

**Classis Iakota**  
**MINUTES**  
**September 17, 2024**  
**Platte CRC: Platte, SD**

**Art. 3829:** The meeting begins at 9:00am with a time of worship led by Rev. Drew Hoekema, pastor of the host church. After the acappella singing of “Hallelujah Praise Jehovah,” Drew offers a prayer. He reads Revelation 2:1-7 and shares how these verses show Jesus commending the church for seeking the truth, but also challenges the church to be careful and loving. After Drew offers another prayer, the delegates sing “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.”

**Art. 3830:** 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	Corey Vander Pol	Troy Noteboom
Harrison	Gary Maas	Trent Delange	Tucker Delange
Inwood		Nic Van Engen	Andre Williams
		Gerald Zwart	
New Holland	Norlyn Van Beek	Tom Steinhauser	Ben Krouse
Platte	Drew Hoekema	Larry Hansum	Jared Peters
Rock Rapids	Doug De Groot	Butch DeBoer	Verlyn Nyhuis
Rock Valley – Calvin		Dennis Van Zee	Matt Kooima
Rock Valley – First	Matthew Haan	Nate Van Kley	Travis Jansen
Rock Valley – Trinity	Henry Lengkeek	Scott Mantel	Ryan Elbers
Amistad Cristiana	Eddy Olguin	Daniel Sanchez	Jesus Uscanga
Sioux Center – Bethel	John Lee	Neil Van Schouwen	Tim Obbink
Sioux Center – Bridge of Hope	Sam Ashmore	Ellen Korver	Mark Oostra
Sioux Center – Covenant	Joel Kok	Chris Goedhart	Rob Haan
Sioux Center – Faith	Bob Pollema	Steve Mouw	Jeremy Van Den Berg
Sioux Center – First	Kurt Monroe	Wes Kroeze	Dale Vander Berg
Sioux Center – Lebanon		Jerry Steenhoek	
Sioux Falls – Cornerstone Prison	Scott Van Voorst	Gordon Dyk	
Sioux Falls – First	Steve Zwart	Al Fransman	
Sioux Falls – Shalom		Rick Hoogeveen	Alvin Punt
		Phil Breems	
Valentine – Lakeview	Joshua Stammis	Rick Vander Wey	Matthew Walkling

**Art. 3831:** Classis is declared constituted by Matt Haan, the Chairperson of the day. The first-time delegates and past delegates who haven’t re-signed the Covenant for Officebearers come forward to sign the Covenant. Drew Hoekema serves as the Vice-chair.

**Art. 3832:** The Chair welcomes the delegates and visitors and appoints Norlyn Van Beek to keep track of the prayer concerns throughout the day with a view to the closing prayer.

**Art. 3833:** The Chair notes the time schedule for the day (9-noon, lunch, 1-3:15, coffee, 3:30-)

**Art. 3834:** Retirement requests are made via the classical credentials.

- A. **Motion** from Trinity, Rock Valley CRC on behalf of Henry Lengkeek to accept his request for retirement effective September 30, 2024 due to age. **-Adopted**
- B. **Motion** from Rock Rapids CRC on behalf of Doug De Groot to accept his request for retirement effective January 1, 2025 due to age. **-Adopted**
- C. Kurt Monroe offers a prayer of thanks for their years of service in ordained ministry and asks for God’s continued blessing on their lives & families as they enter a new season of ministry opportunities in retirement.

**Art. 3835:** The Stated Clerk’s report in the Agenda is noted (p. 2).

- A. Bernie reports that the following people from Classis Iakota, approached by the CIC, will be attending Gather Boston in early October: Ron De Wit, Matt & Holly Haan, John & MaryJo Lee, Rod Ledebouer, Gary & Beth Maas, Eddy Olguin and his daughter, Alexa. Five others from our classis, chosen by the Thrive staff, will also be going. “Gather is a series of events intended to inspire, encourage and bring together CRC leaders from across North America in an intentional effort at renewal.”—Zach King
- B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Stated Clerk **-Adopted**

