

## **Agenda for Classis Heartland Saturday, March 9, 2024 - 8:30 AM**

Location: Hull First Christian Reformed Church  
1121 5<sup>th</sup> St  
Hull, IA 51239  
712-439-1626

### **1. Check-in 8:00 – 8:25 AM**

All delegates must check-in with the stated clerk prior to the meeting. Delegates serving for the first time in their respective office need to sign the Covenant of Officebearers prior to the meeting.

### **Morning Session, 8:30 – 11:45 AM**

### **2. Welcome and Constitution of Classis**

- a. Welcome Delegates and Guests, Announcements and Instructions
- b. Classical Credentials and Attendance Report
- c. Chair declares Classis Constituted with the following officers serving
  - 1) Chairman: **Rev. Ben Wiersma**
  - 2) Vice-Chairman: **Rev. Aaron Gonzalez**
  - 3) Stated Clerk: **Rev. Phillip Westra**
  - 4) Treasurer: **Dr. Randy Smit**

### **3. Opening devotions and time of worship led by Rev. Aaron Greydanus**

### **4. Praying Scripture led by Barb Hibma**

### **5. Communications from Churches**

- a. Letter from Ocheyedan Christian Reformed Church re: “The Chosen” **(pp. 3–4)**
- b. Letter from First Christian Reformed Church of Sheldon re: seating female deacon delegates **(p. 5)**
- c. “Communication Regarding the Unfinished Business of Synod 2023” from Calvary Christian Reformed Church of Orange City **(p. 6)**

### **6. Overtures Proposed for Classis to submit to Synod 2024**

- a. Overture from Sibley Christian Reformed Church re: The Banner **(pp. 7–8)**
- b. Overture from First Christian Reformed Church of Sheldon re: Catechism 108 and sexual ethics are salvation issues **(pp. 9–10)**
- c. Overture from First Christian Reformed Church of Sheldon re: Church Order Supplement to Article 5.B **(pp. 11–12)**

### **7. Classical Nominating Committee (CNC)**

- a. Vote for Calvin Theological Seminary board representative **(p. 13)**
- b. Elect delegates to Synod 2024 meeting June 14–20 at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, MI **(ballot forthcoming)**

*Morning Break, 10:00 – 10:15 AM*

8. Classical Interim Committee (CIC)
  - a. CIC Summary from Sept. 20, Nov. 1, and Dec. 13 of 2023 meetings (p. 14)
  - b. Stated Clerk Report (p. 15)
  - c. Additions to the Agenda from Classical Credentials
  
9. Classical Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT)
  - a. CMLT Written report (p. 16)
  - b. Colloquium Doctum for Rev. Jordan Helming (*Church Order* Article 8)
    - 1) Prayer for Guidance and Blessing
    - 2) Examination Interview of Rev. Jordan Helming led by Rev. Nate Kuperus
    - 3) Executive Session for a motion, deliberation, decision, and the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies
    - 4) Announcement of Outcome and Prayer for Rev. Jordan Helming

*Lunch Break, 12:00 – 12:30 PM*

**Afternoon Session, 12:30 – 3:30 PM**

10. Classical Home Missions Committee (CHMC)
  - a. CHMC Written Report (p. 17)
  - b. Presentation by Rev. Brad Meinders, US Central Regional Mission Leader (p. 18)
  - c. Immerse in Lincoln, NE verbal report by Rev. Phillip Westra
  - d. Video about Friendship Community becoming Elevate church
  - e. Coffee Break report by Elaine Lee
  
11. Classical Education Committee (CEC)
  - a. CEC Written Report (pp. 19–20)
  - b. Safe Church Team Written Report from Dr. Tara Boer (p. 21)
  - c. Minn-I-Kota Youth Network Written Report (p. 22)
  
12. Council of Delegates (COD) report by Mr. Loren Veldhuizen (**COD Highlights, pp. 23–26**)
  
13. Calvin University Board of Trustees report by Mr. Adam Ramirez
  
14. Church Visitors and Regional Pastors
  - a. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel and Rev. Sam Keyzer, visitors to the north
  - b. Rev. Brian Dunn and Rev. Nathan Kuperus, visitors to the south
  - c. Rev. Brian Dunn, regional pastor to the north
  - d. Rev. Sam Keyzer, regional pastor to the south
  
15. Church Counselors
  - a. First CRC in Hull – Rev. Brian Dunn
  - b. Northern Lighthouse in Lincoln – Rev. Chad Van Ginkel
  - c. Hawarden CRC – Rev. Nate Kuperus
  - d. First CRC in Orange City – Rev. John Klompien
  
16. Classical Stewardship Committee (CSC) Written Report (p. 27)
  
17. Adjournment: Next meeting is Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2024, at Calvary CRC in Orange City



*Christian Reformed Church*  
833 Fifth Street Ocheyedon, Iowa 51354-9603  
Study Telephone 712-758-3273 Parsonage Telephone 712-758-3700

October 3, 2023

Rev. Philip Westra  
Stated Clerk  
Classis Heartland  
612 W 3rd St  
Sanborn, IA 51248

Dear Fellow Servants of our Lord Jesus Christ,

At our Fall 2023 Classis Meeting, there was a meditation that was given to the delegates of Classis after our dinner break which involved a brief screening of the show *The Chosen*. Not only does this show take liberty with the Word of God and how it portrays our Lord, but its foundation is also rooted in a man who affirms the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormonism), even incorporating LDS teaching into the show, which ought to be of great concern for any Christian viewing such a production. In light of this, it is our conviction that such a show violates what the Lord has instructed his church in his Commandments.

Our Heidelberg Catechism clearly teaches in Lord's Day 35 on the second commandment "that we in no way make any image of God nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in His Word." It goes on to teach that "God forbids making or having such images if one's intention is to worship them *or to serve God through them*" and that "we shouldn't try to be wiser than God. He wants His people instructed by the living preaching of His Word not by idols that cannot even talk."

Then in Lord's Day 36, our Heidelberg Catechism goes on to teach,

"That we neither blaspheme nor misuse the name of God by cursing, perjury, or unnecessary oaths, nor share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders. In a word, it requires that we use the holy name of God only with reverence and awe, so that we may properly confess Him, pray to Him, and praise Him in everything we do and say...No sin is greater, no sin makes God more angry than blaspheming His name. That is why He commanded the death penalty for it."

Considering the commandments of our God and what our Reformed confession affirms, we, the council of Ocheyedon Christian Reformed Church, write to you communicating that we are saddened and lament that such a viewing was allowed without any oversight on the matter, nor any consideration into the theological and spiritual implications of such a showing, especially if we profess to be a confessional church. It appears to us that there seems to be a disconnect between what we confess about our doctrine of man and what we confess about our doctrine of God. How can we be so staunch on the matter of human sexuality, claiming that this is a confessional issue, and yet seemingly gloss over what our confession clearly teaches about our God? If we truly are confessional, then let us consider what our confession teaches regarding

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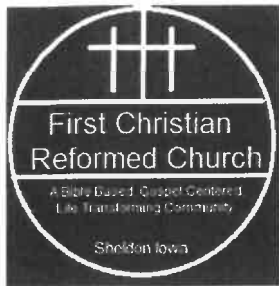
what God has said about his name and the use of vain idols in our worship and teaching; and may such consideration then, lead us, not only to repentance, but also to a deeper understanding of who our God is, who we are, and the great comfort that our God affords us who are loved by and belong to Him.

