

# **AGENDA SUPPLEMENT**

## **CLASSIS HEARTLAND**

**Saturday, September 7, 2019**

**Sanborn Christian Reformed Church**

**Sanborn, Iowa**

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

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# CLASSIS EDUCATION COMMITTEE(CEC)—HEARTLAND MINUTES

July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 1:30 AM  
First Christian Reformed Church, Orange City

Members Present: Rev. Mark Klompien, Pastor Verlyn Schaap, Rev. Mark Vande Zande

I. Opening Prayer: Vande Zande

II. Responsibilities of Committee

A. Providing Continuing Education (Goals)

1. Fall 2019—No education event planned in view of our transition efforts. Rev. Mark Vande Zande rotates out in view of new responsibilities with Council of Delegates. We receive Rev. Aaron Gonzalez (alternate) to the position.

2. Spring 2020: Attempt to fulfill our educational mandate by promoting Rev. Sam Keyzer & TLT (Timothy Leadership Training Institute). Date: 1<sup>st</sup> Sat of Feb  
(eg. at Day of Encouragement, or other CEC event)

B. Supervision of Prayer Coordinator

1. Book—CEC will place copies of Mrs. Barb Hibma's recommended book, *Pray the Word for Your Church* (Tiece L. King) in the hands of each delegate of our local churches at classis. Mrs. Hibma will order the books for distribution at Fall classis.

2. Presentation—A key part of our fall CEC report to Classis will include suggested practices for utilizing the book in our local congregations. Pastor Schaap helped compose a list of suggestions. Rev. Klompien will present the sheet along with the CEC report.

3. Pre-Classis Meeting—Pastor Schaap will schedule a meeting toward introducing *Pray the Word* at classis.

*[NOTE: Meeting took place @ 1<sup>st</sup> CRC OC (8-5-19): Pastor Schaap, Mrs. Hibma, Rev. Kevin Muyskens, Rev. Klompien. Mrs. Hibma requests that all delegates bring personal Bibles to classis in view of the day's presentation/workshop]*

C. Minn-I-Kota Youth Network (MIK)

--No new business. But, next meeting, we will need to designate a member of our CEC as MIK replacement in view of Rev. Vande Zande's notification.

D. Ministry Share Information

**MOTION: That the Classical Education Committee of Classis Heartland keep the 2019 ministry share request at 5 cents per member.**

**GROUNDS:**

**(1) At current expenditure rates, the CEC will be financially solvent for several years with no additional income.**

**(2) It is the practice of our committee to make, in view of good communication, some financial request at classis.**

**—MOTION PASSED (8-5-19)**

E. OTHER—Transition Matters

--Next meeting will be Rev. Mark Vande Zande's last. We will consider how to transfer his responsibilities. Next meeting will be Rev. Aaron Gonzales' first. We will help him begin to make the transition.

--We thank Rev. Vande Zande for his faithful service on the CEC.

IV. Next Meeting

--Monday, Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 AM at 88 Chinese Restaurant

IV. Closing Prayer: Rev. Klompfen

[Scribe: Klompfen]

## **Ideas For Encouraging More Prayer In The Churches of Classis Heartland Using Pray The Word for Your Church by Tlece L. King.**

1. We encourage all Pastors to use the book "Pray the Word for Your Church" for personal prayer for 30 days prior to a "30 Days of Pray the Word for My Church" emphasis.
2. We encourage the Pastors Study Group to work together on a four week sermon series using scripture from "Pray the Word."
3. Each Church is urged to purchase copies of the book "Pray the Word" and make them available to each household in your church prior to a "30 Days of Pray the Word for My Church". A Sunday message on prayer would be preached each Sunday of that month.
4. Churches are encouraged to form new prayer groups or use an existing one to pray through the "Praying for My Church Community Journal" themes on page 71-92. We encourage households to also use this journal as a personal prayer guide.
5. We encourage each Council to come up with creative ways to continue with a renewed focus on prayer in their church. Suggestions:
  - a. Designate a Pray the Word for our Church month to start each new year (or a month that works best for your church).
  - b. In a worship service or services lay hands on and pray for those serving in ministries in your church. This would be a great time to thank them for their service or ask one of them to briefly tell what they are doing and share prayer requests.
  - c. Before the congregational prayer give opportunities for prayer requests or testimonies of answers to prayer or how praying the word has impacted their prayer life.
  - d. Have people available in front of church or in a prayer room to pray with people after the worship service.
  - e. As elders or council arrive 20 minutes early and have a more extended prayer time before the worship service.
  - f. Have elder volunteers offer the congregational prayer.



