

Classis Iakota
MINUTES
September 19, 2023
Amistad Cristiana in Sioux Center, Iowa

Art. 3751: The meeting begins at 9:00am with a time of worship being led by Rev. Adam Ramirez, a former member of Amistad Cristiana and now the pastor of Latino Ministries in Classis Minnkota. After reading Colossians 3:21-29, Rev. Ramirez talks about how the CRC in this area has a beautiful legacy of working with immigrants. He then leads in the singing of “I Want to Sing” and “Together,” first singing the songs each time in Spanish and then in English.

Art. 3752: Below is the list of the delegates appointed by their councils who are present at this meeting:

<u>Churches</u>	<u>Ministers</u>	<u>Elders</u>	<u>Deacons</u>
Corsica	Scott Nichols	Gord Feenstra	
Harrison	Gary Maas	Trent DeLange	Cody Vanden Hoek
Inwood		Dale Kollis	Justin Bonnema
		Mike De Vries	
New Holland	Norlyn Van Beek	Marty Overweg	Travis Dyk
Platte	Drew Hoekema	Ken Overweg	Dale Severson
Rock Rapids	Doug De Groot	Wes Koedam	Verlyn Nyhuis
Rock Valley – Calvin		Dennis Wynia	Jeff De Weerd
		Kevin Den Boer	
Rock Valley – First	Matthew Haan	Vern De Boer	Justin Faber
Rock Valley – Trinity	Henry Lengkeek	Paul Van Ginkel	Dustin Horstman
Amistad Christiana	Eddy Olguin	Miguel Palapox	Jesus Uscanga
Sioux Center – Bethel	John Lee	Stan Wynia	Mark Haan
Sioux Center – Bridge of Hope		Glen Boer	Mark Oostra
		Mark Buss	
Sioux Center – Covenant	Joel Kok	Jeri Schelhaas	Josh Van Schouwen
Sioux Center – Faith	Bob Pollema	Scott Hulstein	Josh Harmelink
Sioux Center – First	Kurt Monroe	Joel Sikkema	Jevon Groenewold
Sioux Center – Lebanon	Robert Drenten	Orlan Gulker	Al Van Wyhe
Sioux Falls – Cornerstone Prison	Scott Van Voorst	Gordon Dyk	
Sioux Falls – First		Terril Te Slaa	
		Loren Dyskshorn	
Sioux Falls – Shalom	Kyle De Young	Cody Lieuwen	Leanne Vis
Valentine – Lakeview	Joshua Stammis	Rick Vander Wey	Matthew Walkling

Art. 3753: Classis is declared constituted by Joshua Stammis, the Chairperson of the day, and while the delegates sing “By the Sea of Crystal” the first time delegates and past delegates who haven’t re-signed the Covenant come forward to sign the Covenant, 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. Scott Nichols serves as Vice-chair and Bernie Haan as Clerk.

Art. 3754: The Chair welcomes the delegates and visitors, and after offering a prayer for God’s blessing on this meeting, he appoints Scott Nichols to keep track of the prayer concerns throughout the day with a view to the closing prayer.

Art. 3755: The Chair notes the time schedule for the day (9-noon, lunch, 1-3:15, coffee, 3:30-)

Art. 3756: On behalf of the council for the Faith CRC in Sioux Center, Bob Pollema requests the approval of the position of “Church Planting Missionary” in Central Africa to be filled by a Commissioned Pastor, per Church Order Article 23-a, with a view to examining Mark Tiemersma (see Agenda, pp. 2-4).

- A. **Motion** to approve this request as it fits the synodical guidelines for a Commissioned Pastor per Church Order Article 23-a. *Adopted*
- B. The synodical deputies (Phillip Westra—Classis Heartland, Wendell Davelaar—Classis Northcentral Iowa, and Harrison Newhouse—Classis Lake Superior) concur with this decision of Classis Iakota.

Art. 3757: On behalf of the council for Bridge of Hope Ministries in Sioux Center, Elder Glen Boer requests the approval of the position of a bi-vocational pastor, per Church Order Article 24-b, with a view to examining Sam & Gail Ashmore who will be sharing this position (see Agenda, pp. 5-6).

