

Executive Committee

1. Call to Order/Prayer/Devotions: Psalm 46 read. Kate said she chose this psalm to remind us that God is - is there for us, is in control, is the one who cares, and is our source of strength. Prayer.

2. Officer Reports

a. Treasurer's Report (Marylynn): Written report received, dated August 31:

- Budget year-to-date. All assessments paid. Expenses are within budget.
- Finances year to date. Total Cash Assets = \$201,496.10. Synod assessments are due in Sept.
- "Crisis Support" will be the title of the line item under MSS. This item will include expenses associated with the Degraaf situation, such as meeting costs, legal fees, counseling support.
- Marylynn is assisting with financial oversight during the Fourth Church closing.

b. Coordinator/Stated Clerk (Larry):

- Approval of Stated Session: May 22. M/S/C - APPROVED
- Approval of Special Sessions: June 3, 17, 24; July 15; August 12, 14. M/S/C APPROVED
- Glenda McKinley resigned from her role as the Holland Classis rep at the GL Synod Exec Comm. Action> We receive this news with regret and wish her well in her new home. We thank her for her service to the classis in the many ways she has served. We will seek a new classis rep.

c. President's Report (Kate):

- Care for the DeGraaf family. There needs to be a classis rep to the family who succeeds Jim Daniels.
- Kate distributed a statement from a victim. The group took no action.

2. Committee Reports

a. Stewardship & Finance.

- Proposed budget for 2019 presented. It is based on what is known or as has been. We acknowledge that forthcoming changes may necessitate expenses unknown at this time.

M/S/C to RECOMMEND this 2019 proposal to the Classis for approval. APPROVED

b. Church Support & Supervision: Churches.

▪ Hiawatha Property Report

1. A Land Contract has been created. We will bring a motion to sell the property to the floor of the Classis for approval.
 - Charge ½% for seven years and a minimum \$1,000/month payment.
2. **M/S/C** that the motion set before the classis does not allow amendments which would change the terms of the Land Contract. **APPROVED**
3. The report to classis is to include a statement about the history and process that leads to this agreement.

c. Nominations:

- We have received names from persons who volunteered to be nominated for the office of vice president.
- We believe it is time to end the elder/minister rotation requirement. **M/S/C** that we refer action to the OJB committee to change the classis bylaws to eliminate or change the stipulation that the presidency alternate annually between minister and elder.

APPROVED

- d. Classis Coordinator Search Team Report: The team will have four phone interviews with candidates in September, continue narrowing candidates from there. These candidates have strong administrative skills. Leigh and Terry are co-chairs and will bring a report to the Classis in September.

Church Multiplication Team

1. Lisa Urivez-Karp is now serving on staff at First Reformed Church. Her focus is to nest a new congregation within the First Church facility and ministry outreach.
2. The Inter-Classis Church Multiplication Team is ready to launch. Therefore, a proposal is presented for the Classis to endorse the formation and funding of this team.
RECOMMENDATION: The Holland Classis approves participating in the formation and mission of Holland / Zeeland Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America Classes collaborative Church Multiplication Team. The Holland Classis commits to the three-year process to help establish this collaborative. We also commit to 'earmarking' \$10,000 from our 2019 church planting budget to be used toward the approved initiative(s) by this group which would help fulfill the initiatives listed in the proposal.
3. Ben Aguilera and the Boulevard Church (BLVD) is preparing to launch public worship services starting October. They are currently using the Boys and Girls Club facility on VanRaalte St.

Church Support & Supervision Committee

1. Issues at Trinity Church
 - a. The consistory met on Monday (June 18) with Larry Schuyler present. The consistory voted to petition the Classis to dissolve the pastoral relationship between the church and the Rev. Chris DeGraaf. The Application (Formulary #8) was presented to the committee. The committee voted to request dissolution of the pastoral relationship between Trinity Reformed Church and the Rev. Chris DeGraaf. CSS acted to approve this request. APPROVED. Note: this action changed Chris' status to minister-without-charge.
 - b. The committee voted to appoint Rev. Larry Schuyler as the Classis Supervisor for Trinity Church until further notice.
 - c. The consistory and the classis acted to support victims by providing funds for counseling as well as extending personal care.
 - d. Terry DeYoung (CSS member) initiated and led the gathering of skilled counseling persons from our classis to assist the congregation. An August 19 congregation meeting was held to assist the congregation with information and provide counseling support to the congregation. Classis counselors have been present at worship each week of August for conversation. The congregation appreciated this effort by the classis. A church workshop will be held on September 29.
2. The Supersession of Fourth Reformed Church
 - a. In June, Jeanette Beagley-Koolhaas and Larry Schuyler began regularly meeting with the consistory to discuss plans for disbanding the church at the end of the summer and into the fall.
 - b. The consistory will stay in place until September 30. The supersession team will begin on September 1. It was agreed that the last worship service would be August 26 and the pastoral relationship between Jonathan Brownson and the consistory is dissolved on August 31.
 - c. The committee voted to request authority to supersede the consistory from the Classis. This request was presented to the Classis on August 12 and approved.
 - d. Jeanette was present with the consistory to act on the request to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Jonathan and the consistory effective August 31. The committee approved this application.