**MINN-I-KOTA**  
YOUTH NETWORK

### **MINN-I-KOTA YOUTH NETWORK BOARD:**

**MINNKOTA CLASSIS**-Representative-Pastor Bryan Dick, Karmen Vis, & Sarah Van Dyken.

**IAKOTA CLASSIS**-Representative-Pastor Henry Lengkeek, Kristi Palsma (Secretary), & Dan Elgersma.

**HEARTLAND CLASSIS**- Representative-Pastor Scott Van Voorst, Sean Baccam (President), & Randy Hilbelink (Treasure).

### **A FEW EVENTS SINCE THE SPRING CLASSIS MTGS:**

**\*\*MARCH 27, 2019-ORANGE CITY IMMANUEL STUDENT LED PRAISE & WORSHIP NIGHT.** At the beginning of my school year last year I sent out a mass email to all the supporting Youth Leaders/Youth Pastors/Youth Directors offering to help facilitate P&W nights in their communities. Orange City Imm CRC was one of the churches that responded to this offer. This P&W night was an event that the Orange City students & Leader-Kody Tesch had been wanting to do for the last few years. Kody contacted me & we began meeting & soon this event was on the calendar. A few of Kody's students, along with some Dorcht students led us in praise songs, which was followed by two Dorcht students (they are on the MIK Youth website Speakers List & are also two of my Jr High Retreat Leaders) gave short testimonies, lessons, & challenges to the High school students who were in attendance (about 75 people from 5 area supporting churches). After the speakers we spent time in prayer & more singing. We all enjoyed some lunch together at the end of the night. This event was held in the Sioux Center, Iowa HOME building. After all the guests had left the OC Imm CRC students who helped on the Praise Team thanked me for helping "pull this night together" as it was something they (seniors) wanted to do before graduating from High School. Also, one of the comments from a visiting Leader was "It is really too bad this place was not filled to the seams...it was so impactful to see students leading this night of Praise & Worship!"

**\*\*APRIL 10, 2019-"A NIGHT OF HOPE-A WAKE UP CALL WITH SCOTT BRUXVOORT-DRUG ABUSE-IDENTITY-SELF WORTH".** MINNIKOTA YOUTH partnered with RISE MINISTRY from Sheldon Iowa. Approximately 200 student attended this Praise & Worship night which was held in the Sheldon Crossroad Pavilion Event Center. Scott's challenge for us was...no matter how busy you are to spend more time in The Word!

**\*\*APRIL 24-26, 2019-THE 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL JR HIGH RETREAT AT INSPIRATION HILLS.** The theme was "IDENTITY" based off of I JOHN 3:1-2 "CHILD OF GOD". 6<sup>TH</sup>, 7<sup>TH</sup>, & 8<sup>TH</sup> graders from 21 churches (13 supporting churches) attended this year. Both the MIK Youth Board President-Sean Baccam & Pastor Scott Van Voorst-the Heartland Representative on the MIK Youth Board attended & helped out on the weekend. The leaders again this year were Dorcht students & my daughter from UNWSP. Of the 22 leaders 5 were from supporting churches & 4 of them had attended this retreat when they were in Junior High. I met & planed with these students for several months before the retreat. We had a record number of attendees this year with a total of 131 with room in the building for 134. We had 66

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guys & 65 gals! God orchestrates the details & the big picture beautifully each year. Many lives were touched again this year. I cannot wait for our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual in 2020!

