

Classis Iakota
AGENDA
September 17, 2019, 9:00 A.M.
Place: Lakeview Christian Reformed Church
Rev. Adam Eisenga, Chairman Rev. John Gorter, Vice-Chairman

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-noon; lunch; 1:00-3:15; break; 3:30-4:30
- G. Appointments 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 FROM CREDENTIALS

**III. EXAMINATION OF MR. STANTON VISSER FOR SERVICE AS A COMMISSIONED PASTOR
(pending congregational approval by Trinity CRC and Mr. Visser's acceptance of a call)**

- A. Presentation of Necessary Documents and Introduction of Mr. Visser
- B. Report of Sermon Evaluators: Rev. David Smit and Dr. Carl Zylstra
- C. Examination by Rev. Joel De Boer on the following areas:
 - a. Knowledge of Scripture
 - b. Knowledge of Reformed Doctrine
 - c. Knowledge of the standards of the church and the Church Order
 - d. Practical matters regarding Christian testimony, walk of life, relationships with others, love for the church, approach to ministry, and promotion of Christ's kingdom
- D. Procedure for Admission
 - a. Motion is made to admit
 - b. Executive Session is declared
 - c. Prayer is offered for guidance of the Holy Spirit and the motion is considered
 - d. Classis votes by ballot and the result is announced to the delegates
 - e. Executive Session concludes and the result is announced publicly

IV. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES AND VARIOUS FUNCTIONARIES

- A. Stated Clerk (pp. 2-3)
- B. Interim Committee (p. 3)
- C. Home Missions Team (pp. 4-5)
- D. Ministerial Leadership Team (p.6)
- E. Church Visitors (pp. 7-10)
- F. Church Counselors
- G. Regional Pastors
- H. Siouxland Diaconal Conference
- I. Minn-I-Kota Youth Board (pp. 11-12; their 2020 budget sent separately)
- J. Safe Church Team (pp. 12-13)
- K. Classical Treasurer

V. ELECTIONS/NOMINATIONS

- A. Classical Home Missions (Rev. Bob Pollema's first term ends)
- B. Classical Home Missions (Mrs. Jacklyn Nieuwendorp's first term ends)

VI. CLASSICAL/REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES TO SYNOCIAL BOARDS AND OTHER SPEAKERS/REPORTS

- A. Calvin College
- B. Calvin Theological Seminary
- C. Council of Delegates
- D. Delegates to Synod 2018 (p. 14)
- E. Dordt College
- F. Faith Formation Ministries
- G. Resonate Global Mission (pp. 15-16)
- H. World Renew

VII. CLOSING BUSINESS

- A. Report from the Credentials and Article 41 Committee
- B. Next Meeting: TBD
- C. Closing Remarks (chairperson)
- D. Closing Prayer
- E. Adjournment

Stated Clerk Report – September 2019

1. This is a reminder about our website: www.classisiakota.org. Rules for Classical Procedure, a list of classical functionaries and committees, six years of classis minutes, and other information are available through that site. Links to congregational and other church-related web sites are included. If you want a link changed or have an updated one, please let me know. Email addresses for the stated clerk and the classical treasurer are also found there. The annual cost for this web site is \$150-170.
2. Facilitated some follow-up correspondence and arrangements after the March 5 classis meeting relative to the appeal that was not sustained.
3. Was involved as a member of the CIC in preparing a classical response to an appeal to this year's synod of the decision made at the March 5 classis meeting not to sustain an appeal.
4. Responded to various individuals and council representatives who have asked for information or advice relative to classical or denominational matters.
5. Met with the lakota CIC on 6/27/18 to begin the planning process for the September 17 meeting of classis.
6. Received from synodical services a special note calling attention to action taken by Synod 2019 in response to the Classis lakota overture regarding funding, support, and care for missionaries: *"That synod commend Classis lakota for its sensitivity and concern for our Resonate Global Mission missionaries."*
7. Received from Dr. Steve Timmermans, the Executive Director for the CRCNA, the following note on July 2, 2019:
*The appeal of the decision of Classis lakota to deny Ms. DeWitt's appeal of actions of Bethel CRC was heard by Synod 2019 in executive session. The outcome of Synod's deliberation was this:
That synod not sustain the personal appeal of Ms. Judy De Wit from a decision of Classis lakota on March 5, 2019.
I pray that the Holy Spirit's presence will be felt by all involved.*
8. A number of ministry-related reports, communications, requests, etc. have been received and forwarded via email to the congregations and other church leaders or organizations associated with our classis.

