

Acts of Classis Heartland
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Hope Christian Reformed Church, Hull, Iowa
Saturday, March 2, 2019

001. **Convening & Constitution of Classis.**

- A. Chairman Rev. Todd Zuidema welcomes the delegates and guests of Classis Heartland to Hope Christian Reformed Church. He invites the body to begin its work in silent meditation. He reads Psalm 133 and offers an opening prayer.
- B. Stated Clerk Rev. Robert Drenten calls the roll. Chairman Rev. Zuidema declares classis constituted.

<u>CHURCHES</u>	<u>MINISTERS</u>	<u>ELDERS</u>	<u>DEACONS</u>
Hawarden	Rev. Mark Klompjen	Mr. Eugene Byker*	Mr. Bill Kingma
Hospers: First	Rev. Aaron Gonzalez*	Mr. Dave Bosma	
Hull: First	Rev. Loren Kotman	Mr. Ed Haveman*	Mr. Dan Poppema*
Hull: Hope	Rev. Todd Zuidema	Mr. Tim Lammers*	Mr. Nathan Bakker
Ireton	Rev. Nate Kuperus	Mr. Arlin De Weerd	Mr. Scott Miedema
Kansas City: New City**			
Le Mars: Calvin	Rev. Nevada De Lapp	Mr. Duane Walhof	Mr. Jeremy Kamp
Lincoln: Northern Lighthouse	Rev. Sam Keyzer	Mr. Jon Keyzer	
Ocheyedan		Mr. Alvin Runia	Mr. Shaun Huisman*
		Mr. Mike Bosma*	
Olathe: Pathway^	Pastor Kevin Schutte, C.P.	Mr. Kurt Rietema	
Omaha: Prairie Lane	Rev. Chad Van Ginkel	Mr. Pete De Vries*	
Orange City: Calvary		Mr. Perry Krossschell*	Mr. Jerry Van Grouw
Orange City: First	Rev. Mark Vande Zande	Mr. Irwin De Jong	Mr. Ross Oolman*
Orange City: Immanuel	Rev. Robert Drenten	Mr. Travis De Jong*	Mr. Charlie Zomermaand*
Orange City: Living Water	Rev. Jesse Walhof###	Mr. Arlin Schaap*	Mr. Andrew Wolgen*
Sanborn	Rev. Al Van Dellen	Mr. Kevin Wiekamp	Mr. Ben Meyers*
Sheldon: First		Mr. Darin Granstra	Mr. Keith Habben
		Mr. Chad Petit*	
Sheldon: Immanuel	Rev. Kevin Muyskens	Mr. Marion Baker*	Mr. Ray Hernandez*
Sergeant Bluff:	Rev. Scott Van Voorst#		
Friendship Community			
Sibley		Mr. Jeff Vande Griend	Mr. Keith Boersma
		Mr. Loren Bosma	

*Signs the *Covenant for Officebearers* as a first-time delegate.

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

**Absent with notice.

###Excused with notice at 2:30 PM.

^Delegation departed at noon.

C. Officers of Classis.

Rev. Todd Zuidema, Chairman	Rev. Robert Drenten, Stated Clerk
Rev. Aaron Gonzalez, Vice Chairman	Mr. Mike Van Surksun, Classis Treasurer

D. Attending as guests or reporting to Classis Heartland on behalf of their ministries:

Ms. Val Brummel	At the Well and Beyond Ministries
Mr. Rod De Boer	Chairman of the Board, Siouxland Diaconal Conference
Rev. Doug De Groot	Cornerstone Prison CRC, Sioux Falls
Ms. Lee De Groot	Director, Minn-I-Kota Youth Network
Mr. Rick Droog	Director, Siouxland Diaconal Conference
Ms. Nancy Driesen	Hope CRC, Hull
Rev. David Heilman	Advancement Coordinator, Inspiration Hills Camp & Retreat Center
Ms. Barb Hibma	Prayer Coordinator, Classis Heartland
Rev. Peter Kelder	Regional Leader, Resonate Global Missions
Rev. Garry Nyenhuis	Minister, Living Water Community CRC, Orange City
Mr. Kurt Rietema	Youthfront Community Development, Argentine, Kansas
Rev. J. William Van Der Heide	Minister Emeritus, Ocheyedan CRC
Mr. Mark Volkers	Classis Heartland Delegate, Council of Delegates - CRCNA
Mr. Levi Wielenga	Leadership Team, Friendship Community CRC, Sergeant Bluff