**\*\*MAY 6, 2019-LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING.** We ended the school year with the last Leaders' Networking Meeting at 4 Brothers in Sioux Center, IA. Leaders came from NE, SD, & IA to join in a noon meal. We shared about the past school year, we talked about our upcoming summer mission trips, we planned for future MIK Youth & local youth events, & we ended our time together in prayer!

**\*\*JULY 6-13, 2019-The 6<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL PRAIRIE SERVE** at Sergeant Bluff Friendship Community Church (Heartland Classis) with Pastor Scott Van Voorst. During this week we worked at three job sites: 1. The Siouxland Unity Lao CRC in Sioux City (Pastor Keo-Heartland/Iakota Classis). We taught VBS in the morning & did odd jobs for the church during the afternoon. 2. The Winnebago Reformed Church...we worked for Pastor Lowell Ten Kley...we did a variety of jobs. 3. The Gospel Mission in Sioux City-we worked in the thrift store & did yard work. In the evenings we spent our Worship & free time at Sergeant Bluff Friendship Community Church. We also helped with a neighborhood picnic & carnival at Friendship Church. Our 2 days away was a pilgrimage of Native History through Spirit Mound, Rosebud, Pine Ridge, St Francis Mission, Wounded Knee, the Badlands, & we ended up at Wall Drug. The evening away was spent at Lakeview CRC in Valentine, NE with Pastor Mark Langenbach (Iakota Classis). The congregation served us a potluck meal. We concluded our night at Lakeview with worship, singing on the front steps of the church, star glazing on their gravel road up front, & getting some much needed sleep. Thank you to both Friendship & Lakeview for being our home away from home again this year.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**\*\*AUGUST 19 (NOON) LEADER NETWORKING MEETING:** Sx Falls Inca Mexican Restaurant.

**\*\*AUGUST 19 (6:30PM) LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING:** Luverne Pizza Ranch.

**\*\*AUGUST 20 (Noon) LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING:** Sx Center Casey's Bakery.

**\*\*AUGUST 20 (6:30PM) LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING:** Sheldon Pizza Ranch.

**\*\*SEPTEMBER 21-THE NATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEER TRAINING** in GOOD NEWS REFORMED CHURCH of Sioux Falls, SD from Approx 9-1130am. For more details go to <https://trainmyvolunteers.com/>.

**\*\*OCTOBER 25-26, 2019-LEADERS' RETREAT AT INSPIRATION HILLS.**

**\*\*APRIL 3-5, 2020-10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL JR HIGH RETREAT AT INSPIRATION HILLS.** More information at the Spring Classis meeting.

*"Christ Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, by the Glory of God Alone!"*

**Thank you for your prayers & financial support!**

**~ Alethea "Lee" De Groot-Ministry Coordinator & Faith Formations Champion**

Classical Interim Committee (CIC)  
June 12, 2019  
Immanuel CRC, Orange City, Iowa 10:00 a.m.  
Attendants: Rev. N. Kuperus, Rev. M. Vande Zande, Rev. T. Zuidema  
Stated Clerk: Rev. R. Drenten

1. Opening prayer by Rev. Zuidema.
2. Retirement of Rev. Alfred J. Van Dellen.  
Classical Interim Committee has received a letter from Sanborn CRC regarding Rev. Van Dellen's retirement. CIC receives this information from Sanborn CRC and Sanborn CRC will present this information at the September 7 Classis Meeting.
3. Letter from Dale Braaksma.  
\*The CIC reviews a letter by Mr. Dale Braaksma sent on March 25, 2019. This letter requests Classis to revisit a previous decision of Classis in 2010. After reviewing the letter, it is judged that there is no new information provided, which is required according to Article 31 of the CRCNA Church Order. Following the decision of Classis Heartland in 2010 and guidelines provided in Article 29 of the CRCNA Church Order, this decision remains settled and binding. Rev. Robert Drenten to inform Mr. Dale Braaksma of this information.
4. Correspondence via the SDC.  
\*We have received information from 1<sup>st</sup> CRC Hull and Hope CRC Hull that they are withholding funds from the Siouxland Diaconal Conference.
5. Preliminary Classis Preparation.  
-Publishing Date for Agenda Items – Agenda Deadline – July 20.  
-Possible question to discuss at a future meeting – how do we get the classis input on the best date for classis meeting in September?
6. Nomination Committee Business.  
The Classical Nominating Committee recommends to the CIC to function on behalf of Classis and approve Rev. Jesse Walhof and Mr. Del Walinga to serve terms of 3 years on the combined Safe Church Team for Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota. This recommendation is carried and supported. Rev. Robert Drenten will inform the Safe Church Team of this action.
7. Rev. N. Kuperus closed in prayer.