9. Received via e-mail a letter from Siouxland Diaconal Board of Directors on 7/25/19 informing the churches of classis that the decision had been made to cease operation of the Siouxland Diaconal Conference and dissolve the ministry in a timely manner.
10. Received a letter dated 7/25/19 from John Baas, the Vice President for Advancement at Dordt University which included the following request: *We are grateful for our relationship with Classis lakota, and we humbly request that Dordt University be included in your classical budget again this year. The amount for the remainder of 2019 is \$68.37. The Area 4 Dordt University ministry-share reduction amount for 2020 is also \$69.37 (per professing member).*
11. Received on 7/26/19 the following notification of a request from the First CRC of Sioux Center: *"To correct a procedural oversight two years ago, First CRC Sioux Center requests Classis lakota to officially approve and record the retirement of Rev. Dr. Wayne Kobes for reason of age effective August 1, 2017."*
12. Dr. Jason Lief and Mr. Nathan Nieuwendorp were notified that their license to exhort is due to expire on September 19, 2019, and were told that if they desired to continue serving in this way, they would need to ask Classis lakota for a renewal of their license.
 - On August 4, 2019 the following message was received from Nathan Nieuwendorp: *"This is my letter asking Classis lakota to renew my license to exhort. I am a member in good standing at Inwood CRC. I have used my license to exhort within Classis lakota and Classis Heartland approximately 50 times in the last two years."*
13. Made the necessary arrangements for the September 17 classis meeting, including correspondence with individuals who requested to speak or report to Classis.
14. Since email is used as the primary means of communication, having an up-to-date email address is vital. If you are not receiving these communications or if something has changed in your congregation's organization, please make sure an accurate email address is being used.

Rev. Bernie Haan

Classis Interim Committee Report to September 2019 Classis Meeting

1. Commissioned pastor process:
We anticipate examining Stanton Visser (Trinity CRC) in our September classis meeting so he can be ordained as a commissioned pastor in our area prisons. Joel De Boer will serve as the examiner. Dave Smit and Carl Zylstra will serve as sermon evaluators.
2. Classis functionaries:
 - 2.1. Joel Kok has agreed to serve as Church Visitor for Group #2.
 - 2.2. Adam Eisenga has agreed to serve as a clergy member of the CMLT.
 - 2.3. Charles Veenstra has been added as a member of Calvin Theological Seminary Board.
3. Classis meeting logistics:
We look forward to Lakeview CRC hosting our September classis meeting. Stanley Groothof will serve as alternate stated clerk for this meeting in Bernie Haan's absence.
4. Ecclesiastical credentials:
 - 4.1. We sent Dan De Graff's ecclesiastical credential to Classis Lake Superior.
 - 4.2. We received Kurt Monroe's ecclesiastical credential from Classis Atlantic Northeast and we welcome him to Classis lakota!

Classis Iakota Home Missions Team

Report for Classis – Fall 2019

Since the March Classis meeting, activity has continued under the umbrella of Classis Home Missions Committee (CHMC), comprised of Pastors Bob Pollema (Chair), Drew Hoekema (Secretary), Matthew Haan and Joel DeBoer, with lay-members Jacklyn Nieuwendorp (Inwood), Gord Dyk (Cornerstone) and Piet Koene (Amistad).

CHMC convened in April and August, and have focused their attention on continuing the church plant projects identified previously by a subcommittee appointed to explore new areas for ministry. In the next few months, letters may be sent out to various churches near these areas in order to gauge interest in serving as planting/parent churches.

West Sioux Falls: At our last classis meeting, a ministry student at Sioux Falls Seminary visited to identify himself as the point-person for this project. After a few months of further consideration, he withdrew from consideration for this role. Therefore, we are back to identifying an individual to convene any core group, and as of this writing have identified one other potential person. In addition, we have also been in contact with area businessmen interested in assisting with a meeting location.

Chamberlain: We have set out a potential timeline for the project in Chamberlain. A member of Platte CRC residing in Chamberlain has expressed willingness to identify a meeting location and attempt to convene a group. The hope is that bi-weekly Bible Studies could begin on Tuesday evenings in late August, with Drew Hoekema and a former Elder of Platte CRC each leading a meeting once per month. We are also working on identifying longer-term ideas to have a person living in Chamberlain in order to better convene a group or gauge this project's sustainability.

Hope CRC – Rapid City: A couple committee members traveled to Hope CRC in order to come alongside their leaders, get a sense of their current situation, set out several different roads they could take forward, and how our committee could help them down those roads.

