

MINUTES OF CLASSIS GRANDVILLE

Thursday, September 15, 2022

Meeting at:
Fellowship Christian Reformed Church
Grandville, Michigan

Chairperson: Rev. Dan Kinnas

Stated Clerk: Rev. Dan Mouw

Article 1

OPENING WORSHIP

Diane Dykgraaf, classical prayer coordinator, along with members of the Healthy Church Team, led classis in a time of worship, including singing, Scripture readings, and group prayers.

Article 2

CREDENTIALS

The following individuals served as delegates:

CHURCHES	MINISTERS	ELDERS	DEACONS
Byron Center First		Jerry Berkenpas *Tony Rozema	
Friendship	Dan Kinnas	Jack De Blaay	*Matt Rousch
Heritage	Bob Huisman	Jon Diekema	Brad Diekema
Pathway	Jim Heethuis	Joe Seif	
Second		Mark Westrate	*Jim Loosenoort
Dorr	Cedric Parsels	Shaun O'Brien Randy Bosse	
Grandville Fellowship	Tom Vander Ploeg	*Chris Cook	*Pam Kortman
Hanley	Joe Vanden Akker	Bob De Boer	Ron De Young
Hope	Dale Fopma	*Doug Marsman	Greg Sytsma
Ivanrest	*Steve Winkle	*Ruth Carr	Jim Heyboer
South Grandville	Will Hensen	Steve Maring	*Sue Pipping
Wyoming Calvary	Mark Van Drunen	Shirley De Lange	*Luann Kruis
Faith Community	Rog Groenboom	Doug Vander Wilp	*David Van Dyken
Hahn-In			
Hispana Emanuel			
Lee Street	Kent Rottman		

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*First time delegates who stood to indicate their agreement with the Covenant for Office-bearers

Article 3

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Chairperson Dan Kinnas assumed the chair and welcomed delegates and visitors. Vice-chairperson was Rev. Bob Huisman.

Article 4

MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE DISBANDING OF HOPE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

a) Release of Rev. Dale Fopma

The Hope CRC and Rev. Dale Fopma requested that he be granted an Article 17a separation effective January 5, 2023, due to the closing of Hope CRC. The following synodical deputies were present: Rev. Al Gelder (Classis Grand Rapids East), Rev. Jerry Blom (Classis Grand Rapids North) and Rev. George Vink (Classis Grand Rapids South).

The following motion was made and supported:

That Classis Grandville approve the release of Rev. Dale Fopma from his ministry at Hope Christian Reformed Church effective January 5, 2023, in accordance with Article 17a of the Christian Reformed Church Order.

The Hope CRC also presented their compensation package for Rev. Fopma for the remainder of 2022 and a severance package for 2023.

This motion was ADOPTED. Synodical deputies concurred.

The following motion was then moved and supported: **That a pastoral care team be appointed for Rev. Fopma comprised of Rev. Will Henson (interim pastor at South Grandville CRC), Rev. John Witvliet (pastor of visitation at South Grandville CRC), and Rev. Kent Rottman (regional pastor).**

[Note: No limitations are being placed on Rev. Fopma's availability to receive and accept a call.]

This motion was ADOPTED.

b) Distribution of the assets of Hope Christian Reformed Church

The Hope CRC presented to Classis Grandville their tentative plans for the distribution of their assets.

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The following motion was moved and supported: **That Classis Grandville affirm the proposed distribution of the assets of Hope Christian Reformed Church.**

This motion was ADOPTED. [Note: A copy of this proposal will be filed with the classical Minutes].

- c) Chairperson Dan Kinnas read a letter from Classis Grandville that will be distributed to the members of the Hope CRC, acknowledging with profound gratitude to God the 106 year ministry of Hope CRC in Grandville.

Article 5

RELEASE OF REV. ALLEN PONTARELLI

The church plant called Southwest Community Church in Wyoming, Michigan, formally ended in August, 2022. Arrangements for the distribution of their assets have been made in consultation with their supervising council at Calvary CRC. The chairperson read a communication from Rev. Allen Pontarelli to classis expressing his gratitude for its support of this ministry.

The following motion was made and supported: That Classis Grandville honorably release Rev. Allen Pontarelli from the office of minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in accordance with Article 14b of the Christian Reformed Church Order.

This motion was ADOPTED. Synodical deputies Al Gelder, Jerry Blum and George Vink (listed above) concurred with this decision.

Article 6

CODE OF CONDUCT

Rev. Amanda Benckhuysen presented the CRC Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders which is being reviewed by councils and classes prior to a final proposal to Synod, 2023. This Code of Conduct, she explained, is considered to be one significant way to curb abuse and guide church leaders in using their influence for the flourishing of others.

Amanda encouraged delegates and churches to share further feedback with her implementation team.

Article 7

RESONATE LOCAL MINISTRY LEADER

Janis Persenaire shared written information with each church's delegates and updated classis on "Evangelism Shift" as well as Global Coffee Break. Global Coffee Break now ministers in 27 countries.

Article 8

REV. ALLEN VAN DELLEN

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Rev. Will Hensen introduced classis to Rev. Al Van Dellen, who has recently retired from CRC ministry in Sanborn, Iowa, and is now living in Grandville. Rev. Van Dellen and his wife Gwen have joined South Grandville CRC and his ministerial credentials now reside in Classis Grandville at South Grandville church.

Article 9

FAITH FORMATION

Carla Bieber distributed to delegates updated information on Faith Formation ministries.

