

Classis lakota

AGENDA

March 3, 2026, 9:00 A.M.

Host Church: Cornerstone Prison Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Host Facility: Inspiration Hills

Rev. Kurt Monroe, Chair

Rev. Robert Drenten, Vice-Chair

I. INITIAL BUSINESS

- A. Opening Devotions—led by the host church
- B. Welcome to delegates and other attendees
- C. Presentation of Credentials & Roll Call
 - Signing of the Covenant for Officebearers by all delegates, per the Classical Rules of Procedure (I. H. p. 2)
- D. Declaration that Classis is constituted.
- E. Adoption of time schedule: 9:00-12:15; lunch; 1:00-3:15; coffee time; 3:30-
- F. Appointment of Prayer Leader
- G. Tally Committee (organized by the host church)

II. INSTRUCTIONS AND OVERTURES

- A. Instructions/Requests from Classical Credentials
- B. Overtures from First Rock Valley CRC
 1. Instruct the COD and the Office of the General Secretary to require all people employed for denominational service related to the CRCNA and its mission to have confessional integrity. (p. 3)
 2. Instruct Calvin University's Board of Trustees to no longer seek any national at-large or only alumni members. (p. 3)

III. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

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|---|------------------------------------|
| A. Stated Clerk (p. 2) | F. Classical Treasurer |
| B. Interim Committee (pp.4-5) | G. Church Counselors (p.12) |
| C. Ministerial Leadership Team | H. Church Visitors (pp. 13-16, 27) |
| D. Missions Team (pp. 5-8) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Areopagus (p. 9)• New Roots Ministry (p.10) | I. Regional Pastors |
| E. Finance Committee (pp. 11-12) | J. Minn-I-Kota Youth (p.17) |
| | K. Safe Church Team (p.18) |

IV. ELECTIONS/NOMINATIONS

- A. Classical Finance Committee—Eric Maas has completed his second 3-year term
- B. CMT Clergy—Rev. Joel Kok is retiring
- C. CMT Clergy Alternate—currently vacant
- D. CMT Lay—Rod Ledebor has completed his first 3-year term
- E. CMLT Clergy—Rev. Joshua Stammis has completed his first 3-year term
- F. CMLT Clergy Alternate—currently vacant
- G. Classical Safe Church Clergy—currently vacant; there is no clergy alternate
- H. Election of delegates to Synod (per the decision made at the 9/20/22 classis meeting: “classis shall consider sending one or more delegates to synod for two consecutive years.”)

V. CLASSICAL/REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES TO SYNODICAL BOARDS

- A. Calvin University (attached to email)
- B. Calvin Theological Seminary (pp. 19-21)
- C. Council of Delegates / CRCNA General Secretary (pp. 22-23)
- D. Resonate Global Mission / Reframe Ministries
- E. World Renew (pp.24-26)

VI. ADDITIONAL MATTERS

- A. Discussion of ministry areas raised by Shalom CRC (cf. Interim Committee Report)
 - 1. How to become a congregation that is attractive to young adults
 - 2. How to become more welcoming and enfolding to visitors
 - 3. How to become more loving and encouraging to each other
- B. Leftover Items (from “Instructions/Requests”)

VII. CLOSING BUSINESS

- A. Next Meeting – September 15, 2025 (First Sioux Falls CRC is next in line)
 - B. Concluding Remarks (chairperson)
 - C. Closing Prayer
 - D. Adjournment
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Stated Clerk’s Report – March 2026

Since the September 2025 meeting of classis, I have handled the following:

- Finalized the minutes of the September 16, 2025 meeting and put together the highlights of that meeting which were then sent to the churches of classis and others associated with Classis lakota
- Updated the list of classical functionaries and the rules of procedure and then posted these on our classical website along with some other documents
- Received and responded to e-mails or phone calls from individuals and/or churches who had a question about an ecclesiastical matter or wanted to bring a ministry-related matter to the attention of classis
- Met with the lakota CIC via Zoom on 12/11/25 to follow-up on matters from the 9/16/25 classis meeting and to begin the planning process for the 3/3/26 classis meeting
- Viewed a recording of a Zoom gathering of stated clerks that was facilitated by staff members in the denominational offices
- Sent reminders to those licensed to exhort that their respective license was expiring; all four responded by asking that their license be renewed for another two years; the following councils are asked to express their support of these requests either through the classical credentials or at the classis meeting—Faith SC CRC for Trevor Mouw and Thomas Soodsma; Inwood CRC for Nathan Nieuwendorp; First SF CRC for Barry Miedema

OVERTURE #1 from First CRC Rock Valley

Title: Confessional Integrity of Denominational Employees, Writers, Boards, and Agencies

Overture:

Classis Iakota overtures Synod 2026 to instruct the COD and the Office of the General Secretary to require all people employed for denominational service related to the CRCNA and its mission to have confessional integrity. This includes but is not limited to all those employed at our denominational agencies: The Banner, Resonate, Thrive, as well as all who populate volunteer boards, must show that they are professing members of a congregation in the CRCNA who fully support and defend the fullness of God's Word and that the Creeds and Confessions of the CRCNA faithfully reflecting Scripture's revelation.

Grounds:

1. The Office of the General Secretary, denominational boards, and agency leadership exercise significant influence over policy, communication, and direction of the CRCNA. Confessional alignment is therefore essential to strengthening trust and partnership between congregations, classes, and denominational leadership.
2. Denominational funds, contributed by member churches through ministry shares and other offerings, ought to support work carried out by those who are personally committed to the CRCNA's confessional standards and ecclesial life.

Respectfully submitted,
First CRC Rock Valley

OVERTURE # 2 from First CRC Rock Valley

Classis Iakota overtures Synod 2026 to instruct Calvin University's Board of Trustees to no longer seek any national at-large or only alumni members. But to have the whole of the Calvin University Board of Trustees to be made up of confessionally aligned members from our 12 regions.

Grounds:

1. Synod 2025 required Calvin University to define "indefinite exceptions" to confessional subscription, which pertained exclusively to national at-large members of the board.
2. Synod 2025 instructed the University to raise the required percentage of confessionally aligned trustees.
3. Synod 2026 has a duty to guard and hold accountable the confessional unity of the denomination and all who are delegated from each Classis who serve according to (Church Order Art. 28, 29). This ensures that Synod receives reporting consistent with CRC confessional teaching and fulfills the Classies pastoral oversight for the congregations and members who rely on denominational institutions from all regions.

