

Meeting Minutes for Classis Heartland

Ireton Christian Reformed Church

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Article 01: Constitution of Classis

Rev. Nate Kuperus welcomed delegates and guests to the meeting and Rev. Phillip Westra, stated clerk, reported credentials in order and delegates present from all congregations except Pathway in Olathe and Siouxland Unity in Sioux City. He reminded delegates our new practice as Classis Heartland is to have all delegates sign the *Covenant of Officebearers* each time we gather for a meeting. Rev. Nate Kuperus declared classis constituted with the following officers and delegates.

A. Classis Meeting Officers

Chair: Rev. Nate Kuperus

Vice-Chair: Rev. Aaron Greydanus

Stated Clerk: Rev. Phillip Westra

Treasurer: Mr. Randy Smit

B. Classis Meeting Delegates

Hawarden: Hawarden Christian Reformed Church – Mr. Gene Byker (elder) and Mr. Al Kingma (deacon)

Hospers: First Christian Reformed Church – Mr. Alan Woudstra (elder)

Hull: First Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Aaron Gonzalez (minister), Mr. Eric Rens (elder) and Mr. Ross TeSlaa (deacon)

Hull: Hope Christian Reformed Church – Pastor Keith Hoekstra (minister), Mr. Joe Dirksen (elder) and Mr. Jacob Van Ginkel (deacon)

Ireton: Ireton Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Nate Kuperus (minister), Mr. Calvin Notebook (elder) and Mr. Jason Van Driesen (deacon)

Kansas City: New City Church – Rev. Andrew Vanden Akker (minister emeritus)

Le Mars: Calvin Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Brian Hofman (minister) and Mr. Steve VerMulm (elder)

Lincoln: F Street Neighborhood Church – Pastor Jeff Heerspink (minister)

Lincoln: Northern Lighthouse – Pastor Jon Keyzer (minister), Mr. Dave Brown (elder), and Ms. Cindi Brown (deacon)

Ocheyedan: Ocheyedan Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Lee Khang (minister) and Mr. Jim Idema (elder)

Olathe: Pathway Community Church – no delegates

Omaha: Prairie Lane Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Chad Van Ginkel (minister) and Mr. Bill Beshlian (deacon)

Orange City: Calvary Christian Reformed Church – Rev. John Klompier (minister), Mr. Galen Mars (elder) and Mr. Phil Elgersma (deacon)

Orange City: First Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Stephen Terpstra (minister), Mr. Brian Kroeze (elder) and Mr. Jon Hellinga (deacon)

Orange City: Immanuel Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Cody Statema (minister) and Mr. Randy Jeltema (elder)

Orange City & Sheldon: Living Water Community Church – Rev. Jesse Walhof (minister), Mr. Gary Vande Vegte (elder) and Mr. Jay Schemper (deacon)
Sanborn: Sanborn Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Phillip Westra (minister), Mr. Rich Vander Werff (elder) and Mr. Chet Vander Velde (deacon)
Sheldon: First Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Brian Dunn (minister), Mr. Harlan Bolkema (elder) and Mr. Jon Nieuwendorp (deacon)
Sheldon: Immanuel Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Kevin Muyskens (minister), Mr. Brad Kraayenbrink (elder) and Mr. Brian Wieringa (deacon)
Sibley: Sibley Christian Reformed Church – Rev. Ben Wiersma (minister), Mr. Jeff VandeGriend (elder), and Mr. Darrell Teerink (deacon)
Sioux City: Siouxland Unity Church – no delegates

C. Classis Meeting Guests

Rev. Scott Van Voorst (Cornerstone Prison Church)
Rev. Todd Zuidema (Dordt University)
Ms. Lora Copley (Areopagus Campus Ministry at ISU)
Rev. Doug De Groot (Minn-I-Kota Youth Network)
Ms. Lee De Groot (Minn-I-Kota Youth Network)
Ms. Kim Starkenburg (World Renew)
Mr. Dan Tracy (Calvary CRC, licensed to exhort)
Rev. Stewart de Jong (Synodical Deputy from Classis Northcentral Iowa)
Rev. Clifford Hoekstra (Synodical Deputy from Classis Iakota)
Rev. Jack Van Marion (Synodical Deputy from Classis Lake Superior)

Article 02: Opening Worship and Meditation

Rev. Nate Kuperus called delegates to worship and we sang “Ancient Words.” After reading Leviticus 7:1–6 delegates learned about a particular sheep with a fat tail called Awassi and were called to offer all of ourselves to the Lord’s service. Rev. Kuperus read from Q&As 13–15 in the Heidelberg Catechism and John 1:29, emphasizing that Christ is the lamb of God. Delegates sang “The Lord is My Salvation” and Rev. Kuperus concluded the time with a prayer for classis.

