

**MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA, RCA
APRIL 30, 2010 – MAY 1, 2010**

I. Introduction, Worship and Opening of Synod

The Regional Synod of Mid-America met in its regular session on Friday-Saturday, April 30-May 1, 2010 at Christ Community Church, Lemont, Illinois. The business meeting was held in conjunction with the *Creating and Weathering the Storm* event. All church leadership from throughout the synod was invited to the *Storm...* event. The business meeting was held Friday afternoon beginning at 2:30 pm. While these minutes record the business of the Regional Synod, the *Storm...* event continued Friday evening and Saturday ending at noon. The synod was led during the event time by Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor. The *Storm...* event included time for worship, prayer, and small group discussions.

The business meeting began with a time of worship, prayer, and praise followed by the synod's Visionary Leader, Wayne Van Regenmorter, leading the Synod in God's Word from I Samuel 13-14.

II. Roll Call

Delegates to Regional Synod of Mid-America, RCA present at session:

Classis of Chicago

Angie Mabry-Nauta
1 Kildeer Ct.
Woodridge, IL 60517

Don Coutts
10201 S. 88th Ave.
Palos Hills, IL 60465

Classis of Florida

Tom Slager
1900 Island Dr.
Miramar, FL 33023

David Tellinghuisen
4524 La Jolla Dr.
Bradenton, FL 34210

Percy E. Marshall
9163 Otter Pass
Tampa, FL 33626

Judy Hazelton
4773 Independence Dr.
Bradenton, FL 34210-1915

Classis of Illiana

Drew Poppleton
1540 Hemlock Rd.
Lafayette, IN 47905

Don MacDonald
PO Box 4
Danforth, IL 60930

Classis of Illiana continued

Jim Medendorp
13701 Lauerman St., #36
Cedar Lake, IN 46303

Tim King
10538 S. Central, Apt 2N
Chicago Ridge, IL 60415

Dave Weemhoff
104 Redwood Dr
St. John, IN 46373

Jimmie Stevenson
603 N. Indiana Ave.
Kankakee, IL 60901

Classis of Illinois

John Tilstra
320 W. Center St.
Baileyville, IL 61007

Brian Akker
5475 Surrey Dr
Bettendorf, IA 52722

Shannon Parrish
10465 Frog Pond Rd.
Erie, IL 61250

Judy Wallace
4616 170th St.
Clinton, IA 52732

Classis of Wisconsin

Cary Winn
4840 Flambeau Dr.
Racine, WI 53406

Amy Nyland
705 Carrington St.
Waupun, WI 53963

Lyle Zumdahl
3420 S. 12th Place
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Joe Veltman
4905 S. Calhoun Rd.
New Berlin, WI 53151

Bob Wierenga
N5532 Johnson Rd.
Delavan, WI 53115

Ron Lorier
808 S. Washington Dr.
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Susan Pehlivanian
4824 Sing Tree Dr.
Racine, WI 53406

Milan Ter Beest
W13702 Lake Maria Rd
Waupun, WI 53963

President
Elmer VanDrunen
17228 South Park Ave.
South Holland, IL 60473

Vice president
Chad Schuitema
2501 S. 18th St.
Lafayette, IN 47909

Ex officio members of synod:

Stated Clerk/Treasurer
Coordinator/Administrator
Randy Kooy
524 West Division Rd.
DeMotte, IN 46319

Past President and
OJB Committee Chairperson
Cary Winn
(also Wisc. Cl. delegate)
4840 Flambeau Dr.
Racine, WI 53406

Synod Staff and others:
Synod Visionary Leader
Wayne VanRegenmorter
10088 Prairie Ct.
St. John, IN 46373

General Synod Council rep.
Christopher Poest
4006 S. Oak Park Ave.
Stickney, IL 60402

Manitowqua Ministries
Laura Vroom
Manitowqua Ministries
8122 West Sauk Trail
Frankfort, IL 60423

Synod Staff and others cont.:
Florida Classis Apostolic Leader
Arlan Ten Clay
2743 First St., #703
Ft. Myers, FL 33916

Chicago Classis Staff
Rich Schuler
8431 Brookside Glen Dr.
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Other guests were present at the meeting. Roll call was done orally with brief introductions given by those present. A quorum was present.

➔ **VOTED to give privilege of the floor to synod staff and guests present.**

III. Approval of minutes of previous session

The previous regional synod gave authority to the synod's Executive Committee to approve the minutes of the 2009 session of the Regional Synod of Mid-America as published. The Executive Committee reported that the 2009 minutes were approved as published.

➔ **VOTED to grant the authority to the Executive Committee to approve the minutes of this 2010 meeting of the Synod of Mid-America.**

IV. Communications

There were no written communications considered by the synod. Any received throughout the year were considered and processed by the Synod Executive Council or referred as appropriate.

V. State of Religion Report

Synod of Mid-America, RCA Annual Session – April 30, 2010

Mission:

The Mission of the Synod of Mid-America is to encourage and equip its classes so they may faithfully follow Christ in ministry and mission.

Vision:

The Vision of the Synod of Mid-America is classes and congregations made healthy through revitalization and multiplication.

Core Value:

We believe the Synod of Mid-America best serves congregations through its classes. The synod will accomplish this by focusing on:

- Casting vision
- Equipping leadership
- Building partnerships
- Sharing resources
- Sharing joys and pain

The core value will build on the foundations of discipleship, leadership, and mission all working in accordance with the Word of God.

Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."

I read those words again a few days ago as part of a Bible reading schedule. What a magnificent reality. He doesn't change, He doesn't have to. His truth in the past is His truth today. His gospel is the same – past, present, and future. What a treasure to own in our post-modern culture.

Jesus doesn't change, but we do and we must. The dynamic of our Reformed Faith is that we are "being Reformed (an on-going process) according to the Word of God." Reforming and changing do not come easy to the vast majority of us. Personally and corporately we must – or we begin to die.

As a Synod we can rejoice in the great things that have happened and continue to happen in the areas of church multiplication and revitalization. God is blessing the diligent, determined, and dedicated work of Wayne Van Regenmorter, our Synod Visionary Leader. Read his report and pray over it.

Speaking of prayer, we are grateful for an increased emphasis on prayer in our Synod and our churches. Diane Aardema and others are passionate and persistent in calling us to a greater commitment to pray. The fruit of this will not be measured this side of eternity.

Manitqua Ministries continues as a part of our Synod, a very vital and valuable part. Through the years the ministry of this organization has affected thousands of lives. I can personally attest to the impact made on our six children as they each attended one or more summer camps. I give thanks for Laura Vroom and the other staff for their leadership and commitment.

This State of Religion Report concludes my two years of serving you as president. I am in gratitude to you for the patience and support you have extended to me. I would be remiss if I didn't give special thanks to Randy. I depended on him for good advice and help on too many occasions to count.

I also want to tell you an inspiring story, but I want you to hear the story instead of reading it. I believe you, like me, will be inspired and enthused. [Greg Firrantello shared the testimony of the group meeting for worship in Sheridan, IL. Prayer was offered for this ministry]

Respectfully,
Elmer Van Drunen, President

VI. Executive Council Report

Executive Council of the Synod of Mid-America Report to the Annual Session of the Synod of Mid-America, RCA April 30, 2010

The duties of the Executive Council as stated in the Bylaws of the Regional Synod of Mid-America include that it will:

- a. Be responsible to carry out the Mission of the Synod, to establish policy to realize the Vision of the Synod, and to continually evaluate the progress towards realizing the Vision of the Synod.
- b. Act for Regional Synod between sessions, and on all matters referred to it by Regional Synod.
- c. Report annually to Regional Synod concerning its actions and deliberations.

Since the last annual session of the Synod the Executive Council has met on three different occasions.

We are into our fourth year with the Council functioning under a structure where the Council consists of delegates appointed by the classes of the Synod plus the officers of the Synod. The majority of the business of the synod funnels through the Executive Council between the sessions. Work is either initiated by the staff, by the Council, or is ongoing work. Classes are encouraged to provide some regular means for its delegates to the Council to regularly report to their appropriate classis. More about the Council structure later in this report.

Synod staff and ministries

The synod is staffed by two persons: a visionary leader, Wayne Van Regenmorter, and a coordinator/administrator, Randy Kooy. Wayne will report separately on his activities within the synod. My activities as the coordinator/administrator include the day-to-day running of the regional synod. Much of my work is reflected in this report.

The synod continues to be blessed with the volunteer work of Diane Aardema as the prayer leader for the Synod of Mid-America. Diane is gifted and called to this ministry. She continues to encourage churches to establish prayer team leaders and has worked to organize them at classis levels. She has put together resources for prayer leaders and for churches with most of those resources available on the synod's website. A monthly prayer guide for our synod, Intercessors Unite, is distributed through the synod's newsletter and website; it is a tool to guided prayer for requests and events within our synod. Diane has plans to begin an effort of organized prayer intercessors for the church starts within our synod.

Some of the other synod-wide ministry occurs through contract arrangements, namely Living Fire Leadership Ministries and work with youth and youth workers within the synod.

