

Meeting Minutes for Classis Heartland
Sibley Christian Reformed Church in Sibley, IA
Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Article 01: Constitution of Classis

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

A. Classis Meeting Officers

Chair: Rev. Chad Van Ginkel
Vice-Chair: Rev. John Klompier
Stated Clerk: Rev. Phillip Westra

B. Classis Meeting Delegates

Calvary CRC – Orange City, IA: Rev. John Klompier (minister), Mr. Glenn Bouma (elder), and Braden Kooiker* (deacon)

Calvin CRC – LeMars, IA: Rev. Brian Hofman* (minister) and Mr. Dave Hector (elder)

First CRC – Hospers, IA: Rev. Aaron Gonzalez (minister) and Mr. Arnie Vander Wilt* (elder)

First CRC – Hull, IA: Rev. Loren Kotman (minister), Mr. Dave Vander Griend* (elder), and Mr. Curt Van Grouw* (deacon)

First CRC – Orange City, IA: Rev. Mark Vande Zande (minister), Mr. Mark Zylstra* (elder), and Mr. Brent Nykamp (deacon)

First CRC – Sheldon, IA: Mr. Lyle Bolkema (elder), Mr. Shane Hoekstra* (elder), and Mr. Mike De Kam* (deacon)

Hawarden CRC – Hawarden, IA: Rev. Mark Klompier (minister), Mr. Brian Oblank (elder), and Mr. Bob Daale (deacon)

Hope CRC – Hull, IA: Mr. Stewart Vander Stoep (elder) and Mr. Aldie Altena (elder)

Immanuel CRC – Orange City, IA: Mr. Kevin Tesch (elder) and Mr. Ryan Breems (deacon)

Immanuel CRC – Sheldon, IA: Rev. Kevin Muyskens (minister), Mr. Brad Kraayenbrink (elder), and Mr. Zach Wolf* (deacon)

Ireton CRC – Ireton, IA: Rev. Nate Kuperus (minister), Mr. Doug Ten Napel* (elder), and Mr. Alex Blankespoor* (deacon)

Living Water Church – Orange City and Sheldon, IA: Rev. Jesse Walhof (minister), Mr. Greg DeJong* (elder), and Mr. Gary Hibma (deacon)

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

Northern Lighthouse Church – Lincoln, NE: Pastor Jeff Heerspink (minister) and Pastor Bill Thornton (elder)

Ocheyedan CRC – Ocheyedan, IA: Rev. Thomas De Does (minister), Mr. Elmer Hatting (elder), and Mr. Chris Slagter* (deacon)

Pathway Community Church – Olathe, KS: no delegates

Prairie Lane CRC – Omaha, NE: Rev. Chad Van Ginkel (minister), Mr. Ken Moses (elder), and Mr. Mike Madden* (deacon)

Sanborn CRC – Sanborn, IA: Rev. Phillip Westra (minister), Mr. Roy Prins (elder), and Mr. Ben Reitsma (deacon)

Sibley CRC – Sibley, IA: Mr. Jeff Vande Griend (elder), Mr. Cliff Wynia (elder), and Mr. Darrel Teerink (deacon)

Rev. Chad Van Ginkel explained the order of the day and welcomed guests to our meeting.

C. Classis Meeting Guests

Mr. Ben Wiersma (Sibley CRC, Ministry Candidate) and his wife Ms. Lisa Wiersma
Rev. Al Kuiper (Calvary CRC)
Rev. Scott Van Voorst (Cornerstone Prison Church, Classis Stewardship Committee)
Ms. Barb Hibma (Classis Prayer Coordinator)
Rev. Tyler Helpers (Areopagus at Iowa State University)
Rev. Todd Zuidema (Dordt University)
Pastor Verlyn Schaap (Friendship Community Church)
Mr. Randy Smit (Classis Treasurer)

Article 02: Opening Worship and Meditation

Rev. Van Ginkel led us in a call to worship and the praise team from Sibley CRC lead us in singing “Praise to the LORD, the Almighty,” “Great is Thy Faithfulness,” and “Be Thou My Vision.” Rev. Al Kuiper, who sustained his classical examination exactly 50 years ago to the date, read from Psalm 119:161–176 and called us to continue seeking God through his Word, humbly remembering we stray like lost sheep and need to be sought out by the LORD. Rev. Kevin Muyskens and Rev. John Klompfen expressed words of appreciation for the 50 years Rev. Kuiper has served the Lord’s Church and several congregations in our classis.