**Art. 3836:** The Classical Interim Committee report (Agenda, pp. 2-4) is given by Kurt Monroe.

- A. It is noted that the stated clerk has been instructed to include the following wording when sending the email calling for credentials, etc.: “Any officebearer who has an unresolved confessional difficulty gravamen is to recuse himself/herself from being delegated to broader assemblies (i.e. classical and/or synod) based on the decision of Synod 2024.”
- B. **Motion** to include in the Classical Rules of Procedure under V. The Committees of Classis: “Each standing committee shall submit a minimum of one nomination for each vacancy to the stated clerk by two months prior to the end of any member’s term.” **-Adopted**
- C. **Motion** to update the Classical Rules of Procedure, p. 2, H to read as follows (additional wording is italicized): “At the time appointed for the meeting the chairperson shall call the meeting to order. They shall receive the credentials of the delegates, and call the roll. *At the first meeting of each year, all delegates to classis will sign the Covenant for Officebearers. At all subsequent meetings, those who have not signed the Covenant for Officebearers in the given calendar year will sign the Covenant for Officebearers* and upon proper examination of the credentials declare that Classis is constituted provided a majority of the churches is present.” **-Adopted**
- D. **Motion** to make the following change to the Classical Rules of Procedure on p. 22 with regard to the Classical Interim Committee scheduling pulpit supply for churches with a pastoral vacancy: “a) each church may be granted one appointment (consisting in both the AM and PM service where applicable) per month.” **-Adopted**
- E. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee **-Adopted**

**Art. 3837:** The Classical Missions Team report (Agenda, p. 5) is given by Gary Maas.

- A. Gary reports that an updated version of the Siouxland Unity budget reveals that they are requesting less than what is given in the agenda.
- B. On behalf of Mark Klompfen who was on home service during the summer months, Gary gives thanks to the churches who gave Mark the opportunity to preach and share his stories of how God is at work in Nepal. He also informs the delegates that since Mark has returned to Nepal there has been devastating flooding.
- C. Fred Wilgenburg speaks on behalf of New Roots Ministry, reminding the delegates of this ministry’s purpose and sharing that more work is being done recently to help immigrants from SE Asia.
- D. Scott Van Voorst speaks on behalf of Cornerstone Prison Church, sharing how a lockdown has hampered this ministry.
- E. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Missions Team **-Adopted**

**Art. 3838:** The Classical Ministerial Leadership Team report is given by Kurt Monroe.

- A. Kurt reminds the delegates as to the role of the CMLT: helping students navigate the process of becoming candidates for ministry in the CRCNA.
- B. The CMLT is currently working with two students, Rylan Brue and Trevor Mouw, who are on track for ordination.
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the CMLT *-Adopted*

**Art. 3839:** The Chair notes the Finance Committee's report as given in the Agenda (pp. 6-8).

- A. **Motion** that Classis Iakota increase its stipends for the stated clerk and the treasurer of classis \$3,150 to \$3,300 each for 2025, and that the finance committee review these amounts annually. *-Adopted*
- B. **Motion** that Classis Iakota reduces its per member ministry share amount for the Classical Expense Fund from \$4.00 to \$3.50. *-Adopted*
- C. **Motion** that Classis Iakota approve the Host Church Expense Form (Agenda, pp 7-8) for 2025, including \$15 per plate reimbursement.
- D. At the invitation of the Finance Committee, Gerald Zwart reports on behalf of the Inwood CRC council regarding Inspiration Hills (Zwart states that he is on their Board). They are requesting Classis Iakota to financially support this ministry.
  - **Motion** to have the Classical Missions Team process this request with the possibility of presenting a proposal at the Spring 2025 classis meeting. *-Adopted*
- E. **Motion** to approve the work of the Finance Committee *-Adopted*

