

Meeting Minutes for Classis Heartland
First Christian Reformed Church in Sheldon, IA
Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Article 01: Constitution of Classis

Rev. Phillip Westra, stated clerk, welcomed delegates and visitors to classis. He reported classis credentials are in order, delegates had checked in and first-time delegates signed the *Covenant of Officebearers* (designated with an * below). Rev. John Klompien declares classis constituted with the following officers and delegates.

A. Classis Meeting Officers

Chair: Rev. John Klompien

Vice-Chair: Rev. Mark Vande Zande

Stated Clerk: Rev. Phillip Westra

Treasurer: Mr. Randy Smit

B. Classis Meeting Delegates

Calvary CRC – Orange City, IA: Rev. John Klompien (minister), Mr. John Westra* (elder), and Darin Dykstra (deacon)

Calvin CRC – LeMars, IA: Rev. Brian Hofman (minister), Mr. Robert Hughes (elder)

First CRC – Hospers, IA: Rev. Aaron Gonzalez (minister) and Mr. Randy Van Kalsbeek (elder)

First CRC – Hull, IA: Rev. Loren Kotman (minister), Mr. Merlyn Kroese (elder), and Mr. Eric Kroese (deacon)

First CRC – Orange City, IA: Rev. Mark Vande Zande (minister), Mr. Bruce Lefever (elder), and Mr. Loren Dykstra (deacon)

First CRC – Sheldon, IA: Rev. Brian Dunn* (minister), Mr. Arlo Heynen (elder), and Mr. Jevon Klyn* (deacon)

Hawarden CRC – Hawarden, IA: Mr. Lou Kingma (elder), Mr. Dave Dorhout (elder), and Mr. Bryan Dekkers (deacon)

Hope CRC – Hull, IA: Mr. Aldie Altena (elder), Mr. Jerry Van Roekel (elder), and Mr. Drew Heynen (deacon)

Immanuel CRC – Orange City, IA: Mr. Kevin Tesch (elder) and Mr. Tyler Wassenaar* (deacon)

Immanuel CRC – Sheldon, IA: Rev. Kevin Muyskens (minister), Mr. Lynn Vande Brake (elder), and Mr. Dan Jacobsma (deacon)

Ireton CRC – Ireton, IA: Rev. Nate Kuperus (minister), Mr. Tim Bommema (elder), and Mr. Jacob Zomermaad (deacon)

Living Water Church – Orange City and Sheldon, IA: Rev. Jesse Walhof (minister), Mr. Randy Brands (elder), and Mr. Rick Droog* (deacon)

New City Church – Kansas City, MO: Rev. Andrew Vanden Akker (elder)

Northern Lighthouse Church – Lincoln, NE: Rev. Sam Keyzer (minister)

Ocheyedan CRC – Ocheyedan, IA: Rev. Thomas De Does (minister), Mr. Alvin Runia (elder), and Mr. Larry Post (deacon)

Pathway Community Church – Olathe, KS: no delegates

Prairie Lane CRC – Omaha, NE: Rev. Chad Van Ginkel (minister)

Sanborn CRC – Sanborn, IA: Rev. Phillip Westra (minister), Mr. Bob Oldenkamp (elder), and

Mr. Larry Hofman (deacon)
Sibley CRC – Sibley, IA: Rev. Ben Wiersma* (minister), Mr. Henry Eekhoff (elder), and Mr. Darrel Teerink (deacon)

C. Classis Meeting Guests (Those designated with an ** joined the meeting later in the afternoon)

Rev. Verlyn Boone (interim pastor at Immanuel CRC, Orange City)
Mr. Keith Hoekstra (candidate for Commissioned Pastor with Hope CRC, Hull)
Rev. Scott Van Voorst (Cornerstone Prison Church)
Mr. Dan Tracy (candidate for Licensure to Exhort) and his wife, Ms. Cheryl Tracy
Ms. Barb Hibma (Classis Prayer Coordinator)
Mr. Randy Smit (Classis Treasurer)
Mr. Jeff Bolt (Director of Advancement, CRCNA)
Rev. Mark Klompien (Resonate Global Missions)**
Ms. Tara Boer (Safe Church Team Coordinator)**
Rev. Gary Nyenhuis (Pastor of Living Water in Orange City)**
Dr. Syd Hielema (Connections Project, CRCNA)**
Ms. Trudy Ash (Faith Formation Ministries, CRCNA)**
Rev. Todd Zuidema (Church Relations, Dordt University)**

Article 02: Opening Worship and Meditation

We sang “In Christ Alone” and Rev. Brian Dunn led a meditation in connection to Isaiah 40:6–8 and Belgic Confession Article 3. Pastor Dunn encouraged classis to stand firm on what we know about the Word of the Lord. He reminded us that our work of sowing seeds of God’s Word in God’s people gives them what will remain forever. After his meditation, we closed our time of devotions by singing “Ancient Words.”