Article 03: Overture from Sanborn CRC

- A. Background: Three churches brought overtures to our previous classis meeting, held on March 2, 2021—Calvary CRC, Ireton CRC, and Sanborn CRC—speaking in support of the Human Sexuality Study Committee recommendations which will be before the next synod (Item 0009.A in those minutes). These overtures were tabled in order for the three churches to return with a unified overture. The overture from Sanborn CRC is an updated overture which has been endorsed by the councils of Calvary CRC and Ireton CRC.
- B. Calvary CRC, Ireton CRC, and Sanborn CRC take their previous overtures off the table and withdraw them in order to bring the updated overture before classis.
- C. Motion: Classis Heartland overture Synod 2022 to “Adopt all the recommendations of the report from the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-Laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality” with written overture proposed by Sanborn CRC. ***Adopted.***

Article 04: Approval for a Commissioned Pastor to serve at Hope CRC in Hull (Church Order Art. 24.b)

- A. Synodical Deputies Welcomed: The chair welcomes Rev. Wendell Davelaar of Classis Northcentral Iowa and Rev. Cliff Hoekstra of Classis Iakota as our in-person synodical deputies. Rev. Michael Winnowski from Classis Wisconsin is our third synodical deputy and connected to our deliberations remotely.
- B. Motion: Classis approve the establishment of a ministry need at Hope CRC according to the letter received dated August 4, 2021. Hope CRC has called Mr. Keith Hoekstra to serve as their next pastor and requests he serve as a Commissioned Pastor while he completes the EPMC program through Calvin Seminary and fulfills the requirements to be a Candidate in the CRCNA. ***Adopted. Synodical Deputies Concur.***
- C. Motion: Classis approve the job description for the senior pastor at Hope CRC of Hull as it fits the synodical guidelines for a Commissioned Pastor. ***Adopted. Synodical Deputies Concur.***

Article 05: Church Visitor and Classical Counselor Reports

- A. Church Visitors
 - 1. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel and Rev. Sam Keyzer, church visitors to the north, submitted a written report about a visit they made with Hawarden CRC which was included in the meeting agenda and is received as information.
 - 2. Rev. David Heilman and Rev. Mark Klompier, church visitors to the south, had no recent visits to report.
- B. Classical Counselors
 - 1. Rev. Thomas De Does, counselor for Sibley CRC, spoke to how the congregation continues serving according to the Lord's gifting and is excited candidate Ben Wiersma accepted the call to be their next pastor. Rev. De Does submitted a written report to the clerk.
 - 2. Rev. Loren Kotman, counselor for Hope CRC, reported on his work of guiding the council and talking with Mr. Hoekstra about the Commissioned Pastor role and candidacy process. Rev. Kotman submitted a written report to the clerk.
 - 3. Rev. Nate Kuperus, counselor for Calvin CRC, reported the church had just installed Rev. Brian Hofman as their new pastor on September 19, 2021. He briefly introduced Rev. Hofman to those present. Rev. Kuperus submitted a written report to the clerk.
Motion: Approve the Work of Rev. Kuperus as church counselor and relieve him of his duties to Calvin CRC. **Adopted.**
 - 4. Rev. Chad Van Ginkel, counselor for Northern Lighthouse, submitted a report which was included in the meeting agenda and is received as information. He verbally highlighted that he is mentoring Mr. John Keyzer who plans to serve the church as their Commissioned Pastor in the future, and clarified his duties are still ongoing there.
 - 5. Rev. Todd Zuidema, counselor for Immanuel CRC in Orange City, reported that Rev. Verlyn Boone is serving them as a Specialized Transitional Minister.
 - 6. Rev. John Klompier, counselor for First CRC in Sheldon, shared that Rev. Brian Dunn has recently accepted the call to serve as their next pastor and anticipates being installed on October 10, 2021. Rev. Klompier submitted a written report to the clerk.

Article 06: Report from Areopagus at Iowa State University by Rev. Tyler Helfers

Rev. Tyler Helfers, director of Areopagus at Iowa State University, shared about COVID challenges in campus ministry, his growing young family, and the discipleship ministries where he continues engaging students. He distributed a sheet that overviews the ministry and announced his plans to move to South Africa to serve a church there beginning in the middle of 2022.

