

Classis Central Plains

Agenda

Grace Fellowship Pella

Friday, September 24, 2021 – 7:00PM

Saturday, September 25, 2021 – 8:00AM

Chair: Rev. Chris Allen

Vice Chair: Rev. Mark Jicinsky

Friday Evening Session – (7PM)

1. Opening Devotions
2. Roll Call/Constituting Classis
3. New Business
 - a. Art. 23 approval of Commissioned Pastor Position (p. 2-3)
 - b. Examination of Mr. Dan Van Kooten as Commissioned Pastor (p. 3 and attached materials)
4. Speaker
 - a. Rev. Todd Zuidema – Dordt University
5. Closing Prayer

Saturday Session – (8AM)

1. Opening Devotions
2. Reports
 - a. Classical committees
 - i. Classical Leadership Team (Interim Committee) (p. 3)
 - ii. Classical Missions Committee (p. 3-5)
 - iii. Classical Ministry Leadership Team (Student Fund)
 - iv. Nominating Committee (p. 6)
 - b. Classical Functionaries
 - i. Stated Clerk (p. 6)
 1. Demonstration of new Classis Database via Office 365
 - ii. Treasurer/Financial Committee
 1. Classis Financial Report (p. 7-8)
 2. Classis 2022-23 Budget Proposal (p. 9)
 - iii. Mentors
 1. Rev. Sheldon Starkenburg for Rev. Aaron Gunsaulus
 - iv. Church visitors
 1. Report for Prairie City CRC (p. 10)
 - v. Church Counselors
 1. Rev. George Den Oudsten for Faith CRC
 2. Rev. Jonathan Spronk for Leighton CRC and Tracy CRC
 - vi. Regional Pastors
 - c. Denominational Boards
 - i. Calvin Seminary Board – Rev. Robert Drenten (p. 11-12)

3. Communications from Churches
 - a. Prayer and Praise from Classis Churches (see attached document)
4. Speakers
 - a. Mr. Jeff Bolt - Director of Advancement CRCNA
 - b. Rev. Robert Drenten – Calvin Seminary Board
 - c. Ms. Carol Van Klompenburg – World Renew
 - d. Mr. Tyler Helfers – Areopagus Campus Ministry
5. Next Regular Meeting of Classis: Saturday, Feb. 26th 2022
6. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Rev. Jonathan Spronk

Stated Clerk – Classis Central Plains

Article 23 Approval of Commissioned Pastor Position

Calvary CRC has called Mr. Dan Van Kooten as a Commissioned Pastor to serve as a Chaplain for Vermeer Industries. Below is the appropriate Church Order information:

From Church Order Supplement, Article 23-a:

The office of commissioned pastor is applicable to a variety of ministries, provided that these ministries fit the following guidelines adopted by Synod 2001:

The office of evangelist[] may be understood to have the character of pastoral extension. Evangelists extend the work of pastoral leadership by founding and working in new congregations and by extending the ministry of organized congregations into specialized areas, including, but not limited to, youth ministry, education, pastoral care, worship, and evangelism. . . . By the broader application of the office of evangelist, with its existing regulations, to a variety of ministry positions, the church avoids the multiplication of offices and provides a way of recognizing and regulating a variety of pastoral positions in our churches. These positions may be identified by titles that indicate their ministry distinctiveness such as chaplain, pastor of education, pastor of youth, minister of congregational life, and so forth.*

(Acts of Synod 2001, p. 506)

[*Note: In 2001 the office was known as evangelist. The title was changed to ministry associate by Synod 2003 and to commissioned pastor by Synod 2012.]

All commissioned pastor positions must be approved by classis, with the concurrence of synodical deputies, to determine whether or not the position fits these guidelines adopted by Synod 2001. All commissioned pastors must demonstrate through an examination their ability to function in the ministry to which they are being called.

Examinations for the office of commissioned pastor must follow the guidelines established by synod as described and recorded in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.

The classis and deputies need to answer the following kind of question: Does this person need to be ordained as a commissioned pastor for this position? *or* Why does this person need to be ordained

as a commissioned pastor for this position? To that end, a job description of the position from Vermeer is included with the Classis Agenda along with documents give Dan's background and desire for ministry (see attachment of files related to Dan Van Kooten). Furthermore, the Synodical Deputies will ask about a learning plan. Calvary has inquired of the Candidacy Committee and given Dan's background, education, and experience in the CRC, a further learning plan is not being ask of by the Candidacy Committee.

Once again, the first action of Classis will be for the approval of the position for a Commissioned Pastor with the concurrence of Synodical Deputies.

