

Classis Iakota
MINUTES
March 3, 2020
First CRC – Sioux Center, IA

Art. 3517: The meeting begins with a time of worship being led by Kurt Monroe, the pastor of the host church. There is the singing of “Jesus Shall Reign Where’er the Sun” and the reading of Psalm 90, followed by Pastor Monroe sharing some thoughts on this Psalm, particularly verses 12-17, noting that every day of our lives are held in God’s hand. After the reciting of Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 1, he reminds us that we have been set free to carry out God’s work personally and as congregations, being called to do this as faithfully as we can no matter what stage in our personal life and in our congregational life we are in. After a prayer for God’s guidance is offered, the time of worship concludes with the singing of “My Comfort.”

Art. 3518: Presentation of Credentials and Roll Call

<u>Churches</u>	<u>Ministers</u>	<u>Elders</u>	<u>Deacons</u>
Corsica	Jack Gray	Chad Vander Pol	Dick Borderwyk
Harrison	Gary Maas	Tim Hollander*	Luke Vander Ley*
Inwood	Adam Eisenga	Mike Knobloch	Mark Dorhout*
New Holland	John Gorter	David VanDerPol*	Riley Niewenhuis*
Platte	Drew Hoekema	Darrell Kraayenbrink	Ryan Van Zee*
Rapid City – Hope***		Gary Kreun*	Nora Vanden Bos*
		Eric Kelderman**	
Rock Rapids		Ron Vander Veen	
Rock Valley – Calvin	Gideon Wamala	Les Burggraaf	Cody De Jager*
Rock Valley – First	Matthew Haan	Carl Elbers	Justin De Wit*
Rock Valley – Trinity	Henry Lengkeek	Larry Vis*	Brad Vanden Bosch*
Amistad Christiana	Eddy Olguin	Daniel Sanchez	Rosa Koene
Sioux Center – Bethel	John Lee	Roger Feekes	Chad Hansen*
Sioux Center – Bridge of Hope	Joel De Boer	Dave Mulder*	Aaron Kleinwolterink*
Sioux Center – Covenant	Joel Kok	Melissa Bailey*	Joe Eggebeen*
Sioux Center – Faith	Bob Pollema	George Bierma	Trevor Mouw*
Sioux Center – First	Kurt Monroe	Mark Sybesma	Drew De Vries*
Sioux Center – Lebanon	Cory Van Sloten	Myron Gradert	Ashley Dekkers*
Sioux Falls – Cornerstone Prison	Doug De Groot	Gordon Dyk	
Sioux Falls – First	Cal Hoogendoorn	Rick Vander Haar	Nick De Leeuw*
Sioux Falls – Shalom	Kyle De Young	Jeff Brands*	Jen De Jong*
Valentine – Lakeview	Mark Langenbach	Gary Peters	

*Indicates first time delegates who signed the Covenant for Officebearers

**Appointed by the Hope CRC council as a past elder to help represent their council at this classis meeting

***Classis votes in favor of receiving this delegation albeit without their credentials

Art. 3519: Classis is declared constituted by John Gorter, the Chairperson of the day, with the following councils recording their protest of the seating of women delegates, seeing this as a violation of the Word of God: New Holland CRC, Platte CRC, Calvin Rock Valley CRC, First Rock Valley CRC. Drew Hoekema serves as Vice-chair and Bernie Haan as Clerk for the meeting.

Art. 3520: The Chair welcomes the delegates and visitors. The Chair appoints Adam Eisenga to handle the prayer concerns, and he appoints the delegates from the Calvin CRC of RockValley to serve as the Credentials and Article 41 Committee. Items on the Credentials are shared with the delegates and then given to the Committee of the Day. The Chair informs classis, in light of the Article 17 request from Pastor Paul Birnbaum and the council of the Hope CRC in Rapid City, that he had appointed an Advisory Team of Henry Lengkeek, Joel De Boer, and Bob Pollema to handle this request and bring recommendations to classis.

Art. 3521: The Chair notes the time schedule for the day (9-11:45, lunch, 1-3:15, coffee, 3:30-)

Art. 3522: The overture from First, Sioux Falls CRC regarding classical diaconal ministry is presented (see Agenda, p. 2).

