

**Meeting Minutes for Classis Heartland**  
Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Orange City, IA  
Wednesday, September 20, 2023

**Article 01: Constitution of Classis**

After delegates checked in with the stated clerk Rev. Kevin Muyskens asked first time delegates to sign the Covenant of Officebearers, designated below by with an \*. After this Rev. Muyskens welcomed delegates and read a letter from the council of First CRC of Sheldon protesting the seating of female deacons. With all this, Rev. Muyskens declared classis constituted with the following officers and delegates.

A. Classis Meeting Officers

Chair: Rev. Kevin Muyskens  
Vice-Chair: Rev. Ben Wiersma  
Stated Clerk: Rev. Phillip Westra  
Treasurer: Mr. Randy Smit

B. Classis Meeting Delegates (M = minister delegate, E = elder delegate, D = deacon delegate)

Calvary CRC – Orange City, IA: Rev. John Klompier (M), Mr. Duane Pals (E), and Mr. Mitch VanOtterloo\* (D)  
Calvin CRC – LeMars, IA: Rev. Brian Hofman (M), Mr. Jerry Reed\* (E), and Ms. Lynda Bulthuis\* (D)  
F Street Church – Lincoln, NE: Pastor Jeff Heerspink (M) and Pastor Bill Thornton (E)  
First CRC – Hospers, IA: Rev. Aaron Gonzalez (M) and Mr. Ed Klynsma\* (E)  
First CRC – Hull, IA: Mr. Rod TeKrony\* (E), Mr. Galen Kroese\* (E), and Mr. Brett Van Middendorp\* (D)  
First CRC – Orange City, IA: Mr. Curt Ahrenholz (E), Mr. Mark Kuiken (E), and Mr. Nate Zuiderveen (D)  
First CRC – Sheldon, IA: Rev. Brian Dunn (M), Mr. Denny De Jong (E), and Mr. Cory Jansen\* (D)  
Hawarden CRC – Hawarden, IA: Mr. Dan Byker (E) and Mr. Bob Daale (deacon)  
Hope CRC – Hull, IA: Pastor Keith Hoekstra (M), Mr. Darwin Boer (E), and Mr. Scott Westra (D)  
Immanuel CRC – Orange City, IA: Rev. Cody Statema\* (M), Mr. Dan Schiebout\* (E), and Mr. Rob Kroeze (D)  
Immanuel CRC – Sheldon, IA: Rev. Kevin Muyskens (M), Mr. Dane Buren\* (E), and Mr. Shawn Wassenaar (D)  
Ireton CRC – Ireton, IA: Rev. Nathan Kuperus (M), Mr. Don Van Sloten (E), and Mr. Zach Fedders\* (D)  
Living Water Church – Orange City and Sheldon, IA: Rev. Jesse Walhof (M), Mr. Jay Schemper\* (D), and Mr. Gawen Zomermaand (D)  
New City Church – Kansas City, MO: Rev. Andrew Vanden Akker (M)  
Northern Lighthouse Church – Lincoln, NE: Rev. Sam Keyzer (M) and Mr. Jon Keyzer (E)  
Ocheyedan CRC – Ocheyedan, IA: Rev. Lee Khang\* (M), Mr. David Bootsma (E), and Mr. Chris Slagter (D)  
Pathway Community Church – Olathe, KS: No delegates present

Prairie Lane CRC – Omaha, NE: Rev. Chad Van Ginkel (M) and Mr. Mike Mruz\* (D)  
Sanborn CRC – Sanborn, IA: Rev. Phillip Westra (M), Mr. Dave Hofman (E), and  
Mr. Cyle Carlson (D)  
Sibley CRC – Sibley, IA: Rev. Ben Wiersma (M), Mr. Jeff VandeGriend (E), and  
Mr. Darrell Teerink (D)

C. Classis Meeting Guests

Rev. Zachary King (General Secretary CRCNA)  
Ms. Trudy Ash (Thrive)  
Rev. Scott Van Voorst (Cornerstone Prison Church)  
Dr. Randy Smit (Classis Treasurer)  
Mr. Loren Veldhuizen (Council of Delegates)  
Rev. Gary Nyenhuis (Pastor at Living Water in Orange City)  
Rev. Jordan Helming (First CRC in Orange City)  
Pastor Keo Phommarath (Siouxland Unity)  
Ms. Barb Hibma (Classis Prayer Coordinator)  
Rev. Steve Boersma  
Rev. Todd Zuidema (Dordt University)  
Rev. Lora Copely (Areopagus Campus Ministry at ISU)  
Lee De Groot (Minn-I-Kota Youth Network)  
Dr. Tara Boer (Safe Church Team Coordinator)

