

**Supplement to the Agenda for Classis Heartland
Saturday, March 7, 2026 - 8:30 AM**

The following items were received by the clerk after the agenda was sent out and need to be included in our deliberations as Classis Heartland.

1. Report from ad hoc committee on elder and deacon training (p. 2)
2. CIC Summary Report (pp. 3-4)
3. COD Highlights (pp. 5-6)
4. CRCNA Ministry Board Meeting Highlights (pp. 7-8)
5. Report from Dordt University (pp. 9-10)
6. Sermon Evaluation – License to Exhort (pp. 11-12)

Committee on the Roles of Elders and Deacons—Classis Heartland Spring Summary

Mandate: To review the nature, function and authority of the offices of Elder and Deacon. Including their unique roles and distinctives, with the goal of providing Elder and Deacon training and training materials. (see agenda for Classis Heartland, spring 2025)

As we began our work, our committee met shortly after Classis to begin sorting out our work. We divided the work into five sections. Rev. Khang would look at the scriptures, Mr. Tracy would investigate ways other churches/traditions train their officers, Mr. Timmermans would research our Creeds and Confessions. Rev. Terpstra would investigate theological documents (systematics etc.) and Rev. Dunn would check previous Synod decisions, in particular the report to Synod 2015. Our goal with this research was to establish some baselines and definitions as well as see what is out there.

After reading and researching for a couple of months between our meetings, we brought our findings together. As we looked for definitions, scripture is clearer on the role of elder than deacon though there is much to glean from a broader theology of service. Our Confessions and church order have much to say but lack specificity for what the offices are called to do. Other traditions do some training for what officers are meant to do, but it seems to vary wildly from tradition to tradition and from church to church even. And in our opinion, the report to Synod 2015 seems to work hard to elevate the role of deacon often creating an unhelpful parity between the offices blurring the lines in what they do. We feel more research needs to be done and our hope is to compile what we have found so far.

Questions for Classis to consider:

- How do officebearers engage in their distinct roles in your church?
- Do we need to clarify and show greater distinction in the offices?
- What denominational/other resources have you used (if any) to train elders and deacons?

Summary Report of Classical Interim Committee

Meeting dates: November 19, December 16, January 13, February 18

Membership: Rev. Brian Hofman (Chair), Rev. Aaron Greydanus (Vice-chair) Rev. Nathan Kuperus (Clerk), Mr. Pete Van Velzen (Stated Clerk), Rev. Stephen Terpstra (alternate)

1. CIC reviewed the vacant church's situations and their need for classical stated supply.
 - a. Hospers CRC has Rev. Jordan Helming covering Lord's Supper services
 - b. Living Water, Orange City has Rev. Cal Hoogendoorn serving as Transitional Minister.
2. CIC received correspondence from Mr. Carson Moon, a Calvin Sem student from the Kansas City area. CIC will pass his information to the CMLT for further conversations.
3. CIC has followed up on Rev. Luke Wynja's process of receiving a call in the CRC.
 - a. A communication has been sent by Rev. Hofman (Chair) notifying the Candidacy committee.
 - b. CIC notes that Classis Heartland meeting in September 2025 gave the CIC the authority to give final approval of Rev. Wynja upon the response from the candidacy committee.
4. CIC has followed up regarding Mr. Matt Dengler's education and route to ministry.
 - a. CIC regrets that the Banner staff misinterpreted the minutes of our previous classis meeting and mistakenly published that Mr. Dengler was granted ordination as Commissioned Pastor. Mr. Van Velzen (stated clerk) has asked the Banner to publish a correction.
 - b. Rev. Greydanus will serve as Mr. Dengler's vocational mentor through his education program.
 - c. Rev. Lee Khang will serve as Mr. Dengler's spiritual mentor
5. CIC determines that it would be wise to have a summary of each classis meeting sent to the churches by the stated clerk.
6. CIC has received a request for classis to consider granting Mr. William Aranas a license to exhort.
 - a. CIC notes that the church order gives much leeway on license to exhort examinations
 - b. CIC makes these arrangements for the examinations.
 - i. Text: Titus 3:1-8
 - ii. Sermon evaluators will be Rev. Terpstra and another person arranged by Rev. Hofman.
 - iii. Life/Practice/Calling/Theology Examiner will be Rev. Brian Dunn.
7. CIC has received a request for classis to consider granting Mr. Harold Willemstyn a license to exhort.
 - a. CIC makes these arrangements for the examinations:
 - i. Text: Acts 17:16-34
 - ii. Sermon evaluators will be Rev. Kuperus and Rev. Steve Boersma
 - iii. Life/Practice/Calling/Theology Examiner will be Rev. Brian Dunn.
8. CIC arranges for the examination for Scott MacDougall to be ordained as a commissioned pastor.
 - a. Text: Colossians 2:8-15 or another passage if there is suitable one already on their preaching schedule.