E. Opening Worship.

1. Praise and thanksgiving are offered to God in song, accompanied by Ms. Melissa Boer, singing, *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing, Ten Thousand Reasons*, and *We Will Extol You God and King*.
2. Rev. Sam Keyzer offers a meditation, "All About the Harvest," based on Matthew 9:35-38. As he draws near retirement, Rev. Keyzer reflects upon how the Lord's focus on the harvest has shaped his life and continues to define the work of Christ's Church.

002. **Overture for the Retirement of Rev. Sam Keyzer.**

A. Chairman Rev. Zuidema presents the following overture from the council of Northern Lighthouse CRC, Lincoln, to classis:

"Rev. Sam Keyzer has formally given notice that he will be retiring from the ministry with the Northern Lighthouse effective Sunday, May 19, 2019. Rev. Keyzer will be 66 years old on May 18, 2019 and thus is eligible to retire. We are excited about this new chapter in his life. The Northern Lighthouse Church council has accepted this notice of retirement and would like to formally request that Classis Heartland accepts this retirement request as well."

It is moved and supported to approve this request, in accordance with Church Order Art. 18.

-Adopted.

B. A brief reception is held for delegates to offer congratulations and commendation to Rev. Keyzer.

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

A. Rev. Vande Zande presents the work and the ballot prepared by the Nominating Committee. He presents the following recommendations to classis.

1. That the two receiving the most votes for Classical Interim Committee will become committee members and the remaining two would be voted on for alternate, with the one receiving the majority becoming the alternate. -Adopted.
2. That classis votes from among three nominees for the two church visitor positions under consideration. The two nominees receiving the most votes will be elected "Church Visitors to the South," and the remaining nominee would be named as alternate. -Adopted.
3. That classis approves the work of the Nominating Committee. -Adopted.

B. The following are elected to positions serving and delegated by Classis Heartland.

1. Synod 2019

Minister -- Rev. Jesse Walhof	Minister Alternate -- Rev. Todd Zuidema
Elder -- Mr. Duane Walhof	(No Elder Alternate)
Deacon -- Mr. Keith Boersma	(No Deacon Alternate)
At-Large -- Rev. Robert Drenten	At-Large Alternate -- Rev. Aaron Gonzalez

2. Servants of Classis Heartland (Term April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2022)

Stated Clerk	-	Rev. Robert Drenten
Classical Treasurer	-	Mr. Michael Van Surksum
Classical Interim Committee	-	Rev. Nathan Kuperus Rev. Todd Zuidema
Classical Interim Committee Alt.	-	Rev. Nevada De Lapp
Classical Education Committee	-	Rev. Mark Vande Zande
Classical Education Committee Alt.	-	Rev. Aaron Gonzalez
Classical Ministry Leadership Team	-	Rev. Loren Kotman
Church Visitor to the North Alt.	-	Rev. Nevada De Lapp
Church Visitor to the South	-	Rev. David Heilman Rev. Mark Klompfen
Church Visitor to the South Alt.	-	Rev. Nathan Kuperus

004. **Prayer – Ms. Barb Hibma.**

Ms. Hibma leads classis in a time of guided prayer. Prayers are offered in small groups of deacons, elders, or ministers. Introduced by fitting passages of Scripture, delegates pray for the Lord's guidance, for church leadership, for all Christians, and for those who have yet to put their faith in Jesus Christ.

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

A. Rev. Muyskens presents the committee's written report. He notes the following items.

1. The council of Sibley CRC met with the committee to explore options for their future.
2. New City CRC, Kansas City, is taking steps toward a church plant in the Kansas City area.