Article 03: Church Visitor Reports

Written church visitor reports from Rev. Sam Keyzer and Rev. Chad Van Ginkel were included in the agenda. Classis received these reports for information and had no questions. The chair informed classis that Rev. Nate Kuperus made some visits to Immanuel CRC of Orange City upon their request.

Article 04: Church Counselor Reports

- A. Rev. Loren Kotman, counselor for Hope CRC in Hull, gave a verbal report and submitted a written report to the stated clerk. Mr. Keith Hoekstra is on the path of becoming a Minister of the Word to serve Hope CRC.
- B. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel, counselor for Northern Lighthouse, submitted a written report to the clerk and verbally shared with classis that Mr. John Keyzer plans to pursue ordination as a commissioned pastor in order to continue serving this church. One note of clarification is that his work as counselor for this congregation will not conclude until they install a pastor.
- C. Rev. John Klompien, counselor to Immanuel in Orange City submitted a written report to the clerk and reported to classis they are currently being served by Rev. Verlyn Boone, a strategic transition minister from the RCA.

- D. Rev. John Klompien, counselor for First CRC in Sheldon, submitted a written report to the clerk and was pleased to announce their new pastor, Rev. Brian Dunn, has been installed and is serving their congregation well.
Motion: Approve the Work of Rev. Klompien as church counselor and relieve him of his duties to First CRC of Sheldon. ***Adopted.***
- E. Rev. Nate Kuperus, counselor for Hawarden CRC, shared that Rev. Klompien recently accepted a call to serve Resonate Global Missions in Nepal and the congregation is in the early stages of the search process for their next pastor.
- F. Rev. Tom De Does, counselor for Sibley CRC, submitted a written report to the clerk and shared verbally that the congregation held the ordination service for Rev. Ben Wiersma on October 10, 2021. This was a time of celebration for Sibley CRC and they look ahead with anticipation on how Pastor Ben will lead the congregation in God's will for their future.
Motion: Approve the Work of Rev. De Does as church counselor and relieve him of his duties to Sibley CRC. ***Adopted.***

Article 05: Election of Synodical Delegates, Classical Positions, and a Regional Representative

- A. Rev. Brian Hofman distributed the ballot prepared by the Classis Nominating Committee and the ballot for a single nominee to be our regional representative to Calvin University. These were collected, counted by the delegates from First CRC of Sheldon, and the following results were shared with classis.
 - 1. Those elected to Classis Positions:
 - a. Mr. Eric Kroese – Classis Stewardship Committee
 - b. Ms. Leandra Hulstein – Classis Stewardship Committee Alternate
 - c. Rev. Jesse Walhof – Classis Education Committee
 - d. Rev. Brian Dunn – Classis Education Committee Alternate
 - e. Rev. Brian Dunn – church visitor to the south
 - 2. Ms. Kathleen Ridder received 39 yes votes for serving as a regional rep to Calvin University
 - 3. Motion: Approve the work of the Classis Nominating Committee. ***Adopted.***
- B. Rev. Kevin Muyskens guided the process for electing synodical delegates.
 - 1. The chair opened up nominations from the floor to be considered as delegates to synod in addition to those listed on the ballot (page 4 in the supplement to the classis agenda). The following three were nominated and added to the ballot.
 - a. Mr. Dave Wielenga, deacon delegate from Ireton CRC
 - b. Mr. Darin Dykstra, deacon delegate from Calvary CRC
 - c. Mr. Drew Heynen, deacon delegate from Hope CRC
 - 2. Ballots were distributed, delegates voted, and the delegates from First CRC of Sheldon tallied the results, which established Rev. Jesse Walhof as pastor delegate, Mr. Mike Krommendyk as elder delegate, and Mr. Darin Dykstra as deacon delegate.
 - 3. Updated ballots were distributed, delegates voted, and the delegates from First CRC of Sheldon tallied the results to determine at large and alternate delegates.
 - a. Motion: Appoint the highest voted individual to serve as the at large delegate. ***Adopted***
 - b. At Large delegate will be Rev. John Klompien, Pastor alternate will be Rev. Phillip Westra, elder alternate will be Mr. Bruce Lefever, and deacon alternate will be Mr. Dave Wielenga.