Support of Other Ministries via Ministry Shares: Each fall, this team has met with various ministries supported by classical ministry shares in order to receive updates on their work, requests for the next year's funding, and also to encourage them and lift them in prayer. We did this at our August meeting, and from that meeting, we bring **two recommendations to classis**. First, it was thought that instead of home missions only overseeing a portion of the ministries supported by ministry shares, it would make more sense if *all* ministries supported by classis be handled together. Thus, ***we recommend to classis that any ministries receiving ministry share contributions fall under the supervision of Classis Home Missions Committee, which would then be responsible for submitting recommended support amounts to classis each fall.*** Related to that recommendation, we then want to ***recommend the following ministry share amounts for the next financial year.***

Ministry	2019	2020	Ministry Share 2020 (based on \$4,000 m.s.)
Amistad	\$21,000	\$20,000	\$5.00
Areopagus	\$6,000	\$6,400	\$1.60
Classical Expense Fund	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$2.50
Classical Home Missions	\$0	\$18,000	\$4.50
CMLT	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$2.00
Cornerstone	\$23,000	\$27,000	\$6.75
Dordt College	\$273,480	\$276,000	\$69
Geneva	\$6,000	\$6,400	\$1.60
Lakeview/Valentine	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$3.25
New Roots	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$4.00
Prairie Light Youth	\$4,500	\$12,000	\$3
Siouxland Diaconal	\$33,000	\$0	\$0
Timothy Leadership	\$0	\$0	\$0
Siouxland Unity	\$26,520	\$26,800	\$6.70
Minn-I-Kota Youth	\$15,000	\$16,000	\$4
TOTAL	(\$113.90/member)	\$455,600	\$113.90

For the future, please be in prayer for all of the above ministries and especially for the potential church plants in our area. We are grateful for the support of Classis congregations, and 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 Minutes & Classis Report
July 10, 2019**

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. With updated accounts standing, we have 12 former students in full-time ministry in the CRCNA whose loans are being forgiven at a rate of 10% per year; 2 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; 1 student who is temporarily on deferment while continuing education and 1 student who is on deferment while waiting for a ministry opportunity.

II. New Business

A. Notes on correspondence since last meeting:

1. Youri Lee received her Master of Divinity from Calvin Theological Seminary in May 2018 but is waiting until 2020 to complete the candidacy process while continuing Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Luke's College in Sioux City where she resides with her husband.
2. Adam Ramirez received his Master of Theological Studies from Calvin Theological Seminary in May 2019 and is discerning where the Lord is leading him to serve.

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. Review of approved funds for 2019-2020 academic year [see chart below]:

1. Luke Vander Leest ~ requested \$4,000

Note: CTS's 2018-2019 MDiv tuition: \$484/credit hour (\$15,972/year @ 33 credit hours)

75% = \$11,979 x 3 years = \$35,937

50% = \$7,986 x 3 years = \$23,958

- D. We recommend a \$1 ministry share assessment per member for 2020.
- E. Rev. Cory Van Sloten will coordinate bulletin announcements this fall informing classis churches and prospective students of the work of the CMLT.
- F. We welcome Mr. Nathan Nieuwendorp who was appointed to the CMLT in March 2019 and Rev. Adam Eisinga who was appointed by the CIC to replace Rev. Dan De Graff. We also thank Mr. Lynn Bleeker for his service on the CMLT over the last six years!
- F. Next meeting: First CRC, Rock Valley ~ Wednesday, January 8, 2020 ~ 1 p.m.

Student:	Degree/Institution/Anticipated Graduation/Vocational Goal:	Approved amount:	Support to date: (through May 2020)
Luke Vander Leest Dordt College First CRC, Sioux Falls	MDiv / Sioux Falls Seminary / May 2024 Goal: Minister of the Word	\$4,000	\$0
Total:		\$4,000 (\$10,500 last year)	

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

Church Visitors' Reports

Rapid City – Hope Christian Reformed Church

On June 26 at 7:30 PM I arrived at Hope CRC in Rapid City. Having visited earlier with Pastor Paul Birnbaum, it was decided that I would come at the same time that the classis representatives from Home Missions would be there, in order to get a better feel of what was happening at Hope CRC.

I was greeted by Pastor Bob Pollema and Pastor Drew Hoekema, our Home Missions representatives, who had gotten there earlier in the day and had visited with Pastor Paul, and Elder Wayne Bordewyk. We waited together for a few minutes while the council finished up their regular meeting, which had started at 6:30. It had been an eventful meeting for them, since six of their youth ranging in ages 12-18 had come to make profession of faith that evening.

It was decided that Pastor Drew and Pastor Bob would lead the discussion first, and go over some options which Hope CRC might consider. It should be noted that the council of Hope CRC have felt that they have been struggling with declining attendance and the ability to keep up with monthly expenses for the past few years.

One of the options discussed was sharing their space in the church with another church or organization. It was noted that they would want to be careful as to who they did this with, so that this would enhance their ministry rather than become a distraction.

