

**MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA, RCA
APRIL 4-5, 2008**

I. Introduction, Worship and Opening of Synod

The Regional Synod of Mid-America met in its regular session on Friday-Saturday, April 4-5, 2008 at Calvary Community Church, South Holland, Illinois. The business meeting was held in conjunction with the M3: Moving from Maintenance to Mission event. The entire synod was invited to the M3 event. The business meeting was held Friday afternoon at 3:00 pm. While these minutes record the business of the Regional Synod, the M3 event continued Friday evening and Saturday ending at noon. The synod was led during this time by Dr. Paul Borden. The M3 event included significant 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 the gospel of Mark.

II. Roll Call

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

Classis of Chicago

Edie Lenz
6892 Zurich Lane
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Christopher Poest
4006 S. Oak Park Ave.
Stickney, IL 60402

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

Bill Flavin
6912 Edgewood Dr.
Palos Heights, IL 60463

Classis of Florida

Jay Sowers
West Broward Comm Church
17950 Griffin Rd.
Southwest Ranches, FL 33331

German Moreno
Comunidad de Fe
153 Henthorne Dr.
Palm Springs, FL 33461

Hilda Castillo
Comunidad de Fe
153 Henthorne Dr.
Palm Springs, FL 33461

Classis of Florida continued

Sylvia Correa
6976 SW 148 Lane
Davie, FL 33331

Classis of Illiana

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

Drew Poppleton
1540 Hemlock Rd.
Lafayette, IN 47905

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

Bob Grysen
413 Brian Dr.
Manteno, IL 60950

Bill Tharnish
429 Blanchette Ave.
Bourbonnais, IL 60914

Classis of Illinois

Phil Doeschot
6930 Mexico Road
St. Peters, MO 63376

Tom Merchant
518 13th Ave.
Fulton, IL 61252

Jeanne Kettler
405 17th Ave.
Fulton, IL 61252

Classis of Wisconsin

Luke Schouten
W2749 Huibregtse Ln
Oostburg, WI 53070

Steven Bakker
W4378 Church Rd.
Box 278
Hingham, WI 53031

Gerry Dykstra
W2615 Riverview Terr.
Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085

Bob Wierenga
N5532 Johnson Rd.
Delavan, WI 53115

Classis of Wisconsin cont.

Don Teunissen
N950 Hwy. KW
Cedar Grove, WI 53013

Bob Gretschnann
8808 S. State Rd. 140
Clinton, WI 53525

David Venard
Bethel Reformed Church
PO Box 357
Brandon, WI 53919

President

Cary Winn
First Reformed Church
4840 Flambeau Dr.
Racine, WI 53406

Vice president

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

Ex officio members of synod

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

Past President
Stephanie Doeschot
6930 Mexico Rd.
St. Peters, MO 63376

Synod Staff and others:

Synod Visionary Leader
Wayne VanRegenmorter
10088 Prairie Ct.
St. John, IN 46373

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

Other guests were present at the meeting. A quorum was present.

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

III. Approval of minutes of previous session

➔ **VOTED to approve the minutes of the 2007 session of the Regional Synod of Mid-America as printed and distributed to the churches of the synod.**

➔ **VOTED to grant the authority to the Executive Committee to approve the minutes of this 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

President's Report to the Regional Synod of Mid-America Annual Meeting April 4, 2008

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.

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

Building on the foundations of discipleship, leadership, and mission — working in accordance with the Word of God — 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

Last year I posed this question in my State of Religion Report:

What will Randy and Wayne face as they seek to serve classes?

My "prophetic" conclusions were that:

Firstly, familiarity would inevitably lead to Randy and Wayne being called upon to function as if no change to their positions or the Synod structure had been made.

Secondly, Randy and Wayne would likely be tempted to fill the void if classes did not readily take up necessary leadership.

Thirdly and most significantly, Randy and Wayne would encounter a church wanting to succeed but in need of direction.

So, how have we done? How have our leaders done? Has the church revealed itself to be more than wanting to succeed but willing to follow Christ in mission?

Frankly, it is too early to say. It should be obvious from the schedule reports these two share with us, they are very busy. My personal view is that they may be too busy - too busy doing things that classes should be equipped to do. I do not say this as a criticism of Wayne or Randy but realize this reflects the needed patience these two are showing in this difficult transitioning process.

As an example: One often sees networks or congregations with desires and needs ahead of what they believe classes are prepared to offer. It is these people with vision who often call upon Wayne and Randy to provide needed direction. God bless them, but I would also ask them to call upon their own Classis to prepare itself, with Wayne and Randy's assistance, to be ready the next time similar opportunities present themselves.

It has been a great privilege to serve as President for these past years. Thank you for your acceptance of my efforts in securing our shared vision.

Respectfully,
Rev. Cary J. Winn, 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 4, 2008

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 five different occasions.

This is the second year that the Council functioned under a structure where the Council consisted 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.

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 has been blessed this year 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 works to develop an organized prayer leader ministry within each classis and each congregation.

Some of the other synod-wide ministry occurs through contract arrangements, namely Winterfest, Living Fire Leadership Ministries, and Leaders on the Horizon.

Winterfest

The every-two-year youth event, Winterfest, continues to be sponsored by the Synod. A contract with Manitouqua Ministries provides the leadership for the event. Specifically, Nathan Phillips, the program director at Manitouqua, is leading the team that is putting together the Winterfest youth event. This is the year for Winterfest and plans are underway for the event to be held after Christmas 2008.

Winterfest has developed mission and vision statements for the event:

Mission Statement – Winterfest is a Christ centered retreat, which will allow students and leaders to experience God in their lives through fellowship, teaching and worship. Our prayer is that the students and leaders will experience personal growth in Christ and a desire to change and be a positive influence on their surrounding world, to become leaders.

Vision Statement – Winterfest is a high school event where students come to have fun, grow closer as a youth group and to God. We pray that each student that attends will engage with new people and God in ways they have never before.

