

**Classis Iakota**  
**AGENDA**  
**March 2, 2021, 9:00 A.M.**  
**Faith Christian Reformed Church of Sioux Center, Iowa**  
**Rev. Henry Lengkeek, Chair**                      **Rev. John Lee, Vice-Chair**

**I. INITIAL BUSINESS**

- A. Opening Devotions (host church)
- B. Presentation of Credentials & Roll Call
- C. Signing of the Covenant for Officebearers by first-time delegates
- D. Declaration that Classis is constituted.
- E. Welcome to delegates and other attendees
- F. Adoption of time schedule: 9:00-11:45; lunch; 1:00-3:15; coffee time; 3:30-
- G. Appointment of Committees for the Day
  - 1. Review of Credentials and Art. 41
  - 2. Prayer Concerns
  - 3. Tally Committee (provided by host church)

**II. READING OF INSTRUCTIONS AND OVERTURES**

- A. Sharing of items on the Classical Credentials
- B. Overture from First Rock Valley CRC Regarding the Human Sexuality Report (p. 2)
- C. Overture from First Rock Valley CRC Regarding a Separation Process for Non-Compliant Churches (pp. 2-3)
- D. Overture from First Sioux Center CRC on the Report on Human Sexuality (pp. 3-4)
- E. Overture from Calvin RV CRC to Overture Synod Regarding Neland Ave CRC (p. 22)
- F. Request for Release from Ministry in the CRCNA (pp. 4-8)

**III. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Stated Clerk (p. 8)
- B. Interim Committee (pp. 8-9)
- C. Home Missions Team (p. 9)
- D. Ministerial Leadership Team (pp. 10-12)
- E. Church Visitors (p.13)
- F. Church Counselors (p. 21)
- G. Regional Pastors
- H. Minn-I-Kota Youth (p. 14)
- I. Safe Church Team (p. 15)
- J. Classical Treasurer

**IV. ELECTIONS/NOMINATIONS**

- A. Stated Clerk—Rev. B Haan has completed his second term
- B. CHMT Clergy member—Rev. M. Haan has completed his second term
- C. CMLT Clergy member—Rev. C. Van Sloten has completed his second term
- D. CMLT Lay member—Mr. G. Van Voorst has completed his second term
- E. CMLT Alternate Lay member—Mr. O. Gulker has completed his second term
- F. Safe Church Team Clergy member—Rev. J. Gorter has completed his first term
- G. Synodical Deputy—Rev. D. De Groot has completed his second term
- H. Alternate Synodical Deputy—Rev. G. Wamala has completed his second term
- I. Election of delegates to Synod: minister via rotation (Rev. John Lee); one minister delegate and alternate via election; one elder delegate and alternate; one deacon delegate and alternate

**V. CLASSICAL/REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES TO SYNODICAL BOARDS**

- A. Calvin College
- B. Calvin Theological Sem. (pp. 16-18)
- C. Council of Delegates
- D. Faith Formation Ministries
- E. Resonate Global Mission (pp. 18-19)
- F. World Renew

**VI. SAFE CHURCH PRESENTATION led by Tara Boer, Classical Safe Church Coordinator**

## **VII. REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

- A. Art. 41 Committee
- B. Varia
  - 1. Article 17 Oversight Report re Paul Birnbaum (p. 20)
  - 2. Article 17 Oversight Report re Joel De Boer: This committee wrapped up its work and Joel has accepted the opportunity to serve Bunde (MN) CRC in an interim capacity for 1 year which started in November 2020.
  - 3. Ad Hoc Committee to study the feasibility of another classical diaconal ministry

## **VIII. CLOSING BUSINESS**

- A. Next Meeting – September 21, 2021
    - Suggested Host churches for upcoming classis meetings:*
    - Sep 2021: Harrison CRC
    - Mar 2022: Bridge of Hope CRC Sioux Center
    - Sep 2022: First CRC Rock Valley
    - Mar 2023: Rock Rapids CRC
    - Sep 2023: Amistad Cristiana Sioux Center
  - B. Concluding Remarks (chairperson)
  - C. Closing Prayer
  - D. Adjournment
- 

## **OVERTURE TO CLASSIS IAKOTA REGARDING THE HUMAN SEXULITY REPORT**

We the council of First CRC move the Synod to accept and affirm the human sexuality report as written as the confessional status of sexuality in our denomination.

Grounds:

- 1. This document only codifies what has always been understood from Scripture regarding sexuality.
- 2. This document is in line with the history of the Church of Christ universal.
- 3. The human sexuality report reminds us all that the dominion of Christ rules over every part of our world, and our being.

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Council of the First CRC in Rock Valley  
December 28, 2020

---

## **OVERTURE TO CLASSIS IAKOTA REGARDING A SEPARATION PROCESS FOR NON-COMPLIANT CHURCHES**

We, the council of First CRC overture the Classis of Iakota to communicate to Synod 2021 the option for Neland CRC and all like-minded churches who desire to read, think and live outside of the confessional nature and bounds of authoritative scripture, be allowed a one-time six-month window to resign their membership from the denomination with their assets including church property at the vote of their individual bodies.

Grounds:

1. It is clear both from the persistent actions of Neland and of the lack of oversight of Classis Grand Rapids East, that there is no longer a way forward in conversation if we cannot read the holy Scriptures in mutual agreement.
2. It is the desire of those seeking SSM to break covenant with the body of the CRC and the living and historical church universal.
3. In this way a resignation of membership can occur without the need for further church discipline to proceed.
4. This act of mutual separation will allow for healing to take place within both the majority body that remains and those who are now freed to live and minister as they have already deemed fit.

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Council of the First CRC in Rock Valley  
December 28, 2020

---

## **Proposed Overture to Synod 2021 on the Report on Human Sexuality**

### 1. Background:

The church of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, spans every inhabited continent and has evangelized an amazing variety of cultures with an amazing variety of religious and ethical backgrounds. In spite of this broad variety of the cultural expressions in which the church has taken form, and in spite of the resistance of the hostile ethics of surrounding cultures, the church's sexual ethic has been consistent and firm in all of these places and through every period of history, for it is rooted in scripture and has been guided by the Holy Spirit. The post-Christian culture of the Western world in the twenty-first century has, in the name of freedom and liberty, adopted a sexual ethic that is hostile to the church's consistent sexual ethic in which alone sexual liberty, wholeness, and justice is found. Confusion, brokenness, and death have accompanied our culture's rejection of the Christian sexual ethic.

Too often the sexual confusion, chaos, and brokenness that has accompanied the sexual rebellion of the culture that surrounds the congregations of the CRCNA has permeated our churches, schools, homes, and our very hearts and minds. The lack of clarity within the CRCNA on this doctrinal issue has produced a lot of theological heat, but this theological heat has generated little pastoral warmth for the members of our congregations who struggle to live in holiness and fidelity to God and his word amidst our own disordered sexual desires as well as the surrounding cultural confusion and brokenness.

