

Classis Iakota
AGENDA
Special Session November 16, 2021; 6:30pm
Shalom CRC in Sioux Falls, SD
Rev. Kurt Monroe, Chairman

I. INITIAL BUSINESS

- A. Opening Devotions
- B. Presentation of Credentials & Roll Call
- C. Signing of the Covenant for Office Bearers by first-time delegates
- D. Declaration that Classis is constituted.
- E. Welcome to delegates and the Synodical Deputies

II. JOINT REQUEST FROM FIRST SIOUX FALLS CRC AND REV. CAL HOOGENDOORN

- A. That Rev. Hoogendoorn be released from active ministerial service at First Sioux Falls CRC in accordance with Church Order Article 17 [Due to the confidential nature of this request, the formal written request from the First CRC council, along with the termination agreement and the report from the Classical Church Visitors are being mailed to the churches.]

III. REQUESTS FROM COVENANT CRC OF SIOUX CENTER

- A. That their elders be allowed to administer communion, when necessary, in accordance with Church Order Articles 53 and 55 (pp. 2-3)
- B. That Paul Birnbaum be declared eligible for a call to serve as a hospital chaplain in accordance with Church Order Article 12-b (three attachments to email)

IV. REQUEST FROM FIRST CRC OF SIOUX CENTER

- A. That the work of Rev. Todd Zuidema as the Director of Church Relations for Dordt University be declared as consistent with the calling of the minister in accordance with Church Order Article 12-c. (one attachment to email)

V. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Election of Classical Treasurer and Alternate Classical Treasurer to another three-year term.
- B. Church Visitor Report on visit made to Faith CRC in Sioux Center (p. 4)
- B. Possible follow-up matters

VI. CLOSING BUSINESS

- A. Concluding Remarks by the Chairperson
- B. Closing Prayer
- C. Adjournment

On Tue, 19 Oct 2021 at 15:53, Joel Kok <joelekok@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks for all your labor for the Interim Committee. I hope the two items from Covenant are straight-forward and unburdensome. They relate to:

1. Administrating weekly communion at Covenant
2. Calling process for Chaplain Paul Birnbaum

1. Regarding administering weekly communion, because neither Justin Bailey nor I can be at Covenant for every worship service, we pass on this request:

Covenant CRC in Sioux Center requests Classis lakota to give us approval to commission Elders to administer the Lord's Supper at worship services at which an ordained minister is not present.

Grounds:

1. Covenant plans to celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday, beginning on First Advent 2021 (November 28)
2. Our ordained ministers—Pastor Joel Kok and Dr. Justin Bailey—are not present every Sunday.
3. Our request is in accord with precedent in CRC Classes and also with the Christian Reformed Church Order Articles below (bold print and italics added):

Article 53

- a. The worship services shall be led by the ministers of the Word and others appointed by the consistory.
- b. Worship services may be led by persons licensed to exhort or by those appointed by the consistory to read a sermon. Such persons, however, shall refrain from all official acts of ministry, and only sermons approved by the consistory shall be read in a worship service.

—Cf. Supplement, Article 53 Supplement, Article 53 “Official Acts of Ministry”

1) ***Certain acts of ministry***—among them the preaching of the Word, ***the administration of the sacraments***, the pronouncement of blessings for the people, the laying of hands on new leaders, and the reception and formal dismissal of members—***are part of the ministry of Christ to his followers and are entrusted to the church and, within the church, to its ordained leaders, not to a specific office.***

2) ***Therefore, no long-standing, organized congregation of Christians should be deprived of these liturgical acts simply because it cannot provide for the presence of an ordained minister or commissioned pastor.***

Article 55

The sacraments shall be administered upon the authority of the consistory in the public worship service by a minister of the Word, a commissioned pastor, or, in the case of need, an ordained person who has received the approval of classis, with the use of the prescribed forms or adaptations of them that conform to synodical guidelines.

—Cf. Supplement, Article 55

- a. Classis approval is required for an ordained person to administer the sacraments.
- b. Ordinarily the ordained person should be an elder. (Acts of Synod 2002, p. 537)***

3) These acts of ministry symbolize and strengthen the relationships among the Lord, leaders, and the people of God. Their use is a sacred trust given to leaders by the Lord for the purpose of strengthening the flock. Therefore the administration of these acts should continue to be regulated by the church. (Acts of Synod 2001, p. 504)

2. Regarding Paul Birnbaum: Paul and his wife Sarah will visit Covenant CRC on Sunday, October 24. He will speak to the congregation regarding his chaplaincy work in Rapid City, and he will be available for dialogue after the service. I have been walking alongside Paul for about 18 months now, and members of Covenant have been in a process of discerning whether to call him for about a year. He spoke at an evening service at Covenant back in January. Several members have held several zoom dialogues with him. Our ad hoc chaplaincy committee also held a zoom dialogue with his Supervisor and other chaplains at Monument Health in Rapid City. Every conversation we have had has encouraged us to become his calling church. We've also worked with the Chaplaincy and Care Ministry of the CRC, which has provisionally approved Paul for CRC chaplaincy, contingent on his call from a congregation. For the info I've received from the CCMC, we do not require a counselor from Classis to issue the call. However, we certainly want to inform Classis and proceed with support from Classis.

Church Visitor Report

From Joel Kok and Len Rhoda of Covenant CRC
On visit to Faith CRC in Sioux Center

On Monday, October 11, Elder Len Rhoda and Pastor Joel Kok from Covenant CRC paid a Church Visit to Faith CRC in Sioux Center, Iowa. We offer this report with thanksgiving for the visit and for Faith CRC.

After the opening devotions for the Council meeting, the Chair of Council offered a helpful summary regarding the purpose and content of Church Visits. In the visit, Pastor Joel and Elder Len focused primarily on the Council as a whole, the Deacons, the Elders, and the Pastors. With respect to all these congregational leaders, reports were authentically positive and enthusiastic.

The full Council feels grateful for the Lord keeping them united amid the pressures of last year's pandemic. Their congregational life, including its budget, continued to flourish during the pandemic, and now they have even greater appreciation for in-person worship and gatherings of all kinds. Feeling energetic and hopeful, they identify their building renovation project as the major challenge facing them in the year to come. They request prayers for provision and wisdom as the ground-breaking for that project draws near.

In dialogue with the Deacons, we were able to note again, with thanksgiving, that all the areas of the budget have been well funded. In addition to the general fund, Faith members donate generously to their Christian School budget, their missionary partnerships, and various committee-ministries such as GLUE. Faith has a healthy level of organization for its congregational life.

The Elders expressed gratitude for worship services as a source of spiritual growth. Attendance has increased lately, and they have also celebrated many professions of faith. The Elders and their partners in ministry carry out home visits regularly, and they combine ministry to one another with ministry to their neighbors near and far. They give thanks for the sermons and the music at Faith.

The staff at Faith includes three pastors. Pastor Bob Pollema serves as current lead pastor of Word and Sacrament. Pastor Cliff Bajema works primarily with the youth, as well as with other areas of congregational life. Pastor Dave Smit carries out a ministry of visitation. In the past, both Pastors Dave and Cliff also served as lead pastors of Word and Sacrament. Their mutual support in their work together now testifies to their health as leaders and to the health of their congregation.

In our time of prayer, we were able to offer heartfelt thanks for many people and gifts. We also prayed for the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, as Faith continues its calling amid the many changes in our surrounding society. We pray with strong trust in the Lord who has brought Faith this far and will remain faithful to Faith in its ongoing journey. Thanks be to God.

In Christ,
Len Rhoda and Joel Kok