Another option that was presented was to consider starting over with a new church plant, in which the classis and denomination would come in and evaluate effective ways to sustain a CRC church in Rapid City. They would also offer people and financial help to accomplish this.

The question was then asked of them “why should you continue to exist as a church?”

The council then reflected a bit on their history. They began as a church plant nearly sixty years ago. They started in the church they are currently in which is located in a part of the town where many Native Americans live, and also many homeless people. Early on they had also purchased a piece of land on which they had hoped to some day build a new church building. In the 1980's during a time of difficulty that piece of property was sold.

They said that early on the church benefited from many CRC members who moved to Rapid City from the eastern part of the state. Currently, that is no longer the case, as they struggle to even keep the children of the congregation who remain in Rapid City as adults.

As a church they have ministered well to disadvantaged people, but this doesn't often translate into new members in the church.

They were encouraged to have prayer meetings seeking God's will for them as a church. Pastor Bob Pollema then closed in prayer asking God's blessing upon them as they discern the future of the church.

Pastors Bob and Drew then left at about 8:30 after having a long day that began in Sioux Center at 3:30 AM. After having thanked them for coming, the council and I continued the visitation.

The first question which I asked them was “what do you see as your biggest challenge as a church?”

They responded by saying “a lack of energy.” They acknowledged that while funds are tight and that they continue to slip a bit each month, and that there is usually only an average of 35-40 people in church on Sundays, the fact that they are just getting tired is their biggest challenge.

When I asked them if they thought that their current location had a negative impact on them as a church, most of the responses were yes, in the sense of gaining traditional CRC members. It was mentioned that the church probably would not have had as great an impact on the disadvantaged people if they had been on a “better” location.

When asked if they were happy with the way their current church services were going, they said that there was a bit of discontent by some of the younger members, in that they felt things could be a bit more upbeat even though many of their members are older aged.

I then encouraged them to possibly take turns leading praise songs and lining up special music to help rejuvenate their worship.

I then asked them what positive things they had going on in the church. They mentioned that they had a young lady who did some sign language during their services. They also said that there is a lady who regularly does the children's message.

They said that they do have a education program for the youth that meets during the school year and is divided into two classes.

It was then about 8:30 and it was evident for many of them it had been a long day and they were getting tired. I encouraged them to look for positive things in their church and build on them, to invite their friends and colleagues to join them in worship.

I then closed in prayer for them, and they thanked me for coming and encouraging them.

From there I went back to the motel our family was staying in as we began our vacation. The motel was new and was located about a mile and a half northeast from where the church was located. It was in a location that is being newly developed. There is a large strip mall nearby as well as a large Walmart. I couldn't help but think of all the possibilities for a Christian Reformed church in Rapid City. This group of strong believers could very well be the start of something much bigger, and still continue to minister to the disadvantaged people around them.

Please keep Hope Christian Reformed Church in your prayers. Also, perhaps classis lakota may consider how they could help water and nurture a church that has already been planted so that it may grow and produce much fruit for the kingdom of God.

Pastor Gary Maas

Lake View CRC Church Visit Report

On Monday, July 29, Elder Keith De Waard and myself met with the Lake View CRC council. On our trip down there, we commented to each other, that the fields west of the river had never looked so lush in all the years we could we could remember. This would also reflect the condition of the church at Lake View.

Pastor Mark Langenbach began the meeting by reading from I Peter 5:7 which reminds us to cast all our anxiety on him, because he cares for us. This too, would seem to be a verse that the people of Lake View CRC have been living by.

When asked what positive things have they seen happen in the past few years, they had a number of things which they were thankful for.

1. Prairie Light Bible School has been a success for many years including this one.
2. Pastor Mark does a good job reaching out to people.
3. They have a number of younger families with small children, and had recently had two Baptisms in three weeks.
4. Their adult Sunday School class continues to be an active group of about 15-20 people.
5. The women's Bible study is also active with 10-15 ladies getting together.
6. They started a Gems program, which is in it's second year and meets once a month. They are also considering starting Cadets program for the boys.
7. They host a group of about 70 young people who come out each year for a retreat with James Schaap and Lee De Groet. They are looking forward to hosting our classis meeting.
8. Gary and Barb Peters continue to mentor kids in their school release program.

When asked what challenges they face, they had just a few.

1. Poor roads for them and their pastor to travel on.
2. A cold winter that left them without the sewer working in church for a couple of months.
3. The lack of potential to grow in numbers, other than being fruitful and multiplying.
4. The economy

When we asked Pastor Mark if he was being taken care of, he replied “very well.” He did say that he has wrestled a bit in whether or not this is what God wants him to continue to do. The council said that they have been blessed by his presence with them.

Keith De Waard offered a prayer for them.

