

Committee Reports to Holland Classis -September 2017

I. Executive Committee. Met on September 5, 2017.

A. Officer Reports

i. Treasurer's Report (Marylynn):

- a) Budget year-to-date. All assessments paid in full. All committees are within budget or close. Our finance report shows a negative balance because of General Synod assessment payment that is required in August.
- b) Bethel Fund is in good shape at this time. Our investments keep growing.
- c) Hiawatha Property special assessment payment. Ottawa County assessed the property \$5580 as part of the area drain work that will be done in the township. Action> We will pay the bill in full with the Hiawatha property funds, rather than finance it. Approved.

ii. Coordinator/Stated Clerk (Larry):

- a) Approval for Executive committee minutes: May 2. Approved.
- b) Approval of Stated Session: May 23. Approved, (Consent Agenda)
- c) Approval of Special Sessions: May 7 and May 21. Approved, (Consent Agenda)
- d) Hiawatha property improvements are being completed using church volunteer labor and Hiawatha property funds. Action> CSS is directed to discuss a land contract with the Harbor Lights Church to enable the Harbor Lights Church to purchase the property.
- e) R-17-56 Classis event needs to be scheduled -- this fall. Information will become available later this month. Coordinator will work with the President to schedule a conversation event likely in November.
- f) The 2 stained-glass windows left from Crossroads Church have been donated to the Hermitage in Three Rivers where they will be integrated into their facility. Curt Bush had been storing these windows for years and it was necessary to have them find a new home.
- g) The Board of Benevolence at Hope College has been disbanded. Our two appointed reps have been thanked for their service. The funds will continue to be disbursed through the Religion Department and Chaplain's Office.
- h) John Messer the new Great Lakes Synod Executive Minister has been invited to our Sept Session.

iii. President's Report (Norm):

- a) A handout from the Design team's work for job description and classis structure was discussed and various observations were noted.
- b) A revised version of this document will be used at the September Session for discussion by the body gathered. The president wants this matter to be place early on the agenda.

iv. Coordinator for Multi-Cultural Ministries (Angel): written report shared.

- a) Angel is working with seminary students. Latino Seminary fund is proving helpful. Action>He can use the classis meeting to ask for support.
- b) Angel is working with immigration issues. A pool of drivers has been created for the trips to Detroit.
- c) Angel has visited several persons in jail and at court hearings.

B. Committee Reports. Each committee reported on their work. Their reports are below.

II. Church Multiplication Team

- A. Sharon Knibbe is serving as chair while Toby Gruppen is on Sabbatical.
- B. In June the Church Multiplication Team had the privilege of learning from Doug McClintic, Church Multiplication Consultant - Great Lakes Region, the overall picture and vision of church planting in the RCA. Doug is instrumental in helping Classes and churches consider church planting. The Luminex tool (luminexusa.org) helps assess the potential of a person for church planting. Doug is active in the assessment process for potential church planters.
- C. In the August the Classis Executive Leader from RCA Zeeland Classis, Rev. Dan Ackerman, gave an update on the group effort of Zeeland and Holland, RCA and CRC, church-planting efforts. The four Classes will continue to work collaboratively in the area of Holland and Zeeland. Currently there is activity and interest in the Fennville/Pullman area.
- D. The CMT of Holland Classis is currently supporting the Missional Church Plant of The Church of Benjamin's Hope. We are also providing financial support for a training in church fundraising for Latino church planters. Angel Lopez and Eddy Aleman are organizing this training.
- E. We are anticipating a New Church Plan from Ben Aguilera to begin financial support in 2018. This support is contingent on approval of the New Church Plan.
- F. We look forward to hosting Eddy Aleman, director of strategic leadership development and coordinator of Hispanic ministries, in September to learn more about the national vision of the Hispanic Council of the RCA.