Soli Deo Gloria,

The Council of Ocheyedan Christian Reformed Church

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lee Khang".

Clerk of Council, Rev. Lee Khang



*First Christian Reformed Church  
901 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Sheldon, IA 51201  
(712)324-2374  
Rev. Brian R. Dunn  
firstcrc@hotmail.com  
Atfirst.org*

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**March 2024— Classis Heartland**

**Classis Credentials Committee,**

The delegates and council of First CRC Sheldon protests Classis Heartland's decision to seat women deacon delegates. We believe this decision is based on at best weak biblical evidence and at worst is contrary to what the scriptures teach about God's designed roles for men and women. This is not a protest against women, nor the use of their gifts, but rather, we believe the scriptural evidence clearly teaches the offices of elder and deacon are for men.

Many will point to texts such as Romans 16:1 as Paul commends "our sister Pheobe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae..." The word for servant can be translated as "deacon" but has more often been translated as servant until recently (NIV 2011 in particular). Additionally, 1 Tim. 3:11, seems to be rightly translated in the ESV and NIV 84 as "their wives..." since Paul will later admonish the deacons to be the husband of one wife, and does not mention women deacons only being the wife of one husband.

While much more could be said about these passages and others, in the end, it is our fear that this decision will lessen our strong hold to the scriptures and lead us down a slippery slope. While that is not always a reason to not do something, one can hardly argue that our culture has not slid down a similar slope. Therefore, in light of these reasons as well as others, we would call Classis Heartland to reconsider this position and stand firm in a beautiful biblical view of masculinity and femininity and so give the world around us a great witness of how God calls us to live into our beautiful design.

We understand the need for an overture to deal with this issue and we will consider that for a future classis meeting.

In Christ,

The Delegates and Council of First CRC Sheldon

## COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF SYNOD 2023

We, the undersigned officers of Calvary CRC Orange City [the churches of Classis Heartland], petition the ***Synod 2024 Program Committee*** to ensure that the ***Agenda for Synod 2024*** contains as its first order of business the recommendations of ***Synod 2023 Committee 8 Majority Report*** as its answer to unaddressed overtures sent to ***Synod 2023***.

### Grounds:

1. Preliminary matters, worship time, and multiple reports have pushed the primary business of Synod and its deliberations to the last day of Synod 'if there is time'.
2. ***Synod 2023*** did not complete the business set before it.
3. The churches and Classes who sent an overture have not yet received a response.
4. The churches and Classes who sent an overture expect that these communications will be a part of the ***Agenda for Synod 2024***.

CC: General Secretary Zach King  
Synodical Services Director Scott De Vries  
Members of the Council of Delegates (COD)

The Council of Sibley Christian Reformed Church of Sibley, IA overtures Classis Heartland to send the following overture to Synod 2024.

## I. Introductory comments

- a. The synodical mandate of *The Banner* is guided by four main tasks:<sup>1</sup>
  - i. Inform readers about what is happening in the CRC as well as the church at large, (task 1)
  - ii. Provide articles that edify and encourage Christian living, (task 2)
  - iii. Stimulate critical thinking about issues related to the Christian faith and the culture of which we are a part in a way that encourages biblical thinking about these issues, in line with our confessional heritage; (task 3) and
  - iv. Offer tools to help readers find fresh awareness to seek, learn, worship, and serve as Reformed Christians in contemporary society. (task 4)
- b. *The Banner* holds general responsibilities to these various groups of people:
  - i. To its subscribers and readers in the Christian Reformed Church
  - ii. To the ecclesiastical assemblies (councils, classes, synod) of the CRC
  - iii. To the official agencies of the CRC
- c. Summary: According to the synodical mandate *The Banner* is a CRC publication intended for CRC members.

## II. Background

- a. A brief review of *The Banner's* adherence to the Synodical mandate
  - i. Task 1: Although *The Banner* does inform the denomination of the happenings of the CRC, it does so in a biased way. In reading June 2023's article "Synod 2023: Incomplete and Broken" one might get the impression that the Holy Spirit was speaking through those who protested verbally the reaffirmation of Synod 2022's decision on human sexuality, as well as speaking through those who left in protest, rather than in the voice of the majority of Synod 2023.<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. Task 3: *The Banner* consistently promotes culture without engaging underlying implications from a biblical or confessional point of view. *The Banner* has promoted movies such as *Barbie* and *Light Year* without speaking biblically about the feministic implications in the former or culture's push of LGBTQ content in children's media in the latter from a biblical and confessional point of view.<sup>3</sup> Rather, *The Banner* has applauded the artistic expressions of these movies. *The Banner* represents a worldly view more often than it does a Reformed view on such topics.
- b. *The Banner's* presence on social media:

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<sup>1</sup> The Synodical Mandate and General Responsibilities for The Banner can be found on The Banner's website: <https://www.thebanner.org/content/synodical-mandate>

<sup>2</sup> The article can be found on The Banner's website: <https://www.thebanner.org/news/2023/06/synod-2023-incomplete-and-broken>.

<sup>3</sup> These articles can be found on *The Banner's* website: <https://www.thebanner.org/mixed-media/2023/08/barbie>  
<https://www.thebanner.org/mixed-media/2022/09/lightyear>

- i. *The Banner's* Facebook page states that it is “The Official Magazine of the Christian Reformed Church.” Although the statement is true, there seems to be an implication that *The Banner* represents the denomination, despite not being part of their synodical mandate. Social media is a public platform for all to see.
- c. Summary: There are issues with how *The Banner* adheres to its current synodical mandate to members of the CRC as outlined by the examples above. With these issues in mind, one wonders how *The Banner* can also represent the denomination on a public platform, despite not having a synodical mandate to do so or to hold *The Banner* accountable.

### III. Overture

Classis Heartland overtures Synod 2024 to take one of the following two directions in regard to *The Banner* publication:

1. Remove *The Banner* from all social media platforms (Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter)).

OR

2. Re-evaluate the synodical mandate of *The Banner* to reflect that the publication represents the Christian Reformed Church beyond the members of the CRC. In reflecting this reality, the synodical mandate should include guidelines for accurately representing the denomination's official positions on public platforms.

#### Grounds:

1. The synodical mandate of *The Banner* implies that the publication is for the express purpose of providing a platform *within the denomination* for the four tasks outlined in the synodical mandate.
2. Sibley Christian Reformed Church's council of Sibley, IA in recent communication with *The Banner* staff, specifically Editor in Chief Chong, was told that it was not the responsibility of *The Banner* to promote the official positions of the CRC.
3. *The Banner* has defended publishing controversial articles that do not represent the denomination.<sup>4</sup>
4. Social Media sites are a public platform where the denomination is being represented by *The Banner*, whether that is the publication's intention or not. As such, people outside of the CRC are able to view articles from *The Banner* with the understanding that the publication accurately represents the views of the denomination at large.
5. If indeed *The Banner* does represent the CRC, the publication should do so in a way that accurately fulfills the synodical mandate to think critically on various issues in ways that are biblical and in line with our confessional heritage.