Living Fire Leadership Ministries

The leadership development program, Living Fire Leadership Ministries, has been a very valuable leadership tool in the churches that are utilizing it. The Synod has contracted with Larry Bolt to administer this program. Larry is the executive administrator of Faith Church in Dyer, Indiana. Faith Church was one of the original synod churches participating in Living Fire.

Living Fire is a three-year intensive cycle that develops leaders to new levels each year. Here is a short description of each of those three years as reported by Larry:

This is an exciting time in **year one** because the participants are telling their own stories and seeing how God has always been present in their lives. This can be a very emotional time but also a freeing time as they recognize that their story is a part of God's story. It is such an encouragement to see how God uses all the circumstances of our lives to draw us to Him.

In **year two** the participants are developing individual and corporate projects. One church collected food and personal supplies for a home for abused spouses. When they brought the goods to the home, there were so many that the home could hardly handle them all. These potential leaders are also studying direct lessons on how to be a leader.

The **year three** participants are discussing how to develop other Christians as leaders while continuing their own spiritual growth. Many of them are seeing themselves unleashed in a ministry of their church and are serving God in that way.

Larry recently reported:

The mid-year training for leaders of Living Fire has just been completed and the leaders have been re-energized as they go back to finish the year with their groups. Life stories have been read in year one and people have been talking about how this has positively impacted the cohesiveness of their groups. Year two people continue to develop their leadership skills in a variety of ways and year three groups are learning to raise up other leaders as they themselves continue to grow in their faith.

As discussions take place at the classis and synod level on training for commissioned pastors and campus pastors, Living Fire is being strongly considered as a part of the character development for these leaders. It is recognized that future leaders need to be asking themselves three questions: Who is God? Who am I? Why did he place me here on this earth? These are all questions that are raised in Living Fire. We ask for your prayers as we continue to develop plans for these leadership positions.

Brochures for Living Fire Leadership Ministries will be available at the meeting.

Youth and Youth Workers

The synod contracts with Manitoqua Ministries to provide leadership for work with the youth and youth workers within our synod. Manitoqua facilitates this through their program director, Nathan Phillips.

Historically Winterfest was a significant part of the youth work within the regional synod. Winterfest was a synod-wide youth conference held every two years during the last few days of December. The last Winterfest was December 2008. While the event itself was very successful in the way it impacted those who attended, the last event experienced a significant decrease in attendance. Winterfest was designed to be self-funding; because of the smaller numbers and many of the fixed costs that remained the same, it lost significant money at the December 2008 event.

Thus, much of 2009 used to determine the future direction for the youth event. Nathan and I put together a survey to get input from the youth workers of the synod's churches. From this it was determined that while Winterfest had great value for many, there were significant sentiments expressed that it did not now fit within some churches' youth programs.

The council analyzed the information and input received from the surveys and the reports of Nathan's contacts. It determined that:

- We will not do a Winterfest in December 2010 which would be the historical next Winterfest.
- Future youth events, if any, will be of a different venue, a different time (dates), and possibly different timing (how often).
- The synod will continue through Manitoqua and Nathan to remain in contact with classis youth leader groups as well as continuing to have representation on the denomination youth team and developing Leaders on the Horizon.
- The synod will keep listening to our classes youth leaders as to what might be their needs that can best be facilitated on a synod-wide basis, and that we be open to sponsoring some type of self-funded youth event in the future.

Leaders on the Horizon is a leadership movement for high school age youth. As already mentioned, synod will continue to contract with Manitoqua to provide the leadership to begin to develop this program. Due to some staff changes in the churches where Nathan was working, the momentum has slowed in the development of LOH. Nathan also represents the synod on the denomination youth team.

Visioning Time at Council

This is the second year that the council decided to spend significant time at its in-person meetings to examine a portion of the vision of the synod to determine direction for the synod as it relates to that vision. As stated at the beginning of this report a primary Executive Council mandate is to "be responsible to carry out the Mission of the Synod, to establish policy to realize the Vision of the Synod, and to continually evaluate the progress towards realizing the Vision of the Synod."

A stated value of the synod is that the Synod "best serves congregations through its *classes*." Our stated mission is "to encourage and equip its *classes* so they may faithfully follow Christ in ministry and mission." In response to those statements the synod has been working with the classes: many have been or are in restructure and many have brought or are bringing on staff persons to facilitate the work of the classis. The first visioning time was spent meeting with those staff persons who are now in place: Rich Schuler (Chicago), Arlan Ten Clay (Florida), and Bob Grysen and Warren Ouwenga (Illiana). Given those reports, the council discussed how we are doing in our vision of seeing the Synod's classes and congregations made healthy through revitalization and multiplication. Some of the comments that were stated included:

- We are early in the process
- We're still at the assessment stage versus implementation stage
- We affirm the vision of the synod – we're doing what was asked/intended
- We support our staff and classis staff in the work being done
- An adjustment is to have better aligned representation from the executive boards of the classes
- Need more appropriate people at the table
- Need those who are visionary/visioning – not necessarily executive board folks
- Need to raise the importance...
- Good to have classis staff here
- Need to get classes going – this is the role of the regional synod – to lead the classes

The second visioning time evolved into a type of continuation of the first as there was again some classis reports with the council then focusing on a question of: What things might need to be changed to become

more effective and fruitful as an Executive Council? What do the council and classes need to be doing to work together to be more missional as a Synod? It was determined by the council there needs to be a better functioning Executive Council. Therefore, the council will be working towards a plan to revise the structure of the Executive Council that will be presented for consideration at the fall session 2010 of the Council. The current vice president, Chad Schuitema, will be heading up this process.

The following are other actions, deliberations, and recommendations from the Executive Council from the past year:

1. The Council received regular reports from the synod staff concerning their activities and work on behalf of synod. Also regular reports were received from Manitoqua Ministries, the contract ministries, and the synod's representative on the General Synod Council.
2. The Council received reports from the Personnel Committee who reviewed synod staff performance. The synod staff compensation for 2010 remained the same as 2009.
3. The synod continued to facilitate a dialogue meeting between the Chicago and Illiana classes. The agenda included reviewing current reality, future vision, and areas of cooperation between the two classes who are in close proximity. Some specific areas were identified. The leadership of the two classes would like to continue to have periodic meetings.
4. Last year's annual session of the regional synod was the second time the format consisted of holding the annual session in conjunction with a synod-wide event for the whole synod. The 2009 event was held in partnership with Wisconsin Classis with the plan to rotate the meeting and event with other classes of the synod if it is determined to continue with this method of meeting. The council determined that we would continue this year with such an event/meeting format. This meeting and event in partnership with Chicago Classis is a result of that decision. The format is reviewed annually.
5. The Council determined an adoption agreement for the RCA 402(b) retirement program to be filed with the RCA per IRS regulations.
6. The Council made an appointment to the synod's Minister Salary Committee to fill an open position from the Classis of Illinois. There are still open positions from Florida plus one from Illiana that opens up this year. Suggestions of appropriate laypersons to fill these openings are welcome.
7. The Council approved a second year of participation and funding in a Mobilizing Leaders program. This is a leadership initiative to equip congregation leaders (both pastors and lay leaders). Five congregations from our synod are in this program. The event leaders at this year's "Creating and Weathering the Storm" event are those leading the Mobilizing Leaders program
8. Luke Schouten was appointed as the regional synod's delegate to the 2010 General Synod.
9. The Council took action to have the Visionary Leader help classes provide appropriate education events regarding the consideration of the Belhar Confession.
10. The bylaws of the synod calls for election of the stated clerk and the treasurer at the first Council meeting following the annual session in odd number years. Randy Kooy was reelected the stated clerk and treasurer of the Synod of Mid-America.
11. Urban ministry funding assistance for 2010 was determined. The Urban Ministry Fund asking remains to provide opportunity for the congregations of the synod to share in urban ministry efforts. Urban ministry funding for 2010 is as follows:

Ministry Funding - 2010
Urban Ministries

Ministry	Amount
La Capilla del Barrio, Chicago	9,000
North Dade Comm, Miami	20,000
Iglesia Trinidad, Milwaukee	12,500
Hope, Sheboygan	6,000

12. The council instructed the synod's Overtures and Judicial Business Committee to form an overture regarding service-as-worship. See the OJB report in this agenda for background and information including the resulting overture.

13. Finances:

- a. The Council received regular financial reports including a budget status reports. The Council revised the budget as necessary. The president and vice president receive monthly financial reports in addition to the reports given to the full council.
- b. The Financial Report for 2009 was reviewed. The report and supporting documents are being reviewed by a CPA who will give a written report to the Council. **See the Financial Report for 2009 as shown as Appendix Exec-A.**
- c. The 2010 budget that is currently being used is presented to this Synod for information. **See the 2010 Budget as shown as Appendix Exec-B.**
- d. A budget for 2011 was approved for recommendation by the Council from input given by synod staff; it appears in this agenda as Appendix Exec-C. The budget as proposed does not reflect any significant changes in operation from what was approved for 2010. All expenditures continue at their 2009 levels or are lowered when possible. The proposed per member assessment rate remains at \$14.50 per member. As has been the case in the last few years it continues to reflect as a deficit budget. It should be noted that the Synod can only operate with a deficit budget for a limited time before something must be changed.