Leaders on the Horizon

A leadership movement for high school age youth is called Leaders on the Horizon. Again the Synod has contracted with Manitouqua to provide the leadership for this program. While beginning to be utilized in other areas of the country, it is in its infant stage in our synod. Nathan is beginning to get out information about it. Also he is working to have a camp adaptation of the program that can be used in our 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.

A person goes through a three-year intensive cycle within this program. 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.

Currently the synod has seven churches participating in Living Fire Leadership Ministries: Faith Church, Dyer; Living Springs, Glenwood; First Reformed, Sheboygan Falls; First Reformed, DeMotte; Missio Dei, Mokena; Calvary, Orland Park; and Christ's Community, Fishers.

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 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 Council set synod staff compensation for 2008.
3. The Council appointed the Synod Coordinator/Administrator to represent the synod as an ex officio member on the Manitoqua Ministries board.
4. Routine appointments were made to fill vacancies on the Overtures and Judicial Business Committee and of the Minister's Salary Committee of the synod.
5. The Synod had a partnership arrangement with the Classis of Florida. That partnership was embodied in a joint staff position previously held by Wayne Van Regenmorter where he worked both with Florida Classis and in new church work in the whole synod. That position became vacant with Wayne accepting the Visionary Leadership position with the synod. The Council determined that synod staff would continue to spend time needed with the Classis of Florida during a transition time to continue the partnership between the classis and the synod in this way. Both Wayne and I (I to a lesser extent) have spent time working with Florida Classis leadership.
6. Last year's synod at its annual session determined that the Executive Council should participate in the RCA One Thing event held January 2008. Most of the Council was able to participate in that event that included a specific time of visioning and reflecting on what was learned at the conference.
7. The Council determined that the annual session of the Synod would include an equipping event open to the entire synod. The M3: Moving from Maintenance to Mission event being held at this annual meeting is what developed from that. A partnership with the event was made with Illiana Classis. If the event is successful it is the intention of the Council to have something similar in future years and to move it around the synod.
8. The Council continued to sponsor dialogue on the issue of classis configuration within the synod. Several conversations were held. Much of the conversation and discussion of the meetings tended to focus on the structure of classes rather than their configuration. The Council determined that at this time conversation need not continue around the structure issue but should continue around configuration as it affects the classes of Chicago and Illiana. Synod staff will facilitate those discussions later in the year including how that configuration affects kingdom issues.
9. Finances:
 - a. The Council received regular financial reports including a budget status reports. The Council revised the budget as necessary.
 - b. The Financial Report for 2007 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 2007 as shown as Appendix Exec-A.**
 - c. The 2008 budget that is currently being used is presented to this Synod for information. **See the 2008 Budget as shown as Appendix Exec-B.**
 - d. A budget for 2009 was approved for recommendation by the Council from input given by synod staff; it appears in this report as Appendix Exec-C. The budget as proposed does not reflect any significant changes in operation from what was approved for 2008. Because the Synod currently has a surplus of funds the proposed budget is one with a significant deficit and no increase in the assessment rate. It should be noted that the Synod can only operate this way for a limited time.
Recommendation Exec-1: The Council recommends that the Synod approves the Budget for 2009 as proposed and shown as Appendix Exec-C.

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

10. The Council received a request from the Classis of Chicago that financial help be given to it for the all-classis assessment process as well as the follow-up and implementation. The estimated cost was \$60,000 and the classis requested \$20,000 assistance. The Council believes that this is a model for what can be done in other classes in the synod. Assessors will be trained in the classis that can be utilized in other locations thus multiplying the resources. The Council decided to fund the Chicago Classis request of \$20,000 for the Assessment Process with the condition that the classis develop a formal prayer structure for the process. This money will come from Mission Fund reserves
11. Funding assistance for 2008 was determined. The Synod funds church planting efforts as it is able from limited General Fund assessments and from Mission Fund reserves. The Urban Ministry Fund asking remains to provide opportunity for the congregations of the synod to share in urban ministry efforts. Ministry funding for 2008 is as follows:

Ministry Funding - 2008
Church Planting and Urban Ministries

Ministry	Type of Funding	Amount
Ch of the Good News, Chicago	Urban Ministry	16,000
Bethel Reformed, Chicago	Urban Ministry	1,000
Faith Community, Stickney, IL	Urban Ministry	1,000
La Capilla del Barrio, Chicago	Urban Ministry	14,000
Rolling Hills, Zellwood, FL	Urban Ministry	5,000
Iglesia Trinidad, Milwaukee	Urban Ministry	14,000
North Dade Comm, Miami	Urban Ministry	14,000
North Ridge Comm, Eldridge, IA	Church Plant	20,000
Missio Dei, Mokena, IL	Church Plant	30,000
Cedar Lake Campus, Cedar Lake, IN	Church Plant	20,000

12. The structure of the Council meetings was analyzed. The Council determined that it needs to spend more time doing visioning of the synod and allow the staff to take care of the running of the synod reporting regularly to the Council. A decision was made to have a significant amount of in-person Council meeting times spent visioning for the synod with that being led by Wayne, as our visionary leader. One meeting utilized this format.
13. From the visioning time at an Executive Council meeting came the concept of potentially having the visionary leader concentrating his efforts in one classis that might be open to a missional vision and direction. The Council will continue to work on this idea as a possible model for how staff works with classes.
14. The Council appointed Stephanie Doeschot as its delegate to the 2008 General Synod.
15. The Council made an ad interim nomination of Christopher Poest as the General Synod Council representative from the Synod of Mid-America. Christopher will fill the remaining year of an unexpired term and will be eligible for a full term as representative to the General Synod Council.
16. When funding assistance is given for Urban Ministries, it is the Synod's policy to stop funding mid-year if the need for the specific purpose for which the money was granted ends. Since the policy might not be clear if a ministry ends but the need continues (such as the case with the Church of the Good News with ongoing expenses), the Council determined that it would continue to honor a commitment as long as there is a need for the funding as it fits into the specified purpose stated in the application for funding.
17. Recent changes to the bylaws of the Synod made the Executive Council delegates to the Executive Council part of the delegation from the classes to the annual session of the regional synod. It was discovered that the bylaws do not specifically address the situation of when a classis delegate to the Executive Council cannot attend the annual session of the Synod. In that case can the classis send an alternate? The Council determined that alternates should be allowed so a classis is not under-represented through no-fault of its own. Therefore the Council makes the following recommendation of a clarifying change to its bylaws:

Recommendation Exec-2: That the bylaws of the Synod of Mid-America be amended as follows (additions underlined):

Sec. B – The delegates of the synod will be:

1. The delegates from the classes of the Synod to the Executive Council as defined later in these bylaws. If an Executive Council delegate is unable to attend the annual session of the synod, the classis of which the Executive

Council delegate is a member may appoint an alternate of the same office to be a delegate to the annual session. However, that alternate will be a delegate only for the session of appointment with the regular Executive Council delegate reassuming delegate status at the end of the session.

2. Additional delegates from each classis so that the total composition of each classis delegation... *[and the rule goes on from here to describe how the classis fills out its delegation]*

[Information will be given at the meeting regarding OJB committee input regarding this bylaw amendment.]

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

18. 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. Because of timing of their meeting and the distribution of this agenda the Salary Committee report is not included at this time. However it will be distributed as soon as it becomes available.

Recommendation Exec-3: That the synod approves the 2009 Minister's Salary Schedule, Rules, and Guidelines as it will appear as Appendix Exec-D and to recommend it to the classes of synod for their adoption and implementation.

➔ **VOTED to adopt Recommendation Exec-3.**

I would like to thank the members of the Executive Council for its work throughout the past year. The members are: Cary Winn, Elmer VanDrunen, Randy Kooy, Stephanie Doeschot, Edie Lenz, Jim VanZetten, Don Coutts, Tom Slager, Jay Sowers, Drew Poppleton, Chad Schuitema, Bill Tharnish, Phil Doeschot, Kevin Rust, Bob Wierenga, Bill TeWinkle, Kent VantHul, and Luke Schouten. I would especially like to thank the officers for their leadership, work, time, and efforts for the synod.

Additionally I would like to thank Laura Vroom who represents Manitoqua Ministries and Tom Daubenspeck who was our General Synod Representative; these two persons faithfully attend the council meetings and give valuable input.

On behalf of the Council I would also like to thank Stephanie Doeschot who with this annual session completes her officer terms of president, vice president, and past president.

This meeting ends the term of Cary Winn as president of the Synod of Mid-America. While we are grateful that he will continue on the Executive Council as our past president, we will miss his presidential leadership. Both he and Stephanie led our synod through some intense reevaluation of our mission, vision, and values as well as the restructure of the synod to support them. Thank you Cary!

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, 2007 to December 31, 2007

GENERAL FUND 2007

<u>Opening Balance 1/1/2007</u>			263,593.37
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	
<u>INCOME</u>			
Assessments	324,330	326,385.00	
Designated receipts		4,021.30	
NCD income		2,290.00	
Miscellaneous income	500	6,639.84	
TOTAL INCOME	324,830		339,336.14
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
Visionary Leader:			
Services	98,600	79,341.10	
Continuing Education	900	746.85	
Travel	8,000	12,548.96	
Coordinator/Administrator:			
Services	83,500	82,598.53	
Travel incl. Cont Ed.	4,600	6,443.60	
Min of Leadership Development*	20,000	23,706.45	
Committee Meetings:			
Executive Council	5,000	4,428.64	
OJB Committee	500		
Minister's Salary Committee	500	190.95	
Annual Session	5,000	3,621.57	
Office Expenses:			
Insurance	3,500	2,878.60	
Financial review	1,000	680.00	
Telephone	5,000	5,913.09	
Rent	1,000	171.98	
Office expnse: supply, postage,et	4,000	3,883.44	
Equipment/repairs	2,500	2,709.74	
Program expense	1,000	146.54	
Directory - minutes	2,500	1,671.00	
Miscellaneous	2,500	1,140.21	
Manitoqua:			
Contribution	50,000	50,674.96	
Partnership	20,000	2,000.00	
Winterfest:			
Contribution	4,000	4,000.00	
Contract leader	8,000	8,000.00	
Living Fire Leadership Ministries			
Expenses	5,000	851.42	
Contract leader	3,000	1,500.00	
Leader expenses	1,000	230.49	
New church planter expenses	3,000	1,566.03	
Specialized Interim Ministers	3,000	658.00	
Miscellaneous Ministry	5,000	2,024.17	
Church plant assistance*	20,000	20,000.00	
NCD expense		2,196.00	
Designated expense		2,521.30	
Visionary Lead moving exp		7,821.66	
One Thing expense		2,222.08	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	371,600		339,087.36
INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS	(46,770)		248.78
			<i>* also see Mission Fund</i>
<u>Closing balance 12/31/2007</u>			<u>263,842.15</u>

MISSION FUND 2007Opening balance 1/1/2007

282,500.12

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	
<u>INCOME</u>			
Contributions received		10,182.00	
Honoraria		100.00	
Miscellaneous income	7,500	<u>11,750.14</u>	
TOTAL INCOME	7,500		22,032.14
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
Christian Educ/Discipleship Consult.			
Services (salary & taxes)	20,125	10,994.12	
Travel, program	4,500	2,075.97	
Continuing education	375		
Youth Minister salary	30,000	30,000.00	
Church plant consultant partnershp	62,830	20,181.89	
Church plant assistance	30,000	30,000.00	
Synod gathering	14,000	<u></u>	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	161,830		<u>93,251.98</u>
<u>INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS</u>	-154,330		<u>(71,219.84)</u>
<u>Closing balance 12/31/2007</u>			<u>211,280.28</u>