**Art. 3840:** Classical Church Visiting

- A. The report of the church visit made by Joel Kok and Bob DeSmith to Bridge of Hope Ministries is distributed (see Appendix #1). This is received as information.
- B. The Classical Interim comes with a proposal to realign the church visiting groups.  
**Motion** to approve the following alignment:
  - Group # 1—Bethel, SC / Covenant, SC / First, SC / Amistad Cristiana: Rev. Bob Drenten as classical church visitor
  - Group #2—Bridge of Hope, SC / Faith, SC / Lebanon / Rock Rapids: Rev. Joel Kok as classical church visitor
  - Group #3—Inwood / Calvin, RV / First, RV / Trinity, RV: Rev. John Lee as classical church visitor
  - Group #4—Cornerstone, SF / First, SF / Shalom, SF: Rev. Bob Pollema as classical church visitor
  - Group #5—Corsica / Harrison / Lakeview / New Holland / Platte: Rev. Dan De Groot and Rev. Jack Gray as classical church visitors. *-Adopted*
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Church Visitors *-Adopted*

**Art. 3841:** Church Counselors

- A. A brief written report (see Agenda, p.8) from David Heilman, the counselor for the Inwood CRC, is noted by the chair.
- B. No updates are given from the other counselors—Scott Nichols for New Holland CRC and Drew Hoekema for Shalom CRC.
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the classical church counselors *-Adopted*

**Art. 3842:** Regional Pastors: Dave Smit for the pastors in the Iowa congregations; Gary Maas for the pastors in South Dakota congregations

- A. Gary Maas gives a brief oral report which includes encouraging the churches to use the month of October to show their appreciation for their respective pastor(s).
- B. **Motion** to approve the work of the regional pastors *-Adopted*

**Art. 3843:** Minn-I-Kota Youth Network (see Agenda, pp. 9-10)

- A. Lee and Doug DeGroot report on behalf of this ministry, highlighting the plans to begin serving post-high young adults next January.
- B. This ministry is commended through a **motion** to approve their work. *-Adopted*

**Art. 3844:** Classical Safe Church Team (see Appendix #2)

- A. Henry Lengkeek reports for the team, noting from the team’s written report that Tara Boer is stepping down from serving as the Coordinator for the Safe Church Team and that the team plans on providing classis with qualified candidates to step into the coordinator role. He also points out that the team is working on finding a pastoral candidate to replace himself as his term on this team has been completed.
- B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Safe Church Team *-Adopted*

**Art. 3845:** Classical Treasurer

- A. Bob Van Ruler distributes the Treasurer’s Report for January 1, 2024 to September 1, 2024, highlighting the Consolidated Fund Report which shows the receipts and disbursement for the various classical ministries so far this year and presents the proposed classical ministry shares amounts for 2025.
- B. **Motion** to approve the proposed Classis Iakota Ministry Shares for 2025 *-Adopted*

• Classical Mission Team	
○ Amistad Cristiana	\$5.00
○ Areopagus	\$1.60
○ Cornerstone Prison Ministry	\$7.50
○ Geneva Campus	\$1.60
○ Lakeview/Valentine	\$3,25
○ Mark Klompfen	\$5.00
○ New Roots	\$4.00
○ Prairie Light Project	\$1.25
○ Siouxland Unity CRC*	\$6.00
○ Tyler Helpers	\$1.50
• CMLT	
○ Student Aid	\$0.00
• Classical Finance Committee	
○ Classical Expense Fund	\$3.50
○ Dordt University	\$69.60
○ Minn-I-Kota Youth Ministry	\$5.25
• Total Per Member	<b>\$115.35</b>

\*the amount for Siouxland Unity CRC will be slightly less than the amount given in the report (cf. Art. 3837 A.)

- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Treasurer *-Adopted*

**Art. 3846:** Elections

The following individuals were chosen via ballot to serve a three year term:

- Classical Interim Committee, second term—Kurt Monroe
- Classical Treasurer—Bob Van Ruler
- Alternate Classical Treasurer—Ron Fedders
- Lay Member on the Classical Missions Team—Ivan Van Dusseldorp
- Classical Ministerial Leadership Team—Bob Van Ruler
- Minn-I-Kota Youth Board—Scott Van Voorst

**Art. 3847:** The chair notes the report from Synod 2024 written by Drew Hoekema (see Appendix #3).

**Art. 3848:** A four-page report from Calvin Theological Seminary is distributed and John Lee informs the delegates that he was elected this past summer to serve as a member on this board, representing Region 8.