- b. Sermon evaluator is yet to be determined.
- c. Date is yet to be determined.
- d. Practical/Theological Examiner will be Rev. Khang.
- e. CIC notes that since this is not a bridge ordination, it is not necessary to invite synodical deputies.
- f. CIC determines that a stipend of \$400 will be given to defray some of the cost of food, fuel and lodging for the pastor who travels to Kansas City for the
- g. **CIC notes the need for an additional voting member on the Interim Committee and so recommends:**
 - i. **that Classis amend the Rules of Procedure to include one more voting member as follows:**

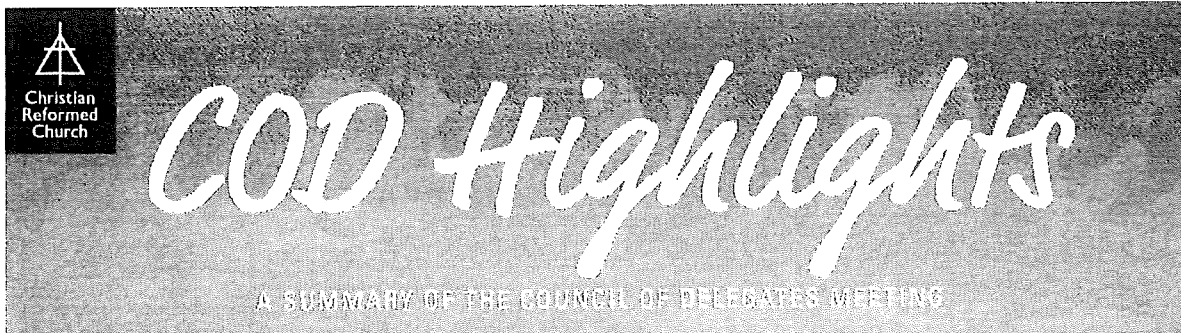
*Membership: The Classical Interim Committee has ~~three~~ **four** members elected to three year terms, staggered so **at least** one is elected each year. The Stated Clerk is a ~~fourth~~ **fifth** non-voting, ex officio member. There is one alternate*

1. Grounds:

- a. the CIC has only 2 voting members according to proper rules, plus the chairperson and the stated clerk who do not vote.
- b. An additional member will allow better deliberation on important matters.
- c. The CIC already has invited Rev. Terpstra (alternate) to attend meetings for the purpose of deliberating and staying up to speed with what is going on with CIC.

ii. that classis appoint Rev. Terpstra to this new position and instruct CNC to include a new alternate on the ballot of the Fall 2026 meeting.

- 1. Ground: Rev. Terpstra is already meeting with the CIC regularly so there will be very little change functionally.
- 9. CIC meets with Rev. Muyskens (Classis Program Coordinator), Rev. Khang (vice chair of March meeting) and Rev. Hofman (chair of March meeting) to have a clear picture of the upcoming classis meeting.
- 10. CIC processes a letter received from Pathway Community Church in Olathe, Kansas stating that they have disbanded.
- 11. CIC asks classis to approve the work of the Interim Committee.



To: **CRC Council of Delegates Members and Staff**
From: Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, Director of Communications & Marketing
Date: February 9, 2026

Highlights from meeting of February 4–6, 2026

The Council of Delegates (COD) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met via video conference on February 4-6, 2026. During this meeting, the COD spent time in prayer, received reports, held discussions, and made decisions as follows:

- Heard from Zachary King, general secretary, about his recent work. He noted a biblical model for church renewal rooted in repentance, prayer, and dependence on the Spirit. He also reported on two major initiatives: a church renewal pathway, and a 10-year plan for church planting. Both will be reported to Synod 2026.
- Heard from Roberta Vriesema, director of partnership administration, about her recent onboarding to the position. She shared a metaphor of a community garden to explain how the CRCNA ministries work together, and reviews past and projected data about ministry shares.
- Received a presentation on the strategy for church renewal that Thrive is using and that will go to Synod 2026 for endorsement. This strategy encourages churches to start with participating in the *Thriving Essentials* course, focused on mission, discipleship, discernment and leadership. From there, unique next steps will be identified.
- Heard an update on the new Diaspora and Ethnic Ministry advisory committee, and agreed that reports from CRCNA's diverse ethnic groups will report to synod via this committee.
- Received a review report on the Dignity Team and recommended that synod endorse its work for another three years.
- Heard updates from Thrive, Resonate Global Mission, ReFrame Ministries and *The Banner*.
- Heard from Calvin University president Greg Elzinga, noting current joys and challenges.
- Adopted several changes to the *COD Governance Handbook* including a name change to *CRC Governance Handbook*. These changes reflect structural changes of recent years.
- Recommended to synod several changes to the *Rules for Synodical Procedure* including the discontinuation of having a parliamentarian at synod, changing the deadline for distribution of study committee reports, and getting rid of the distinction between a study committee and a taskforce.
- Recommended that synod approve a change in meeting schedule for future synods from a Thursday to Saturday schedule, to a Saturday to Saturday one.
- Recommended to synod several updates to the *Church Order Supplement*.
- Requested that the Office of General Secretary work on a termination policy for COD members.

- Endorsed an approach to ministry shares allocations that will be used to bring specific numbers back to the May COD meeting and synod.
- Delegated the U.S. ministry board to coordinate with and ensure financial integrity of the CRC Loan Fund. This will allow the Loan Fund to report to synod.
- Declared that some synodical tasks are now complete such as providing resources to help churches and classes navigate the process of limited suspension, providing resources to commemorate the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed.
- Appointed an interim COD member to be ratified by synod. Appointed people to the Dignity Team. Ratified synodical deputy and alternate synodical deputy appointments. Appointed young adult representatives to synod 2026.
- Heard that the annual denominational survey is now open, and encouraged this year's cohort of churches to promote it.
- Recommended to synod that Cascade Fellowship CRC be the convening church for Synod 2027.
- Approved a schedule for future COD meetings.

For more information, please contact:

Rev. Zachary King, Ph. D.

general-secretary@crcna.org

Upcoming meeting dates:

- May 6-8, 2026, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- October 14-16, 2026, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- February 3-5, 2027, virtual
- May 5-7, 2027, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- October 13-15, 2027, Grand Rapids, Mich.



Ministry Board Meeting Highlights

To: **CRCNA Ministry Board Members and Staff**

From: Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, Director of Communications & Marketing

Date: February 9, 2026

Ministry Board Meetings – U.S. and Canada

In addition to the meeting of the COD, the boards of other CRC corporate entities met separately on February 5 and reported the following:

CRCNA Canada Board

- Heard an update from Al Postma, executive director, and received reports from Thrive, Resonate Global Mission, Canadian justice ministries, advancement and communications.
- Discussed the history and structure of the Canadian justice ministries (Indigenous ministry, Intercultural ministry, Citizen for Public Dialogue). Asked the Executive Committee to create an ad hoc committee (3-4 persons) to review and suggest an updated and clarified reporting structure for these ministries.
- Approved a mandate for the Finance Committee.
- Received reports from the Governance Committee, Finance Committee and the Joint Ministry Committee Convenor for information.
- Heard a report from the Chief Administrative Officer on finance, human resources and IT.
- Heard an update on the Canadian National Gathering (see crcna.org/Canada for more information)

ReFrame Ministries Canada Board

- Received a report from ReFrame director Kurt Selles including advancement and program updates
- Received the financial statements through December 31, 2025 for information

CRCNA U.S. Board

- Heard a report from Dan DeKam, director of US ministry operations, noting cost savings related to maintenance in the new building.
- Received a report from the Joint Ministry Committee convener.
- Received updates on ministry shares and advancement activities.
- Heard that a recent audit is complete and showed no issues. Appointed BDO to be the auditor for the next fiscal year.