- A. **Motion** to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee from among members of Classis Iakota (four members) and Classis Heartland (four members) to study the feasibility and focus of establishing a new ministry similar to that exercised by the Siouxland Diaconal Conference (SDC). *-Adopted*
- The Chair refers to the CIC the matter of appointing four members from Classis Iakota to be on this Ad Hoc Committee.
- B. **Motion** to discontinue the current Siouxland Diaconal Conference Classical Ministry Share. *-Adopted*

Art. 3523: The overture from First, Sioux Falls CRC regarding classical finance ministry is presented (see Agenda, p. 3).

- A. **Motion** to form a Classical Finance Committee mandated to submit at each Fall meeting of Classis a unified annual Ministry Share budget *-Adopted*
- B. **Motion** to adopt the following boundaries and expectations for the Finance Committee: [a] the committee will be comprised of between 3 to 5 able members of Classis and the Classis Treasurer (in an ex officio capacity); [b] committee members may not serve on other standing committees in order to avoid conflict of interest; and [c] Ministry Share requests are to be submitted by June 30 of each year. *-Adopted*

Art. 3524: Having received the endorsement of the Classical Ministerial Leadership Team and approval to proceed from the CRCNA Candidacy Committee, classis proceeds with a Colloquium Doctum of Dr. Justin Bailey, who has applied for ordination in the CRCNA for the purpose of serving as an Associate Pastor for the Covenant CRC of Sioux Center while serving as a professor of Theology at Dordt University.

- A. The Stated Clerk, Bernie Haan, briefly explains the process leading up to the interview.
- B. Joel Kok introduces Dr. Bailey.
- C. Cal Hoogendoorn interviews Dr. Bailey as to soundness of doctrine, sanctity of life, and knowledge of appreciation of Christian Reformed Church practice and usage.
- D. The delegates and synodical deputies are given the opportunity to ask questions.
- E. Executive Session is declared.
- F. **Motion** to admit Dr. Justin Bailey as an ordained minister into the Christian Reformed Church of North America and declare him eligible for a call.
1. There is deliberation over the motion.
 2. Prayer for guidance by Holy Spirit is offered.
 3. The delegates vote by ballot and the motion is ... *Adopted*
 4. The Synodical Deputies concur with this decision.
- G. Executive Session is ended.
- H. Dr. Bailey is informed of the decision of classis, signs the covenant for office-bearers, and is presented with a Classical Diploma.
- I. Prayer is offered by Joel Kok and the delegates are given the opportunity to personally welcome Dr. Bailey as a Minister of the Word within the CRCNA.

[Addendum: The Stated Clerk was informed the next day that the installation for Dr. Bailey will be on April 19, 2020 at the Covenant CRC in Sioux Center.]

Art. 3525: The joint request of the Hope CRC in Rapid City, South Dakota and Rev. Paul Birnbaum is submitted to release Rev. Birnbaum from active ministerial service at Hope CRC in accordance with Church Order Article 17, and is acted upon in executive session.

[The following is a summary of the actions taken by classis. The minutes of the executive session are on file with the stated clerk and may be accessed only upon request from and approval by the Classical Interim Committee.]

- A. **Motion** to support the joint request of Hope CRC and Pastor Paul Birnbaum to release Rev. Birnbaum from active ministerial service at Hope CRC in accordance with Church Order Article 17. *-Adopted*
- B. **Motion** to approve the termination agreement agreed to by Hope CRC and Rev. Paul Birnbaum in accordance with the guidelines stated in Article 17, Appendix A. *-Adopted*
- C. **Motion** to appoint an oversight committee to plan and monitor an evaluation of Rev. Birnbaum's readiness to resume ministry. *-Adopted*
- D. **Motion** that Rev. Birnbaum not be eligible for a call for a minimum of 6 months. This may be extended based on the evaluation of the oversight committee. *-Adopted*
- E. **Motion** that Hope CRC undergo a year of evaluation and assistance before extending another call. A committee of no less than three persons, appointed by the CIC, shall oversee this evaluation and assistance. *-Adopted*
- F. **Motion** that the CIC appoint pulpit supply to serve Hope CRC. *-Adopted*
- G. The Synodical Deputies concur with the decisions of classis.

