

# Classis of North Grand Rapids Meeting Minutes

Stated Session

Via Zoom Web Conference

January 19, 2021

## Opening: Devotion led by Tim Meendering

Tim reflected on the challenges to ministry because of the pandemic particularly the feeling of isolation, both individually and for congregations. He highlighted the plight of retirement residents—those with a faith and without a faith as experienced by chaplain Nancy Claus. He referenced a book *Analog Church* that discusses people's need to interact with each other. The church can meet this need. He emphasized the importance of coaching noted by the respondents to the Executive Committee inquiry. We can't get carried away with the digital church.

Business Meeting Called to Order by Tim Meendering, President at 6:30 PM.

## Roll Call (completed by signature)

A – Excused Absence    U – Unexcused Absence

Church	Clergy	Elder	Elder
Aberdeen Reformed	Matt Rose (MUC)	Ted Myers	Carl Bos
Central Reformed	Steven Pierce	Willa Brown	Jeff DeVree
The Community - Ada	William Norden	Katie Music-Reynhout	
	Mara Joy Norden		
Faith Harvest	David Mayer	Deb Schmidt	
Fourth Reformed	Eric Schalk		
Knapp Street Reformed	Les Wiseman	Keith Hinkle	
Oakview Community Church	Vacant	Jerry DeRuiter	
Orchard Hill Reformed	Bob Karel (A)	Michael Bart	Bill Hahn
	Kathy Bartels (MUC)		
	Laura Dilley (MUC)		
Remembrance Reformed	Eric Cook	John Jacobitz	Travis Buys, Ch. Finance
	Todd Schmidt	Jen Breen	Lynn Samuelson
Resurrection Reformed	Doug Kiel	Katrina Towns	
Richmond Reformed	Christopher Westerbeek	Mark Mulder	
Rockford Reformed	Tim Meendering	Kevin Johnson	
Servant's Community	Mark Veldt		
Standale	Jessica Shults	Lin Cline	
	Matt Shults		
Third Reformed	Jeff Petersen	Ron Schollaart	
Trinity Reformed	Ben Bruins	Katie Bush	
	Sarah Bruins		
<b>Specialized Ministers/Ministers Without Charge/Inactive</b>			
Katherine Baker	Nancy Claus	Jennifer Holmes Curran	John Delger
Kristi Kiel	Steve Luchies	Diane Maodush-Pitzer (A)	Kristen Meyer
Cheryl Molhoek	Adam Navis (U)	Branson Parler (U)	Rebecca Stegeman Riekse
Robyn Saylor (U)	Dave Vander Woude (MUC) (U)	David Veldt	Steve Wolters
Eric Bogerd	Nancy Boote	Eric Branch (U)	Rachel Bush (U)
Kate Kooyman (U)	Ryan Landt (U)	Jennifer Petersen (A)	Jonathan Tice (A)

Susan VanderWall (U)	Bill VanderWerp	Aaron Wetzel	
Andre Daley (U)			
<b>Retired Ministers</b>			
Bill Fennema (A)	Ralph Robrahn		
<b>Associates In Ministry, Commissioned Pastor</b>			
Willa Brown	George VanderHyde (U)		
Joel Bengelink (A)	George Werkema		

## Welcome

New delegate was welcomed—Kevin Johnson, Rockford.

## Approval of the Agenda

Motion made, supported, and passed to approve the agenda as amended.

## Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion made, supported, and passed by common consent to accept the minutes of the September 20, 2020 as presented.

## Committee and Council Reports

### Executive Committee

Approved the recommendation to appoint Rev. Dr. Steve Pierce as chairperson of the Overtures and Judicial Business Committee to a first term ending 9/20/22 and Rev. Christopher Westerbeek as chairperson of the Revitalization Team to a first term ending 9/20/22.

Approved the recommendation to appoint Rev. Diane Maodush-Pitzer to a second term on the Regional Synod Overtures and Judicial Business Committee with a term ending 5/31/2025.

The Executive Committee approved the recommendation of the Student Care Committee of the following examiners: Theology, Paul Troost; Eric Schalk, History; Nancy Claus, Sacraments, and Polity, Rob Teitsma.

These recommendations were approved by consent.

## New Business

1. Discussion of General Synod Council request for comment on General Synod 2021 structure.

Comments from various groups:

Digital meeting preferred if an in-person meeting can't be held in June or October 2021. There has to be a digital option for delegates who can't travel or choose not to attend.

Look at a satellite approach and use central meeting in Iowa and regional meetings, including Canada, using digital. A word of caution was given that we should think about what is realistic to facilitate by a small GSC staff.