- A. **Motion** to approve the call of Sam Ashmore to the position of Commissioned Pastor, per Church Order Article 24-b, for a term to conclude with the successful completion of the EPMC program at CTS, contingent to the clarification of two distinct job descriptions at Bridge of Hope Ministries by the Classical Interim Committee. *-Adopted*
- B. The synodical deputies (Westra, Davelaar, and Newhouse) concur with this decision of Classis Iakota.
- C. **Motion** to approve the call of Gail Ashmore to the position of Commissioned Pastor for a term to conclude with the successful completion of a M,Div degree at Calvin Theological Seminary, contingent to the clarification of two distinct job descriptions at Bridge of Hope Ministries by the Classical Interim Committee. *-Adopted*
- D. The synodical deputies (Westra, Davelaar, and Newhouse) concur with this decision of Classis Iakota.

Art. 3758: Classis proceeds with the examination of Mark Tiemersma.

- A. Bob Drenten presents his sermon evaluation (on file) of Mark Tiemersma who led the evening worship for the Faith CRC congregation on August 27, 2023.
 - **Motion** to approve the sermon and evaluation of Mark Tiemersma. *-Adopted*[Bob Drenten steps in to take the minutes while the Stated Clerk attends the funeral of a relative.]
- B. Joel Kok leads the examination of Mark Tiemersma in the areas specified in our Classical Rules of Procedure (p. 15) in accordance with Church Order Art. 23-a.
 - **Motion** to approve the examination and proceed with the ordination of Mark Tiemersma as a Commissioned Pastor in the Faith Christian Reformed Church of Sioux Center. *-Adopted*
- C. Delegates and guests lay hands on Mr. Tiemersma as Chairman Joshua Stamis offers a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing.

Art. 3759: **Motion** to proceed by examining Sam Ashmore and Gail Ashmore simultaneously for their ordination as commissioned pastors. *-Adopted*
[The chairman informs the delegates that the delegates from churches who take exception to the ordination of woman to ecclesiastical office do not have to be present for the examination per the Classical Rules of Procedure which state, “In the event of a female commissioned pastor, those churches who have registered their protest to the seating of female delegates will not participate in the examination of this minister.” The delegates from Platte CRC, Calvin CRC Rock Valley, and First CRC Rock Valley excuse themselves for this examination.]

Art. 3760: The examination of Sam Ashmore and Gail Ashmore

- A. Charles Veenstra presents his sermon evaluation (on file) of Sam Ashmore who led the worship service for Bridge of Hope Ministries on August 27, 2023.
 - **Motion** to approve the sermon and evaluation of Sam Ashmore. *-Adopted*

- B. Tim Ouwinga presents the sermon evaluation (on file) of Gail Ashmore who led the worship service for Bridge of Hope Ministries on September 3, 2023.
- Motion to approve the sermon and evaluation of Gail Ashmore. **-Adopted**
- C. Joel Kok leads the examination of Sam and Gail Ashmore in the areas specified in our Classical Rules of Procedure (p. 15) in accordance with Church Order Article 23-a.
1. **Motion** to approve the examination of Sam Ashmore and proceed with his ordination as Commissioned Pastor for Bridge of Hope Ministries, pending the satisfaction of contingencies in the job description approved by Classis Iakota (cf. Art. 3757-A). **-Adopted**
 2. **Motion** to approve the examination of Gail Ashmore and proceed with her ordination as Commissioned Pastor for Bridge of Hope Ministries, pending the satisfaction of contingencies in the job description approved by Classis Iakota (cf. Art. 3757-C). **-Adopted**
- D. Delegates and guests lay hands on Sam and Gail Ashmore as Chairman Joshua Stammis offers a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing.

[The Stated Clerk returns to take the minutes of this meeting.]

Art. 3761: The Classical Safe Church Team report is given by the Safe Church coordinator, Tara Boer who reminds the churches to identify a safe church leader within each church if one hasn't already been identified. This allows the Team to work more closely and directly with each church for training and response purposes.