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<sup>4</sup> The article stating this can be found on *The Banner's* website:  
<https://www.thebanner.org/columns/2022/09/why-we-publish-controversial-articles>



The council of First Christian Reformed Church, Sheldon, Iowa overtures classis Heartland to send the overture below to synod 2024 of the Christian Reformed Church.

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Overture to synod 2024 from classis Heartland  
to declare that Heidelberg Catechism 108 and sexual ethics are salvation issues

Background:

Leading up to and following synods 2022 and 2023, a common argument has been made for maintaining “unity” with, and withholding discipline from, those who disagree with both synods’ affirmations that “unchastity” in Heidelberg Q&A 108 “encompasses adultery, premarital sex, extramarital sex, polyamory, pornography, and homosexual sex, all of which violate the seventh commandment.”<sup>1</sup> That common argument is this: Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 does not address a “salvation issue” and should therefore be treated as some form of *adiaphora* (a matter judged to be not essential to the faith: a “questionable” or “disputable” issue about which Christians can disagree).

The argument that HC 108 does not address a “salvation issue” (and that sexual ethics broadly speaking are not a “salvation issue”) is made numerous times in the agendas for both synods 2022 and 2023 and is used as the foundation of arguments for maintaining “unity” and refusing to discipline those who disagree with position of the CRCNA. For example, Neland Avenue CRC’s response to the decisions of synod 2022 states: “But we do agree on paying attention to the call of the Holy Spirit and the fact that this issue is not a salvation matter that should shatter churches or denominations.”<sup>2</sup> In the same report from the *In Loco* committee for Neland Avenue CRC, an elder from Neland Avenue offered the same line of argumentation for remaining a member and officebearer of that church: “I’m still at Neland because I don’t think this issue, though very important, is a salvation issue.”<sup>3</sup> The same line of argumentation was employed already in 2022 by classis Chicago South, who attacked the Human Sexuality Report, saying that “the report works against its call to repentance and hospitality, erects barriers to open conversation, and continues to support a culture of shame by claiming the church’s teaching on sexuality already has confessional status, by arguing sexual ethics are a matter of salvation . . .”<sup>4</sup>

The CRCNA’s own confessions, however, rule out the possibility of such arguments. In fact, the Heidelberg Catechism itself explicitly states that unchastity is certainly a salvation issue. Q&A 87 says:

Q. Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and unrepentant ways.

A. By no means. Scripture tells us that no unchaste person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous person, no drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like will inherit the kingdom of God.

In order to argue that unchastity and sexual ethics (along with idolatry, adultery, theft, covetousness, drunkenness, slander, robbery, or the like) are not “salvation issues,” we would be required to revise or remove Q&A 87 from the catechism. If we did not revise or remove Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87, the argument that sexual ethics is not a salvation issue would always be confessionally incoherent (and as we believe our confessions to be a faithful summary of Scripture’s teaching, also biblically incoherent).

Overture:

Classis Heartland therefore overtures synod 2024 to

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<sup>1</sup> *Acts of Synod 2022*, 922.

<sup>2</sup> *Agenda for Synod 2023*, 328.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

<sup>4</sup> *Agenda for Synod 2022*, 657. Other examples from the agendas of both synods could be cited. This line of argumentation is also frequently found in the publications and public statements of individuals and organizations advocating for the classification of human sexuality as *adiaphora* and for “space for disagreement” within the CRCNA on the issue of human sexuality.

1. Declare that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 addresses a salvation issue;

Ground:

The Scriptures and confessional standards (particularly Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87) make clear that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A108 does address a salvation issue and that unchastity and sexual ethics are salvation issues.

2. Declare that it is a serious deviation from the teachings of the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church in any way to deny that either Heidelberg Q&A 87 or Q&A 108 address salvation issues or to deny that sexual ethics and unchastity are salvation issues;

Grounds:

a. Officebearers in the CRCNA are denying that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 (and implicitly Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87) and sexual ethics are salvation issues.

b. It is a serious deviation from the teachings of the CRCNA to reclassify that which is a matter of salvation as a disputable or questionable issue or some other classification; such serious deviations from the clear teachings of Scripture and our confessions endanger the eternal salvation of the sheep and the unity of the flock entrusted to the officebearers' care.

3. Declare that any officebearer who denies that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87 or Q&A 108 address a salvation issue and/or denies that unchastity and sexual ethics are a salvation issue is worthy of special discipline in accordance with Church Order Article 83;

Grounds:

a. Church Order Article 83 states, "Special discipline shall be applied to officebearers if they violate the Covenant for Officebearers, are guilty of neglect or abuse of office, or in any way seriously deviate from sound doctrine and godly conduct."

b. Tolerating such denials of these salvation issues puts the CRCNA in danger of transgressing its own boundaries for what a true church is, which includes the proper exercise of church discipline "Belgic Confession, Art. 29).

c. Officebearers in the CRCNA who deny that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87 and Q&A 108 and sexual ethics are salvation issues, instead of faithfully fulfilling the responsibility of their office to confront brothers and sisters regarding their sin, are leaving them in their sin, thus denying them the opportunity for repentance and subsequent reconciliation with God and their neighbors.

4. Instruct all classes, councils, and officebearers in the CRCNA that it is our duty to uphold the clear teaching of the Scriptures and confessions on the nature of Heidelberg Q&A 87 and Q&A 108 and sexual ethics.

Grounds:

a. As Christians, we are called to be people of the truth, with integrity and honor, and failure to promote and defend the faith is to break the Covenant for Officebearers.

b. The church must make every effort to correct such a grievous error, that we might not continue to sin in the eyes of God.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Council of the First CRC of Sheldon, Iowa  
Feb. 2, 2024

The council of First Christian Reformed Church, Sheldon, Iowa overtures classis Heartland to send the overture below to synod 2024 of the Christian Reformed Church.

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Overture to Synod 2024 from Classis Heartland regarding Church Order, Supplement, Article 5, B:

1. Background:

At every level of the Christian Reformed Church's ecclesiastical life (council, classis, and synod), officebearers are required to indicate their confessional covenant with one another around our forms of unity by either signing the Covenant for Officebearers or, in the case of synod, standing together to signify their confessional covenant with their fellow delegates. As signatories, officebearers "promise to be formed and governed by them" and profess that they "heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming [their] preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them." As Church Order, Supplement, Article 5, A, 1 says, "The person signing the Covenant for Officebearers affirms without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God."

