

**Supplement to the Agenda for Classis Heartland
Wednesday, September 21, 2022 • 8:30 AM**

Location: Hawarden Christian Reformed Church
 1515 16th St
 Hawarden, IA 51023

The following reports and communications will be considered in our classis heartland meeting.

1. Classis Stewardship Committee Minutes dated August 29, 2022 (**p. 51**) is part of the CSC report and item 5.a on the agenda.
2. Classical Deaconate Task Force Communication (**p. 52**) will be and additional matter to be considered as part of CIC's reporting to classis, item 4 on the agenda
3. Communication from Calvary CRC (**p. 53**) is item 8.a on the agenda
4. Commissioned Pastor Preparation and Learning Plan (**pp. 54–55**) is item 11.b.iv on the agenda and needs the approval of classis and the concurrence of the synodical deputies for Northern Lighthouse to have Jonathan Keyzer serve them as a Commissioned Pastor
5. Classical Education Committee Safety Proposal to Classis Heartland (**p. 56**) is an additional matter to be decided on as part of CEC's report, item 10 on the agenda.
6. The final three items are NOT before classis but are provided for information and provide some historical context. Previous Overtures about the seating of female delegates to Classis Heartland from Prairie Lane CRC dated January 22, 2015 (**p. 57**), from Calvin CRC dated March 7, 2015 (**p. 58**), and from Prairie Lane CRC dated July 6, 2019 (**p. 59**)

*****NOTE*****

The Classis Interim Committee met recently with the officers of our upcoming classis meeting and acknowledged that classis will need to determine whether or not Calvin CRC's current overture (item 9 on our agenda) presents new grounds, so please review the previous overtures to be ready for that discussion. When Classis Heartland met on March 7, 2015 it addressed two overtures, one from Prairie Lane CRC and one from Calvin CRC. Classis voted to require a 2/3 majority vote to change Classis Heartland's Rules of Procedure and neither Calvin's or Prairie Lane's requests passed. At the meeting of Classis Heartland on September 7, 2019 it addressed an overture from Prairie Lane CRC. Once again classis required a 2/3 majority and said "no" to the request.

CLASSICAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
Classis Heartland
August 29, 2022
Sioux Center

Members present: Chris Dekkers, Eric Kroese, Nathan Kuperus, Randy Smit & Tom De Does.
John Klompjen was absent with notification.

1. Chairman Kuperus opened the meeting with prayer.
2. The Chair welcomed Eric Kroese, newly elected member to the committee.
3. The minutes of the February 10, 2022 meeting were accepted as presented.
4. Old Business: Tom had contacted Classis lakota stated clerk, Bernie Haan. He reported they give their treasurer and stated clerk the stipend of \$2,750 per year. At present in Classis Heartland, the treasurer receives \$2,750, the stated clerk, \$3,000 and the coordinator of Classis \$2,000. It was reported that the CIC was recommending a \$500 increase for the treasurer and stated clerk. MMSP to recommend an increase of \$750 for our treasurer and stated clerk. The last increase was in 2014. We asked our chairman to bring the role of the coordinator up at a CIC meeting as we evaluate what he receives. (that was set in 2016)
5. We examined all the budgets submitted. Our task is to also recommend what is needed for Classical Expenses. MMSP to up the Expense fund of Classis to \$6.00 per member. This means the total budget amount per member for 2023 will be \$111.79.
6. There was no update available about the joint project with Classi lakota from the Diaconal Taskforce.
7. The next meeting is set for February 13, 11:15 at the Grille on the campus of Dordt College. A word of thanks was expressed to Tom De Does as this was his last meeting. Tom offered a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas De Does

(fill in clerk for this meeting)

Classis Heartland
Classical Deaconate Task Force

Purpose: Study the formation of a deaconate organization shared by Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota.

Deaconate Leadership position has been discussed between Pete Attema and Jim Viet after a year of inactivity, with one member, Jon Hellinga, receiving but not responding to emails.

Conclusion: We do not feel a paid full or part time Deaconate Coordinator is the best path for Classis Heartland. It is hard to find one person with the all the skills necessary to help both churches and individuals with the many needs that can arise. This can result in the need to hire additional help with additional expense. It can also be difficult for one person to connect with every church causing some churches to feel left out. Other churches handle some of their training needs internally.

The churches of Classis Heartland have many individuals with years of wisdom and experience dealing with matters of Deacon and Elder Training, Budgeting, Financial Guidance, and any other need that may arise from its churches or their members.