4. A final ballot was distributed of all remaining nominees, the delegates voted, and the host church tallied the results to select the alternate at large delegate. The person selected to this position was Mr. Drew Heynen.
5. The following list of delegates to synod was shared.

Rev. Jesse Walhof – pastor delegate
 Mr. Mike Krommendyk – elder delegate
 Mr. Darin Dykstra – deacon delegate
 Rev. John Klompien – at large delegate

Rev. Phillip Westra – pastor alternate
 Mr. Bruce Lefever – elder alternate
 Mr. Dave Wielenga – deacon alternate
 Mr. Drew Heynen – alternate at large

Article 06: Communications from Churches

- A. Letters Received: the clerk received the following three letters from churches (the first two included in the agenda and the third included in the agenda supplement)
 1. Calvary CRC submitted a letter requesting classis examine Mr. Dan Tracy for a license to exhort, which is on our agenda for the day
 2. Hope CRC submitted a letter requesting classis examine Mr. Keith Hoekstra to be their commissioned pastor, which is on our agenda for the day
 3. Northern Lighthouse submitted a letter stating their intent to call Mr. John Keyzer to serve them as a commissioned pastor in the future.
- B. Notes on Credentials: The following items were included on classis credentials
 1. Calvary CRC stated the following three items which classis agreed to receive for information:
 - a. Proactive Steps: Regarding issues in the Reformed Church of America, as it affects the CRC denominational churches, where are we at in our level of awareness and concern?
 - b. Friendship CRC Sergeant Bluff, IA. Pastor and member visit: Encourage pastors filling pulpit supply to attend with members. State time is 10:25 am. One morning service, no evening service, 2 person leadership team. Mr. Vos provides much of the order of worship. offered. rather than scheduled pulpit supply and guest praise team would be a blessing.
 - c. In response to a request from Pastor Dave Heilman, Calvary CRC approved the transfer of his ministerial credentials to Shalom CRC of Sioux Falls, where he has been called to be their Director of Church Operations and Outreach
 2. Immanuel of Orange City and Ireton included a note suggesting classis re-evaluate weekday meetings, stating it prevented many from being delegates and that they would prefer we hold one or both meetings per year on a Saturday. After hearing churches who travel the furthest say they are open to a Saturday meeting, the Classis Interim Committee agreed to explore holding a Saturday classis meeting in 2023.
 3. Northern Lighthouse asked for time to share an update on their Charity Auto building project, which will happen in the Classis Home Missions report (Article 13.b below).
 4. Sanborn asked about the state of the diaconal task force. The clerk reported he has been in contact with this committee and will urge them to report on their work at our fall classis meeting.
 5. Sibley requested classis pray for their church, that “God will continue to lead us in ministry as we seek to serve God and the community.”

- C. *Prayer:* Rev. Westra, stated clerk, led classis in a prayer for all these items communicated from churches above.

Article 07: Examination of Mr. Dan Tracy for Licensure to Exhort (*Church Order Art. 43.b*)

- A. *Introduction:* Mr. John Westra, elder delegate from Calvary CRC, introduced Mr. Tracy as a man who is gifted to teach others from the Bible, echoing Calvary's written request.
- B. *Sermon Evaluation:* Rev. Mark Vande Zande reviewed Mr. Tracy's sermon and his recent delivery of this sermon at First CRC in Orange City during the evening service of February 20, 2022. Rev. Vande Zande shared he believed it met the evaluation criteria for being biblical, authentic, contextual, and life-changing.
- C. *Interview Examination:* Rev. Kevin Muyskens conducted an interview with Mr. Tracy exploring his biblical and theological knowledge, sermon preparation process, and practical wisdom. This also included a time for delegates to classis to ask questions of Mr. Tracy.
- D. *Executive Session:* Classis visitors were dismissed
Motion: Grant a License to Exhort to Mr. Dan Tracy. ***Adopted.***
- E. *Prayer:* Rev. Vande Zande lead classis in a prayer of blessing for Mr. Tracy and his service to the congregations of classis.