Art. 3526: The Stated Clerk's Report (see Agenda, p. 6) is presented.

- A. A letter is read from Dr. John Kok requesting the extension of his license to exhort for 2 more years. This is followed by the reading of a letter from the council of the Covenant CRC of Sioux Center endorsing Dr. Kok's request. **Motion** to grant the request. *-Adopted*
- B. A letter is read from Mr. Barry Miedema requesting the extension of his license to exhort for 2 more years. The delegation from the First Sioux Falls CRC reports that they endorse this request. **Motion** to grant the request. *-Adopted*
- C. A letter is read from Mr. Jeff Santema whereby he informs classis of his decision not to renew his license to exhort.
- D. **Motion** to approve the work of the Stated Clerk *-Adopted*

Art. 3527: The Classical Interim Committee Report is presented by Stanley Groothof (see Agenda, p. 7).

- A. **Motion** to have the Alternate Stated Clerk position be filled by the Classical Interim Committee secretary. *-Adopted*
- B. An update was given with regard to conversations the CIC has been having with the Heartland CIC over matters of mutual interest and concern.
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee *-Adopted*

Art. 3528: Classis breaks into designated small groups for an hour of communal "church visiting" (see Agenda, p. 19), using the following questions as the springboard for sharing:

- What areas/aspects of your church's ministry in the last few years have proven to be very rewarding or encouraging?
- What areas/aspects of your church's ministry in the last few years have proven to be overly challenging or frustrating?
- What have you been doing to equip the members of your congregation for ministry?
- What have you done to encourage your pastor(s) this past year? What continuing education opportunities have been used?
- What aspects of classical ministry do you regard as significant and fruitful?

- Art. 3529:** The Classical Safe Church Team report is presented by Tara Boer (see Agenda, p 16).
- A. The safe church training event rescheduled for Saturday April 25 from 8:30-noon at Dordt University is highlighted.
 - B. **Motion** to approve the work of this ministry within our region *-Adopted*
- Art. 3530:** Classical Home Missions Team Report is presented by Drew Hoekema (see Agenda, pp. 8-9)
- A. The revised ministry share recommendations for 2020 were presented.
 - 1. **Motion** to approve these ministry share amounts for 2020. *-Adopted*
 - B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Home Missions Committee *-Adopted*
- Art. 3531:** Classical Ministerial Leadership Team Report is given by Cory Van Sloten (see Agenda, pp. 10-12).
- A. **Motion** to grant Anna Christians \$8,000 and Luke Vander Leest \$4,000 for the 2020-21 academic year. *-Adopted*
 - C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Ministerial Leadership Team *-Adopted*
- Art. 3532:** Church Visitor reports are received.
- A. From the visit made to the Lebanon CRC of Sioux Center by Joel Kok and Elder Steve Holtrop (cf. Agenda, p. 13).
 - B. From the visit made to the Bridge of Hope CRC of Sioux Center by Joel Kok and Elder Deb Hibma (cf. Appendix)
 - C. From the visit made to the Platte CRC by John Gorter and Adam Eisenga (cf. Appendix)
 - D. From the visit made to Amistad Cristiana by Gideon Wamala and Elder Jeff Santema (cf. Appendix).
 - E. **Motion** to approve the work of the Church Visitors *-Adopted*
- Art. 3533:** Church Counselor Reports
- A. An oral report is given from Adam Eisenga, the counselor for the Rock Rapids CRC.
 - B. An oral report is given from John Gorter, the counselor for the Corsica CRC.
 - C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Church Counselors *-Adopted*
- Art. 3534:** Regional Pastors Report (see Agenda, p. 14)
- A. Dave Smit, the regional pastor for the pastors in the Iowa churches, gives an oral report regarding the role of the Regional Pastor.
 - B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Regional Pastors *-Adopted*
- Art. 3535:** Minn-I-Kota Youth Ministry Report is given by Lee De Groot (see Agenda, p. 15)..
- A. A meaningful ministry moment from the Annual High School 10-hour Lock-in/Praise & Worship event at Bethel CRC's Lighthouse is highlighted.
 - B. The Chair commends this ministry for its ongoing work within our region. *-Adopted*
- Art. 3536:** The Classical Treasurer's Report is given by Robert Van Ruler
- A. The Treasurer's Report for 2020 is distributed and various items in the report are noted.
 - B. The Treasurer wonders from which account will come the funds needed for classis helping Hope CRC (see Article 3525 D. 5.). The Chair refers this matter to the CIC.
 - C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Treasurer *-Adopted*

Art. 3537: Council of Delegates Report is given by John Lee, drawing from the document with the Highlights from the February 19-21 meeting which were distributed.

