

Classis of Holland, Reformed Church in America

Meeting on Tuesday March 20, 2018 at LifeQuest Church.

Minutes

Present:

Ministers & Commissioned Pastors: D Blauw, Ji Brownson, S Cammenga, J Elzinga, T Gruppen, N Hook, K Kleinheksel, B Luidens, JA Lopez, J Lopez-Koolhaas, K Meyer, J Nelson, J Russell, L Schuyler, and A VanDerVeen.

Elder Delegates: **Beechwood-** none; **Calvary-** CH Falstad, K Shingledecker; **Central Park-** Glenda McKinley; **Christ Memorial-** Ed Vanderkooy; **Fellowship-** C Kulier; **First-** none; **Hope-** F VanDoornik, R Smith; **Intersection/Grace-** none; **LifeQuest-**D Rosendahl, Torey Heinz; **LifeTree-**Dean Brown; **Maple Ave Ministries-** none; **Maplewood-** E Zuidema; **New Community/Fourth-** L Dykema; **Pillar-**none; **Rose Park-** none; **Third-**none; and **Trinity-** none.

Absent with Notice: A Avery, J Beagley-Koolhaas, R Bechtel, J Brandsen, Jo Brownson, T Daubenspeck, Ke Davelaar, C DeGraaf, T DeYoung, N Donkersloot, L Duin, K Eriks, J Japinga, Y Jeon, Y Kim, C Ledbetter-Guckian, J Lemmenes, L Ruiz, M Schmidt, G Tanis, D Thompson, T VanEk, C VanKempen, L VanKempen, P VanKempen, C Veldheer DeYoung, G Wiersma, and M Wilson.

President Kate Meyer presiding. Meeting start time 6:40pm.

The Classis Gathers

1. **Prayer.** President Kate Meyer called the meeting to order and offered prayer.
2. **Welcome.** Pastor Toby Gruppen welcomed everyone to the LifeQuest facility and shared their ministry context.
3. **Reception of New Member.** The Rev. Tim Alicki read and signed the Declaration for Ministers. Tim is received by transfer from the Northern Michigan Classis RCA. Larry Schuyler shared the classis greeting and offered prayer.
4. **Approval of the evening's Agenda.** M/S/C to approve the agenda as presented.
APPROVED
5. **Worship,** led by LifeQuest Church. LifeQuest member Bill Palmbo led the singing. Pastor Toby read John 12 and spoke about the costly oil. The aroma of aromatic oil filled the room as each person was anointed. We are sent forth with the aroma of Christ. 2 Cor. 2:14.

Classis Ministry

6. **Consent Agenda - (Recommendation: Approve all items)**
 - Executive Committee: Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes of the January 23, 2018 Stated Session.
 - Minutes of the January 28, 2018 and February 11, 2018 Special Sessions
 - Minister Support & Supervision Committee
 - Add Celaine Bouma-Prediger as a member of the committee. Her first term ends on 12/31/2020.

The request was made to consider the Minutes of the January 23, 2018 session separately. These minutes were then considered with the Executive Committee report.

The president called for a vote on the remaining items.

APPROVED

7. **Committee Reports** (See Committee Reports document for each committee)

- a) Student Support & Supervision (SSS): Introduction of Candidates. No verbal report.
- b) Executive (ExCom)

- **Recommendation.** Approve the Minutes of January 23, 2018. The reason given for removal from the consent agenda is the awareness of a lack of quorum at the January session (as well as this session). The body recognized this issue but also recognized that not approving the minutes doesn't solve the issue.