In the midst of our own brokenness and the surrounding cultural and denominational confusion, recognizing that our congregations needed far more doctrinal and pastoral guidance than advice regarding participation in "same-sex marriages," Synod 2016 established a committee "to articulate a foundation-laying biblical theology of human sexuality that pays particular attention to biblical conceptions of gender and sexuality. The central aim of this theological task will be to provide concise yet clear ethical guidance for what constitutes a holy and healthy Christian sexual life."

This committee's study report faithfully fulfills the mandate given by synod 2016 and provides robust biblical, theological, and pastoral guidance to the churches of the CRCNA that will lead churches and their members into the holiness, wholeness, and justice into which scripture and the long tradition of the catholic and apostolic church invites them and into faithful witness to this rebellious and confused world.

2. Overture:

Classis lakota therefore overtures Synod 2021 to accede to recommendations A through F of the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality.

3. Grounds:

- a. The study report provides doctrinal clarity in faithfulness to God's word that will reduce the theological heat which plagues our denomination so that our pastoral warmth and witness to the world might increase.
- b. The study report provides the doctrinal and confessional clarity necessary to maintain not only the unity of the CRCNA but also the CRCNA's unity with the catholic and apostolic church of all times and places.
- c. The study throughout is a helpful invitation to Christian discipleship as a covenant community, calling each of us to submit our sexuality to Christ's call to daily take up our cross (Luke 9:23), die to our sinful nature (Colossians 3:5), and embrace the mutual accountability we share as members of Christ's body (Hebrews 3:13)

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Council of the First CRC in Sioux Center  
January 30, 2021

---

## **REQUEST FOR RELEASE FROM MINISTRY IN THE CRCNA**

Our pastor, Mark Langenbach, is requesting that he be released from ministry in the CRCNA as he has decided to serve as the Business Manager for a Disciples of Christ Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Having heard his reasons for leaving the ministry as laid out in the document below, the Lakeview CRC council has blessed his decision and are asking that Classis lakota approve his request, per Church Order Article 14-c.

Gary Peters, Clerk of Council  
Lakeview Christian Reformed Church  
January 11, 2021

---

January 8, 2021

Rev. Bernie Haan  
Stated Clerk of Classis lakota  
214 W. 81st St.  
Sioux Falls, SD 57108

Dear Rev. Haan,  
Please accept this letter as explanation of the weighty reason(s) for my request to be released from performing official acts of ministry in the Christian Reformed Church as an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament, according to Article 14-c of the Church Order. My desire is to transition from being the Pastor of Lakeview Christian Reformed Church to being employed as the Business Manager of a Disciples of Christ church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The explanation of the weighty reason(s) for my request is as follows, including background on my path to ordination and how I came to this point, seeking release from it:

What led me to become a Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church began while taking Master of Business Administration courses at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan (2007-2009). My plan was to further my education and advance in a career in business administration. God had other plans for me and my career path, and even to grow my faith through His plan. Part of the way through the MBA program, though it was going well – I was enjoying learning more about business administration and even learning more about working as a Christian in a business environment – even so, I felt God had other plans for me besides some type of career in a traditional business environment.

The MBA program had opened my eyes to a Christian worldview. So, after graduating from the program and receiving my MBA degree in May 2009, I ended up enrolling in theology courses at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary (in the fall of 2009) to test the waters, so-to-speak, for more continuing education. After taking these courses and enjoying them, the discernment process began in earnest for how to keep pursuing an education in theology.

I was having discussions with friends and co-workers about theology and really enjoying those discussions, growing in my personal Christian faith along the way. I also became more active in a local Christian Reformed Church, helping out with their middle-school youth program, mentoring the youth in their Christian faith. After going through this lengthy discernment process from 2009-2010 (involving conversations with a student at Calvin Seminary and the pastor of the local CRC that my family and I were members of) in the fall of 2010, I took the leap of faith, as some people will say. I quit my full-time work and became a full-time student at Calvin Theological Seminary, trusting God to truly provide for all our needs (Phil. 4:19).

However, like railroad crossing lights, the warning signs for the struggles I would have in future ministry were present when finishing out my seminary education in 2013. In looking back on personal journal entries from that time period, and even in the years following, I know that my choice was to not heed those warning signs fully. In my discernment process then, I came to the conclusion that because of the time and money invested in pursuing a path to ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, I needed to press on toward receiving a call to a church and then the ordination that would follow.

My road to ordination in the Christian Reformed Church included a one-year internship at Racine Christian Reformed Church after graduating from Calvin Seminary. This additional internship didn't block my graduation from seminary in May 2013, but it did postpone the denomination's approval for me to be eligible for a call to serve in a church as an ordained minister. Staff of Calvin Seminary and representatives of the denomination wanted me to first to work alongside a mentor, a pastor of a church, for a period of one year. While working alongside a mentor, my goal was to improve my sermon writing and show that I could write a solid four-page sermon as taught at Calvin Seminary.

This mentoring was provided by Rev. Doug Aldrink at Racine CRC (from 2013-2014). In 2014 I was approved by Calvin Seminary and the denomination to be eligible for a call having completed the internship and having interviewed with representatives of the denomination. In June of 2015 I received a call from Lakeview Christian Reformed Church to be their pastor. Classis Iakota examined me and approved my ordination in the September 2015 Classis meeting. My ordination took place at Lakeview CRC in October of 2015.

Like my time at Calvin Seminary, and even my time at Racine CRC, the five plus years my family and I have lived in Lakeview, South Dakota has been both challenging and rewarding. Lakeview is a great place to live, but also a tough place to live. And rural ministry is not for everyone. But the people of Lakeview love having our family here with them, doing life with them. We've persevered through many physical and spiritual trials, only by trusting in God and being supported by the loving community of Lakeview, South Dakota.

I firmly believe that God called me to serve in this Church for a reason and for a season of my life. There is plenty of solitude to be reflective on God's calling me into ministry and plenty of opportunities to grow as a Christian and as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament. Though a pastor of rural Lakeview CRC needs to wear many hats, the primary focus is to faithfully preach the Word of God on Sunday morning. And this is where I really continue to struggle in my role as an ordained minister in the CRC; weekly sermon preparation and writing.

Ever since my internship at Racine CRC, I've been working hard at writing sermons each week, continually trying to improve the way I prepare sermons, to make the process easier for me. But, the stress I continue to feel each week to prepare and write out a full sermon is like a heavy weight on my chest. Because of this heavy amount of stress, coupled with higher levels of anxiety that I already struggle with on a daily basis, I have unfortunately become more withdrawn over the years from engaging members of the congregation personally and professionally.

