

# **AGENDA SUPPLEMENT**

## **CLASSIS HEARTLAND**

**Tuesday, March 2, 2021**

### **STANDING COMMITTEES & FUNCTIONARY REPORTS**

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The Council of Ireton CRC wants to officially communicate to the rest of the churches of Classis Heartland that our council recommended to the congregation that we pledge \$0 to the ministry shares “reimagined” because of two different but not completely disconnected issues. To be faithful in our work together we are overturning Classis Heartland to overturn Synod 2021 regarding our frustrations.

### **Denominational Executive Director and Ministry Offices Statements:**

First and most importantly, the council has grown increasingly frustrated and distrustful of the way ministry shares are being used by the ministry offices of the denomination to promote unbiblical and sinful points of view. This includes viewing the LGBT lifestyle as morally acceptable. It also includes the way denominational ministry offices have sinfully jumped on social justice bandwagons and dragged the name of our beloved denomination through the mud. In June, a few days after the killing of George Floyd, a statement was put out and signed by all of the directors of the offices of the denomination (see below). The statement accurately stated our hatred of racism in our world and culture but continued on to prejudge the actions of all of the police as racist and policing in general as racist. As a council we reject the directors and the offices of our denomination in this sinful act of prejudging motives and then broadly promoting it. When we are commanded “do not bear false testimony” it means we must not, under any circumstances, spread prejudice and slander. We believe this is what has happened in this statement. Frustratingly, the statement made and signed by the directors of the denominational offices includes website links for further action to groups that directly attack the Christian worldview as racist. More specifically we reject the new ideas coming out of the Office of Social Justice and the Office of Race Relations that increasingly defines people by the color of their skin. (example: new definition of “whiteness”, attached below)

**Overture 1: Ireton CRC overturns Classis Heartland to overturn Synod 2021 to retract the statement and delete it from all places it is published due to its violation of the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment.**

**Overture 2: Ireton CRC overturns Classis Heartland to overturn Synod 2021 to give an official reprimand to the signatories of the statement and to the COD for its approval.**

**Overture 3: Ireton CRC overturns Classis Heartland to overturn Synod 2021 to instruct denominational employees and agencies to end all publications of statements of this sort that have not been duly approved by Synod.**

- Statements like these do not hold any ecclesiastical weight or offer anything helpful to public dialogue.
- Denominational agencies or employees do not have the authority to make declarations or statements of this sort.
- Statements like these actually hinder the relationship between our local church and the denomination, as well as the ability of our church to have positive influence with the people of our community who recognize the statement to be a sinful act.

- Denominationally we should be thoughtful, wise, holy and gracious in our statements even at the expense of seeming less relevant or timely.

### **Support of Smaller Ministry Share System**

Secondly, we disapprove of this method of funding ministry together. The Executive Director of the denomination has stated for many years that our ministry share system is broken. The denomination has reported that they only bring in about half of what is budgeted when considering ministry shares. We understand that something needs to change. We understand that. However, our denomination has allowed our ministry shares to balloon with no correction to the point where we are asked to contribute double or more of what nearly all other denominations ask. Clearly some sort of adjustment was needed.

But we disapprove of this method of funding ministry together. Our denominational ministries are increasingly becoming large parachurch organizations that seek most of their funding from individual donors instead of congregations. We believe the denominational ministry offices need to be funded by ministry shares, not individual donations.

We do not wish to withhold any funding from our missionaries, so we will hold offerings that will go specifically to the work of our missionaries and hope we are able to bless our missionaries with additional gifts because of this. In order to report these offerings that are received in the budget, we will create a new line item called the Special Missions Fund. The Special Missions Fund will also receive any general fund offerings that we have beyond our usual local and classis financial obligations. The budgeted amount for the Special Missions Fund will be approximately equal to the 2020 Denominational Ministry Share.

**Overture 4: Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture Synod 2021 to return to a ministry share system.**

**Overture 5: Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture Synod 2021 to reduce ministry shares to \$100 per active member restructure denominational ministry accordingly.**

**Overture 6: Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture Synod to approve the Statement on Human Sexuality and consider it to hold confessional weight.**

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Statement About the Deaths of George Floyd Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor

Website: <https://network.crcna.org/racial-reconciliation/crcna-statement-about-deaths-george-floyd-ahmaud-arbery-and-breonna-taylor>

Racism is sin.

We must all stand up and speak, work, and preach against the sin of racism. This is not political action; it is a biblical position. Biblical and theological foundations for this faith-based vision can be found in [“God’s Diverse and Unified Family”](#) (adopted by Synod 1996, also available in [Spanish](#) and [Korean](#)).