APPROVED

- c) Commissioned Pastor Support & Supervision (CPSS). No Report.
- d) Church Multiplication Team (CMT). Verbal report offered by Toby Gruppen.
 - The CMT² idea was presented. This idea is the formation of a unified team composed of representatives from the Holland classes and Zeeland classes of both the RCA and CRC. A firm proposal will be presented at the May session. The classis asked that the proposal make clear statements about how oversight over new church starts will be addressed.
- e) Church Support & Supervision (CSS). Verbal report offered by Sandra Cammenga.
 - Summary of the Annual Reports from Churches. The membership statistics are in the agenda packet. CSS would like to send the compilation of the CRF essay questions to all classis members, so everyone can see the quality ministry that is occurring in our midst and share the prayer concerns. The Classis body agreed by consensus to receive this material through email.
 - The results of the Constitutional Inquiry are also published in the packet.
 - The Consistory Workshop was well received. The vast majority of survey respondents asked that such a workshop be held annually. Ideas for workshops are and will be received anytime.
- f) Minister Support & Supervision (MSS). Verbal report by David Blauw.
 - The committee will be contacting specialized ministers for reports on their ministry. The vehicle for such reports is being considered: Written, phone calls, or gathering.
- g) Nominations (Nom). No report.
- h) Overtures & Judicial Business (OJB) - Second reading of Classis Bylaw Changes
Recommendation: Approved the proposed changes (See Addendum for the text changes)
 - Proposal #1: Add "commissioned pastors" to the membership of the classis in appropriate places within the document. Minutes from our January session: **Motion from the Floor:** "that we fully approve the addition of commissioned pastor to the bylaws." This motion was supported and approved. **APPROVED.** APPROVED
 - Proposal #2: Add "A notice of absence from a member or delegate shall be treated as a motion to be excused from the quorum count, unless the notice indicates otherwise." to Article I, Section B1. After discussion, the proposal passed. APPROVED
 - Proposal #3: Amend Article 1, Section B2 - A minister ~~Ministers who has have~~ not received credit for attending a minimum of two stated sessions of the Classis in a year shall not advance for one year on the rotation list toward serving as a delegate to a General Synod or Great Lakes Synod. ~~be placed at the end of the list (as if they have just attended a General or Great Lakes Synod meeting) in the rotational system.~~

APPROVED

- Proposal #4: Add “denominational staff, regional synod staff” to the list of persons who have privilege of the floor at our Classis sessions. APPROVED

i) Stewardship & Finance (SF). No report

8. Officer Reports

a) Past President’s Report - Norm Donkersloot

Norm had airline flight issues and was unable to attend this session. He had prepared remarks to share with the Classis. The body received his printed speech (which is also available on the Classis website). President Meyer highlighted a few of the sections of the report.

b) President’s Report - Kate Meyer

- Kate is proposing to the Executive Committee that this classis have three stated sessions per year. The March session would be treated as a special session. Expect to consider this proposal later this year.
- She will be working to promote more engagement and involvement in Classis by members of the Classis.
- She is on the planning team for the RCA Chaplain Conference held here in June. Help with transportation to/from the airport is needed. She is asking for help from churches with buses/vans as well as individuals. Contact her (616-405-2495).

c) Classis Coordinator’s Report-Larry Schuyler

- Hiawatha Property (former Haven Shores Church). The Executive Committee is acting to sell the property to the current renter, the Harbor Lights Baptist Church via a land contract. The target date for the sale is the end of June. The price will be determined by independent appraisal. The land contract would be for seven years. Question is one of process: Does the classis feel the sale requires a vote of the Classis to happen or just the Executive Committee? **Motion/S** that the Classis Executive Committee is authorized to proceed with any legal sale of property when the price is determined by appraisal and the interest rate is competitive.

Discussion: Shouldn’t this kind of policy statement be in our bylaws rather than just minutes of this session?

Amendment: **Motion/S** to change “...any legal sale of property...” to “...the sale of the Hiawatha property...” because details of any future sale could be unique. The amendment carried. APPROVED

The motion as amended was approved. APPROVED

- Delegates to the Synods. General Synod: Notice of the need for alternate elder delegates has been sent forth, as per our classis policy. Names will only be received that have the endorsement of the local church of membership. Great Lakes Synod: Two churches declined. As replacement delegates are sought, each church in line will be asked. The church will not forfeit its place in line if it is unable to provide a named delegate.
- Vice President Candidate. Larry reports that a major issue with securing candidates is the fear of over-demand for attendance at special sessions. **Motion/S** to allow any past-president to officiate at a service of ordination. NOT APPROVED

Motion/S that the Executive Committee is authorized to approve whomever they approve from this Classis to preside at an ordination or installation service. APPROVED

- Name Tags. A new display format has been introduced. Additional names of occasional elder delegates are available in a side container.

d) Treasurer's Report - Written report is received.