Article 03: Classical Interim Committee (CIC)

- A. *CIC Report*: Speaking on behalf of the CIC, Rev. Nate Kuperus welcomed Rev. Stephen Terpstra to his first meeting of Classis Heartland, then drew the delegates’ attention to the most recent CIC decisions on page 3 of the meeting supplement, and offered to address any questions from the delegates.
- B. *Stated Clerk Report*: Rev. Phillip Westra drew delegates’ attention to the written stated clerk report, which includes the tentative schedule for classis chairs, co-chairs, and host locations from 2025 to 2030. Delegates from Lincoln commented they would be willing to host sooner and more often. Rev. Westra shared that clerks in several classes are dealing with limited suspensions and disaffiliation procedures. We should pray for them and be thankful we remain united in the denomination’s decisions about human sexuality. He then shared and explained the following motion requested of us from Classis Illiana.
1. Motion: Classis Heartland approved the loan of Rev. Fred DeJong from Crown Point CRC of Crown Point, IN to First Reformed Church of Orange City, IA according to the supplement of Article 13-c. **Adopted.**

2. Motion: Approve the work of the stated clerk. **Adopted.**
- C. *Items from Classical Credentials*: Below are four notes Rev. Westra read from classical credentials and the response of classis if necessary.
1. From Living Water Community Church: The leaders of Living Water are “creating a feasibility team to study the benefits, effectiveness, and possibility of Living Water Sheldon emerging as an independent congregation. This is being led by the Sheldon campus and accepted by the councils of Orange City and Sheldon. At this time, we share this with classis for your information and ask for your prayers as we discern the Spirit’s guidance for Living Water Community Church.”
 2. From Calvary Christian Reformed Church of Orange City: “How do we encourage volunteer participation in Kids’ programs (Cadets, GEMS)? How do we keep post high members involved?” Classis agreed these could be discussed in our time of sharing and prayer scheduled before/after lunch.
 3. From Calvary Christian Reformed Church of Orange City: “It is our understanding that those licensed to exhort are not to raise hands for parting blessing at public worship. A Friendly reminder?” This was received for information.
 4. From Ocheyedan Christian Reformed Church: “We request that classis consider moving her future fall meetings of Classis to Saturdays rather than having this meeting on Wednesdays. Due to the business of the season, we struggle to find delegates and alternates available to send to Fall meetings of Classis.” No motions were made in response to this matter and the CIC remains open to all feedback as they schedule future meetings.
- D. *Denominational Communication about Gather*: Delegates watched a recorded greeting video from Rev. Zachary King, general secretary of the CRCNA. Rev. Kevin Muyskens shared that our classis has been invited to participate in the Gather event in Niagara Falls, Ontario planned for November 18–20. Invitations have been sent out and anyone interested in representing our classis at this event should communicate that to Rev. Muyskens.
- E. *Overture from Sibley Christian Reformed Church re: The Banner* (tabled at our previous meeting of Classis Heartland on March 9, 2024).
1. Motion: Put the overture back on the floor. **Adopted.**
 2. After classis discussed the motion and many delegates stated they did not believe the overture is necessary given the strong possibility the Banner will no longer be funded in the future, Sibley Christian Reformed Church withdrew their overture.
- F. *Living Water Community Church Oversight Committee Report*: Rev. Cody Statement shared with classis that in addition to the written report on page 12 of the agenda, Rev. Hoogendorn, their STM (Strategic Transition Minister), has conducted 45 interviews and formed a transition team. Classis received this report for information.
- G. *Rev. Gary Nyenhuis Oversight Committee Report*: Rev. Brian Dunn gave a verbal report about the committee’s encouragement of Rev. Nyenhuis. They believe they have done everything in their power to encourage and help him and as his credentials remain with the Reformed Church of America (RCA), there is nothing else we can do at this time.
- Motion: Consider the work of the oversight committee for Rev. Nyenhuis completed.
Adopted.
- H. Motion: Approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee. **Adopted.**