URBAN MINISTRIES FUND 2007

<u>Opening Balance 1/1/2007</u>			113,606.90
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	
<u>INCOME</u>			
Asking	45,000	44,676.50	
Sunday School asking	5,000	4,440.92	
		<hr/>	
TOTAL INCOME	50,000		49,117.42
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
Support/program aid	65,000	65,000.00	
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TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	65,000		<u>65,000.00</u>
<u>INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS</u>	(15,000)		<u>(15,882.58)</u>
<u>Closing balance 12/31/2007</u>			<u><u>97,724.32</u></u>

SUMMARY - ALL RSMA FUNDS

<u>Opening balance 1/1/2007</u>			
General Fund	263,593.37		
Mission Fund	282,500.12		
Urban Ministries Fund	<u>113,606.90</u>		
TOTAL opening balance			659,700.39
<u>INCOME</u>			
General Fund		339,336.14	
Mission Fund		22,032.14	
Urban Ministries Fund		<u>49,117.42</u>	
TOTAL income			410,485.70
<u>DISBURSEMENTS</u>			
General Fund		339,087.36	
Mission Fund		93,251.98	
Urban Ministries Fund		<u>65,000.00</u>	
TOTAL disbursements			<u>497,339.34</u>
<u>INCOME/DISBURSEMENTS</u>			<u>(86,853.64)</u>
<u>Closing balance 12/31/2007</u>			
General Fund	263,842.15		
Mission Fund	211,280.28		
Urban Ministries Fund	<u>97,724.32</u>		
TOTAL closing balance			<u><u>572,846.75</u></u>

BANK ACCOUNTS 2007MB Financial Bank CHECKING

Balance 1/1/2007	176,964.78
Income	179,542.36
Transfer to Providence Bank checking	(39,901.91)
Disbursements	<u>(316,605.23)</u>
Balance 12/31/2007	-

Providence Bank CHECKING

Balance 1/1/2007	-
Income	225,787.24
Transfer from MB Financial Bank chkn	39,901.91
Transfer from RCA Cash 2169-PP	50,000.00
Disbursements	<u>(180,734.11)</u>
Balance 12/31/2007	134,955.04

RCA Cash Fund - 002183-R

Balance 1/1/2007	332,500.00
Income (pd by check to checking)	-
Disbursements	-
Balance 12/31/2007	<u>332,500.00</u>

RCA Cash Fund - 008236-P

Balance 1/1/2007	15,898.78
Income	654.74
Disbursements	-
Balance 12/31/2007	<u>16,553.52</u>

RCA Cash Fund - 002169-PP

Balance 1/1/2007	134,336.83
Income	4,501.36
Transfer to Providence Bank checking	<u>(50,000.00)</u>
Disbursements	-
Balance 12/31/2007	<u>88,838.19</u>

ASSETS & LIABILITIES 2007ASSETSCash assets

MB Financial Bank checking account	-
Providence Bank checking account	134,955.04
RCA Cash Fund - 002183-R	332,500.00
RCA Cash Fund - 008236-P	16,553.52
RCA Cash Fund - 002169-PP	88,838.19
TOTAL cash	572,846.75

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 - 12/31/2007	<u><u>580,846.75</u></u>
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LIABILITIES

TOTAL LIABILITIES - 12/31/2007	<u>0.00</u>
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2008 Budget - Regional Synod of Mid-America
Approved by synod - 4/24/07

RECEIPTS				
	General Fund	Synod Mission	Urban Ministry	Total
General Fund Assessment @ \$15.00	326,385			326,385
Urban Min. Asking @ \$4.00			45,000	
Sunday School Asking @ \$2.00			5,000	
Miscellaneous and Int. Income	500	7,500		8,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	326,885	7,500	50,000	384,385
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	371,980	75,000	65,000	511,980
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(45,095)	(67,500)	(15,000)	(127,595)
Opening Balance 1/1/2008	263,842	211,280	97,724	572,846
Projected Closing Balance 12/31/2008	218,747	143,780	82,724	445,251
DISBURSEMENTS				
PERSONNEL SERVICES				
Visionary Leader:				
Salary, services, benefits & SSallow	101,600			
Continuing Education	930			
Travel & business expense	13,000			
Coordinator/Administrator:				
Salary, services, benefits & SS tx	86,000			
Continuing Education	850			
Travel & business expense	5,000			
Florida partnership		5,000		
Total	207,380	5,000		
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSE				
Committee expense:				
Executive Council	8,000			
OJB Committee	500			
Minister's Salary Committee	100			
Annual Session	5,000			
Office Expenses:				
Insurance	3,500			
Financial review	1,000			
Telephone	5,000			
Rent	1,000			
Office expnse: supply, postage, etc	4,000			
Equipment/repairs	2,500			
Program expense	1,000			
Directory - minutes	2,500			
Miscellaneous	2,500			
Total	36,600			

	General Fund	Synod Mission	Urban Ministry	Total
MINISTRY EXPENSE				
Manitoqua:				
Contribution	50,000			
Partnership	20,000			
Winterfest:				
Contribution	4,000			
Contract leader	8,000			
Living Fire Leadership Ministries				
Expenses	5,000			
Contract leader	3,000			
Leader expenses	1,000			
New church planter expenses	3,000			
New church plant events	6,000			
Specialized Interim Ministers	3,000			
Miscellaneous Ministry	5,000			
Church plant assistance	20,000	70,000		
Urban assistance			65,000	
Totals	128,000	70,000	65,000	
SUMMARY				
Personnel Services	207,380	5,000	-	212,380
Administration Expense	36,600	-	-	36,600
Ministry Expense	128,000	70,000	65,000	263,000
Totals	371,980	75,000	65,000	511,980