III. Church Support & Supervision Committee

- A. Jeanette Beagley-Koolhaas serves as chair.
- B. From the June 15 meeting
 - i. Church updates
 - a) Fellowship Church. CSS approved the dissolution of the Pastor relationship between the church and Rev. Brian Keepers. CSS approved the appointment of Rev. Jon Brown as classis supervisor.
 - b) Hope Church. CSS approved the two-year contract with Rev. Beth Carroll.
 - c) Intersection Ministries. CSS approved a part-time contract with Rev. Amy Klanderma. Amy will be received into our classis at our September meeting.
 - d) Calvary Church. CSS encourages the church to move forward with ordination for Mike Lamson in his ministry position.
 - ii. Review of Consistorial Reports. We learned that the CRF office can assist collating these reports.
 - iii. Classis Coordinator sought CSS advice on an issue of confidentiality.
 - iv. CSS will create a Resource Library for Church Positions. We are seeing different roles evolving and believe it would be helpful to all churches if they too could see what others are doing.
 - v. Consistory Training Session/ Workshop. CSS team will explore this idea this summer.
 - vi. CSS submitted its budget request for 2018 to the SF committee. We increased the church

assistance for 2018 in order to be open to additional requests for support from our churches. We decreased the revitalization fund so as not to increase overall assessment request.

- vii. Churches prayer requests. a) Many VBS experiences are happening in churches with good response from non-churched. We give thanks. b) Refugee settlement in our area continues as a work of love and faith commitment. We offer our prayers of support. c) We haven't heard much fallout from the General Synod meeting.
 - ix. CSS accepted Dewey Thompson's resignation with regrets from the committee caused by his new work schedule. We wish him blessings and thank him for his service.
- C. From our August 21 meeting:
- i. Conversation with Jonathan Brownson Re: proposals to change Contract and add Ben Aguilera part-time.
 - a) Jonathan said thank you (on behalf of the church) for the support given to the church over the years.
 - b) The church is celebrating Brownson's 10 years of ministry at NC4.
 - c) Jonathan has volunteered ¼ of his time to General Synod and is seeking permission/approval to forego that time and compensation with NC4.
 - d) **M/S** to affirm Jonathan's plan to reduce salary and time at NC4 for six months (through Feb 28). (Motion tabled until Jonathan exits.) **APPROVED**
 - e) Rev. Ben Aguilera, a neighbor to the church, is willing to fill in that ¼ time.
 - f) **M/S** to approve the contract New Community/Fourth is offering to Ben for these six months (end Feb. 28, 2018).
 - g) We want the congregation to evaluate this dual relationship in 3 months and all of us (church and classis) to evaluate at the end of the six months, especially if the contract is continued.
 - ii. Maplewood Church request:
 - a) Maplewood send a very nice note thanking the classis for support through its commitment to the Ridder Renewal Initiative. Now the last payment is due. CSS had already approved a grant to the church. We asked our treasurer to issue payment.
 - iii. Church Updates.
 - a) Fellowship> Jon Brown, Classis Supervisor, reports that the Church has chosen to not employ an interim minister during this pastoral vacancy. They believe they have the personnel and aptitude to proceed.
 - b) Calvary Church and Mike Lamson contract. **M/S/C** We approved the contract with its waivers. Glad that Mike is eligible for ordination.
 - c) Beechwood Church. We received word that a new staff person will be joining their team. We will get more information in the future.
 - iv. Report on the Position Description Resource Library Project. The team presented initial layout for a resource library to be housed on the Classis website. We will continue to ask churches to contribute more position descriptions. Descriptions may contain the name of the church, but not the name of the holder of the position nor any financial information. We are also open to churches outside of our classis submitting position descriptions.
 - v. Report on the Consistory Workshop Project. We will plan for this event to happen in January/February.

IV. Commissioned Pastor Support & Supervision Committee

- A. Jeff Elzinga serves as chair. This team met on September 12.
- B. The team met with representatives from the Church Leadership Center to learn about the recent reorganization.
- C. The team reviewed the candidates under care with their mentors and classis reps.
- D. The team wants to review what they want the Holland Classis Commissioned Pastor program to accomplish in the training and expectation of our candidates.