- Motion to approve the work of the Classical Safe Church Team. **-Adopted**

Art. 3762: On behalf of Dordt University, Todd Zuidema distributes a one-page handout, extends greetings from Dordt, gives thanks to Classis for its support, and shares some new developments at Dordt.

Art. 3763: On behalf of the council of First CRC, Rock Valley, Matthew Haan presents an overture from their council calling for classis to have a process laid out for dealing with Confessional Difficulty Gravamina (CDG) for officebearers within Classis Iakota (see Agenda, pp. 7-8).

Motion

- A. An officebearer who has an unresolved Confessional Difficulty Gravamina cannot be delegated to a higher body (classis or synod).
- B. During the time the officebearer has a CDG, the individual must teach, act, promote, defend, and live in unity with the confessions of the church in all areas of life. The individual may not contradict the confessions openly and deliberately while the gravamen is still unresolved and must diligently work towards resolving the confessional difficulty.
- C. A council has six months, or until the next classis meeting, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the CDG is forwarded to classis, classis shall have six months, or until agenda items for the next synod must be submitted. If at the end of these periods the officebearer still has confessional difficulty, he or she must appeal to synod or be honorably released from office.

-Adopted

Art. 3764: The overture from the council of the First CRC, Rock Valley about resolving a Confessional Difficulty within a certain amount of time is presented by Matthew Haan (see Agenda, p. 8)

- **Motion** to instruct those who have taken a Confessional Difficulty Gravamen with respect to the definition of unchastity to resolve their difficulty by affirming the standards, resigning, or being suspended from office within a year of filing the CDG. This would also include, if applicable, the officebearer's resigning from any position(s) on broader assemblies, boards, or committees. **-Adopted**

Art. 3765: The overture from the council of the First CRC. Rock Valley regarding special discipline of officebearers is presented by Matthew Haan (see Agenda, p.8).

- **Motion** to instruct councils to begin special discipline of officebearers who are suspended from office at the end of 2023 if they refuse to adhere to the definition of unchastity reflected in the standards. *-Adopted*

Art. 3766: The overture from the council of the First CRC, Rock Valley, calling the delegates of Synod 2023 to reconvene in December 2023 to finish the work of Synod is presented by Matthew Haan (see Agenda, p. 9).

- **Motion** to call the duly elected delegates of Synod 2023 who did not unseat themselves in protest, to reconvene Synod the second week of December 2023 in order to finish the work of Synod as it was assigned. *-Defeated*

Art. 3767: Zachary King, the General Secretary of the CRCNA, with the use of PowerPoint, gives an abbreviated presentation of “Our Journey 2025” (Denomination Ministry Plan) and responds to questions/concerns from the delegates.

- He explains how synod will handle the matters that were left undone at Synod 2023.
- He reminds the delegates that Synod has instructed classes to guide into compliance officebearers that reject the biblical guidelines affirmed by Synod 2022.
- He reports for the COD that leaders are being called to prayer and discernment.

Art. 3768: The Stated Clerk’s Report (see Agenda, p. 9) is presented.

A. Bernie Haan shares the following items which have arisen since the agenda was sent out:

- A letter from the Historical Committee of the CRCNA was received stating that there have been some organizational changes and asking that the Stated Clerk remind and urge congregations in the classis “to submit their official records to be copied and archived at Heritage Hall and to encourage Christian Reformed people and denominationally related organizations in your area to submit materials for archiving that contribute to a deeper understanding of congregational and denominational life.”
- A letter from Lindsay Capel was received to remind Classis Iakota that our Regional Disability Advocate is Dan De Vries (ddevries@hopehaven.org) and that he and his colleague, Missy Dokter, “have been leading a cohort of churches from Northwest Iowa in growing in accessibility and welcome of people with disabilities.”
- A letter from Luke Vander Leest, a member on the Board of Therefore Go Ministries (formerly Youth Unlimited), was received to express his regrets that Rick Zomer, the Executive Director of Therefore Go Ministries, would not be able to attend the 9/19 Classis meeting as earlier intended. And upon his request a handout regarding SERVE 2024 is distributed to the delegates and a brief video about SERVE 2024 is shown.
- A letter from Eric Kelderman, former elder at the Hope CRC in Rapid City, was distributed wherein he expresses his gratitude for the guidance received from Classis Iakota and he shares the latest with regard to the distribution of monies from the sale of the Hope CRC property per the Designated Fund Agreement.
- Attended via Zoom a Stated Clerks’ Connect on 9/11/23.

