



Classis of North Grand Rapids
1460 Banbury Drive
Grand Rapids MI 49505

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Classis of North Grand Rapids Meeting Minutes

Stated Session
The Community - Ada
January 17, 2023

Opening: Worship led by Mara Norden

Mara led a responsive reading of Psalm 40, singing a hymn and offered several prayers of thanksgiving and petition.

Business Meeting Called to Order by Ben Bruins, President at 6:48 PM.

Roll Call (completed by signature)

A – Excused Absence U – Unexcused Absence

| Church | Clergy | Elder | Elder |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Central Reformed | Steven Pierce | Willa Brown (A) | Jeff DeVree |
| | Matt Shults (MUC) (A) | Tim Elzinga (Finance) | |
| The Community - Ada | Mara Joy Norden | | Katie Music-Reynhout (VP) |
| Oakview Community Church | Vacant | Jerry DeRuiter (U) | John Dykema (A) |
| Resurrection Reformed | Doug Kiel (U) | (U) | |
| Richmond Reformed | Vacant | (U) | Nancy Werkema |
| Rockford Reformed | Tim Meendering | Scott Jacobs | |
| Servant's Community | James Earley | Marty Wagoner | |
| Standale | Vacant | Lin Cline | Sharon Palma |
| Third Reformed | Jeff Petersen | Ron Schollaart (U) | |
| Trinity Reformed | Ben Bruins | Jan Koopman | |
| | Sarah Bruins | | |
| Specialized Ministers/Ministers Without Charge/Inactive | | | |
| Kathy Bartels (A) | Nancy Boote | Jennifer Holmes Curran (U) | Laura Dilley (A) |
| Eric Cook (U) | Anne Elzinga (A) | Bob Karel (U) | Kristi Kiel (U) |
| Ryan Landt (U) | Steve Luchies | Kristen Meyer | Cheryl Molhoek |
| Billy Norden | Branson Parler (A) | Rebecca Stegeman Riekse | Matt Rose (U) |
| Robyn Saylor (U) | Jessica Shults (A) | Todd Schmidt (U) | Peter TeWinkle |
| Dave Vander Woude | David Veldt (U) | Les Wiseman (U) | |
| | | | |
| Eric Bogerd (A) | Eric Branch (U) | Rachel Bush (U) | Nancy Claus |
| John Delger | Kate Kooyman (U) | David Mayer (A) | Jennifer Petersen (A) |
| Jonathan Tice (A) | Susan VanderWall (U) | Bill VanderWerp (A) | Christopher Westerbeek (U) |
| Aaron Wetzel | Steve Wolters (U) | | |
| | | | |
| Andre Daley | | | |
| Retired Ministers | | | |
| Ralph Robrahn | | | |
| Associates In Ministry, Commissioned Pastor | | | |
| Willa Brown (A) | | George Werkema | |

Appoint Tellers

Tellers were appointed from Standale.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion made, supported, and passed to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2022.

Committee and Team Reports

Executive Committee

Presentation by Nancy Boote and Kristen Meyer on the RCA's antiracism policy and recommendation by Executive Committee to adopt the same for the Classis. They gave background on the recommendations from General Synod. Kristen introduced CORE, an organization, that provides training for churches who want to address antiracism.

Will the Classis have a concerted effort to develop this concept or just accept it? It is up to the will of the body as to how it moves forward. We need to put our faith into action; we don't need a policy.

Motion made, supported, and passed to adopt the antiracism policy of the RCA.

Billy Norden reported on progress made by the Finance Task Force and highlighted components of the Task Force's findings. A final report with recommendations will be made at the March stated session. Several people spoke to specific uses of money—supporting RCA missions and funding antiracism programming of some type. Consider adding to Classis staff in the form of a Classis Leader. Emphasize support to churches like Servant's and Richmond as they revitalize their ministries.

Motion made, supported, and passed to ratify the following recommendations in one action.

Approved a restated budget including an omitted salary aid assessment of \$3.15.

Recommend the Classis ratify this action.

Approved appointing Ralph Robrahn to an at-large position on the Executive Committee, term ending September 17, 2024; Peter TeWinkle to an extra position on the Specialized Ministry Committee, term ending September 17, 2024; and James Earley to the Student Care Committee, term ending September 16, 2025.

Recommend the Classis ratify this action.

Appointed Jan Koopman to an elder position on the Pastoral Care Committee, term ending September 16, 2025.

Recommend the Classis ratify this appointment.

Voted to a) pay up to \$2,297 in medical co-pays for David Mayer and b) to grant him retirement status effective December 1, 2022. Note: David states that he will be active in our Classis, and in the Freedom Dreamers ministry for Returning Citizens and his Legacy Pals ministry.