Continuing to serve in a pastoral role with this high level of stress affecting my developing relationships with members of the congregation is really a disservice to them (meaning, I'm not caring for them as well as I should / could be). Members of Lakeview CRC have not expressed any concerns to me about my spiritual care for them, nor has the Council. This is primarily an internal struggle of mine that is difficult to live with day-to-day. It's been a real struggle for me for the last seven years, since graduating from Calvin Seminary.

I do take my inner sense of call to ministry very seriously, and have worked hard to remain faithful to God and his call on my life, but it's to the point of being too much to bear to remain in pastoral ministry. Therefore, I wish to be released from carrying out official acts of ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, in order to make a transition to working in a church setting in a position more suited to my gifts in business administration. This will – I hope / trust and Lord willing – alleviate much of this heavy stress I am experiencing, thereby improving my overall health and my relationships with others (including my own family members).

I've come to this decision after many years of discerning God's calling on my life. In fact, it's been 10+ years since taking the leap of faith and enrolling in Calvin Seminary. But, specifically in June of 2019, two discernment activities took place. First, my wife arranged for me to go to the Benedictine Peace Center in Yankton, South Dakota for a few days in June. As part of this personal retreat I met with a spiritual advisor to help with my discernment on whether to stay in pastoral ministry, or make a transition to something new. This advising received from a gifted spiritual advisor, and time away at the Sacred Heart Monastery, provided me space to journal and reflect on my calling, and how best to serve God with the abilities with which he has blessed me.

Second, also in June of 2019, I contacted Pastor Church Resources of the Christian Reformed Church, for help with taking a Ministry Assessment. After completing a Birkman Report, I reviewed the results with Rev. Samantha DeJong McCarron, who was the CRCNA - Ministry Vocational Consultant at the time. Sam helped me discover, and affirmed for me, that business administration was the best fit for me in terms of a career, even though I am an ordained Minister in the CRC. She also helped me prepare my resume for applying to jobs related to business administration, highlighting the strengths that my role in ministry have given me to serve in a business administration role, once again.

These conversations with Sam were followed up with an invitation to attend the Thriving Together Program taking place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in February of 2020. Joining with other pastors and Pastor Church Resources' staff, the process of discerning when to stay and when to leave a specific call to ministry continued for me. Everyone in attendance was able to see my eyes light up when I talked about business administration and serving God in this way. Somewhat seriously, they said I should handle the finances and other business administration for the Christian Reformed Church! After this conference I took part in an online mentoring group set up by P.C.R. staff, with Rev. Andrew de Gelder leading the group. This was in April of 2020.

Most recently, beginning in October of 2020, I have been working on discernment by participating in Clinical Pastoral Education, through an online program offered by Pine Rest in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. Karl VanHarn is the CPE educator and facilitator. Self-confidence in ministry is the main focus for me. Working with Karl, the following goals were set up for CPE and my ministry setting. Self-confidence can come through being my authentic self (being authentic as a minister in a context where I am an outsider), discerning / clarifying my inner sense of call in ministry (even through applying to non-ministry positions and interviewing for them), and articulating the value / meaning of what I do in ministry (since I am not making a tangible product in the work I do, what is the meaning / value in what I do?).

Please be aware, personal and family counseling has been part of this discernment process, as well. Because of the heavy stress / burden I feel in the calling to be an ordained Minister, not only is my physical health being affected in a negative way, but – as I mentioned previously – the relationships within my family are being affected in a negative way. As you can see through these examples, specifically for the last two years (2019-2021), I have been intensely wrestling with God in this discernment process, on whether to stay in my current pastoral ministry, or transition out of pastoral ministry altogether.

In closing, primarily because of the stress I am experiencing being an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament, and the effects of the stress on me, my family, and my ministry, I am asking for a release from carrying out official acts of ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, making it possible for me to work in a church setting, in a role more suited to my gifts (i.e. business administration).

God's hand in coordinating all the events in my life and leading to this decision that I need to make is clear. I believe that God's plan for my life has included taking me down a path of serving Him in the role of an ordained Minister, to draw me closer to Him and to make me more dependent on Him personally, and to better prepare me for a career in business administration (like I had hoped for earlier in life), but now in a church setting and with a specific, Kingdom-work focus.

I am excited to have received an offer from a Disciples of Christ church in Grand Rapids, Michigan to be their Business Manager, and look forward to working in this new role. I give praise to God for opening this door to serve him in a new way, beginning a new chapter in my life, and the life of my family, that is desperately needed because of the weighty reasons I have shared. I ask for the blessing of Classis Lakota – after having received the blessing of Lakeview Christian Reformed Church council members – to make this transition a smooth one and a God-honoring one.

In His Service,

Rev. Mark E. Langenbach  
Lakeview Christian Reformed Church  
29930 270<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Valentine, NE 69201

The weighty reasons for my request are summarized:

1. Though different methods have been researched and implemented, weekly sermon preparation and writing has been very difficult for me since graduating from seminary in 2013, and even after completing a post-seminary, pastoral ministry internship that focused on receiving mentoring in the area of sermon preparation and writing (2013-2014).
2. Stress and anxiety resulting from the difficulties mentioned above have continued to affect how I relate to my family in the roles of husband and father, and to the congregation I serve (Lakeview CRC) in the role of minister.

3. After a lengthy period of discernment (two+ years), including a Vocational Ministry Assessment provided by Pastor Church Resources staff (CRC), what's been affirmed is that working in a position focusing on my business education (M.B.A. 2009) and administrative skills would be more suitable to me.
4. Cascade Christian Church, a Disciples of Christ church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has offered me the position of Business Manager, including the option to help with pastoral ministry as needed. I praise God for providing this opportunity to work and minister in ways that come more naturally to me.
5. The Council of Lakeview Christian Reformed Church has heard the weighty reasons for my request, according to Article 14-c of the Church Order, and they have given their blessing on my decision. They also ask Classis Lakota to approve my request and give their collective blessing.

---

### **STATED CLERK REPORT – MARCH 2021**

Since the September 2020 meeting of classis, I have handled the following:

- The written minutes and a summary of the 9/15/20 classis meeting were distributed to the appropriate groups and individuals, as well as added to our website: [www.classisiakota.org](http://www.classisiakota.org).
- Received and responded to e-mails from individuals and/or churches who had a question about an ecclesiastical matter or want to bring a ministry-related matter to the attention of our classis.
- Updated the Classical Rules of Procedure to include the mandate for the Classical Finance Committee. You can find this document on our website.
- Have received beneficial material for stated clerks from Al Postma, who serves as a facilitator for Classis Renewal through Pastor Church Resources.
- Sent out reminders of our 3/2/21 meeting to the councils of our classis and other ministry leaders who give reports to classis.
- Sent out messages to synodical deputies in our area requesting their presence at our 3/2/20 meeting for the purpose of a request for release from ministry (Church Order Article 14-c).
- Gathered together what was necessary for putting together the agenda for the 3/2/21 meeting and corresponded with the CIC to discuss and decide on how to proceed with regard to various matters.