Examination of Mr. Dan Van Kooten as Commissioned Pastor

After the Commissioned Pastor Position has been approved, Classis can examine Mr. Dan Van Kooten. Classis Leadership Committee has approved the following examiners for Dan:

Practica: Rev. Gary Brouwers
Sermon Evaluators: Rev. Will Verhoef and Mr. Greg Westra
Biblical/Theological: Rev. George Den Oudsten

Classis Reports

Classis Leadership Team (Classis Interim Committee)

Classis Leadership team met on June 28th to plan the upcoming Classis meeting. In response to the actions of the Spring 2021 Classis meeting, an ad hoc committee was created with Aaron Gunsaulus as chair to work with Peoria CRC and the Office of Social Justice to report at future Classis meetings. The upcoming examination of Dan Van Kooten was discussed. An additional CLT meeting will take place before the fall meeting of Classis.

Rev. Jon Spronk
Stated Clerk

Classis Missions Committee

August 26, 2021, 8:00 9m Zoom meeting

Russ Marcus (2021), Tim Franje (2021-2nd term), George Den Oudsten-chair (2022-2nd term) were present.

Doug Van Der Pol (2023-2nd term) was absent and Chris Allen-secretary (2022) was absent with notice

Russ agreed to take minutes in Chris's absence

1. Scripture and Prayer—George Den Oudsten opened the meeting with 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 followed by prayer for the meeting.
2. New Members – Tim will be going off after completing his 2nd term. We thank Tim for his service. Russ is willing to serve a second term. This leaves two vacancies on the committee which will be referred to the Classis nominating committee.

We wish to let the nominating committee know that Doug Van Der Pol has asked to be taken off the Mission Committee. He has two years left on his second term.

3. Budget requests: Areopagus Campus Ministry, Geneva Campus Ministry, and New Life Prison Church

Each of the ministries was discussed briefly. One of the common challenges they are all experiencing is donations from individual donors has been down.

Areopagus Campus Ministry

Asking for \$10,500

Geneva Campus Ministry

We request a continuation of your **annual contribution of \$22,000** from your Classis towards our mission work. We understand that all our financial situations are very uncertain. Last year we cut over 11% from our budget and experienced a significant decline in individual giving. We have kept our budget level this year. If you can increase your giving, that would be greatly appreciated.

See supporting materials included with agenda.

New Life Prison Church

\$15,000

4. Proposed Budget

The proposed budget was reviewed as follows;

Geneva Campus Ministries \$22,000

Areopagus Ministries \$10,500

New Life Prison Church \$15,000

Church Plant Fund \$9,000

Church Development Grant Fund \$2000

Committee Expenses \$200

Total \$58,700

A motion was made to reduce the church plant fund down to \$4500 for one year only and then spread the remaining \$4500 evenly between the Geneva, Areopagus and New Life Ministries. This was proposed to help fill some of the gap from lower individual donor giving. The motion was supported and approved.

The new proposed budget as approved would be;

Geneva Campus Ministries \$23,500
Areopagus Ministries \$12,000
New Life Prison Church \$16,500
Church Plant Fund \$4,500
Church Development Grant Fund \$2000
Committee Expenses \$200
Total \$58,700

Since the Church Development Grant money was not used last year, if this money can be retained, then the budget request could be reduced by \$2000 making the total \$56,700.

The mission committee is requesting clarification from the Classis Finance committee on whether the \$2000 is retained from the previous year or forfeited.

5. Church Development Grant Fund.

It was noted that we did not have any requests this past year for funds from the Church Development Grant fund. Russ proposed that we send a note to the church councils quarterly to remind them of the funds available. George also plans to highlight at future Classis meetings.

6. Mission committee purpose:

One of the items we have been wrestling with as a committee is how we can best fulfill our mandate, which is laid out in Church Order article 75. Recently article 75 was changed and no longer says "each classis shall have a classical home missions committee."

Church Order Article 75 (2019)

a. The classes shall implement a ministry plan that advances evangelistic and diaconal witness to Christ and his kingdom in its specific region and, when necessary, assist those churches needing support to fulfill their mission.

The Classis Missions committee is requesting direction from the Classis Interim Committee (CIC) concerning the purpose of the Missions Committee.

7. Round table

No additional items were discussed.

8. Next meeting: The next meeting was left as TBD until after discussions and direction from the CIC as to the purpose of the Missions Committee beyond recommending and approving the annual ministry budgets.

9. Motion to adjourn

A motion was made and supported to adjourn. The motion passed.