Recommendation Exec-1: The Council recommends that the Synod approves the Budget for 2011 as proposed and shown as Appendix Exec-C.

→ **VOTED to adopt Recommendation Exec-1.**

14. Minister's Salary Committee: The Synod has a Minister's Salary Committee that is charged with the task of reviewing the Minister's Salary Schedule, Rules, and Guidelines for the coming year and to recommend it for recommendation to the classes of the Synod. That report follows as Appendix Exec-D. A summary of the changes in the guidelines can be found at the beginning of the report. You will find that report to reflect no changes.

Recommendation Exec-2: That the synod approves the 2011 Minister's Salary Schedule, Rules, and Guidelines as it appears as Appendix Exec-D and to recommend it to the classes of synod for their adoption and implementation.

→ **VOTED to adopt Recommendation Exec-2.**

I would like to thank the members of the Executive Council for its work throughout the past year. The current members are: Elmer VanDrunen, Chad Schuitema, Randy Kooy, Cary Winn, Pedro Windsor, Don Coutts, Tom Slager, Jay Sowers, Drew Poppleton, Don MacDonald, Bill Tharnish, Dave Weemhoff, Phil Doeschot, Shannon Parrish, Bob Wierenga, Bill TeWinkle, and Luke Schouten. I would especially like to thank the officers for their leadership, work, time, and efforts for the synod. And a special "thank you" to Jay Sowers and Bill Tharnish who completed terms at the end of 2009.

Additionally I would like to thank Laura Vroom who represents Manitoqua Ministries and Christopher Poest who is our General Synod Council Representative. These two persons are ex officio members of the council; they give valuable input both in their areas and more.

Please pray for the synod staff and for the Executive Council as they lead our synod in the coming year and beyond.

Randy Kooy, Synod Coordinator, Administrator, Stated Clerk, Treasurer

SYNOD of Mid AMERICA - FINANCIAL REPORT

January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009

GENERAL FUND 2009

<u>Opening Balance 1/1/2009</u>			234,112.50
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	
<u>INCOME</u>			
Assessments	322,845	322,845.00	
Designated receipts		1,500.00	
Interest income	5,000	9,231.68	
NCD income		870.00	
Miscellaneous income		8,748.95 *	
TOTAL INCOME	<u>327,845</u>		343,195.63
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
Visionary Leader:			
Services	102,000	100,085.04	
Continuing Education	980	549.78	
Travel	14,000	15,330.88	
Coordinator/Administrator:			
Services	88,600	87,425.78	
Continuing Education	900	866.61	
Travel incl. Cont Ed.	6,000	4,753.92	
Committee Meetings:			
Executive Council	7,000	4,455.36	
OJB Committee	500	-	
Minister's Salary Committee	100	39.58	
Annual Session	6,000	12,211.70 **	
Office Expenses:			
Insurance	3,500	2,427.00	
Financial review	1,000	850.00	
Telephone	5,000	4,667.52	
Rent	500	150.00	
Office expnse: supply, postage,etc	4,000	3,673.11	
Equipment/repairs	2,500	2,028.55	
Program expense	1,000	148.56	
Directory - minutes	2,500	-	
Miscellaneous	2,500	1,258.07	
Manitoqua:			
Contribution	50,000	50,775.94	
Partnership	20,000	4,000.00	
Winterfest:			
Contribution	4,000	(3,556.07) ***	
Contract leader	8,000	8,000.00	
Living Fire Leadership Ministries			
Expenses	3,000	-	
Contract leader	3,000	3,000.00	
Leader expenses	1,000	-	
New church planter expenses	3,000	1,000.00	
Mobilization Leaders	3,750	3,750.00	
Specialized Interim Ministers	3,000	2,928.16	
Miscellaneous Ministry	5,000	2,555.70	
Church plant assistance	20,000	20,000.00	
NCD expense		470.00	
Designated expense		500.00	
Florida partnership funded from Mission		3,464.89	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	<u>372,330</u>		337,810.08
<u>INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS</u>	<u>(44,485)</u>		<u>5,385.55</u>
<u>Closing balance 12/31/2009</u>			<u>239,498.05</u>

* This amount includes \$4873.95 transferred from Mission for Florida partnership

** This amount offset by \$3675 income included in miscellaneous income line

*** Over budget in 2008 - excess returned in 2009

MISSION FUND 2009

The Synod Mission Fund had ceased receiving regular contributions beginning in 2007. The money that remained in the fund was being used for church plants and other specific uses as designated by the Executive Council. In 2008 the Council decided to close the Mission Fund account and distribute the remaining money to the classes proportionally with the request that the funds be used for multiplication and revitalization efforts. This report reflects that action as it was implemented in March 2009.

Opening balance 1/1/2009

151,059.69

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	
<u>INCOME</u>			
Interest income	7,500	<u>1,129.62</u>	
TOTAL INCOME	7,500		1,129.62
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
Florida Classis partnership	5,000	5,000.00	
Designated pastor asst to General		1,000.00	
Chicago Classis church assmt assist	25,000	25,000.00	
Distribution to close Mission Fund:			
Chicago Classis		12,122.87	
Florida Classis		4,527.07	
Illiana Classis		42,579.27	
Illinois Classis		20,264.85	
Wisconsin Classis		41,695.25	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	30,000	<u>152,189.31</u>	
<u>INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS</u>	-22,500		<u>(151,059.69)</u>

Closing balance 12/31/2009

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URBAN MINISTRIES FUND 2009

<u>Opening Balance 1/1/2009</u>			81,996.58
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	
<u>INCOME</u>			
Asking	45,000	44,113.08	
Sunday School asking	2,000	1,862.75	
Interest income		<u>347.57</u>	
TOTAL INCOME	47,000		46,323.40
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
Support/program aid	45,000	45,000.00	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	45,000		<u>45,000.00</u>
<u>INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS</u>	2,000		<u>1,323.40</u>
<u>Closing balance 12/31/2009</u>			<u>83,319.98</u>

SUMMARY - ALL RSMA FUNDS

<u>Opening balance 1/1/2009</u>			
General Fund	234,112.50		
Mission Fund	151,059.69		
Urban Ministries Fund	<u>81,996.58</u>		
TOTAL opening balance			467,168.77
<u>INCOME</u>			
General Fund		343,195.63	
Mission Fund		1,129.62	
Urban Ministries Fund		<u>46,323.40</u>	
TOTAL income			390,648.65
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
General Fund		337,810.08	
Mission Fund		152,189.31	
Urban Ministries Fund		<u>45,000.00</u>	
TOTAL disbursements			<u>534,999.39</u>
<u>INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS</u>			<u>(144,350.74)</u>
<u>Closing balance 12/31/2009</u>			
General Fund	239,498.05		
Mission Fund	-		
Urban Ministries Fund	<u>83,319.98</u>		
TOTAL closing balance			<u>322,818.03</u>

BANK ACCOUNTS 2009Providence Bank CHECKING

Balance 1/1/2009	71,176.01
Income	390,648.65
Transfer from RCA Cash 2183-R	129,443.23
Transfer from RCA Cash 2169-PP	63,492.76
Disbursements	(534,999.39)
Balance 12/31/2009	119,761.26

RCA Cash Fund - 002183-R

Balance 1/1/2009	332,500.00
Income (pd by check to checking)	-
Transfer to Providence Bank checking	(129,443.23)
Disbursements	-
Balance 12/31/2009	<u>203,056.77</u>

RCA Cash Fund - 002169-PP

Balance 1/1/2009	63,492.76
Income	
Transfer to Providence Bank checking	(63,492.76)
Disbursements	-
Balance 12/31/2009	<u>-</u>

ASSETS & LIABILITIES 2009ASSETSCash assets

Providence Bank checking account	119,761.26	
RCA Cash Fund - 002183-R	203,056.77	
RCA Cash Fund - 002169-PP	-	
TOTAL cash		322,818.03

Estimated other assets

Furniture/fixtures/equipment (est)	8,000.00	
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TOTAL other assets		<u>8,000.00</u>
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TOTAL ASSETS - 12/31/2009		<u><u>330,818.03</u></u>
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LIABILITIES

TOTAL LIABILITIES - 12/31/2009		<u>0.00</u>
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2010 Budget - Regional Synod of Mid-America
Approved April 24, 2009 - modified to current figures

RECEIPTS			
	General Fund	Urban Ministry	Total
General Fund Assessment @ \$14.50	310,982		310,982
Urban Min. Asking @ \$4.00		45,000	
Sunday School Asking @ \$2.00		2,000	
Miscellaneous and Int. Income	5,000		5,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	315,982	47,000	362,982
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	339,230	47,500	386,730
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(23,249)	(500)	(23,749)
Actual Opening Balance 1/1/2010	239,498	83,320	322,818
Projected Closing Balance 12/31/2010	216,250	82,820	299,070
DISBURSEMENTS			
PERSONNEL SERVICES			
Visionary Leader:			
Salary, services, benefits & SSallow	100,800		
Continuing Education	980		
Travel & business expense	17,000		
Coordinator/Administrator:			
Salary, services, benefits & SStx	87,700		
Continuing Education	900		
Travel & business expense	5,500		
Total	212,880		
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSE			
Committee expense:			
Executive Council	5,000		
OBJ Committee	500		
Minister's Salary Committee	100		
Annual Session	6,000		
Office Expenses:			
Insurance	3,500		
Financial review	1,000		
Telephone	5,000		
Rent	500		
Office expnse: supply, postage,etc	4,000		
Equipment/repairs	2,500		
Program expense	500		
Directory - minutes	500		
Miscellaneous	2,000		
Total	31,100		