Respectfully submitted,
First CRC Rock Valley

Classis lakota Interim Committee: Report to Classis March 2026

Your Classis Interim Committee met on December 11, 2025, and corresponded regularly as to the ongoing needs of classis between meetings. The following business was handled by our team:

1. Provisionally approved (Church Order Art. 12 Supplement C.1.e.) a request from Shalom CRC that Rev. Norlyn Van Beek be extended on loan (Church Order Art 12-d) to serve First Presbyterian Church, Sibley, IA, for a period of up to 2 years.
 - **Request:** that Classis sustain this decision of the CIC.
2. Handled the transfer of Ecclesiastical Credential for a Minister of Rev. Stanley Groothof from Trinity CRC in Rock Valley to Victoria CRC, Victoria, BC, Canada, and Classis B.C. North-West.
3. Filled a request for Classis Preaching Assignments for Spring 2026 from Covenant CRC, Sioux Center.
4. Appointed Steve Zwart to serve as Alternate Synodical Deputy.
 - **Request:** that Classis approve this appointment. (Stated Clerk's note: this will also need the approval of the COD)
5. Drew Hoekema reported on his trip to Resonate Global Mission's Multiply Conference in November. CIC determined that a further discussion surrounding its guiding theses would be appropriate at the Spring meeting.
6. Discussed the request of Shalom CRC commended to CIC during the September 2025 meeting that the following topics be discussed: a. How to become a congregation that is attractive to young adults b. How to become more welcoming and enfolding to visitors c. How to become more loving and encouraging to each other. We discerned that these issues would be included in the discussion recommended in the above point.
7. Communicated with Rev. Sam Hamstra, Jr. at Rukes Group that congregations would be well-served by communicating early and often with Classis Counselors in situations where ministers are being called from other denominations.
8. Began exploring the following potential initiatives for Classis:
 - Partnering with Dordt University to create a cooperative track whereby students preparing for ministry are granted a licensure to exhort and placed "under care" of a local congregation in an intentional manner.
 - Communicating with other classes about potential changes aimed at better preserving the job distinction between Elders and Deacons at Classis
9. Prepared the following Pastoral Short-Term Illness Policy for review and approval by classis:

Short-Term Illness Policy

Background: Over the last number of years, Classis Iakota has encountered a steady increase in pastor's or members of a pastor's family who have suffered one or more short term disability events or illnesses, including stroke, accident, cancer, West Nile, etc. Often the question of the local church has been: what do we do now when our pastor is unable to work?

Synod 2022 was also posed with this question. It was discovered that only one classis had a specific fund set up to aid classis churches and pastors who experience the trauma of a critical short term illness.

In Classis Iakota we do not have a fund, and to the CIC's knowledge, it is currently not common for churches to include short-term disability in their current benefit packages.

Recommendation: That classis approve the policy outlined below, commending it to congregations.

- a. Each local congregation to work with their pastor to provide reasonable coverage for short term disability as part of their benefits package.
- b. During a short-term disability event, congregations are expected to continue regular salary and benefits for up to one year of treatment while serving their congregation.
- c. It is the responsibility of the pastor to fully communicate with the council and church about spiritual and financial needs during this time.
- d. Churches should seek an interim, seminarian, or other part-time ministry to walk with the church from the time of diagnosis through treatment. This ensures that ministry continues to be carried out in the congregation. This policy might match a recommended sabbatical policy that would occur at a minimum for 6 months for every 6 years of service.
- e. Neither pastor nor church should seek separation during this period but should work towards faithfulness and care of one another for a period of no less than one year from diagnosis to the end of active treatment.

It is the prayer of the CIC that these recommendations would smooth the troubled waters of illness and disease in our fallen world that have been and will be faced by churches and pastors in Classis Iakota.

Classical Missions Team Report

On November 20, 2025 the Classis Mission Team met at Shalom CRC in Sioux Falls to hear a request for support from Thomas Soodsma of Faith CRC in Sioux Center. Thomas shared his vision and that of Faith's GLOW (Growing Local Outreach and Witnessing) committee of sharing the gospel with unbelievers in a Creation to Christ weekend retreat at Inspiration Hills. The CMT appreciated the passion and enthusiasm that Thomas shared in his desire to reach the lost and decided to support this ministry with \$2500.

The CMT then discussed a request from the Finance Committee to develop or clarify guidance for the identification and distribution of funds received. A committee was appointed of Scott Van Voorst, Leonard Hoekstra, and Rod Ledeboer to develop such a plan.

This plan which was put together, shared with the Finance Committee and then revised by the CMT at a meeting in January is being presented to the Classis. It is the CMT's hope that Classis not only approve this plan, but that each church earnestly seek God's will in putting to use the funds that are available for ministry.

The CMT also discussed potential pastors who would be happy and willing to fill vacant positions on the team. Pastors David Heilman and Greg Dyk have agreed to allow their names to be presented to Classis for these positions.

Blessed to be part of the team!
Gary Maas, chair

[The CMT is seeking classical approval for the following three documents]

To: Churches of Classis lakota
From: The Classis Missions Team of Classis lakota
Topic: Grant Funds for local evangelism efforts
Date: Dec 2025

Dear Churches,

lakota Classis Missions Team (CMT) desires to see churches engage in local evangelism efforts. We would like to incentivize innovation in evangelism by offering classis grant funds for churches to try new evangelism efforts.

The funds are to be used by churches from Classis lakota and local ministry partners in our region. These funds are intended to encourage established churches and ministries from our Classis to invest in mission minded activities such as outreach events and leadership development opportunities that would impact the communities around our churches.

Fund requests will be reviewed and awarded by the CMT at its regularly scheduled meetings or a special meeting should a request warrant a special meeting of the CMT:

-Funds will be awarded on a first come basis with a maximum request of \$5,000 for a new project. A church project demonstrating mission effectiveness may request additional rounds of support.

-Proposals must be submitted with approval of ministry staff or the church consistory.

Grant Funds for Local Evangelism Efforts

Classis Iakota- Classis Mission team

Written January 2026

Proposal Information Form:

-All sections of the form must be complete- Please Type or print clearly.

1. Organization Requesting Funds:
 - a. Name of the Organization
 - b. Mailing Address
 - c. E-mail:
 - d. Amount requested (5,000 Max)
 - e. Estimated amount of the total Project:
 - f. Date of this Request:
 - g. Preferred Phone Number:

2. Project Director:
 - a. The person in charge of the effort whom we can communicate with.
 - b. Mailing address:
 - c. E-mail Address:
 - d. Phone Number(s):

3. Name of the Project:
 - a. Explanation of the Project
 - b. Impact of the project (what is the desired outcome/ community engagement):
 - c. Is this a project that will be sustained long-term of a one-time effort?
 - d. Timeline for the beginning and end of the project
 - e. Proposed/ Estimated budget of what the requested funds will be used for. Please include information regarding any funds the church or individual donors have committed toward the project already.
 - f. Any other information you feel will be helpful in our decision

4. A Brief follow up report will be expected by the CHMA upon completion of the project within three months. CHMC will provide an evaluation form

5. Submit this form by e-mail or mail to:

Classis Mission Team Chair
Rev. Gary Maas
180 8th St
Harrison SD, 57344
garymaas@siouxvalley.net

Iakota Classis Missions Team Grant Funds

Post Event/Project Evaluation Form

Written Jan 2026

Date of Report:

Date the Project was completed:

Project Name:

Project Director:

-Feel free to use the back of the form or next page to answer if space is needed.

1. How this project or event impacted the ministry and the leadership of this project?
2. Were the goals met (please share an example/ story)?
3. Would you recommend this project for another church or ministry? Why or Why not?
4. Please Share any other relevant lessons learned or information that would impact our decision to support this type of project or event again in the near future.