**Art. 3849:** By way of a video, Rev. Zachary King, the General Secretary for the CRCNA, greets the delegates and offers words of encouragement. Included in the video is a greeting from Dan De Kam, the Director of US Ministry Operations. He shares how the denominational offices have now moved to a smaller more efficient facility and expresses thanks classis for the ongoing financial support of our denominational ministries.

**Art. 3850:** Todd Zuidema, Director of Church Relations for Dordt University, distributes a handout from Dordt University and offers greetings from this institution along with noting various resources for our congregations. He also shares the fact that our classis is Dordt's largest supporting classis, both financially and through the number of students enrolled at Dordt from Classis Iakota.

**Art. 3851:** In place of a report from our World Renew representative, a handout from World Renew written by Andrew Rienstra is distributed to the delegates whereby their Gift Catalog is highlighted.

**Art. 3852:** Ron De Weerd, a resident of Rock Valley and a member if the long-range recovery team for Sioux & Lyon counties, is given the opportunity to share with the delegates about the flood relief and recovery efforts going on in NW Iowa. He invites churches to provide short and long-term volunteers to help in these relief efforts, and he encourages classis to cast a vision to be very intentional in their diaconal work.

**Art. 3853:** After the noon meal the delegates engage in a group discussion on the ministry topic of discipleship using material prepared by Drew Hoekema (see Appendix #4). Drew Hoekema closed this time of reflective discussion on disciples with a prayer for God's guidance.

**Art. 3854:** Follow-up reports are given by the Article 17 Committees appointed at the July 17, 2024 Classis Meeting

- A. John Lee reports on the pastoral care being provided for Rev. Kyle De Young.
- B. Bob Pollema reports for the team assigned to offer guidance for the Shalom CRC council.

**Art. 3855:** Matt Haan thanks the Platte CRC for their hospitality and thanks the delegates for a faithful and fruitful time together.

**Art. 3856:** Norlyn Van Beek offers a closing prayer.

**Art. 3857: Motion** to adjourn is made at 2:15pm and the meeting concludes with the singing of the Doxology.

Next Meeting: March 4, 2025 at the Covenant CRC in Sioux Center.

*Rev. Bernie Haan*  
Stated Clerk

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## Appendix #1

### Church Visit Report

Bridge of Hope Christian Reformed Church feels gratitude for the present and hope for the future.

On the evening of August 21, Pastor Joel Kok and Elder Bob De Smith, from Covenant CRC in Sioux Center, paid a church visit to Bridge of Hope CRC, also in Sioux Center. The Bridge Council and the church visitors were able to reflect on some struggles from the past and, as stated above, feel gratitude for the present and hope for the future. The pastors, staff, Council, and congregation at Bridge look forward to working together as a team now and in years to come.

To describe Bridge and its leaders as a “team” flows from their interesting staff structure. Bridge has begun to journey down the path known as the forming of a “bivocational” pastoral position. “Bivocational” here means the pastor works half-time at church and also has another job and source of income, and, in the case of Bridge, it also means they have two pastors working together in that one bivocational position. And to add another note of interest: the two pastors working together at Bridge are a husband and wife, Sam and Gail Ashmore. They are currently commissioned pastors and are in process toward further ordination as ministers of God’s Word.

While acknowledging the need for discernment regarding how to live out this bivocational arrangement, both the Ashmores and the Council members feel grateful for how the arrangement has gone so far and hopeful that they can continue to work together in healthy ways. One source of that hope is the further arrangement of having five additional staff members. In addition to an Administrator-Ministry Coordinator, Bridge also has part-time workers in ministries related to worship direction, pastoral care, and church education. And, once again,

they feel grateful and hopeful regarding not just the staff structure but also the giftedness of each and all staff workers.

We could explore further dimensions of this staff structure, but, in this report, we can simply emphasize that the “team” feels grateful and glad to work together. They can practice mutual accountability and mutual encouragement in all kinds of wise ways, and they testify to the fruitfulness of having part-time staff workers. Both calling and hiring-paying someone to work for and with a church can lead to fruit bearing ministries. It’s an arrangement that other congregations, in our busy times, do well to consider.