3. Friendship Community CRC, Sergeant Bluff, is taking steps to staff its ministry with two, bi-vocational pastors. Rev. Scott Van Voorst, who serves the church at present, is pursuing additional work as a chaplain assigned to the 185th Wing of the National Air Guard in Sioux City. Rev. Muyskens offers prayer for blessing on this initiative.
4. Rev. Muyskens reminds the churches that grants of up to \$1,000 are available from the Established Church Development Fund of classis. Classis provides this grant to defray the costs of outreach initiatives of churches connecting to their communities.
5. It is moved and supported to approve the work of the Classical Home Missions Committee. -Adopted.

B. Resonate Global Missions – Rev. Peter Kelder.

Rev. Kelder, regional leader serving Classis Heartland, addresses classis, giving his encouragement in its ambitious and capable leadership in missions. He thanks local churches for support of global missionaries. He reports that Resonate Global Missions recently met with consultants who identified “adaptive challenges” for the CRCNA, particularly the need for local churches to connect to its local community as the cultural gap between church and community continues to widen. He offers churches of classis an opportunity to join an 18-month cohort to explore ways to connect with their local communities.

006. Mission Stories – Rev. Kevin Muyskens.

- A. Classical Program Coordinator Rev. Muyskens introduces the ministry theme focus for the day. Several presenters tell stories of their experiences in short-term missions and in prison ministry.
 1. Ms. Nancy Driesen recounts her experience joining a team from Hope CRC, Hull, to serve Paradise Bound, a mission based in Guatemala. She reflects on the impact this short-term mission project had on the growth of her faith and on her desire to live out her faith in Jesus Christ.
 2. Mr. Kurt Rietema, Director of Youthfront Community Development, Argentine, Kansas, explores the value of short-term missions with delegates. He explores the barriers of distrust between the “helpers” and those who are helped, in the context of the account of Saul’s conversion recorded in Acts 9. Real reasons for distrust can be overcome as Jesus Christ makes our relationships new and right.
 3. Ms. Val Brummel of At the Well and Beyond Ministries, relates her work in women’s prison ministry in South Dakota. She illustrates the difference gospel ministry makes in the lives of inmates, bringing hope to those who feel forgotten, worthless, and despairing.
 4. Rev. Doug De Groot of Cornerstone Prison CRC in Sioux Falls tells of the experiences of inmates impacted by on-going Christian ministry “on the inside.” He relates the amazing power of God’s Word to bring Christ to some of the most hurting and hardened of prison inmates.
- B. Rev. Muyskens asks delegates each to write down a sentence or two to take away from the accounts of prison ministry, and to consider the opportunity of short-term missions.

007. Overtures.

- A. The council of First Christian Reformed Church of Orange City, Iowa overtures Classis Heartland to overture Synod 2019 that the Synod Review Task Force use the word “recommend” rather than “require” in Article 20 of its report.

Article 20 of the Synod Review Task Force Report states, “That synod encourage diversity in classical delegations to synod, as previously approved by synod, and **require** each classis to include at least one woman or one ethnic minority person in its delegation of one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one other officebearer to synod. Grounds: a. This requirement would increase the number of ethnic minority and women delegates. b. This practice would eventually eliminate the need for nonvoting advisers.”

Grounds for this Overture

1. Classis Heartland does not allow women to serve at classis, which would prevent our classis from delegating at least one woman.
2. Classis Heartland is limited in its ability to provide enough ethnic minorities to serve on the synodical level (most of our churches’ delegations to classis are Caucasian men).
3. The CRC denomination allows varying opinions/perspectives on the woman in office issue (i.e. Acts of Synod 2007 – Synod decided that classes “may, in keeping with their understanding of the biblical position on the role of women in ecclesiastical office, declare that women officebearers not be delegated to classis.”) By requiring at least one woman or one ethnic minority to serve, Synod is forcing the hand of each classis, especially when it comes to the woman in office issue, to fully integrate and allow woman in office, which goes against our classis’ understanding of the biblical position on the role of women in ecclesiastical office.

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1. It is moved and supported to amend the overture in order to distinguish between the concerns regarding minorities and gender in the overture, and to refer to previous decisions of synod allowing councils and classes to continue to ordain exclusively male office-bearers. -*Defeated.*
 2. It is moved and supported to adopt the overture. -*Adopted.*
- B. The council of Immanuel CRC, Orange City, submits the following overture to classis.