Classical Interim Committee Meeting  
August 15, 2019  
1:00 p.m. Immanuel CRC, Orange City, Iowa

Attendants: Rev. Nathan Kuperus, Rev. Mark Vande Zande, Rev. Todd Zuidema,  
Rev. Robert Drenten (ex' officio); Rev. Kevin Muyskens (Classical Program Coordinator)

1. Rev. Todd Zuidema opened with prayer.
2. Discussed the Classis Agenda and the order of the day.  
\*The CIC is exploring that appointment of Rev. Chad Van Ginkel to be the church counselor for Northern Lighthouse.  
\*After discussing the agenda and the order of the day, Rev. Kevin Muyskens was dismissed from the meeting.
3. The CIC signed the credentials of Rev. Thomas De Does (Ocheyedan CRC) sent by Classis Colombia (Quincy CRC).
4. Reviewed request by Mr. Dale Braaksma. The Stated Clerk will send a response to Mr. Braaksma as noted in the June 12, 2019 minutes of the CIC.
5. Reviewed the correspondence from the Siouxland Diaconal Conference (SDC) in regards to their decision to dissolve the SDC.
6. We discussed the Prairie Lane CRC's overture.
7. Rev. Mark Vande Zande closed in prayer.

**Stated Clerk Report -- Classis Heartland  
Sanborn CRC - September 7, 2019**

**News and Information**

The decisions of recent synods have called each classis to become more intentional and cooperative in ministry. A new approach to ministry share funding awaits the approval of Synod 2020, but other changes have already taken effect. Each classis must develop a strategy for training officebearers in the best practices to promote a “safe church” environment. Each classis will develop a ministry plan for churches in its region. Our churches are expected to share Christ’s mission in new ways,

This meeting marks a transition in the way you will receive most classis materials. Our website, [classisheartland.com](http://classisheartland.com) is available for you. Agendas, minutes, and classis information will be posted there. Also, the new email address for the Stated Clerk is, [classisheartlandstatedclerk@gmail.com](mailto:classisheartlandstatedclerk@gmail.com). As of September 7, 2019, that will be the sole email address to use to contact the clerk.

We have nearly completed our round of meetings hosted by each church in Classis Heartland. I’m urging our classis to think about how best to plan our meetings in the future. First, the date for our September meetings has made for some challenges. Because the agenda needs to be in the hands of our councils before the meeting, the agenda needs to be ready by the first of August. That in turn makes for an even earlier agenda deadline in mid-to-late July. Our committees are sometimes hard-pressed to complete their work over those summer months. Would a meeting later in September, as was once our practice, be worth considering again? Also, the expanse of our classis creates challenges for those who travel from the edges of our boundaries, who are called to meet until Saturday afternoon, and then to return in time to lead Sunday worship. Other classes in our region of similar size either meet mid-week or host an evening-to-following-morning session, to allow for full participation at meetings and for travel time of up to six hours. Is it time to schedule meetings in a way that better accommodates our needs?

Finally, I regularly receive word from the CRCNA’s Historical Committee, Some of our churches are current on submitting their council, consistory, and deacons’ records to the archives held at Calvin University’s library. Other churches have yet to send their first items. Perhaps this reflects the range of values on keeping records found across our churches. I offer two pieces of wisdom gained from recent observations. First, keeping good records of the ministry of your church is vital. When a church may be called upon to show that it handled care for its members and its resources responsibly, good records are a safeguard against accusations of injustice. Second, archiving such records means that a church can retrieve its information in the event that its primary records are lost. What seems like “busywork” at times can be the difference between healthy church or a hurting church. Please contact me if you need help connecting with the Historical Committee for your archives.