- Received reports from Thrive and Resonate Global Mission.
- Elected new officers: Chuck Adams (president), Eric Van Dyken (vice president), Lloyd Hemstreet (treasurer), and Christian Sebastia (secretary)

ReFrame Ministries U.S. Board

- Received a report from ReFrame director Kurt Selles including advancement and program updates
- Received the five-month financial statements through November 30, 2025 for information.
- Received the consolidated audit report and financial statements from last fiscal year
- Appointed BDO as the auditor for this fiscal year

For more information, please contact:

Rev. Al Postma (CRCNA Canada and ReFrame Canada)
apostma@crcna.org

Dan DeKam (CRCNA U.S.)
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Rev. Kurt Selles (ReFrame U.S.)
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Greetings to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church.

Dordt University remains deeply grateful for its longstanding relationship with the CRCNA and for the shared Reformed commitment that continues to shape our mission and life together. While Dordt is not the official institution of higher education of the denomination, we remain steadfast in serving the church through Christ-centered higher education rooted in Scripture and committed to the Reformed confessions.

During the 2025-26 academic year, we have seen evidence of God's faithfulness as Dordt continues to grow while remaining anchored in its mission: to equip students for Christ-centered renewal in all areas of contemporary life.

Dordt remains committed to grounding every aspect of campus life in fidelity to Scripture. This year, the university undertook a refresh of its [Task and Framework documents](#), reaffirming Dordt's biblical foundations while clarifying how our mission is lived out in a changing cultural context. This work reflects a continued commitment to theological clarity, institutional integrity, and faithful Christian witness.

Spiritual formation remains central to the Dordt student experience. Chapel and faith-based small groups continue to play a significant role in campus life, alongside service-learning opportunities such as PLIA, AMOR, and local outreach programs. Nearly half of the Dordt student body participates in Bible study groups, and more than two-thirds of students engage in volunteer or community outreach efforts—purposely integrating faith and service.

Students' commitment to the church remains strong: approximately 94% of Dordt students regularly attend church, demonstrating ongoing engagement with local congregations during their college years.

Dordt also continues to encourage students to prayerfully discern whether God may be calling them into ministry and church leadership. This fall, the university hosted "Called," an event that brought together area pastors and denominational leaders to help students as well as others from the region explore a range of ministry pathways, including congregational ministry, church planting, and overseas service. Dordt is also in the process of developing partnerships with Calvin Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary to support students who are called to seminary training.

Dordt continues to serve the Christian Reformed Church and the intent of Article 71 of the church order to promote Christian education through a distinctive institutional commitment: all full-time faculty and professional staff are active members of congregations that subscribe to the Reformed Confessions, and they commit to educating their children through Christian day schools or parent-directed education.

The university remains actively engaged with Christian day schools through the work of the Center for the Advancement of Christian Education (CACE), which supports teachers, administrators, and schools across North America. Through conferences, research, and professional development, Dordt continues to strengthen the pipeline between Christian K-12 education and Christian higher education.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dordt University / 700 Seventh Street NE / Sioux Center, Iowa 51250 / 712-722-6333

For the fifth year in a row, Dordt achieved record enrollment. This fall, 2,077 students are enrolled, including 1,655 full-time undergraduates with a nearly even mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This continual growth reflects the confidence families place in Dordt's Christ-centered education and the university's expanding geographic reach across states and countries, including an enduring Canadian presence.

Campus continues to be expanded and enhanced to support Dordt's growing student body. Recent completed projects include new upperclassmen cottages that foster community-focused residential living and a new nursing lab to support enrollment growth. Improvements have also been made to athletic and arts facilities, including expanded offices, training spaces, and locker rooms in the Rozenboom Family Athletic Center. The Jim and Marilyn Dean Recital Hall is a newly constructed multi-purpose venue intended to serve both artistic and academic needs on campus, including performances and rehearsals. The Atrium—Dordt's new dining commons—provides longer serving hours and enhanced gathering spaces that serve as a central hub for campus life. Construction continues on a new set of upperclassmen apartments, and work will begin on a new underclassmen dormitory in late spring; in total, Dordt will add approximately 355 beds in the next two years.

Alumni remain deeply invested in the life of the university through annual giving and prayerful support. This year, 21% of Dordt alumni participated in giving, and many current students are second- and third-generation Dordt graduates—signs of long-term trust in Dordt's mission among families and communities.

Dordt students and faculty continue to demonstrate excellence in academics, scholarship, and co-curricular life. A team of Dordt finance majors placed second nationally at an elite business valuation competition. Faculty leadership was highlighted through Dr. Jeff Ploegstra's appointment to the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council. New academic offerings, including the recently announced Master of Science in Nursing: Family Nurse Practitioner program, expand Dordt's capacity to serve students called to advanced professional leadership.