It is clear that some councils and classes within the Christian Reformed Church North America are using the confessional-difficulty gravamen as a means of allowing those who cannot "affirm without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God" to either begin their service as officebearers or continue in service as officebearers without any desire or effort to resolve the "difficulty" at the council level or by submitting the matter to classis or synod for examination or judgment. This practice renders the integrity of our covenant as officebearers uncertain, particularly at the classical and synodical levels where, due to the confidential and pastoral nature of the confessional-difficulty gravamen process, delegates cannot know the nature or weight of any confessional difficulties that their fellow officebearers from other councils might have submitted. In short, delegates to classis and synod do not know (and cannot know) if their fellow delegates have "difficulties" with the confessions, what the nature and type of those difficulties might be, and if the delegates to the ecclesiastical body are in confessional covenant or not. This is clearly problematic and unsustainable.

To restore the integrity of the confessional covenant of classes and synod and to maintain the pastoral sensitivity of the confessional-difficulty gravamen process, those who have submitted confessional-difficulty gravamen should not be delegated to those ecclesiastical bodies that do not and cannot know the nature of their difficulties (i.e. classis and synod) until their difficulties are resolved with appropriate pastoral care and confidentiality and until they can affirm "without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church." To further preserve the integrity of the confessional covenant of the council and the mutual accountability of councils, classis, and synod, a reasonable timeline should be observed for providing help to officebearers with difficulties and for classical and synodical examination and judgment of those difficulties.

2. Overture:

Classis Heartland overtures synod to amend Church Order, Supplement, Article 5, B. to read as follows [new material to the supplement is highlighted in gray]:

1. Ministers (whether missionaries, professors, or others not serving congregations as pastors), elders, or deacons shall submit their "difficulties" to their councils for examination and judgment. Should a council decide that it is not able to judge the gravamen submitted to it, it shall submit the matter to classis for examination and judgment. If the classis, after examination, judges that it is unable to decide the matter, it may submit it to synod, in accordance with the principles of Church Order

Article 28-b. These procedures shall follow the following timetable.  
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- a. A council shall have six months, or until the next classis meeting, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the gravamen is forwarded to classis, classis shall have six months, or until agenda items for the next synod must be submitted, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the gravamen appears before synod, synod's decision is binding, and the subscriber will have until the end of that calendar year to either 1) affirm the standards without reservation, 2) file a confessional-revision gravamen, or 3) resign from office.
    - b. If applicable, ministers can be honorably released at the conclusion of this process.
  2. In all instances of confessional-difficulty gravamina, the matter shall not be open for discussion by the whole church since this type of gravamen is a personal request for information and/ or clarification of the confession. Hence this type of gravamen should be dealt with pastorally and personally by the assembly addressed.
  3. A confessional-difficulty gravamen is a personal request for help in resolving a subscriber's doubts about a doctrine contained in the confessions that arise after the officer has, in good faith, subscribed themselves to the Covenant of Officebearers. It is not a request for an assembly to tolerate a subscriber's settled conviction that a doctrine contained in the confessions is wrong. Therefore, in all instances of confessional-difficulty gravamina, no assembly may exempt a subscriber from having to affirm all of the doctrines contained in the standards of the church.
  4. To honor the confidential and pastoral nature of the confessional-difficulty gravamen process and to maintain the integrity of the church's confessional covenant, the local council of an officebearer who has submitted a confessional-difficulty gravamen may not delegate that officebearer to a broader ecclesiastical assembly (classis or synod) until the difficulty has been resolved and the officebearer can affirm without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God. If the officebearer who has submitted a confessional-difficulty gravamen is nominated as a delegate to a broader assembly by an officebearer outside of his or her own council, he or she must decline the nomination.
3. Grounds:
- a. Confessional-difficulty gravamina were never intended as a permanent exception from our confessions. Therefore, we cannot let their illegitimate use as permanent exceptions from the confessions compromise the integrity of our confessional covenant.
  - b. Due to the confidential nature of confessional-difficulty gravamina, delegates to broader assemblies (classis, synod) have no confidence that their fellow delegates hold to the same beliefs and are deliberating from the same biblical and confessional foundation.
  - c. Adding a timetable to the guidelines and regulations will ensure that commitment to God's Word, commitment to the testimony of the creeds and confessions, and mutual trust among all officebearers of the CRCNA will be restored in a reasonable and prompt manner.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Council of the First CRC of Sheldon, Iowa  
Feb. 2, 2024

**BALLOT**  
**Classis Heartland**

**When voting for regional representatives, limit the votes to *two or three* votes per church for those credentialed to attend classis meetings.**

***Calvin Theological Seminary***

(Vote for one of the following nominees.)

\_\_\_\_\_ *Rev. John Lee* has served as senior pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa, since 2009. Between college and seminary, he served with Resonate/World Renew in Nicaragua (2001-2004) at the Nehemiah Center, including working with the Nicaraguan CRC to develop a theological education program for pastors. Rev. Lee has served on the Dordt University Board of Trustees (2010-2020), Classis Iakota Interim Committee (2017-2023), Classis Iakota Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (2009-2016) and on the CRCNA Council of Delegates (2018-2024).

\_\_\_\_\_ *Rev. Brian Ochsner* currently serves as lead pastor of Faith Christian Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa since 2021. Previously, he served as pastor in Brookside CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Sully, Iowa following his graduation from Calvin Seminary in 2006. Rev. Ochsner has served in various capacities including CRCNA Council of Delegates (5yrs), chair of the Congregational Ministries Subcommittee (3 years), Classical Interim Committee Chair (6 years), Classical Finance Team Chair (6 years) as well as currently serving as a Regional Pastor for Classis Central Plains.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Stated Clerk**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Heartland  
Classis**

**Please return this ballot with total votes for each nominee to:**

**Rev. Scott DeVries, Director of Synodical Services**  
**1700 28<sup>th</sup> Street SE**  
**Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407**  
**Fax: 616-224-5895**  
**Email: [scottdevries@crcna.org](mailto:scottdevries@crcna.org)**

## Heartland Classical Interim Committee Meeting Summaries for Classis Meeting on March 9, 2024

September 20, 2023 (following classis meeting)

1. Motion duly made and supported to **accept the transfer of ministerial credentials for Rev. Aaron Greydanus from Raymond CRC (Classis Lake Superior) to First CRC, Hull.** Credentials have been duly signed.

November 1, 2023

2. CIC receives a communication from Ocheyeden CRC questioning the showing of a clip of “The Chosen” at the September 2023 classis meeting. CIC will include this with the packet for the March classis meeting.
3. Heartland CIC accepts the invitation of lakota CIC for a joint meeting in keeping with what we have done in past years. Proposed meeting dates are November 29 or 30.
4. CIC chooses First CRC, Hull as the new location of the March 2, 2024 classis meeting.
  - a. The Pathway CRC and New City CRC (Kansas City) are not able to host the meeting as requested.
  - b. Siouxland Unity (Laotian ministry in Sioux City) was also asked if they could host but is not able to handle that at this point.
5. CIC encourages the vacant churches of classis (First CRC, Orange City; Hawarden CRC) in their ongoing search for a new pastor.
6. CIC affirms the value of the Classis Program Coordinator position. Rev. Muyskens (Program Coordinator) and Rev. Westra (Stated Clerk) will work together to organize the flow of the next classis meeting, keeping in mind the stated goals of the classical renewal report from 2016.