V. Minister Support & Supervision Committee

- A. David Blauw serves as chair.
- B. From our May 30 meeting.
 - i. Ordination Applications.
 - a) Kristen Meyer. Kristen is seeking re-ordination. She demitted from ministry through our classis in 2012 when she lived in Nashville TN. She with her family now live in Grand Rapids. She will start a chaplain internship in Grand Rapids (we have received the contract.) We said at the time of the demission, that the classis would gladly re-ordain her when a ministry opportunity arose. That time has come. We will likely transfer her membership to the North GR Classis after ordination. Action> Ordination request Approved.
 - ii. Mentoring and Networks in our Classis.
Action> We will seek to start an Associate's group with the start of the fall season. Aaron and Larry assigned to this responsibility. We will seek to start a chaplains' group also, with David Blauw's assistance.
 - iii. Budget request for 2018. Action> Request \$1600.00 for 2018.
 - iv. Discussion about Larry Schuyler impending retirement and classis transition. It has been announced that Marylynn and Larry are ready to move toward retirement and they have invited the classis to launch a transition plan and secure new leadership. When the classis is ready in 2018, Larry and Marylynn will step aside from their positions.
 - v. Prayer time: Mary Wisner. Mike VanDoornik. Fellowship's transition. David Blauw's niece's family. David's son's wedding.
- C. From our June 27 Meeting.
 - i. We enjoyed a conversation with Amy Klanderman, who is being ordained Saturday July 1 and will be serving at the Intersection Ministries. Amy is requesting membership in the Holland Classis and commissioning to her position at Intersection Ministries. Action> We decided that it would work best if we commissioned her on Saturday to her role at intersection and formally received her into Classis membership later (i.e. Sept Session). Action> We approved her contract at Intersection Ministries and receive her into the Holland Classis.
 - ii. Change in Minister Status.
 - a) Dawn Boelkins. Dawn requests to be designated as "Retired." She has concluded her position at Western Seminary. Action> Approved. We praise God for her years of service. **Recommendation:** Declare Dawn Boelkins retired. (Consent Agenda)
 - b) Brian Keepers. We approved the transfer to East Sioux Classis as minister in good and regular standing. Action> Approved.
 - c) Robert Sackett has been transferred to the City Classis earlier this month as a minister in good and regular standing.

- d) Stephanie Croom has been transferred to the Presbytery in Charlotte NC, as a minister in good and regular standing.
 - iii. Ordination Applications.
 - a) Noah McClaren. Noah has received a Call/Contract from the Graafschap Christian Reformed Church to serve as Pastor for Worship Ministries. The Call meets our Compensation Guidelines and standards. Action> We approve the Ordination. We ask the Classis president to approve the date when a specific date is requested. (January 14 date is reserved)
 - b) Marcy Rudins. The Montgomery Classis chose to not accept Marcy's transfer as a Licensed Candidate. They did not want to ordain her because she didn't have a "regular" (full-time, long-term) call. We will hold her membership for now. She will likely enter a new position in the fall and we will consider ordination at that time.
 - iv. Prayer time: Sharon Van Gelderen health issues. Beth Smith health issues. Following silent prayer, David closed our prayer time.
- D. From our August 21 meeting:
- i. Change in Minister Status.
 - a) Ben Aguilera has been recognized as a new church planter. His status moves to "specialized minister" (from minister-under-contract). This new status enables him to come under the RCA insurance program. Action> Approved.
Ben has also just accepted a part-time position with New Community/Fourth for 10-15 week to assist in the absence of Jonathan Brownson.
 - b) Jean Lemmenes is no longer under contract at Beechwood Church. She is an adjunct professor at Kuyper College. She can be recognized as a specialized minister-education. Action> Approved.
 - c) Transfer of Paige Douglas to the Wisconsin Classis RCA. She has accepted a chaplain position in Appleton WI. Action> We approved her transfer to the WI Classis as a minister in good and regular standing, and wish her well.
 - d) Judy VanDyke has completed a CPE unit and will serve on staff at Pine Rest Care Facility in GR as a Staff Chaplain. Action> Approve status change to specialized minister-chaplain.
 - e) Jim Lankheet. We approved the request for his transfer to the Muskegon Classis as a minister in good and regular standing.
 - f) Case VanKempen has concluded his ministry at Central-Grand Rapids and has taken a position for interim ministry at Bethany-Sheboygan WI
 - ii. Ordination Applications.
 - a) Kristen Meyer. Her re-ordination is postponed until November or later.
 - b) Noah McLaren. We approved his request at our June 27 meeting. Noah originally has asked for a date in September. He has postponed the date to January 2018.
 - c) Mike Lamson. Mike is a Licensed Candidate in our Classis, employed at Calvary Church. Calvary has agreed to recognize him as an ordained minister in their midst and presented him with a contract. CSS has approved the contract. Action> Ordination approved. Date to be determined with Classis president and church. (Sunday October 8).
 - d) Mark Mares is seeking ordination to serve as a pastor with four churches in the Montgomery Classis through an Albany Synod Fellowship assigned to the Montgomery Classis. Action> We approve this request for ordination. Date is Sunday Sept 24 at Maple Avenue. His membership will be transferred to a classis in the Albany Synod.
 - e) Marcy Rudins is seeking ordination to serve as a pastor at the Delmar Reformed Church through an Albany Synod Fellowship. Action> We approve her ordination request and subsequent transfer to the Albany Classis. Date is Sunday October 1 at Maple Avenue.
 - e) Stacey Duensing is seeking ordination to serve as a pastor at the Lynnwood Reformed Church in Schenectady Classis through an Albany Synod Fellowship. Action> We approve her