Submit this Form and information by mail or e-mail to
Classis Mission Team Chair
Rev Gary Maas
180 8th St
Harrison, SD 57344
garymaas@siouxvalley.net

Areopagus Spring Report to Classis

Dear Classis Partner in Ministry,

The new semester has begun! 2025 was a good year. God worked at Iowa State (see [TGC article on this](#)) —and He brought us new student connections, growing relationships, and, most of all, deepening gospel trust and obedience.

As we enter Spring 2026, we've been encouraged that God "goes slow, to go fast," and "**goes deep, to grow wide.**" We desire to make disciples who make disciples. *Matt 28:19-20*. Both Lora and Joel are being discipled with Discipleship 222, and are discipling a student each in this Catechism based multiplying model.

This semester, Lora pares down to the essentials -- reading Scripture together, both in 1:1 Bible studies (*James, Romans, Judges*) and in a weekly **public reading of Scripture** group (Acts-Revelation). Joel is doing more with young men in our Areopagus orbit; yesterday was billiards! And our group joins Trinity's *Young Adults* for movies, meals, games and (what else?) the Super Bowl.

Our student president Matt Haken is working hard to begin a **Christian Engineering Society** chapter at ISU. To that end, Areopagus will be hosting Dordt profs Griffioen and VanderWerff, in a **March 30, 6pm** Faith and Engineering lecture event.

This will be a different semester. We face transitions – our Board president, Randy Raak moves to help *Resonate*. Areopagus shares Lora's focus with our CRCNA magazine [The Banner](#), part-time. (Areopagus' own [Herb Schreur](#) put in a great article.) We are grateful for the flexibility given by our ministry for Lora to serve in this interim way, but we are also anxious that time is allotted wisely and well. Please pray for this, even as we pray that Jesus' name is lifted high in all our work.

On behalf of our board, our student steering team, and those served by our ministry, **thank you** for your prayers and financial support. **We are excited** to see what God will do in this new year!

Yours, trusting in our always faithful Lord,

Lora A Copley
505-387-6861



PS Follow us on Instagram for regular photos!



Report from New Roots Ministry

Thank-you, Classis Iakota, for your tremendous support of New Roots Ministry, presently in its 19th year.

The future of the Church, at least in its relevance to society and the world, is in its effect on, and growth by way of, new believers. As well, that was a major priority for our Lord Jesus and for His first churches.

That is ultimately what New Roots Ministry is about, and it does that through equipping immigrants in Sioux Falls, and by seeking to engage and inspire the Church here and beyond. Specifically for immigrants, we offer driver training for adults, Timothy Leadership Training, liaison support in the way of English training and mentoring as well as spiritual engagement, empowerment opportunities like speaking engagements, workplace chaplaincy, and educational & morale support for about 65 immigrant churches and their 75 pastors.



Specifically for the Church, we offer discipleship opportunities with new believers and their families, workshops and educational events to learn about and to engage with immigrant people, hosting of groups wanting to be better acquainted with immigrants, and Everyday-Ambassador Practicum. **If any Classis members would like to hang out in meeting interesting immigrant people, including having dialogue with those of other faiths, or new believers, that would be our privilege. Please let us know (605-376-6330, sfnewroots@gmail.com).**



Our biggest programming need presently is discipleship of new believers and their families. This involves meeting with people about every 2 weeks in person, besides communicating by phone. In essence, people are new in Jesus as they are coming out of Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, but now they need Christian friends to walk with them in faith.



**Finance Committee
Classis lakota
Report – March 3, 2026**

The Finance Committee met January 13, 2026. Members Eric Maas, Darrel Raih, and Rev. Bob Drenten were present, joined by Treasurer Bob Van Ruler (ex officio) and Classis Mission Team liaison Leonard Hoekstra.

Matters at Hand

- Treasurer Van Ruler briefly updated the committee on 2025 classis finances. Receipts and expenses have been within anticipated amounts. Van Ruler will present the 2025 report to classis. Finance Committee members Maas and Raih plan to review (“audit”) the treasurer’s work in late January or early February.
- Chance Laswell, a student at Dordt University, has been developing a bookkeeping system for Classis lakota based on Quickbooks. The Finance Committee expects the prototype to be ready by May 2026.
- The committee position now held by Eric Maas expires March 2026. After discussion, the committee recommended that Classis lakota appoint Eric Maas to another three-year term. Continuity is valuable as the committee continues to develop its understanding of and approach to its duties on behalf of classis.
- On behalf of the Classical Mission Team (CMT), Hoekstra presented a request for funding for a mission initiative by Faith CRC in Sioux Center. The CMT wishes to match \$2,500 funding contributed by Faith CRC for an evangelistic retreat. The Finance Committee directed Treasurer Van Ruler to fund this grant from the “Classical Home Missions” fund line item.
- The request from Faith CRC in Sioux Center prompted further discussion in the Finance Committee regarding the availability and use of four funds held by Classis lakota from the disbanding of Heartland CRC in Sioux Falls. The Church Plant Grant, the Mission Renewal Grant Fund, the New Church Start Fund, and the Funds for Church Plant accounts have similar names and vague documented mandates. The Finance Committee has noticed that neither the churches nor the CMT clearly understand how to make use of these funds, which represent a considerable resource. In light of this, the Finance Committee recommended that Classis lakota consolidate these four funds into one “Mission Opportunities Fund.” Guidance for the use of these funds would be developed by the CMT with the help of the Finance Committee. The intent is that the Mission Opportunities Fund will offer flexible and understandable resources to support congregational and classical mission initiatives.

Recommendations

- 1. That Classis lakota accept the single nomination of Eric Maas to an additional three-year term ending March 30, 2029.**

Grounds

- a. Continuity is valuable as the five-year-old committee continues to develop its mandate and methods for Classis lakota.
- b. Mr. Maas is willing, available, and gifted for this position.

- 2. That Classis lakota consolidates the Church Plant Grant, the Mission Renewal Grant Fund, the New Church Start Fund, and the Funds for Church Plant as the Mission Opportunities Fund, as a resource administered by the Classical Missions Team (CMT) to help fund congregational and classical mission initiatives. Classis lakota instructs the CMT with the Finance Committee to develop policy for the use of these funds.**

Grounds

- a. This clarifies the purpose for and the access to the resources of these four funds.
- b. This honors the broader intent of these funds to support missions.

- 3. That Classis lakota approve the work of its Finance Committee.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Bob Drenten, Chairman
Darrel Raih
Eric Maas

Leonard Hoekstra, *ex officio* Classical Mission Team Liaison
Treasurer Bob Van Ruler, *ex officio*

Church Counselor’s Reports

The following churches have been assigned the following counselor:

- Inwood CRC—Rev. David Heilman
- Covenant CRC in Sioux Center—Rev. Bob Drenten
- Rock Rapids CRC—Rev. John Lee
- Calvin CRC in Rock Valley—Rev. Kurt Monroe
- Trinity CRC in Rock Valley—Rev. John Lee
- Shalom CRC in Sioux Falls—Rev. Bernie Haan

Church Visitor Report: Platte SD – October 2025

Jack Gray and I visited the CR church in Platte on October 6. Since we met at 5pm, we shared a time of fellowship with them as we had a supper of fresh sub sandwiches. This was just a taste of how refreshing and exciting our visit with them would be

The elders began by sharing some highlights of the ministry at Platte. Pastor Drew's preaching is true to God's Word and is Christ-centered. He is preaching through Deuteronomy with an emphasis on God's direction and warnings also for us today. When they celebrated the Lord's Supper recently, he preached about Christ, the living bread. Wanting to emphasize how essential prayer is in our lives, Drew established a prayer room in the church. The pastor also faithfully visits members and commits time to the community, but also sets aside time for his family.