December 13, 2023

7. Motion was made and mutually agreed upon by all members of the CIC: **to move the date of the spring meeting of Classis Heartland from the published date of Saturday, March 2 to Saturday, March 9.**
  - a. Grounds:
    - i. First CRC, Hull has agreed to host since the Kansas City churches were not able to host at this time.
    - ii. First CRC, Hull is already being used for another event on March 2 and offered the date March 9 instead.
    - iii. There is enough time for delegates to be informed of this change without too much disruption.
  - b. The CIC instructs the Rev. Westra (Stated Clerk) to notify the churches of this change as soon as possible.

## **Stated Clerk Report Classis Heartland, Spring of 2024**

Below are tasks I completed as the stated clerk since our last meeting on September 20, 2023.

1. Processed ministerial credentials transfer for Rev. Aaron Greydanus.
2. Wrote and distributed a Meeting Highlights document for our September 2023 meeting.
3. Completed and distributed the Classis Meeting Minutes for our September 2023 meeting.
4. Submitted nomination information for Calvin Theological Seminary board positions.
5. Amended September meeting minutes with the grounds for granting Rev. Steve Boersma retirement as requested by the synodical services office.
6. Participated in CIC meetings, helped determine the next meeting location given churches who declined to host and the appropriate chair given church vacancies.
7. Updated the servants of classis list and send those to our churches.
8. Forwarded several communications to churches—Safe Church Team communication, updated Pulpit Supply list, Denominational Ministry Share Pledge information, invitation for Regional Pastors and Church Visitors, etc.
9. Participated in a discussion about future overtures for Synod 2024 on November 29.
10. Participated in a Joint CIC meeting between Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota in Rock Valley on December 5.
11. Met and talked over the phone with Adam Ramirez, our new Calvin University board rep, as he is exploring opportunities in the area to help churches with Spanish-speaking ministries and may seek a license to exhort in Classis Iakota.
12. Met with Kevin Muyskens on January 17 to begin spring classis meeting planning.
13. Communicated meeting hosting information to First CRC in Hull
14. Emailed churches relevant updates and requests for credentials, reports, overtures, and other communications for our March 9 classis meeting.
15. I missed the live Zoom meeting but watched the recording of the Stated Clerks Connect event held on January 29.
16. Emailed information to our churches about updated Synod 2024 plans and request for nominees before our classis meeting.
17. Engaged in conversations with individuals, pastors, and council members of churches which need to remain confidential.
18. Arranges for synodical deputies to serve us at our March 9 meeting.
19. Compiled reports and communications into a meeting agenda for March 9. Met on February 28 to review the agenda with CIC, chair, and vice-chair. Finalized the final copy of the agenda and emailed it out on February 29.
20. As a synodical deputy I participated in the meetings of Classis Iakota in person on September 19, Classis Wisconsin via Zoom on September 26, Classis Lake Superior in person on October 23, and classis Wisconsin via Zoom on February 17.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Phillip Westra

**REPORT OF THE CLASSICAL MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM  
TO CLASSIS IN SESSION, Saturday, March 9, 2024**

**WRITTEN REPORT**

Esteemed Delegates:

1. Committee met with Commissioned Pastor Keith Hoekstra reviewing his progress towards ordination.
2. Pastor Chad Van Ginkel attended the CMLT/Candidacy Connect Meeting via zoom on September 26.
  - a. CRCNA shared the updated commission pastor handbooks
  - b. CRCNA shared a new "Process Guide for CMLTs."

**ITEMS FOR CLASSICAL INFORMATION**

**LICENSED TO EXHORT IN CLASSIS HEARTLAND**

Mr. Kurt Rietema (9/2025) (913) 219-9498 [krietema@youthfront.com](mailto:krietema@youthfront.com)

Mr. Dan Tracy (9/2025) (712) 395-8640 [dctracy@hotmail.com](mailto:dctracy@hotmail.com)

Mr. Matt Dengler (9/2025) (712) 221-5227 [hatwiththematt@gmail.com](mailto:hatwiththematt@gmail.com)

NOTE: Ministers, either retired or serving in non-parish ministry, within Classis Heartland and Iakota and may be available for pulpit supply. Contact information can be requested from the Classis Clerk.

**Classis Heartland**

[classisheartlandstatedclerk@gmail.com](mailto:classisheartlandstatedclerk@gmail.com)

1. Rev. Sam Keyzer

2. Rev Steve Boersma

**Classis Iakota.**

[iakotaclerk@outlook.com](mailto:iakotaclerk@outlook.com)

**ITEMS FOR CLASSICAL ACTION**

1. That classis approve our report.
2. That classis interview Jordan Helming to become ordained in the CRC.

Respectfully Submitted February 5, 2024  
Rev. Chad Van Ginkel, Chair,  
Classical Ministry Leadership Team



## **Committee Report to Classis**

### **REPORT OF THE –Classical Home Missions Committee TO CLASSIS IN SESSION, - Saturday, March 9, 2024 AT –First Christian Reformed Church Hull, IA**

Report filed: - February 27, 2024

Esteemed Delegates:

The Classical Home Missions Committee convened on two occasions subsequent to the most recent Classis meeting, first meeting together on October 24<sup>th</sup> 2023, at Dordt University, In attendance at that meeting were Kevin Muyskens, Pastor Keith Hoekstra, Allan Kramer, Mark Volkers, and Jeff Heerspink via zoom, with Gary Hibma absent with notice. Second meeting together on February 1, 2024 at Dordt University. In attendance at that meeting were Kevin Muyskens, Pastor Keith Hoekstra, Allan Kramer, Mark Volkers, Gary Hibma, and Jeff Heerspink via zoom. The meetings were opened with prayer, held in accordance with the requirements of church order for classical meetings, and closed with prayer.

#### **ITEMS FROM CLASSICAL HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The committee continues to desire to encourage our congregations to utilize ECD grants to use for the purposes of outreach and ministry within their communities. The committee rejoiced at the approval of an ECD request from Sibley CRC, itemized below.

The committee is also seeking to be intentional and bold in seeking church plant opportunities within our served communities. We are reaching out to schools and wish to hear from congregations about those whom God has equipped with the talents and a passion for the work of church planting.

The committee has authorized video projects to highlight things that are going on in our congregations, we look forward to sharing with the classis results from this project during this classis meeting.

#### **ITEMS FOR CLASSICAL INFORMATION**

The Committee approved the following in regard to the subjects of the meetings outlined previously.

- a. Approved ECD funding for ESL community program for Sibley CRC

#### **ITEMS FOR CLASSICAL ACTION / RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Classical Home Missions Committee would ask that the Classis approve the work of the committee as presented in this report, and we would ask for the prayers of the members of classis in seeking to be intentionally missional as congregations and classis members.