A severance package was created and approved for Jonathan. As part of this package, the Brownsons may live in the parsonage through February 2019. Perhaps longer if a new agreement is established.

- e. Jeanette and Larry have met several times with members of the congregation who do not favor the closure of the church and are displeased about this action.
 - f. Jeanette has met with all the organizations who use the building to begin to develop written contracts about expectations for each group. It is the classis intention that the building continued to be used as a neighborhood/community meeting place.
 - g. CSS appoints the following persons to form the supersession team. Each person as agreed to serve on this team. Elder Norm Donkersloot, Rev. Judy Nelson, Elder Nick deVries, Rev. Jeanette Beagley-Koolhaas. One more member may be added. The supersession team may also form other taskforces as needed. CSS provided this team with a job description/task responsibility sheet and a time of orientation.
 - h. The membership of the church needs to be moved to other churches before the church is formally disbanded. The use of the building will be determined by the supersession team which oversees the church's finances and property titles.
3. Congregation visitation
CSS is working on its plan to visit congregations and interact with congregational leaders starting this fall.
4. The Hiawatha property.
- a. The CSS, with its supersession authority, has followed-up from the Classis discussion at the January session to present an offer to sell the property to the Harbor Lights congregation which is currently renting the building.
 - b. CSS member Terry DeYoung and Larry Schuyler have served as the classis negotiating team. They met with the Harbor Lights Board several times to determine the arrangement.
 - c. The sale price is \$369,000 as determined by a professional appraisal. The land contract will be for seven years (the year of Jubilee thing). The down payment will be provided by the Classis in the form of a credit for half of the net proceeds from the rent that the congregation has paid. (estimated credit is about \$11,000). We want the Harbor Lights congregation to be able to demonstrate that it is paying down the principle of the mortgage. The advice of the S&F Committee is to set the interest rate at ½% for the seven year. Reason: The monthly payment will make a visible decrease in the amount owed. Also, each month less interest will be paid and more principle. In seven years, they will have a demonstrated credit history for a bank to see.
 - d. The S&F Committee also advised that the Harbor Lights monthly payment increase every year so that the leap from our agreement to a bank payment after seven years isn't as significant. This detail has yet to be finalized.
 - e. CSS with the endorsement of the Executive Committee **RECOMMENDS** Classis approve the sale of the Hiawatha property to the Harbor Lights Baptist Church via a seven-year land contract as set forth in paragraph c. If approved, and Harbor Lights congregation approves, the sale will be completed by the end of October.
5. Korean ministry – Pastor Amy Klanderman, Intersection Ministries oversite pastor. CSS met with Pastor Amy and Pastor Joseph of the Korean Ministry. He reported: 15-20 people attend. Seeking to reach out to all Asian people in the area. Korean and English is used to meet all needs. Once a month, all congregations meet together and the service is translated into three languages. They request a \$5,000 grant for 2019. CSS approved this request for its 2019 budget.
6. The committee submitted its budget request for 2019 to the S&F Committee.

7. We have checked with Pillar Church and with Maple Avenue Ministries about their intent to incur debt with capital projects they may have. Both congregations assured the committee they had no intention of incurring debt that would require classis approval.
8. We checked with Christ Memorial leaders about the planned welcome of their new ministers on staff. We rejoice in the public affirmation of the staff ministers.

Commissioned Pastor Support & Supervision Committee

1. The team met with applicant Juan Lopez, an elder at Alas de Aguila/Eagle's Wings Church. Mr Lopez request to come under care to pursue the commissioned pastor role within our classis. He serves as the music director at the Alas Church. It is the church's goal to bring Juan onto their staff in a fuller job when he completes the commissioned pastor training and is commissioned.
2. The committee would like to see this question asked in our annual review and **RECOMMENDS** that the Classis approve doing so: *Do you conduct performance reviews of the ministers and commissioned pastors employed in your church? Note: Classis would appreciate receiving a copy of the instrument you use or a description of the process that is followed, so that we have the resources to assist all of our congregations with this responsibility.*
The committee is not requesting a change to the BCO's Constitutional Inquiry but is asking that the classis include this question in its annual process of collecting information from churches.