2009 Budget - Regional Synod of Mid-America
Proposed to synod - 4/5/08

RECEIPTS				
	General Fund	Synod Mission	Urban Ministry	Total
General Fund Assessment @ \$15.00	322,305			322,305
Urban Min. Asking @ \$4.00			45,000	
Sunday School Asking @ \$2.00			5,000	
Miscellaneous and Int. Income	5,000	7,500		12,500
TOTAL RECEIPTS	327,305	7,500	50,000	384,805
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	368,540	5,000	65,000	438,540
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(41,235)	2,500	(15,000)	(53,735)
Projected Opening Balance 1/1/2009	218,747	143,780	82,724	445,251
Projected Closing Balance 12/31/2009	177,512	146,280	67,724	391,516
DISBURSEMENTS				
PERSONNEL SERVICES				
Visionary Leader:				
Salary, services, benefits & SSallow	102,000			
Continuing Education	960			
Travel & business expense	14,000			
Coordinator/Administrator:				
Salary, services, benefits & SStx	88,600			
Continuing Education	880			
Travel & business expense	6,000			
Florida partnership		5,000		
Total	212,440	5,000		
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSE				
Committee expense:				
Executive Council	7,000			
OJB 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	1,000			
Directory - minutes	2,500			
Miscellaneous	2,500			
Total	36,100			

	General Fund	Synod Mission	Urban Ministry	Total
MINISTRY EXPENSE				
Manitoqua:				
Contribution	50,000			
Partnership	20,000			
Winterfest:				
Contribution	4,000			
Contract leader	8,000			
Living Fire Leadership Ministries				
Expenses	3,000			
Contract leader	3,000			
Leader expenses	1,000			
New church planter expenses	3,000			
Specialized Interim Ministers	3,000			
Miscellaneous Ministry	5,000			
Church plant assistance	20,000	Mission amt to be determined		
Urban assistance			65,000	
Totals	120,000	-	65,000	
SUMMARY				
Personnel Services	212,440	5,000	-	217,440
Administration Expense	36,100	-	-	36,100
Ministry Expense	120,000	-	65,000	185,000
Totals	368,540	5,000	65,000	438,540

**Minister's Salary Committee Report
To the Synod of Mid-America
April 4, 2008**

The Minister's Salary Schedule Committee met on March 25, 2008 by conference call. The members of the committee are as follows: Mark Bensema, Rich Schuler, Tom Hubbell, Dale Huizenga, Neal DeWall, Phil Renkes, Vern Jurgens and Susan Kist. All members except Mark were present for the meeting. Staff support was provided by Randy Kooy who moderated the meeting.

The following are changes made in the guidelines:

1. The minimum salary table was revised. The salary amounts in the table have been increased by 2.3% over the amounts listed in the table in the rules for 2008. This is the amount of the most recent Cost of Living Adjustment as published by the government.
2. The wording was changed in the recommendation section that immediately follows the salary chart and chart instructions refers to when a minister is above the minimum and what is recommended for church increase of the salary. That section no longer specifies the type of increase that is recommended.
3. The Salary Committee continues to recommend that the classes and/or the Regional Synod offer financial planning seminars for pastors.

2009 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:
- Publication 1828 – Tax Guide for Churches and Religious Organizations. Especially note the section titled *Special Rules for Compensation of Ministers*.
 - 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 STARTING SALARIES TABLE FOR 2009 (2.3% increase over 2008)			
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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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: The church shall provide the pastor with the necessary telephone service to conduct church business. The pastor would be responsible for any additional charge for personal use. The necessary telephone service may 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 enable pastors to have a paid sabbatical leave after 6 years of service in that pastorate during which the pastor can have 3 or more months of planned professional enrichment. 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 8 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 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. 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.

→ **VOTED to elect Elmer VanDrunen 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: Edie Lenz and Chad Schuitema. There were no nominations presented from the floor of the synod.

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

VII. Staff Reports

A. Wayne Van Regenmorter – Visionary Leader

**Report to the Synod of Mid-America
Visionary Leader
Wayne Van Regenmorter
April 2008**

In his book **Seismic Shifts**, Kevin Harney writes about the seven key indicators that determine whether we are moving toward spiritual maturity. One of those indicators is identified as living in a bigger world. He describes it this way. Before we were born we were in a small place, the womb of our mother. At first our world remains quite limited—a car seat, a crib or playpen sets the boundaries of our universe. Eventually as toddlers our world gets bigger and we begin to roam the house. As we grow, move outside the house and start riding a bike, our world seems massive. Then we get a license and start driving and only the price of gas limits how far we can wander. This journey from a small to a big world describes our walk of faith as well. God is in the business of expanding our hearts to follow Christ in mission, in a lost and broken world so loved by God. That's why the Bible says, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him"* (John 3:16-17).

With spiritual growth and maturity comes an expanding heart for those who do not know the love of Jesus. As our world grows bigger, our hearts begin to echo Our Call—*"The Reformed Church in America is a fellowship of congregations called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the very presence of Jesus Christ in the world. Our shared task is to equip congregations for ministry—a thousand churches in a million ways doing one thing—following Christ in mission, in a lost and broken world so loved by God."* We are on a journey together with a vision for revitalizing existing congregations and multiplying new congregations in our Classes. Let me share what God is doing as is shared in stories that come out of this journey.

Chicago Classis

A new reality is emerging in Chicago Classis as God has brought the classis to a crossroads. In his President's Report Pastor Chris Poest writes about a far better road: *"Beloved people of God, we are standing at a similar crossroads. It is time for us to make a decision on our future; time for us to choose which of two roads we will walk down as a Classis. Will we continue to walk down the road of moving along in fits and starts, trying some exciting and good ministries and events here and there, but never moving beyond ourselves, never trusting each other, never letting go of our need for power and control, never developing any momentum or consistency over the long term and, in the end, ending up about where we started **or** will we choose to give everything over to God and embark on an amazing journey that leads to life we never knew was possible? The road we are on is not the road we could be on."*

In June of 2007, the churches of Chicago Classis began a health assessment process to become all that God wanted them to be. A team of four SIM assessors from the Synod of the Great Lakes trained four assessors from the Chicago Classis for the task of assessing the 13 congregations in the Chicago Classis.