Athletics also remains a vital context for discipleship and excellence. This year included historic achievements such as Dordt women's basketball winning the NAIA national championship, Dordt football capturing the GPAC championship, and continued national-level success in cross country, hockey, and other programs.

In the arts, Dordt's Wind Symphony will represent the university on the East Coast, including an opportunity for the ensemble to be guest conducted by the Assistant Director of "The President's Own" U.S Marine Band and to perform a joint concert with U.S. Marine Band Quantico, from Quantico Marine Corps Base. These opportunities highlight both artistic excellence and Dordt's national presence.

We are grateful for the Christian Reformed Church's continued prayers, partnership, and encouragement. Dordt remains committed to serving the church by forming graduates who love God, serve faithfully in their vocations, and seek Christ-centered renewal in all areas of life.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Dordt University



Dr. Erik Hoekstra, President

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Sermon Evaluation

On February 22, 2026, at Ireton Christian Reformed Church's evening worship service, Rev. Steve Boersma and Rev. Nate Kuperus evaluated Mr. Harold Willemstyn as he led the worship service and delivered a message on Acts 17:16-34.

We evaluated Harold using the categories given in the Calvin Seminary sermon evaluation form: Biblical, Authentic, Contextual and Life-Changing.

Biblical: The sermon faithfully presented a message derived directly from the encounter Paul has with the philosophers and thinkers at the Areopagus in Athens. The congregation would have learned about the significance of Athens, the Areopagus, and the "thinktankiness" going on. They would learn what sort of worldview guides each of the groups that Paul encountered there, namely the Jews, God-fearing Jews, Epicureans and Stoics.

We are aware that this sermon was preached by Harold a few weeks earlier at Sanborn CRC as a part of a larger series about evangelism, and the sermon would have tied in nicely with a broader examination of evangelism. From this passage, the sermon explained how the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus is the motivation, and that reasoning with other unbelievers the gospel of Jesus is a tactic of Paul's evangelism. The sermon connected on these points to passages in Isaiah and in 1 Peter showing the unity of the message of Scripture. The sermon clearly began where the passage began and ended where the passage ended.

Authentic: The sermon itself and the entire worship service was presented with energy, honesty, pastoral sensitivity and enthusiasm. Harold did particularly well at reading the passage in an engaging way. Also handled some microphone issues with levity without missing a beat.

Contextual: The sermon was well connected to our context today. Harold did this by explaining the passage through pithy statements (ie. Challenge our evangelistic bones to action), memorable analogies (ie. Putting the transmission of our souls into 'E' for evangelism), and drawing connections to our day today (Aeropagus is the place where people are, like Kwik Star; Epicureans have the worldview of Mardi Gras). Each part of the sermon was followed by a good connection to today's culture and life.

Life-Changing: Broadly, the sermon strove to inspire the congregation to preach Christ like Paul and to see that the gospel itself is a reasoned and effective tactic for evangelism. He distilled from the passage other methods for evangelism as well, such as showing that Christ fills the blank spaces of life and straightens crooked thinking. The sermon moved toward the end with clear preaching of the gospel where the congregation heard the message of Christ as if they were listening to Paul themselves. The congregation was reminded that God calls all of us to repentance and trust. And even though the sermon called for action to evangelize, it ended with the reality that even with the best tactics, only some will believe by the grace of God.

In conversations after church, Harold shared that he felt a little disconnected during the message at times. He was concerned that he wasn't getting the immediate feedback from witty statements that he'd make. We assured him that we felt the congregation was responding in those moments even though he might not have felt it.

Our critiques are relatively minor.

A few times during the message Harold made suggestions that the sermon is a long one or that he's almost done. We recommend that he avoid all suggestion of how long the message will be since that will right away turn the congregations attention to the length of preaching instead of the content of the preaching. The time to be concerned about how long the sermon is during the preparation. When you are sure you have a message that needs to be preached, that it is a reasonable length, preach without worrying about the time.

We would suggest that Harold specifically draw the congregation's attention back to their open Bibles so they can connect his preaching with the specific words of the Bible passage. It can also serve to break people out of a "listening trance" that can set in, particularly in an evening service. But this is mostly a matter of a pastors preference, but could be a useful tip.

When other questions and comments are concluded...

Based on our evaluation, we make the motion to allow the examination of Harold Willemstyn to continue.