It has been exciting and encouraging to the whole church when 5 babies have been baptized recently. In addition, 2 teenagers from Baptist background joined the church and were baptized through immersion. An elder visited one of these students at SDSU and will continue to mentor that student. A Lutheran family is also interested in the Platte church.

The elders clearly take their role as leaders of the church seriously. The day we were there, an elder had visited a member who fell off of a horse. They do not have formal family visiting, but each elder visits the families in his district. The challenge is being able to coordinate with families who are very busy. When bringing the bulletin to the shut-ins they spend time visiting them.

The Platte deacons reported that the church has good financial support from the families and individuals. The challenge is to discuss requests for support and which to support. The deacons also have a time of prayer with their district elder.

The council members did not have any specific questions for us as church visitors, but shared some of the things that are encouraging to them. They have a stronger view of the CRC because of the discussions and decisions of Synod recently. The Platte church participates in the "every family" Banner plan, which helps them feel a part of the denomination. They also talked about how the council members hold each other accountable and show appreciation for what an office bearer has done.

At every council meeting each office bearer shares a Scripture verse and how it been meaningful for him. They make a practice of talking to their pastor about how they can support him in his ministry. They also shared how they encourage the members giving by telling something about the cause that the offering is for, and then praying for that cause. They also thank the congregation for their support.

We as church visitors left Platte rejoicing with them about the spiritual life of the church. We hope this gives you a glimpse of the Platte church so we as a classis can rejoice with them for God's faithfulness to them and their faithfulness to God.

Church Visitor Report: New Holland, South Dakota

With joy Jerry Buwalda and Jack Gray went to New Holland the evening of October 6 under a gorgeous Harvest Moon. We went to inquire about God's harvest of His spiritual gifts to a church family that is deeply dependent on a good harvest of crops. This is what we found.

The Council expressed appreciation for Rev. Norlyn Van Beek and his wife, Cheryl, who served as Interim Pastoral Couple for almost three years of their four-year pastoral vacancy. They did this struggling with health issues which required six surgeries in two years.

New Holland's new pastor sat quietly in the council room. Rev. Greg Dyk was not yet installed. Jerry asked if he felt welcomed by the church family. His answer, "I am home. I was born in Platte, and I am home." We are confident that Greg and his wife, Kayleen, will have a positive impact on the spiritual vitality of the church and community. His previous ministry serving churches like New Holland have been a blessing, so those people praise God for his gifts and leadership. We trust God will use Greg in the congregation and in our classis.

We asked about how the congregation was shepherded in the long years between pastors. Elders and deacons stood up and served with special energy assisting the Interim Pastor. Fittingly Pastor Greg in his two Sundays before installation reflected with the congregation on Psalm 23. He reminded the church family that while he is God's shepherding caretaker, God not only cares for pastors but each person in His family. God's family in New Holland CRC will, by God's grace, experience the peace that comes when Christ is our personal shepherd.

We were there the evening council was selecting nominations for elder and deacon. They asked us what we thought about deeply devout Christians being placed in nomination whose worship pattern is spotty. Their final step in the selection process is to draw names trusting God to lead them to His choice. I shared with them examples from my ministry in which men who might not ever have been elected but whose names were drawn, did wonderful things for the church and God's kingdom in their three-year term. God knows the future and God will put men in place who have the gifts to meet the challenges and opportunities that will come.

Speaking of the future, New Holland has 24 children come forward each Sunday for the Children's Message. What a future! Where will they worship? For over a century the church building has stood as a stately structure with its steeple tower casting a long shadow over the prairie each sunrise and sunset. Several years ago the bell had to come down and now has its own new tower. Today the east wall is leaning so the sanctuary will have to be replaced. Since fledgling farmers could build such a beautiful church with its great pipe organ and fabulous stained-glass windows, this generation will find a way to make a wonderful replacement as they have already done with the new Fellowship Addition. Those 24 kids—and the ones who come behind them—will worship God wonderfully in a new church building. But they are at a crisis: they are far short of the money needed to rebuild. The present building needs work that is expensive. Do they keep spending money to repair rather than put it in the new building fund? Another hindrance is the price of corn and beans this year, but we heard no complaints. Pray for the New Holland church family as they face this challenge.

The Council Minutes are well kept, signed and up to date. The Deacons work and the financial records show good stewardship. Pastor Greg has the great privilege of leading God's people in New Holland to grow in the grace of God the Father, the salvation of God the Son, with power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Jerry's picture on the council wall with all the pastors who have served New Holland CRC is a lot younger looking than Jerry looks today. What can you expect 33 years

after his decade of service to this congregation from 1982 to 1992? The rapport is still there! They appreciate his godly service along with his wife, Sharon, which still echoes today. My wife, Wanda, and I served them as Interim Pastoral Couple for half a year and on other occasions, so we know the strong character of the congregation and the devout conviction to Jesus Christ our Lord which they pass from generation to generation. Christ is praised by the people of New Holland.

Jerry Buwalda and Jack Gray

Church Visitor Report Harrison SD – October 2025

Jack Gray and I visited with the council of the Harrison Community Church at 8:30pm on October 6. We had already visited Platte and New Holland that day, so it could have been tiring, but it was truly a blessing to visit all of these churches. We were looking forward to what we would hear in Harrison, and we weren't disappointed. It was like the icing on the cake. We were met by Pastor Gary Maas who took us to see the new building - the sanctuary, the fellowship hall, and the council room.

In listening to the council, we heard excitement in their voices about how working together on the new building had brought them closer together. That has also become visible to the community, which has led to new people attending and joining. For example, a family living in Vermillion has joined the church; a young person has invited a friend; a young family is attending; 2 Lutherans have worshipped with them; a man who hasn't attended church for 45 years is now coming, and they've also had several baptisms.

In all of this, the congregation has been very generous in their giving. Their new building is paid for because of the generous giving. This was a result of the example of the leadership who gave generously. Today they have a beautiful facility and are debt free. They also decided to support equally the Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church of North America.

The council really appreciates Pastor Gary. The previous Sunday when a baby named Naomi was baptized, the pastor preached from the book of Ruth and the return of Naomi and Ruth to the Lord. His call to the congregation was for people to turn their eyes to Jesus.

When asked about the place of prayer in the life of the church, their response showed how important it is to council members. They begin each council meeting with prayer as they go around the table praying for various concerns.

