

Minutes of Stated Session

Holland Classis, Reformed Church in America
Meeting on May 28, 2019
at Hope Church RCA, Holland, Michigan

Held at Trinity Reformed Church

Present

- Ministers & Commissioned Pastors (52):
 - Ben Aguilera, Ron Bechtel, Celaine Bouma-Prediger, Lisa Braunius, Jonathan Brownson, Sandra Cammenga, Beth Carroll, Dan Carter, Terry DeYoung, Ross Dieleman, Dick Doeden, Isaias D’Oleo-Ochoa, Lorene Duin, Kent Fry, Dan Gillett, Daniel Griswold, Ruth Hawley-Lowry, Bob Luidens, Lynn Japinga, Dan Jelsma, Amy Klanderman, Sharon Knibbe, David Komline, Han-Luen Komline, Darrell Koopmans, Jean Lemmenes, Jose Angel Lopez, Janelle Lopez-Koolhaas, Noah McLaren, Kate Meyer, Judy Nelson, Tim Nelson, Rachel Patmos, Chad Pierce, Phil Quinn, Izzy Rhodes, Jill Russell, Jennifer Ryden, Nate Schipper, Paul Smith, Andrew Spidahl, JP Sundararajan, Katy Sundararajan, Dan Unekis, Aaron VanDerVeen, Leigh Van Kempen, Paul Van Kempen, David VanOpstall, Robert VanVoorst, Hugo Vasquez, Cindi Veldheer DeYoung, Travis West
- Elder Delegates (13):
 - Beechwood: none; Calvary: none; Central Park: none; Christ Memorial: Terry Edewaard, Barb Lawton, Sally Tapley; First: Dale Nienhuis; Fellowship: Barb Eriks, Charles Kulier; Hope: Barbara Bright, Scott Parrott; Iglesia Alas de Aguila: none; Intersection/Grace: Pat Weatherwax; LifeQuest: none; Life Tree: none; Maple Ave Ministries: P J Benedict; Maplewood: Doug Ebels; Pillar: none; Rose Parl: none; Third: Joyce Magee; Trinity: Dan Kruithof
- Candidates for Ministry:
 - Katie Alley, Alex Arthurs, Kyle Boer, Emmett Brown, Renée Jelsma, Kyle Lake, Nathan Longfield, Rita Loyola, Alyssa Meuhmel, Cassie Nelson-Rogalski, Matthew Nelson-Rogalski (examined on behalf of Chicago Classis), Hannah Nickolay, Laurel Pals, Eugene Ryan, Trey Tirpak

Excused from Quorum Requested & Approved

- Ministers & Commissioned Pastors (8):
 - David Blauw, Thom Daubenspeck, Jeff Elzinga, Kevin Kleinheksel, Larry Schuyler, Todd VanEk, Case Van Kempen, Gordon Wiersma
- Elders (2):
 - elder from Central Park, C.H. Falstad (Calvary)

1. Call to Order

- President Kate Meyer opened the stated session with prayer at 6:33 p.m.
- **Motion:** to approve the agenda, as amended — **MSC**
- **Motion:** to approve the Consent Agenda (see below) — **MSC**

2. Worship

- a time of worship was led by members of Hope Church

3. Candidate Exams: Senior Theology

- Examinations were conducted in three groups
 1. examiner Chad Pierce: Alex Arthurs, Renee' Jelsma, Kyle Lake, Cassie Nelson-Rogalski
 2. examiner Jill Russell: Emmett Brown, Nathan Longfield, Laurel Pals
 3. examiner Cindi Veldheer DeYoung: QiaoQiao Chen, Tim DeCamp, Matt Nelson-Rogalski

4. Executive Session

- **Motion:** to go into executive session — **MSC**

These actions were taken during executive session and are placed into the record (note: * denotes “with commendation”):

- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Call to Ministry* Exam: Katie Alley*, Kyle Boer, Ryan Hall, Rita Loyola*, Alyssa Muehmel*, Hannah Nickolay*, Wayne Otten*, Gene Ryan*, Jordan Starkenburg, Trey Tirpak* — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Biblical Knowledge* Exam: Katie Alley, Rebecca Boogaart Cooper, Rita Loyola, Alyssa Muehmel, Hannah Nickolay, Wayne Otten, Gene Ryan, Jordan Starkenburg, Trey Tirpak — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Worship & Sacraments* Exam: Katie Alley, Kyle Boer, Ryan Hall, Renee' Jelsma*, Kyle Lake, Alyssa Muehmel, Hannah Nickolay, Wayne Otten, Laurel Pals, Gene Ryan*, Jordan Starkenburg — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *RCA Mission* exam: Alex Arthurs*, Emmett Brown, QiaoQiao Chen, Tim DeCamp, Rob Housman, Renee' Jelsma, Kyle Lake, Nathan Longfield; and to accept a grade of Incomplete in RCA Mission for Laurel Pals and Trey Tirpak — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Preaching & Sermon Preparation* Exam: Katie Alley, Kyle Boer, Hunter Brumels, Rebecca Boogaart Cooper, Ryan Hall, Alyssa Muehmel, Hannah Nickolay, Caleb Nykamp, Wayne Otten, Gene Ryan*, Jordan Starkenburg*, Trey Tirpak — **MSC**

- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Disciplemaking & Teaching* Exam: Emmett Brown, Rebecca Boogaart Cooper, Ryan Hall, Alyssa Muehmel*, Trey Tirpak* — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Church History* Exam: Katie Alley, Kyle Boer, Emmett Brown, Hunter Brumels, Ryan Hall, Alyssa Muehmel, Caleb Nykamp, Wayne Otten, Gene Ryan, Jordan Starkenburg, Trey Tirpak — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *RCA Polity* Exam: Alex Arthurs, Emmett Brown, QiaoQiao Chen, Tim DeCamp, Rob Housman, Renee’ Jelsma*, Kyle Lake, Nathan Longfield*, Cassie Nelson-Rogalski, Matt Nelson-Rogalski, Laurel Pals — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Doctrinal Standards* exam: Alex Arthurs, Emmett Brown, QiaoQiao Chen, Tim DeCamp, Rob Housman*, Renee’ Jelsma*, Kyle Lake*, Nathan Longfield, Cassie Nelson-Rogalski, Matt Nelson-Rogalski, Laurel Pals — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To declare the following candidates as having Passed the *Senior Theology* Exam: Alex Arthurs, Emmett Brown, QiaoQiao Chen, Tim DeCamp, Rob Housman, Renee’ Jelsma, Kyle Lake, Nathan Longfield, Cassie Nelson-Rogalski, Matt Nelson-Rogalski, Laurel Pals — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To grant a “provisional license to preach” to the candidates continuing under our care: Katie Alley, Emily Bodkins, Kyle Boer, Hunter Brumels, Ryan Hall, Rita Loyola, Amy Mares, Alyssa Muehmel, Hannah Nickolay, Caleb Nykamp, Wayne Otten, Gene Ryan, Jordan Starkenburg, Trey Tirpak — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To grant Certificates of Licensure to these candidates: Alex Arthurs, QiaoQiao Chen, Tim DeCamp, Rob Housman, Renee’ Jelsma, Kyle Lake, Nathan Longfield, Cassie Nelson-Rogalski, Matt Nelson-Rogalski — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To grant Certificates of Licensure pending the resolution of incompletes to these candidates: Emmett Brown, Laurel Pals — **MSC**
- **Motion:** To authorize Rob Housman to read and sign the declaration either at the June 3 special session of classis or with a delegation of 3 classis members, so this may be accomplished at least 10 days before his ordination — **MSC**
- **Motion:** to leave executive session — **MSC**
- The candidates were welcomed back into the sanctuary, to applause. The following candidates read and signed the “Declaration for Licensed Candidates”: Alex Arthurs, Emmett Brown, QiaoQiao Chen, Tim DeCamp, Renee’ Jelsma, Kyle Lake, Nathan Longfield, Cassie Nelson-Rogalski, Matt Nelson-Rogalski (pending transfer from Chicago Classis), Laurel Pals
- Phil Quinn, chair of the Student Support & Supervision Committee, prayed on behalf of these and all our candidates for ministry