**March 2, 2019, Meeting of Classis (Hull: Hope CRC)**

- Published and distributed “The Acts of Classis Heartland - March 2019,” “Report to the Churches,” and related documents.
- Forwarded a copy of minutes and related documents to Synodical Services of CRCNA.
- Distributed materials pertaining to the Siouxland Diaconal Conference Board’ to the councils as directed by Classis Heartland.
- Submitted credentials for Synod 2019 to Synodical Services of CRCNA.
- Notified the CRCNA of the retirement of Rev. Sam Keyzer.

**September 7, 2019, Meeting of Classis (Sanborn CRC)**

- Placed a notice in *The Banner* for the September 2019 meeting.
- Sent letter of notice to the host church, and the cost reimbursement form.
- Prepared and distributed the agenda and an agenda supplement.



## Correspondence & Duties

- Correspondence (not included in the Agenda for Classis)
  - CRCNA - Call for a minister nominee to serve on the Judicial Code Committee.
  - CRCNA - Invitation to participate in a “church visitor cohort,” a gathering of church visitors from several classes exploring ways toward more vital church visitor ministry.
  - 
  - Amistad Cristiana - request for support from Classis Heartland. Forwarded to CHMC.
  - Dordt University - request for support from Classis Heartland.
  - Mr. Dale Braaksma - request to consider a matter previously decided by Classis Heartland. Referred to the Classical Interim Committee.
  - CRCNA - Annual “Stated Clerk’s Packet,” information reflecting current policies, and a summary of decisions of Synod 2019.
  - Received and forwarded newsletters from Areopagus Campus Ministry (ISU).
  - Classis Columbia - Ministerial credentials of Rev. Tom De Does. Forwarded to CIC.
  - Received an invitation to the stated clerks’ conference on January 8, 2020. Forwarded to CIC with a request to participate.
  
- Duties / Activities
  - Met with the Classis Nominating Committee and Classical Interim Committee *ex officio*.
  - Participated in a video forum hosted by the Office of Synodical Services and the Classis Renewal Consultant to update stated clerks of classes in the CRCNA on matters pertaining to their work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Robert Drenten -- Stated Clerk, Classis Heartland

**Synod 2019  
Report to Classis Heartland  
September 7, 2019**

Please refer to the summary of Synod 2019 accompanying this report.

**Significant Changes**

Synod 2019 adopted a number of recommendations which are intended to improve the way synodical and classical work is done. The decisions of Synod placed a high value on orientation for delegates, communication with churches, and effective participation in its meetings. Of interest to Classis Heartland was that the decisions of Synod favored the concern of our overture. There will be no *requirement* to satisfy certain criteria among our delegation, based on gender or ethnicity. However, each classis is *encouraged* to pay attention to diversity within its delegation. Also, Synod encourages each classis to send at least one of its delegates two years in a row, for the sake of continuity and experience.

Synod expanded the definition of classis found in Church Order Art. 39, to emphasize the regional, shared ministry aspect of classis. Synod explored, and declined, to rename, “classis.” Synod also better defined the role of a regional pastor in Church Order Art. 42. Both were recommendations of Synod 2018.

One of the most substantial changes Synod 2019 adopted was a recommendation to change the method used to fund denominational ministries. The current ministry share system would be replaced beginning in 2020 with a system based on congregational and classical pledges. Synod 2020 will consider this recommendation for approval. If adopted, the denomination will guide churches and classes through this change. It would mean that churches will become more intentional in their giving to denominationally shared ministries. If adopted, the hope is that the denomination will have a clearer grasp of the funding our ministries can expect through ministry shares.

