

Classis of North Grand Rapids Meeting Minutes

Stated Session
Third Reformed Church
January 19, 2016

Opening: Devotion led by

Branson Parler, Student under care of Classis. He read from Acts 15:28 and gave a meditation on community. Community includes conflict and commitment. He closed in prayer.

Business Meeting Called to Order by Bob Engelsman, President at 7:10 PM.

Roll Call (completed by signature)

A – Excused Absence U – Unexcused Absence

Church	Clergy	Elder	Elder
Aberdeen Reformed	Ryan Landt (A)	(U)	
Casnovia	Vacant	Jason Vermeulen	
Central Reformed	Louis Lotz (A) Katie Baker (A)	Helen Phillips	John Meyers
Church of the Master	David Mayer	Debra Schmidt	
Clancy Street Fellowship	Carol Faas (MUC) (U)	(U)	
The Community - Ada	William Norden (A)	Bob Engelsman	
	Mara Joy Norden		
Fourth Reformed	Vacant	Tom Boehm	Branson Parler
Knapp Street Reformed	Les Wiseman	Russ Ripma	
Oakview Community Church	Gerald Vander Velde (MUC)	Mark Bultema	
Orchard Hill Reformed	Bob Karel	Henry Smitter	Michael Bart
	Kathy Bartels (MUC)	William Kok	
Remembrance Reformed	Eric Cook	John Jacobitz	Eunice Kooiman
	Todd Schmidt	Ed DeGroot (A)	
Resurrection Reformed	Doug Kiel (A)	Bruce Holleboom	
	Kristi Kiel		
Richmond Reformed	Christopher Westerbeek	Mark Mulder	
Rockford Reformed	Paul Bradford	Megan DeVries	
Servant's Community	Jeff Petersen	Cindy Bennett	
	Jennifer Petersen		
Standale	Jessica Shults	Lin Cline	
Third Reformed	Vacant	Margo Taylor	Jim Noordyke
Trinity Reformed	Ben Bruins	Marsha Hoffman	
	Sarah Bruins		
Specialized Ministers/Ministers Without Charge/Inactive			
Lee Ausema	Nancy Boote (A)	Eric Branch (U)	Nancy Claus
Susan Cleveland	Andrew DeBraber (A)	John Delger	Marcia Elders (A)
Sarah Juist	Kate Kooyman	Steve Luchies	Diane Maodush-Pitzer
Tim Meendering	Cheryl Molhoek	Adam Navis (A)	
Robyn Saylor	Eric Schalk (A)	Lisa Tice (A)	Susan VanderWall (U)
David Veldt	Steve Wolters		
Rachel Bush (U)	Lisa Henderson	Diane Konynenbelt	Sophie Landt (U)
Brad Olson (A)	Dan Plasman	Bill VanderWerp (A)	Jonathan Tice (A)
Aaron Wetzel	Andre Daley (U)		

Retired Ministers			
George Brown Jr (A)	Bill Fennema	Jan Rogacki (A)	Ralph Robrahn
Don Veltman (A)			
Associates In Ministry, Commissioned Pastor			
Willa Brown (A)	George VanderHyde (U)		
Joel Bengelink (A)	Mike Gafa	George Werkema (U)	
Guests			

Welcome

First time delegates and guests were asked to introduce themselves and be acknowledged by the Classis.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion made, supported, and passed to accept the minutes of the Stated Session, September 15, 2015 and the Ordination service for Paige Convis, October 11, 2015.

Appoint Tellers

Tellers were appointed from Casnovia and Central.

Committee and Council Reports

Executive Committee

Motion made, supported, and passed the recommendation of the Specialized Ministry Committee to receive the membership of the Rev. Sarah Juist; approve the appointment of Rev. Ben Bruins to fill an unexpired term on the OJB Committee; approve Craig Vander Heide, Rockford as delegate to General Synod; approve Diane Konyonenbelt as co-leader of the Student Care Committee and its representative to the Executive Committee.

The Rev. Sarah Juist read and signed the Declaration. Jeff Petersen offered a prayer for Sarah's call to ministry and blessing on her call to ministry at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Overtures and Judicial Business

Henry Smitter presented the proposed changes to the Book of Church Order and answered any questions. The results of the paper vote is:

1. Elder Delegates to Classes 49 Yes 1 No
2. Classis Determination Regarding Ministry Experience for Other Candidates 50 Yes 0 No

Ministry Presentations

Oakview Reformed

Gerald Vander Velde presented an overview of the active and effective ministries at Oakview. These include:

- Three weekly alcoholics anonymous meetings; one weekly Alanon District meeting; and one weekly narcotics anonymous meeting
- Twice monthly food pantry
- Weekly Northview Youth For Christ breakfast during school year

- Monthly Sunday night community movie night
- Winter knitting program that provides mittens for community distribution
- Community Lenten breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt with average attendance of 60 and 200 respectively.
- Summer reading tutoring program in cooperation with the Northview Public Schools.
- Summer garden available to the community.
- Annual Christmas Carol and Music program and dinner with average attendance of 125.

