture committees or other supervisory organizations to which they are accountable. These updates are to be published regularly in the missions newsletter, in the monthly prayer list and annual prayer map, and on the missions page of the urcnamissions.org website, in a manner that best serves the churches.
- (b) The Committee shall ascertain and remain abreast of the financial needs of missionaries, disseminating pertinent information to URCNA councils (including details such as location, family, nature, and needs of a particular ministry).

- (c) The Committee shall generally promote the cause of missions in the URCNA in a way that consistently represents our commitment to assist each other in the support of our missionaries (Church Order Art. 47).
- (d) The Committee shall gather information about the work of missions and church planting within the URCNA, including both what has worked well and what has worked badly, to be shared with consistories, councils, and joint venture committees that are supervising or are considering the supervision of mission works.
- (e) The Committee shall make available to the churches copies of the *Biblical and Confessional Basis for Missions*, printed in booklet form.
- (f) Upon the request of consistories, councils, joint venture committees, or missionaries, the Committee shall delegate a team of its members to visit and offer advice concerning the calling and sending of missionaries, planning and supervision of mission works, or mediation of difficulties on the mission field.
- (g) The Committee shall organize a biennial conference for URCNA office-bearers to provide education and encouragement concerning missions, church planting, evangelism, and outreach.
- (h) The Committee shall not propose or recommend changes to the Church Order or to its own Mandate or Guidelines.
- (i) The Committee shall provide a report of its work in the agenda for each synod.

OVERTURE PART D:

Rename the position of Missions Coordinator as Missions Information Coordinator, and adopt new Guidelines for the Missions Information Coordinator set forth below.

GROUNDS:

1. This revised name better reflects the position's emphasis on information dissemination.
2. These Guidelines establish the secretarial and diaconal focus of the Coordinator's role.
3. These Guidelines would ensure that there is someone who is able to address questions regarding URCNA mission work, directing concerns or requests for counsel to the appropriate members of the Committee.
4. These Guidelines would help to protect the Coordinator from being regarded as a supervisor or director of missions for our federation.

Guidelines for the URCNA Missions Information Coordinator:

- (a) The Missions Information Coordinator shall be called and supervised in his doctrine and life by his consistory. His work will be supervised by the URCNA Missions Committee, which shall regularly correspond with the Coordinator's consistory concerning that work.
- (b) The Missions Information Coordinator shall maintain contact with domestic and foreign missionaries.
- (c) The Missions Information Coordinator shall maintain regular contact with calling churches, joint venture committees, and classis missions committees to learn of their current needs and of the financial status of their mission work.
- (d) The Missions Information Coordinator shall encourage congregations to financially support foreign and domestic missions, reminding the churches of the priority that such works should receive over para-church organizations.

- (e) Upon the request of consistories, councils, joint venture committees, or missionaries, the Missions Information Coordinator shall visit missionaries for encouragement and to offer advice.
- (f) The Missions Information Coordinator shall assist the URCNA Missions Committee in its assigned tasks, particularly:
 - a. The work of publishing updates regarding the URCNA's missions works and the financial status of those works.
 - b. The archiving of information concerning missions-related methods that have been employed by our churches.
 - c. Organizing the biennial educational conference.
- (g) The Missions Information Coordinator shall receive inquiries concerning potential missions opportunities and shall connect inquirers with consistories, joint venture committees, or classis missions committees that may be able to address the opportunities.
- (h) The Missions Information Coordinator shall direct potential financial donors to missions works that are experiencing financial need.
- (i) The Missions Information Coordinator shall provide a report of his work in the agenda for each synod.

OVERTURE PART E:

Adopt new Qualifications for URCNA Missions Committee Members and for the Missions Information Coordinator, set forth below.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. These Qualifications spell out clearly the process for appointing and retaining men for the Missions Committee and for the Missions Information Coordinator.
2. By staffing the Committee with those who possess current or past experience serving on or supervising mission fields, the Committee will be well equipped to respond to consistories that seek counsel for establishing and maintaining missions.
3. The specified terms for the Committee members would encourage a regular turnover of representation, while still encouraging continuity on the Committee.
4. Classis involvement in bringing forward nominees will encourage the churches to seek consensus in nominating well-qualified men to serve on the Committee and as the Coordinator.
5. A full-time Coordinator will better enable the Committee to fulfill its mandate and will ensure that the Committee is always able to be reached by those who need counsel or who seek to provide help to mission works.