Background Information

In response to reports of mismanagement of funds by the director of the Siouxland Diaconal Conference (SDC) several churches in classis Heartland have withheld classical ministry shares designated for support of the SDC. Investigation into that mismanagement has resulted in a report by the classical interim committee that was made available by classis Heartland to those churches that requested the report. The council of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church made such a request, received and reviewed the report. This overture is a result of that review.

Overture

The council of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Orange City, IA overtures Classis Heartland (1) to direct the Classical Interim Committee to submit their report concerning the SDC to all churches of classis Heartland and (2), in light of the report, to encourage the churches to evaluate the relationship of Classis Heartland to the SDC.

Grounds for the Overture

1. The report details the misappropriation of \$45,000 by the director of the SDC and the response of the board of the SDC to that financial loss.
2. Because of the evidence of the financial mismanagement initially revealed via inquiries by the Internal Revenue Service, the relationship between the churches of Classis Heartland and SDC is tenuous.
3. The report of the classical interim committee represents the best available summary of the events. As such, it provides a basis by which the churches of classis may evaluate the potential damage to the reputation and efficacy of the SDC caused by these events.
4. In light of the response to these events, the report provides the best available basis for evaluating whether the SDC as it is currently organized ought to be supported by ministry funds of Classis Heartland.

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It is moved and supported to adopt the overture. -*Adopted.*

008. **Inspiration Hills** – *Rev. David Heilman.*
 Rev. David Heilman, Director for Advancement, Inspiration Hills, addresses classis. He encourages the churches of classis to promote the camp and to consider serving in this ministry. He shares two letters, one from a mother, the other from her child, expressing the positive impact Inspiration Hills had in the child’s life, moving the family to share a gift of support to this ministry. The most recent newsletter is distributed which includes encouragement for the diaconates in classis to schedule an offering for Inspiration Hills.
009. **Noon Break.**
 Classis recesses for noon lunch, served by Hope CRC. Rev. David Heilman offers a prayer of thanks.
010. **Classical Education Committee** – *Rev. Mark Klompfen.*
 A. Rev. M. Klompfen presents the written account of the committee. He highlights a pastors’ event featuring Rev. Timothy Blackmon, hosted by Dordt College on November 28, 2018, which was partially funded by Classis Heartland. He also notes the funding made available to churches who wished to offset expenses for a training seminar for elders and deacons sponsored by the Siouxland Diaconal Conference in February 2019. The committee is exploring an informal preaching seminar which would be led by Rev. Sam Keyzer. It is moved and supported to approve the work of the Classical Education Committee. -*Adopted.*
- B. **Classical Prayer Coordinator** – *Ms. Barb Hibma.*
 Ms. Hibma encourages the churches to promote a vital prayer ministry. She recommends, *Pray the Word for Your Church*, by Tiece L. King as a resource for guided prayer. She notes that Immanuel CRC in Sheldon hosts a community prayer service to observe

the Annual Day of Prayer of the CRCNA as a way to revitalize the event. She drew attention to the CRC Prayer Guide, available from the CRCNA website and via email. She also encouraged churches to observe the National Day of Prayer on May 2, 2019. This year's theme, "Love One Another," is based on John 13.

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

Ms. De Groot presents the MIK written report. Additionally, she notes that Faith Formation Ministries of the CRCNA has designated her as a "champion" for Classes Heartland, Iakota, and Minnkota. She asks churches to encourage their junior high school youth to attend the retreat at Inspiration Hills on April 26-28, 2019, and distributed registration materials for each church. MIK now provides a website for the churches' convenience: www.minnikotayouthnetwork.com.