---

### **Classis Lakota Interim Committee Report for March 2021 Classis Meeting**

In addition to items elsewhere in this agenda, the Classical Interim Committee worked on the following things over the past several months:

1. Finance Committee: The following people agreed to serve on this committee: Bob Drenten (chair), Eric Maas (First Sioux Falls CRC), Jacklyn Nieuwendorp (representing the Classical Home Missions Team), Darrel Raih (First Sioux Center CRC), Bob Van Ruler (ex officio member as the Classical Treasurer). The committee recently convened its first meeting via Zoom.



2. Pulpit supply: We made arrangements for pastors to lead worship at Bridge of Hope Ministries.
  3. Ecclesiastical credentials:
    - 3.1. We transferred Doug De Groot from Cornerstone Prison CRC in Sioux Falls to the Rock Rapids CRC.
    - 3.2. We welcome Robert (Bob) Drenton from Classis Heartland as he begins his work at the Lebanon CRC.
- 

### **Classis Iakota Home Missions Team** Report for Classis – Spring 2021

The Classis Home Missions Committee (CHMC) is comprised of Pastors Bob Pollema (Chair), Drew Hoekema (Secretary), Matthew Haan and Adam Eisenga, with lay-members Jacklyn Nieuwendorp (Inwood), Gord Dyk (Cornerstone) and Piet Koene (Amistad).

CHMC convened November 17 in person and on January 19 virtually.

#### **Church Planting:**

**West Sioux Falls:** Last fall, the committee welcomed Adam Ramirez to Sioux Falls for an in-person interview and discussion about this project. His intent following this interview was to undergo a church planter evaluation with Resonate. Communication with Mr. Ramirez is ongoing; however, in the meantime, the team remains open to other potential candidates and welcomes discussion with classis churches (particularly in Sioux Falls) for input and any current CRC members living in the target area who might be interested in participating in a plant or in an initial Bible study.

**Hope CRC – Rapid City:** I (Drew) am serving as Classis Counselor and a member of the advisory team for Hope. After a conference call between their council and CRC Pastor-Church Relations, Hope is considering an evaluation which could potentially lead them to close and ‘re-start’ as a church plant. When the team was asked about its willingness to partner with Hope in this option (should they determine it to be the best course), the support was unanimous.

**Classis Finance Committee:** Team member Jacklyn Nieuwendorp was nominated to serve on this committee as the representative from our team.

It is our hope and prayer that God’s Kingdom would continue to expand in Iowa and South Dakota!

Respectfully submitted,

Drew Hoekema, CHMC Secretary

**CMLT Report  
January 27, 2021**

Members: Rev. Doug De Groot, Rev. Adam Eisinga, Mr. Nathan Nieuwendorp, Mr. Bob Van Ruler (treasurer), Rev. Cory Van Sloten (chair), and Mr. Gerald Van Voorst.

I. Old Business

A. Review of accounts standing:

1. Rev. Sarah Hoogendoorn and Rev. Cory Van Sloten have completed ten years of service in the CRCNA as of this year and their financial awards have been forgiven.
2. With updated accounts standing, we have 8 former students in full-time ministry in the CRCNA whose loans are being forgiven at a rate of 10% per year; 3 former students who are not in qualifying ministry in the CRCNA and are repaying their loans; 2 former students who are not in qualifying ministry in the CRCNA and have not yet begun to repay their loans; and 2 students who are temporarily on deferment while continuing education or waiting on a ministry opportunity.

II. New Business

A. Notes on correspondence since last meeting: nothing significant to report.

B. Review of funding policy [approved January/March 2018]: (1) Up to 75% of current tuition at Calvin Theological Seminary not to exceed 75% of CTS's current tuition at three years of full-time residential study. (2) Up to 50% of tuition (50% of CTS's current tuition) at other seminaries, at the discretion of the CMLT, not to exceed 50% of tuition (50% of CTS's current tuition) at three years of full-time residential study.

C. **Recommendation** of funds for 2021-2022 academic year [see chart below]

1. AJ Funk ~ requesting \$8,000 (pending scholarships/awards yet to be determined)
2. Luke Vander Leest ~ requesting \$4,000

*Note: CTS's 2020-2021 MDiv tuition: \$514/credit hour (\$16,962/year @ 33 credit hours)*

*75% = \$12,721.50 x 3 years = \$38,165 (maximum current award)*

*50% = \$8,481 x 3 years = \$25,433 (maximum current award)*

D. Rev. Cory Van Sloten and Mr. Gerald Van Voorst, along with lay alternate Mr. Orlan Gulker, have completed their second terms on the CMLT in March 2021 and will need to be replaced. **Recommendation** of Rev. Kurt Monroe to replace Rev. Cory Van Sloten and Mr. Orlan Gulker of Lebanon CRC to replace Mr. Gerald Van Voorst.

E. Next meeting: Wednesday, July 14, 2021

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Degree/Institution/Anticipated Graduation/Vocational Goal:</b>	<b>Recommended amount:</b>	<b>Support to date: (through May 2021)</b>
<b>AJ Funk</b> Dordt University First CRC Sioux Center	MDiv / Western Theological Seminary / May 2024 Goal: Minister of the Word	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Luke Vander Leest</b> Dordt College First CRC, Sioux Falls	MDiv / Sioux Falls Seminary / May 2026 Goal: Minister of the Word	<b>\$4,000</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$12,000 (\$4,000 last year)</b>	

*Respectfully submitted on behalf of the CMLT,  
Rev. Cory Van Sloten*

## AJ Funk

December 10, 2020



I was baptized and raised in the CRC. Since long before I can remember, I have been hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ from CRC pulpits. From infancy to my early high school days, I attended Immanuel CRC in Sheldon, Iowa. By my sophomore year of high school, I found myself attending the youth group at First CRC in Sioux Center, Iowa. There, I was asked a bizarre question, “why does the wind blow on Mars?” The man who had asked me was the pastor of the church at the time, Rev. Mark Verbruggen.

I tried to answer the question scientifically, but his response changed my life, slowly at first, but I’ll never forget it. “For the glory of God,” he said. From that time, I have had a much different perspective on the world. During my senior year of high school, I had several open periods each day, so I met to get coffee with Mark several times a week. During this time, we would talk about scripture, pop culture, politics, and really anything that came to mind that day. Before this, though I had been attending church my whole life, I can’t say I was all that compelled by the church’s teachings. I was mostly there out of a sense of duty, not through any real desire to attend. As we became friends, however, I was compelled to enter the church out of love, rather than duty. Pastor Mark confirmed me the week after Easter and the week before he left Sioux Center in 2017.