We then made our journey back home, and commented on the way, as to what a joy it was to visit with them. In our minds, Lake View CRC seems to be as healthy as ever.

Pastor Gary Maas

To: 1st CRC Sioux Falls SD / for Classis Iakota

Visitors: Pastor Bob Pollema / Elder Vernon Haagsma from Faith CRC Sioux Center IA

Date: April 30, 2019 at 7:30 pm

Elder Vernon Haagsma and I had the opportunity to visit with the council of 1st CRC Sioux Falls. It was a great visit and we were encouraged by how God is working in and through 1st CRC’s congregation.

I structured the questions for each group, full Council, Elders, and Deacons as follows:

What are your Joys, Struggles and Concerns?

What are 7 strengths and 5 challenges?

Joys:

- 1) The joys for the council are varied and numerous. I will focus on a few. One of their joys is having youth come forward to profess their faith; seeing these kids you have taught and mentored over the years grow in Christ and start that walk on their own is one of their highlights.
- 2) Another joy is having a full sanctuary every Sunday; and seeing the intergenerational blend of seasoned believers and young families worshiping together. They have a good solid growth. Credit for this growth is given to the sound Biblical preaching each Sunday.
- 3) The preaching of the word is a joy for them and something they “celebrate”. To have the word preached intentionally and unapologetically so is significant in a world where many churches hear a watered-down gospel. People coming to 1st find a place of truth and good news in the middle of a world that lacks it.
- 4) Another joy was hearing from the staff on how their ministries are going, and how each one would go above and beyond to address the needs and challenges of the congregation. It is a well-run organization that can evolve and flex with the challenges.
- 5) It was also mentioned that one of their joys and strengths is that a lot of time and effort goes into teaching the leadership. They are not just sitting in a seat but are expected to take their responsibilities as Elder and Deacon seriously, so they are enabled and equipped to do so which makes for a healthier church.
- 6) The Elders enjoy visiting and the Deacons are blessed in seeing how generous the congregation is.

7) As they look to see beyond their walls, there is joy in their outreach not only with the new faces that they see on Sundays but also in their partnership with the Liberian and Nepalese congregations which make 1st church their home. 1st is a church that is a joy to invite people to. They will be welcomed, hear the word, and if they stick around - find a church home.

8) One more joy is the blessing of being able to see and participate in the bigger picture of what God is doing by way of an outreach grant ministry. This ministry distributes funds to outreach causes outside their congregation.

Struggles:

1) One struggle they mentioned is that with their size and steady growth of their congregation it is hard to keep up with the new faces that come in the door. Sometimes those singles or couples, and families don't connect and soon are not seen. The fact that they are aware of this and are striving to work on it says a lot. Some bigger churches don't always make that connecting a priority.

2) They have had some staff changes in the past year or two; one in worship and one as the visiting pastor. They have decided instead of filling these positions with another paid staff, they will use the gifts and talents of volunteers in the area of worship, and the elders will take on more responsibility in the area of visiting those in need. This is a challenge but a good one and it seems they are looking forward to living up to it in His strength.

Concerns:

I think I have covered their concerns in the section above but several **challenges** I will list.

- 1) To keep the outreach going
- 2) To expand the small groups well
- 3) To keep equipping leadership
- 4) To be even more welcoming

Strengths:

When asked to list 7 strengths the council gave me 12. Most of which are mentioned above. some that are not listed are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Hospitality | 4) Unity |
| 2) Care Groups | 5) Serve project in the summer |
| 3) A joyful congregation | 6) A compassionate congregation |

Overall, I have assessed that life at 1st is going well, and God is working in and through them to advance his Kingdom and bring Grace to the Sioux Falls area. In fact, I got to experience that welcome and spirit when my daughter and I attended there on one of my Sunday's off.

It was a joy and a blessing. Pray that God will continue to guide 1st Church, help them overcome and surpass their challenges and humbly praise Him for their strengths.

Submitted humbly to Classis Iakota by Pastor Bob Pollema

Minn-I-Kota Youth Report

MINN-I-KOTA YOUTH NETWORK BOARD:

MINNKOTA CLASSIS-Representative-Pastor Bryan Dick, Karmen Vis, & Sarah Van Dyken.

IAKOTA CLASSIS-Representative-Pastor Henry Lengkeek, Kristi Palsma (Secretary), & Dan Elgersma.

HEARTLAND CLASSIS- Representative-Pastor Scott Van Voorst, Sean Baccam (President), & Randy Hilbelink (Treasurer).