B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Stated Clerk. *-Adopted*

Art. 3769: The Classical Interim Committee’s Report (see Agenda, p. 10) is brought to attention of the delegates by the Stated Clerk.

- A. The ballot is presented for those classical positions needing to be filled.
- B. The voting by the delegates renders the following results:

- Classical Interim Committee Member—Drew Hoekema
 - Classical Interim Committee Member—Matthew Haan
 - Classical Missions Team Clergy Alternate—Jack Gray
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee *-Adopted*

Article 3770: The Classical Missions Team Report is presented by Gary Maas, chair of the CMT.

- A. A letter from Mark Klompien, the Christian worker in Nepal supported by Classis Iakota, is distributed to the delegates, and it is reported that the Klompiens plan on being in the area next summer for home service, with the hope of connecting with churches in our classis at that time.
- B. Fred Wilgenburg, the director for New Roots Ministry in Sioux Falls, distributes a handout for the delegates and gives the delegates an update on this ministry's activities and goals.
- C. Lora Copley, the director for Areopagus at Iowa State University, likewise distributes a handout for the delegates and gives an update on this ministry's activities and goals.
- D. Scott Van Voorst, pastor for the Cornerstone Prison Church at the penitentiary in Sioux Falls, shares with the delegates some of the challenges facing this ministry in the wake of more and more restrictions being put in place by the Department of Corrections. He goes on to state that in spite of this God is working in amazing ways to provide nourishment for inmates wanting and needing this spiritual support.
- E. **Motion** to approve Siouxland Unity's request (see Agenda, p. 11) to hire a seminary intern for the summer of 2024. *-Adopted*
- F. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Missions Team. *-Adopted*

Art. 3771: The Finance Committee Report is presented by Bob Drenten, chair of this committee.

- A. **Motion** to approve the audit (on file), carried out by Eric Maas and Darrel Raih, of the classical books for the years ending 2021 and 2022, wherein they report finding no exceptions to the expected results. *-Adopted*
- B. **Motion** to approve the request from Minn-I-Kota Youth Network to receive \$20,000 in classical funds for 2024. *-Adopted*
- C. **Motion** to approve the request from Dordt University to receive \$69.20 per professing member for fiscal year 2023-24. *-Adopted*
- D. **Motion** that Classis Iakota offer to reimburse churches hosting classis meetings the actual cost for meals, along with any other added expenses the host church may have incurred. The host church may request this reimbursement by receipt or other appropriate documentation. *-Adopted*
- E. **Motion** that the terms of service for the current members of the Finance Committee conclude on the following dates. Thereafter, the term of service for a member is to be three years. Members will be eligible for additional terms subject to the Rules of Classical Procedure.
- Darrel Raih - March 2025
 - Eric Maas - March 2026
 - Rev. Bob Drenten - March 2027
- Adopted*
- F. **Motion** that Classis Iakota offer three options to Minn-I-Kota Youth Network (MIK) for their reception of surplus funds held at present by classis. *-Adopted*
- To receive a lump-sum of the surplus
 - To receive the surplus distributed over two years
 - That Classis Iakota continue to hold the surplus in reserve. Classis Iakota will report the amount of the surplus held to the MIK Board

- G. **Motion** that Classis Iakota increase its stipend amounts for the stated clerk and the treasurer by 5% for 2024. The clerk and the treasurer each would receive \$3,150. **-Adopted**
- H. **Motion** to approve the work of the Finance Committee. **-Adopted**

Art. 3772: The Chair notes the Church Visitor Report of the visit to the Covenant CRC council on 6/12/23 made by Rev. Robert Drenten and Elder Jerry Steenhoek (see Agenda, pp. 12-13).