The team had in-depth interviews with consistories and pastors of every church in the classis. At the March classis meeting the team's report was shared with searching, honest and straightforward reflections. The report included 10 recommendations on how the classis should clarify its vision, agree on goals, and change the structure of its meetings. In addition, hard and honest recommendations were shared for each of the 13 congregations. Difficult decisions are being made, but they revolve around holding congregations accountable to each other and to God's call for intentionality in mission and ministry. The Classis of Chicago is taking seriously the vision for revitalizing existing congregations and multiplying new ones as it participates in God's mission in the world.

- Rich Schuler was hired as the Classis Coordinator to follow through on the recommendations for each congregation as they seek God's direction moving into the future. I continue to work with Rich, the Chicago Church Care Committee and the Chicago Coordinating Committee of the Chicago Classis. I am assisting the classis by equipping them with resources for closing churches, restarting churches, revitalizing churches, the development of mutually supportive coaching networks and discerning God's vision for the Classis.
- A new church start in Hanover Park continues to develop with financial partnership coming from Calvary Reformed Church of Orland Park and Christ Community Church of Lemont. The lead pastor, Jose Jesus Ramirez, is working with an attorney to come into the United States under an RI status.
- Jericho Road Church, led by Jeff Klein and Kevin Engel, is continuing to grow well and is building a strong commitment to community service. Five "Living Room" groups of 10-17 people each meet in homes. About 75 to 90 people are attending worship services. Lives are being changed as the church is blessing the neighborhood and the local school.
- Pastor Bob Reid of Chicago Grace Church, a new church start adoption, has been received into the classis.
- The Church of the Good News is being closed and the classis is seeking God's direction for the future use of the building.

Illiana Classis

There are some good signs of health and renewal in the Illiana Classis but there are indicators of concerns as well.

- The Classis approved a proposed new structure for the classis to help in being more effective in the areas of church planting, church revitalization, nurturing leaders and building relationships between churches and church leaders. I participated on the task force in the development of this new structure.
- Missio Dei Church, a new church start in Mokena, IL, continues to grow in ministry as they celebrate their one year anniversary.
- The Cedar Lake Campus, a multi-site ministry of Faith Church in Dyer, IN, launched in September 2007 and led by Dave Weemhof, has received its first 8 new members and continues to worship with about 300 weekly.
- Pastor Fernando Ossandon, the lead pastor of Iglesia Cristiana San Pablo in Champaign, IL, was received as a pastor in the RCA. He is leading a core group of about 50 people.
- There are several UCC congregations that are interested in becoming a part of the RCA and joining the classis. St. Paul's United Church of Christ of Van Wert, Ohio has voted to pursue joining the RCA. Cross Community Church of Berne, IN, is seriously considering the RCA and several other churches are somewhere in the process.
- A Church Multiplying Network has been formed following the initial training at the One Thing event. Bob Grysen will lead the network with parenting church materials.
- An active coached revitalizing network continues to meet in Lafayette, IN.
- There are concerns of disconnection between classis pastors and churches as observed through an independent spirit among churches. There is a need for mutual accountability and the establishment of support and learning opportunities through greater development of networks.
- Some churches are hanging on and not looking ahead into God's future.

Wisconsin Classis

In the March 2008 Classis meeting, the Wisconsin Classis devoted 4 hours of their meeting exploring the implications of Our Call, especially as it relates to church revitalization. Wes Granberg-Michaelson presented an overview of what it means to be a missional church versus a settled church. About 90

pastors and Elders were present as Ken Eriks brought clarity, focus, and support for ways that can lead to revitalizing local congregations and engaging in mission. Ken shared that the central calling of the church is to place participation in God's mission at the center of its life and ministry and to choose God's mission before treasured traditions, personal preferences and valued relationships. I have been meeting with some pastors in the classis seeking ways to equip congregations and provide resources to be more effective in revitalizing existing congregations.

In April 2007 at the Wisconsin Classis "Gathering", Tim Vink, the RCA Coordinator for Multiplication and I had the opportunity to challenge the Wisconsin pastors and church members from God's Word to seek His presence, power and possibilities for making an impact on their communities through revitalizing and multiplying congregations. About 180 people participated in the event. It was an incredible day to marvel at God's movement among the people as He poured out the refreshment of His Spirit through cleansing, restoration, healing and a desire to follow His call to be sent out into the harvest fields.

- Pastors Wayne De Vrou and Brad Veenendaal continue to work in the process of gathering people for a new church start in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin.
- I am meeting with the consistory of the Bethany Reformed Church in Sheboygan, Wisconsin to explore the process for a multi-site campus or daughtering a new church.
- I have met with a Task Force from the Wisconsin Classis to engage in a discussion regarding a change of structure for the classis. The goal of this process is to find ways to bring intentionality to making the ministries of the classis more missional, particularly as it relates to revitalization and multiplication.
- Pastor Bob James continues to lead a new church start—Hope Crossing Community Church in Madison, Wisconsin. They are continuing to expand their ministry into the community.

Illinois Classis

The Illinois Classis is seeking to clarify its vision and is exploring ways to restructure the classis to become more fruitful in revitalizing existing congregations and starting new ones.

- The Classis and a parenting church, Christ's Family Church, celebrated the organization of North Ridge Community Church in Eldridge, IA, on February 24, 2008. Pastor Doug Evenhouse is the lead pastor who has been gathering together a new church family with this vision: "Connecting people with Jesus and each other."
- Stephanie Doeschot and members of her team are beginning a joint RCA and Lutheran new church start church, The Bridge, in New Town, MO.
- Recently a new coached revitalizing network has been formed in Illinois Classis. The network is using the Purposeful Living material for learning how to bring revitalization to the rural churches in their area. There are a few other networks that already exist in the classis.
- I have been working with the Illinois Classis C P & D Committee and Pastor Kurt Kruger in moving forward to start a new church in Davis Junction, IL.
- Kurt Kruger and a team that he is forming to start a new church attended a THRIVE boot camp for church planters.
- Silver Creek Reformed Church in Silver Creek, IL, is committed to the NCD process.