Article 08: Ministry Shares Presentation by Mr. Jeff Bolt, Director of Advancement for the CRCNA

- A. Mr. Bolt spoke about the various people and activities made possible through the ministry share system of the Christian Reformed Church. In the interaction following the presentation, some delegates shared their convictions that some agencies were not serving the congregations of the CRCNA well. It was also brought up that the denomination must honor requests as to what exactly the church's ministry shares fund, so there is a process for directing shares to specific ministries.
- B. The stated clerk will follow-up with Mr. Bolt as it relates to submitting ministry share contributions and making congregational pledges.

Article 09: Examination of Mr. Keith Hoekstra for Commissioned Pastor (*Church Order Art. 24.b*)

- A. *Introduction:* Mr. Aldie Altena, elder delegate from Hope CRC, introduced Mr. Keith Hoekstra to classis and spoke appreciatively of his ministry there.
- B. *Paperwork:* The Clerk of Classis stated that all the paperwork is in order for us to proceed with the examination.
- C. *Sermon Evaluation:* Rev. Brian Dunn and Rev. Brian Hofman briefly shared highlights from their written report in the supplement to the meeting agenda regarding Mr. Hoekstra's sermon and delivery. They stated that any room they saw for improvement will likely come with experience.
- D. Motion: Proceed with the examination of Mr. Hoekstra for Commissioned Pastor. ***Adopted.***
- E. *Interview:* Rev. Chad Van Ginkel led the examination where he explored Mr. Hoekstra's personal relationship with Christ, biblical and theological knowledge, pastoral wisdom, the Heidelberg Catechism, and CRC polity. A time was also given for delegates to ask questions.
- F. *Executive Session:* Classis visitors were dismissed
Motion: Admit Mr. Keith Hoekstra to the office of Commissioned Pastor. ***Adopted.***
- G. *Prayer:* Rev. Chad Van Ginkel led classis in a time of prayer for Pastor Hoekstra and his work with Hope CRC of Hull moving forward. This was followed with a break and an opportunity for delegates to greet and congratulate Pastor Hoekstra.

Article 10: Council of Delegates (COD) Report

Rev. Mark Vande Zande drew classis delegates' attention to the COD Highlights, item 7 in the agenda supplement, and highlighted the nomination of Zach King to serve as the General Secretary of the CRCNA.

Article 11: Classical Interim Committee (CIC) Report

- A. Rev. Nate Kuperus drew delegates' attention to CIC meeting summaries in the agenda and offered to take questions about the work of the CIC.
Motion: Approve the work of the CIC. ***Adopted.***
- B. Rev. Phillip Westra, stated clerk, offered to answer questions about his written report. He shared that one item he neglected to work on was the classis' website. This is something he will try to utilize better between now and the next classis meeting.
Motion: Approve the work of the stated clerk. ***Adopted.***

Article 12: Classical Stewardship Committee (CSC) Report

Mr. Randy Smit reported about his work in taking over as classis treasurer. He talked about the learning curve involved in taking over as treasurer. One important matter is to get updated accurate membership information from our churches for calculating more accurate per member ministry share information.

1. Motion: Have each church submit active membership count to treasurer each time the church sends a classis ministry share payment.
After some discussion, ***the motion was Tabled.***
2. The chair ruled that the CSC should decide how to best update membership information for ministry share purposes.
3. Motion: Approve the work of the CSC. ***Adopted.***

Article 13: Classical Home Missions Committee (CHMC) Report

- A. Rev. Kevin Muyskens drew attention to the CHMC report and shared they were working closely with Friendship Community Church of Sergeant Bluff as they discern their future.
- B. Rev. Scott Van Voorst spoke about how God is at work through Cornerstone Prison Church with a testimony of a drastic change of heart in a man he has known for a while.
- C. Rev. Sam Keyzer gave an update from Northern Lighthouse, an Established Church Grant recipient, speaking with appreciation for all the donations and prayers from classis Heartland congregations that have allowed the new Charity Auto Garage building to break ground.
- D. Rev. Andrew Vanden Akker shared briefly that New City, with the help of a residency grant, has an intern working with them for a season.
- E. Motion: Approve the work of the CHMC. ***Adopted.***

Article 14: Classical Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT) Report

Rev. Loren Kotman shared there were not specific actions requiring classis' discussion or approval beyond what we had already done in examining Mr. Dan Tracy. Classis received the CMLT report for information.