- **Motion** to approve the work of the classical church visitors. **-Adopted**

Art. 3773: Church Counselor Reports

- A. An oral report is given by Drew Hoekema, the counselor for the First CRC in Sioux Falls. He then offers a prayer for this church as the church awaits the response to a call that has been extended.
- B. No report from Joel Kok, the counselor for Bridge of Hope Ministries, which will now be getting things in order so that Sam and Gail Ashmore can be ordained as Commissioned Pastors.
- C. The Stated Clerk reports that Dave Heilman, the counselor for the Inwood CRC, has nothing to report at this time.
- D. No report from Scott Nichols, the counselor for the New Holland CRC.
- E. **Motion** to approve the work of the classical church counselors, **-Adopted**

Art. 3774: Regional Pastors Report

- A. Dave Smit, the Regional Pastor for the pastors of the Iowa churches in Classis Iakota, is present and refers the delegates to his written report (see Agenda, pp. 13-14).
- B. Kyle De Young, the Regional Pastor for the pastors of the South Dakota church in Classis Iakota, reports to the delegates that he is setting up a way to connect with the pastors both individually and as a group.
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Regional Pastors **-Adopted**

Art. 3775: The Minn-I-Kota Youth Network Report is presented jointly by Lee De Groot and Doug De Groot (see Agenda, pp. 14-15) who elaborated a bit on what was given in the report.

- **Motion** to commend this ministry for its ongoing work within our region. **-Adopted**

Art. 3776: The Classical Treasurer's Report is given by Robert Van Ruler who distributes a handout (on file) and "walks" the delegates through the handout, which includes the Consolidated Fund Report for 1/1/23-9/1/23 and lists the Ministry Shares projected for 2024.

- **Motion** to approve the work of the classical treasurer. **-Adopted**

Art. 3777: The Chair notes the Synod 2023 Report found in the agenda (pp. 15-16) and thanks Kurt Monroe for the report. Kurt shares that all four of the delegates to this year's synod are present at this classis meeting.

Art. 3778: The Chair notes the report in the agenda from Calvin University (see Agenda, p. 17)

Art. 3779: The Calvin Theological Seminary Report (see Agenda, p. 18) is noted by the Chair and Bob Drenten, a member of the Board, reports that his term on the Board is expiring and that any nominations to that Board need to pass through the Stated Clerk.

Art. 3780: The Council of Delegates' report is given by John Lee who notes 1) the COD has been restructured so that it will now focus on “ecclesiastical issues” while nation-specific ministry boards will deal with “organizational” issues; 2) the decision has been made to sell the denominational building in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and 3) his term on the Council is expiring June 2023 so a new person needs to be chosen at the March meeting of classis.

Art. 3781: Trudy Ash, the Regional Connector for *Thrive*, introduces herself, and distributes a handout called “US Midwest Playlist” which explains how to get connected to the various resources available through *Thrive*.

Art. 3782: Brad Meinders, the Regional Mission Leader for Resonate Global Mission, introduces himself and briefly shares the core initiatives of Resonate, that of, church planting, intercultural gospel witness, and congregational gospel witness. He likewise distributes a resource material for the churches called “Evangelism Shift.”

Art. 3783: Ron Vos, newly-elected member to the Board of World Renew, introduces himself, shares some of the qualifications he possesses, and states how he is looking forward to serving on this board.

Art. 3784: Bob Drenten reports on behalf of the Care Committee for Cal Hoogendoorn that their work is complete.

- **Motion** to release this committee from its mandate. **-Adopted**

Art. 3785: The Stated Clerk reports as to information found on the classical credentials. [Post-meeting note from the Stated Clerk: I failed to notice and report that the credentials from the council of the Rock Rapids CRC included the following request: “We would like Classis to organize a training for elders and deacons.” This is to be noted by the Classical Interim Committee.]

Art. 3786: The Chair thanks Amistad Cristiana for their hospitality and the delegates for their cooperation throughout the day.

Art. 3787: Scott Nichols asks for prayer requests from those present and then offers a closing prayer.

Art. 3788: **Motion** to adjourn is made at 3:15pm and the meeting concludes with the singing of the Doxology. **-Adopted**

Next Meeting: March 5, 2024

Rev. Bernie Haan
Stated Clerk