Qualifications for URCNA Missions Committee Members:

- (a) Composition of Committee:
 - a. Three current or former foreign missionaries.
 - b. Three current or former domestic missionaries.
 - c. Six elders who serve or have served on consistories that supervise missionaries or joint venture committees that supervise missionaries.
- (b) Means of Appointment:
 - a. All nominees to serve on the Committee must be ordained either as elders or as ministers in URCNA congregations (including emeritated ministers).

- b. An elder must be actively serving when appointed, but he may continue serving after his elder term concludes.
 - c. Nominations to serve on the Committee may be brought by any classis or may be proposed by the Committee itself.
 - d. The synod shall select among the nominees, ensuring that the composition of the Committee remains as stated above. Appointments in each category shall be made by majority vote of synod, taken by ballot.
- (c) Term of Appointment:
- a. The term of service for Committee members shall be six years. (These terms should be staggered to ensure that only one-third of each category that comprises the Committee is replaced at any time.)
 - b. Each Committee member shall be eligible for reappointment once.
 - c. An elder serving on the Committee may be reappointed beyond his elder term with the approval of his consistory.

Qualifications for URCNA Missions Information Coordinator:

- (a) Means of Appointment:
- a. Due to the extensive nature of the work, Missions Information Coordinator is to be considered a full-time position.
 - b. The Missions Information Coordinator must be serving or must have served as an office-bearer in a URCNA congregation.
 - i. Because his duties do not require preaching, the position need not be filled by a minister.
 - ii. Because there is no supervisory aspect to this role, the position may be filled by a deacon.
 - c. Nominations must come via classis. Nominations shall include:
 - i. A statement by the consistory that is prepared to supervise the doctrine and life of the nominee. If a minister, he may already be serving that church; or the church may be prepared to extend a call to him, pending his appointment to the position of Missions Information Coordinator by synod.
 - ii. A compensation plan for the Missions Information Coordinator in his work. The compensation plan should focus on honorable provision of salary, housing, medical, and retirement needs, based on the cost of living in the area of the calling church, as well as suggested amounts for office, equipment, and travel needs. The URCNA Missions Committee will make itself available to interested churches to help set ballpark figures in this regard. Details of the proposed compensation will be subject to the approval of synod.
 - iii. A brief introduction to the nominee, which should include a resume of service in the church and of the particular gifts and experience that the nominee would bring to the position of Missions Information Coordinator.
 - d. From the pool of nominees, synod shall elect a Missions Information Coordinator. Election shall be by majority vote, taken by ballot.
- (b) Term of Appointment: The Missions Information Coordinator shall ordinarily serve a term of no less than three years, established by the synod. The Missions Information

Coordinator shall be eligible for re-election by a subsequent synod, without term limit restrictions.

(c) Reappointment of the Missions Information Coordinator:

- a. With the approval of the Missions Information Coordinator and his consistory, and upon receiving input from the URCNA Missions Committee, the Missions Information Coordinator may be reappointed by a two-thirds majority vote at the first synod that is at least three years from his previous appointment.
- b. Should a classis of the federation believe that the missions of the URCNA may be further prospered through the appointment of a new Missions Information Coordinator, any classis of the federation may nominate another office-bearer to the position. Such a nomination must follow the guidelines listed above, under point (a)c. On such an occasion, the nomination shall be considered by the churches at the first synod that is at least three years from the last appointment of the Missions Information Coordinator. The appointment of a new Missions Information Coordinator requires a two-thirds majority vote of the synod.

OVERTURE PART F:

Request that the churches submit nominations for men to serve on the URCNA Missions Committee, with nominations to be received and acted upon at Synod 2022.

GROUND:

1. Nominations are needed to staff the newly-constituted committee.
2. The churches are in the best position to know which men are gifted and willing to serve on the Committee.
3. A delay of two years between establishing the new Mandate and Guidelines and the appointment of men to serve on the Committee will provide a reasonable opportunity for the classes to locate and bring forward men who are qualified and willing to serve.