	General Fund	Urban Ministry	Total
MINISTRY EXPENSE			
Manitoqua:			
Contribution	50,000		
Partnership (LOH)	4,000		
Winterfest: (budget approved but no expenditures anticipated in 2010)			
Contribution	4,000		
Contract leader (Manitoqua)	8,000		
Living Fire Leadership Ministries			
Expenses	3,000		
Contract leader	3,000		
Leader expenses	500		
New church planter expenses	1,000		
Mobilization Leaders	3,750		
Specialized Interim Ministers	3,000		
Miscellaneous Ministry	5,000		
Church plant assistance	10,000		
Urban assistance (actual TBD)		47,500	
Totals	95,250	47,500	
SUMMARY			
Personnel Services	212,880	-	212,880
Administration Expense	31,100	-	31,100
Ministry Expense	95,250	47,500	142,750
Totals	339,230	47,500	386,730

2011 Budget - Regional Synod of Mid-America
Approved by synod 4/30/2010 - w/ newest membership numbers

RECEIPTS			
	General Fund	Urban Ministry	Total
General Fund Assessment @ \$14.50	305,182		305,182
Urban Min. Asking @ \$4.00		45,000	45,000
Sunday School Asking @ \$2.00		2,000	2,000
Miscellaneous and Int. Income	5,000		5,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	310,182	47,000	357,182
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	328,030	45,000	373,030
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(17,849)	2,000	(15,849)
Projected Opening Balance 1/1/2011	216,250	82,820	299,070
Projected Closing Balance 12/31/2011	198,402	84,820	283,222
DISBURSEMENTS			
PERSONNEL SERVICES			
Visionary Leader:			
Salary, services, benefits & SSallow	101,800		
Continuing Education	980		
Travel expense	17,000		
Coordinator/Administrator:			
Salary, services, benefits & SStx	88,500		
Continuing Education	900		
Travel expense	5,500		
Total	214,680		
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSE			
Committee expense:			
Executive Council	5,000		
OBJ Committee	500		
Minister's Salary Committee	100		
Annual Session	6,000		
Office Expenses:			
Insurance	3,000		
Financial review	1,000		
Telephone	5,000		
Rent and/or mtg room expense	500		
Office expnse: supply, postage, etc	4,000		
Equipment/repairs	2,500		
Program expense	500		
Miscellaneous	2,000		
Total	30,100		

Appendix Exec-C continued

	General Fund	Urban Ministry	Total
MINISTRY EXPENSE			
Manitoqua:			
Contribution	50,000		
Partnership (LOH)	4,000		
Living Fire Leadership Ministries			
Expenses	3,000		
Contract leader	3,000		
Leader expenses	500		
New church planter expenses	1,000		
Mobilization Leaders (Revitalization)	3,750		
Specialized Interim Ministers	3,000		
Miscellaneous Ministry	5,000		
Church plant assistance	10,000		
Urban assistance (actual TBD)		45,000	
Totals	83,250	45,000	
SUMMARY			
Personnel Services	214,680	-	214,680
Administration Expense	30,100	-	30,100
Ministry Expense	83,250	45,000	128,250
Totals	328,030	45,000	373,030

**Minister's Salary Committee Report
To the Synod of Mid-America meeting on April 30, 2010**

The Minister's Salary Schedule Committee met on March 1, 2010 by conference call. The members of the committee are as follows: Mark Bensema, Rich Schuler, Tom Hubbell, Dale Huizenga, Phil Renkes, Rich Schultz, Vern Jurgens and Susan Kist. All members except Vern were present for the meeting. Staff support was provided by Randy Kooy who moderated the meeting.

The following are notes to or changes made in the guidelines:

1. The committee considered the minimum salary table as published in the salary guidelines. The committee decided to not recommend any change in the 2011 table over the 2010 table. This is the second year of no change in the table. Rationale include:
 - a. While there are some economy improvements, many churches still have serious financial issues with members losing jobs or having cutbacks.
 - b. In most employment situations when health insurance is offered, the employee pays a share of the insurance cost. Churches are required to pick up the full health insurance cost for ministers. The 6% insurance cost increase (2010 over 2009) is an expense increase that is assumed totally by the church.
2. **Churches are reminded that these are minimum salaries so if they can afford to give an increase they are encouraged to do so.** No salary increase is tantamount to a salary decrease when inflation is considered.
3. No 2011 changes were made to any provisions contained in the 2010 guidelines.

2011 Minister's Salary Schedule, Rules, and Guidelines

Introduction and Recommendations

1. The call issued to a pastor has two main concepts which deal with the relationship between a pastor and people. Specifically, the pastor is to perform certain services in his/her ministry among the people and the people are to provide remuneration for the pastor to keep him/her from temporal concerns. The latter is an obligation clearly undertaken by the church.
2. Every church and consistory needs to be involved with their pastor(s) in setting specific goals for both the pastor(s) and the church in order to lead the church in mission for Jesus Christ. Financial considerations are part of this two-way accountability and communication.
3. In order that pastors in the RCA are adequately compensated, each classis sets a minimum standard that needs to be met. After this minimum is met there is a base for discussion between pastor and the church on how performance and needs should be recognized in the salary determination.
4. It is **recommended and expected** that each church appoint a personnel committee to work with the pastoral staff of the church. Further it is recommended that this same committee be utilized to work with all church staff, ordained or non-ordained. Realizing that there are differences from church to church, the details of the personnel committee would be left to the individual church. However, the following should be minimum guidelines of the committee:
 - a. Meet on a regular schedule with each pastor and staff person at least twice a year
 - b. Set and discuss goals for each position and how those goals fit into the vision of the church
 - c. Review the past performance of the pastor(s) and staff persons
 - d. Recognize superior achievements and extraordinary service
 - e. Discuss general concerns
 - f. Specifically discuss financial needs to include salary, housing, transportation reimbursement, insurance, continuing education, and retirement plan as applicable
 - g. Consider financial needs beyond the day-to-day living expenses such as medical bills, education costs, emergencies, and retirement
 - h. Discuss other needs such as family crises, illness, marital stress, depression, and ministerial frustration
 - i. Give support and encouragement
 - j. Discuss and facilitate good relationships between church staff
 - k. Act as the communication link between staff and the consistory

5. It is **recommended** that churches and pastors consult with appropriate tax professionals as they work out the details of compensation and the pastor's financial planning. Tax counsel is important to maximize pastor benefits, minimize church costs, and protect all parties from incurring penalties from poor practices.
6. It is **recommended** that churches and pastors consult Internal Revenue Service (IRS) publications for specific information and rules. The following two publications are especially helpful:
 - a. Publication 1828 – Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations. Especially note the section titled *Special Rules for Compensation of Ministers*.
 - b. Publication 517 – Social Security and Other information for Members of the Clergy and Religious Workers. This publication includes examples of forms.
 These two publications can be obtained from the IRS website at the following address:
<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>

Rules for Minimum Compensation and Benefits

There are *three* components to **minimum compensation** for pastors: **1. Salary, 2. Social Security & Medicare Allowance, and 3. Housing or a Housing Allowance** if applicable. Additionally there are **Reimbursable Expense Allowances** and **Other Provisions**. This represents minimum rules – a church may exceed any of them. If a church is not able to meet the minimum rules, it should contact the appropriate committee in the classis where these Guidelines and Rules are approved.

Minimum Compensation

1. Salary

Rule: The church shall pay the pastor a salary that is at or above the amounts according to the following chart:

MINIMUM SALARIES TABLE FOR 2011 (no increase over 2010)			
Years since ordination	Average Sunday Morning Attendance		
	0-200	201-400	401 & above
0-1	35,139	37,431	39,867
2	36,360	38,678	41,094
3	37,544	39,687	42,273
4	38,716	41,071	43,447
5	39,880	42,252	44,605
6	40,071	42,496	44,858
7	40,259	42,738	45,108
8	40,443	42,975	45,353
9	40,629	43,206	45,593
10	40,770	43,439	45,834
11	40,907	43,683	46,073
12	41,042	43,895	46,305
13	41,177	44,117	46,534
14	41,306	44,333	46,759
15	41,435	44,544	46,982
16	41,562	44,755	47,204
17	41,686	44,961	47,421
18	41,808	45,165	47,632
19	41,927	45,366	47,845
20 +	42,044	45,565	48,054

Chart instructions:

1. Determine the appropriate Sunday Morning attendance figure for your church. Adjustment should be made for multiple Sunday morning services and weekday services that are intended as a replacement for a Sunday morning service. Multiple attendance should only be counted once.
2. Determine the year's since ordination. If the pastor has had ministry experience prior to ordination it is recommended that the church give consideration for this experience.
3. The resulting figure is the minimum salary for the pastor. This amount can be increased based on the pastor's needs, performance, etc.
4. The effective date of this chart will be January 1 of the year for which these guidelines and rules are published. However a church may elect to use an earlier date

Recommendation: If the church is already compensating the pastor above the minimum salary for a given year, it is recommended that for the following year the church increase that salary.

