

Agenda for the Meeting of Classis Grandville

Worshiping one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in four languages

A gathering of Christian Reformed Churches in Byron Center, Dorr, Grandville and Wyoming

Albanian Christian Ministry (emerging), First Byron Center, Second Byron Center, Calvary, Dorr, Emanuel Hispanic, Faith Community, Fellowship, Friendship, Hahn-In, Hanley, Hope, Heritage, Ivanrest, J.A.M. [Jesus and Me] (emerging), Lee Street, Pathway, South Grandville, Southwest Community (emerging)

Date: July 9, 2020

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: First Byron Center CRC

8541 Byron Center Avenue SW

Byron Center, Michigan 49315

Chairperson: Rev. Bob Huisman

Vice-chairperson: Pastor Jim Heethuis

Please note the following:

The Executive Team has scheduled this special meeting of Classis Grandville at the request of the Council of First Byron Center CRC. First Byron CRC has presented the attached job description for the office of Commissioned Pastor to serve as their Senior Pastor. This job description requires the approval of Classis Grandville and synodical deputies. Detailed information is also attached as background to this request.

Barring a change in Covid-19 limitations, this meeting will take place in the sanctuary of First Byron Center CRC, where proper social distancing regulations will be observed. Delegates are requested to wear face masks. In order to limit contact, Councils are requested to send their classical credentials to the stated clerk prior to the meeting, by mail (Dan Mouw, 5642 Trinity Lane SW, Wyoming, MI. 49418) or email (danielbmouw@gmail.com). Please note on your credentials which of your delegates, if any, are first-time delegates.

If Covid-19 limitations do not permit this gathering, we will be meeting on Zoom. Further updates will be sent as this July 9 meeting gets closer.

1. Opening prayer
2. Welcome to delegates and visitors.
3. Introduction of Dr. David Murray

4. Introduction of synodical deputies: Rev. Henry Admiraal (Classis GR North)
Rev. Al Gelder (Classis GR East)
Rev. Stephen Terpstra (Classis Zeeland)

5. Recommendation: To approve the job description for a commissioned pastor serving as the lead pastor at the First Byron Center Christian Reformed Church.

Grounds:

- a) Though Article 24 of the Christian Reformed church order was written to address a different set of circumstances than those which present themselves in this situation, it does provide a way for a commissioned pastor to serve in a senior pastor role.
- b) The Candidacy Committee, which oversees the office of commissioned pastor and is the gateway for entrance into CRC ministry, is agreeable to this arrangement.
- c) The church order is silent on the matter of pastors from another denomination being loaned to a Christian Reformed Church (except in the case of the Reformed Church in America), though it does allow Christian Reformed ministers of the Word to be loaned to another denomination. Since that option is not available, this allows Classis Grandville to pastorally address the convictions of First Byron Center CRC as they seek their next pastor.
- d) The First Byron Center CRC is fully committed to implementing all the prescribed requirements for the commissioned pastor position, and honor the expectations of the Christian Reformed Church as outlined in the Covenant for Officebearers in the CRC (2012).

[Note: This requires the concurrence of the synodical deputies].

6. Recommendation: To approve the learning plan for Dr. David Murray [attached]

7. Closing prayer

**Next regular meeting of Classis Grandville:
Thursday, September 17, 2020**

**First Byron CRC
Job Description
Commissioned Pastor to serve as Senior Pastor**

Overview

The pastor's work at First Byron Center Christian Reformed Church, in consultation with the elders, is to provide spiritual leadership in the congregation, to proclaim the Word in congregational life, to coordinate pastoral care and to encourage all members of the congregation to discover, develop, and use their gifts in works of ministry.

Qualifications

- Committed follower of Jesus Christ
- Committed to personal integrity and prayer in all aspects of personal and professional life
- High energy, mature, and self-motivated leader who can serve as a unifying force in the church
- Demonstrates an understanding of and possesses the ability to communicate the Reformed faith through preaching and teaching
- Ordained as a Pastor in the CRC or in another Reformed denomination
- Master of Divinity and a thoroughgoing commitment to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity
- A thoroughgoing agreement with and commitment to the First Byron Elder Covenant
- Position requires contact with confidential information; therefore, individual must have a proven degree of credibility and professional maturity