011. **Classical Stewardship Committee** – *Rev. Scott Van Voorst.*

A. Rev. Van Voorst presents the committee's report.

1. Calvin CRC, Le Mars; Northern Lighthouse CRC, Lincoln; and Pathway CRC, Olathe are encouraged to continue the progress they are making toward full classical ministry share support. Also, Immanuel CRC, Orange City; First CRC, Orange City; and Sanborn CRC each report their ministry shares for the Siouxland Diaconal Conference (SDC) are being withheld at this time. First CRC, Orange City, did give the full amount of requested classical ministry shares, though requesting that their funds not be given to the SDC. The churches are urged to support the ministry of Classis Heartland faithfully.
2. The CSC considered taking advantage of insurance offered through the CRCNA against fraudulent use of classical funds. The CSC judged the requirements for this insurance too costly to justify the benefit. However, the CSC is taking steps to increase its accountability and protection of the treasurer's work by requiring all checks written for classical funds to be co-signed by an authorized agent of Classis Heartland.
3. Rev. Van Voorst notes that ministry share calculations have been based on 3,000 professing members within Classis Heartland. The actual count in 2019 is 2,972, leading to a slight shortfall in receipts even when churches contribute fully.
4. The CSC recommends designating funds from Classis Heartland to provide a website for classis. *-Adopted.*
5. It is moved and supported to approve the work of the CSC. *-Adopted.*

B. **Classical Treasurer** – *Mr. Michael Van Surksom.*

Mr. Van Surksom presents the 2018 Treasurer's Report. Chairman Rev. Zuidema notes the balance in the Ministry Opportunities Fund and encourages churches to take advantage of this for community outreach. He also urges churches to encourage youth to consider entering ministry and to take advantage of the Student Aid Fund. It is moved and supported to approve the 2018 Treasurer's Report. *-Adopted.*

C. **Siouxland Diaconal Conference**

1. SDC Director, Mr. Rick Droog, presents the director's report of the SDC. Mr. Droog thanks Classis Heartland for the opportunity at the September 2018 meeting to apologize for his misappropriation of SDC funds. He offers to visit with any requesting church council to answer questions as the Classical Interim Committee makes its information regarding the SDC available. Mr. Droog notes that 70 elders and deacons attended the February 26, 2019, leadership conference in Sioux Center sponsored by SDC.
2. SDC Board Chairman, Mr. Rod De Boer, offers a review of the action the board has taken with respect to the SDC director, and the reporting offered to classis, following the misappropriation of its funds. He echoed the apology offered by Mr. Droog, noted the documentation of corrective steps the SDC board has taken, instituted a performance evaluation for the SDC director, and is now setting goals for 2019. These goals include improved communication with Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota, to provide training for councils, and to partner with Resonate Global Missions to promote the Healthy Church program. He assures the churches that the SDC board is committed to rebuilding trust.

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

Mr. De Boer serves World Renew board on behalf of Classis Heartland. He highlights "Truth-Centered Transformation," an initiative in Tanzania and West Africa helping churches explore ways to address their own needs from their own resources. For example, members of one church pooled their resources to build a needed restroom facility. Mr. De Boer also reminds churches of World Renew's ongoing disaster relief ministry and of the World Renew Gift Catalog for ideas for individual or church contributions.

013. **Classical Interim Committee** – *Rev. Mark Vande Zande.*

- A. Rev. Vande Zande presents the written report of the committee for information. It is moved and supported to approve the work of the CIC. *-Adopted.*

- B. Rev. Vande Zande presents the recommendations adopted by the Combined Classical Interim Committee of Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota.
1. That Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota jointly develop a Safe Church Team (SCT). *-Adopted.*
 2. That Classis Heartland adopt the following mandate for the SCT, subject to the concurring approval of Classis Iakota.
 - a. The Safe Church Team serves in a consultative role for churches in classis who are developing, reviewing, or revising congregational safe church policies.
 - b. The Safe Church Team serves as a resource for churches dealing with allegations of abuse.
 - c. The Safe Church Team serves as a clearing house of best practices and periodic trainings for Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota with regard to abuse awareness and prevention. *-Adopted.*
 3. That Classis Heartland constitute a Safe Church Team consisting of a coordinator, with a clergy member and lay member supplied each from Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota, for a total membership of five. *-Adopted.*
 4. That Classis Heartland establish the position of SCT Coordinator with an annual stipend of \$1,500. Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota will each contribute half the sum of the stipend. *-Adopted.*
 5. Rev. Vande Zande notes that Ms. Tara Boer has been approached and has expressed a willingness to serve as the SCT Coordinator. It is moved and supported to endorse the appointment of Ms. Boer. *-Adopted.*
 6. The Stated Clerk will inform Classis Iakota of these decisions.