**Article 02: Opening Worship and Meditations**

Rev. Zachary King lead us with a meditation based on John 12:20–26, guiding us with the question of how God calls us to surrender or give up, as well as what God is calling us to begin new. After a prayer, a worship team from Immanuel CRC lead us in singing “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” and “Amazing Grace.”

**Article 03: Classical Interim Committee (CIC)**

- A. Rev. Kevin Muyskens welcomed new ministers to our classis, Rev. Aaron Greydanus, Rev. Lee Khang, and Rev. Cody Statema. He also welcomed other guests to classis (listed above).  
*Rev. Ben Wiersma offered a prayer for recently arrived ministers and their churches.*
- B. Rev. Nate Kuperus drew classis’ attention to written reports from the CIC and fielded any questions people had.  
Motion: Approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee. **Adopted.**
- C. Rev. Kuperus read the request from Hawarden CRC to approve the retirement of Rev. Steve Boersma from their letter on page 5 of the agenda.  
Motion: Approve the request from Hawarden CRC to grant the privilege of retirement for Rev. Steve Boersma. **Adopted.**  
*Rev. Kevin Muyskens offered a prayer of blessing for Steve in his retirement.*
- D. Rev. Phillip Westra directed the delegates’ attention to his written report on page 6 of the agenda and highlighted the following items received from credentials.
1. From Calvary CRC in Orange City: How many meetings per month are required of your officebearers?
  2. From First CRC in Hull: Rev. Aaron Greydanus will be installed at Hull First CRC on October 1<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 PM. All Classis members present here and their congregation are welcome to attend.

3. From First CRC in Orange City: Continue classical pulpit supply while our church is vacant. Timely reports of classis meetings.
4. From Sanborn CRC: We are curious if our congregations have lost or gained attendance through COVID, and if some members remain at home to listen to worship.

The chair stated that Items 1 and 4 will be taken up later in the meeting (See Art. 12 below).

Motion: Approve the work of the stated clerk. **Adopted.**

- E. We receive as information the communication from denominational leaders on pages 7–8 in the agenda.

#### **Article 04: Presentation by Rev. Zachary King, General Secretary of the CRCNA**

Rev. King spoke to the four main goals as articulated in our denominational ministry plan, “Our Journey 2025.” First, we are working to draw near to God through vibrant Spiritual Disciplines. Second, we are seeking to enhance intergenerational ministry. Third, we are partnering with the growing ethnic minority congregations that are part of the CRCNA. Finally, our churches are focusing on the mission of gospel proclamation and living. He also reviewed highlights from Synod 2023. He fielded some questions from delegates and Ms. Barb Hibma lead in a prayer of blessing and guidance for him.

#### **Article 05: Classical Stewardship Committee (CSC)**

- A. Rev. Nate Kuperus drew delegates’ attention to the CSC report on page 9. He noted that the funds received from Jamie Negus were used for our general fund to help cover expenses in holding a future classis meeting that will require increased travel costs.
- B. Dr. Randy Smit drew delegates attention to the ministry shares plan on page 10. The reason there is a slight increase in ministry shares is due to a slight decrease in membership.
  1. Motion: Approve the work of the Classical Stewardship Committee. **Adopted.**
  2. Motion: Approve the ministry share budget as presented. **Tabled.**

#### **Article 06: Rev. Todd Zuidema, Director of Church Relations at Dordt University**

The residential student population 1,526 this year, the largest number of students Dordt has ever had. Their total enrollment is just over 1,900. Dordt is increasingly drawing students from beyond the CRC, has recently built more residence halls, and plans to build a new dining hall in the near future. They continue to develop their vocational programs in partnership with local businesses and embrace the opportunities to deepen the faith of their students.

#### **Article 07: Classical Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT)**

Rev. Chad Van Ginkel drew the delegates’ attention to the brief written report handed out at the meeting. We are not currently supporting any students and have funds to support those who may request it in the near future. The committee will be working with the stated clerk to update the contact information of those who exhort in our classis as well as Classis Iakota.