Minister Support & Supervision Committee

1. Change in Minister Status.
 - a. Pastor Chris DeGraaf > became a minister-without-charge in June, when he was dismissed from Trinity. He was deposed from office by the Classis in August.
 - Action Discussion> How does MSS care for Chris and the DeGraaf family?
 - Dr. Chuck DeGroat was invited to our meeting. Having heard this news, we had to debrief ourselves and process our own emotions before we could proceed constructively.
 - Action Step Response> We asked Dr. DeGroat to create a written proposed plan that classis could use to care for Chris and family.
 - We are willing to assist Betsy and Chris to attend the Quiet Waters Counseling Center. We ask the classis to provide \$2,000 for the costs. Recommendation: approve up to \$2,000.
 - b. The pastoral relationship with Mark Kamper and Holland Heights CRC was dissolved in May. Mark is now a minister-without-charge. Action> We provided Mark with information about post pastoral-relationship care networks.
 - c. Ruth Hawley-Lowry; M/S/C to declare her a specialized minister, whose ministry is working with groups for advocacy for justice and inclusiveness. APPROVED
 - d. Julie Myers: Change in ministry location to Benjamin's Hope. She remains a specialized minister.
 - e. Grace Miguel Cipriano: Action> M/S/C to change to minister without charge, because we do not know what she is doing or where she is.
 - f. Mark Poppen. He is no longer at the seminary. So, a status change is likely in order. At the time of this writing, we don't know what the new status will be at this time.
2. Minister Contracts

We are aware that contracts with ministers and consistories have been made this year that have not been shared with the classis. Our Book of Church Order requires that all contracts between ministers and consistories be approved by the classis. We ask that the ministers and the consistories respect the system that has been established to safeguard everyone's interest and well-being.
3. Report about our Specialized Ministers check-in.
 - a. The proposal is a meal time together at WTS in the fall, so that minsters can see the new facility.

- b. We decided to invite all active-serving and non-active-serving ministers to this event. A series of a few questions will be presented for discussions among small groups at this event.
 - c. Action> An invitation will be created to share with the classis a prototype email to present to the committee.
 - d. Action> The date for this event is **Tuesday, November 13, 7:30am to 9am at Western Seminary.**
4. Classis budget for 2019 request. Action> \$1800 request for 2019
 5. Minister Excellence Fund Grant for Assistance with Pastor's debt.
Nothing to report this month. But at the General Synod, it was announced that a plan is developing to promote this grant over the next years. 2018 was the original end date for this grant.
 6. We offer prayers for all of our ministers, especially for the health concerns for Mike VanDoornik, Elton Bruins, and Vern Sterk.
 7. Ministers seeking membership in our classis.
 - a. We approved receiving the transfer of the Rev. Carolyn Raar from the Zeeland Classis. Carolyn is a minister-without-charge. The Raars live in Holland and are members at Beechwood Church.
 - b. We approved receiving the transfer of the Marlin Vis from the Zeeland Classis. Marlin is a retired minister. The Vis family lives in Holland and are members at Fellowship Church.
 - c. Both are anticipating reading and signing the Declaration at our September session.

Nominations Committee

This committee doesn't have a designated chair.

1. Committee appointments. Please see the Committee Appointments Report for details about service on classis committees. **RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the appointments (Consent Agenda)
2. Delegates to General Synod. The ministers and churches whose turn has come to serve as classis delegates are:
Ministers > Jay Lindell, Kent Fry, Jean Lemmenes, and Larry Schuyler
First Alternates are: Katy Sundararajan, JP Sundararajan, Lorene Duin, Sharon Knibbe, Jon Brown.
Churches sending elder delegates > Intersection Ministries, Fellowship, Maple Avenue Ministries, and LifeTree.
See the complete rotation lists for General Synod. These lists are our approved alternate list.
RECOMMENDATION: Approve the appointments and alternate list. (Consent Agenda)
3. Delegates to Great Lakes Regional Synod. The ministers and churches whose turn has come to serve as classis delegates are:
Ministers > David Lantz (2nd year of 2); Dan Gillett, Gretchen Tanis, Terry DeYoung (1st year of 2)
Churches > Third (2nd year of 2); Maplewood, Rose Park, and Christ Memorial (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)
4. Election of the Classis President. Nominees are presented at the classis session.
5. Election of Vice President of Classis. Nominees are presented at the classis session.