Recommend the Classis ratify this action.

The President led a discussion of "How do we fit into today's RCA and Classis?" This was a general discussion using the questions posed by the Regional Synod.

The participants broke into smaller groups for a brief discussion on the future of the Classis. Discuss what is the most fruitful path forward for our Classis.

Comments:

Need to develop a new vision statement. Smaller classis size can be a benefit to Classis function and effectiveness. Put emphasis on people and time fostering more vision development.

Competing visions for restructuring dependent on what General and Regional Synods are going to do.

How can the Classis leverage the unique opportunities to do ministry together?

Importance of local relationships; affinity model with like minded people is detrimental to informed function and ministry. Classis needs diversity of thought to represent the dissimilar beliefs of many church members.

Can we financially continue long term? If merging with GLCC for example, what is the impact on NGRC? Distance between churches makes for a more productive classis session due to the various ministries represented.

Desire for relationship based on group's experience in other classes. Longer meeting sessions due to distance traveled proved effective in building relationships and sharing ministry experiences. The Classis needs to allow ministries to share successes, needs, and wants and encourage each other. The Classis must foster the desire to see other churches do well.

Desire to be effective as a group. Want to keep NGRC together.

Finance Committee

1. General Synod Assessment expense line item has been corrected to \$94,987, an increase of \$16,615.
2. Regional Synod Assessment Expense line item has been corrected to \$31,414, an increase of \$5,495.

Both above increases are the result of an incorrect assumption by the Chairman of the Finance Committee that assessments for departed churches would be due only until the end of 2022. By General Synod rule those assessments must be paid up to the 12th month after a Petition for Withdrawal has been filed.

To reflect above items 1. and 2., General Fund expenses increases from \$130,335 to \$152,445. To reflect above items 1. and 2., Net Cash shortfall increases from \$43,397 to \$65,507.

Motion made, supported, and passed to approve the revision to the 2023 budget.

Nominations Committee

Motion made, supported, and passed to appoint the following as delegates to General and Regional Synods.

General Synod

Rev. Steve Pierce
Rev. Rebecca Stegeman Riekse

Elder Brian Andrew, Central
Elder John Dykema, Oakview

Alternates

Rev. Kristen Meyer
Rev. Jennifer Holmes Curran

Elders from
Third
Trinity

Regional Synod

Year 2

Rev. Rebecca Stegeman Riekse
Rev. Kristen Meyer

Elder Lin Cline, Standale
Elder from Ada (replacing elder from Rockford)

Year 1

Rev. Jennifer Holmes Curran
Rev. David VanderWoude

Elder Brian Andrew, Central
Elder Kurt Reppart, Servant's

Alternates

Rev. Matt Shults
Rev. Matt Rose

Elder from Third
Elder from Trinity

Overtures and Judicial Business

The Committee reported on its review and recommendations to the proposed changes to the Book of Church Order as made at the 2022 General Synod.

Changing the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry Process (TE 22-2, MGS 2022, pp. 262-264)

16 YES 3 NO

Changing the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry Name (TE 22-1, MGS 2022, pp. 253-256)

16 YES 3 NO

Pastoral Care Committee

No report.

Specialized Ministry Committee

No report.

Student Care Committee

No report.

Miscellaneous

Demission Branson Parler

Rev. Branson Parler petitioned the Classis to grant demission from Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Reformed Church in America.

Motion, made, and supported to demit Branson Parler from ministry in the RCA.

Announcements/Reminders

Consistorial Reports are to be completed by March 1, 2023; Constitutional Inquiries are to be received by January 31, 2023; Salary and Benefits Statements were due January 15, 2023; and Specialized Minister and Ministers Without Charge forms were due January 15, 2023.

Consistory and Elders Minutes for review are due January 31, 2023.

Anyone not receiving Classis emails, please let me know.

Particularia

The Stated Clerk thanked The Community - Ada for hosting church for the meeting.

Resolutions

Motion made, supported, and passed to excuse the absences of Kathy Bartels, Eric Bogerd, Willa Brown, Laura Dilley, John Dykema, Anne Elzinga, Lou Lotz, David Mayer, Jen Petersen, Jess Shults, Matt Shults, Bill VanderWerp.

Closing

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

Closing Prayer by Ben Bruins.

Next Classis Meetings

Stated Sessions

March 21, 2023, Oakview; dinner 5:45 PM session 6:30 PM

September 19, 2023, Resurrection, dinner 5:45 PM session 6:30



Benjamin Bruins, President



Robert J. Teitsma, Stated Clerk