Chaplain Rev. Steve Wolters

Steve is a chaplain and the bereavement coordinator at Spectrum in the OB clinic. He provides training for staff and manages the resources that they need. He facilitates a support group for families that experienced a pregnancy related death. He reported on the challenges and blessings of his ministry; which are often linked. The challenges include knowing the words to say in situations where there really aren't any easy words. Families face a long process in dealing with loss so he serves as a guide and as a faith resource. The blessing is that he's invited into these conversations and knowing that God hasn't left them during a very difficult time. Infant deaths occur frequently and families may feel isolated and lonely in their grief. This grief isn't always shared with others adding to this sense of isolation. He counselled Classis attendees that it's important to remember the baby's name, which tells the parents that you love them. Community resources: support group 4th Monday of the month; Starlight Ministries in Hudsonville; Mom's Womb; Ele's Place.

Chaplain Rev. Nancy Claus

Chaplain at Porter Hills. 1350 residents at five different locations. She is responsible for three locations; residents range in age from 65-105 years old. Nancy is one of two chaplains at Porter Hills. 20% of the residents don't have or want any relationship with Christ. She serves as an evangelist as well caring for the 80% who claim a relationship with Christ. She leads Bible studies and preaches once per month and coordinates visiting pastors from the community. Chaplains at Porter Hills conduct funerals, memorial services, and administer communion. Nancy developed the Worship on Wednesday program in the health center, memory care, and other off site campuses. She is becoming certified in ministry to those who suffer memory loss. One of the last things to fade from the memory is the relationship with God. She believes that God blesses churches who take care of their elderly. Many churches seem to forget their members when they move into Porter Hills.

Rev. Ralph Robrahn offered a prayer of blessing on these ministries. The Classis members laid hands on Gerald, Steve, and Nancy during the prayer.

Revitalization Team Presentation on Churches in Transition.

Tim Meendering made a presentation on the role of Specialized Transitional Ministry to churches between pastors. The purpose is to bring objectivity to the church's identification of its strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Continuity for preaching and teaching during transition is an important role of the specialized transitional minister.

Particularia

The Stated Clerk is instructed to send a letter of appreciation to Third Reformed as the host church for the meeting.

Ministerial Changes for 2015.

The Clerk referred members to the report of ministerial changes that took place in 2015.

Consistorial Reports.

Must be completed on line before March 1, 2016. Church login account numbers and passwords were emailed out. If you need these contact the stated clerk immediately.

Constitutional Inquiries.

These are due by February 15, 2016.

Benefits Verification Forms

Due January 15, 2016 and many haven't responded yet.

Contracted Pastors.

Contracts must be renewed annually and approved by Pastoral Care Committee before being signed.

March 2016 Classis Meeting.

Discussed the need for a March stated session and willingness to defer any business to the May/June Exams meeting. The President will make a decision. If the regular stated session isn't held there will be a prayer session in advance of the Wise Council meeting.

Announcement

Jeff Petersen mentioned that Dick TerMaat is dealing with severe health problems and asked for prayers for Dick and Helen. So far his condition is undiagnosed. Cindy Bennett, elder delegate from Servant's is resigning as delegate after 5 years of service.

Bob Engelsman reported that Steve Faas is back home following successful surgery.

Notice of Special Classis Conversation February 16, 2016.

This won't be a formal classis session; rather, a conversation about the topic of same sex relationships and the Reformed Church's position on it.

How Does the Classis Make Better Use of Time

Jen Petersen reported on the Wise Council delegate process and selecting delegates. Our desire is to represent the voices of the Classis during the Wise Council sessions. Mike Gafa reported on his intent to fully represent the Classis as delegate to the Wise Council and asks for the Classis' prayers during this time.

Restorative Practices discussions were practiced by the Classis during this presentation. This format will be followed during the Classis' special conversation on February 16, 2016.

Resolutions

Motion made, supported, and approved to excuse the absences of Katie Baker, Joel Bengelink, Nancy Boote, George Brown, Willa Brown, Andy DeBraber, Ed DeGroot, Marcia Elders, Doug Kiel, Ryan Landt, Lou Lotz, Brad Olson, Adam Navis, Billy Norden, Jan Rogacki, Eric Schalk, Jonathan Tice, Lisa Tice, Bill VanderWerp, and Don Veltman.

Closing

Motion made, supported, and approved to close the meeting.

Closing Prayer by Jen Petersen.

Next Classis Meetings

Stated Session –March at to be determined Dinner 5:45 PM; session 6:45 PM

Student Exams – May 17 if Western Seminary student only; June if Western Seminary and MFCA students at Aberdeen Reformed; 6:30 PM