Article 07: Examination of candidate Ben Wiersma to be admitted as a Minister of the Word at Sibley CRC (Church Order Art. 24.b)

- A. Introduction: Rev. Jesse Walhof introduced Mr. Wiersma to those present, speaking with appreciation to Ben's work at Living Water Church and his good service through his internships at Sibley CRC. Ben expressed his appreciation for the classis for its prayers, mentoring, and financial support.
- B. *Practica* Examination: Rev. Loren Kotman asked the candidate questions about his life, sense of call, giftedness for ministry, spiritual disciplines, leadership practices, and ministry to people in various broken situations.
Motion: Proceed with the examination process. **Adopted. Synodical Deputies Concur.**
- C. *Sermon Evaluation:* Rev. Jesse Walhof shared about his and Rev. Mark Vande Zande's visit to the worship service on September 19, 2021 at Hope CRC where the candidate led worship and

preached his sermon on the assigned text of Philippians 2:12–18. He spoke favorably of Ben’s ability to lead the worship service and preaching the Word, connecting with the congregation well with his own style and skill, and showing his pastor’s heart. Rev. Vande Zande and Rev. Walhof submitted their written report to the clerk.

Motion: Proceed with the examination process. **Adopted. Synodical Deputies Concur.**

- D. *Biblical and Theological* Examination: Rev. Phillip Westra asked Candidate Ben Wiersma to identify and explain some Bible passages, asked where Scripture addressed particular topics, Theological concepts, and confessional standards. Ben also fielded questions from the floor.
- E. Executive Session: Those who were not delegates to classis were dismissed for executive session, which proceeded in the following manner.
 - 1. Prayer: The chair, Rev. Van Ginkel, led the delegates in a prayer for guidance.
 - 2. The synodical deputies were dismissed to deliberate among themselves
 - 3. Motion: Vote to admit candidate by voice vote, not a ballot. **Adopted.**
 - 4. Motion: Admit the candidate to the Ministry of the Word. **Adopted.**
 - 5. Synodical deputies rejoined the delegates. **Synodical Deputies Concur.**
- F. All guests to classis were invited back and the announcement was made that Mr. Ben Wiersma had successfully sustained the examination and classis voted to admit him to Ministry of the Word.
- G. Prayer of Blessing: Delegates gathered around Ben and Lisa Wiersma, laid hands on them and Rev. Van Ginkel led in a prayer of blessing for them and their future ministry at Sibley CRC.

Article 08: Communications from Churches via Credentials (Church Order Art. 41)

The clerk, Rev. Westra, shared the following communications from classis credentials.

- A. Calvin CRC: “We are unable to send a deacon delegate due to the scheduling of classis meetings on a weekday.” This is received for information.
- B. Hope CRC: The letter and job description included with their credentials has already been address in Article 04 above.
- C. Immanuel CRC (Orange City): “The council of Immanuel CRC of Orange City requests that classis have a conversation with the stakeholders of Friendship Church of Sgt. Bluff regarding their future including a new parent church if they decide to continue. Grounds: Friendship is in need of more assistance and leadership than Orange City Immanuel can currently provide.”

Motion: Classis takes the twofold request of Immanuel CRC—(1) a conversation with the stakeholders of Friendship Church and (2) seeking a new parent church if they decide to continue—and assign these tasks to the Classis Home Mission Committee. **Adopted.**
- D. Sanborn CRC: “Sanborn CRC thanks the classis for resuming the practice of scheduling church visitors and are eager to welcome Rev. Sam Keyzer and Rev. Chad Van Ginkel in their upcoming visit.” This is received as information.
- E. Sibley CRC: “Pray for the future ministry of our church. We would like to express gratitude to classis for the support and encouragement you have given us over the last few years.” This is received as information.

Article 09: Prayer for our Churches

- A. Rev. Muyskens asked everyone present to divide up into groups of 3 to 5 people, write down the following items on a note card, and use them to guide GROUPS in praying for one another and their respective churches.
 - 1. What are two successes you have experienced in your church?
 - 2. What are two struggles your church is facing?
 - 3. List two hopes your church has for the future.