Florida Classis

The Florida Classis is continuing to move forward through a process of transition.

- A task force is in the process of searching for an Apostolic Leader for the classis. Randy Kooy has been facilitating this task force and at the March Classis meeting it was affirmed to seek candidates for this position.
- Regularly I meet with the Florida Church Multiplication Team in resourcing, evaluating, and empowering the team and the leadership of the new church starts in Florida.
 - The Vine led by Reggie Padin is worshipping at a mini-mall shopping center in Pembroke Pines, FL.
 - Iglesia Comunidad Cristiana, led by Pastor Fernando Jensen continues to meet at the Korean Choong Hyun Church of Orlando (an RCA church).
 - Steve and Hope Geroso, lead pastors at Living Stones Church in New Tampa, Florida, continue to grow and deepen relationships, and are involved in ministries to reach their neighbors, co-workers and families.
 - Good News Christian Fellowship led by Pastor Jerry Hekhuis meets in New Port Richey, Florida.
 - West Coast Church of the Cross in Sarasota led by Kevin O'Hara has grown to about 60 in worship and continues targeting children and youth in the community.

- I am working with the Florida Classis Church Multiplication Team in the exploration of a partnership of Florida Classis and City Church of San Francisco to begin a new urban church planting movement in the Miami, Florida area.
- Faith Church in Dyer, IN, has been doing some consulting work with New Horizons Church in Deerfield Beach to bring renewal and revitalization to that congregation.
- Several churches in Florida are completing a cycle of NCD.
- Florida Classis is in the process of changing the structure of the classis and to facilitate the implementation of the classis vision into ministry areas of Church Multiplication, Congregational Revitalization, and Leadership Development. I have assisted in this process.
- In May 2007, the Florida Classis gathered for a Prayer and Vision Summit as people gathered for prayer, worship, confession, vision clarification, and small group discussions on the Mission and Vision of the Classis in the areas of revitalization and church multiplication. As a result, five key values were identified to help the classis carry out a movement of revitalization and church multiplication.

Here are some of the things that we celebrate in the Synod:

- 11 pastors and leaders from our Synod attended the THRIVE events this past year.
- 69 pastors and leaders have now been trained in Foundational Coaching in the Synod of Mid-America. Effective coaching is an essential part of our vision of “healthy classes and congregations through revitalization and multiplication.”
- 6 pastors received certification in coaching by training on Coaching Excellence Day this year.
- 47 pastors have now been trained as Network Facilitators
- 15 new church starts are at various stages in the birthing process, plus church adoptions. These congregations have an average weekly worship attendance of 1490:
 - Good News Christian Fellowship, New Port Richey, Florida, Pastor Jerry Hekhuis
 - Iglesia Comundad Cristiana, Orlando, Florida, Pastor Fernando Jensen
 - Living Stones, New Tampa, Florida, Pastors Steve and Hope Germoso
 - The Vine, Pembroke Pines, Florida, Pastor Reggie Padin
 - West Coast Church of the Cross, Sarasota, Florida, Pastor Kevin O’Hara
 - Chicago Grace Church, Chicago, Illinois, Pastor Bob Reid
 - Jericho Road, Wheaton, Illinois, Pastor Jeff Klein, Pastor Kevin Engel
 - Hispanic Church, Hanover Park, Illinois, Jose Jesus Ramirez
 - North Ridge Community Church, Eldridge, Iowa, Pastor Doug Evenhouse (organized Feb—2008)
 - Hope Crossing Community Church, Madison, Wisconsin, Pastor Bob James
 - Faith Church multi-site, Dyer, Indiana, Dave and Carla Weemhoff
 - Iglesia Cristiana San Pablo, Champaign, Illinois, Pastor Fernando Ossandon
 - The Bridge, New Town, Missouri, Pastor Stephanie Doeschot
 - Davis Junction, Illinois, proposed plant, Kurt Kruger
 - Sheboygan County Wisconsin, proposed plant, Wayne De Vrou & Brad Veenendaal
 - Working on 2 to 3 adoptions of UCC churches in Indiana and Ohio
- 82 participants of the Synod of Mid-America attended the One Thing event in San Antonio. The inspiration and energy of the conference continues to wash through the Synod as many congregations are using Reggie McNeal’s “Present Future” leadership training resources.
- In partnership with Illiana Classis the Synod is hosting M3: a training and equipping event for pastors and consistory leaders with Paul Borden as the guest speaker. Paul will give three presentations on Moving from Maintenance to Mission: Christian Leadership for a New Century; Congregational Life Cycles; and Making Evangelism a Value

Prayer Mobilization

I have been working with Diane Aardema to recruit prayer movement leaders in each classis in our Synod. Classis prayer leaders have been identified and the next steps include: to identify a prayer leader in every congregation who will encourage and equip prayer leaders with resources to build a successful prayer team in every congregation in our Synod. Diane continues to share her passion for this important ministry. Randy Kooy is working with Diane on including Prayer as a link on the Synod website. In the future, prayer resources will be available to every congregation.

Church Multiplication Team

I am a part of the Church Multiplication Team (CMT) of the RCA. We are listening to God's leading to start 400 new congregations by December 2013. So far, there are 92 new church plants reaching the harvest; 72 parenting churches have been identified. New worshippers in these new church starts number over 10,000. A Church Multiplication Team conviction has been developed: "The classis of the parenting church (directive parent) determines the classis of accountability and support for a new church start the first ten years." (See attachment) In my work on the Empowering Team we are developing training resources for networks and coaches of new church planters and parenting pastors.