Overtures & Judicial Business Committee

The committee met twice this summer for the purpose of addressing the DeGraaf matter.

1. At the June 26 meeting, these steps were addressed.
 - a. Why are we here? The purpose of the meeting is to consider whether it is proper to present charges to the classis against the Rev. Chris DeGraaf.
 - b. Review the circumstances of the matter.

- c. Should Charges be filed? The committee agreed that charges of clergy misconduct should be filed against the Rev. Chris DeGraaf. The accusations have enough merit to warrant a trial. AGREED
 - i. Rev. Jill Russell and Rev. Gordon Wiersma will serve as the presenters to file charges.
 - ii. It should be clearly stated that Chris admitted prior history and lying to the Classis.
- d. Classis must be called into judicial session to handle this matter. If the charges are not contested, then a trial is not necessary. The process moves to imposing discipline.
- e. Communicating with Chris
 - i. When the charge/s has been formally received by OJB, then Chris needs to receive it within 3 days. The clerk is to deliver the written charges to the defendant.
 - ii. Chris then has 20 days to respond in writing to the charge.
 - iii. The charge paper does not need to include the consequential discipline that can be imposed if the charges are proven to the classis.
- f. OJB needs to communicate with the Executive Committee about the action it is taking and direct Larry to do so.
- g. OJB must meet again after the response from DeGraaf is received and prior to the Classis judicatory meeting.

2. At its July 24 meeting, these steps were addressed.

- a. Issue of Sufficient merit. The committee had received Chris DeGraaf's response to the charges presented to him. Classis received his response on July 20 which met the 20-day deadline as set forth by the BCO.

In Chris' response he admitted that the charge of conduct inappropriate for a minister was true. Therefore, the committee finds that there is sufficient merit to present the charges to the classis for consideration.

- b. The process for the judicial session is that the charges and response will be presented in writing to classis. M/S/C that we recommend that Classis vote to sustain the charges presented. Vote needs to happen by written ballot with a 2/3 vote of approval. A trial is not necessary because Chris admitted the truth of the charges.
- c. Chris DeGraaf and Jim Daniels met with the committee.
- d. Charges.

The charge will be presented as received unless Jill and Gordon agree to edit. Larry is assigned to follow up with them about the final draft.
- e. The imposed discipline.
 - i. M/S/C to recommend that the discipline imposed on Chris DeGraaf is deposition from office.
 - ii. Reasons: The care of the victims demands this discipline. The protection of the classis needs this discipline. The gravity and repeated nature of the offense suggest this discipline is appropriate. Restoration is the same for deposition or suspension.
 - iii. Furthermore, the burden of proof for readiness for ministry and restoration is up to Chris, not the classis. If suspended, the classis has to prove that suspension should be lifted.
 - iv. Vote needs to be taken by written ballot in which 2/3 vote approving the action happens.
- f. Planning for the classis session
 - i. Kate will write the announcement for the meeting. We have August 14 as our first choice date for this meeting. Jill and Gordon need to be present.
 - ii. The printed charges and response will be handed out at the meeting. It will not be distributed prior to the meeting and will not be distributed via electronic media.
 - iii. Cindi will present the committee recommendations to the classis.
 - iv. We agree that Chris has the right to speak to the classis. Then the classis should go into Executive session when determining discipline.

- g. Chair of committee. Cindi was voted in as the chair of this committee until the end of December. We are also looking for an elder to serve on this committee.
- h. We suggest that MSS assign someone in addition to Jim Daniels to meet with Chris and maintain contact with the "Classis."

Stewardship & Finance Committee

1. Propose a 2019 Budget to submit to the Executive Committee.
 - a. Marylynn presented the original draft of the 2019 budget proposal line-by-line.
 - b. 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.
 - c. The per member assessment from the General Synod increased \$0.47. The Great Lakes Synod increased \$0.50. The proposed budget presents a zero increase in assessments for the Classis.
 - d. 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 as is.
 - e. Our current budget spending comparison is "On Target" for the year, reports the treasurer. The huge assessment payment is coming due. We have sufficient cash in hand to cover it.
 - f. **RECOMMENDATION** to the Executive Committee: Approve this proposal. It has a zero increase in classis assessments, while honoring the requests from our committees.
2. Propose a 2019 Minister Compensation Guidelines to the Classis.
 - a. The Guidelines from the Great Lakes Synod were reviewed. The guidelines reflect a 1.75% increase in cash salary over the 2018 guidelines.
 - b. **RECOMMENDATION** to Classis. Action> Recommend: That classis approve the 2019 Minister Compensation Guidelines. (Consent Agenda)
 - c. Also, 2019 Staff Compensation guidelines are offered for information to us and then to the Classis. Action> These guidelines will be offered to the Classis for information.
3. Bethel Fund report. Bill presented information about the Bethel Fund's current standing.