Article 04: Church Counselor Reports

- A. Rev. John Klompier, church counselor for First Christian Reformed Church of Orange City, reported that Rev. Stephen Terpstra was installed in their congregation on July 7.
Motion: Consider Rev. Klompier's service as church counselor for First CRC in Orange City completed. **Adopted.**
- B. Rev. Nate Kuperus, church counselor for Hawarden Christian Reformed Church, reported Mr. Nathan Hitchcock is preaching and giving the congregation guidance through 2024.
- C. Rev. Aaron Greydanus, church counselor for First Christian Reformed Church in Hospers, just began his duties, made an initial contact with the congregation and has nothing to report yet.
- D. Rev. Kevin Muyskens, church counselor for New City Church in Kansas City, just began his duties and has nothing to report yet.

Article 05: Classical Stewardship Committee (CSC)

Rev. Nate Kuperus drew delegates' attention to the classical ministry shares proposal for 2025 on page 14 of the agenda.

Motion: Table the ministry shares proposal for 2025 until after all committees have reported. **Adopted.**

Rev. Andy Vanden Akker led classis in a prayer for God's guidance for our denomination, Living Water Community Church as they discern and navigate their future, for Pastor Gary, and for our congregations in times of transition.

Classis paused the meeting to take a brief morning break.

Article 06: Examination of candidate Pastor Keith Hoekstra for Article 10 Ordination as Minister of the Word at Hope Christian Reformed Church in Hull.

- A. Rev. Jesse Walhof introduced Pastor Keith to delegates and visitors, noting church members and family members present. Rev. Walhof led classis in a prayer for the examination process and everyone involved.
- B. Rev. Cody Statema conducted a *Practica* examination of Pastor Hoekstra before the body. Delegates and Synodical Deputies were given opportunity to ask question as well.
- C. Motion: Proceed with the examination. **Adopted. Synodical Deputies Concur.**
- D. Rev. Brian Hofman and Elder Doug Pollema shared their report of participating in a recent worship service Pastor Hoekstra led. A time was given where delegates and Synodical Deputies asked questions about the sermons Pastor Hoekstra submitted for review.
- E. Motion: Proceed with the examination. **Adopted. Synodical Deputies Concur.**
- F. Rev. Phillip Westra conducted a *Biblical and Theological* examination of Pastor Hoekstra before the body. After approximately 40 minutes of one-on-one interviewing, delegates and Synodical Deputies took the opportunity to ask questions of the candidate also.
- G. Executive Session was declared by the chair, Rev. Kuperus, and all visitors were dismissed
 - 1. Rev. Nate Kuperus lead delegates in a prayer for discernment
 - 2. After deliberations, the Synodical Deputies were dismissed so classis delegates and the Synodical Deputies could make their decisions independently.
 - 3. Motion: Admit Pastor Kieth Hoekstra into the Ministry of the Word according to the provisions of Article 10. **Adopted. Synodical Deputies Concur.**

- H. Executive Session was Concluded, Pastor Keith Hoekstra and guests were welcomed back into the classis meeting, all were informed he sustained his examination and he received congratulations from delegates.
- I. Classis delegates gathered around Pastor Keith and Rev. Ben Wiersma led classis in a prayer of blessing for him, his family, and the church he will pastor.

Classis took a break for lunch.

Article 07: Time of Sharing and Prayer

- A. Rev. Kevin Muyskens led delegates in a time of discussion and prayer about matters important to churches represented. All were encouraged to write down two things they were thankful for and two things they are seeking God’s help in navigating within their church.
- B. Delegates gathered into small groups with delegates from other churches and spent time sharing and praying about their praises and petitions.
- C. Delegates were given the opportunity to share some highlights from their discussion with the whole group. Some important themes from this time, which are relevant to Calvary CRC’s question on their credentials (Art. 03.C.2 above), included the following:
 - 1. Several churches reporting God’s blessings as they aim to be both hospitable and stand firm on God’s Word.
 - 2. People are often the most committed when they are also the most involved. Efforts at getting people connected to ministries and activities are worth it and often bear fruit.
 - 3. Keep your confidence rooted in the redemptive power of Christ as you deal with the messes of life people bring into our churches.