- It is noted that the COD “heard background information regarding recent decisions of the CRCNA Canada Corporation to comply Canadian charitable law.” This led to time at the COD meeting offering prayers of lament for the disunity this involves and the asking for wisdom as the denomination moves in the future.
- It is noted that the COD received with deep regret the resignation of Steven Timmermans as the Executive Director of the CRCNA and that Colin Watson has been appointed to role of acting executive Director through Synod 2020.
- A two minute video about the importance of ministry shares is shared.
- Delegates receive a document entitled: “Ministry Shares Re-Imagined: What You Can Expect” and a two-page letter from the denominational offices offering guidance on how to go about determining the pledge amounts that each church would need to submit, if synod goes on to approve this new ministry share system.

Art. 3538: The February Resonate Global Mission Report is distributed and noted.

Art. 3539: The Credentials and Article 41 committee reports that everything is in order.

Art. 3540: Elections/action renders the following results:

- A. Classical Home Mission s Team Clergy Member – Drew Hoekema
- B. Classical Home Missions Team Lay Member – Gordon Dyk
- C. Classical Ministerial Leadership Team Clergy Member – Adam Eisenga
- D. Ministerial Delegate to Synod 2020 (by rotation) – John Lee
- E. Ministerial Alternate Delegate to Synod 2020 (by rotation) – Cliff Hoekstra
- F. Elder Delegate to Synod 2020 – unfilled
- G. Elder Alternate Delegate to Synod 2020 – unfilled
- H. Deacon Delegate to Synod 2020 – Trevor Mouw
- I. Deacon Alternate Delegate to Synod 2020 – Richard Borderwyk
- J. Fourth Officebearer Delegate to Synod 2020 – Doug De Groot
- K. Fourth Officebearer Alternate Delegate to Synod 2020 – Cal Hoogendoorn

Art. 3541: Chairperson John Gorter thanks First Sioux Center CRC for their hospitality and thanks the delegates for their gracious attention and spirit of unity.

Art. 3542: After Corey Van Sloten shares his upcoming plans in June to leave the Lebanon CRC as their pastor to continue his chaplaincy ministry with the Iowa National Guard on a full-time basis, Adam Eisenga leads the delegates in a closing prayer.

Art.3543: Classis adjourns. The meeting concludes with the singing of “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow.”

Rev. Bernie Haan
Stated Clerk

Appendix – Classical Church Visit Reports

Platte Church visit

On October 6, Pastor John Gorter and myself visited with the council, and members of the congregation, of Platte Christian Reformed Church.

The Platte church expressed their gratitude for the tireless efforts of Pastor Drew. They spoke warmly about his wisdom and dedication to his work among them including the new discipleship group. They also spoke of their appreciation for his wife and the way that her gifting complements his gifting. There is clearly a good working relationship between the council and pastor. The elders noted their appreciation for high and proper expectations of them in their office. The elders and deacons seek to carry on continuity between outgoing office bearers and incoming office bearers by meeting together to discuss their work.

The Platte church rejoices in the new members who have recently joined the congregation. They have a mentoring program to help these couples grow in grace. They are hopeful that these new members will become more engaged in the life of the congregation. They do lament the number of young people who have moved out of the area and noted the hardship that this has put on the congregation.

The congregation is responsive to the leadership of the council and the council wants to ensure that they and the congregation have open lines of communication. The council does have questions and concerns about what is expected of them in regard to the Chamberlain church plant. They would appreciate a conversation with classical home missions on the matter.