The elders have set up districts to minister to all the people. When they bring the church bulletin to the shut-ins, they spend time visiting them. They especially get excited about young people coming to make profession of faith.

One thing I noticed is that the younger generation has taken spiritual leadership in the church. It was great to hear what the Lord is doing in Harrison Community Church.

Jack Gray & Jerry Buwalda

Church Visitor Report Lakeview SD – October 2025

Jack Gray and I visited with the Lakeview council at 3 PM on October 20. We were thankful they were so accommodating to meet in the afternoon so we could visit Corsica in the evening. We were concerned that we were making them take time off from harvesting, but they assured us that it was no problem because the corn wasn't ready for harvest because of fall rains.

They first mentioned as a highlight that God has truly been faithful. They fatten cattle so the economy has been great for their church. Their membership numbers have been generally static, fluctuating up and down somewhat. But the members are faithful. For example, a member had a stroke and was bedridden for 6 months. During that time the people faithfully visited her until her death when she went to her complete rest in the Lord.

Pastor Joshua's messages are Reformed and interesting to the congregation, and they give the people food for thought during the week. He often reads from the Heidelberg Catechism or the Belgic Confession during the sermon, but is always aware that people need to understand what he is talking about. He also still preaches when the members can't attend due to severe storms.

Prayer plays a role in all aspects of church life. They have prayer requests at each service and in adult Sunday school. The council prays for the pastor before each morning service, and the members pray for the Lakeview school children - many of them are from the reservation.

A unique ministry of the Lakeview Church is Prairie Light, held each summer when they pick up many children from the Rosebud Reservation for a week of Bible School. Over the years several churches in Classis have sent adults and youth to assist with the Bible School. Robbie Jacobson, a daughter of the church who lives in Sioux Falls and is a member of First Baptist Church, was the inspiration for Prairie Light about 40 years ago. She is now an elderly widow but still goes out there every year during Prairie Light.

They often feel far from the Christian Reformed Church, and feel it has become "too cozy with sin." That is not what they want to be. They asked about the Abide Project, which Jack is involved in.

Jack and I met separately with Pastor Joshua to talk about how he is dealing with the isolation at Lakeview, particularly since he grew up in the city and is single. He mentioned learning about the life of a cowboy, and has experienced that as he spent time with members of the church on their ranches. He was looking forward to the next day when he would work cattle with them. He also mentioned that he enjoys going abroad once a year.

As Lakeview receives financial support from classis, they expressed how grateful they are for the that support, but also that Classis sometime meets at the Lakeview church and sends church visitors to meet with them. They know they have not been forgotten.

Jerry Buwalda and Jack Gray

Minn-I-Kota Youth Report

MINN-I-KOTA YOUTH BOARD:

*MINNKOTA CLASSIS: Representative-Pastor Greg Timmer-9/2022, Karmen Vis- Secretary-9/2017, Rachel Guthmiller-1/2026

*IAKOTA CLASSIS: Representative-Pastor Scott Van Voorst-9/2024, Dan Elgersma-President-1/2019, Shelli Kollis-1/2020

*HEARTLAND CLASSIS: Representative-Pastor Ben Wiersma-9/2021, Kody Tesch-Treasurer-11/2019, Scott deBoom-9/2024

MIK YOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

We have four lessons that we can present to your Youth Group. Give your leaders a night off and let us lead the lesson for that night. Pick from these Travelling Lesson Plans:

1. "Will You Be My Neighbor" Luke 10:25-37
2. "The Talking Donkey" Numbers 22:21-39
3. "Hello My Name Is..." Judges 6
4. "Pick Me...Pick Me!" Psalm 23/HC Q&A #1

We also have the Mario & Princess Peach Wedding Day Travelling Escape Room and a second Escape Room that we are still working on for the fall of 2026 titled: "The 7 Cs"

ATTENTION MIK YOUTH JR HIGHERS: The 16th Annual Jr High Retreat will be April 17-19 at Inspiration Hills. The theme this year is "Truth" based off the verse from John 8:32. This will be the 16th annual retreat for Junior High Students. (6th, 7th, -8th Grade)

****Fun Fact**** Once again this year we have Dordt University students who have volunteered to be leaders for this event. Several of them went through this retreat when they were in Jr. High. We even have leaders who went through this retreat as a Jr. Highers and are now sharing this experience with their younger siblings! Full Circle Ministry!

MIK + YOUNG ADULTS

MIK + Young Adult ministry is one year old! It was officially started in January of 2025. It is designed to be a ministry for young single adults from 19 to 30 years of age. Once a month we share a meal and have Bible Study. This year we are studying the book of Ephesians. We also try to plan a fun outing once a month.

If you are (or if you know) a single adult between 19 and 30 years of age, we encourage you to give us a try. There is no prep needed--- just a willingness to learn, a desire to share, and an opportunity to build friendships. Bible Studies are in Inwood CRC (meal starts at 6pm with Bible Study to follow).

Save these dates:

- 2/7 -Game night (location TBD)
- 2/21 – Eph. 4:1-16 "How Churches Grow"
- 3/7 – Dodgeball (location TBD)
- 3/21 – Eph. 4:17-5:20 "Christians Are Not Chameleons"
- 4/11 – Eph. 5:21- 6:9 "Home and Work"
- 4/25 – Outing TBD
- 5/2 – Eph. 6:10-24 "Spiritual Warfare" (Loc. TBD)

Summer plans are still being planned. Some of the fun things MIK+ has done since Sept include... a night at Thunder Road in Sioux Falls, Challenge Shopping for the Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes, and a Friendsgiving meal. We had a Christmas Caroling night planned but we had to cancel because of bad weather.

Follow us on Facebook: Minnikota Youth

**Thank you for your continued support! **

Blessings to all!

Hebrews 10:25

Lee and Pastor Doug De Groot

712-470-4244

mikyouthnetwork@gmail.com

Classis Heartland & lakota Safe Church Report Spring Report 2026

Prepared by: Abby Vanden Bosch, lakota & Heartland Safe Church Coordinator

Date Prepared: 1/30/2026

lakota & Heartland Classical Safe Church Team Members: Pastor Jesse Walhof (Living Water CRC- Heartland), Kristi Habben (Sibley CRC- Heartland), Haeley Faber (Trinity CRC- lakota), Abby Vanden Bosch (Living Water CRC- Heartland)

Classical Safe Church Team Tasks:

- The Safe Church Team serves in a consultative role for churches in the classes who are reviewing or revising congregational safe church policies. It is expected that all churches have an operating safe church policy and a safe church team within your church.
- The Safe Church team serves as a resource for churches dealing with allegations of abuse.
- The Safe Church Team serves as a clearing house of best practices and periodic trainings for Classis Heartland and Classis lakota with regard to abuse awareness and prevention.

Team Activity:

The Safe Church Team plans to meet on February 17 at Living Water, Sheldon. Agenda items, at this time, will include discussion on policy development and identification of a safe church lead within each church. The team continues to work in becoming familiar with general safe church policies and procedures. The team also continues the search for a pastor representative to serve as part of the safe church team.