Article 08: Classical Home Missions Committee (CHMC)

- A. Ms. Lora Copley gave classis an update on her work with Areopagus Campus Ministry at Iowa State University. Key things happening through Areopagus are one-on-one discipleship, small group studies, and lectures by Christian scholars. Ms. Copley also spoke about the challenge of high turnover inherent in campus ministry and asked that we pray for the significant leadership transitions that lie ahead for them. As always, if anyone know of a student we would like Lora to reach out to, let her know with an email or phone call.
- B. Rev. Scott Van Voorst addressed classis on behalf of Cornerstone Prison Church. Despite access restrictions in the prison and challenges for inmates’ time, ministry continues and there are also opportunities for others to get involved.
- C. Pastor Jeff Heerspink addressed classis on behalf of Resonate Global Missions, speaking appreciatively about the initiatives and regional team shown on page 16 of the agenda. Pastor Heerspink also shared that F Street is hoping and praying to one day plant another church in Lincoln in partnership with our classis and Resonate.
- D. Pastor Keith Hoekstra reviewed the financial plan for CHMC in 2025 as outlined on page 18 in the agenda and welcomed questions.
- E. Classis viewed a video created by Dordt University about Prairie Lane Christian Reformed Church in Omaha. This video is viewable at the following link.

https://www.google.com/url?q=https://player.vimeo.com/progressive_redirect/playback/1008417640/rendition/1080p/file.mp4?loc%3Dexternal%26log_user%3D0%26signature%3D32ce3cb0c5b0cd0bb31bf03d3ab4be1e75dbb7a559537c83c7e1a5cb2ee9d7c1&source=gmail&ust=1737550000953000&usg=AOvVaw0ooao3C5JmaI9ZmK8vSG_o

- F. Motion: Approve the work of the CHMC. **Adopted.**

Article 09: Classical Nominating Committee (CNC)

- A. Paper ballots were distributed to delegates (copies of the ballot found on pages 22 and 23 of the agenda).
- B. Rev. Brian Hofman explained the rationale for the ballots, that the CNC made it a priority to fill all vacancies but there are some alternates which we do not have names for at this time. Rev. Hofman also requested nominations from the floor but did not receive any for the delegates to add to the ballots.
- C. After the ballots were collected and counted, the following individuals were appointed or reappointed to the following roles:
1. Mr. Pete Van Velzen – Stated Clerk
 2. Mr. Ed Starkenburg – Stated Clerk Alternate
 3. Dr. Randy Smit – Treasurer
 4. Ms. Kate Wierenga – Treasurer Alternate
 5. Rev. Aaron Greydanus – Classical Interim Committee
 6. Rev. Brian Hofman – Classical Interim Committee
 7. Rev. Stephen Terpstra – Classical Interim Committee Alternate
 8. Pastor Jeff Heerspink – Classical Home Missions Committee
 9. Mr. Gary Hibma – Classical Home Missions Committee
 10. Rev. Nate Kuperus – Classical Stewardship Committee
 11. Rev. John Klompfen – Classical Stewardship Committee Alternate
 12. Rev. Ben Wiersma – Classical Discipleship Committee
 13. Rev. Brian Hofman – Classical Nominating Committee
 14. Mr. Steve Ver Mulm – Classical Nominating Committee
 15. Mr. Mike Byker – Classical Nominating Committee Alternate
 16. Rev. Cody Statema – Church Visitor to the North
 17. Rev. Phillip Westra – Church Visitor to the South
 18. Rev. Jordan Helming – Classical Ministry Leadership Team Alternate
 19. Pastor Jon Keyzer – Classical Safe Church Team Alternate
 20. Rev. Ben Wiersma – Classical youth Consultant
 21. Rev. Kevin Muyskens – Classical Program Coordinator
- D. Motion: Approve the work of the Classical Nominating Committee. **Adopted.**

Rev. Brian Hofman led classis in a prayer for our ministry partners, Areopagus Campus Ministry and Cornerstone Prison Church, for the endeavors of Resonate in our region, and for all who will be taking on new roles within Classis Heartland.