**To Classis Central US
of the United Reformed Churches in North America
meeting at the Covenant Reformed Church
in Pella, Iowa
on March 9, 2020**

from the **Redeemer United Reformed Church, Orange City, Iowa**

Overture to Enter Ecumenical Relations on a Classis Level with Classis Minnkota of the Christian Reformed Church

I. Background

At the 44th meeting of Classis Central US, Rev. Jon Bushnell was examined by way of Colloquium Doctum, as requested by Sioux Center URC. Rev. Bushnell was serving as the minister of Prinsburg CRC, which is a church in Classis Minnkota of the CRC. During the course of the Colloquium Doctum, Classis became aware that Classis Minnkota was in the practice of sending delegates to Synod under protest because of the presence of women delegates at the Synod of the CRC. Classis Minnkota is comprised of some 21 churches, five of which are outside the geographical boundaries of the Classis, but have been granted entrance into the Classis by the Synod. These five churches requested membership in the Classis for biblical and theological issues, the rejection of women serving in ecclesiastical office being primary among those issues. In recent years, Classis Minnkota has also sent overtures and communications to the Synod regarding the CRC Office of Social Justice.

In 2018, NAPARC received a communication from Classis Minnkota of the CRC requesting membership in NAPARC. NAPARC did not grant their request because the constitution of NAPARC does not allow a Classis or Presbytery to join NAPARC. Membership is only granted at the level of the denomination or federation.

On October 14, 2019, Rev. Jon Bushnell and Rev. Todd De Rooy traveled to Pipestone, MN, to visit with some of the ministers of the Classis Minnkota InterNos (ministerial). At that meeting, Rev. Bushnell and Rev. De Rooy proposed the idea of Classis Central US inviting Classis Minnkota into ecumenical relations. One of the ministers said he was humbled and encouraged that we would even think of their Classis and their churches. The ministers of the InterNos expressed an openness to the idea.

Through this process, two things have become apparent: first, Classis Minnkota is a Classis that is theologically isolated from its denomination, and that sense of isolation is particularly palpable for their synodical delegates; and, second, there is biblical, confessional, and theological like-mindedness between the churches of Classis Minnkota and Classis Central US. Ecumenical relations at the level of Classis provides an opportunity to encourage isolated churches, reminding them that they are not alone in their service in God's Kingdom.

II. Overture

The Consistory of Redeemer United Reformed Church of Orange City, IA, overtures Classis Central U.S. to invite Classis Minnkota of the CRC to enter into ecumenical relations with Classis Central U.S., according to Article 35 of the URCNA Church Order.

III. Grounds

1. Article 35 of the URCNA Church Order states: “The churches of a classis may, as a group, enter into ecumenical relations with an individual church or group of churches such as a classis or presbytery. The classis shall keep synod informed of such ecumenical relations, thereby honoring our federative bond.”
2. This is an opportunity for our Classis to encourage like-minded and theologically isolated churches in a region that borders our own Classis.
3. Ecumenical relations at the level of Classis do not have organic union as a goal, and therefore do not come under the categories of ecumenicity in the mandates of CERCU and CECCA.
4. Ecumenical relations at the level of Classis would allow for our Classis to send fraternal delegates to Classis Minnkota, and for us to receive fraternal delegates from Classis Minnkota, so that we might encourage one another.

Done in the Redeemer URC Consistory: January 6, 2020

President: Rev. Todd De Rooy

Clerk: Elder Nick Scholten

CHURCHES OF CLASSIS CENTRAL US

UPDATED OCTOBER AD 2019

Total of 21 Churches & Church Plants (19 organized, 2 unorganized)

Churches (organized) alphabetical listing for rotation of hosting and chairing:

1. Beecher, IL → Faith URC, Rev. Todd Joling
2. De Motte, IN → Immanuel URC, Rev. Roberto Rossi
3. Des Moines, IA → Providence Reformed Church, Rev. Jody Lucero
4. Doon, IA → Doon URC, Rev. John Vermeer
5. Dyer, IN → Redeemer URC, Rev. Jacques Roets
6. Hills, MN → Hills URC, Rev. Alan Camarigg
7. Kansas City, MO → Covenant Reformed Church, Rev. Harold Miller
8. Lansing, IL → Oak Glen URC, Rev. Ed Marcusse
9. Lynwood, IL → Lynwood URC, Rev. Nick Alons
10. Oak Lawn, IL → First URC of Oak Lawn, Rev. Ted Gray
11. Orange City, IA → Redeemer URC, Rev. Todd De Rooy
12. Pella, IA → Covenant Reformed Church, Rev. Doug Barnes
13. Rock Valley, IA → Rock Valley URC, Rev. Joel Vander Kooi
14. Sanborn, IA → Cornerstone URC, Rev. Dan Donovan
15. Schererville, IN → Community URC, Rev. James Oord
16. Sioux Center, IA → Sioux Center URC, Rev. Jon Bushnell
17. Sioux Falls, SD → Christ Reformed Church, Rev. Spencer Aalsburg
18. Waupun, WI → Grace URC, Rev. Paul Freswick
19. Wellsburg, IA → URC of Wellsburg, Rev. Joel Worries

Church Plants (unorganized):

1. Chicago Heights → El Pacto de Gracia, Rev. Ruben Sernas
2. Quito, Ecuador → Iglesia Reformada Luz de Vida, Rev. Pablo Landázuri

CLASSIS FUNCTIONARIES:

Stated Clerk (2 term limit):

Rev. Ralph Pontier
641-230-3880 classiscentralus@gmail.com

First term ends November 2020

Alternate Stated Clerk

Rev. Doug Barnes

First term ends April 2021

Treasurer

Supervising Consistory: Sioux Center URC (appointed Mar. 2014)
Treasurer: Mr. Harlan Harmelink
1441 4th Ave SE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
(712) 441-0573 (cell)
Harlan.harmelink@dordt.edu

Church Visitors East

Rev. Ed Marcusse

Term ends April 2022

Mr. John Surowiec (Schererville, IN)
Rev. Andrew Compton, alt.
Rev. Jacques Roets, alt.

Term ends September 2021
Term ends September 2021
Term ends April 2022

Church Visitors West

Rev. Harold Miller
Rev. Joel Vander Kooi
Rev. Doug Barnes, alt.

Term ends September 2022
Term ends April 2020
Term ends November 2020

CPAC Membership

Immanuel URC (De Motte, IN)
Chairman: Rev. Spencer Aalsburg
Clerk: Rev. Jody Lucero
Mr. Grant Diekevers (Sanborn, IA)
Mr. Micah Van Maanen (Orange City, IA)
Rev. Joel Worries
Alternate: Rev. Jacques Roets
Alternate: Mr. Korrie Van Maanen (Rock Valley, IA)

Supervising Consistory
Third term ends September 2021
Third term ends September 2021
First term ends April 2021
First term ends April 2020
First term ends September 2021
Second term ends April 2022
Second term ends April 2022

CECCA Delegate

Mr. Gerald Swets (Schererville, IN)
Alternate: Rev. John Vermeer

First term ends April 2020
Second term ends September 2022

CERCU Delegate

Rev. Todd De Rooy
Alternate: Rev. Joel Vander Kooi

Second term ends September 2022
Second term ends September 2022

Missions Committee Delegates

Rev. Jody Lucero
Mr. Harold Meinders (Pella, IA)
Alternate: Rev. Spencer Aalsburg

Second term ends March 2020
First term ends September 2021
Third term ends September 2021

Web Oversight Committee

Mr. Micah Van Maanen (Orange City, IA)
Alternate: Rev. Joel Worries

First term ends September 2022
First term ends April 2022

Committee on Appeals

Mr. Mark Van Der Molen (De Motte, IN)
Alternate: Rev. Ralph Pontier

First term ends September 2021
First term ends September 2021

NOTE: Synodical committee delegates & alternates serve three-year terms. As per Synod Wyoming 2016's (Article 77) modifying Synodical Regulations 5.3.2.c, each classis determines how many three-year terms their delegates may serve.