A FEW EVENTS SINCE THE SPRING CLASSIS MTGS:

****MARCH 27, 2019-ORANGE CITY IMMANUEL STUDENT LED PRAISE & WORSHIP NIGHT.** At the beginning of my school year last year I sent out a mass email to all the supporting Youth Leaders/Youth Pastors/Youth Directors offering to help facilitate P&W nights in their communities. Orange City Imm CRC was one of the churches that responded to this offer. This P&W night was an event that the Orange City students & Leader-Kody Tesch had been wanting to do for the last few years. Kody contacted me & we began meeting & soon this event was on the calendar. A few of Kody's students, along with some Dordt students led us in praise songs, which was followed by two Dordt students (they are on the MIK Youth website Speakers List & are also two of my Jr High Retreat Leaders) gave short testimonies, lessons, & challenges to the High school students who were in attendance (about 75 people from 5 area supporting churches). After the speakers we spent time in prayer & more singing. We all enjoyed some lunch together at the end of the night. This event was held in the Sioux Center, Iowa HOME building. After all the guests had left the OC Imm CRC students who helped on the Praise Team thanked me for helping "pull this night together" as it was something they (seniors) wanted to do before graduating from High School. Also, one of the comments from a visiting Leader was "It is really too bad this place was not filled to the seams...it was so impactful to see students leading this night of Praise & Worship!"

****APRIL 10, 2019-"A NIGHT OF HOPE-A WAKE UP CALL WITH SCOTT BRUXVOORT-DRUG ABUSE-IDENTITY-SELF WORTH".** MINNIKOTA YOUTH partnered with RISE MINISTRY from Sheldon Iowa. Approximately 200 student attended this Praise & Worship night which was held in the Sheldon Crossroad Pavilion Event Center. Scott's challenge for us was...no matter how busy you are to spend more time in The Word!

****APRIL 24-26, 2019-THE 9TH ANNUAL JR HIGH RETREAT AT INSPIRATION HILLS.** The theme was "IDENTITY" based off of I JOHN 3:1-2 "CHILD OF GOD". 6TH, 7TH, & 8TH graders from 21 churches (13 supporting churches) attended this year. Both the MIK Youth Board President-Sean Baccam & Pastor Scott Van Voorst-the Heartland Representative on the MIK Youth Board attended & helped out on the weekend. The leaders again this year were Dordt students & my daughter from UNWSP. Of the 22 leaders 5 were from supporting churches & 4 of them had attended this retreat when they were in Junior High. I met & planed with these students for several months before the retreat. We had a record number of attendees this year with a total of 131 with room in the building for 134. We had 66 guys & 65 gals! God orchestras the details & the big picture beautifully each year. Many lives were touched again this year. I cannot wait for our 10th Annual in 2020!

****MAY 6, 2019-LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING.** We ended the school year with the last Leaders' Networking Meeting at 4 Brothers in Sioux Center, IA. Leaders came from NE, SD, & IA to join in a noon meal. We shared about the past school year, we talked about our upcoming summer mission trips, we planned for future MIK Youth & local youth events, & we ended our time together in prayer!

****JULY 6-13, 2019-The 6th ANNUAL PRAIRIE SERVE** at Sergeant Bluff Friendship Community Church (Heartland Classis) with Pastor Scott Van Voorst. During this week we worked at three job sites: 1. The Siouxland Unity Lao CRC in Sioux City (Pastor Keo-Heartland/Iakota Classis). We taught VBS in the morning & did odd jobs for the church during the afternoon. 2. The Winnebago Reformed Church...we worked for Pastor Lowell Ten Kley...we did a variety of jobs. 3. The Gospel Mission in Sioux City-we worked in the thrift store & did yard work. In the evenings we spent our Worship & free time at Sergeant Bluff Friendship Community Church. We also helped with a neighborhood picnic & carnival at Friendship Church. Our 2 days away was a pilgrimage of Native History through Spirit Mound, Rosebud, Pine Ridge, St Francis Mission, Wounded Knee, the Badlands, & we ended up at Wall Drug. The evening away was spent at Lakeview CRC in Valentine, NE with Pastor Mark Langenbach (Iakota Classis). The congregation served us a potluck meal. We concluded our night at Lakeview with worship, singing on the front steps of the church, star glazing on their gravel road up front, & getting some much needed sleep. Thank you to both Friendship & Lakeview for being our home away from home again this year.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

****AUGUST 19 (NOON) LEADER NETWORKING MEETING:** Sx Falls Inca Mexican Restaurant.

****AUGUST 19 (6:30PM) LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING:** Luverne Pizza Ranch.

****AUGUST 20 (Noon) LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING:** Sx Center Casey's Bakery.

****AUGUST 20 (6:30PM) LEADERS NETWORKING MEETING:** Sheldon Pizza Ranch.

****SEPTEMBER 21-THE NATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEER TRAINING** in GOOD NEWS REFORMED CHURCH of Sioux Falls, SD from Approx 9-1130am. For more details go to <https://trainmyvolunteers.com/>.