**Questions for Synod 2020**

Bivocational models for pastoral ministry are increasingly common, sometimes for financial reasons, sometimes for missional reasons. In the past Church Order viewed this as an exceptional situation. Synod approved a task force which will explore this model more deeply, to offer guidance for those settings where a pastor holds a second job.

Some of our churches are facing a persistent question regarding the definition of marriage, that is, whether “marriage in the sight of God” is necessarily “marriage in the sight of the state.” Synod heard from these churches of elderly couples who wished to be married but found that the requirements of the law of the state would make such a marriage financially unfeasible. Synod approved a task force which is asked to help clarify the relationship of these two expressions of the marriage union.

Synod also faced the reality of the current practice of a growing number of churches holding only one worship service on the Lord’s Day. Synod 2019 is recommending a change to Church Order Art. 51 which would recommend, but not require, a morning and evening service. There were voices of appreciation for upholding the current, stated practice, as well as voices conceding what has become practice. The

churches would be encouraged to take the opportunity to explore other expressions of ministry should the requirement be removed from C.O. Art. 51.

### **Safe Church Accountability**

Synod continues to address the need to reduce abuse in the churches and to support survivors of such abuse. Synod decided to instruct each classis to develop a strategy to ensure all officebearers receive training regarding the abuse of power, and to show that this training is carried out. A classis must also ensure that the survivors of such abuse receive appropriate care. The establishment of the Heartland-lakota Classical Safe Church Team is a timely move in light of this decision.

### **Same-Sex Ministry Guidance**

Synod 2019 received a progress report from the study committee exploring faithful ministry responding to same-sex relationships, and more broadly to sexual ethics. The initial work presented by the study committee offered some of the real pastoral situations that churches are facing, and a summary of faithful, Biblical guidance. Small groups of synodical delegates were asked to discuss and submit their input in response to the committee's report. Both the report and the discussion groups showed a desire for faithful, honest wrestling with God's truth and God's grace responding to expressions of human sexuality in this fallen world. No final decision was asked of Synod 2019.

It was an honor to serve Synod 2019 on behalf of Classis Heartland.

Rev. Jesse Walhof, Minister Delegate  
Mr. Duane Walhof, Elder Delegate  
Mr. Keith Boersma, Deacon Delegate  
Rev. Robert Drenten, At-Large Delegate



## Calvin Theological Seminary Communication Points – August 2019 Update

**Commencement 2019:** May 18, 2019, was a historic day for Calvin Seminary. On that day, we honored 121 graduates (the second most ever) who received diplomas recognizing their work in programs ranging from certificate programs to the Ph.D. level. Many of the students received either a Certificate in Latino Ministry or a Certificate in Family Care through our Latino Ministry program where all courses are taught in Spanish. As a result, our commencement program was bilingual (English and Spanish) for the first time ever.

As a global seminary, we were blessed with graduates coming from the following 19 countries and territories: Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, Venezuela, and the United States.

**From Across the Globe to Learn Together:** August 19 is the date of International Student Orientation and it will reflect again how Calvin Seminary is a global seminary. Our incoming class has students entering from Brazil, China, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria and South Korea as well as Canada and the United States. We invite prayers for these international students as well as for all other students new to CTS this year or continuing their programs of study. The formal beginning of our new academic year will occur with Convocation on Wednesday, September 4, with Sid Jansma, Jr (Board Chair, *Emeritus*) reflecting on his 18 years of CTS Board service as we also mark the 144<sup>th</sup> year of ministry service for Calvin Seminary from her beginning in 1876.

This academic year will also take place in the context of the 500<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Anniversary of the Swiss Reformation. Calvin University and Calvin Seminary are hosting a conference to commemorate this anniversary on September 13-14, 2019. Dr, Karin Maag, the Director of the Meeter Center, editor of the Calvin Theological Journal and author of the book – Does the Reformation Still Matter? - is organizing this conference.