Our concept is to find volunteers within the churches of Classis Heartland to serve on a Deaconate Committee. Our hope is that these individuals, all with different gifts and skills, would then be willing to help churches and their members as needs arose. For example, if a church is looking for help training its deacons, have one, or more than one from the Deaconate Committee (having the skills in training) help with training in that church.

It is difficult to know how much need our Classis has so it is hard to size this committee. It would be nice to have small teams within the Committee with similar gifts (financial, training, leadership, counseling, etc.). The Deaconate Committee would potentially need many (6-20?) to serve but our churches would all have a list of members with both the skills and passion to serve. We believe each church could find 1-3 willing members. We do not see term limits if members are qualified and willing. There may need to be a vetting process to "set a level of excellence".

We anticipate the need for a leader to coordinate between the Deaconate Committee and its churches. We also anticipate a budget needed if outside guidance or training was needed when those in the committee didn't feel qualified to help with a certain need.

This concept is very rough. We have more details that could be discussed if the CIC finds value in further discussion.

Respectfully,

Jim Viet and Pete Attema
Classis Heartland, Classical Deaconate Task Force

Classis Communication:

We, the Council of *Calvary CRC* in Orange City, IA, submit the following communication to Classis Heartland, asking classis to petition the General Secretary and the Council of Delegates to replace the appointment of *Church of the Servant* as the convening church for Synod 2023.

Grounds:

1. While Synod 2022 approved the appointment of *Church of the Servant* as the convening church for Synod 2023, it did not do so with the usual unanimous voice vote. Instead, following a brief debate, it was passed by a recorded vote of 139-25 (with 10 abstentions).
2. Those speaking against the appointment expressed concern that *Church of the Servant* may not be inclined to fully support the confessions of the church in light of the decisions of Synod 2022 regarding the HSR report, but those speaking in favor asserted that no such charges had been made against *Church of the Servant*.
3. Given these arguments for and against, it's very possible that, at least some, and perhaps many of the votes to approve the appointment were made by delegates who chose to give *Church of the Servant* the "benefit of the doubt" over an issue on which they had not yet stated an official position.
4. Following Synod 2022, in a letter to their congregation, the Executive Committee at *Church of the Servant* appears to imply that their position on the decisions of Synod 2022 may in fact jeopardize their standing with the CRC, stating "We find ourselves in new territory for which there is no roadmap. We face complex questions about the shape and possibilities of our life as a congregation, **especially as it relates to our affiliation with the CRC** and various ministry partners." (emphasis added).
5. If, in fact, they themselves are questioning their future relationship with the CRCNA, it doesn't seem appropriate for the CRCNA to invite them to host the next Synod.

Commissioned Pastor Preparation and Learning Plan

Mentor: Chad Van Ginkel

Applicant: Jon Keyzer

Church: Northern Lighthouse Church – Lincoln, NE

The following is a learning plan covenant. Outlined below are various resources that Jon Keyzer (applicant) and Chad Van Ginkel (mentor) will read and discuss as they meet together to prepare for the Commissioned Pastor Exam.

1. CRC Ministries (Denominational Ministry Orientation)

- a. Web site: www.crcna.org
- b. DVD Review

2. CRC History (learning the denominational story in context of the Christian Church story)

- a. Booklet: "Who We Are and What We Believe"
- b. Book: [CRC Family Portrait](#) – (Schaap, James)

3. CRC Polity/Church Order

- a. Church Order Commentary (DeMoor, Henry)
- b. Kathy Smith DVD

4. Reformed Creeds and Confessions

- a. Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions
- b. Book: [Body & Soul](#) (M. Craig Barnes)

5. Reformed Perspective

- a. TLT: God's plan for Sustainable Development training
- b. Book: [Reformed, What it Means; Why It Matters](#) (DeMoor, R.)

6. Reformed Hermeneutics

- a. Book: [How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth](#), (Fee, Gordon)
- b. Book: [What I Most Want](#) (Wiema, Art)
- c. CRC Synodical Study: The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority (www.crcna.org web site, synod resources, Agenda of Synod 1972)

7. Basic Bible Knowledge

- a. Daily Reading from the One Year Bible, as well as scripture commentaries
- b. Daily Audio Bible while going for walks
- c. Leading a weekly Bible Study at the Northern Lighthouse

8. The Art of Preaching

- a. TLT: Biblical Preaching Training

9. The Heart of a Pastor (Character Development and Leadership)

- a. Book: [Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership](#) (Barton, Ruth H)
- b. TLT: Caring for God's People Training
- c. Stephen's Ministry Training (50hrs)

10. The Call of a Pastor

- a. Article: "Introduction: Pastor Pete" from the book The Pastor, (Eugene Peterson)

11. Classis Specific Requirements and Individual Needs

- a. Abuse of Power Training

12. Ethnic/Cultural Needs and Factors

- a. TLT Harm to Harmony Training
- b. RIP Training

Mentor Role and Contract

How often will the mentor and applicant meet, and for how long?