Respectfully Submitted this – February 27, 2024  
*Pastor Keith Hoekstra*  
Pastor Keith Hoekstra

# Resonate Global Mission

## US Central Region



Resonate Global Mission is the mission agency of the Christian Reformed Church. Resonate can help deepen your passion for mission, strengthen your capacity to follow God on mission, and amplify the impact you and your church have in your neighborhood and around the world. Here are ways we do that:



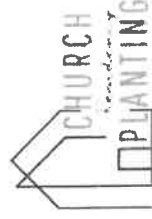
### Congregational Gospel Witness

1 This initiative is about mobilizing churches to engage their local neighborhood with the gospel. One way we do this is through Setting the Table, which is when our team spends time in your ministry context to understand how we can partner with you to reach your neighborhood.



### Intercultural Gospel Witness

2 This initiative is about churches being equipped and empowered to witness to Christ interculturally. One way we do this is through a Witness Vision Trip, where your church can learn from believers about evangelism in a context that is different from your own.



### Church Planting

3 This initiative is about forming new Christian communities where no such community currently exists. One way we do this is through a Church Planting Residence, where individuals are immersed into the local church to experience the life and work of a church planter.

Here is your regional Resonate team. Please reach out if you have any questions or if you would like to know how we can partner together missionally for the sake of the gospel.



Marianne Giebel  
Admin. Assistant  
mgiebel@crcna.org



Jeff Heerspink  
Local Mission Leader  
jheerspink@crcna.org



Dave Katsma  
Local Mission Leader  
dkatsma@crcna.org



Mark Lachonce  
Local Mission Leader  
mlachonce@crcna.org



Elaine Lee  
Local Mission Leader  
elainelee@crcna.org



Brad Meinders  
Regional Mission Leader  
bmeinders@crcna.org



Mike Moore  
Local Mission Leader  
mmoore@crcna.org



McLowly Sore  
Local Mission Leader  
msore@crcna.org

**REPORT OF THE –CLASSICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE- TO  
CLASSIS IN SESSION, - March 9, 2024  
AT – First CRC, Hull, IA**

**REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE CEC**

**Esteemed Delegates:**

The Classical Education Committee met on January 17, 2024. Members present were Rev. Aaron Gonzalez, Rev. Jesse Walhof, Rev. Ben Wiersma. Aaron opened with devotions and prayer. Jesse closed with prayer at the end of the meeting.

**Topics discussed at the meetings included:**

1. Providing Continuing Education
2. Ministry Support on behalf of Classis Heartland
  - a. Classis Prayer Coordinator (Ms. Barb Hibma)
  - b. Minn-I-Kota Youth Network (MIK) (Ms. Lee DeGroot)
  - c. Safe-Church Team Heartland and Iakota (Dr. Tara Boer)
3. Financial Reports

**Details of items discussed:**

1. Providing Continuing Education
  - a. **Timothy Leadership Training** – The CEC has been in contact with Rev. Sam Keyzer, Del Walinga (TLT facilitators in Heartland) to help promote and support upcoming TLT events.
    - i. The next TLT Summit is March 22-23 at Northern Lighthouse in Lincoln, NE.
    - ii. The CEC approved a \$500 grant to TLT for the Summit.
  - b. **Dordt and Classis Heartland Opportunities** – The CEC will remain in contact with Rev. Todd Zuidema at Dordt University in order to partner with them in educational events.
  - c. **Abide Project** – Pending dates for the 2024 Abide Project Convention are July 30-31 to be hosted by First CRC, Sioux Center in partnership with Dordt University.
  - d. The CEC is in planning an event for training in the Logos Bible Study Tools software.
  - e. The CEC is promoting the next Dunamis Project event on Listening Evangelism on March 21-24.
2. Ministry Support on behalf of Classis Heartland
  - a. **Classis Prayer Coordinator (Ms. Barb Hibma)**
    - i. The CEC is staying in contact with Barb to discuss ways to incorporate prayer in the work and ministries of the Classis.
  - b. **Minn-I-Kota Youth Network (Ms. Lee DeGroot)**
    - i. Please refer to the MIK-Youth report in the agenda.
  - c. **Safe Church (Dr. Tara Boer)**
    - i. The CEC has continued to offer pastoral support to Ocheydan CRC.
3. Other
  - a. A motion was approved to request a name change of the Classical Education Committee to Classical Discipleship Committee. Grounds:
    - i. The CEC covers a broader scope of ministry than the original mandate for the CEC that moves beyond just continuing education for church leadership. Specifically overseeing Safe Church and the Prayer Coordinator.
    - ii. Education is a fundamental part of discipleship, so the committee will continue with its original mandate to provide or promote continuing educational opportunities for church leaders and lay people.
    - iii. The CEC supports through personal relationships, pastoral guidance, and spiritual growth several ministries within the Classis as well as combined with

other Classes (Safe Church, Special Church Visitors in Safe Church Matters, MIK-Youth, Prayer Coordinator, and TLT).

4. Financial Reports

- a. A motion was passed to request an increase in funding from Classis of \$.50 up from \$.05 per member in September 2024. Grounds:
  - i. The current funds allocated to the CEC is approximately \$140 per year.
  - ii. The CEC has offered financial help for attendance at the Abide Project Convention to pastors and church leaders.
  - iii. The CEC has covered the shortfall in MIK-Youth funding from the Classis.
  - iv. The CEC has provided grants for the TLT Summit.
  - v. The CEC has offered scholarships for church leaders and lay people wanting to attend the Dunamis Project events.
  - vi. The CEC would like to continue supporting these events and others but will require more funding to do so.
- b. Current balances will be reported by the Classis Treasurer.

**ITEMS FOR CLASSICAL INFORMATION**

The Classical Education Committee has been working to fulfill its calling to provide educational opportunities for church leaders in Classis Heartland. The CEC has been working to support the Timothy Leadership Training team as well as Dordt University as it provides learning opportunities. The CEC has been offering ministry support to the Classis Prayer Coordinator, Minn-I-Kota Youth Network, and the Safe Church Team. The CEC has been working to be good stewards of the funds that have been allocated to the CEC as well as the Classis Prayer Coordinator.

**ITEMS FOR CLASSICAL ACTION / RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1: That Classis approve the motion to change the name of the Classical Education Committee to the Classical Discipleship Committee to better reflect the scope of work the committee does for the Classis. The rest of the grounds are stated within the report.**

**Recommendation 2: That Classis approve the work and report of the Classis Education Committee.**

Members of the CEC: Rev. Aaron Gonzalez, Rev. Jesse Walhof, Rev. Ben Wiersma

## Classis Heartland & Iakota Safe Church Report Spring 2024

**Prepared by:** Tara Boer, Iakota & Heartland Safe Church Coordinator  
**Data Prepared:** 02/12/24

**Iakota & Heartland Classical Safe Church Team Members:** Pastor Henry Lengkeek (Trinity CRC-Iakota), Heidi Van Roekel (Bethel CRC-Iakota), Pastor Jesse Walhof (Living Water CRC-Heartland), Kristi Habben (Sibley CRC-Heartland) Tara Boer (Hope CRC, Heartland)

### **Classical Safe Church Team Tasks:**

- The Safe Church Team serves in a consultative role for churches in classis who are developing (or reviewing/revising) congregational safe church policies.
- The Safe Church Team serves as a resource for churches dealing with allegations of abuse.
- The Safe Church Team serves as a clearing house of best practices and periodic trainings for Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota with regard to abuse awareness and prevention.