Congregational Transformation Process

I continue to work with the program design of the Ridder Leadership and Congregational Transformation process. The purpose of this process is: "To engage participants in a systemic learning process of pastoral and congregational leaders that builds leadership capacity and supports congregational practices that result in—

- Systemic transformational change
- Increased congregational health
- Aimed at faithful and fruitful missional engagement
- Resulting in transformed lives and renewed communities

Five congregations in our Synod will be invited to meet regularly with Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor to focus on themes two to three times a year and then go back to their congregations to practice what they have learned in the larger group. This would happen over a three year span. The goal is a deeper dive into congregational revitalization.

Vision

The vision of the Synod of Mid-America focuses on classes and congregations made healthy through revitalization and multiplication. Revitalization and multiplication are driven by expanding the reign of God calling congregations to make a radical difference in the world by following Christ in mission in a lost and broken world. If classes and congregations in our Synod do this, we will see...

- Lives being transformed by the love of Jesus Christ.
- Congregations so transformed by the reign of God that they are places of peace, mercy and justice.
- Congregations ministering out of a clear and compelling vision where boys and girls, men and women come to know the same Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that you and I know.
- Congregations who have a deep foundational and Biblical mission that drives them to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.
- Congregations that nurture, grow and make disciples among their own people, but also have a missional mindset for their community.
- Congregations and classes committed to multiplication—multiplying leaders, multiplying groups, multiplying ministries, multiplying disciples, multiplying congregations.
- Congregations growing deeper in their love for God and wider among the people whom God has called them to serve.
- Pastoral leaders who are clear about who God shaped them to be and what He has called them to do.
- Consistories being communities of spiritual growth, learning and maturity.
- Pastors and congregational leaders who immerse their lives, their leadership and everything they do in prayer.
- Pastors and congregational leaders living obediently, serving gladly and risking freely.

The bottom line for classes and congregations in our Synod is that lives are transformed. We have been chosen to be faithful to God and therefore, God has chosen to bless us. We need to ask ourselves: What does it mean for us to make participation in God's mission to be the center of our lives? It requires surrender to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

At the Wisconsin Classis meeting Wes Granberg-Michaelson shared a story and a prayer of abandonment written by a Frenchman, Charles de Foucauld who lived from 1858 to 1916. His pilgrimage led de Foucauld from a comfortable life in France to become a monk. He came eventually to the Sahara Desert, where he lived among those who were "the furthest removed" and committed himself to "shout the gospel with his life." The prayer he wrote has endured. It reminds us of how Jesus abandoned himself

to the will of God as He moved toward the cross. Perhaps this prayer can be helpful to us as we surrender ourselves to follow Jesus Christ in ministry and mission.

*Father,
I abandon myself into your hands,
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.*

*Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures—
I wish no more than this, O Lord.*

*Into your hands I commend my soul:
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.*

Together in His Cause,
Wayne Van Regenmorter

B. Manitoqua Ministries Report

TO: SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA – ANNUAL SESSION
FROM: LAURA VROOM
SUBJECT: MANITOQUA MINISTRIES
DATE: APRIL 4, 2008

Manitoqua Ministries continues to serve the children, youth, and adults of the Regional Synod in a variety of ways. Through an expanding program ministry, we are touching more people than ever before.

Program Report

Summer Staffing

We are still in the process of interviewing and covenanting the summer staff. Due to the large number of children that want to come to camp, we are looking for volunteers to help serve this summer. If you or any member of your church is interested, we would love to have you.

Summer Camp Registration

Registration is going smoothly. At this time our registrations are up. We are excited to watch God continue to be faithful in bringing kids to be served.

Building and Grounds

We have been hard at work here at camp to update the facility and to make it more guest friendly. If you or your church would like to help we always have projects.

Volunteers

We have had the privilege of watching many people serve God here at Camp Manitoqua.

Our annual work day is April 26, 2007 at Camp Manitoqua and April 19, 2007 at The Kings Camp. It is one of our priorities to take care of all the facilities that God has given us. We are blessed by many volunteer groups who are helping us do that. We would like to thank all the people who help and the churches that take special offerings to support these projects. **We are always in need of volunteers who have a heart for helping Manitoqua reach its full potential.**

Retreats

In the last year we served 10,871 people from churches, schools, and not-for-profit organizations. The majority of our guest groups are repeat business and they continue to appreciate our beautiful setting and the excellent service they receive. It is very exciting to see people come and feel the presence of the Spirit of God here at Camp Manitoqua & Retreat Center.

Kings Camp

In Chana, Illinois, The King's Camp has built a new community center for their guests. This building has a kitchen so that we can serve family campers as well as the summer camp program. Our campground managers, Wes and Eileen, are excited about another year of ministry and are encouraged by the number of RCA members who are using this facility.

Board Members

At this time I do not have any board members for Synod approval.

Plea for Help and Support

Manitoqua Ministries has continued to grow and reach out to many people in the last 50 years. We, the staff and Board of Directors, would like to see it continue to be a place where "God's Spirit Changes Lives". I believe that we are at a crossroads. We covet prayers and financial support from churches and individuals to continue this ministry.

Thank you

The staff finds it a privilege to serve 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 Manitoqua to their members.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Vroom
Executive Director

VIII. Other business

A report was given on the inspection of the classis minutes. All minutes of the classes were available at the synod session. Specific inspector reports will be sent to each classis clerk regarding the minutes.

IX. 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 2008 Annual session of the Synod of Mid-America was read by title.

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

X. Adjournment to Equipping Event

The synod adjourned from the business meeting with prayer offered by Cary Winn. The delegates then participated as a part of the M3: Moving from Maintenance to Mission event.

XI. Seating of new officers and adjournment

At the end of the M3 event Elmer VanDrunen was seated as the new president of the Synod of Mid-America.

The Synod session ended with prayer offered by Cary Winn.

The 2009 annual session of the Synod of Mid-America will be scheduled and announced by the Executive Council as soon as possible.

Cary Winn
President

Randy Kooy
Stated Clerk