The mentor and applicant will meet once per month for 1-2 hours.

What will the applicant do to demonstrate a teachable spirit, and allow the mentor access into his/her life?

The applicant will be open, honest and vulnerable. The applicant will attempt to relate the materials being studied to real-life ministry and personal situations.

What will the mentor do to come alongside the applicant in a way that speaks the truth in love?

The mentor will show real interest in the applicant's life/ministry as well as invest in the applicant's growth and knowledge of the materials being discussed.

Reporting the Progress and Completion of the Plan

To whom will a "progress report" be made, and how often?

CMLT by the end of February 2023 and the end of July 2023 (it not completed by the end of February)

Who will be the person making the "progress report(s)"?

Chad Van Ginkel

At what point will the Mentor and the Applicant review the "Covenant for Office Bearers", and how will this be reported? (see document 6.1.8 on the Candidacy Committee google site)

Prior to examination.

Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____

Signature of CMLT Mentor _____

Date _____

Signature of CMLT/Classis Representative: _____

Date _____

Signature of Candidacy Comm. _____

Date _____

Classical Education Committee Safety Proposal to Classis Heartland

- I. Safe-Church Ministry (S.C.M.) structure and its needs
 - 1) The S.C.M. is primarily comprised of experts of such areas as psychology, church safety, abuse prevention, and victim recovery.
 - 2) However, since the S.C.M. operates in an ecclesiastical context, when serious incidents or allegations occur, the S.C.M. ability to respond is significantly handicapped within that ecclesiastical context which requires knowledge of how to navigate said context (i.e. Church order, interaction with church councils, communication with Classis, etc...)
- II. Classical Education Committee Recommendation
 - 1) The C.E.C. recommends that classis appoint members of the C.E.C. to help with the S.C.M.'s interactions with church councils and its communications with Classis.
- III. Grounds
 - 1) These ministers will greatly benefit the communication between the S.C.M. and classis since they will give 1st hand reports and explanation of the S.C.M.'s actions and reasoning's behind their actions.
 - 2) These ministers should be well versed in following and implementing church order as well as gifted in facilitating communications between church councils and other third (offending or offended) parties.
 - 3) Article 42 a of the church order states, "The classis shall be responsible for appointing persons to provide counsel and advice to churches." It then specifically names the offices of "Church visitor" and "Classical Counselor" as two possible (yet mandatory) means of fulfilling this article.
- IV. Proposed Motion for Classis
 - 1) **In the spirit of said article (And for better legal protection), the C.E.C. proposes the following motion; "That Classis appoint the ministers on the C.E.C. to serve in the S.C.M.. These ministers will serve as "Special Church Advisors" that will primarily help both church councils and the S.C.M. navigate through particularly divisive cases such as sexual abuse and molestation allegations within the church. Cases where third party arbitration would especially be ideal.**

Signed by the members of the Classical Education Committee,

Rev. Jesse Walhof, Rev. Ben Wiersma, Rev. Aaron Gonzalez

Overture to Classis Heartland :

To the classis of the Heartland—

Our current by-laws of classis state in I-D “Delegates are ministers, elders, and deacons who serve according to Church Order Article 40a. ... No woman may be seated as a delegate.” We overture classis to remove the sentence “No woman may be seated as a delegate” from our classis by-laws.

Some Reasons:

-- Synod gives each classis freedom to decide their own policy on female delegates. (Currently, of the 47 classes in the CRC, 7 do not allow female delegates).

-- The CRC also allows each congregation to determine its own policy regarding women in church leadership. There are presently churches in our classis that do allow women to serve on church councils. In order to fulfill the duties of their office, they should be permitted to serve the classis as delegates. And, our current by-laws can make it difficult for our congregation to send our full number of 3 delegates to classis meetings.

-- Such a change in our classis by-laws does not suggest that any congregation should change their own policies regarding how women may serve in their church. Church polity even includes a procedure where other delegates may express their personal convictions on the matter (church order article 40). But, changing our current classis policy would allow those churches in classis with a different perspective to continue to fully participate in classis.