Since then, I have been attending Dordt University and remained a member of First CRC Sioux Center. I’ve been majoring in theology, biblical studies, and philosophy, and falling in love with the teachings of the church and my friends and teachers in the faith. I’ve had the opportunity to research the atonement with Dr. David Westfall and Dr. Justin Bailey, begin a book project with Dr. Rebekah Earnshaw, lecture in classes, and study for a semester at the University of Oxford. I was even able to preach a number of times at First Plymouth Presbyterian Church outside of Le Mars before it closed its doors last Christmas.

I’ve found preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be one of the greatest joys of my life. Out of thankfulness for what the CRC has brought to my life, I hope to serve in it as a minister of the Word and share the joy I have found through it in Jesus with others. In order to do this, I desire to study for an M.Div. degree at Western Theological Seminary and would greatly appreciate the financial support of Classis Iakota.

**Luke Vander Leest**  
**Biographical Update**  
**Classis Iakota**  
**December 24, 2020**

Dear Members of Classis Iakota CMLT Committee,

Thank you for your encouragement and support over the past year. Seminary with a busy and active family and a demanding job as a teacher, coach and counselor has been a challenge. Despite the challenges, God has been incredibly gracious and good to my family and I.

I continue coursework at Sioux Falls Seminary and just finished the fall semester. Along with classes at Sioux Falls Seminary, I have started the EPMC program through Calvin Seminary. At my current rate, it will be another 5+ years before I am able to seek ordination through the CRCNA. I'm definitely still figuring out how to balance various responsibilities and opportunities and welcome your prayers for wisdom, discernment and direction as decisions are made for the upcoming year.

Sioux Falls Christian School, where I have been employed as the Spiritual Life Director for the past 14 years, has been very gracious and helpful as my family and I seek to faithfully walk this new route. I was able to cut back to 80% at school, allowing me to study and go to class two mornings per week. Additionally, I have been encouraged by my church family at First CRC of Sioux Falls. Pastor Cal has been a great mentor and along with several opportunities to preach and provide pastoral care this past year.

We continue to hold our plans for the future somewhat loosely. At this point, I plan to continue teaching, coaching and counseling at SFC while making slow and steady progress on my seminary training. The financial support, prayers and encouragement of Class Iakota continue to be appreciated. Thank you.



**Date:** October 5, 2020

**RE:** Classis Iakota Church Visit Report: Trinity Christian Reformed Church, Rock Valley, IA

**Church Visitors:** Pastor John Lee and Elder Roger Feekes (Bethel CRC)

At their invitation, elder Roger Feekes and I joined the Trinity Christian Reformed Church's council at 8:00PM for their monthly meeting on October 5, 2020. In the midst of a year of deep challenges, Trinity continues to experience the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in and through its congregation, leadership, and ministries.

The council named a number of areas where they especially celebrate the Holy Spirit's work. One of those key areas was *discipleship*. Hearing young people profess their faith is a highlight for office bearers. To prepare youth for that milestone, Trinity offers both profession of faith classes as well as a mentoring alternative – both of which are engaged at a young person's discretion. More broadly, God is blessing Trinity with many children and young adults that Trinity invests in through a full-time youth director and vibrant youth ministries. Another cluster of celebration was a communal experience of *loving relationships*. Elders are faithful in conducting family visitation and had just conducted 40 visits in September. Deacons gratefully note the generous responsiveness of congregants to benevolence needs, especially in this time of Covid-19. Deacons have also been working with Love Inc. to ensure that benevolence help moves from the financial to addressing holistic needs of recipients. Trinity CRC celebrates a *vibrant worship ministry* centered on the preaching of the Word. Recent sermon series have worked through The Story, the book of Daniel, and the seven letters to the churches. Evening services are confessional, working through the Canons of Dordt last year and Our World Belongs to God this year. Finally, Trinity celebrates God's faithfulness through 50 years of ministry. Due to Covid-19, Trinity has delayed its planned celebration until next year and will be inviting all former pastors back to join the congregation in that celebration.

New opportunities for service center on *kingdom extension and mission outreach*. Trinity has plans to partner in planting a church among an unreached people group through a daughter of the congregation who has received training at Radius International. Trinity approaches this as a long-term commitment of prayer, financial support, and periodic on-site team visits. A second area of excitement is a retooled Shepherding process including a newly developed Shepherding Handbook to guide elders, deacons, facilitators, and a coordinator in shepherding congregational pastoral groups. Finally, Trinity has been living into its Healthy Church initiative, including a renewed vision centered on the core values of being authentic, caring, growing, and worshipful. Looking ahead Trinity hopes to: 1) Reboot their Shepherding groups; 2) Get everyone "back in the game" after the disruption and disconnection of Covid-19; and 3) explore ways to connect with the Hispanic community, including a local Guatemalan population.

Amidst the good work, Trinity's council faces the challenge of shepherding a diverse congregation amidst a polarized environment and the confluence of conflicting opinions. Keeping members engaged in the midst of Covid-19, in addition to the general busyness of modern life, continues to also be an area of focus. Relatedly, diminished attendance at the Sunday evening service is an area of concern. Trinity is thankful for its dedicated staff, yet finds maintaining maximal effectiveness among its large staff is also an area of focus. Trinity continues to invest in its staff by hiring an agency named Connections to do staff training. Staff meets weekly and is moving toward semi-annual staff reviews that aim to give each staff person clear feedback to help them thrive in ministry together. The council seeks to provide support to Pastor Henry and Pastor Stanley and their families and recognizes their complementary gift sets as pastors. Trinity has an established sabbatical policy that has only been used once. We challenged the council to engage their sabbatical policy with their current staff, sharing the good experience that process had been at Bethel.

We closed with prayer thanking God for blessing Trinity with wise and engaged leaders that are living out God's covenant faithfulness in new and proactive ministry alongside a healthy and maturing congregation. Soli Deo Gloria.

Humbly submitted,

Pastor John Lee, Church Visitor  
Roger Feekes, Bethel CRC, Sioux Center, IA.

**Minn-I-Kota Youth Report  
for March Classis Meeting 2021**

**2021 is here!** Psalm 118:24 *“This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”*

Most of the 2020 Minn-I-Kota Youth Network Ministry events were cancelled due to the Pandemic. It is really hard to “do” MIK Youth when most of what this ministry does is gather people to network and spend time together. For the past 12 years my signature for my ministry email (mikyouthnetwork@gmail.com) included this passage...Hebrews 10:22-25 <sup>22</sup>let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>**not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another**—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Since we were unable to meet together in 2020 I leaned on the middle part of verse 25... **“encouraging one another”**.