2. Social Security & Medicare allowance

Pastors are considered self-employed for Social Security and Medicare tax. Therefore they must pay this tax as a self-employed person without the benefit of the employer payment of the employer portion of the tax. It is the intention of these rules to compensate the pastor for the employer portion of this tax. If a pastor has elected not to be a part of the Social Security system, an equal allowance should be made to another appropriate retirement plan.

Rule: The church shall reimburse the pastor for one-half of the self-employed social security taxes. This is calculated by taking 7.65% of the Salary plus Housing.

- If the pastor is furnished a home by the church, the Housing amount is calculated to be
 1. At least the fair rental value of a parsonage plus the cost of furnished utilities, or
 2. 40% of the Salary amount, unless 40% is less than the fair rental value plus utilities.
- If the pastor is given a Housing Allowance, the Housing amount is the actual amount paid.
- The allowance is considered to be additional income unless otherwise deferred.

3. Housing

Rule: The church shall provide the pastor with the free use of a parsonage including all utilities.

Alternately the church may provide a *cash Housing Allowance* for the pastor. The amount of the allowance must be adequate to reimburse the pastor for rental or purchase of adequate housing for the pastor and his or her family in the community where the church is located plus utilities.

The following are the proper steps to figure minimum compensation when a Housing Allowance is being offered to the pastor:

1. Determine the minimum salary using the chart as outlined above.
Note: If salary will be paid above the minimum it should be added at this time.
2. Determine the appropriate amount to reimburse for *adequate housing* in the community where the church is located, plus utilities. A guideline that can be used is the Social Security Administration' suggested amount of 40% of salary. Actual adequate housing could be more or less depending on a number of factors that would include the size of the pastor's family and the cost of housing in the community where the church is located.
3. The pastor may elect to voluntarily transfer a portion of his salary to housing for a possible tax advantage for the pastor. The church and the pastor should be careful to follow IRS guidelines including designating the housing allowance pursuant to official action taken in advance of the payment. It is recommended that the above mentioned IRS publications be consulted and professional tax advice obtained. *The church should not allow this voluntary transfer until steps 1 and 2 are completed. The salary and housing allowance should not be offered as a package amount.*
4. The Social Security and Medicare allowance is then figured on the sum of the Salary and the Housing Allowance.

Reimbursable Expense Allowances

1. **Vehicle expense reimbursement:** If the pastor uses his or her personal vehicle(s) for church business, the church shall reimburse the pastor for that church business use. The reimbursement shall be at the IRS standard mileage rate. IRS reporting rules for vehicle expense should be followed.

Alternately the church may purchase a vehicle for the pastor to use for church business. All church related expenses for such a vehicle shall be paid by the church.

2. **Telephone and internet:** The church shall provide the pastor with the necessary telephone and internet service to conduct church business. The pastor would be responsible for any additional charge for personal use. If the church expects the pastor to be available by cellular telephone, the necessary telephone service will include cellular phone service.

Other Provisions

1. **RCA Retirement Program:** The church shall make the entire contribution on behalf of the pastor to the RCA retirement program. The contribution shall follow the instructions given annually by the Board of Benefits Services and is based on salary and housing, and not on other benefits such as the Social Security and Medicare allowances, the vehicle allowance, or the continuing education allowance.
2. **RCA Insurance:** The church shall make the entire contribution for the RCA Major Medical (family plan if immediate family is not otherwise covered through a spouse's employer-sponsored group plan), Long Term Disability, and Group Life insurance premiums. It is recommended that churches consider paying all or part of the premium if the pastor decides to enroll in the denominational sponsored Dental Assistance Program.
3. **Disability:** Physical, emotional or mental disability is defined as the inability of the pastor to carry out the normal functions of his/her office. In such event, whether total or partial disability, the salary and benefits of the pastor shall be paid for a period of six months. Thereafter all benefits due the pastor are those provided by the Long Term Disability Insurance.
4. **Vacation:** The following schedule shall apply for amount of annual vacation for the pastor:

Years Since Ordination	Weeks of Vacation	Sundays included in vacation weeks
Less than 3 years	3	3
3 years - 19 years	4	4
20 years and over	5	5

While the vacation time is expressed in weeks it is understood that pastors do not have what are commonly considered usual workweek days or hours. Pastors and consistories should reach an understanding of appropriate time-off when less than full week segments are taken.

Unused vacation time shall not carry over to another year. Pastors are encouraged to use the vacation in order that they may be personally refreshed. If the pastor has had ministry experience prior to ordination it is recommended that the church give consideration for this experience.

5. **Continuing Education:** The local churches and consistories are strongly encouraged to support professional development of the pastor for their mutual benefit. To that end, as provided by the RCA Book of Church Order, a minimum of one week including one Sunday shall be allowed plus an amount approximately equal to 1/52nd of only the annual salary shall be allowed towards actual expenses of the professional program such as travel, food, lodging and registration expenses.

Pastors are expected and encouraged to take advantage of this benefit on a yearly basis. However, by prior agreement between pastor and consistory this benefit may be accumulated to a maximum equivalent for 4 years of service. It is understood that professional development means a learning experience in a setting designed for skilled training in some aspects of pastoral work.

6. Sabbaticals: Churches are encouraged to grant pastors a six-week or more sabbatical at full salary after each seven year of service with that congregation. The agenda for such sabbatical should be submitted and approved by the consistory with the express intent that such sabbatical shall be an investment in the future to the benefit of the church.

After eight years of pastoral service without a sabbatical, churches, through its consistory or other appropriate committee, are **required** to annually review the Synod's sabbatical policy with its pastor(s).

For further information and a copy of synod approved sabbatical policy can be found on the Synod of Mid-America website at <http://midamericasynod.org/pdf1/SabbaticalPolicy.pdf> or contact the regional synod office.

7. Maternity leave: A reference for churches needing to look at maternity leave can be found at the following RCA website: <http://images.rca.org/docs/ministry/leavepolicy.rtf>

General Rules

1. Assistant or Associate Pastors: In the case of assistant or associate pastors, the Salary Schedule shall apply regarding the years since ordination, but such pastors may be paid according to the schedule for the next lower category size church regardless of the size church they serve.
2. Part-time Pastors: The salary schedule shall not apply to a part-time pastor. However these provisions should guide the church to appropriate minimum compensation for the part-time pastor.
3. Special Considerations: A pastor who is at least fifty-five (55) years of age and who wishes to serve a church having less responsibility and fewer demanding functions shall be entitled to special considerations.
 - a. A church may negotiate with such a pastor for his/her services at a salary not less than 70% of the appropriate salary schedule. All of the remaining provisions shall apply.
 - b. If a church wishes to utilize the services of such a pastor as an assistant or associate pastor, the salary negotiated shall be subject to approval of the appropriate committee in the classis where these Guidelines and Rules are approved.
4. Fees and Honorariums:
 - a. The pastor shall be entitled to retain fees and honorariums for his/her personal use, except the fees for classical appointments shall be delivered to his/her church treasurer.
 - b. Mileage reimbursement should not be considered as part of the classical appointment fee.
 - c. In order to maintain some consistency with pulpit supply payments, we **recommend** that a minimum honorarium of \$75.00 be given for the pulpit supply for a morning service (with appropriate adjustment for multiple services) and \$75.00 for an evening service. Also the church is to provide reimbursement of mileage at the IRS recommended rate. The primary purpose for this recommendation is for the benefit of retired pastors who use pulpit supply as a means of income.
 - d. It would be best if outside activities are kept to a minimum to prevent interfering with the pastor's ministry especially for the purpose of additional income. However, we do encourage pastors to have a reasonable degree of involvement in activities at the Classis, Regional Synod or General Synod level.

VI. Overtures and Judicial Business Committee report

Report of the Overtures and Judicial Business (OJB) Committee To the Synod of Mid-America April 30, 2010

The Executive Council of the Synod of Mid-America routinely hears reports of activities and happenings of the various classes and congregations within its bounds. At its last meeting there was mention of congregations occasionally doing service-as-worship. Service-as-worship is described as a congregation first meeting for a brief worship service and then going out into the community to put their faith into action by serving the community in some way. There are at least two church plants within the regional synod that do this with some regularity and it has occurred occasionally in other synod churches.

The Executive Council took action to instruct the Synod of Mid-America Overtures and Judicial Business (OJB) Committee to form a recommendation to the Synod of Mid-America to overture the General Synod to instruct the Commission on Theology to examine the theological rationale for less than weekly formal worship services being replaced by service-as-worship.

One of the responsibilities of the OJB committee is "upon recommendation of the Executive Council, formulate overtures for the Regional Synod's consideration."