- B. Rev. Muyskens took a few minutes to allow groups to share something from their discussion with the larger group.
- C. Ms. Barb Hibma closed our time by leading in a prayer for our congregations, leaders, and pastors.

Article 10: Classis Interim Committee (CIC) Report

- A. Rev. Nate Kuperus reviewed what the CIC had done to prepare for the classis meeting, making reference to the committee’s minutes from August 3, 2021 included in the agenda packets.

Motion: Approve the work of the CIC. **Adopted.**

- B. Rev. Phillip Westra, stated clerk, spoke with appreciation on the collaboration he has with Rev. Muyskens, program coordinator, and referred delegates to his written report. Rev. Westra reminded delegates that churches will soon be receiving pledge requests for denominational ministry shares.

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

Article 11: Classical Stewardship Committee (CSC) Report

Rev. Scott Van Voorst drew everyone’s attention to the Ministry Shares and CSC Meeting Minutes in the agenda packet. Mr. Randy Smit, treasurer of classis, explained the rationale behind the three categories where ministry shares will decrease.

- A. Motion: Classis approve per member 2022 Ministry share of \$109.23. **Adopted.**

- B. A motion was brought from the CSC to increase classis pulpit supply rates from \$100 to \$125. After discussion about whether this is mandatory or suggested, and which instances classis can enforce, the delegates agreed to divide this into the following two motions.

- 1. Motion: Classis change the pulpit supply payment from \$100 to \$125 for all classical appointments beginning 2022. **Adopted.**

- 2. Motion: Classis recommends churches of Classis Heartland compensate guest ministers the amount of \$125 per service plus mileage effective beginning of 2022. **Adopted.**

- C. Motion: Approve the work of the CSC. **Adopted.**

Article 12: Classical Home Missions Committee (CHMC) Report

Rev. Kevin Muyskens drew attention to the CHMC report and proposed budget in the agenda packets. He then invited the following two people to report on their respective ministry work.

- A. Pastor Jeff Heerspink spoke about F Street Church. They continue to celebrate beautiful things God is doing in this church they began in 2014. The congregation recently started a Celebrate Recovery ministry. There are also heartaches seeing people stumbling through life in their neighborhood. The Lord has used funerals to reach people around them and Pastor Jeff shared a story about Dave, a person from the neighborhood who recently began worshipping and getting involved with F Street.

- B. Rev. Scott Van Voorst began serving Cornerstone Prison Church in the last few weeks. He told a story about a group of inmates who recently gave up their recreation time to spend time praying with a fellow prisoner whose wife passed away. He also introduced the strategy that Cornerstone is utilizing called “Commissioned Members,” which is a dual membership, allowing people to serve with Cornerstone without leaving their current church home.

- C. Note: Tyler Helfers reported on his work with Areopagus earlier in the day since he could not be present into the afternoon (Article 06 above).

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

Article 13: Classical Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT) Report

Rev. Loren Kotman drew everyone's attention to his written report and then invited Jamie Negus, 4th year student at Sioux Falls Seminary, to introduce himself and thank classis for its support. Mr. Negus is currently serving as an intern at Living Water and anticipates becoming a candidate in 2023.

- A. Motion: Classis renew the licensure to exhort for Sherwin Bolkema (712-737-8183) and Kurt Rietema (913-219-9498). **Adopted.**
- B. Motion: Approve the work of the CMLT. **Adopted.**

Article 14: Classical Education Committee (CEC) Report

- A. Rev. Aaron Gonzalez shared about the continuing education events they had sponsored and their plans to hold a TLT class called "Biblical Preaching" which will be a good study for those seeking a license to exhort refresher and refresher for anyone who preaches.
- B. Ms. Lee De Groot, director the Minn-I-Kota Youth Network, shared she has been to 66 classis meetings. She distributed a brochure about an upcoming event for youth leaders. She spoke about Immerse Lincoln, a week-long youth service project opportunity that happens in the summer. She plans to begin the work hiring her replacement in 2022 and will be requesting funds to enable their ministry to have overlap in staffing to ensure the leadership transition will go as smooth as possible.
- C. Tara Boer is the leader of the safe church committee for classis Lakota and Heartland. She shared that Del Walinga would like to step down from the committee in the future. The team had to recently implement the process to respond to an abuse allegation. She reminded delegates to contact someone from the safe church team if there is an accusation that arises within any of our churches. There is an upcoming training event our denomination will be holding for those who are involved in this process. The details of this are forthcoming.
- D. Barb Hibma, our classis Prayer Coordinator, shared three things. 1) The COD has called our churches to make this a year of prayer, asking us to consider Jehoshaphat's prayer in 2 Chronicles 20. There is a planning team denominational wide. 2) Our classis recently began monthly zoom prayer calls, with Pastor Jesse Walhof leading, the 4th Tuesday of the month at 4pm. 3) She encouraged churches make Pastors Prayer support teams. At Living Water, they designate an individual in the congregation to pray for their pastor each day.
- E. Motion: Approve the work of the CEC. **Adopted.**