7. Election of a Vice President

The President asked for nominations from the floor. One nomination was offered by the nominee declined. We will continue to seek for the person called to this role.

Discussion: The Executive Committee is pondering if there is a different way to host elections to this office.

8. Report of the Classis Leadership Transition Team. Verbal Report by David Blauw.

- The job description presented in January is being discussed and a review of our history has been done.
- The small transition team met and believe it is the role of the Executive Committee to shape the job description for the Classis Coordinator, since that group provides a fuller representation of the Classis. Therefore, this group made these decisions:
 - This team will not attempt to move forward until a) A fuller representation of the Executive Committee sets direction for the role of Classis Coordinator, and b) A financial comparison of resources has been completed. This step includes seeing what other classes spend for leadership positions.
 - This team is not bringing a rationale for its past proposal to this session, but expects the Executive Committee to bring a clear proposal to the May session.

Ministry Celebration - Following Christ in Mission

9. **Announcements** None were made

10. Prayer Time

- For our denomination: General Synod will be held at Calvin College June 7-11.
- For our regional Synod: Assembly will be held on May 7.
- For our classis: Our continued interactions and multi-cultural immersions.
- For our churches: to grow disciples and missionally engage our community
- For our candidates: Preparing for exams and seeking calls to ministry

The President called the body to prayer. Several offered prayer on the items listed above as well as other topics. The president then closed the session with prayer.

11. The President declared the session adjourned at 8:50pm.

Next Stated Session: Tuesday, May 22, 2018, at Pillar Church
(Corner of Ninth Street and College Ave - downtown Holland)

- 12:30pm-5pm **Student Examinations**
- 6:30 PM **Worship and Evening Session**

Rev. Larry Schuyler, Classis Clerk

Addendum

Text of the Holland Classis Bylaw Change Proposal:

Article I. Membership

- A. Membership in the Classis includes all enrolled ministers, commissioned pastors, and the elder delegates who represent all the churches within the Classis bounds. Voting rights are limited to elder delegates, ~~and~~ those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the Classis, and commissioned pastors.
- B. Attendance at Stated and Special Sessions.
1. Ministers, commissioned pastors and elder delegates to the Classis are expected to attend all stated and special sessions of the Classis. A notice of absence from a member or delegate shall be treated as a motion to be excused from the quorum count, unless the notice indicates otherwise.
 2. A minister ~~Ministers~~ who ~~has~~ ~~have~~ not received credit for attending a minimum of two stated sessions of the Classis in a year shall not advance for one year on the rotation list toward serving as a delegate to a General Synod or Great Lakes Synod. ~~be placed at the end of the list (as if they have just attended a General or Great Lakes Synod meeting) in the rotational system.~~ The Nominations Committee shall serve as the ruling body if a minister desires to apply for an exception to this rule due to extenuating circumstances.
 3. Delegates from a church which is not current in the payment of its assessments (more than 60 days past due) shall not be eligible to vote at the Classis sessions. The Executive Committee may grant a waiver of this requirement at its meeting prior to a stated session of the Classis.
- C. Corresponding delegates are Associates in Ministry, licensed candidates, fraternal delegates, chairs of the Classis committees, denominational staff, regional synod staff and officers of the Classis who do not otherwise have voting rights. Corresponding delegates shall have the privilege of the floor.
- D. Retired ministers shall have the privilege of the floor. The Minister Support and Supervision Committee may designate a retired minister, who is serving under a contract, as actively serving, if the minister requests. These actively serving retired ministers shall have voting privileges but may not represent the classis at the synods. This designation has to be made annually, since the BCO limits such contracts to one year.