Therefore they offer the following recommendation for consideration:

Proposed overture:

Service-as-Worship

The Regional Synod of Mid-America overtures the General Synod to request that the Commission on Theology in consultation with the Commission on Worship do a biblical and theological study of the practice among some of our worshipping communities or congregations of periodically replacing Lord's Day Worship with "Service as Worship."

Reason:

The Book of Church Order states in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 11a:

Sec. 11. The consistory shall be guided by the following requirements in their provision of services of worship:

- a. The order of worship on the Lord's Day shall be in accordance with the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America, or with the principles set forth in the *Directory for Worship*, as the consistory may direct for the edification and profit of the congregation.

This implies (prescribes) the necessity of Lord's Day worship.

➔ **VOTED to not adopt the above proposed overture.**

VII. Election of officers

Election of president: Per synod rules, the synod vice-president shall be the sole nominee on the first electing ballot. If the vote is affirmative, the current vice-president shall be declared elected.

Prayer was offered before the elections.

➔ **VOTED to elect Chad Schuitema as president of the Synod of Mid-America for the coming two years.**

Election of vice-president: Per synod rules, the Nominating Committee presented the following slate to the synod: Jimmie Stevenson and Robert Wierenga. There were no nominations presented from the floor of the synod.

→ **VOTED to elect Jimmie Stevenson as vice president of the Synod of Mid-America for the coming two years.**

VIII. Staff Reports

A. Wayne Van Regenmorter – Visionary Leader

Report to the Synod of Mid-America Visionary Leader Wayne Van Regenmorter April 2010

It was on August 7, 1954 during the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, B.C. that Roger Bannister and John Landy met for the first time for the 1 mile run. Both men had beaten the 4 minute mark previously. Bannister was the first man to break the 4 minute mile and Landy was the current record holder. As 35,000 fans looked on, no one knew what would take place on that historic day. It would later be known as the "miracle mile." With only 90 yards to go, John Landy glanced over his left shoulder. At that instant, Bannister streaked by on Landy's right to win in a time of 3:58:8. Landy's second place finish of 3:59.6 marked the first time the 4 minute mile had been broken by two runners in the same race. The tragic mistake that John Landy made was to glance over his shoulder to see where his competitor was. In that one instant, taking his eyes off the goal, losing his focus, Bannister shot by and won the race. There was a tiny fatal lapse of concentration on Landy's part that cost him the race. John Landy's lapse serves as a modern visualization of what the writer of Hebrews implicitly warns against. We cannot afford even a momentary lapse of focus and attention. Those who look away from Jesus will never finish well. We must not take our eyes off Him.

Hebrews 12:1-3 says: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."*

Congregations and classes in the Synod of Mid-America have been seeking to keep their eyes on Jesus as they have been shaping a new future in multiplication, revitalization, leadership development, relationships, prayer and more recently a multi-racial future freed from racism. As change and transitions are taking place in our congregations and classes, I see pastors, leaders and key influencers running the race with enthusiasm and passion. "Race" in the Greek is the word '*agon*', from which we get the word "agony." The race is not a thing of passive luxury, but is demanding, sometimes grueling and agonizing, and requires our utmost self discipline, determination, and perseverance. I believe we are eagerly running the race.

Our Classes Have Restructured

As we seek to be missional and Reformed in extending the love of Jesus Christ to different people, in different cultures and in different places, the structures in our classes have adapted and changed. We have seen the evidence that at the heart of our Reformed tradition we are Reformed and always reforming, according to the Word of God. Here are some examples of changing classes' structures:

- The Illiana Classis has hired four part-time people who each have responsibilities over one of four teams designed to carry out the vision of the classis:
 1. The Church Multiplication Team--To implement strategies and plans to grow the Kingdom of God by starting new churches.
 2. The Congregational Revitalization Team--To cultivate an environment of innovative ministries and resources for revitalizing existing congregations.

3. The Leadership Development Team--To identify, equip and release effective and gifted leaders.
 4. The Relationship Development Team--To work together in relationships with one another as members of the Body of Christ.
- The Illinois Classis has developed a similar team process using volunteer leadership.
 - The Wisconsin Classis has adopted five commissions to be the working arm of the classis--Prayer Commission, Church Multiplication Commission, Congregational Revitalization Commission, Relationship Development Commission and a Leadership Development Commission. A Servant Team has been developed to be the guardian of the classis' mission/vision and to empower the work of the commissions. A Classis Leader will be hired with specific responsibilities to help carry out the core values of the vision of the classis.
 - The Chicago Classis adopted a restructure process a few years ago. Rick Schuler is currently employed by the classis to implement the vision of the classis through various committees.
 - The Florida Classis has restructured to a Church Multiplication team, a Church Revitalization Team, A Leadership Team, an Administrative Council and an Apostolic Council. Arlan Ten Clay has been hired by the classis to help carry out the mission/vision of the classis. What is unique about the vision of catalyzing missional churches in Florida is that the vision will grow out of a partnership with the Classis of Florida and the New Wave Network, a coalition of RCA pastors with experience in church multiplication, bringing passion, skills and leadership for starting a new wave of churches.

The restructuring of our classes is just the first leg in running the race into God's missional future. We will have to work hard to overcome pending obstacles, fatigue and exhaustion, particularly the discouragement from the evil one. There will be moments where like a marathon runner we will feel like we hit "the wall", a point where others will tell us it is impossible to continue to carry out God's mission. But what is required at that point is perseverance. Our faith is not meant to get us to a certain point and then leave us there, but rather we are called to go the distance. God is concerned about steadfastness. Along with this we must have a passion for making disciples, reaching the lost, caring for the poor and dealing with issues of justice and mercy.

Pastors and Church Leaders are Engaged in Revitalization

For the past 18 months pastors and church leaders from 16 different congregations (5 from the Synod of Mid-America), have been engaged in a revitalization process with Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor in taking steps to discern God's future for their ministries. Pastors and church leaders have been discovering that in order to become effective leaders they need to deal with their own personal transformation. Leaders have been learning how to manage change well in a non-anxious presence as they move their congregations through some difficult initiatives of creating and sustaining good, positive change toward the future. They are also asking tough questions like: "If an integrity gap is identified in the life of a leader, what's the process for helping the leader address that redemptively?"

This has been a very helpful process for pastors and church leaders because people have opened up avenues of discussion and conversation about church life that has been sort of hidden territory in the past. One person reflects on how learning new skills has affected him personally: *"I've changed the way I look at my family, friends, coworkers, and church. I am more objective about situations and try to judge less and listen more. I try not to ask myself, Why is this so, so much and instead choose to ask, What is so. I now understand the value of saying what is so to folks instead of letting issues fester, and do that much more frequently. I choose to be more aware of what the system is doing and helping people to see that instead of judging them for it. I am working on changing my natural reaction to triangle to relieve my anxiety, and instead choose to deal with the person directly or let it go. I am much more able to recognize my desire to overfunction or underfunction in an anxiety filled situation before I start doing either one, so I can step back and make a decision about how to proceed based on thinking and not feeling."*

The "Big Mo" Ridder Leadership Initiative has been one of the most hopeful forms of congregational revitalization in which I have participated. The Ridder Team is now planning ways to expand this training experience to other pastors and congregations within our region. We are learning that to have joy in the journey like Jesus did we need to live in radical obedience to the Father, in authentic community and be practicing a reflective life style of becoming more like Him.

Multiple Resources for Church Revitalization

Ministry is challenging today. Because of the changing culture and ministries, pastors are required to work outside their areas of giftedness and passions. It is estimated that approximately 1500 pastors leave their assignments each month, due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or conflicts within the local congregations. We have experienced that pain in several places in the synod. As a result, classes and churches are using many different resources and organizations in the congregational revitalization process. Some congregations have chosen to use the NCD process, however, it is used much less than in past years. About a dozen congregations have used the NCD Survey to assess congregational health and identify those areas of ministry to focus on for congregational revitalization.

Several congregations have engaged with an organization called Pinnacle Ministries. They are committed to the vision of: "Healthy Pastors, Healthy Leaders, Leading Healthy Churches." Their desire is to see effective pastoral families leading churches with true community impact. They are especially committed to providing affordable help for the smaller and mid-sized churches--about 100 people in attendance. On several occasions I have consulted with Gary Harrison, who leads Pinnacle Ministries. We have worked together, along with classis leaders, in conference calls regarding several churches in our region.

We have about 15 Coached Revitalizing Networks which are meeting regularly in our synod. Over 70 pastors and leaders have been trained in Foundational Coaching. Effective coaching is an essential part of the vision of "healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication." I have heard of powerful stories coming out of coached networks and the difference they have made in pastors' lives and ministries. However, one of the challenges in the synod is to get many more pastors connected to networks. In a President's report in one of our classes the pastor writes: *"Maybe because I have been struggling with burnout issues the last few years I am aware through reading and research how prevalent the problem is among clergy. In fact 71% of those in ministry according to a Francis Shaffer Institute study report are feeling burned out. A few weeks ago I attended a burnout seminar sponsored by the Pastor's Care Network. Cathy Gates, the presenter, defined burnout as a state of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations. One key to preventing and dealing with burn out is the establishment of a relationship with someone who can be a friend, keep us accountable for maintaining healthy habits, keep us accountable for avoiding unhealthy habits, and who will simply care for us."* The classis then approved "to recommend the Relationship Team consider connecting unconnected clergy in our classis with each other in mentor/accountability groups." The need to establish more coached revitalizing networks in our classes is essential to the health of our pastors and congregations.