Required skills and abilities

- Able to faithfully and effectively preach expository sermons and lead worship
- A relational, encouraging shepherd, who can counsel, equip, and care for church members
- A collaborative leader who can lead, engage with, and direct the staff
- Able to communicate, direct, prioritize, and delegate in a positive, clear, and firm manner
- A visionary leader who is able to identify and resolve ministry gaps and ministry direction
- Detail oriented with ability to multitask, hold staff accountable, and work well under pressure
- Excellent organizational skills and the ability to meet deadlines
- Relationship builder with the flexibility and finesse to manage by influence

Essential functions and responsibilities

Preaching, worship, and teaching

70%

- Preach morning and evening worship services
- Administer the sacraments
- Plan worship in conjunction with the Director of Worship
- Serve as a permanent member of the Worship Committee
- Teach occasionally in Bible studies or other settings
- Assist the Youth Pastor in leading periodic pre-confession classes
- Assist in leading new member classes

Pastoral Care**20%**

- Coordinate pastoral care with staff and elders. Primarily responsible for crisis care visits
- Coordinate pre-marriage counseling along with lay mentor couples
- Conduct weddings and funerals as called upon
- Assist and advise the elders in the work of discipline

Administration**10%**

- Oversee and encourage the work of the staff
- Serve as a permanent member of the Executive Committee
- Take a leading role in the development of vision and goals of 1st Byron
- Evaluate job performance of direct reports
- Serve on the Council and Elder body as an advisory member

Reporting relationships

The Senior pastor will report directly to the Executive Committee and Council. He will submit a written monthly report to the Council.

Revised 5-14-20

Background information

Classis Grandville special meeting on July 9, 2020

First Byron Center CRC has requested permission from Classis Grandville to call Dr. David Murray as their senior pastor. Dr. Murray has been preaching regularly for First Byron Center as stated supply since Rev. Tom Groelsema left in January to serve a congregation in North Carolina that is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The search committee at First Byron interviewed several ministers (including Christian Reformed pastors) but came to the conviction that Dr. Murray was the pastor whom the Lord had in mind for their congregation. They made that recommendation to their Council, and their Council voted to recommend to the congregation to call Dr. Murray.

Dr. Murray most recently has been serving as a professor at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids. His ministerial ordination has been in the Free Reformed Church but he is in the process of becoming ordained as a minister of the Word in the PCA.

Ordinarily the procedures for calling a minister from outside the denomination are directed by Church Order Article 8 of the Christian Reformed Church order. The supplement under Article 8 spells out an affiliation process which would culminate in a classical examination, which, if favorable, would allow a congregation to call that minister as their pastor and have that person become an ordained minister of the Word in the CRC.

In this case, however, First Byron Center is requesting that Dr. Murray be ordained as their senior pastor in the office of Commissioned Pastor. The Commissioned Pastor office is described in Articles 23 and 24 of the Church Order, with detailed information available online on the CRCNA website in the Commissioned Pastor handbook. The reason for this request is that Dr. Murray doesn't wish to become ordained as a minister of the Word in the CRC because of his disagreement with an understanding of Scripture that permits women to serve in ecclesiastical office. Dr. Murray is in agreement with the Reformed confessions and his intention would be to become a member of First Byron Center (along with his family) and, as a Commissioned Pastor, an office-bearer in First Byron Center. Dr. Murray's position on women in ecclesiastical office is consistent with the convictions of the Council at First Byron Center.

At this July 9 meeting Classis Grandville will be asked, along with the three synodical deputies, to approve their job description for a commissioned pastor serving in the senior pastor role. Both parties (classical delegates and synodical deputies) must independently grant their approval. The approval of classis delegates and the synodical deputies would then lead next to an examination at a subsequent classis meeting.

What makes this request complicated is that it falls outside the normal church order regulations. Ordinarily, Dr. Murray would be asked, if he wished to be eligible to serve as senior pastor at First Byron, to follow the protocol in Article 8 and be ordained as a Minister of the Word, not as a Commissioned Pastor. The CRC does, after all, permit ministers of the Word to be personally opposed to having women serve in ecclesiastical office and be in good standing.

Yet, on the other hand, the church order does permit, in carefully defined circumstances, commissioned pastors to serve as senior pastors [that in itself isn't the issue], but its general intent is that eventually, with further training, those commissioned pastors would usually ultimately be ordained as ministers of the Word.