As denominational leaders in the Christian Reformed Church in North America, we grieve with the families of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd. We also recognize that they were killed because they were seen through a lens of racism. While these incidents create moments of crisis in the lives of non-black people, they actually expose centuries-long patterns of racism and prejudice in the United States that are lived every day by people of color.

These high profile cases are not anomalies. They are not simply the result of some rogue police officers. Instead, they underline the systemic nature of racism and its pervasiveness in our culture. George Floyd is one among way too many African American men disrespected as image bearers of God in the US. And in Canada, there are similar systemic realities that result in precious children of the Creator taken too soon.

The CRC's Office of Race Relations has a 50-year history of working with congregations and collaborating in the public square on issues of racialized injustice. Most recently leaders from congregations and classes in the United States and Canada have asked the Office of Race Relations about actions to take in response to recent killings.

We thank God for this interest, but we also understand that the news cycle will soon move on. It is imperative that, as a church and as individual Christians, we remain focused on the socialized beliefs and assumptions that perpetuate such racist acts, even when the media has moved on to the next news story. Racism is a stronghold in our countries that will not go away overnight. The remedy is a commitment to sanctification. We invite you to walk with us in this sanctification process.

Each of us—pastors, leaders, church members, and classes—must ask ourselves questions like these:

- What is God saying to change us, heal us, renew us?
- What common narratives will this moment change?
- How much priority will we give to anti-racist spiritual formation?
- What will it mean to have a Reformed world and life view in responding to racialized inequality?
- Will we allow ourselves to be crucified with Christ, so that we no longer live, but Christ lives in us?

These recent killings have exposed racism to our collective attention. Some of us have participated in peaceful protests, but racism has not gone away. Turning from it toward equity and love will require remembering who we are in Christ, memorializing the murdered cloud of witnesses, taking the historical blood-stained sins to the cross, and raising our eyes to the hope of Jesus leading us to a beloved community.

This may be easily said, but it will require a ministry commitment to humility, kenosis, education, conversation and action for it to be realized. Most of all, it will require sacrifice, especially for white members of our community. Pursuing a change like this will be costly. Yet, we believe that such sacrifice is not only necessary, it also reflects the type of sacrificial love Jesus showed most gloriously on the cross.

So, let us allow ourselves to be enabled by the Spirit to take action. Let us sacrifice and die to ourselves, for the sake of love of brothers and sisters, who must live with racism directed against them every day.

Below are some suggested actions that you—particularly our white sisters and brothers—can take individually, communally, and systemically. Please join us in moving beyond “thoughts and prayers” to truly becoming a church of reconciliation and justice.

Your partners in ministry,

Carol Bremer-Bennett, World Renew - US

Kevin DeRaaf, Resonate Global Mission - Canada

Mike Hogeterp, Centre for Public Dialogue

Sam Huizenga, Raise Up Global Ministries

Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, World Renew - Canada

Zachary King, Resonate Global Mission - U.S.

David Koll, Candidacy

Michael LeRoy, Calvin University

Jul Medenblik, Calvin Theological Seminary

Bonnie Nicholas, Safe Church Ministry

Denise L. Posie, Leadership Diversity

Sarah Roelofs, Chaplaincy and Care Ministry

Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director

Chris Schoon, Faith Formation Ministries

Kurt Selles, Back to God Ministries International

Mark Stephenson, Race Relations / Social Justice / Disability Concerns

Lis Van Harten, Congregational Services

Cecil vanNiejenhuis, Pastor Church Resources

Colin P. Watson Sr., Executive Director, CRCNA

**Suggested ways for church leaders and congregations to spiritually discern and take actions to be anti-racist:**

(Many of the links below are to resources created by CRCNA ministries. Note that for those that were produced outside the denomination, we do not necessarily endorse every link or every statement on their websites).

- Personal:
  - Use resources such as [those on the Network](#) and the [Office of Race Relations \(ORR\) website](#) to learn about racism and whiteness.