Being the Very Presence of Jesus Christ in the World Through Church Multiplication

As I serve on the Church Multiplication Team of the RCA, our goal is to seek the Kingdom of God and demonstrate the Gospel movement in the power of the Holy Spirit. The RCA ended 2009 with 174 new congregations entering the RCA since January 2003. Currently there are more than 225 new congregations in the United States and Canada with a worship attendance that exceeds 13,500, an average of 60 people in worship per new congregation. In spite of the recession, the Church Multiplication Team approved 26 more New Congregation Plans in 2009. Ten churches organized in 2009. More than 1/3 of our new congregations continue to be multi-racial or ethnically/racially different than the previous RCA Anglo majority. Hundreds of people are coming to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and disciples are being made.

Although numbers are important measurements, they do not tell the stories of how these new congregations are being of service in their communities and around the world. One of the new plants in St. Charles, MO, called The Bridge is helping rural women in Bangladesh provide supplemental income for their families. The pastor writes: *"We are committed to having a real impact and making a real difference with those we work with. The way we do that is different from other developmental organizations. We combine trade and training. We work with small-scale artisans and farmers to develop their skills and we buy and sell what they create. They learn, they work and they earn: all of the elements needed to become self-sufficient in the long term."*

Over 75% of RCA new congregations have an identifiable relationship with a parenting congregation. Many of the new congregations in our synod have been started by parent churches. There are over 110 parenting churches in the RCA now since 2003. In April there will be about 12 pastors and other church leaders attending a Parenting Training Event in Orlando, Florida, in an effort to increase interest from other existing RCA churches to parent. When a parent congregation reaches out, it transforms a congregation's life.

Presently in the Synod of Mid-America we celebrate 16 new congregations who are worshipping weekly and re-energizing classes and congregations because people's lives are being touched by the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

- o Good News Christian Fellowship, New Port Richey, Florida, Pastor Jerry Hekhuis
- o Iglesia Comundad Cristiana, Orlando, Florida, Pastor Fernando Jensen
- o Living Stones, New Tampa, Florida, Pastors Steve and Hope Germoso
- o West Coast Church of the Cross, Sarasota, Florida, Pastor Kevin O'Hara
- o Well of Hope, Orlando, FLorida, Pastor DaRon Dixon
- o Chicago Grace Church, Chicago, Illinois, Pastor Bob Reid
- o Jericho Road, Wheaton, Illinois, Pastor Jeff Klein, Pastor Kevin Engel
- o Missio Dei, Mokena, Illinois, Paul Vroom
- o Faith Church/Dyer, IN multi-site in Cedar Lake, Indiana, Dave and Carla Weemhoff
- o Faith Church/Dyer, IN multi-site in Valpraiso, Indiana, Jason De Vries
- o Faith West/Sheridan, IL, Greg Firrantello
- o The Bridge, St. Charles, Missouri, Pastor Stephanie Doeschot
- o The Crossing, Davis Junction, Illinois, Pastor Kurt Kruger
- o Hope Crossing Community Church, Madison, Wisconsin, Pastor Bob James
- o River Rock Community Church, Sheboygan, WI, Pastor Jon Nienhuis
- o Remedy/Sheboygan, WI multi-site, Pastor Bob Abel

The Classis of Florida has a vision to make a difference for the Kingdom of God, a vision to see lives transformed through a relationship with Jesus Christ, a vision to participate in a movement empowered by the Holy Spirit that will catalyze missional churches in the state of Florida. This vision has grown out of a partnership with the New Wave Network, a group of pastors and leaders in the Reformed Church in America coming together for the purpose of catalyzing a movement of new churches in Florida that are radically committed to transforming people and communities through Jesus Christ.

The goals for the next decade are to:

- Start 5 reproducing churches in Florida by October 2010
- Start 3 African-American/multi-racial churches
- Start 3 Hispanic/multi-racial churches
- Start 3 Asian/multi-racial churches
- Start 2 to 3 urban churches
- Provide leadership, oversight, and accountability for existing church plants
- Establish an ongoing church multiplication system that would produce new churches in Florida for decades to come

Under the leadership of Bob Grysen, the Classis of Illiana is moving toward the vision of planting churches. A New Church Multiplication Team has been recruited which includes: a Team Consultant for site exploration and development; a Prayer Team Leader; a Parent Church Multi-Site Leader; a Planter Selection Leader; and a Planter Care and Training Leader. This team will lay out the plans and strategies for the creation of a church multiplication movement in the Illiana Classis that will plant 20 new churches by the year 2020.

Fresh Start Training Event

The first Fresh Start training event was held on November 6 & 7, 2009, at Calvary Reformed Church in Orland Park, IL. Rich Schuler and I are both a part of an RCA team that offers this event for various classes in the RCA. Fresh Start's mission is to come alongside congregations, classis leaders, and regional leaders to equip them through assessment, training, and coaching the development of fresh starts all over the Reformed Church in America in the service of the kingdom of God. The equipping process includes the development of Fresh Start trained planters and teams. This resource is available to all of the classes in the synod.

Our Prayer Ministry

Diane Aardema has been a tremendous prayer leader in the Synod of Mid-America. Each month she composes "Intercessors Unite"--a monthly prayer focus tool to help us as a synod, classes and congregations to focus our prayers on common concerns. On the resources link of the synod website the following prayer resources are found:

- Partnering in Prayer for our Pastor — A guide for praying for pastors and their families.
- Why Pray With a Group — Thirty-two reasons why we should utilize the power of corporate prayer.
- Beginning a Prayer Ministry — Some first steps in starting a prayer ministry in your church.
- Prayer Ideas — A list of suggested prayer ideas that can fit with the vision of your church and prayer ministry.
- Praying Throughout the Church — God has blessed us with church buildings. Celebrate His goodness and mercy by praying through several church locations. Suggestions for each location are given in this document.
- Praying the Prayers of Paul — is a resource that can assist you in praying Scripture for church leaders.

A Passionate for Prayer event was recently held at Missio Dei Church. Diane serves as the prayer coordinator for the Illiana Classis. As new church planter emerge, she makes connections, shares prayer information, and assists the planter in identifying a prayer ministry leader within the congregation. She also sets up prayer walks and mobile prayer rides around neighborhoods. We thank Diane for her generous work in the prayer ministry of the classes and synod.

Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

As we work together in congregations, classes and the synod I find encouragement that we are united with Jesus. I am encouraged that we are working together to accomplish God's mission. We are in the race of our lives and our focus must remain firm. Paul reminds us: "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (II Corinthians 4:18) We need to draw on the resources that Jesus provides, keeping our eyes on Him, and learning from Him how to make it through the hard parts of life and ministry.

When Jesus called us and we entered into a relationship with Him, He didn't just fire a starting pistol and say, "Okay, now you're on your own." He brought the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. We never run alone. Jesus is our running companion. He runs in front of us to show us the way. He runs by our side to pick us up when we fall or falter, and He comes behind us to encourage us in the race.

Together in His Purposes,

Wayne Van Regenmorter

Oral reports were given within Wayne's report from the Ridder Initiative (Christopher Poest), the Remedy church plant (Lyle Zumdahl), the New Wave Network (Arlan TenClay), and the activity of Chicago Classis (Rich Schuler). Prayer was offered for each ministry.

B. Manitoqua Ministries Report

TO: SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA – ANNUAL SESSION

FROM: LAURA VROOM

SUBJECT: MANITOQUA MINISTRIES

DATE: APRIL 12, 2010

Manitoba Ministries continues to serve the children, youth, and adults of the Regional Synod in a variety of ways, and through the work of the Holy Spirit we will continue to do so.

When I began putting together my report for you, I noticed that it looked very similar to last year's information. We have the most summer staff applications as we have ever had before; our retreat guest numbers are about the same as last year; our summer camp registrations are down; our donations are down, and we continue to have a 3 million dollar loan. Those are the facts about our ministry.

But the God we love and serve is not about those facts. He is about the story below:

I have been at Camp Manitoba in some fashion since I was 11 years old. At Manitoba's Vesper Circle, God opened my eyes to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. As a S.A.M., I was discipled and given a model for pursuing a personal relationship with Christ. On staff, God ignited and fostered my passion for serving and caring for children and youth. I even met my husband through close camp friendships.

Now 27, I find it difficult to harness all of the memories and stories I have gathered over the years of God's work at camp. I wouldn't want to leave out the memory of eating chocolate chip cookie dough with my bare hands as a day camper. I wouldn't want to forget my improv performance in front of all of rez camp and the sense of acceptance I walked away with at the end of the week. I wouldn't want to leave out the experience of washing my fellow counselors' feet before our campers arrived for their first week. There is so much to tell.

And yet, God is still moving.

Part of the beauty of God's work at camp is that my story is really His story, and there are so many other stories similar to mine that all point to God's story – and that is exactly what God will continue to do and what we hope to continue to share at camp.