****OCTOBER 25-26, 2019-LEADERS' RETREAT AT INSPIRATION HILLS.**

****APRIL 3-5, 2020-10TH ANNUAL JR HIGH RETREAT AT INSPIRATION HILLS.** More information at the Spring Classis meeting.

"Christ Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, by the Glory of God Alone!"
Thank you for your prayers & financial support!

~ Alethea "Lee" De Groot-Ministry Coordinator & Faith Formations Champion

lakota Fall Safe Church Report

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

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).

Safe Church Classis 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 lakota with regard to abuse awareness and prevention.

Team Formation & Discussion:

Tara Boer accepted the position as lakota & Heartland safe church coordinator in January of 2019. In March, Pastor John Gorter of New Holland CRC and Heidi Mulder from Bethel CRC were added to the lakota team. In June, Pastor Jesse Walhof of Living Springs Church and Del Walinga were added to represent the Heartland classis.

On May 30, 2019, John, Heidi, and Tara participated in a video meeting with over-all safe church coordinator, Bonnie Nicholas, to discuss plan and focus of the team as well as over-all goals and tasks of the team.

The Heartland & lakota team members participated in a face to face meeting on July 18, 2019. Pastor John was unable to attend due to helping a family through a loss. All other team members attended and discussed the role of team, short and long-term tasks for the team, and recommendations for upcoming classis meetings.

Discussion during initial meeting:

1. Churches who want to improve environmental safety for their churches should be advised to start a separate team to address training for intruders, gun safety etc. The current structure and tasks of the safe church teams appears to be oriented around servicing children and families in abuse and family violence situations. If this structure changes we will inform churches of safe church team's capacity to serve congregations in these situations as well.
2. Each church in the classis will be assigned team member(s) to offer support for safe church policies and procedures. These team members will also serve as a voice for the represented churches in the classis safe church team meetings. Lakota and Heartland team members will be contacting church leaders and identified safe church representatives in the month(s) following the fall 2019 classis meeting.
3. **Abuse awareness Sunday is coming September 22.** We would like all churches to acknowledge this and take steps to inform their congregations of resources available to them within and outside the church to assist them if experiencing abuse or violence. Churches should have received an email from Tara with further information about this.
4. Training topics have not yet been identified or thoroughly discussed but Tara Boer is willing to offer training for churches and the classis to support their needs as they develop. This will be developed at our next team meeting.

Recommendations for Churches from the Classical Safe Church Team:

Currently all of Lakota churches have a safe church policy however only five of these churches have a safe church team to review, support, and update these policies. The Lakota and Heartland Safe Church team is recommending that each church have a safe church team consisting of 3-4 total members with one member being identified as the leader. Churches are also asked to review and/or update their policies and consult with the classical safe church committee if needed.

Safe Church Committee Responses:

Tara was contacted once during the summer from a local church to ask about policies and procedures that protect youth while attending off campus and service activities. The requestor was given resources from the safe church website and informed of general supervision practices that keep children/teens safe.

Long term goals for Lakota and Heartland Churches:

- All churches have a safe church team and updated safe church policies.
- Churches and church leaders are trained in abuse prevention and response.
- Churches feel equipped to implement the Circle of Grace curriculum in their church.

Hand-outs provided at classis meeting:

Safe Church Brochure
Ten Ways to Make your Church a Safer Church
Why Policy

Report of Synod 2019 to Classis lakota

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend Synod 2019 this past June in Grand Rapids. Attending these meetings helps me appreciate the work God is doing through the Christian Reformed Church, whether it's in North America or around the world. We are a small denomination, but I think the many good things God is accomplishing through us are disproportionate to our size!

If you haven't already, there are several ways you can catch up with the proceedings of Synod 2019. On the Synod Resources webpage (crcna.org/resources/synod-resources) you will find the complete *Acts of Synod* as well as a thorough 6-page summary. I also highly recommend the July-August issue of *The Banner* with its good reporting and photography covering the proceedings.