5. Reports

A. Executive Committee

- Cindi Veldheer DeYoung spoke about the need for humanitarian aid in the Ciudad Juarez region of Mexico, where the brother of our colleague the Rev. Angel Lopez serves as a pastor and is seeking to help immigrants from Cuba and Central America. Angel spoke about the needs and the urgency and how it would be helpful to have the endorsement of the classis to seek contributions from congregations and individuals. (The document distributed in advance of the meeting is included in these minutes as an appendix.)
- **Motion:** To endorse the raising of funds for Frontera de Gracia Ministry at the Mexican border — MSC

B. Vice President's Report

- Vice President Judy Nelson asked people to pray for the delegates, staff, and resource people participating in General Synod (June 6–11), and extended a warm invitation to serve as prayer volunteers at Synod.

6. Announcements

- Terry DeYoung announced an event concerning mental illness, “Laughter is Sacred Space,” and encouraged all to take posters with them
- Dan Griswold reminded all about the upcoming special session, June 2, 3:00 pm, at Intersection Ministries, for the purpose of installing the Rev. Amy Klanderman and the Rev. Tito Venegas as pastors of Grace Reformed Church

7. Adjournment

- The next stated session will be 6:30 pm, September 24, 2019 at Third Reformed Church
- President Meyer closed the stated session with prayer at 9:41 pm

Consent Agenda

From Executive Committee:

- Recommendation: Approve the Minutes of the March 26, 2019 stated session

Appendix: Executive Committee Request

On behalf of the executive committee:

The Holland Classis executive committee requests that the Classis of Holland endorse the raising of funds for Frontera de Gracia Ministry at the Mexican border.

The executive committee received a request from Angel Lopez to endorse his desire to raise funds on behalf of his brother's church in Mexico, as they seek to offer necessary housing and care for refugees. Angel is a member of Holland Classis, and serves on the staff of Third Reformed Church.

Angel's brother, Samuel, is a pastor in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, near the border of Texas. Samuel Lopez and the Frontera de Gracia Church, Ciudad Juarez, (Presbyterian Church of Mexico) has become a safe place for refugees as they await an opportunity to seek asylum in the US. Many of these refugees are from Cuba, who are following the directives to seek asylum in the US by coming over land rather than by sea.

See:

Link to Cuban refugees seeking asylum:

- <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/obtaining-asylum-united-states>

Angel and Samuel say that it is "not common to find an Evangelical church willing to step out in faith, sharing their resources, and receive refugees." These refugees have no other place to go. They need housing, clothing, toiletries, and food.

This is a unique opportunity, at a pivotal time, to offer life-saving hope and help, for refugees seeking asylum. Angel is NOT asking Holland Classis to allocate this money; he is asking for us to endorse his fundraising among our community so as to support his brother's ministry. He is also not asking us to be persuaded toward or against a political viewpoint. He is asking us to help hungry people, and to clothe people, and to help them to survive.

This is not an ordinary programmatic request for funds; the usual agencies and structures are not in place for this refugee crisis. This is a grassroots initiative, and is on the forefront of humanitarian aid. Endorsing this request is a step of faith that Angel, Samuel, and others have seen a need and are responding as best they can. The ministry they are undertaking has been witnessed and supported by Melissa Stek of the CRCNA and JJ TenClay, of RCA Global Mission's Refugee Ministries. Staff from the CRCNA and RCA have been in conversation with Angel and Samuel, and recognize the unique opportunity this presents for supporting these refugees.

As you will see in the proposal, the framework for raising these funds is focused on assisting 50 people for the next year. The need is anticipated to be very great, as thousands more refugees arrive near the border to await the opportunity to be considered for asylum in the USA.

The classis executive committee seeks your approval to endorse Angel's fundraising on behalf of these people, as we follow the command to care for the foreigner, and feed the hungry.

Please see:

- <http://dojustice.crcna.org/article/five-things-crcna-remember-and-advocate-during-today>
- <http://dojustice.crcna.org/article/4-ways-support-asylum-seekers-us-mexico-border>
- <https://www.rca.org/news/welcoming-hungry-sick-and-afraid>