

***Acts of Classis Heartland***  
***Christian Reformed Church in North America***  
**First Christian Reformed Church**  
**Orange City, Iowa**  
**Tuesday, March 2, 2021**

001. **Constitution of Classis.**

A. Roll Call.

Rev. Mark Vande Zande, minister of the host church, welcomes all to Classis Heartland. Rev. Robert Drenten, stated clerk, leads the roll call. Rev. Vande Zande declares classis constituted.

<u>CHURCHES</u>	<u>MINISTERS</u>	<u>ELDERS</u>	<u>DEACONS</u>
Hawarden	Rev. Mark Klompier	Mr. Brian Obbink	Mr. Bill Kingma
Hospers: First	Rev. Aaron Gonzalez	Mr. Hank Coulander	
Hull: First	Rev. Loren Kotman	Mr. Glen Scholten	Mr. Jon Scholten*
Hull: Hope		Mr. Stewart Vander Stoep	
		Mr. Alden Altena	
Ireton	Rev. Nate Kuperus	Mr. Art Hamming	Mr. Dave Wielenga*
Kansas City: New City**			
Le Mars: Calvin		Mr. Bob Hughes	Mr. Jeremy Camp
		Mr. Ron De Kok*	
Lincoln: Northern Lighthouse	Rev. Sam Keyzer	Mr. Jon Keyzer	
Lincoln: F Street Church	Pastor Jeff Heerspink(C.P.)#	Mr. Bill Thornton*#	
Ocheyedan	Rev. Tom De Does	Mr. Mike Bosma	Mr. Corey Slagter
Olathe: Pathway**			
Omaha: Prairie Lane	Rev. Chad Van Ginkel	Mr. Duane Elgersma	Mr. Brian Kramer
Orange City: Calvary	Rev. Al Kuiper	Mr. Bill Foreman	Mr. Bruce Vanden Brink
Orange City: First	Rev. Mark Vande Zande	Mr. Ryan Raines*	
Orange City: Immanuel		Mr. Gerry Bomgaars	Mr. Dan Bonnema
		Mr. Kevin Tesch	
Orange City/Sheldon:	Rev. Jesse Walhof	Mr. Arlyn Schaap	
Living Water Community Church			
Sanborn	Rev. Phillip Westra*	Mr. Gerald Alons	Mr. Stefan Sybesma*
Sheldon: First		Mr. Mark Kleinwolterink	Mr. Dallas Granstra*
		Mr. Darin Granstra	
Sheldon: Immanuel	Rev. Kevin Muyskens	Mr. Bart Peters*	Mr. Joel Gesink*
Sergeant Bluff:	Rev. Scott Van Voorst#		
Friendship Community Church			
Sibley		Mr. Henry Eekhoff	Mr. Darrel Teerink
		Mr. Jeff Vander Griend	

\*Signs the *Covenant for Officebearers*.

#Seated as an emerging church delegate, as requested in the credentials of the sponsoring council.

\*\*Absent with notice.

B. Welcome and Opening Worship.

Rev. Vande Zande introduces the theme for the meeting, "Milestones." He notes that Calvary Christian Reformed Church, Orange City, marks its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year; and that First Christian Reformed Church, Orange City, celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Rev. Vande Zande reads Lamentations 3:19-24 and Proverbs 3:5-6, focusing on the Lord's faithfulness and the Lord's call to be faithful.

Rev. John Klompier of Calvary CRC, Orange City, offers a meditation on Luke 9:51-62, by means of video. The meditation focuses on Jesus' resolute journey to the cross and resurrection. He encourages the churches to press on in ministry with the same resolve and hope.

Classis sings, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," "Trust and Obey," and "I Will Extol You, O My God," accompanied by Ms. Vi Kuiken on the organ.

C. Prayer and Mission Report.

Rev. Kevin Muyskens, Classis Program Coordinator, guides delegates in a time of prayer focused on the milestones their congregations have marked.