ordination request. Date is Saturday Sept 30 at Fellowship Church. Reason for Saturday is that family needs to travel from Nebraska. Membership will transfer to Schenectady Classis.

iii. Contracts with Ministers.

We have noticed that several contracts with ministers lately have come with waivers from the Classis Compensation Guidelines. We are wondering if we are seeing a trend? This observation concerns us. We want employed ministers and we want to see standards for employment. These two values are at odds with each other. Action> We recognize the importance of having rules (guidelines) and needing a way to make exceptions to those rules (waivers). We also recognize that when waivers become common, the rule, in essence, is lost. We find ourselves in a dilemma of wanting ministers to be employed and wanting our rules to be honored. We are not sure what the answer is within this pattern, but we want to record our discomfort with this increased pattern of waiver requests. In the waiver approval, we ensure that all sides are aware of the agreement they are making.

iv. Mentoring and Networks in our Classis.

We are anticipating the formation of a new pastor's network.

VI. Nominations Committee

A. This committee doesn't have a designated chair.

B. Committee appointments. Please see the Committee Appointments Report for details about service on classis committees. **Recommendation:** Approve the appointments (Consent Agenda)

C. Delegates to General Synod. The ministers and churches whose turn has come to serve as classis delegates are:

Ministers > David Lantz; Gretchen Tanis; Dewey Thompson; Nick Knebl.

First Alternates are: Jon Brownson, Lindsay Bona, Leigh VanKempen, and Jay Lindell.

Churches sending elder delegates > Maplewood; Beechwood; Rose Park; and Christ Memorial.

See the complete rotation lists for General Synod. These lists are our approved alternate list.

Recommendation: Approve the appointments and alternate list. (Consent Agenda)

D. Delegates to Great Lakes Regional Synod. The ministers and churches whose turn has come to serve as classis delegates are:

Ministers > Celaine Bouma-Prediger, Ken Eriks (2nd year); Dan Gillett, David Lantz (1st year of 2)

Churches > Hope (2nd year); Third, New Community/4th, and Trinity (1st year of 2)

See the complete rotation lists for the Great Lakes Synod. These lists are our approved alternate list.

Recommendation: Approve the appointments and alternate list. (Consent Agenda)

E. Election of the Classis President.

The only nominee is the current Vice President, the Rev. Kate Meyer

F. Nominees for Vice President of Classis. This year we elect an elder as classis vice president.

Nominees are presented at the classis session.

VII. Overtures & Judicial Business. No report.

VIII. Stewardship & Finance Committee

A. Bill Paarlberg serves as the committee chairperson.

B. Propose a 2018 Budget to submit to the Executive Committee.

i. The budget draft was discussed line-by-line.

ii. We discussed the items targeted for Bethel Fund support and why. Action> We agreed with the plan to use Bethel Funds as needed to support our budget.