In 2020 many of us in ministry had to think outside the box. Since I was not able to gather our youth and/or their leaders I focused more on intentional prayer time, reading youth ministry books, and supporting/encouraging our leaders from a distance through Facebook posts, phone calls, “Survival Kits/Care Packages”, and a few one on one, face to face meetings.

In August/September I sent out/hand delivered 55 “Survival Kits/Care Packages” to support/encourage church youth group leaders. These packages included a lesson plan, candy, a devotional, words of encouragement, a youth ministry ‘survival kit’ with lots of goodies and more. In November I reached out to many supporting church youth group graduates. These graduates are in all different walks of life, all different ages, and many different states. I asked them to think back to their 4 years of youth group and share with me their ‘favorite youth group memory’ and their ‘favorite Bible verse’. I will be sending/hand delivering (January-March) another package to each of the youth group leaders. This time the care package will be titled “Looking Back”. I will be including the replies from these graduates as a “look back” at local Youth Ministry, a “look back” at Billy Graham’s story entitled “The Influence of One Single Person”, a list of upcoming youth events, a “look back intergenerational” lesson idea, and individual “covid safe” hot chocolate mix and candy.

**ON THE CALENDAR:**

January-March-“Looking Back” Care Packages sent/delivered to Youth Leaders

February 27-Great Bear Lazer Tubing Night (9-11pm) Brandon SD

April 16-18-Annual Jr High Retreat at Inspiration Hills Inwood IA

May 5-Praise on the Parking Lot with Happy the Dog (TBA)

October 15-16-Leaders’ Retreat/Conference at Inspiration Hills Inwood IA

**Thank you for continuing to support MIK Youth Network & Faith Formation Ministry  
through your prayers and finances. “...encouraging one another...” Hebrews 10:25b**

**Alethea "Lee" De Groot**  
*Minn-I-Kota Youth Ministry Coordinator*  
*Faith Formation Champion/Executive Team*

## **Classis Heartland & lakota Safe Church Report Spring, 2020**

**Prepared by:** Tara Boer, lakota & Heartland Safe Church Coordinator

**Date Prepared:** 01/31/21

**lakota & Heartland Classical Safe Church Team Members:** Pastor John Gorter (New Holland CRC-lakota), Heidi Mulder (Bethel CRC-lakota), Pastor Jesse Walhof (Living Water CRC-Heartland), Del Walinga (Calvary CRC-Heartland). Tara Boer (Bridge of Hope CRC, lakota).

### **Classical Safe Church Team Tasks:**

- The Safe Church Team serves in a consultative role for churches who are developing (or reviewing/revising) congregational safe church policies.
- 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 Meeting:**

lakota team members will meet on February 3 and Heartland team members will meet on February 9. Goals will be discussed for the upcoming year as well as educational and training opportunities for committee and congregation members.

### **Safe Church Committee Activity**

The virtual safe church event on October 31, 2020 included roughly 45 participants in the opening session with 10-15 people attending each breakout sessions on topics of policy formation, healthy ministry boundaries, technology, and the Circle of Grace curriculum. The event was recorded and can be accessed on the [Network blog](#). Committee members have also remained available to local churches with requests to review policies and assist in implementing the Circle of Grace curriculum. Please continue to watch your email regarding training or educational opportunities offered through [safe church ministry](#).

### **Safe Church Team Goals:**

Although COVID has changed some of the ways that people gather as well as some of the programming within the churches, the committee remains committed to helping churches think through ways to increase safety and trust in congregations. The team expects that each church will have their own safe church team and an updated abuse prevention policy.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of our committee if you would like to talk about any needs your church may have. You may communicate with any committee member or contact Tara directly at 712-898-6468 (cell) or [tara.boer@dordt.edu](mailto:tara.boer@dordt.edu)



## Calvin Theological Seminary

Board of Trustees Report to Region 8  
Rev. Robert Drenten ([robert.drenten@gmail.com](mailto:robert.drenten@gmail.com))

Partners in Ministry:

Below you will find the “Highlights” of CTS, prepared by President Jul Medenblik. The Board is grateful for his leadership, and for the creative determination of the whole seminary to continue the work of training ministry leaders while dealing with COVID-19.

The Board has not met in person since October 2019 due to COVID-19. We continue to conduct business through video conferencing, including some board development training led by the “In Trust Center.” “In Trust” provides governance resources to many seminaries in North America.

The Lord continues to supply the resources of people, finance, and opportunity for the ministry of CTS. We give thanks for these advantages that CTS continues to enjoy.

Remember to encourage our members – youth through “second-career adult” – to consider prayerfully whether the Lord is calling them into the ministry of the Church. CTS would be happy to help anyone exploring ministry to gain clarity in that sense of call. You may contact me if you’d like to discuss this further.

### **Calvin Theological Seminary – Spring 2021 Highlights**

Since 1876, Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) has worked on your behalf to faithfully prepare leaders who can nurture disciples and serve the church. Calvin Seminary is a vital and hospitable learning community in the Reformed Christian tradition.

Our desire is not just to train pastors, but to also form church leaders who can cultivate communities of disciples for Jesus Christ.

Currently Calvin Seminary has around 300 students in various programs including our Latino/na Ministry Certificates. In addition, the school hosts a number of classes, weekly community events, chapel services, conferences, lectures, and other learning opportunities.

Ministry Highlights:

### **COVID-19 Update**

The global pandemic from COVID-19 has affected and is continuing to affect us all and that includes Calvin Theological Seminary. In March of 2020, we went completely online with the hopes of being able to return to some level of residential instruction at some point in the spring semester, but we could not. We even had to hold a virtual commemoration for our 61 graduates who came from Brazil, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Kenya, South Korea and the United States.

2020 Celebration of Graduates Commencement Video: <https://vimeo.com/420427114>

The fall 2020 semester brought us to a “flex” delivery system of education where we had asynchronous online courses as well as synchronous residential courses where students had the option of being present via Zoom or in person. Near Thanksgiving we had to move entirely online. From use of an outdoor tent to turning our chapel into a classroom space, we did what we could to adapt to the circumstances that kept changing through the semester.



We anticipate that the spring 2021 semester will bring a mirror reverse image of the fall where we start in flex mode again, but we probably have most students online with the hope that we can move into more face to face residential instruction as the vaccine for COVID-19 becomes more prevalent.

We would like to commend those who worked in providing and supporting IT functions and programming support which especially includes Daryl Boersema, Technology Support Manager, and Chris De Man, Organizational Systems & Strategic Initiatives Manager. We also have been blessed by the team leadership of Chief Operations Officer, Margaret Mwenda, and Dean of Students, Jeff Sajdak, who co-lead our COVID-19 Response Team.