Having explored the staff arrangement at Bridge, we can turn now to the Elders and Deacons. In another interesting aspect regarding Bridge, we can note that they refer to their Elders as “Pastoral Shepherds,” and they refer to their Deacons as “Service Shepherds.” When the church visitors asked the Pastoral Shepherds to share some rewarding events from the previous year, they expressed gratitude regarding the testimonies that young people offered as they professed their faith. When we asked the Service Shepherds to share rewarding events, they noted the encouragement that came with finishing payment on their church building. The setting here is that, while Bridge worships each Sunday in a local middle school, they carry out many related ministries in their church building. E.g., the Council was meeting the evening of our visit in the church building, and, further, both congregational and community groups meet during the week in that church building. The congregational groups include members in a wide spectrum of ages and vocations, and the community groups include people needing and seeking the healing holiness of our Lord. Bridge has long felt called to embody God’s grace to people hurting in all kinds of ways, and that ministry can and does take place in their building.

Joel Kok and Bob De Smith can conclude our report by sharing that we found our visit interesting and illuminating. With their Council, we briefly explored ways in which we can possibly journey and serve together. Bridge’s church building is less than one block away from Covenant’s place of worship and ministry, and we also discerned other possible ways in which our Lord can bring us together.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joel Kok and Bob De Smith

## Appendix #2

### Classis Heartland & Iakota Safe Church Report Fall 2024

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

**Data Prepared:** 09/04/24

**Iakota & Heartland Classical Safe Church Team Members:** Pastor Henry Lengkeek (Trinity CRC-Iakota), Heidi Van Roekel (Bethel CRC-Iakota), Pastor Jesse Walhof (Living Water CRC-Heartland), Kristi Habben (Sibley CRC-Heartland) Tara Boer (Hope CRC, Heartland)

#### Classical Safe Church Team Tasks:

- The Safe Church Team serves in a consultative role for churches in classis 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 Iakota with regard to abuse awareness and prevention.

#### Team Meeting:

A Safe Church Team meeting was held on 09/04/24 to discuss the future of the safe church team. Pastor Henry Lengkeek is retiring and Tara Boer will be resigning from her role after the end of the year. The team reviewed past and current church needs as well as potential candidates to fill these soon vacant positions.

#### Safe Church Team Recommendations

The team will provide classis with qualified candidates willing to step into the safe church team coordinator role. Tara is willing to help/mentor the new coordinator in whatever capacity is needed. The current team also agreed on a pastoral candidate to replace Pastor Lengkeek and contact will be made with this individual to determine their willingness to serve. If willing, a recommendation will be made to classis for that position. The team will continue to be available for churches for process and procedure questions related to safe church issues.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of our committee if you would like to talk about any safe church 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)

#### Team Members

Pastor Henry Lengkeek: [henry@trinitycrc.com](mailto:henry@trinitycrc.com)

Heidi Van Roekel: [mhvanroekel@hotmail.com](mailto:mhvanroekel@hotmail.com)

Pastor Jesse Walhof: [jsswalhof@gmail.com](mailto:jsswalhof@gmail.com)

Kristi Habben: [khabben@premieronline.net](mailto:khabben@premieronline.net)



**Report from Synod 2024 for Classis Iakota  
Drew Hoekema – Platte CRC**

**I. Decisions of Consequence**

- a. **Confessional Difficulty Gravamen [CDG]** are temporary, not indefinite exceptions:
- Church Order supplements [related to Art. 5] were changed to say a confessional-difficulty gravamen is a “temporary” gravamen “subsequent to their ordination” when an officebearer has a difficulty with a doctrine but does not “have a settled conviction contrary to” the confessions. Signing the Covenant for Officebearers “Without reservation” means that an officebearer does not have a difficulty or hold a settled conviction contrary to any of the doctrines contained in the creeds and confessions. This includes what synod has declared to have confessional status.”
  - Councils are to establish timelines not exceeding 3 years for a CDG to be resolved.