Article 15: Classical Nominating Committee (CNC) Report

- A. Motion: Approve the ballot submitted by the CNC and thus approve their work. **Adopted.**
- B. Election of classical positions was held by ballot. All but one of the positions were single nominees. Results of the election are as follows.
 - 1. CIC alternate: Rev. Brian Hofman
 - 2. CNC pastor member: Rev. Brian Hofman
 - 3. CNC lay member: Mr. Steve Ver Mulm
 - 4. CNC alternate: Mr. Mike Byker
 - 5. Church Visitor to the North: Rev. Sam Keyzer
 - 6. Church Visitor to the South: Pastor Ryan Pelton
 - 7. Minn-I-Kota board: Rev. Ben Wiersma
 - 8. CMLT alternate: Rev. John Klompier
 - 9. CMHC pastor member: Pastor Jeff Heerspink
 - 10. CMHC lay member: Mr. Gary Hibma
 - 11. CEC pastor member: Rev. Ben Wiersma
 - 12. Classis coordinator: Rev. Kevin Muyskens

13. CSC: Rev. Nate Kuperus
14. CSC alternate: Rev. John Klompien
15. COD: Rev. Mark Vande Zande

Article 16: Prayer for Classis Committees and Ministries

Mr. Gary Hibma led classis in a time of prayer for Cornerstone Prison Church, F Street Church, and Areopagus at Iowa State University, and the Minn-I-Kota Youth Network, ministries which had reported. He also asked the Lord's blessing to be upon our committees and teams which serve our churches to the Glory of Christ.

Article 17: Council of Delegates (COD) Report

Rev. Mark Vande Zande, our COD representative for Classis Heartland, reminded the delegates of the special meeting the COD held to conduct some of the business usually requires of synod.

- A. A question was brought up as to the nature of having LGBTQ voices speaking at synod. Rev. Vande Zande recommends writing a communication to the COD from your council.
- B. A question was asked about the nature of the conflict we hear between the US and Canada Christian Reformed Churches. Mark recommended we read the report on pp 519 – 558 in the appendix of the special meeting and talk to him if you have follow-up questions.

Article 18: World Renew Report

Mr. Rod De Boer encouraged congregations to consider donating and getting involved with disaster relief services. World Renew is focusing on responding to the earthquake and political upheaval in Haiti. He handed out a copy of the latest gift catalogue and encouraged we consider using these in our charitable giving.

Mr. Randy Hedman works on the donor relations team for World Renew. He thanked our churches for their partnership and spoke about the ways the ministry has had to adapt to COVID challenges. The pandemic has had the greatest impact in communities World Renew is trying to help, where businesses were required to close and many suffered due to economic challenges.

Article 19: Dordt University Report

Rev. Todd Zuidema distributed Dordt University's annual report. He spoke with appreciation for the financial gifts as well as the students from our churches and alumni serving in our communities. This year Dordt has the highest total enrollment and the second-largest freshmen class in its history. The University has been honored once again to rank #1 in student engagement by the Wall Street Journal.

Article 20: Prayer for the CRCNA and Denominational Ministries

Rev. Tom De Does led classis in a prayer for the Christian Reformed Churches across the continent. He thanked the Lord for the particular work being done through World Renew and the Dordt University. He also asked God's blessings in our missional endeavors around the world and for the work of training up new church leaders.

Article 21: Adjournment

- A. Motion: Adjourn the Meeting. **Adopted.**
- B. The CIC met on September 29, 2021 and set the following dates and host churches for 2022.
 1. Spring: March 2, 2022 – hosted by First CRC of Sheldon
 2. Fall: September 21, 2022 – hosted by Hawarden CRC