In effect, Classis Grandville delegates and synodical deputies are being asked to utilize the commissioned pastor office in a different way than that for which it was initially designed. If we were to describe this as an exceptional situation, and First Byron follows all the prescribed expectations for the commissioned pastor office, is it then permissible for classis to proceed to grant approval to First Byron Center's request (assuming that the job description is acceptable)? The stated clerk has been in communication with denominational leaders, both in church polity matters and the Candidacy Committee, and has received mixed responses to that question. Ultimately our classis has to grapple with this ourselves.

The commissioned pastor position as outlined in Articles 23 and 24 was clearly created with other kinds of situations in mind. On the other hand, the approval of classis and synodical deputies would permit First Byron Center to call the senior pastor they feel led to call and permit him as an ordained [commissioned] pastor to serve their congregation. Let's pray for wisdom as we come to a decision which we trust will honor the Lord and build His church.

The Executive Team of Classis Grandville

Commissioned Pastor Preparation and Learning Plan Design

- An introduction to the CRC
- A study of the CRC church order
- CRC history
- A study of our creeds and confessions.

I. Before Constructing the Plan

The following documents are suggested so a classis and a local ministry can work together to design a plan that appropriately prepares an individual for classis examination and for the ministry that will hopefully follow. (Note Church Order Supplement Art. 23):

- Job or Ministry Description
- Psychological Assessment
- List of diplomas, transcripts, or non-accredited education
- Background Check and Personal Disclosure form
- Letter of Recommendation from CRC Council
- Letter of Recommendation from Mentor/Pastor
- Bible Knowledge Assessment Test Results

Notes for Plan Construction:

1. Job or Ministry Description (First Byron CRC)
2. Psychological Assessment (ask Dan Mouw)
3. Diplomas, transcripts, etc (DPM)
4. Background Check and Personal Disclosure form (ask Dan Mouw)
5. Letter of Recommendation from CRC Council (First Byron CRC)
6. Letter of Recommendation from Mentor/Pastor (DPM ask Joel Beeke)
7. Bible Knowledge Assessment Test Results (ask Dan Mouw)

II. Assessing the Basic Denominationally Required Areas

- *The following list presents ten areas of preparation required for any person who will be examined for a senior or solo role as a commissioned pastor. The list may, of course, in whole or in part, also be profitable for persons who will be examined for other roles.*
- Note that each of the ten areas offers basic resource suggestions. The presumption is that each plan will be uniquely designed to match the interests and needs of the individual applicant. For those who want a basic yet comprehensive plan, **the resources indicated with bold** may be obtained in a packet sent from the candidacy committee for the cost \$100 per packet. (FA = available from Faith Alive)
- Additional resources may be selected or substituted in the plan design.
- Notes can be offered that demonstrate how and when any of the given areas have already been addressed.
- In each area where study is designed, a designated “form of accountability” is required (perhaps a paragraph of reflective essay, or a group interview, or some other means...)

1. CRC Ministries (denominational ministry orientation)

- a. Web site: www.crcna.org
- b. Print copy of the yearly denominational ministry report (FA)
- c. DVD review of denominational ministries (_____source_____)

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

1. Web site: www.crcna.org
 2. Print copy of the yearly denominational ministry report
 3. DVD review of denominational ministries
- Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

2. CRC History (learning the denominational story in context of the Christian Church story)

- a. **Grace Through Every Generation (Hoezee) (FA)**
- b. **Booklet: “Who We Are and What We Believe” (FA)**
- c. Learning to Count to One (A. Mulder) (FA)

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

Grace Through Every Generation
Booklet: “Who We Are and What We Believe”
Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

3. CRC Polity/Church Order

- a. **CRC Church Order and Supplement (FA)**
- b. **Church Order Commentary (H. DeMoor) (FA)**

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

CRC Church Order and Supplement
Church Order Commentary (H. DeMoor)
Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

4. Reformed Creeds and Confessions

- a. **Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions (FA)**
- b. **Faith Unfolded (J. Oosterhouse) (FA)**
- c. **Body and Soul (C. Barnes) (FA)**
- d. **Deep Down Faith (C. Plantinga) (Faith Alive, \$17.99)**

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions

Passed previous examinations in Reformed Creeds and Confessions with Free Church of Scotland and Free Reformed Churches of North America

M.Div. and Th.M courses on Westminster Standards taught for 13 years at PRTS

Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

5. Reformed Perspective

a. **“What It Means to be Reformed” (CRC “Identity Statement” booklet) (FA)**

b. **Book: Reformed, What it Means; Why It Matters (R. DeMoore) (FA)**

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

“What It Means to be Reformed”

Pastor and Professor of Theology in Reformed Churches for 24 years.

Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

6. Reformed Hermeneutics

a. **Article from CTS Forum by J Weima, “The Bible Tells Me So” (Free in resource packet)**

b. **Article: “Should Babies Be Baptized?” (D. Feddes) (Free in resource packet)**

c. **Book: How to Read the Bible for All It’s Worth, (Gordon Fee)**

d. **CRC Synodical Study: The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority (www.crcna web site, synod resources, Agenda of Synod 1972) (also appears as Document 2.7.2 on the candidacy google site)**

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

Article from CTS Forum by J Weima, “The Bible Tells Me So

Jesus on Every Page

Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

7. Basic Bible Knowledge

a. **Book: How to Read the Bible through the Jesus Lens (M. Williams, Zondervans)**

b. **NIV Study Bible notes and chapter introductions**

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

Passed previous Bible knowledge examinations in Free Church of Scotland and Free Reformed Church of North America

Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

8. The Art of Preaching

- a. **Article by CTS faculty on preaching (Free in resource packet)**
- b. **Article by Dr. John Rottman on “The Four Pages of the Sermon” (Free in resource packet)**
- c. Book: The Witness of Preaching, (Thomas Long)
- d. Book: The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text (S. Greidanus) (\$20.94 on Amazon) -- especially the chapter on Hermeneutics. –
- e. Book: The Servant of the Word (H.H. Farmer) (Fortress Press, 1942)

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

M.Div. Homiletics Course taught by David Murray

How Sermons Work by David Murray

Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman)

9. The Heart of a Pastor (character development and leadership)

- a. **Book: In the Name of Jesus (Henri Nouwen, Crossroad Press)**
- b. **Article: How Pastors Struggle (Free in resource packet)**
- c. **Article: Four Factors in Effective Leadership (Free in resource packet)**
- d. Book: Working the Angles (E. Peterson) (Eerdmans, \$13.51 on Amazon))
- e. Book: The Leader’s Journey (Jim Herrington) (\$16.31 on Amazon)

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

M.Div. Pastoral Ministry and Leadership course taught by David Murray

Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

10. The Call of a Pastor (knowing and telling your story of call to ministry)

a Article: *"Introduction"* from book Pastor, by William Willimon (*Free* in resource packet)

b Article: *"Introduction: Pastor Pete"* from book Pastor, by Eugene Peterson (*Free* in resource packet)

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

M.Div. Pastoral Ministry and Leadership course taught by David Murray

Accountability: Questions from and discussions with Van De Greind/Noorman

III. Identifying the Classis Specific Requirements and Individual Needs

- Based on the notes identified in section "I" above, and based upon the particular desires of the ministry and the regional classis body, make note of any additional elements of the learning plan design.

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

None

IV. Identifying any Ethnic or Cultural Needs and Factors

- The learning plan needs to be sensitive to each individual, and responsive to their ethnic and cultural needs, and the unique needs and factors of the ministry to be served. This box is provided in an attempt to give opportunity to articulate any specific needs and factors that pertain to the particular case.

Identify the resources to be used, and describe the form of accountability proposed:

None

V. Mentor Role and Contract

How often will the mentor and applicant meet, and for how long?

Once a week for 1-2 hours

What will the applicant do to demonstrate a teachable spirit, and allow the mentor access into his/her life?

He will meet every week with the mentor, answer questions as required, and receive any correction and advice in a humble spirit.

What will the mentor do to come alongside the applicant in a way that speaks the truth in love?

He will meet every week with the applicant, ask questions, and offer correction and advice.

VI. Reporting the Progress and Completion of the Plan

To whom will a “progress report” be made, and how often?

Progress report to First Byron Council every week until learning plan is completed

Who will be the person making the “progress report(s)”?

The applicant and the mentor will each submit a weekly report.

At what point will the Mentor and the Applicant review the “Covenant for Office Bearers”, and how will this be reported? (see document 6.1.8 on the Candidacy Committee google site))

No later than one month after the learning plan begins.

How will the mentor enlist the help of the applicant in preparing the final report to the Classis representative and the Denominational Candidacy Committee?

The mentor will ask the applicant to submit a report to him which the mentor may incorporate into his final report.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Signature of CMLT Mentor _____ Date _____

Signature of CMLT/Classis Representative: _____ Date _____

Signature of Candidacy Comm. _____ Date _____