Motion: Approve the work of the Classical Ministry Leadership Team. **Adopted.**

#### **Article 08: Examination of Pastor Jon Keyzer for the Office of Commissioned Pastor at Northern Lighthouse Church**

- A. Chad Van Ginkel verbally endorsed Jon Keyzer for this position at Northern Lighthouse and reviewed the learning plan he has recently completed.

- B. Pastor Bill Thornton spoke about his and Rev. Gary Nyenhuis' visit of a recent worship service, noting his clear and engaging preaching, as well as his love for the people he is serving.
- C. Motion: Proceed with the examination of Pastor John Keyzer for the office of Commissioned Pastor. **Adopted.**
- D. Rev. John Klompien lead an oral examination of Pastor Jon Keyzer through the topics of his personal faith story, Biblical knowledge, understanding of Reformed doctrine, and matters of practical ministry. This was followed by a time of questions from delegates.
- E. Motion: Approve Pastor Jon Keyzer for the office of commissioned pastor at Northern Lighthouse Church. **Adopted.**
- F. With delegates gathered around Pastor Jon Keyzer, Rev. Sam Keyzer lead classis in a prayer of blessing for his ongoing spiritual formation and ministry.

#### **Article 09: Conversation and Prayer Time**

Rev. Kevin Muyskens and Ms. Barb Hibma asked delegates to sit with others not from their own congregation. First, participants were asked consider and discuss how our churches express their identity and how they show compassion. Second, participants were asked to pray together for our churches.

#### **Article 10: Classical Home Missions Committee (CHMC)**

- A. Pastor Keith Hoekstra asked delegates to note the written report on pages 11–12 in the agenda.
- B. Pastor Keo Phommarath shared with classis how Siouxland Unity is reaching out to people of Asian heritage who have previously had a significant Buddhist influence. As they teach about the gospel of Jesus Christ, the church is also helping many with cultural and citizenship issues. He expressed his appreciation to be connected with fellow CRC ministers, shared their plan to raise more of their own funds, and responded to some questions.  
*Rev. Lee Khang offered a prayer of blessing for Pastor Keo and Siouxland Unity Church.*
- C. Pastor Jeff Heerspink shared his joy about Pastor Jon Keyzer's work and the organization of F Street. Resonate is working to raise up local leaders and equip them in their own contexts. The ministry of Resonate has many resources to help churches recognize and embrace opportunities for gospel witness in their own neighborhoods.
- D. Rev. Lora Copely reported on her work with Areopagus Campus Ministry at Iowa State University. They began a student-led steering team, are championing studies about sexuality and gender, are connecting well with international students, and have shared the gospel with people who had never heard it before.  
*Rev. Phillip Westra offered a prayer of blessing for Areopagus and Resonate.*
- E. Rev. Scott Van Voorst reminded our classis that Cornerstone Prison Church at the Sioux Falls Penitentiary has been organized for 10 years and engaged in ministry for 20 years. They continue to maintain various avenues to connect with inmates but changes in leadership and state policies have brought many barriers. The prison has decreased how much inmates can work, meet with groups for Bible studies, and are not listening to input from people outside the prison who serve them. While they cannot offer what they used to in the prison, inmates continue to sacrifice much to participate in their church.  
*Pastor Keith Hoekstra offered a prayer for Rev. Scott Van Voorst and Cornerstone.*
- F. Motion: Approve the work of the Classical Home Missions Committee. **Adopted.**

### **Article 11: Classical Education Committee (CEC)**

- A. Rev. Aaron Gonzalez highlighted the underlined items from their written report on page 13 of the agenda. The CEC recommends congregational leaders utilize Timothy Leadership Training for their growth, encourages our classis to embrace opportunities that Dordt University offers by way of educational events, and is working with the Abide Project to host a future event.
- B. Dr. Tara Boer, leader of our classis' Safe Church Team, explained their role is to come alongside churches to help develop and improve safe church policies. She is working to create a list of contacts so she has a safe church contact for each church. Please fill out who should be that contact from your church with a paper form or the online Google document the stated clerk will send out as a follow-up to this classis meeting.
- C. Rev. Aaron Gonzalez spoke about the good work Ms. Lee De Groot is doing with Minn-I-Kota Youth Network. They had a successful kick-off at Thunder Road in Sioux Falls and are planning a regional youth leaders training event. Remember to support and mentor the youth in your congregations.
- D. Motion: Approve the work of the Classical Education Committee. **Adpoted.**

Motion: Take the motion to approve ministry share budget as presented off the table. **Adopted.**

Motion: Approve the classical ministry share budget as presented. **Adopted.**

### **Article 12: Questions from Classical Credentials**

Taking up the two questions from the clerk report (letter D under Article 3), the chair led a survey by raising hands to answer the following two questions.