10. Prayer: Tim Franje closed the meeting in prayer.

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee will be presenting a slate of nominees for a variety of positions at the Classis meeting. We remind delegates that will need to nominate and approve a new Classis representative to the CRC Council of Delegates.

On behalf of the nominating committee
Jon Spronk, Stated Clerk

Stated Clerk Report

This past summer, the Classis ended its file database subscription to Exavault as the pricing plans for the service were going to increase greatly. Thanks to Crossroads Fellowship, the Classis will now be hosting our documents via the Crossroads Fellowship. Rodney Spoelstra from Crossroads will be demonstrating at the Classis meeting how to access this database. Additionally, further materials will be sent out to the churches, church offices and pastors to show how to log-in to our new accounts.

Moreover, I have been invited to attend a Stated Clerks gathering that the denomination is sponsoring in California on January 5-7, 2022. I am requesting that Classis contribute \$500 so that I can participate in this training event.

Jon Spronk, Stated Clerk

Treasurer Report

Classis Financial Report		
March 1 - August 31, 2021		
Balance March 1, 2021		\$132,579.58
Receipts:	Ministry shares	\$83,885.58
	Interest	\$63.48
Disbursements:		
<u>Student Fund</u>		
	Rose Admiral - tuition	\$3,800.00
<u>Classis Expense Fund</u>		
	Classis meal	\$1,297.56
	Exavault	\$24.23
	Clerk fee	\$1,500.00
	Treasurer fee	\$1,500.00
<u>New Church Plant Fund</u>		
<u>Classis Home Mission Fund</u>		
	Geneva	\$11,000.00
	Areopagus	\$5,250.00
	New Life	\$8,000.00
<u>Safe Church Team</u>		
	<u>Dordt University</u>	\$40,075.00
<u>Classis Diaconal Committee</u>		
Total disbursements		\$72,446.79
Designated fund balance - Student fund		\$5,000.00
	- New Church Plant fund	\$24,500.00
Undesignated Fund Balance August 31, 2021		\$114,581.85

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Classis Ministry Shares
 Individual Church Shares & Remittances
 March 1, 2021 - February 27, 2022

	Classis Ministry <u>Shares</u>	Pledged Ministry <u>Shares</u>	Paid <u>To Date</u>	2020 <u>% Paid</u>
Cedar	2958.00	1450.00		0.00%
Peace	11934.00	3929.00	1964.50	50.00%
Leighton	4284.00		1658.50	0.00%
Newton	10914.00	1600.00	800.00	50.00%
North Liberty	5100.00	1500.00		0.00%
Bethel	10404.00	4000.00	4000.00	100.00%
First - Osky	29784.00	27000.00	13500.00	50.00%
Calvary	35394.00	21452.00	10726.00	50.00%
Faith	25908.00	25908.00	12381.50	47.79%
Connect	10710.00	5000.00	1250.00	25.00%
Grace	3876.00	6750.00	3937.50	58.33%
Cornerstone	17544.00	8520.00	4260.00	50.00%
Peoria	14122.00	14122.00	7061.00	50.00%
Prairie City	9792.00	1500.00		0.00%
Trinity - St. L	6732.00	1000.00	1000.00	100.00%
Sully	27336.00	24000.00	15762.50	65.68%
Tracy	4488.00	4000.00		0.00%
Crossroads	15096.00	9736.00	5584.08	57.35%
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Total				
	246376.00	161467.00	83885.58	51.95%

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Classis Central Plains
 Budget Proposal
 2022-2023

	Actual	Requested	Pledged
	21-22	22-23	22-23
Student Fund			
Total	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Missions Committee			
Committee Expense	\$200	\$200	
Geneva Campus Ministries	\$22,000	\$23,500	
Areopagus Ministries	\$10,500	\$12,000	
New Life Prison	\$16,000	\$16,500	
Total	\$48,700	\$52,200	
Dordt University	\$80,150	\$165,380	
Church Development Grant	\$2,000	\$2,000	
New Church Plant	\$9,000	\$4,500	
Classis Expense			
Travel Expense	\$2,500	\$2,500	
Classis Meals	\$750	\$750	
Printing, Postage	\$50	\$50	
Treasurer Bond	\$100	\$100	
Conferences	\$1,750	\$1,750	
Clerk	\$3,000	\$3,000	
Treasurer	\$3,000	\$3,000	
Total	\$11,150	\$11,150	
Total	\$161,000	\$245,230	
Total active professing members		2445	
Ministry shares per member		\$100.30	