**New Academic Programs to Serve the Church Even More Broadly:** This past academic year saw three different significant program approvals:

1. **Our M.A. in Ministry Leadership is now completely on-line.** This availability means that people can take all their classes from their homes and ministry contexts.
2. We have a new certificate coming on-line as well. We are offering, in partnership with Christian Schools International, a **Certificate in Bible Instruction** that is especially geared to any person teaching the Bible – including Christian School teachers in elementary, middle and high schools.
3. Finally, our accrediting body, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, has authorized us to proceed with a **Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree.** Plans are underway to begin offering classes in the summer of 2020. This degree is especially focused on working pastors who desire a diverse, curated cohort learning that

is aimed at effective ministry impact. This degree will strive to deepen pastoral understanding of themselves, their ministry context, and how to “navigate” the changing contexts of ministry today. We are also glad to note that our developing D.Min. program will be co-led by Professors Danjuma Gibson and Geoff Vandermolen.

**New Administration and Academic Leaders Who Are Called to Serve:** After serving for eight years in academic administration, Professor Ronald Feenstra has returned to full-time teaching. We thank him for his service during a time where we saw the introduction of distance learning, a Latino/a Ministry Certificate program along with the development of the Calvin Prison Initiative. In his place, we are blessed to have Dr. Gary Burge move from Visiting Professor of New Testament and Faculty Development Specialist to Dean of the Faculty and Visiting Professor of New Testament. In addition, we are also blessed to have Joan Beelen expand her role from Registrar (a position she has held for thirteen years) to becoming our Associate Dean of Academic Services and Registrar.

For this academic year, we welcome Katrina Schaafsma who is a Doctor of Theology candidate in Old Testament and Homiletics at Duke University Divinity School. She will serve a one-year appointment as Lecturer-in-Residence in Old Testament while Professor Sarah Schreiber takes a dissertation and sabbatical leave. We also welcome Gil Suh, Resonate Global Missionary, who has been serving in Cambodia for a one-year appointment as a Scholar in Residence. We appreciate the sponsorship of Resonate for this appointment.

In addition to these changes, we are very glad to announce that Rev. Shawn Brix will take up a role as Canadian Church Relations Liaison starting in January of 2020. This connecting, listening and serving role will help CTS be more present and available to serve leaders and churches in Canada. Rev. Brix has served congregations in Acton, Burlington and he is now at Living Hope in Peterborough, Ontario.

**Why Attend a Seminary? Why Attend Calvin Theological Seminary?** What does it mean to be called to ministry? How does a seminary equip people for that calling? How do we connect the church and the classroom together in training leaders of the church? Those questions and more are the theme of a special edition of the Forum, a semi-annual magazine that addresses questions and themes being discussed at the local church by providing theological content and insights. This issue is still available in print and it is also available along with archived versions of the Forum at <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/ministry-connections/publications/forum-archive/>

**New and Improved Web-Site:** Today the front door of the seminary is a virtual door. We have taken the time to listen and build a new (and hopefully improved) website that we invite you to explore. Please go to [www.calvinseminary.edu](http://www.calvinseminary.edu)

At this site, you can find favorite (or favourite in Canada) pages like the Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP) directed by Rev. Scott Hoezee. You can join thousands of others who use CEP to hear good sermons, find insights on Bible passages, and identify good books to read. Professor Hoezee also recently wrote a Calvin Short book – Why We Listen to Sermons - that is a great

resource for churches and councils. A conversation between Professors Scott Hoezee and John Witvliet on this topic and book can be found at - <https://vimeo.com/340972524>

**CTS Podcast Channel:** We recently launched a new way for people to connect with the conversations at Calvin Seminary – our own podcast. Please share the news and you can find out more by going to [www.calvinseminary.edu/resound](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/resound)

**Financial Outlook:** We are blessed with looking back on a positive year for the budget of 2018-2019, but we again lay before you our annual formation fund budget of needs beyond ministry shares of \$1.6 million dollars. We are deeply grateful for the faithful churches and individuals who invest their stewardship dollars in training and forming leaders for Christ's church.

**Prayer Request:** Please continue praying for Calvin Seminary as we begin our 144<sup>th</sup> academic year of study, welcoming students from around the world who have chosen Calvin Seminary for its hospitable learning community as well as biblical and theological depth of study!