D. Officers of Classis.

Rev. Tom De Does, Chairman	Rev. Robert Drenten, Stated Clerk
Rev. Chad Van Ginkel, Vice Chairman	Mr. Mike Van Surksun, Classis Treasurer

E. Functionaries and those reporting to Classis Heartland on behalf of their ministries:

Rev. Dan De Groot	Synodical Deputy, Classis Iakota
Rev. Brad Meinders	Synodical Deputy, Classis Central Plains
Rev. Roger Sparks	Synodical Deputy, Classis Minnkota
Mr. Rod De Boer	World Renew, Classis Heartland Trustee
Ms. Trudy Ash	Faith Formation Ministries, Regional Catalyzer
Ms. Jill Friend	Faith Formation Ministries, Regional Catalyzer
Ms. Lee De Groot	Minn-I-Kota Youth Network, Director
Ms. Tara Boer	Classis Heartland-Iakota Safe Church Team
Rev. Robert Drenten	Classis Heartland, Stated Clerk
Mr. Mike Van Surksun	Classis Heartland, Treasurer

002. **Video Presentation – “Charity Auto Repair.”**

Rev. Muyskens introduces a video presentation from Northern Lighthouse, Lincoln. “Charity Auto Repair” ministers to their neighbors in Lincoln, providing an opportunity to share Jesus Christ with them. Their growing ministry is in need of more space and tools. They have set a fundraising goal of \$100,000, and they invite the churches to consider donating to this cause.

003. **World Renew – Mr. Rod De Boer.**

Mr. De Boer serves on the board of World Renew on behalf of Classis Heartland. He offers recent ministry highlights. He reports that COVID interfered with staff travel this past year. Ministry continues especially through partner organizations around the world. Disaster Relief Services (DRS) continues though hampered by COVID. He notes the loss of James Mutoigo in January, the husband of Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, director of World Renew Canada. He thanks Classis Heartland for their offering support and invites churches to contact him with questions or to explore ministry opportunities.

004. **Nominating Committee – Rev. Mark Vande Zande.**

Rev. Vande Zande reports for the committee.

A. He notes the appointment of Ms. Lauri Poppema as the Classis Heartland Regional Advocate for Disability Concerns.

B. *Recommendation* – To approve the ballot of single nominees for positions in Classis Heartland *Adopted.*  
The following are appointed to serve Classis Heartland for terms ending September 30, 2023:

Rev. Phillip Westra -	Stated Clerk
Dr. Ed Starckenburg -	Stated Clerk, Alt.
Mr. Randy Smit -	Classical Treasurer
Rev. Todd Zuidema -	Classical Education Committee, Alt.

C. It is moved to approve work of committee. *Adopted.*

005. **Classical Ministry Leadership Team – Rev. Loren Kotman.** (missing from agenda – need to submit with minutes)

Rev. Kotman presents the work of the CMLT to classis.

A. The CMLT has interviewed Jamie Negus, student at Sioux Falls Seminary, and submitted Classis Report #1 of 2 to the Candidacy Committee (CRCNA) for the 24 Month Candidacy Program. The CMLT has also completed a classis recommendation for Mr. Ben Wiersma, which has been submitted to the Candidacy Committee. Rev. Kotman also notes those granted license to exhort in Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota are available for pulpit supply in Classis Heartland.

B. *Recommendation* – That Classis Heartland awards \$5,000 to Mr. Jamie Negus as a 60% - time ministry student. *Adopted.*

C. It is moved to approve the work of the CMLT. *Adopted.*

Rev. Jesse Walhof leads in prayer for World Renew and for students under the care of CMLT.

006. **Classical Home Missions Committee** – *Rev. Kevin Muyskens.*

A. Rev. Muyskens reports on behalf of the CHMC, presenting their written report to classis. He highlights a resource from Resonate Global Missions Regional Leader, Rev. Peter Kelder. “Crossroads” is a tool for churches exploring their future. He also encourages churches to make use of the CHMC’s Grants for Established Churches. Grants up to \$1,000 are available.

B. It is moved to approve the work of the CHMC. *Adopted.*

007. **Overture: Church Order Article 14-b** – *Rev. Luke Wynja.*

A. Classis Heartland received a letter from Rev. Luke Wynja requesting release according to C.O. Art. 14-b. The council of First Christian Reformed Church of Sheldon also submitted communication supporting his request. Elder Darin Granstra of Firsts CRC, Sheldon, gives additional background. Rev. Wynja has joined Grace Covenant Church in the Minneapolis area and has accepted a call to ministry in the Presbyterian Church in America. It is moved to declare Rev. Luke Wynja honorably released from the office of Minister of the Word in the CRCNA. *Adopted.*

Synodical deputies Rev. Dan De Groot (Classis Iakota), Rev. Roger Sparks (Classis Minnkota), and Rev. Brad Meinders (Classis Central Plains) concur with the decision of Classis Heartland.

B. Rev. Kevin Muyskens offers a prayer for blessing upon the work and future journey of Rev. Luke and Julie Wynja, their family; and Sheldon First CRC and their future.