Church Visit Report

Church Visitor Report (Team 2) Prairie City CRC; Prairie City, IA

On April 12, 2021, I met with the Council of Prairie City CRC. As we began, I briefly mentioned the denominational shift in emphasis toward fruitfulness when it comes to Church Visiting. We discussed the general health of the church and talked at length about the challenges and opportunities that the last year and the COVID-19 situation presented. Many of the challenges PCCRC faced were those that have been common to all churches over the last year, as they navigated the pandemic. One in particular that was mentioned was the challenge of the limitations associated with special services such as funerals (which very few people could attend), and the lack of personal contact with grieving families. But throughout the pandemic, the Council has remained united, the congregation has remained supportive, and the Lord has carried them through the turbulence.

What was exciting to hear is how many opportunities God gave them along the way. Like many churches, PCCRC held outdoor services until the weather prevented it. This enabled them to reach and interact with members of their community in a way that indoor services do not. It was mentioned that the community got to see the church being the church in a tangible way. Additionally, the Council received very positive feedback about the outdoor services from church members.

Some other highlights throughout the year include 1) a tremendous response to their Christian Ministry Center (CMC) fundraiser. The CMC houses and hosts many of the groups, events, and ministries of PCCRC; 2) most of the ministries of PCCRC were able to continue throughout the year, with some adjustments. Like the Sunday services, other ministries took advantage of meeting outside, and one person even joined GEMS, largely due to the more public and visible meetings; 3) The church building was also able to be used as a meeting place for social workers and their clients, providing opportunities for the church to be seen as a place of refuge for those who might not otherwise visit a church.

The Council expressed an eagerness to return more fully to a “normal” situation, particularly as this pertains to its fall programs, and resuming coffee times and potlucks, but it was clear that PCCRC has continued to be blessed and used by God throughout the pandemic.

We closed with a reading of John 15:1-8 (the call to remain in Christ and bear much fruit) and prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Aaron Gunsaulus

Denominational Boards

Calvin Theological Seminary

Report for Classis – Fall 2021

Region 8 Trustee – Rev. Robert Drenten

Noteworthy items from the Board of Trustees meeting of May 20-21, 2021:

Facility Remodel and Expansion – Calvin Theological Seminary broke ground on a new addition to the building. An extensive upgrade is underway on the facilities to upgrade classrooms; to improve spaces for students, faculty, and staff; and to enhance the hospitality of the building and grounds. The project also addresses some maintenance issues.

Students and Academic Programs – The student body represents a diversity of nations. CTS anticipates welcoming a student from Cuba this year. We thank God for the international impact CTS is making. We are also thankful for the experience interaction provides students during their years at CTS.

52 graduated from CTS in May 2021 with degrees ranging from certificate-level to masters and doctorate degrees. This included 22 Master of Divinity graduates. M.Div. graduates often seek candidacy for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

CTS sees three trends in enrollment which may be related. First, CTS is receiving a declining number of applicants for the M.Div. program. Second, students preparing for ministry increasingly pursue a more narrowly-focused Master of Arts degree. Third, applicants increasingly seek out distance learning options. These trends hold true for applicants to most seminaries across North America. Applicants tend to be older, less free to commit to in-resident education, and interested in accessible tools for ministry.

CTS is in a strong position to adapt to the context of these trends. The Lord has blessed CTS with a heritage of quality education and with financial health. The Lilly Foundation has awarded a \$50,000 grant for a CTS initiative, “Pathways to Tomorrow,” which will explore ways to realign its programs in the future.

Staff and Faculty – The board approved 3-year reappointments to Jeff Sajdak as Dean of Students, and to Sarah Chun as Dean of International Students & Scholar Services.

CTS has begun a search for faculty positions in Old Testament, History of Christianity, Philosophical Theology, and Preaching. Be in prayer that the Lord provides professors for these positions. Be in prayer also that the Lord will use new faculty members to continue to give shape to the vision and life of CTS.

Calvin Prison Initiative – CTS continues to provide help and resources to give prisoners training in ministry leadership at the Handlon Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan.

Resources – Please take advantage of *Forum*, a resource published quarterly by CTS and sent to Christian Reformed churches. *Forum* provides helpful study material for church councils and members.

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Also, please explore the resources available through the Calvin Theological Seminary website -- <http://calvinseminary.edu/> . The site offers a number of tools for preaching, worship, and ministry leadership.

Finally, encourage those around you who you notice may have gifts for ministry to explore the Lord's calling in their lives, and to consider Calvin Theological Seminary as a key part of their preparation.