While we have also seen the pause of prospective students on whether to attend school during a pandemic, we have also been blessed by a Summer 2020 session where we partnered with Calvin University and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship to offer “COVID courses” which led to over 300 different individuals from across the globe taking a course that centered on some aspect of responding to and ministering in the midst of this panic. We are continuing with experimenting with an online format for continuing such courses which can be found here - <https://www.calvinseminary.edu/academics/covid-19-courses>

We also were able to provide a complete on-line conference entitled Loving Your Neighbor Conference: Forming Citizens of God's Kingdom in Prison and Upon Reentry. The entire summer conference can be found here – <https://vimeo.com/showcase/7340817>

We want to also acknowledge and give thanks for the ongoing and faithful support from the CRC as a denomination and from individuals, churches, and classes. We are blessed by this community that continues to care for and encourage us – Board members, faculty, staff, and students.

In addition to the above, we would highlight the following:

- Launched a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree with 12 new students that focuses on applied, contextual learning for a diverse community of practitioners to develop advanced ministry leadership skills and spiritual formation. The webpage for this program can be found at <https://www.calvinseminary.edu/academics/doctor-of-ministry> We welcome new student applications and inquiries.
- Presented a book launch to highlight Missiology and Missional Ministry Professor Cory Willson's new book (published by Eerdmans) which he co-authored entitled – Work and Worship: Reconnecting our Labor and Liturgy. Here is a link to an overview presentation on this topic - <https://vimeo.com/478925236>
- Launched an updated website for The Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP) as it continues to serve as one of the premier Reformed preaching and teaching sites in North America under the direction of Rev. Scott Hoezee. <https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/>
- We also continue to welcome the opportunity to connect our students with churches in need of summer ministry leadership – be that as a result of pastoral vacancy, sabbaticals, or new ministry initiatives. Please contact the Vocational Formation office for more information about this process. [vocationalformation@calvinseminary.edu](mailto:vocationalformation@calvinseminary.edu) and our webpage on this – <https://www.calvinseminary.edu/church-resources>
- Calvin Theological Seminary and University sponsored the Stob Lecture and Colloquium through the January Series. The speaker this year is Jemar Tisby who wrote – The Color of Compromise and How to Fight Racism. The link for the Colloquium interview with Calvin Seminary Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coaches – Pastors Dave Beelen and Denise Posie can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/489568992>

- We want to introduce you to Annie Mas-Smith as the new Calvin Seminary Director of Communications. Annie comes to us after serving at Calvin University, Grace College and World Renew in various capacities. If you are looking for resources, Annie will be glad to assist you. She can be reached at - [amas202@calvinseminary.edu](mailto:amas202@calvinseminary.edu)
- We also want to acknowledge the transition of Professor Amanda Benckhuysen (O.T. Professor) who has accepted the call to be the next Director of Safe Church Ministries for the CRCNA. Professor Benckhuysen is an excellent teacher and scholar and her new role will only extend her gifts to others. We wish her well and we are very glad that she will still be doing some teaching for us in the spring. <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/news/benckhuysen-be-new-safe-church-director>
- The transition of Professor Benckhuysen as well as upcoming retirements of some professors will be leading to a search process where we will be inviting applicants in the area of Church History, Old Testament, New Testament and Latino/na Ministry Program leadership among other needs. We invite your prayers for God's provision and at another time, we will be asking the church to provide nominations for faculty openings.

Thank you for your ministry of prayer, support and encouragement! We are glad that we are C.T.S. - Called To Serve!

---

## Resonate Global Missions Report

It has been three years since World Missions and Home Missions combined to become resonate Global Missions. This past year has been one of review and revisioning for Resonate as it seeks to live out God's mission in North America and other parts of the world.

Four priorities have become the focus for Resonate:

### 1. **Equipping young adults and lay leaders for mission.**

One way that we are attempting to work with this priority is to open spaces where young adults are present and through conversation we listen and learn their views of the church and its mission. This kind of experiment can give voice to some who have not had a way to express their love for and concern for the church and its mission. Perhaps your church has young adults and lay leaders that would value being a part of such an experiment. We would love to have those contacts for the experiment we are planning to have.

Another way that we work with this priority is through our support of campus ministries. They are places for young adults to connect, experience community and discipleship, and be given opportunities to lead and use their spiritual gifts. In our Tri-Classis, we support and work with the following campus ministries:

- \*Rosetta Polk Pugh who ministers to students at Chicago State and Kennedy –King
- \*David Seymour who ministers to students coming out of Chicago to Northern Illinois University and helps them adjust to life at the university
- \*Tim Bossenbroek whose church, Hessel Park, is involved with students at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana IL
- \*Tyler Ward, Alec Kenny, and Alexandra Schorr who minister at Loyola University through Agape and Ecclesia (groups and worship)

In the broader Central US region, there are campus ministries at...

\*University of Wisconsin, Madison WI, Geneva, Mike Winnowski and Jim Kirk

\*University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, Geneva, Tom Wolthuis

\*Iowa State University, Ames, IA, Areopagus, Tyler Helfers

## **2. Plant new ministries and broaden church planting movements.**

While the pandemic has certainly affected starting new ministries, the new church called Grace, East Garfield Park, led by Moises and Erin Pacheco, has been gaining traction in that neighborhood. They have found a space to call their own and are looking at 2021 as an important year for their ministry.

Others are dreaming about something new as well. Mike Moore and his wife Grace are prayerfully considering a new ministry that includes a hospitality house, proximate to university students and connected to its community.

Siang Hup is working with both priority #1 and #2. He is training young leaders who have been chosen as elders in their communities as well as looking to bring Burmese ministries into the Christian Reformed Church. He truly is sent by Classis Illiana as our missionary to the Burmese Christians in Indiana!

In other places, new ministries have started:

\*Trinity Hill in Chanhassen MN, led by Arlan Koppendraayer

\*The Broken, Willmar, MN which is for ex-addicts and prisoners

Still others are being considered, and are looking for leaders:

\*Marshall MN, with the Minnkota Mission Committee

\*Sioux Falls, SD, with Lakota Mission Committee

\*Kansas City, MO with New City Church and Ryan Pelton

## **3. Equip/encourage congregations in gospel witness.**

Go Local is one way Resonate has been encouraging and equipping congregations in their gospel witness. This discernment journey (not program) points a congregation outward to their community. Rather than asking the question, "how can we get them into our church", Go Local helps the church ask the question, "where is God obviously doing something and how can we participate in that?" Several churches have participated in Go Local. Go Local is also working with churches in WI and IA.

Another way that this priority is being addressed is through foster/adoption. This is when a large, healthy church comes alongside of a small, struggling congregation in a way that benefits both churches. Fostering would be for a specified period of time; adoption is when the smaller entity is enfolded into the larger one permanently. In our Tri-Class, examples could be Bethel, Lansing with Beacon Light in Gary IN. Elmhurst CRC and Faith, Elmhurst have also done some of this over the years.