A Camp Manitoba Lifer,
Brianna Medema

I think many people are in a time of asking and searching for what is next for us, a time of asking "God, what is your purpose for me and this ministry at this time in your kingdom? Show us your ways, Oh Lord!"

If you would be interested in seeking what God has next for Camp Manitoba, we are looking for new board members who have a heart and love for this ministry and want to pursue God in what he has planned for this place. If being on the board is not something that looks interesting to you, than we ask that you pray with zeal and confidence for the work of the Spirit here at Camp Manitoba. We also ask that you and your church consider being generous to the work that God is doing at Camp Manitoba.

Thank you

The staff finds it to be a privilege to serve and work with the Synod. We really want to take this time to say thank you to all the Classis for their support. We appreciate the Synod's support of this ministry and encourage the members of the Synod to return to their congregations and promote Manitoba to their members.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Vroom
Executive Director

Prayer was offered for Manitoba Ministries.

C. General Synod Council Report

Report from GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL

The General Synod Council (GSC) of the Reformed Church in America met for its spring meeting in Chicago on March 23-25, 2010. The GSC functions as the program agent of the RCA, the executive committee of the General Synod, and the Board of Directors of the corporation of the RCA.

The agenda included a number of items that will be brought to this summer's meeting of the General Synod, as well as progress reports on fulfilling the ends established by the General Synod in its 10-year goal, Our Call.

Following are some of the significant accomplishments that came out of the three-day meeting.

GSC proposes 3 percent assessment increase to General Synod

The GSC held an extensive discussion regarding funding the mission, ministry, governance, and administrative support services of the denomination. The GSC is the entity that brings to the synod a proposed assessment amount that supports 33% of the overall denominational budget. The GSC will forward to General Synod an assessment budget of \$42.48/confessing member, which is a 3 percent increase over the current 2010 budget. The GSC directed the general secretary and staff to forward to General Synod requests for continuing assessments for Disabilities Ministries and for a proposed additional assessment to support the needs of theological education through our seminaries and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA).

Ends policy monitoring reports reviewed and progress assessed

Reports reviewed by the GSC in the six ends areas form the basis of its report to the General Synod in June. Detailed reports with measurable data were provided in the six ends areas as follows:

Church Multiplication policy

The RCA will foster a sustainable movement of church multiplication through starting new congregations.

Church Revitalization policy

The RCA will be a fellowship of externally-focused congregations where lives are being transformed and communities are being renewed.

Discipleship policy

The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations filled with disciples, nurtured inwardly, focused outwardly, becoming like Jesus in all they think, say, and do in order to show the love of God in all circumstances to all people.

RCA congregations will be equipped to welcome and fully include all persons with disabilities and their families, so that persons with disabilities can become professing and active followers of Jesus and serve God to the best of their abilities.

Leadership policy

The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations that are building a healthy, growing future by renewing existing leadership and identifying, calling forth, and training people with gifts for leadership.

Mission policy

A fellowship of congregations intentionally crossing boundaries in word and deed with the love of God known in Jesus Christ, resulting in:

- Sending and receiving, both locally and globally, with all the partners God provides.

- Engaging the world: hurts being healed, the lost being found, the hungry being fed, peace healing brokenness, hope healing despair, lives transformed by the love of Jesus Christ.

Multiracial Future Freed from Racism policy

The RCA will be a fellowship of congregations resisting the sin of racism and committing to a multiracial future engaging all of God's people in mission and ministry.

The GSC also reviewed reports from its racial and ethnic councils as a dimension of the GSC's responsibility to carry out the General Synod's mandate that the RCA give clear focus to its multiracial future freed from racism.

Disabilities Ministries reviewed

The ends policy review this year also included an update of the work that has just begun around Disability Ministries as requested by the General Synod. We are currently in the first year of this ministry with Terry DeYoung in the staff leadership role.

Executive limitations monitoring holds general secretary and staff accountable

One of the significant General Synod Council responsibilities in policy governance is to review detailed reports from the general secretary and staff around the RCA's mission, vision, and day-to-day operations. These monitoring reports are reviewed in-depth at both the fall and spring meetings. They provide the single best mechanism for the GSC to evaluate performance in all areas of responsibility of the general secretary and staff. The general secretary and staff reported compliance or progress in all policy areas.

Discernment process planned for 2012

The GSC heard a report from a planning team, including representatives of General Synod commissions, regarding plans for a church-wide discernment process to assist the General Synod in the development of goals for mission and ministry after 2013 and a possible churchwide event in 2012.

Michelle Chahine named moderator of GSC

Michelle Chahine, an elder representative on the GSC from Lansing, Michigan was elected moderator of GSC beginning July 2010. Michelle has served on the GSC since 2007 and succeeds Carol Bechtel, whose term ends following General Synod in June.

2011 General Synod to meet at Calvin

The GSC accepted an invitation from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to host the 2011 meeting of the General Synod on the Calvin campus. It also approved a plan for the RCA and the Christian Reformed Church to cooperate in more extensive use of electronic communication to support the meetings of the General Synods of both denominations. This will reduce costs and increase efficiencies for both denominations.

GSC affirms the general secretary's leadership of the RCA

The GSC received and discussed the report of its relationship and review committee, the standing committee established to review the work of the general secretary. The GSC affirmed the leadership of Wesley Granberg-Michaelson as general secretary. The session included an opportunity for direct conversation with Wes and concluded with a time of prayer. The GSC's responsibility in this regard is to evaluate the general secretary's performance in all areas of his work as well as his performance within the General Synod Council. GSC commended the work of the general secretary in continuing momentum toward fulfillment of the denomination's 10-year goal and carrying out General Synod business. The GSC also endorsed the general secretary's proposed sabbatical during April, May and August 2010.

2010 General Synod schedule and agenda reviewed and approved

The GSC set the agenda and schedule of the upcoming meeting of the General Synod and approved plans to frame many of the issues coming to the meeting through the perspectives of the church's successful work in church multiplication and revitalization. The GSC requested that staff build into the synod sufficient opportunity for all delegate advisory committees to address at least two major issues: funding the RCA's mission and ministry, and full participation in the RCA-sponsored insurance programs for all ordained ministers of Word and sacrament. The GSC also requested that sufficient time be

allocated on the schedule for smaller specialized advisory committees to address recommendations in many of the reports being forwarded from commissions, task forces, and General Synod agencies.

Other GSC business

The GSC also addressed other business:

- The general secretary reported the selection of Claudette Reid to fill the position of Coordinator of Women's Ministries. In this position Reid will help advance the commitment of the Reformed Church in America to the full inclusion of women and their gifts at all levels of the church's leadership and ministry. She will help the RCA achieve the goals of Our Call by intentionally pursuing a future in which women are equipped and empowered to fully exercise their gifts in the life, ministry, and mission of the church. Reid's commitment to the RCA is rooted in Brookdale Reformed Church in Bloomfield, New Jersey, where she has served as an elder and in a variety of other leadership roles since 1996.
- The GSC received oral reports from its members who have all accepted responsibility for visiting and listening to our classes. Since September, 37 classes have been visited by a member of the GSC. The GSC members intend to continue making these visits and now assume that this is one of the expectations of service on the GSC.
- The GSC received reports from the General Synod's Board of Benefits Services and the MFCA requesting clarity about the relationship of these agencies of the synod and the GSC to each other. These requests are part of an ongoing process of clarifying the responsibilities of the various agencies of the General Synod that began several years ago when the GSC itself was reorganized by action of the synod.

It continues to be an honor and privilege to serve church as a member of the GSC. Please do not hesitate to contact me throughout the year if you have any questions.

Rev. Christopher Poest, GSC representative from the Synod of Mid-America

Prayer was offered for the General Synod Council.

IX. Other business

The Book of Church Order calls for a "copy of the minutes of every session of the several classes held since the last regular session of the regional synod shall be produced for inspection at the synod's annual meeting." The bylaws of the synod gives the responsibility of inspection of these minutes to the synod's Executive Council or its representative. The Council authorized the Stated Clerk to inspect the minutes on its behalf and to report any issues or concerns. The Stated Clerk reported that all of the classes submitted their minutes and they have been inspected. Communication regarding concerns will be shared with the various clerks of the classes.

X. Closing roll call and reading of the journal

- ➔ **VOTED to omit the closing roll call.**
- ➔ **VOTED to read the journal by title.**

The journal of the 2010 Annual session of the Synod of Mid-America was read by title.

- ➔ **VOTED to approve the journal as read by title**

XI. Adjournment to Equipping Event

The synod adjourned from the business meeting with prayer offered by Jimmie Stevenson. The delegates then participated as a part of the *Creating and Weathering the Storm* event.

XII. Seating of new officers and adjournment

At the end of the equipping event Chad Schuitema was seated as the new president of the Synod of Mid-America, and Jimmie Stevenson as the new vice president.

The Synod session ended with prayer offered by Chad Schuitema.

The 2011 annual session of the Synod of Mid-America will be scheduled and announced by the Executive Council as soon as possible.

Elmer Van Drunen
President

Randy Kooy
Stated Clerk