- Motion: Approve the work of the CMLT. ***Adopted.***

Article 15: Classical Education Committee (CEC) Report

- A. Rev. Aaron Gonzalez introduced the work of the CEC, highlighting their involvement in helping organize Timothy Leadership Training events and doing some preliminary planning for our evening session at classis with Dr. Syd Hielema. He then invited the following three leaders to share about their respective ministries
- B. Ms. Barb Hibma, our classis Prayer Coordinator, shared about her appreciation for making prayer a priority in our classis meeting.
- C. Dr. Tara Boer leads the safe church team for classis Lakota and Heartland. She reminded delegates to contact someone from the safe church team if there is an accusation that arises within any of our churches. She also encouraged church leaders to utilize future training events our area classis and denomination aimed at preventing abuse from happening among our churches.
- D. Ms. Lee De Groot is currently the director of the Minn-I-Kota Youth network. The big news on the horizon is their plan to transition to a new director. With Lee and the new person needing to overlap for a smooth hand-off, Minn-I-Kota has requested additional funds from its supporting classis. The CEC will work to determine how we might support this ministry in their period of transition.
- E. Motion: Approve the work of the CEC. ***Adopted.***

Article 16: Written Reports Received for Information

Delegates were told to receive the following written reports as information.

- 1. Dordt University from Rev. Todd Zuidema
- 2. Resonate Global Missions from Rev. Peter Kelder
- 3. Calvin University from Mr. Jon Kuyers
- 4. World Renew Classis Report from Ms. Jodi Koeman

Article 17: Evening Session for Meditation and Prayer

- A. Following a dinner break Rev. John Klompien welcomed delegates and visitors to our evening session, led in prayer, and invited everyone to sing "The Church's One Foundation."
- B. Dr. Syd Hielema spoke about his interactions with congregations and classis gatherings throughout the CRCNA and what he hears from church leaders. His meditation is his response from God's Word to the situation we find ourselves in. Dr. Hielema read from Revelation 5, interpreted it and applied it to our day and time. He then guided everyone through a time of silent prayer. After this, tables spent time praying together. The outline of this is found on the following page under APPENDIX A, "Prayer Evening: Tears that Lead to Hope Restored."
- C. Rev. Phillip Westra lead the group in a concluding prayer and professing our faith together using the Apostles' Creed.
- D. We closed our evening session by singing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

Article 18: Adjournment

- A. Motion: Adjourn the Meeting. ***Adopted.***
- B. The Fall Meeting of Classis Heartland is scheduled for September 21, 2022 to be hosted by Hawarden CRC.

Respectfully submitted,
Phillip Westra (Stated Clerk of Classis Heartland)

APPENDIX A

Prayer evening: Tears that lead to hope restored

1. Meditation on Revelation 5: John's tears lead to restored hope through the Lamb who reigns.
2. A time of guided silent prayer based on Revelation 5 (the guided silent prayers will be preparatory for the small group prayers that follow).
3. A time of small group prayer based on Revelation 5.

Small group prayer facilitators:

- a. We have experienced and witnessed great sadnesses these past two years: in our own faith lives, in our homes, in our congregations, in our denomination. We worship a God whose ears and heart embrace ALL of our sadnesses tenderly and comfortingly. What are some of the sadnesses we have experienced and witnessed (briefly). Let's bring them to the Lord together.
- b. The Lion of the tribe of Judah who has triumphed is a Lamb, looking as if had been slain. The meaning of this seeming impossibility challenges us every day, and the Lord uses such deep challenges to refine us. This lifelong refining work clarifies some areas and confuses us in other areas in our walk with Christ. Such experiences lead to new conflicts for Christians to work through and sometimes leave us longing for simpler times in the past. Throughout the Scriptures (and also in REV 5) the Lord uses trials and tribulations to refine us, to help us separate what truly matters and is right from that which is not central to his Kingdom. As a group, share what the Holy Spirit has clarified through challenges, what remains confusing in recent challenges, and then bring this mix of clarity and confusion to the Lord together, praying for each other and for Christ's church.
- c. The Lamb reigns! He has made us a kingdom and priests to rule with him, and our prayers are in the bowls of incense in the heavenly throne room. This is the strongest hope in the universe. Share with each other: what Scriptures, fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord, events, and more are serving to strengthen your hope? Bring your hopes to the Lord together in prayer.