Because of circumstances out of our control, the team was not able to complete training for the advisory panel process. We have reconnected with Julia Rathbun at Thrive and training has been rescheduled for the evening of Tuesday, February 17. This training will allow for the team to be further equipped and prepared for situations involving the safe church team.

Safe Church Team Recommendations:

The team continues to ask all churches to develop a safe church policy and add an age-appropriate abuse prevention curriculum in the Sunday school classrooms along with the training for the adults who teach it. The team continues to request updated information identifying a lead safe church team member with their contact information; please share this updated information with any member of the safe church team.

If you would like to talk about any safe church needs your church may have, please communicate with any committee member.

Current Team Members

Pastor Jesse Walhof: jsswalhof@gmail.com

Abby Vanden Bosch: abby.vandenbosch@westernchristianhs.com

Kristi Habben: khabben@premieronline.net

Haeley Faber: haeleyfaber@gmail.com

Calvin Theological Seminary Spring 2026 Ministry Highlights

Since 1876, Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) has worked on your behalf to faithfully prepare leaders who can nurture disciples and serve the church. The 2025-2026 academic year does mark our 150th Anniversary – shared by both Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin University!

For these 150 years we have been a vital part of the learning community within the Reformed Christian tradition. As our context has changed around us, we've responded to the needs of our church, implementing programs that form leaders in various fields of ministry. We continue to refine and explore with you what it means to serve the church, looking forward to this anniversary and beyond. **A public worship service of thanksgiving (that will be live-streamed) will be held the evening of March 29, 2026 in the Covenant Fine Arts Center. You are invited to be present or tune-in!**

<https://calvin.edu/events/150th-anniversary-worship-service-1774817100>

Here are a few highlights that are important building blocks for our ministry partnership with the church.

- **At its October 2025 Board meeting, the Board received the Notice of Retirement of President Jul Medenblik. D.V., he will continue to serve as President until June 30, 2027. President Medenblik's letter of gratitude is linked below. We give thanks for his faithful leadership. We ask for prayers for the CTS Board who following the identification of new Board officers will begin the work of identifying a profile and Search Team. Please pray for the person of God's choosing to be made known.**

https://mailchi.mp/calvinseminary/faculty-staff-student-special-edition-nov25?utm_source=Communications&utm_campaign=f3b8940ef8-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2025_07_01_03_07_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-6c6dbb8fa3-368868529

- **The Board as part of its governance function and review of current structure also moved forward to search for a Professional Service Consultant. Please be in prayer for this important work of evaluation and planning.**
- Convocation, Wednesday Chapel Services, the Opening Picnic of the Year, Tuesday gatherings for the Public Reading of Scripture followed by lunch together and Christmas Around the World have been used by God to help us gather and support each other in this new year.

You can always “drop-in” to Wednesday Chapels at 10:30 am via a Livestream or watch them later via YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsflAGWsG1-6LdBCALm2wk69d_qntsepB

Here is the link to the Convocation 2025 service which includes the address by Dr. Ronald Feenstra who began teaching at CTS in 1992 as one of the foundational faculty members to begin the PhD program at CTS. **Professor Feenstra's Last Lecture (which will be recorded) has been scheduled for Friday, May 1, 2026.** We also hope this event will be livestreamed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1pXHJUkncY>

- **Please continue to pray for our faculty and staff and please pray for the persons of God's choosing to fill faculty openings in the area of Old Testament as well as new openings in Pastoral Care and Counseling as well as a Chief Academic Officer/Dean of Faculty. We are glad to report that Rev. David Beelen has agreed to be Director of Vocational Formation for this year and next as part of a ministry team.**
- You can check into all position postings by going to <http://calvinseminary.edu/employment> If you have persons you wish to nominate or recommend, please contact Ms. Karen DeYoung who serves as the CTS Director of Human Resources. She can be reached at kdyoung@calvinseminary.edu.
- **One of our key projects has been the building of our new 46 apartment student housing that is designed with our current and future students in mind and we give thanks that the project is complete!** We have been seeing more second-career students and students with children enroll at CTS. As a result, we planned a new facility with capacity for 20 three-bedroom, 19, two-bedroom and 7 one-bedroom apartments. We are grateful for fund support of over 70% for the estimated cost completion of this project. The location of this new housing is right next to campus at 3300 Burton Street SE. A Community Ribbon-Cutting took place on October 30, 2025! Students began moving into this wonderful setting in mid-November.
- **We want to invite all persons to bookmark The Forum as a digital tool for use that includes our usual array of articles as well as podcasts and video. We also maintain a mailing list for The FORUM and invite people to also sign up for this long-standing and trusted resource.**
<https://theforum.calvinseminary.edu/>
<https://wkf.ms/3wXH7r3>
- **Finally, the CTS Board of Trustees recently approved our strategic plan and set our goals to help guide us into the next 150 years of service to the church. We distill this plan into four major themes:**

Compelling Invitation – We focus intentionally on our Reformed heritage and identity not only through scholarship, but also in student formation and societal engagement. We want to share our distinctiveness in bold, create and clear ways that are compellingly invitational and winsome.

Holistic Learning Journeys – We focus on serving students, ensuring the best learning experiences and mentorship by not only equipping staff and faculty appropriately and adequately, but also meeting student expectations for contextual curriculum and multifaceted learning opportunities.

Organizational Excellence – We foster an ethos of organizational excellence where trust, accountability, respect and mutuality around a shared vision are embodied, where individual and collective contributions are valued and celebrated, and where everyone who comes into contact with CTS will experience purpose, fulfillment, care and ultimately a communal experience of our unity in Christ.

Cultivating Abundance – With gratitude to God for His providence, we are encouraged by and appreciate a community of generous supporters through whom our student body will continue to grow and expand, and through whom the mission of CTS is realized. We will promote this missional invitation to ensure a solid fiscal base for the ongoing work of Reformed theological education, formation and scholarship.

- Please join us as we look forward to celebrating God’s faithfulness from 1876 to today and anticipate His continued blessing on our community. **We invite your prayers for the Board, faculty, staff and students and thank you for your ministry of prayer, support and encouragement! We are glad that we are C.T.S. – Called To Serve!**

Finally, on a personal note, I want to highlight two things.

First, I want to update you on **Calvin Seminary’s ongoing commitment to providing a theological education grounded in God’s living Word and guided by our shared understanding of that Word as taught in our Reformed confessions.** Prior to Synod 2025, at our May 2025 board meeting, we voted to ensure that all regularly appointed faculty (full or reduced load) would sign the Covenant for Officebearers and would be or become members of a Christian Reformed Church congregation. This step makes explicit what had been assumed for almost 150 years, from the time of Louis Berkhof to the time of Richard Muller, that the faculty of CTS are aligned with and committed to the denomination in whose seminary they serve. Since Synod 2025, we on the board have also been working in good faith to respond to Synod’s follow-up request “to provide information to Synod 2026 as to the adherence of all instructional personnel to the CRC’s teachings, especially the creeds and our confessions.” We will bring a report to Synod 2026 that will reflect additional policies and clarifications regarding adjunct faculty that I believe will be helpful for Calvin Theological Seminary and help ensure faithful, trustworthy theological education for CRC churches we serve and love.