008. **Stated Clerk’s Report** – *Rev. Robert Drenten.*

A. Rev. Drenten presents his final report as stated clerk for Classis Heartland. He highlights the updated schedule for host churches and notes that a new schedule for meeting dates will soon be completed by the Classical Interim Committee. He also reports on the notations submitted by several churches on their credentials:

- |                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Ireton CRC             | - | Requests a routine visit by church visitors  |
| Calvin CRC, Le Mars    | - | Requests prayer for their search committee and guidance in their pastoral vacancy  |
| First CRC, Orange City | - | Notes celebrating their 150 <sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer  |
| Sanborn CRC            | - | Request that Rev. Phillip Westra not be considered for Synod 2021  |
| Immanuel CRC, Sheldon  | - | Requests that all overtures to Classis Heartland be included in the original agenda to allow councils to discuss them      |
| Sibley CRC             | - | Notes consulting with CHMC for assistance in revitalizing the church and requests prayer as they move forward in ministry. |

009. **Overtures to Synod.**

A. The councils of Calvary CRC, Orange City; Sanborn CRC; and Ireton CRC submitted overtures in support of the Human Sexuality Report which was to be considered by Synod 2021. Chairman Rev. De Does allows time for discussion of these related overtures. It is moved to table the overtures until the September 2021 meeting of Classis Heartland. *Adopted.*

Classis takes note of the desire to consolidate and unify the overtures. The chairman, noting the desires expressed in the discussion, encourages the councils submitting these overtures to explore collaboration in this matter.

B. Ireton Christian Reformed Church. Rev. Nathan Kuperus presents a series of overtures submitted by his council, regarding *Statement About the Deaths of George Floyd Ahmand Arbery, and Breonna Taylor.*

1. “Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture 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.”
2. “Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture Synod 2021 to give an official reprimand to the signatories of the statement and to the COD for its approval.”
3. “Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture 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.”

It is moved to divide the question into three separate overtures. *Adopted.*

After discussion, Ireton CRC withdraws these three overtures.

- C. Ireton Christian Reformed Church. Rev. Nathan Kuperus presents a series of overtures related to denominational ministry shares.
1. “Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture Synod 2021 to return to a ministry share system.”
  2. “Ireton CRC overtures Classis Heartland to overture Synod 2021 to reduce ministry shares to \$100 per active member (and to) restructure denominational ministry accordingly.”

After a time of discussion, Ireton CRC withdraws these two overtures.

010. **Faith Formation Ministries** – *Ms. Trudy Ash, Ms. Jill Friend, Rev. Mark Vande Zande.*

Ms. Ash and Ms. Friend, regional catalyzers for Faith Formation Ministries (CRCNA), with Rev. Vande Zande, lead an introduction to “Our Journey 2025,” a five-year exercise for churches. More information is available on the CRCNA website: [www.crcna.org/OurJourney](http://www.crcna.org/OurJourney)

Rev. Vande Zande closes the presentation and exercise with prayer. Rev. Jeff Heerspink next offers a prayer for the denomination.

011. **Minn-I-Kota Youth Network** – *Ms. Lee De Groot.*

Ms. De Groot, Director of MIK, addresses classis. She presents her written report for information. Information regarding the Junior High Retreat at Inspiration Hills Retreat Center is distributed to the delegates. MIK distributed care packages in lieu of events canceled due to COVID restrictions. Ms. De Groot also reports on follow-up conversations she had with individuals served by MIK in past years. Their responses confirmed the impact of youth ministry.

012. **Classical Stewardship Committee** – *Rev. Scott Van Voorst, Mr. Mike Van Surksum.*

A. Mr. Van Surksum, Classical Treasurer, presents his final report. He concludes his service since March 1998 at this meeting. He notes an increase in the balance of classical funds, largely due to decreased ministry activity in 2020 due to COVID. He encourages classis to take advantage of these resources by putting them to use in ministry.

1. It is moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report. *Adopted.*
2. Rev. Kevin Muyskens expresses appreciation and presents a gift from Classis Heartland to Mr. Van Surksum for his capable and faithful service.

013. **Noon Break.**

Elder Mike Bosma reads from 1 Thessalonians 5 and offers a prayer to close the morning session. Classis Heartland is in recess for noon lunch.