Article 10: Classical Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT)

- A. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel reported we are not currently giving financial assistance to any seminary students and the main request, as sated in the written report in the agenda, is to renew those with licenses to exhort.
- B. Motion: Renew the classical license to exhort for Mr. Tracy and Mr. Dengler for another two years. **Adopted.**
- C. Motion: Approve the work of the CMLT. **Adopted.**

Article 11: Dordt University

- A. Rev. Todd Zuidema handed out a sheet that reported 72 undergraduate and 6 masters students are currently enrolled at Dordt University from Classis Heartland. He also spoke about Dordt's recent completion of more student housing and their sizable building project to update the music department in the BJ Haan and construct a new cafeteria connecting the BJ Haan to the Campus Center.
- B. Rev. Zuidema encouraged churches to promote Dordt, noting students are receiving significant amounts of financial aid, making college affordable for most students.
- C. Rev. Zuidema also shared plans for holding a Pastor's Day on October 11th where they will be welcoming Collin Hansen to campus to speak about his biography of Tim Keller.

Article 12: Classical Discipleship Committee (CDC)

- A. Rev. Ben Wiersma drew the delegates' attention to the CDC report on pages 26 and 27 in the agenda and reminded them of the committee's mission and current members
- B. Mr. Del Walinga spoke about Timothy Leadership Training (TLT), noting its aim is to create active servants of Christ in our churches. He urged delegates to not let the word "leadership" be intimidating and suggested God may be calling some of us to simply influence one other person.
- C. Ms. Lee De Groot spoke about Minn-I-Kota (MIK) Youth, noting how significant health trials this past year have renewed their sense of calling among young people in our area. Both Lee and Doug are working with MIK and Lee encouraged churches to participate in their upcoming kick-off at Thunder Road in Sioux Falls as well as a young adult ministry to gather 18–29-year-olds together in our area.
- D. Rev. Brian Dunn spoke briefly about the Abide Project and their successful conference hosted in Sioux Center this past July. Abide continues to ask how it might resource our churches and welcomes our input.
- E. Rev. Ben Wiersma spoke briefly about the Dunamis Project which takes the form of biblical training events in Milford, IA. The next one will be held on October 10–13.
- F. Rev. Jesse Walhof spoke briefly about the Safe Church Team and in light of Dr. Tara Boer's resignation effective the end of 2024, our need to get someone new involved in this ministry. Rev. Walhof also emphasized how important it is to get Safe Church involved as early as possible if a safety or abuse issue come to light in your congregation.
- G. Motion: increase funding from \$0.05 to \$0.5 for the CDC. **Adopted.**
- H. Motion: Approve increasing the budget to \$3,000 per year for MIK Youth in 2025. **Adopted.**
- I. Motion: Approve the work of Classical Discipleship Committee. **Adopted.**

Article 13: World Renew

Ms. Kim Starkenburg spoke about the ongoing work of World Renew in our area and across the globe. With the flooding our own communities have dealt with this year, Ms. Starkenburg shared verbally that World Renew has gotten involved in 29 house repairs between Spencer, IA and Hawarden, IA.

Article 14: Return to Classical Stewardship Committee (CSC)

Motion: Approve the 2025 budget for Classis Heartland as reflected in the proposed ministry shares on page 14 of the agenda. **Adopted.**

Article 15: Closing Prayer and Adjournment

- A. Motion: Adjourn the meeting. ***Adopted.***
- B. Rev. Aaron Greydanus lead classis in a closing prayer
- C. Delegates sang the doxology together.
- D. The planned dates and locations for 2025 as are follows:
 - 1. March 8, 2025 (Saturday) at Calvary CRC in Orange City
 - 2. September 17, 2025 (Wednesday) at Priare Lane CRC in Omaha

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Phillip Westra, Stated Clerk of Classis Heartland