The financial records and minutes of this congregation are in good order.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Adam Eisenga

Classical Church Visitor's Report

On visit with the council of Bridge of Hope CRC, Sioux Center February 19, 2020

We had a very good meeting with the council of Bridge. They are a very committed group of people doing their best to serve their church and lead them forward. Their love for their church was reflected in our conversation. The Bridge is going thru some growing pains (similar to all churches at one time or other) right now. They have exciting new endeavors with the edition of a youth director and a new Bible study for their very active small group organization. Last year they had over 80% participation which is rather remarkable. They also are very happy with their pastor and his leadership. But with these exciting programs and additions comes the pains of finding a constant place for worship, encouraging better giving and the frustration of members leaving their church. Finding solutions and keeping the church vibrant and strong is their newest challenge.

God has been good to them and I am confident that they will go forward in strength with God leading them. The Bridge is working hard to keep their purpose alive and well. They are a unique church for those looking for a different approach from a traditional CRC.

Elder Deb Hibma
Pastor Joel Kok

Date: February 28, 2020

Re: Church Visiting: Amistad Cristiana

Church Visitors: Rev. Gideon E. Wamala & Elder Jeff Santema (Calvin CRC)

On the evening of February 28, 2020, Elder Jeff Santema and I made our way to Sioux Center, Iowa to visit with the council of Amistad Cristiana, a Hispanic ministry now currently under the pastoral leadership of Pastor Arturo Olguin. As we made our way, we wondered as to how the visit would be, given the ethnic dynamic that would come into play as we visited. Needless to say, one thing worth mentioning is that the council invited us to share an evening meal with them before meeting officially. I must say that it was a wonderful meal, besides the camaraderie and fellowship it created between us.

As we transitioned into the visit itself, we introduced ourselves and the purpose of our visit, drawing reference to Article 42 of the Church Order. Simultaneously, one of the council members who was fluent in both English and Spanish interpreted the purpose of our visit in Spanish, an approach that featured throughout the visit. We then set the framework of the matters we were going to cover, namely, (1) reasons to joy in the ministry, (2) challenges in the ministry, (3) prayer concerns for the ministry, and (4) concluding prayer.

With regard to the reasons to joy in ministry, the council of Amistad Cristiana thanked and praised God for the unity in the church in spite of the diversity of cultures and spiritual backgrounds within the church. “Just because we are Hispanic doesn’t mean we aren’t different in all sorts of ways” remarked a council member. “We at least speak the same language.” Note was made of the exciting worship that connects with and is meaningful to the congregation. The participation of young people in the ministry, be it in leadership roles or other ministry related activities is yet another reason to joy in the Lord. The initiative to challenge people to know Jesus Christ, including getting people involved in Bible studies has been fruitful; Pastor Arturo also mentioned the ongoing effort to teach the Reformed faith and tradition to several congregant members. Our question regarding how the church made its presence known in the community certainly generated quite some buzz. Evangelism events, town picnics, and serving meals after worship services, including social media and radio, are some of the ways Amistad Cristiana continues to make herself known in the community.

We then transitioned to the challenges of ministry. Pastor Arturo brought up the youth and their struggles with issues of sexuality, cultural identity, sense of direction and purpose, including his efforts to provide Biblical guidance and counsel. The size of the congregation, let alone a limited budget, was also mentioned. “We cannot provide as many ministry opportunities as larger churches in the community do” stated a council member. Also, given that Amistad Cristiana has a significant number of immigrants in her midst, immigration issues are a concern. To add, most of the Hispanics that Amistad Cristiana attempts to reach out to are Roman Catholic by background, and may, therefore, hesitate to explore the Reformed faith. Notwithstanding, Amistad Cristiana desires to be seen as a fellow church rather than a church that is merely “welcomed.”

Before concluding our visit with prayer, Elder Jeff and I noted the prayer concerns Amistad Cristiana would like other churches in Classis to include in their prayers:

- To develop and have a larger pool of candidates for council office
- To have an impact in the Hispanic community
- To pray for council members
- To train and disciple potential leaders

We then concluded our visit with prayer. Certainly, in spite of the challenges Amistad Cristiana faces in ministry, God continues to move in their midst for His name's sake and glory. As the Bible states, “. . . *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Philippians 2:10-11).

In Christ's service,

Rev. Gideon E. Wamala
Elder Jeff Santema