Action> The Hilliard Fund has grown at 6.83% annually over time under their oversight. This is slightly above standard income projection. 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> Bill has updated our Classis Investment Policy. He used some of the policy that Geneva follows. The committee voted to approve the policy update.

Action> We affirm by vote that we keep Hilliard Lyons as our lead investing firm for next year and until we act to change investment firms.
4. Sale of the Hiawatha Property
 - a. Church S&S Committee is the supersession team for the property. They are seeking to sell the property via land contract to the Harbor Lights Baptist Church.
 - b. Appraised value (June 2018) is \$369,000. This is the selling price. Land contract would be for seven years, which should give the church time to secure bank financing.
 - c. CSS seeks the SF assistance to determine appropriate selling terms. They want the buyer to be able to reduce the mortgage debt with their \$1,000 per month payment. Discussion occurred about the various options, such as a monthly fee rather than interest. But settled on advising that ½% interest be charged on the principle as the most effective means to achieve our goal.
 - d. Furthermore, that it would be helpful to the Harbor Lights Church if the monthly payment increased annually to help them "step up" to what likely would be a mortgage payment after the 7 years. (Bank mortgage estimated in the \$2600 range.) Approved.
5. Central Park Reformed Church.

It is time for Central Park's mortgage to be refinanced. They have been accepted by the RCA Church Growth Fund for amortization loan. Such loans require classis approval/signature. There was nothing "out of place" with this request. The committee gave its approval to this action and the Central Park Refinancing plan.

Student Support & Supervision Committee

1. We received the following students under care.
 - a. Jordan Starkenberg interview. We agree to receive him under care but cannot officially do so until a recommendation is received from Calvary Church. He is anticipating pastorate ministry. We enjoyed our time with him. Committee liaison assigned to
 - b. Kyle Lake interview. We agree to receive him under care but cannot officially do so until a recommendation is received. When paperwork arrives, we will date acceptance from May 22 when exams were taken. Kyle is serving on staff at Mars Hill Church and expects to continue to do so once ordained. Seeking ordination in RCA because he has come to identify himself with Reformed theology and RCA polity.
 - c. Laurel Pals interview. We agree to receive her under care but cannot officially do so until a recommendation is received. Expect to receive recommendation from Fellowship. We heard her call to serve in Oman and work for issues of justice. When paperwork arrives, we will date her acceptance from May 22, when exams were taken.
2. Follow-up on Exams incompletes. Things have bogged down with the action needed to satisfy the "incompletes." We talked about candidates needing attention.
 - a. Maxwell completed a rewrite of part of his church history exam. Examiner Ron Bechtel was satisfied with the work. Maxwell was then ordained to office in June.
 - b. Examiner Larry Schuyler met with Joel Boersma regarding his polity exam. Joel completed remedial work that satisfied the examiner. Grade was changed to pass.
 - c. Tim DeCamp. A follow-up plan was created and sent to Tim. However, it was never received by him. Therefore, the plan was given a new deadline to complete and submitted to the examiner.
 - d. Emmett Brown. He completed work with Examiner Nate Schipper who in turn provided a passing grade for the Call to Ministry exam. He completed work with Examiner Noah McLaren for the Worship exam. Noah approved the exam and changed the exam to "pass."
3. Candidate Derek Taylor who has moved to WA state (professor at Whitworth College). He asked if he could continue under care toward ordination and is willing to come to Holland as needed. Action> We will continue him under our care. We believe we are as qualified to do so as any other classis. Derek is a MFCA candidate since he has a M.Div. degree.
4. Practice of Ministry exam. We agreed to meet on Thursday, October 11 from 3p-5p at Western Seminary. We will probably need an additional meeting in the fall to receive candidates under care.
5. Provisional licenses. We granted provisional licenses to candidates with whom we know are moving toward ordination.

END OF COMMITTEE REPORTS