**b. Discipline Related to HSR**

- After Synod 2022, 18 churches openly declared positions contradictory to the CRC on human sexuality. Synod directed these churches to repent and declared “*after the conclusion of Synod 2024, all office-bearers from churches in non-compliance, by actions or in any form of media, be placed on a limited suspension. That suspension would include a loss of ability to send delegates to classis, synod, the COD or other CRCNA agencies. Officebearers under limited suspension may attend classis with the privilege of the floor but not as a seated delegate.*” Churches are encouraged to go down a path of either repentance or disaffiliation; those who do neither will be reverted by classis to emerging status, with their council placed under authority of a neighboring church.
- Churches which declared themselves to be “churches in protest” with ecclesiastical intent were later entered into the process established above.

**c. Calvin University and Covenant Subscription**

- The reporting committee recognized a “breakdown of trust” between CU and some in the CRC, and Synod both noted “Calvin’s efforts to be faithful to the Reformed confessions in the context of academic inquiry” and instructed CU’s BOT to “define the differences in Calvin’s use of ‘confessional difficulties’ in relation to the decisions of synod concerning gravamen, and develop language and processes in alignment with those in the CRC,” to report back to Synod 2025.

**II. Overtures from Classis Iakota**

- Synod acceded in part to a request for re-examining the CRC’s relationship to the RCA, and directed the relevant committee to approach the RCA with particular questions, to report back to Synod 2025 with recommendations about their status as church in communion. Current arrangements were unchanged.
- Synod did not accede to a request to declare human sexuality a salvation issue, stating that “salvation issue” is not a clear term and that Scripture makes clear “all sin, including unrepentant sin, is a ‘salvation issue.’”

**III. Decisions Impacting Classical Work**

- a. **CMLT – Raising Up New Ministers:** Synod encouraged councils and CMLT’s “to identify potential leaders; and, in consultation with the Candidacy Committee, to develop and strengthen the current and alternate pathways for leadership development and further training and formation.” There is a shortage of ministers in the CRCNA, and the Candidacy Committee is calling on those at the ground level to actively cultivate the next generation of clergy.

- b. **Commissioned Pastor as Pathway to Ordination:** the Candidacy Committee was instructed by Synod to explore the development of more consistent approaches to contextual individualized learning plans,” hoping to foster greater clarity and assistance for those entering into the Commissioned Pastor role with a view toward eventual ordination.
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## Appendix #4

Group Ministry Issue Discussion  
Classis Iakota – Fall 2024  
From Classis Interim Committee

*“...At a minimum of one of its meetings annually, shall allocate sufficient time to discuss at least one ministry issue that the classis considers to be especially important in the life and ministry of member congregations in the denomination.”* – Church Order Article 41

Ministry Issue: Discipleship [helping Christians in our churches follow Jesus more faithfully]  
Aims: to align ourselves in commitment to discipleship, share current practices, and identify how it carries out uniquely in a CRC context.

- I. Introduction [10-15 min] –definition and directive
  - a. Background Texts: Matthew 28:18-20
  - b. How do we understand the meaning of the word “disciple” or “discipleship,” and how is discipleship distinct from evangelism, education, or fellowship?
  - c. Why should our churches make discipleship a priority?
- II. Small Group Breakout Discussion [45 min] – motives and means
  - a. Background Texts: Philippians 3:12-21; Titus 2:1-8
  - b. When has God worked to inspire you to follow Christ and grow as a disciple?
  - c. What might be some inappropriate or ungodly motives for making disciples?
  - d. Where have you seen adult discipleship happen well, either in your church or in a parachurch context?
  - e. How might your church encourage discipleship similar to what Paul describes to Titus?
- III. Large Group Summary Discussion [30 min] – obstacles and opportunities
  - a. Background Text: Luke 8:1-15
  - b. What forces are at work seeking to derail discipleship?
  - c. How is discipleship in the CRC in 2024 in Iakota uniquely difficult?
  - d. How can CRC faith and practice be uniquely beneficial to discipleship?
  - e. What can our councils do to move toward more effective discipleship?