The following are several specific items that directly affect Classis lakota:

- Major changes are coming to denominational Ministry Shares. Instead of the Council of Delegates (COD) setting Ministry Shares and requesting those funds from the churches, the local church will lead by setting its Ministry Share pledge from which the COD and boards will set their budgets. Classes will encourage and hold accountable churches in their giving. Even with this significant change, Ministry Shares will remain the most cost effective and efficient way for churches to directly support the ministry of the denomination. For more details, please see the Synod Resources webpage for "Reimagining Ministry Shares."
- To assist congregations in nurturing discipleship opportunities in our churches and homes, classes are asked to appoint a volunteer youth ministry champion to partner in faith formation.
- Classis lakota submitted an overture asking synod to examine how we can better support our mission partners as classes and congregations. Both synod and Zachary King, Director of Resonate Global Mission, "commend[ed] Classis lakota for its sensitivity and concern for our Resonate Global Mission missionaries." Resonate Global Mission endorsed the recommendation from the Advisory Committee that "encourage[d] classes to take a larger, more proactive role in supporting new and current missionaries, particularly missionaries who do not have significant long-term connections to individual congregations in the CRCNA." Synod adopted this recommendation which we trust adequately addresses our concerns for providing support for our mission partners.
- Classis lakota also submitted an overture about a recommendation presented by the Synod Review Task Force that would require each classis to include at least one woman or one ethnic minority person in its delegation to synod. We asked synod not to make this a requirement. The delegates chose to replace the word *require* with *recommend* (which, for the record, is a little stronger than the current language that encourages classes to do this).
- Also from the Synod Review Task Force, classes are now encouraged to send a delegate to synod for two consecutive years, if possible, to build continuity from synod to synod. (This year, synod looked at the interim report from the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality; for continuity, Classis lakota may wish to send one of the four delegates who attended this year to Synod 2021 when the final report will be presented.)
- One more thing for us to consider: The Synod Review Task Force encourages classes to provide remuneration to delegates who are financially disadvantaged by attending synod.
- The *Acts of Synod* states "that synod not sustain the personal appeal of Ms. Judy De Wit from a decision of Classis lakota on March 5, 2019." In other words, synod discerned that the decision made by Classis lakota was appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,
Stanley J. Groothof

Fall Classis Report: Resonate Global Mission-Central US

As the fall season approaches, I am grateful to see a number of new church developments emerging throughout the region. Sioux Falls, Chamberlain in SD, Marshall MN, in west Central MN and the Twin Cities, to the greater Chicagoland area, new ministries are reaching people or preparing to do so. In Kansas City and other areas of IA, new initiatives by mission-minded congregations are doing new things to raise up leaders, connect to others, and serve their communities innovatively. The regional team of Central US stands ready to assist in ways that prove helpful to all of these God-led directions.

Someone has suggested that reports to Classis should have benefit to the recipients rather than the sender, which makes a lot of sense to me. So for the rest of this report, let's talk about change and flexibility.

Here is a self-test: how ready is your church for change and flexibility?
(score 5 points if this is an accurate picture of us; 1 point for this isn't us at all and any number in between that best describes your congregation)

*We actively encourage multiple people to share their thoughts and ideas, even if they go against the views of the majority of the congregation.

*We actively listen to a variety of voices before making decisions, particularly voices that are often overlooked (due to age, lack of involvement, ethnicity, gender, etc.).

*We actively listen to the Spirit in order to discern where God is moving in the congregation and the community.

* We are able to be non-anxious in times of anxiety brought on by change or loss.

*We have examples of making mid-course corrections during times of transition or change in order to refocus on the vision and the goal.

*We actively promote and encourage vision -based innovation.

*We have examples of programs that have ended because they did not produce the same results anymore.

*We are comfortable with a slow, but intentional, pace of growth and change (recognizing that problems are not fixed overnight)

*We are comfortable with not knowing the answers, and that there might not be "right answers" to the problems we are facing.

Acts 16:6-10 English Standard Version (ESV)

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

How do you get it to be more so?

Cary Nieuhof wrote a blog entitled 11 Traits of Churches That Will Impact the Future. Trait #9 is a high value on experimentation. He writes that the more traditional you are, the less you will value experimentation. If you begin to raise the value of experimentation, you will accelerate change and flexibility. The church that connects with their community will be the church willing enough to try a variety of things, and who also have the courage to end them as soon as they stop producing the intended result.

Action/Reflection/Learning cycle:

Action:

An experiment that fits the characteristics (challenge: focus more on relationship building rather than an event or program for long lasting, deeply rooted change)

A good experiment...

- Addresses an adaptive challenge
- Occurs over a short period of time
- Is simple and requires few resources
- Recognizes a small amount of risk
- Is creative
- Is measurable to allow for reflective

Reflection questions:

-What did we do?

-What went well?

-What would we change or do differently next time?

-What stories can we share?

Learning:

What can we learn from this?

What are we learning about leading a shared journey of discerning what the Spirit is doing ahead of us in our neighborhoods and communities so we can join God there?

(Go Local guiding question)

Go Local is a process using these principles and places churches into learning groups together for shared experiences. We are better together than alone. If you are interested in Go Local, please contact either Peter Kelder or Ruth Kelder (pkelder@crcna.org; rkelder@crcna.org)