Second, I want to encourage you to be **prayerfully cultivating a culture of calling to full-time vocational ministry in your congregations and classes.** The CRC has a shortage of clergy. We are working to ensure that Calvin Theological Seminary is a world-class place to train them, but we can only do so if you send us students who have heard God’s internal *and* external calling to ministry. Classis Heartland and Lakota held a grassroots Conference on Calling at Dordt University on November 22 to encourage those exploring God’s call to ministry: <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/news/called-conference-encourages-potential-leaders>. We would encourage other classes – and each congregation – to help a new generation hear Christ’s challenge: “*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send our workers into his harvest field*” (Matthew 9:35-38).

As always, if you have any questions or ideas, please let me know. My cell number is: 712-441-5871. My e-mail is: jrlee12@gmail.com.

It is an honor to serve God on your behalf as part of the C.T.S. Board.

In Christ,
John Lee

Dear CRCNA Classis Leaders:

Greetings in Christ's name. We pray that you will experience God's richest blessings in the ministry of your congregations and classes in 2026.

In our fall 2025 letter to the CRCNA classes we reflected on Zerubbabel and Joshua's rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple in the face of much opposition and material shortage (Haggai 2). In 2026 we are leaning into the request of Synod 2025 to pray for the renewal of our congregations. As we do so, it's worth returning to the story of the temple's rebuilding again.

During the two decades of temple rebuilding, the prophet Zechariah (Zech 4) also communicated a message of encouragement to Zerubbabel. That message was a reminder that although Zerubbabel was laying the stones of the temple, it was God who was rebuilding it. Only the Spirit of the Lord could do the work of rebuilding – "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zech 4:6). The Lord also reminded Zerubbabel that, like the new temple's foundation (when compared to Solomon's temple), the Lord's mighty work often starts small (Zech 4:10).

What does this mean for our congregations and classes in 2026? God is calling our community of churches into the "posture of Zerubbabel" as defined by the following statements:

- Our churches belong to Jesus, who died for them and will renew them (Zech 4:6);
- The Spirit has the resources necessary for the renewal of our congregation (Hag 2:6-8);
- We should not despise the Lord's small beginnings of renewal (Zech 4:10);
- The Lord calls us to pray for the renewing of our congregations (2 Chron 8:13-16).

Below are some key items that we would like classes to be aware of for their winter and spring meetings:

Call to Prayer for Congregational Renewal and Church Planting

At significant moments throughout history, God has called his people to intentional and faithful prayer for their renewal and mission. In obedience to this pattern, Synod 2025 encouraged classes and congregations to devote themselves to praying for the renewal of the Christian Reformed Church in 2025-2026 (*Agenda and Acts of Synod*, p. 698). In response, we have [created materials](#) to support prayer in the fall, winter, and spring classis meetings. Beginning in January 2026, CRCNA agencies will share a weekly call to prayer and fasting for both **congregational renewal and for the planting of new congregations** to everyone who wants to participate. Learn more and sign up for weekly prayers [here](#).

Progress on the CRC Congregational Renewal Pathway

Since Synod 2025, our denominational agencies and ministries (especially Thrive) have been collaborating to develop the congregational renewal pathway that was requested by Synod 2023 (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 975-76) and informed by the results of the Gather Initiative (*Acts of Synod 2025*, pp. 509-25). Last fall, we requested classes to interact with these results and provide their feedback.

We are encouraged by the progress on this mandate, which will be shared with Synod 2026 for its approval. The developing pathway will be rooted in a process of learning, discovery, and prayerful discernment for leaders and members. It will also have multiple "on-ramps" for churches in different situations and contexts. It will be designed to attend to the deeper issues facing congregations desirous of renewal. It will be focused on engaging the congregation in its part of God's mission to the world, and will provide relational support from Thrive as congregations implement renewal efforts. Finally, this pathway is being built on experience with real situations in congregations. For these reasons we would like to again invite your classis to provide feedback on the learning from the Gather Initiative using the materials found [here](#) and emailing your feedback to emay@crcna.org.

Progress on the CRCNA Ten-Year Church Planting Plan

Synod 2025 directed the general secretary to work with the churches, classes, and denominational ministries to create a ten-year church planting plan (*Agenda and Acts of Synod 2025*, pp. 709) to present to Synod 2026. Our CRCNA mission agency, Resonate Global Mission, has been making progress on the plan in collaboration with the CRC classes and agencies/institutions. We give thanks for a successful church planting summit, called the [Multiply Conference](#), co-hosted by Classis Southeast US and Resonate Global Mission in Port Saint Lucie, FL, in November, 2025

We anticipate that the forthcoming plan will have six foci:

- Multiplying disciples and leaders in every congregation and classis;
- Growing support for Diaspora and diverse leaders;
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities to provide strong support and collaboration for church planters between CRCNA agencies/institutions, classes, and congregations;
- Engaging churches near the end of their life-cycle;
- Deepening connections with the global church and international church planting;
- Clarifying sustainable funding.

This winter and spring Resonate staff members will continue to reach out classis leadership for feedback about this developing plan. Please reach out to Tim Sheridan (tsheridan@crcna.org) if you have questions.

God is laying a new foundation to revitalize the ministry and mission of our CRC congregations. Congregational renewal and church planting are two complementary parts of that vision. Let's join together in praying for and supporting this movement of God among us.

Additional Important Items for classis consideration in preparation for summer 2026:

- CRCNA Canadian classes and ministries are busy preparing for the Canada National Gathering on May 28-31, 2026, in Ancaster, ON. See crcna.org/Canada for more information.
- **Thank you for the support you provide** so that our denominational ministries can serve CRCNA churches. Please share your denominational ministry share pledges for the New Year and please generously support these critical ministries. In Canada, reach out to Rosh at rmorton@crcna.org, and in the US reach out to Jeff at jbolt@crcna.org.
- Classes are encouraged to review and offer communications and overtures as desired on the following:
 1. [Report from the COD Task Force to Review Governance Costs](#) (including the proposal for a biennial synod). (also available in [Spanish](#), [Korean](#)) Please take special to the reflection on the number of classes (p.10)
 2. [The Report of the Task Force to Develop Church Order Procedures to Discipline Officebearers, Including Disaffiliation of a Council or Classis Initiated by a Major Assembly](#). (Summary: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Korean](#))
 3. Advice on the Historical, Biblical, and Theological Aspects of Church Membership (forthcoming).

May God bless you with strength and wisdom as he works to renew our classes and congregations in 2026.



Zach King
General Secretary



Executive Director, Canada

Winter 2026 Report for Classis

A Word from World Renew U.S. Executive Director Carol Bremer-Bennett

Dear Friends in Christ,

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the ways you support the ministry of World Renew. Through your prayers, generous giving, and the faithful service of volunteers, communities are served in Christ's name through relief, development, and long term restoration.

Scripture reminds us, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). Your partnership reflects this calling as you walk alongside communities facing poverty, disaster, and long-term challenges with care and perseverance.

Thank you for standing with World Renew and for your continued commitment to loving your neighbors near and far. We are grateful to serve alongside you.