### **Team Meeting:**

A Safe Church Team meeting was held on 01/18/24 via zoom (due to weather) to discuss agenda items about committee members' services to churches for policy development, issues pertaining to abuse and church order, and discussion about how to strengthen relationships with safe church team members within each congregation. The safe church team receives regular support via email and zoom from Amanda Benckhuysen in Grand Rapids for ongoing consultation.

### **Safe Church Team Goals:**

The team continues to ask all churches to develop a safe church policy and aim to advance the scope of their work through adding an age-appropriate abuse prevention curriculum in the Sunday school classrooms. Initiating background checks for volunteers is best practice for your ministry. If your church has not identified a lead safe church team member, please do so and provide us with his/her contact information. Members of safe church teams within the classes are welcome and encouraged to join the Iakota and Heartland Safe Church Team private facebook group for additional support and resourcing.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of our committee if you would like to talk about any safe church needs your church may have. You may communicate with any committee member or contact Tara directly at 712-898-6468 (cell) or [tara.boer@dordt.edu](mailto:tara.boer@dordt.edu)

### **Team Members**

Pastor Henry Lengkeek: [henry@trinitycrc.com](mailto:henry@trinitycrc.com)  
Heidi Van Roekel: [mhvanroekel@hotmail.com](mailto:mhvanroekel@hotmail.com)  
Pastor Jesse Walhof: [jsswalhof@gmail.com](mailto:jsswalhof@gmail.com)  
Kristi Habben: [khabben@premieronline.net](mailto:khabben@premieronline.net)



minn-I-KOTA  
YOUTH NETWORK

Alethea "Lee" & Pastor Doug De Groot  
307 South Union Street  
Rock Rapids, IA 51246  
712-470-4244

Thank You Father! For the past 5 months (since 10/3) I have been recovering from a surgery and an intense stay in SxFalls Avera Hospital in the Acute Care Unit. I have been told repeatedly... "Slow and steady wins the race". If that is the case, I will win! Thank you for all the support and prayers. Recuperation and physical therapy continues! ~Lee DG

### Minn-I-Kota Youth Board:

**\*Minnkota Classis:** Representative-Pastor Greg Timmer-9/2022, Karmen Vis-Co Secretary-9/2017, Sarah Van Dyken-Co Secretary-5/2019

**\*Iakota Classis:** Representative-Pastor Henry Lengkeek-9/2018, Dan Elgersma-President-1/2019, Shelli Kollis-1/2020

**\*Heartland Classis:** Representative-Pastor Ben Wiersma-9/2021, Kody Tesch-Treasurer-11/2019, Beth Heerspink-4/2021-1/2024 Retired from the board in Jan. which leaves the 3<sup>rd</sup> position in Heartland vacant at this time.

In January Rev Ron deVries, the Youth and Emerging Adult Ministry Consultant with the CRCNA, recommended Joan Brady from Classis Huron, SW Ontario, Canada contact me about my position with Minnikota Youth Network in the three classis Minnkota, Iakota, and Heartland. Joan is a Mission Catalyst, a position jointly supported by Resonate and Classis Huron. She is a resource to this Classis and she offers support where it is needed. One of the goals she has for the very near future is to bridge a gap in support for the Youth Ministry in Classis Huron. Her main objective is to introduce a supported youth position within this Classis, similar to mine with Minnikota Youth Network. We are continuing to communicate about this position for Classis Huron.

In January I started meeting with the Minnikota Youth 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Jr High Retreat Dordt University Student Leaders. The THEME for this year's retreat is **-"Created to BE---Believe, Belong, Become, and Be a Builder."** **"Believe in Jesus, Belong to The Family, Become a Follower, and Be a Builder of the Kingdom of God"**. There will be four supporting verses TBD along with emphasis on the HC Q&A #1. "...That I Belong..." I have DU student leaders from all three supporting Classis (first time having all three in the same year). All four of my DU Lead-Leaders attended the MIK Youth Jr High Retreat as Jr Highers. The dates of the retreat are Friday evening April 19-Sunday noon April 21 at Inspiration Hills. Registration forms/flyers are available.

Thank you Iakota Classis for the generous gift to the MIK Youth Network Ministry. Thank you to all three of the supporting Classis: Minnkota, Iakota, and Heartland for your continued prayers and Classical Shares. The ministry continues because of your support!

Please, take time to check out the ministry on our website [minnikotayouthnetwork.com](http://minnikotayouthnetwork.com) or follow us on Facebook at minnikota youth.

"Be still and know that I am God" ~Lee & Pastor Doug De Groot



# COD Highlights

A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES MEETING

To: **CRC Councils and Stated Clerks of Classes**  
From: Zachary J. King, General Secretary of the CRCNA  
Date: February 28, 2024

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## **Highlights from meeting of Feb. 14–16, 2024**

The Council of Delegates (COD) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met via video conference on February 14–16, 2024. During this meeting, the COD spent time in prayer, received reports, held discussions, and made decisions as follows:

- Spent time in board development discussing spiritual practices in board governance. This session was led by Sean Baker and Jon Hoekema, and focused on seeking God's will, remaining in Christ, and loving one another.
- Approved several items related to future synods including adopting a new reporting schedule for agencies and institutions, designating Redeemer University (Ancaster, Ont.) as the location for Synod 2025 and Calvin University (Grand Rapids, Mich.) as the location for Synod 2026, and selecting a new convening church for 2025.
- Approved several items related to Synod 2024 including naming ethnic advisors and young adult representatives, approving a theme of "God With Us", approving a virtual convening session and initial online advisory committee meetings to create greater efficiency for delegates time together, passing along recommendations for the officers regarding how to manage plenary times, and making recommendations for classes about how to reduce and streamline the workload of synod.
- Heard about and endorsed *Gather* - a new initiative to bring together five classes at a time to help address membership decline in our churches in response to Synod 2023. Events will be spread out across North America over the next 18 months. More information is available at [crcna.org/Gather](http://crcna.org/Gather).
- Received a report from the Global Vision Team and gave provisional affirmation for a framework that would strengthen connections between the CRCNA and international churches (such as those that have affiliated with Classis California South). Classes will periodically share challenges and opportunities related to this effort with the Office of General Secretary. Also gave provisional affirmation to develop a global vision implementation team that would converse with CRCNA-affiliated churches outside North America and interested international denominational partners to develop a CRC Global Ecclesiastical body.
- Heard from Zachary King, general secretary, about his recent work including the distribution of [pastoral statement and recommended resources](#) for ministry with LGBTQ+ people, work with the Global Vision Team, work on the One Family Conversation, and materials in process to support bivocational pastors.