Delay the meeting because of the pandemic causing people to be over-taxed and this is a topic that will produce an intensive discussion without the additional pandemic-induced pressures. Technology doesn't facilitate doing the work well—participants miss the visual cues that an in-person meeting provides. It is

harder to have real conversation using digital media—this meeting suggests that participants aren't engaged; no one looks happy to be here.

What is the cost of waiting to make a decision? Trying to balance a sense of urgency for this topic considering everything else (pandemic related) going on. All General Synod, Regional Synod, and to a degree, Classis business is deferred, delayed, postponed—can't move forward until the General Synod moves to a decision. Do we need to rush into everything? Can we live until 2022 without direction that will result from the General Synod meeting? Is it responsible to make this type of decision in the pandemic environment? Conflict and high anxiety—need to be in person and inclusive of those who need a voice.

There is a sense of urgency, but consistories and pastors are overwhelmed keeping their congregations working maintaining community during the pandemic. The various judicatories have to listen to the elders as they address their physical and mental capacities. Churches are just trying to stay afloat.

What is the unknown impact of a change in US President and his administration's approach to COVID restrictions?

PCUSA put their digital meeting together in 6 months in 2020 and UCC is holding digital meeting in June 2021.

**Participants were asked to vote on the four proposals by the General Synod president, selecting their first choice and a second choice.**

**First Choice: D. Postpone General Synod 2021 to the next year.**

**Second Choice: C. Hold the stated session of the General Synod in October 2021.**

In accordance with the invitation to submit other ideas it was agreed to submit an idea for a completely digital meeting and a satellite meeting scenario with the vote breakdowns included. These are:

Completely digital meeting. 61% No; 45% Yes; 8 Abstentions

Main Iowa meeting with satellite locations. 47% No; 45% Yes; 17% Abstentions

The Clerk will provide a written response of these decisions to the General Synod president.

2. Concerns of Parish and Chaplain ministers and ministries during Covid and prayers.

Thanks to the parish ministers and chaplains who responded to the Executive Committee's request for pandemic assessment. The responses were very insightful, and today the Executive Committee prayed for each of the concerns mentioned. All members and delegates are encouraged to lift all parish ministers and chaplains in prayer and be mindful of the pressures they are under. Today, Exec doesn't know the next steps but working on it with Pastoral Care Committee.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Announcements/Reminders**

Specialized Minister/Without Charge forms are past due. Please get them in so Specialized Ministry Committee can complete its work in a timely manner.

Distribution of Ministerial Changes 2020.

Consistorial Reports. To be completed online by March 1, 2021.

Constitutional Inquiries. Due to Stated Clerk by January 31, 2021.

Minister/Consistory Benefits Verification Statements. Due to Stated Clerk by January 31, 2021.

Elder/consistory minutes. Due to the Stated Clerk by January 31, 2021.

## **Particularia**

The Stated Clerk thanked Wally De Fuente for facilitating the meeting.

Les Wiseman stated that the Rev. Vance Elzinga, former Knapp pastor, passed into Glory this past weekend.

## **Resolutions**

Motion made, supported, and passed to excuse the absences of Joel Bengelink, Bob Karel, Jennifer Petersen, and Jonathan Tice.

## **Closing**

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

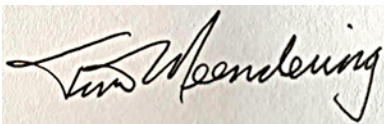
Closing Prayer by Tim Meendering.

## **Next Classis Meetings**

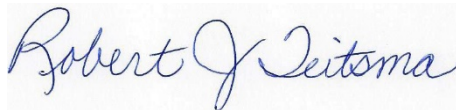
Stated Session – March 16, 2021 at the call of the President. Digital meeting if conducted.

May 18, 2021 student exams, format and location to be determined.

September 21, 2021 format and location to be determined.



Tim Meendering, President



Robert J. Teitsma, Stated Clerk

**CHANGE REPORT**  
**Classis of North Grand Rapids**  
**Reformed Church in America**  
**2020**

**Examination for Declaration of Licensure:**

None

**Ordinations:**

None

**Installations:**

None

**Received from Other Classes:**

None

**Transfers to Other Classes:**

Lisa Henderson, Holland Classis, February 2020

**Received from Other Classis/Denomination:**

None

**Transfers to Other Classis/Denomination:**

None

**Dissolutions:**

None

**Change in Ministerial Status within the Classis:**

Dave Vander Woude, MUC Remembrance to Specialized Minister, Church Planter, July 2020

Mark Veldt, From Full Time to Reduced Time (80%), Servant's Community, July 2020

**Without Charge:**

None

**Demitted:**

None

**Retired:**

None

**Inactive:**

None

**Deceased:**

None