Wholeheartedly,

Carol

Carol Bremer-Bennett
Executive Director, World Renew US



Welcome New Executive Director, World Renew Canada

World Renew is pleased to announce that Peter Timmerman has been appointed Executive Director of World Renew Canada and global co-director.

Peter brings more than 30 years of experience in Christian relief and development and has a long history of working alongside churches in Africa and Canada. Rooted in Scripture and a lifelong member of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, Peter's leadership reflects a deep commitment to justice, mercy, and love of neighbor.

Please pray for Peter and for World Renew's co-directors as they lead together in God's mission.

Overview of Impact

In fiscal year 2024–25, thanks to your support, World Renew was able to walk alongside over 720,000 participants in 2,000 communities across 30 countries!

In **Community Development** faith and community leaders were equipped through biblically rooted training, local church partnerships, and practical tools that help communities grow in resilience and stewardship, offering pathways of bold hope to more than 340,000 participants.

One example is Shiwa, a retired teacher and lifelong evangelist in Tanzania, who through World Renew's Truth Centered Transformation program learned financial stewardship skills that helped him move from ongoing hardship to stability. With this training, Shiwa was able to start a small milling business that now provides income for his family, serves his community, and strengthens his ongoing ministry, reflecting how hope takes root when faith, learning, and opportunity come together.

In **International Disaster Response** 379,000+ people affected by disasters across 22 countries were assisted through emergency food, water, shelter, sanitation, home repair, rebuilding, and livelihood rehabilitation.

After Hurricanes Eta and Iota struck Nicaragua, Celia Baptiz and her community lost crops, food, and access to safe drinking water as floodwaters overwhelmed their homes and land. Clean drinking water quickly became one of the most urgent needs. Through local partners, World Renew provided emergency assistance and walked alongside the community as recovery began.

In **North America Disaster Response Services (DRS)** volunteers repaired or rebuilt 209 homes and served 2,367 individuals through Disaster Response Services in North American communities impacted by storms, flooding, and other disasters!

Hendersonville, North Carolina, was deeply impacted by Hurricane Helene, with flooding and fallen trees causing widespread damage. One of those trees crushed Rob's trailer, leaving his home severely damaged and uncertain how to move forward. Through World Renew's partnership with Baptists on Mission, Disaster Response Services volunteers from Kelloggsville Church came alongside Rob months later to help restore his home. Their work brought renewed hope after a long and difficult season. This kind of restoration is possible because congregations like yours step in with prayer, generosity, and service. Thank you for being part of this work as communities continue rebuilding.

To learn more about supporting Disaster Response Services or serving in Hurricane Helene recovery, please contact drs@worldrenew.net. If your church becomes aware of a disaster and would like to know whether World Renew is responding, please reach out! We are grateful to serve as a trusted resource for churches seeking to respond faithfully.

How Can Your Congregation Be Involved?

Give Faithfully World Renew's ministry depends on the faithful generosity of congregations like yours. Because World Renew does not receive ministry shares, your giving is essential to this work of restoration and hope, reminding families and communities that they are not forgotten by God or by the church!

Please consider supporting World Renew through these upcoming synodically designated church offerings. Resources can be found at worldrenew.net/resources

Disaster Response Sunday: February 15, 2026

Mother's Day Sunday: May 10, 2026

Engage World Renew offers meaningful ways to engage, from serving alongside Disaster Response Services to connecting more deeply with our global ministries. This spring and summer, members of our ministry teams from Latin America and Eastern and Southern Africa will be visiting congregations across the United States. We would welcome the opportunity to spend time with your church to share stories of what God is doing through World Renew and to pray and worship together.

We also invite you to consider a World Renew Discovery Tour. These immersive experiences offer a firsthand look at how God is at work through local churches and community partners, weaving together learning, relationship, prayer, and reflection.

Current Discovery Tour Opportunities

- **Tanzania** | June 12–22, 2026

Engage with World Renew's work in health, education, and economic development, and be inspired by the resilience and hope of Tanzanian communities.

Pray Please join World Renew in prayer for communities facing hardship around the world, asking God to bring hope, strength, and daily provision. Pray also for our partner churches, who serve as places of welcome and healing as they care for their neighbors. May God's peace bring renewal where it is needed most. "Let us spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24).

Thank you for your prayers and partnership.

**All client and participant names have been changed for security and privacy purposes.*

Jerry Buwalda and Jack Gray observed God's blessing on the working-togetherness of the CRC and ARC congregations who now call themselves Corsica Community Church as they engage their city and surrounding territory with the powerful message of God's good news. The councils of Grace Reformed and Corsica CRC were both present. We praise God for the hand-in-glove ministry that makes them a beacon for Christ in Corsica.

Here are five highlights.

1. The church is growing primarily with young families. The back rows of pews are filled with kids and their parents. Seventeen children come forward for the Children's Message each Sunday. A few years ago there was no need for a Children's message because there were so few children. How God has blest!
2. Each year there are several young people who make profession of faith. They are encouraged to affirm their baptism in the early months of the year so their first communion falls on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday.
3. The youth service involves 50 to 60 young people, including youth from the community. Almost all parents come to church that Sunday. It is a great time of youth worship. It has grown significantly since I (Jack) preached for it as Interim Pastor.
4. About 50 teens go to Rocky Mountain High. The church raises enough money so every child can go free.
5. The ladies make prayer blankets for those with special prayer needs in the church and community. This uses the talents of the quilters who stopped during covid. It also pictures how the congregation blankets people with prayer. Prayer is the most powerful tool any congregation has.

A major concern in Corsica is the closing of the Rest Home. The congregation has two members who must find care in other towns. For older people who have challenges with travel this is a major concern. Corsica clergy together are each taking responsibility for spiritual care of former residents.

Along with most churches, it is a challenge to get Sunday School teachers and men willing to serve in council. The same people step forward. Soon the younger families will begin to take their turn at leadership.

When Jerry asked what they do with criticism one of the elders said, "I just listen. I don't want to say anything wrong. I go home and answer after I have reflected on the criticism." It shows council members are seeking to serve the Savior using the gifts God has given to them. It was a word wisely spoken.

What will this church family of Grace Reformed and Corisa Christian Reformed look like in the future? Nobody knows. As they work and worship together they provide a model of ministry that positively impacts Corsica and the surrounding area. God is blessing what they are doing today. He will lead them in the future at His own pace. They are at peace with that.

Pastor Scott Nichols has a suggestion for all pastors. Make your last place of ministry the same as your first place of ministry. He came to Grace Reformed Church as a candidate and will conclude his ministry for Christ at Corsica Community Church. Pastor Scott makes his visits by text message, phone, or visit in the home, whichever that parishioner prefers. His sermons are appreciated because he boldly challenges people to follow Jesus Christ. His clear call to be a Christian captivated by Christ cultivates a spiritual climate in which the Holy Spirit works with power. As Christ's shepherd for Corsica he cajoles people for Christ. Praise God! Please continue to pray for God's abundant blessings on Corsica Community Church.

Jerry Buwalda and Jack Gray