- Heard from Shirley DeVries, chief administrative officer.
- Received reports from the Team on Alliance of Reformed Church Matters, the Church Order Review Taskforce, the Virtual Church Team, the Dignity Team, the Bible Translations Committee, Calvin University.
- Appointed members to various roles and committees including the Assisted Suicide Taskforce, the Judicial Code Committee, synodical deputies and alternate, and interim appointments to the COD.
- Were introduced to a new form that is being used to collect names and information of CRC members who may be interested in serving on a synodical taskforce or study committee. COD members are asked to share the form with people in their region.
- Accepted the condensed financial report from CRCNA ministries and forwarded it to Synod 2024, and endorsed a plan for the distribution of ministry shares in the preparation of budgets for 2024-2025
- Formed a taskforce to create updated pastor compensation guidelines for churches. This committee will report to the COD in October 2024 and complete their work by June 2025.
- Adopted updates to several financial policies including a financial reserve policy, a cash handling policy, a fundraising ethical guidelines policy, and investment policy.
- Adopted changes to COD governance including tweaks to committee mandates, a process for handling post-meeting feedback, and changes to the COD Code of Conduct to bring it into alignment with the one approved by Synod 2023.
- Approved a board development session for the May COD meeting that will focus on evangelism.
- Spent time in executive session.

**For more information, please contact:**

Rev. Zachary King, Ph. D.

[general-secretary@crcna.org](mailto:general-secretary@crcna.org)

**Upcoming meeting dates:**

- May 1-3, 2024, in Grand Rapids, Mich.
- October 16-18, 2024, in Grand Rapids, Mich.





# Ministry Board Meeting Highlights

To: **CRCNA Ministry Board Members and Staff**  
From: Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, Director of Communications & Marketing  
Date: February 20, 2024

## Ministry Board Meetings – U.S. and Canada

In addition to the meeting of the COD, the boards of several CRC corporate entities met separately on February 15 and reported the following:

### CRCNA Canada Board

- Welcomed and approved new members.
- Received the Joint Management Convenor's Semi-Annual Report
- Received report from the transitional executive director, including updates on Resonate, Thrive, Canadian justice ministries, and Canadian Indigenous ministries
- Discussed the recent Stories and Strategies event, the establishment of a Canadian governance committee, and conversations with Towards a CRC Canada group.

### ReFrame Ministries Canada Board

- Did not meet

### CRCNA U.S. Board

- Heard a report from Dan DeKam, the U.S. director of ministry operations, on his first 6 months in the position.
- Heard an update on the Grand Rapids building, noting that there is an interested buyer and progress is being made in securing a new location.
- Received the Joint Management Convenor's Semi-Annual Report
- Received reports from Resonate Global Mission and Thrive
- Approved audits for the CRCNA Funds, Employee Savings Plan, CRC Loan Fund, Special Assistance Fund, and the Consolidated Financial Statements.
- Appointed BDO as auditor for the fiscal year.
- Discussed a policy to allow one to three additional members to the executive committee.

### ReFrame Ministries U.S. Board

- Approved a motion to have the Director of ReFrame Ministries report to the U.S. Director of Ministry Operations.

- Received the joint management approval documents and semi-annual reports
- Received the six-month financial statements, and consolidated audit reports.
- Appointed BDO as auditor for the fiscal year.

**For more information, please contact:**

Rev. Al Postma (CRCNA Canada and ReFrame Canada)  
[apostma@crcna.org](mailto:apostma@crcna.org)

DanDan DeKam (CRCNA U.S.)  
[ddekam@crcna.org](mailto:ddekam@crcna.org)

Rev.Kurt Selles (ReFrame U.S.)  
[ksekselles@crcna.org](mailto:ksekselles@crcna.org)

Classis Heartland Stewardship Committee Minutes  
Monday, January 29, 2024  
11:00AM, The Grille at Dordt University

1. Opening Prayer by Pastor Keith Hoekstra
2. Roll Call (clerk)
  - a. Present: Pastor Nate Kuperus (chair), Pastor Keith Hoekstra, Ms. Leandra Hulstein (lay member), Mr. Eric Kroese (lay member), Dr. Randy Smit (Classical treasurer), and Pastor John Klompien (clergy alternate)
  - b. Absent: None.
3. Review Previous Minutes
4. Old Business
  - a. WE reviewed Classical Expense Fund & noted the winter Classis meeting will be at 1<sup>st</sup> CRC of Hull.
  - b. Our treasurer updated us on churches who have not paid full ministry shares:
    - i. Our clerk intends to notify churches which have not met at least a 90% threshold in case they have forgotten to send their portion or are unaware of a shortfall. It is thought that giving above 90% may simply reflect a decline in individual church member numbers since last reports.
    - ii. Our Home Missions representative noted that he believes three of the churches falling short are still receiving Home Missions Support. (He will confirm this number)
    - iii. On the flipside, we noted that Northern Lighthouse has made a meaningful effort to participate.
    - iv. General agreement was reached that we will continue to encourage churches who are not giving to give something as a sign of solidarity with the Classis and as an opportunity to “grow into it”.
    - v. The Clerk is thanked for adopting this approach with us.
5. Ministry Share analysis and review of Statement of Activity (Winter)
  - a. It was noted that ministry shares must rise even if budget is unchanged. Why? Our Classis is seeing a membership decline (about 200 fewer classis members than the last census) and so these fewer members must give more money. We discussed the limit we can expect of each member.
  - b. **Motion made and supported:** That our CHMC member ask CHMC to discern uses for the large amount of money banked in the “Ministry Opportunities” line item of our balance sheet. Our intent is to see what portion of this is needed and what might be re-allocated. Is it possible that an amount could be tapped to offset rising ‘per member ministry share’ costs? Motion Passed. Pastor Hoekstra will communicate our request to CHMC.
  - c. Conversation surrounded the “Classical Expense” account which has about \$25,000. It was allocated a chunk of money paid back by a seminarian. This 2023 allocation reflected classis planning for travel and lodging expenses at the March 2024 Classis meeting supposed to be held at a South Classis church. Since this didn’t materialize, might this money be utilized to offset rising ‘per member ministry share’? Revisit at our August meeting.
6. Classical Treasurer Report was reviewed and approved.
7. New Business:
  - a. The “Chaplain – Lincoln” portion of the Classis budget (\$10,000) was discussed. Confirmed that this amount has been designated to The Northern Lighthouse church for the support of Pastor Jon Keyzer’s chaplaincy ministry at the Nebraska prison system (see July 17,2023 CHMC committee minutes.)
  - b. In light of per member Ministry Share increases to maintain present Classis ministry, we wondered about the significant “ask” of Dordt University (\$181,000). It is noted that despite this high number, our classis is exempt from contributing to Calvin University ministry shares. Further, Calvin’s “ask” of churches in its proximity is equal to or more than Dordt’s request of its immediate neighbor classis. We will discuss again in August, 2024, D.V.
8. Next Meeting is planned for August 28, 2024 at 12:30PM at Dordt Grille.
9. Closing Prayer by Mr. Randy Smit
10. Meeting adjourned