- iii. The per member assessment from the General Synod increased \$1.52. The Great Lakes Synod increased \$1.00. The proposed budget presents a zero increase in assessments for the Classis. This is possible especially because of a decrease in insurance costs for the Coordinator.
 - iv. We do not know what next year will bring with a forthcoming change of staff. This budget is offered based on what we know if things continued unchanged.
 - v. Our current budget comparison is "On Target" for the year, reports the treasurer.
 - vi. Recommendation to the Executive Committee: Approve this proposal. It is based on zero increase in classis assessments, while honoring the requests from our committees.
- C. Propose a 2018 Minister Compensation Guidelines to the Classis.
- i. The Guidelines from the Great Lakes Synod were reviewed. The guidelines reflect a 2% increase in cash salary over the 2017 guidelines.
 - ii. **Recommendation** to Classis. That classis approve the 2018 Compensation Guidelines. (Consent Agenda)
 - iii. Also, 2018 Staff Compensation guidelines are offered for information. No action needed.
- D. Bethel Fund report. Bill will present information about the Bethel Fund's current standing.
- Action> The Hilliard Fund has grown at 8.8% this year. We are pleased with the management of this fund. Our funds in the RCA Church Growth Fund are also producing a good return. We also have funds in the Community Foundation.
- Action> We need to update our Investment Policy. Bill will work on this project and bring an updated draft to next meeting (which we anticipate will happen this fall).
- Action> Steve agreed to be the "sounding board" for Bill when a portfolio change is needed.
- E. We are anticipating meeting again this fall to consider a loan request from one of our churches.

IX. Student Support & Supervision Committee

- A. This committee is currently in need of a chairperson due to Megan Hodgins' departure. We thank her for her good service. The committee met on June 27 and meets again on September 19.
- B. Reflection on exams day. Discussion> Overall, things went well. Candidate luncheon was well-received. Fellowship Church served well as an event place. We had more last-minute exam additions than prior years. These happen because new people are coming into the classis and additions exams were chosen by candidates.
- C. Follow-up on exams that have concerns.
- i. Each examiner has agreed to follow-up personally with candidate with whom they had "concerns." Examiners have offered to change/remove the concern designation if additional work is done.
 - ii. We have noted that one or more candidates have chosen not to do any additional work with the examiner.
 - iii. As a committee policy, we think it could be a good practice that, if a candidate receives more than one "concern" on their exam report (whether one year or multiple years), that the committee will interview that candidate about their call to minister, approach to exams, and workload.
- D. Emily Bodkins under care. Action> We activated Emily's status as "under-care." Since she is an AAR candidate, the 24-month does not apply to her. We will plan for her to be involved in our regular exam process.
- E. Emily Holehan. She was absent from exams due to illness. Action> We will arrange for the completion of all written exams that need to be taken. This will be completed by next spring. We will arrange for examiner to conduct their exam and for SSS members to witness the exams.
- F. Interview with Mike Lamson for the Competent for Ministry exam.
- i. Mike has completed the MFCA AAR and just received his Certificate of Fitness for Ministry yesterday.
 - ii. Mike found a deeper appreciation for the Reformed perspective than he expected he would have when he entered this process.

- iii. Mike will continue to serve as a pastor at Calvary Church following ordination.
 - iv. Classis had approved his exams and pended awarding the Certificate of Licensure until a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry was presented. It was presented and we awarded him the Certificate of Licensure.
- G. Setting date for fall meeting. We have new candidates to interview and Competent for Ministry interviews to hold. We chose Sept 19 as the meeting date and see what agenda develops.
- H. Giving the Provisional Certificate of Licensure to absent candidates. We were directed by the classis to review the presentation of provisional certificates to candidates who haven't been present for exams.
- i. Names of absent candidates are Sergio Reyes, Matt Mulder, Israel Alvarado, Enrique Cuevas. Caleb Nykamp and Rodrigo Cano only submitted language grades this year.
 - ii. Action> We will not award certificate to Sergio and Matt since they have not been in seminary in these last months. We will provide certificate to Israel, Enrique, Caleb and Rodrigo.
 - iii. We also take the position that we will not award this certificate next year if these candidates are not present in person at our exams, unless extenuating circumstances occur.
- I. Change of leadership. Megan reported that she must resign from the committee because she accepted a call to serve as the Pastor of the First Reformed Church in Scotia NY and will move there by August. Action> We are excited for Megan. We accepted her resignation with regret, yet with much appreciation for her leadership this year. Action> We postponed the appointment of a new chairperson.
- J. Budget request for 2018. Action> We approved seeking \$800 for 2018.

End of committee reports.