## **Finally, ministry with diaspora communities.**

Diaspora refers to scattered people and may refer to immigrants, migrants, refugees, and international students on campus. The goal is to enable every church to welcome and embrace these people, communicate the love God has for them, and to share faith and life with them.

This year the Diaspora arm of Resonate is having a focus on Chicago, which will culminate in a hybrid conference in June at Trinity Christian College. We will be learning about Christian Muslim dialogue, racial justice, and learning to love people different than us. For more information on this see me or email, [pkelder@crcna.org](mailto:pkelder@crcna.org) to let me know of your interest. There are seminars or webinars leading up to the June event each month.

## Article 17 Oversight Report Re Paul Birnbaum

To: Pastor Church Resources and Classis Iakota Interim Committee  
From: Pastor Joel Kok, Covenant CRC in Sioux Center, Iowa  
Re: Article 17 Evaluation Process  
Date: December 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Please receive this message as an update and recommendation regarding Rev. Paul Birnbaum, formerly of Hope CRC in Rapid City, South Dakota.

As an oversight committee appointed by Classis Iakota, Kyle De Young, Dale Ellens, and I have met regularly with Paul for approximately nine months. In accord with Church Order Supplement Article 17-a, we request the formation of an evaluation team to discern Paul's eligibility for call.

As an oversight committee, we recommend that the evaluators declare Paul eligible for call. In regard to that recommendation, we provide the following grounds:

1. Paul has sought and benefitted from counseling in the form of meeting with a spiritual director.
2. Paul has engaged in fruitful self-reflection and reading to strengthen his gifts for ministry.
3. Paul has felt led to explore chaplaincy as a form of ministry suitable for his gifts.
4. Paul has been offered and accepted a position as a part-time chaplain at Monument Health Rapid City Hospital, and they have indicated that in the near future a full-time position will be available for him.
5. This specific chaplaincy position fits not only Paul's gifts for ministry but also his family situation. He and his wife Sarah have three children, two nearing the end of High School, one in Elementary
6. Paul has received encouragement from Rev. Sarah Roelofs regarding chaplaincy as a calling. Sarah has begun a provisional approval process for Paul, which will include consultation with me, Joel Kok. I serve as Pastor at the congregation that now holds Paul's ministerial credentials.
7. Paul has felt led by the Lord to continue his ministerial calling within the Christian Reformed Church.

As Kyle, Dale, and I send this message, we realize that it arrives at a crowded time in the church calendar. We expect the next action steps in the procedure to take place in the new year of our cultural calendar. We send this now because on December 14 we had another healthy dialogue with Paul, and we find it fitting to send our recommendation. Please let us know if we need to take any further steps in the process, and please let us know if you have additional thoughts or questions.

In Christ,  
Joel Kok  
On behalf of Kyle De Young and Dale Ellens

Counselor for Corsica CRC  
Report to Classis Iakota  
March 2, 2020

On behalf of classis I functioned as counselor for Corsica Christian Reformed Church (CRC) during their vacancy, May 2019 – November 2020. The Corsica CRC holds worship services and carries out ministries jointly with Grace Reformed Church, part of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). These churches also call ministers jointly, who then serve both congregations. Following are some of the activities I was involved in.

1. Consulted with the CRC council vice-presidents and Grace Reformed consistory president regularly.
2. Participated in a couple of council/consistory meetings and recommended the services of a specialized transitional minister. The churches' leadership decided to pursue the search and call of a pastor instead.
3. Participated in a few search committee meetings. Seth Sundstrom, classis pastor of the Dakota Classis of the RCA, led most of these meetings well.
4. Assisted with pastoral situations and needs occasionally.
5. Attended a congregational meeting of the CRC. The congregation decided to call Scott Nichols, pastor in the RCA at Faith Reformed Church of Midland Park, NJ. The council ratified this decision. The Grace Reformed Church held its congregational meeting at the same time and decided to call Scott Nichols as well.
6. The letter of call was signed by leadership of both churches, Seth Sundstrom, and me. Scott Nichols accepted the call. He and his family moved a couple of months later. His wife is Jodie; his two high-school aged sons are Robert and Jonathan.
7. I participated in the installation service on November 22, 2020. This was an official meeting of the Dakota Classis of the Reformed Church of America. I was allowed to sign in as an official delegate to this classis meeting as I had been assisting Grace Reformed Church. A quorum of at least three elders and three pastors of their classis was confirmed by the stated clerk, Brenda Van Beek. Seth Sundstrom functioned as the chair of the meeting and as the worship leader. The order of worship, functioning as the agenda for this classis meeting, was approved. I gave the charge to the congregations during the installation service.

I can provide a more detailed account of my activities if requested. Thank you for the privilege to serve as counselor for Corsica CRC.

John Gorter

Calvin Christian Reformed Church  
1804 17th Avenue  
Rock Valley, Iowa 51247

To the Stated Clerk of Classis Iakota,

We, the Council of Calvin CRC, are writing this letter to encourage Classis Iakota to take action and address the Synod, by overture from the Classis, in the matter of Neland Avenue CRC installing a practicing homosexual to the office of deacon. Primarily this is against God's Law, but also against our own denominational decisions and covenant which prohibits an individual church from acting contrary to God's Word!

We feel writing letters to the Neland Avenue CRC will fall on deaf ears and by bringing this matter to the Classis and ultimately, the Synod, proper disciplinary actions can be taken to stop this church and possibly any others who might feel inclined to follow their example instead of God's Word on this matter. This is no small matter as the Word of God is very clear on God's design on human sexuality. The scriptures strictly forbid all sexual relations outside of one man being married to one woman. There are many warnings to all who break or abuse the covenant of marriage. God labels such sin as sexual immorality and we should flee from it!

We believe the Bible is clear and Synod's decisions of 1973, 2002, 2016 are not advice, but voted in on the understanding that churches would hold one another accountable to these decisions. We urge the Classis and the Synod to address this matter and Neland Avenue CRC to confess their sins, be forgiven, and reverse its decision to install a practicing homosexual to an office in God's church.

Council of Calvin CRC  
President- Galen Van Maanen  
Clerk—Howie Van Ginkel  
January 24, 2021

To Classis Iakota

Calvin CRC requests Classis Iakota submit this overture to the Christian Reformed Church Synod.

1. We, Classis Iakota, ask Synod to use their oversight and the disciplinary means necessary to bring Neland Avenue CRC back to the teachings of God's Word and Synod's decisions of 1973, 2002 and 2016 regarding this congregation installing a practicing homosexual in the office of deacon.
2. God's word strictly forbids all sexual relations outside of one man being married to one woman. There are many warnings to all who break or abuse the covenant of marriage and God labels such sin as sexual immorality and we should flee from it! We urge Synod to address this matter and Neland Avenue CRC to confess their sins, reverse their decision, be forgiven and restored to grace.