

Report for the Churches
Classis Heartland
First Christian Reformed Church – Orange City, Iowa
March 2, 2021

Rev. Tom De Does, Ocheyedan CRC, chaired the meeting. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel of Prairie Lane CRC in Omaha served as vice-chair.

Theme of the Day: *Milestones* – Rev. Kevin Muyskens, Classis Program Coordinator, framed the day's theme around a number of significant changes noted in this meeting.

Anniversaries

Two of our churches mark noteworthy anniversaries this year. First CRC, Orange City, celebrates 150 years and Calvary CRC, Orange City, marks 100 years. We thank the Lord for his faithfulness!

Transitions

Classis thanks two of its servants whose work comes to an end at this meeting. Mike Van Surksun served as treasurer since March 1998. Rev. Bob Drenten had been stated clerk since August 2012. Classis Heartland expressed sincere thanks for their work. Mr. Randy Smit was appointed as the next treasurer, and Rev. Phillip Westra as the new stated clerk.

Rev. Luke Wynja, formerly the pastor of First CRC, Sheldon, had accepted a call to ministry in the Presbyterian Church in America. He has joined Grace Covenant Church in the Minneapolis area. Classis Heartland approved a request from Rev. Wynja and First CRC to honorably release him from the office of Minister of the Word in the CRCNA. May the Lord continue to bless Rev. Wynja and his family as they serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Searches

At present, six churches of Classis Heartland are in various stages of a search for pastoral leadership: Hope CRC, Hull; Calvin CRC, Le Mars; Northern Lighthouse, Lincoln; Immanuel CRC, Orange City; First CRC, Sheldon; Sibley CRC. Continue to pray that the Lord will lead and provide for these congregations.

Ministry Resources

Safe Church Resources

Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota are served by a Safe Church Team under the direction of Tara Boer. The team is available to help churches formulate good and realistic policies to guard their ministries against sexual abuse. The team is also able to respond to incidents of abuse that may happen, and to provide ministry resources for members who may be struggling with pornography or domestic abuse. You may reach Tara Boer by email - Tara.Boer@dordt.edu.

Timothy Leadership Training

The Classical Education Committee continues to sponsor Timothy Leadership Training, led by Rev. Sam Keyzer. All members of the churches are welcomed to take part in the training modules offered. Sessions will be publicized in the churches when available.

Minn-I-Kota Youth Network

Lee De Groot continues to serve as the director for MIK, offering youth ministry resources and opportunities to the churches. Churches were invited to encourage their youth to participate in this Spring's Junior High Retreat at Inspiration Hills. You may contact Lee De Groot by email - degrootlee@gmail.com.

Faith Formation Ministries

Trudy Ash and Jill Friend introduced Classis Heartland to one of the newest resources from Faith Formation Ministries of the CRCNA. "Our Journey 2025" helps churches become communities that cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual disciplines, that listen to the voices of every generation, that grow in diversity and unity, and that share the gospel. More information is available at www.crcna.org/OurJourney. Trudy Ash and Jill Friend are available to help churches with all resources of FFM. Email Trudy Ash – tash@crcna.org.

Classis Highlights

Classical Ministry Leadership Team (Ministry Students)

Classis Heartland continues to support two students preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

Ben Wiersma is now serving an internship at Sibley CRC. He has nearly completed his education and hopes to be approved by the Christian Reformed Church as a candidate for ministry this summer.

Jamie Negus is a student at Sioux Falls Seminary. He is midway through his studies toward his Ministry of Divinity degree.

Overtures

Three churches presented overtures to Classis Heartland expressing support for the Report on Human Sexuality that was planned to be considered by Synod 2021. Sanborn CRC; Calvary CRC, Orange City; and Ireton CRC each submitted similar overtures. Since Synod 2021 has been canceled, the three churches withdrew their overtures. It is expected that they will collaborate and present a unified overture for Classis Heartland's consideration at a future meeting, with a view to having this considered by Synod 2022.

Ireton CRC also submitted a series of overtures addressing concerns regarding ministry shares, pledging for ministry shares, and formal statements from denominational leaders on behalf of the CRCNA, addressing current social issues. After some discussion by classis, the Ireton CRC delegation withdrew their overtures.

Servants of Classis Heartland

Appointed by Classis Heartland for terms ending September 30, 2023:

Rev. Phillip Westra, Stated Clerk

Dr. Ed Starckenburg, Stated Clerk Alternate

Mr. Randy Smit, Classis Treasurer

Rev. Todd Zuidema, Classical Education Committee, Alternate

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Classis Heartland next meets Wednesday, September 22, 2021, at Sibley Christian Reformed Church, D.V. The deadline to submit agenda materials to the stated clerk, Rev. Phillip Westra, is July 30, 2021.

Rev. Phillip Westra, Stated Clerk
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