-- In the book of Romans and I Corinthians, Paul addresses some issues in the early church that lacked strong Scriptural clarity. In Romans 14:1, he calls these kinds of debatable issues “disputable matters” because both sides had legitimate reasons for their position. And, when Paul discusses these “disputable matters”, his primary concerns are for unity, peace, and for the advancement of the gospel (Romans 14:19-21, I Cor. 9:12 and 10:33b). We recognize that this decision, in either direction, will bring up differing opinions, and that we must be sensitive to different viewpoints and perspectives. We do not see this as an issue where Christians should condemn one another, nor an issue about which we would need to break fellowship with people who come to different conclusions.

But, our desire is to recognize the diversity that does exist in our classis already, and allow our female office bearers to represent our congregation at classis.

--Prairie Lane does not think it would be helpful to debate the differing Biblical interpretations nor current CRC policy. By now, we are familiar with the perspectives on both sides, and we are learning to respectfully disagree with one another. The relevant issue is whether or not classis will allow churches, who already do permit women on their church councils, to fully participate in this classis or not.

Overture Approved in council on January 22, 2015

President of Council

Vice-President of Council

Overture to Classis to be held at Immanuel CRC, Orange City, IA, March 7, 2015.

From Calvin Christian Reformed Church, LeMars, IA.

Dear Brothers of the Heartland Classis,

We ask that you would reconsider our current policy as is stated in our document titled, "Rules of Procedure", dated September 27, 2014, under point I. D. in regards to women serving as delegates and being seated at classis to allow for women deacons to be seated as delegates to Classis.

Grounds:

1. Our Synod accepts women delegates to their assemblies.
2. We have three churches in our Classis which have ordained women as office bearers in the church. Our current policy prohibits their participation at Classis.
3. Having so few office bearers from which to delegate to classis makes this delegation difficult for us to fill, especially when one or two of those eligible for election as a delegate is/are absent or unable to attend.

By order of the council,

_____, president

_____, clerk

_____, date

July 6, 2019

To the Delegates of Classis Heartland,

The Council of Prairie Lane Christian Reformed Church of Omaha, Nebraska overtures Classis Heartland to remove the phrase “No woman may be seated as a delegate” from section I. D of the Classis of Heartland Rules of Procedure allowing women to be recognized as delegates to Classis Heartland. This phrase hindered and will continue to hinder Prairie Lane CRC from full representation and participation at classis.

Grounds for this Overture

1. Seating women at a classis meeting does not ordain them as elder or deacon. Each office bearer has already been ordained to their offices by their church councils. The decision to ordain women or not to a respective church office is given to a local congregation via CRC Church Order Art #3 and is recognized as an honorable way to interpret Scripture.
2. Seating women is not only an issue relevant for those churches which already hold women as officer bearers, but will Heartland Classis or the CIC refuse to approve a call of a woman candidate (Art 10) if a congregation within the classis calls a women pastor? Not seating women would at that point create immediate tension with the Belgic Confession Art 31 which states that “Ministers of the Word, they all have the same power and authority, no matter where they may be, since they are all servants of Christ.” It can be argued that this statement from the Belgic Confession applies to all ordained office bearers. We should honor and respect those who have been ordained as elders or deacons because they have been ordained as elders or deacons by Christ’s church under an honorable way of interpreting Scripture.
3. This classical decision seems to contradict Church Order Article 27A, which highlights the authority of the council as being original. The phrase “No woman may be seated as a delegate” violates the privilege of individual councils to select its own delegates for classis.
4. Removing this phrase from the Rules of Procedure does not change any local congregation’s policies on ordaining women according to the Supplement of Art 3; however, by allowing it to remain may restrict other congregations from participating fully.
5. By keeping the phrase “No women may be seated as a delegate,” Classis Heartland stands opposed to Synod 1995’s decision to recognize multiple views. By Heartland Classis forbidding women to ecclesiastical office is essentially stating Scripture forbids this position. This classical position is equivalent to telling local congregations within your classis that ordain women that they stand outside of Scripture. This is something the denomination hasn’t done. However, by allowing women to be seated recognizes that the two positions of Synod 1995 can both be supported by Scripture. Local congregations then retain the privilege of selecting their delegates, all functioning within the boundaries of Church Order. This position does not require congregations to ordain women, nor does it say either position is wrong.

On behalf of the Prairie Lane CRC Council,

President _____

Clerk _____