C. **Stated Clerk** – *Rev. Robert Drenten.*

Rev. Drenten presents the written account of his work as stated clerk. He draws attention to the report and information from the Historical Committee of the CRCNA. He emphasizes the importance of keeping and archiving a record of the work of each council, consistory, and diaconate. He also informs classis of an upcoming Classis Renewal Gathering, convened by Rev. Al Postma, Classis Renewal Consultant for the CRCNA. Representatives will gather at Crossroads CRC in Des Moines on March 5-6, 2019, from Classes Central Plains, Heartland, Iakota, Minnkota, and Northcentral Iowa. It is moved and supported to approve the work of the stated clerk. *-Adopted.*

014. **Classical Ministry Leadership Team** – *Rev. Loren Kotman.*

- A. Rev. Kotman presents the written report of the team.
1. He notes the list of those who have been licensed to exhort in Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota are available for pulpit supply.
 2. The CMLT recommends that Classis Heartland approves the following awards from the Student Aid Fund:
 - a. To Mr. Ben Wiersma – \$5,000 for the 2019-2020 school year.
 - b. To Mr. Jamie Negus – \$5,000 as a half-time student or \$7,500 as a three-quarter time student for the 2019-2020 school year. *-Adopted.*
- B. It is moved and supported to approve the work of the CMLT. *-Adopted.*

015. **Council of Delegates** – *Mr. Mark Volkers.*

Mr. Volkers, the Classis Heartland delegate, presents the recent written report of the Council of Delegates and shares highlights from their recent work. The COD is recommending that Synod 2019 form a committee to review Bible translations to judge their suitability for use in the churches. He also reports the COD is taking steps to help ethnic church plants to incorporate into the CRCNA. Chairman Rev. Zuidema thanks Mr. Volkers for his work.

016. **Calvin College.**

The written report of Mr. Jon Kuylers, Region 8 trustee of the Calvin College Board, is received as information. Classis takes note that the college will formally announce a name change to “Calvin University” in July 2019.

017. **Church Visitors.**

No written church visitor reports were submitted. Rev. Robert Drenten, Church Visitor to the North, reports verbally on two informal visits. He visited with the council of First CRC, Sheldon, following the conclusion of Rev. Luke Wynja’s ministry. He also visited with the council of Sibley CRC as they explore options for their future.

018. **Classical Counselors.**

- A. Rev. Loren Kotman reports that Ocheyedon CRC has formed a search committee, and that the committee is in conversation with one minister exploring the potential for extending a call.

- B. It is moved and supported to appoint Rev. John Klompien as counselor to First CRC, Sheldon. Rev. Klompien would begin his duties upon the completion of his sabbatical in May 2019. *-Adopted.*
- C. No counselor is assigned to Sibley CRC. They are considering options for their future at this time and are not engaged in a search process. Rev. J. William Van Der Heide had served as classical counselor until his retirement from ministry.
- D. Rev. Jason Van Wyk of Living Water Community CRC, Orange City, accepted a call to Peace Reformed Church (RCA) in Sioux Falls. Classis will not appoint a counselor at this time as the church plans to continue its ministry staffed by Rev. Garry Nyenhuis and Rev. Jesse Walhof.

019. **Church Order Article 41.**
 Ireton CRC submits the following question in their credentials: “How can we as a church support pro-life?” Rev. Nathan Kuperus elaborates, noting that the council’s question was prompted by recent developments in the Iowa legislature. Chairman Rev. Zuidema invites the delegates to share their church’s “best practices” with respect to this issue.

020. **Adjournment.**
 It is moved and supported to adjourn. Rev. Aaron Gonzalez offers the closing prayer. *-Adopted.*

Soli Deo Gloria.

Rev. Robert Drenten
 Stated Clerk, Classis Heartland

UPCOMING REGULAR SESSIONS OF CLASSIS HEARTLAND

September 7, 2019 at Sanborn, Iowa, CRC
Rev. Aaron Gonzalez, Chairman
Agenda Deadline – July 20, 2019

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March 7, 2020 at Living Water Community CRC
Nathan Kuperus, Chairman
Agenda Deadline – January 18, 2020