- A. How many meetings per month are required of your officebearers?
  - Regularly 4 meetings per month – 1 church
  - Regularly 3 meetings per month – 5 churches
  - Regularly 2 meetings per month – 8 churches
  - Regularly 1 meeting per month – 5 churches
- B. [As restated by Rev. Westra on behalf of Sanborn CRC] How many families who used to participate in worship and fellowship in-person still only watch church activities online since COVID shutdowns even if they are healthy and able to participate in person?
  - 4 or more families – 2 churches
  - 3 families – 4 churches
  - 2 families – 2 churches
  - 1 family – 1 church

### **Article 13: Church Visitor and Regional Pastor Reports**

- A. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel and Rev. Sam Keyzer, church visitors to the north, reported they plan to begin a new round of regular visits next calendar year.
- B. Rev. Brian Dunn and Rev. Nate Kuperus, church visitors to the south, reported they also hope to begin a new round of regular church visits again soon.
- C. Rev. Brian Dunn, regional pastor to the north, recently held an event for pastors and their families.
- D. Rev. Sam Keyzer, regional pastor to the south, reported they met with Pastors in Kansas City once this past year and they continue to hold monthly meetings between Lincoln and Omaha. *Rev. Brian Hofman led classis in a prayer for our church visitors, our regional pastors, and our educational endeavors as a classis.*

#### **Article 14: Classical Nominating Committee (CNC)**

- A. Rev. Brian Hofman reported that the CNC essentially created the ballot which was distributed to delegates (page 19 in the agenda). The stated clerk emailed churches and pastors seeking other nominees and did not receive any additional nominees. Rev. Hofman asked delegates if anyone had another nomination to make which we could add to the ballot as a write-in. No nominations were made.
- B. Motion: Approve all those nominated on the ballot via a voice vote. **Adopted.**
- C. Motion: Appoint all nominees on the ballot to their positions. **Adopted.**

#### **Article 15: Church Counselor Reports (CHMC)**

- A. Rev. Nate Kuperus, church counselor for Hawarden CRC, shared that the congregation continues to be engaged in their search process.
- B. Rev. Brian Dunn, church counselor for First CRC in Hull, informed the delegates Rev. Aaron Greydanus has accepted the congregation's call to serve as their next pastor. His installation service is scheduled for October 1<sup>st</sup> as noted in First CRC's credentials (see Art. 3, Item D, number 2 above).
- C. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel, church counselor for Northern Lighthouse in Lincoln, said the church will next hold an installation service for Pastor Jon Keyzer in light of his sustained examination.
- D. Rev. Ben Wiersma, church counselor for Ocheyedan CRC, informed classis that Rev. Lee Khang has accepted their call and was installed as their new pastor on August 27, 2023.  
Motion: Declare Rev. Ben Wiersma's service to Ocheyedan CRC as their church counselor to be completed. **Adopted.**
- E. Rev. John Klompier, church counselor for First CRC of Orange City, shared the congregation continues their search process. He provided the clerk with a written report.
- F. Rev. John Klompier, church counselor for Immanuel CRC of Orange City, informed classis that Rev. Cody Statema accepted their call and was installed on August 20, 2023. He provided the clerk with a written report.  
Motion: Declare Rev. John Klompier's service to Immanuel CRC of Orange City as their church counselor to be completed. **Adopted.**

#### **Article 16: Other Written Reports**

The chair, Rev. Kevin Muyskens, reminds delegates to read written reports provided in the agenda from Resonate (page 20), World Renew (pages 21 – 22), and Calvin Theological Seminary (page 23).

#### **Article 14: Adjournment**

- A. Motion: Adjourn the meeting. **Adopted.**
- B. The co-chair Rev. Ben Wiersma closed the meeting in prayer.
- C. Delegates sang the doxology together.
- D. Next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 2, 2024 and the location is still to be determined.

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