- Host a socially-distanced watch party of [Just Mercy, based upon Bryan Stevenson’s book](#). You can rent it for free during the month of June through any digital movie platform.
- Take the suggested steps and resources of others on your journey of racial awakening and pursuing racial justice. Here are a few that were recommended to us:
  - [75 Things White People Can Do For Racial Justice](#)
  - [Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources](#)
  - [Anti-Racism Resources For White People](#)
  - [100 Ways That You Can Take Action Against Racism Right Now](#) (US specific)
- Actively listen to the voices of people of color, hearing their pain, frustration, anger, and fear. Follow Black leaders on social media and read books written by Black authors (see [ORR website](#) and “suggested steps” links above).
- Give financial support to marginalized communities of color through entities such as the [National Bail Fund Network](#), [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#), and the [DACA Renewal Fund](#)
- Communal:
  - Get involved with organizations in your community already doing racial justice work; consider local chapters of [Showing Up For Racial Justice](#), [Black Lives Matter](#), and [Movimiento Cosecha](#).
  - Work with your church leadership to make and share a statement condemning race-based violence and lamenting alongside our Black siblings in Christ.
  - Host ORR and OSJ for workshops on [racism, whiteness, cultural intelligence, immigration](#), and [policy advocacy](#). Virtual workshops are available upon request.
  - Do a book study with your congregation using the books recommended by [ORR](#) and in the “suggested steps” links above.
  - Add anti-racism to your worship practices. Resources have been curated by the [Calvin Institute for Christian Worship](#). Use in your worship service [the prayers and litany](#) offered on June 3 by the Office of Social Justice (OSJ) Do Justice Prayers.
- Systemic:
  - Contact your local elected officials about police reforms that can be made in your city. For those in the U.S. one, campaign you might consider is [8 Can’t Wait](#)
  - Take action with [Campaign Zero](#) to contact U.S. state and federal elected officials about passing legislation that addresses police violence

- Encourage voter registration ([U.S](#) | [Canada](#)) in your community and work against [voter disenfranchisement](#)
- Vote in any and all elections, for all governmental levels of leadership (not just federal, but local level, too!), and [encourage others](#) to do so as well through voter registration and education on [voting rights](#) (this resource U.S. only).
- Attend your elected officials' town hall meetings and ask what they are doing to promote racial justice and equity in their policymaking
- [Subscribe to the OSJ's action alerts](#) or the [Centre for Public Dialogue's action alerts](#) to receive to your inbox opportunities to communicate with your elected officials about social and racial justice issues

To learn more about how to advocate on social and racial justice issues, consider hosting the CPD/OSJ [Faith In Action](#) workshop at your church.

#### Resources about Whiteness

Website: <https://www.crcna.org/race/resources>

“Just as the inferiority complexes that racism creates in people of color are distortions of our God-given identities, the superiority complexes created for white people in these systems of racism also distort our God-given identities. This is not the full and abundant life that God has for us.

Whiteness is more than the color of someone's skin—when we use the word “whiteness”, we are referring to the system of thinking (and the social structures built on this system of thinking) that values the cultures, bodies, and contributions of people with white skin above those of people of color. These systems were constructed over generations--there's plenty to learn and unlearn so that we can be free to live into the abundant life God has for us! [Here are some resources we recommend to get you started »](#)”

# Classical Education Committee Summary

Tuesday, Oct 20 & Wednesday, Jan 13<sup>th</sup> 2021 1:30pm Calvary CRC, Orange City

Members: Rev. Mark Klompien, Rev. Phil Westra, Rev. Aaron Gonzalez

## **I. PROVIDING CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **1. Timothy Leadership Training (Caring for God's People)**

- i. Will be held via Zoom beginning April 7<sup>th</sup> for 8 weeks (Wednesdays 6-8pm).
- ii. Will send out bulletin announcements before and after classis and have strong promotion during classis meeting.

### **2. Dordt Pastor's Day**

- i. C.E.C. will coordinate with Dordt concerning their next planning session and communicate with Classis concerning any future events.

### **3. Pastoral Book Study ("From Weakness to Strength" by Scott Sauls)**

- i. Later this year, Rev. Phil Westra plans to lead a study of the book—both in person and via ZOOM—during the weekly gathering of Heartland pastors.
- ii. C.E.C. Will purchase one book for every minister in Classis Heartland.

## **II. SUPERVISION ON BEHALF OF CLASSIS HEARTLAND**

### **1. Prayer Coordinator**

- i. Barb Hibma will serve as prayer coordinator for Synod 2021

### **2. Minn-I-Kota Youth Network (M.I.K.)**

- i. Will propose to Classical Interim Committee (C.I.C.) that one member of the M.I.K. board be replaced with a member from the Classical Education Committee (C.E.C.) and thus serve as a liaison for both the C.E.C. and Classis Heartland to the M.I.K.

### **3. Safe-Church**

- i. Will propose to (C.I.C.) that one member of the Safe-Church board be replaced with a member from the (C.E.C.) and thus serve as a liaison for both the C.E.C. and Classis Heartland to the Safe-Church ministry.