014. **Classical Stewardship Committee.**

B. Rev. Van Voorst reports for the CSC.

1. Churches paying less than full classical ministry shares are asked to speak to their shortfall. Ireton CRC and Sibley CRC attribute their shortfalls to discrepancies in membership totals. Pathway CRC, Olathe, had no report. Northern Lighthouse, Lincoln, attributes their shortfall to declines in giving due to COVID. The churches are thanked and encouraged in their contributions to classis ministries.
2. It is moved to approve the work of the CSC. *Adopted.*

015. **Heartland-Iakota Safe Church Team** – *Ms. Tara Boer.*

Ms. Boer, Director of the Classis Heartland-Classis Iakota Safe Church Team, addresses classis. Her team is available to help churches set best policies for safeguarding against abuse in ministry contexts. The team seeks to develop a culture within the churches where it is safe to disclose painful stories and to find help. She encourages the churches to make use of the “Circle of Grace” curriculum from the CRCNA to equip youth and adults to understand and deal with instances of abuse. She also makes classis aware of resources to address pornography.

016. **Prayer for Classis Heartland Ministry Leaders** – *Rev. Scott Van Voorst.*

Rev. Van Voorst leads delegates in a time of prayer for all classis leaders and functionaries. Special attention is given to the Safe Church Team ministry.

017. **Classical Education Committee** – *Rev. Aaron Gonzalez, Rev. Sam Keyzer.*

- A. Rev. Gonzalez reports for the CEC. He notes the Timothy Leadership Training being offered via “Zoom” for eight weeks beginning April 7, 2021. He also invites pastors to take advantage of a presentation by Dr. Preston Sprinkle at Dordt University. Dr. Sprinkle is an author and scholar who gives guidance for a Christian response to gender identity issues. Finally, CEC is providing the book, “From Weakness to Strength,” by Rev. Scott Sauls, to every pastor. Pastors will have an opportunity to discuss this book together in the future.

It is moved to approve the work of the CEC.

*Adopted.*

- B. Rev. Keyzer distributes an invitation for the upcoming Timothy Leadership Training. This is available to all members of the churches.

018. **Council of Delegates** – *Rev. Mark Vande Zande.*

Rev. Vande Zande, Classis Heartland delegate to the COD, directs attention to the February 2021 “Highlights” of the COD for information. He notes the difficulty of the decision to cancel Synod 2021. He reports that Ms. Amanda Benckhuysen has been appointed as director of Safe Church Ministries (CRCNA), and that Rev. Susan LaClear has been selected as successor for Rev. David Koll as director of the Candidacy Committee (CRCNA).

019. **Classical Interim Committee** – *Rev. Nathan Kuperus.*

Rev. Kuperus reviews the work of the CIC. He notes the desire of the CIC that the Classical Stewardship Committee work more closely with other committees of classis as they present their annual budget requests to Classis Heartland. He also notes that the CIC desires that the Classis Heartland website continue to serve as the primary portal for information for the churches and others. It is moved to approve the work of the CIC.

*Adopted.*

020. **Church Visitors.**

- A. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel reports on a visit he and Rev. Robert Drenten conducted with First CRC, Hospers.  
B. Rev. Mark Klompjen reports on a series of visits conducted by himself and Rev. David Heilman with Immanuel CRC, Orange City.

It is moved to approve the work of the church visitors.

*Adopted.*

021. **Classical Counselors.**

The following counselors give progress reports of their work with churches seeking new pastoral leadership, for information:

Rev. Tom De Does	-	Sibley CRC
Rev. Loren Kotman	-	Hope CRC, Hull
Rev. Nathan Kuperus	-	Calvin CRC, Le Mars
Rev. Chad Van Ginkel	-	Northern Lighthouse, Lincoln
Rev. Al Kuiper	-	Immanuel CRC, Orange City
Rev. John Klompjen	-	First CRC, Sheldon

Rev. Phillip Westra offers a prayer for the churches seeking pastors.

022. **Closing.**

- A. Rev. Kevin Muyskens presents a gift of appreciation to Rev. Robert Drenten for his service as stated clerk.  
B. Chairman Rev. Tom De Does reviews the “milestones” noted in the meeting, and encourages the churches to remember and recognize the Lord’s care. The delegates join to sing, “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow.”  
C. It is moved to adjourn.

*Adopted.*

Soli Deo Gloria.

Rev. Robert Drenten  
Stated Clerk, Classis Heartland

**Next Meeting of Classis Heartland**  
**Wednesday, September 22, 2021 – Sibley, Iowa, Christian Reformed Church**