## **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **1. C.E.C. Bylaws**

- i. Will "clean-up" and rewrite.

## **IV. NEXT MEETING: April 7@1:30pm**

**Ballot for Classis Heartland  
Tuesday, March 2, 2021**

**CLASSICAL POSITIONS**

**Stated Clerk – (vote for 1)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Rev. Phillip Westra  
Sanborn CRC, Sanborn, Iowa

**Classical Treasurer (vote for 1)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Randy Smit  
Calvary CRC, Orange City, Iowa

**Stated Clerk Alternate (vote for 1)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Ed Starckenburg  
Immanuel CRC, Orange City, Iowa

**Classical Education Committee Alternate (vote for 1)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Rev. Todd Zuidema  
Director of Church Relations (Dordt University)

Classis Heartland Stewardship Committee Agenda  
February 12, 2021

- I. Mike Van Surksum (Classical Treasurer), Chris Dekkers (Lay Rep.), Scott Kooiman(Lay Rep.), Rev. Scott Van Voorst (Chair).
- II. New Business
  - A. Fall 2020 Minutes reviewed and approved- Motion to approve as presented was made by Scott K- Motion passed.
  - B. Reviewed 2020 Statement of activities and Ministry Share Analysis for 2020 – Unanimously approved as presented
    - 1. Based on current accountability and mutual support model for following up with churches, we will request response from a representative at the spring Classis meeting from the following churches: Ireton, Pathway, Northern Lighthouse, and Sibley
  - C. CSC Team size
    - 1. Classis Home Missions and Classis Nominating Committee are working to have someone dual represent CSC and CHM
    - 2. Potential shift in responsibilities was discussed, but no change took place.
  - D. Classis Treasurer Transition
    - 1. Mike Van Surksum has set things up well for the transition and has offered an appropriate level of assistance for the transition
- III. Old Business
  - 1. Classis Credit Card- Updates and transition needs may have to be taken care of in between meetings or with a special meeting upon the transition of the Classis treasurer and the potential transition of the Classis Stated Clerk.
- IV. Reports
  - A. Classical Treasurer- Reported on current work. Verbal report was accepted for information.

Respectfully Submitted February 15 by Rev. Scott Van Voorst

**STATED CLERK REPORT**  
**CLASSIS HEARTLAND**  
**MARCH 2, 2021**

- Tasks related to the September 26, 2020, meeting:
  - Completed and published the minutes and “Report to the Churches.”
  - Submitted synodical deputy forms to Synodical Services / CRCNA.
  - Updated the “Servants of Classis Heartland.”
  
- Tasks related to the March 2, 2021, meeting:
  - Prepared and published the agenda and supplemental materials.
  - Received and reviewed the credentials from the councils.
  - Worked with the Program Coordinator to contact the host church and to prepare the order of the day.
  
- Other tasks
  - Since the schedule of host churches was completed in September, worked with the Interim Committee to create a fresh balanced schedule for host churches.
  - Contacted neighboring classes to ascertain their regular meeting schedules, and to help the Interim Committee review its options for meetings.
  - Forwarded materials to the churches from denominational agencies and ministries supported by Classis Heartland.
  - Took advantage of resources for stated clerks offered by the AI Postma, Classis Renewal Consultant, CRCNA.

Rev. Robert Drenten,  
Stated Clerk, Classis Heartland

Balanced Schedule - Host Churches  
Classis Heartland  
March 2021 Edition

<u>March</u>	<u>September</u>
2021 - Orange City: First	Sibley
2022 - Sheldon: First	Hawarden
2023 - Le Mars: Calvin Ministries	Kansas City Area Churches &
2024 - Orange City: Immanuel	Sioux City: Siouxland Unity
2025 - Hull: First	Sergeant Bluff: Friendship Community
2026 - Orange City: Calvary	Omaha: Prairie Lane
2027 - Hospers: First	Ocheyedan
2028 - Sheldon: Immanuel	Ireton
2029 - Hull: Hope	Lincoln Area Churches
2030 - Orange City/Sheldon: Living Water Comm.	Sanborn

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Notes:

1. Host churches in March are nearer the center of the church density in classis. Host churches in September tend to be toward the parameter of classis.
2. If a church wishes to host a classis meeting for a special occasion, that church is encouraged to trade within the host month of churches to which they belong. The stated clerk will have final responsibility of keeping the schedule up to date to ensure each church has its opportunity to host classis before a new cycle begins.
3. The chair of classis will ordinarily be assigned to a minister of a church in a rotation following the alphabetical order of the churches in the Yearbook of the CRCNA.