Article 10

CLASSICAL DIACONAL MINISTRY

Suzanne Reinink distributed to delegates the latest newsletter from Volunteers in Service.

Article 11

EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Executive Team report in the printed agenda was received for information.

Article 12

COMMUNITY IMPACT TEAM

Chairperson Dan Kinnas highlighted the Greater Grand Rapids Church Planting Collaborative, which seeks to be a catalyst for church plants. A prayer tour of current church plants in the Grand Rapids area is being planned for November 10.

Article 13

HEALTHY CHURCH TEAM

Chairperson Dale Fopma is seeking to create a new list of church visitor teams, which will be presented to the Executive Team for approval.

Article 14

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Chairperson Bob Huisman indicated that Classis Grandville currently supports two seminary students.

Article 15

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Chairperson Rog Groenboom presented the proposed 2023 budget in the printed agenda. No amendments were considered.

The following motion was moved and supported: That Classis Grandville adopt the proposed 2023 budget of \$111,185.87 (a per member ministry share of \$27.79).

This motion was ADOPTED.

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Article 16

REGIONAL PASTOR

Rev. Kent Rottman updated classis on his work as regional pastor. He underscored the severe complications for pastors and ministries created by Covid.

Rev. Will Hensen informed classis about ongoing treatments that he is now receiving following a diagnosis of Hodgkin's Lymphoma. His current bi-weekly treatments are scheduled to continue for six months. Classis prayed for patience, healing and grace for Rev. Hensen and his family in the journey ahead.

Article 17

CHURCH COUNSELORS

Rev. Bob Huisman (Second Byron Center CRC) and Rev. Rog Groenboom (South Grandville CRC) reported on the progress of the calling process in these congregations.

Rev. Bryce Mensink is the counselor for Hahn-In CRC in their search process.

Article 18

CHURCH VISITOR REPORTS

No reports.

Article 19

OVERSIGHT TEAM

Rev. Tom Vander Ploeg provided a written update on the work of the oversight team appointed for Rev. A.J. Gretz. Rev. Gretz's release from South Grandville CRC under Article 17a took place a year ago.

Article 20

REPORT FROM DELEGATES TO SYNOD, 2022

Rev. Bob Huisman reported briefly on his experiences as a delegate to Synod in June.

Article 21

COMMUNICATION FROM FIRST BYRON CENTER CRC

In addition to the communication in the printed agenda, First Byron Center CRC included the following request on their classical credentials: "That Classis Grandville send a letter to the appropriate committees and bodies within the CRC (the committee *in loco* charged with enforcing the decision of Synod 2022, Neland Avenue CRC, and any other groups deemed appropriate by classis), insisting that Neland Avenue CRC be made to immediately obey the directions of Synod and remove deacon from office as instructed by Synod 2022."

The following motion was made and supported: That Classis Grandville communicate with Neland Avenue CRC, urging them to comply with the mandate they received from Synod, 2022, even while an appeal is in process.

This motion was DEFEATED.

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Article 22

OVERTURE FROM THE DORR CRC

An overture from the Dorr CRC was sent out electronically to the churches of classis four days before this classis meeting. Classis declined to take up this late submission at this meeting, and it will be presented and discussed at the January, 2023 meeting of Classis Grandville.

Article 23

STATED CLERK REPORT

Classis was informed that the following individuals representing Classis Grandville as delegates on denominational boards are eligible for reappointment by synod to a second term: Rachel Bouwkamp (Council of Delegates), R. Scott Greenway (Calvin Theological Seminary) and Calvin University (Rev. Nathan DeJong McCarron).

No reservations were raised about their reappointment. Their names will be submitted to Synod, 2023 for reappointment.

A motion was made, supported and adopted to approve the work of the stated clerk.

Article 24

CLASSICAL TREASURER REPORT

Leon De Lange distributed updated financial reports. He requested councils to confirm (if necessary) with the denomination (Theona Cook) that they are using the correct federal identification number.

Also the denomination has created a new remittance form that gives congregations options (if they choose) in allocating amounts for ministry shares.

A motion was made, supported and adopted to approve the work of the classical treasurer.

Article 25

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

In addition to matters on the credentials previously addressed during this classis meeting, Classis Grandville noted the following communication from the Calvary CRC:

The Council of Calvary would like to share that we have formed a task force to respond to the 2022 Synodical Affirmation of the Human Sexuality Report. This task force was formed because of our concerns about its implications for pastoral care. Over the past number of years, we have slowly realized that we have a large number of families in the church who have kids who identify as gay or, more broadly, as queer. Some of these are adult children, others are younger children and are active participants in our congregation. Our question is, "How are we to respond to this pastoral reality given the conclusions of the Human Sexuality Report?"

Regardless of the reasoning behind this movement, it has been very discouraging for families who are trying to figure out how to love their children to see a movement in our denomination that seems to be focused on shutting down discussion and excluding people from participation

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in our community. We do not have any answers about how to move forward, but we are concerned with the tone of this conversation and the methodologies that are being implemented. There has been much talk about being confessional, but at its heart, this movement does not seem to be centered on being sacrificial and Christlike. This tone, even more than the adoption of the report itself, is prompting us to set aside specific time and energy to consider the implications of this report for pastoral care for members and their families, as well as the broader community. We welcome any help or wisdom that could be provided in this process.

Article 26
SAFE CHURCH TEAM
No report.

Article 27
COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
Rachel Bouwkamp addressed classis about denominational restructuring, along with conversations at the COD about denominational membership decline. Rachel will contact some of our churches to get feedback on how to promote health and growth.

Article 28
WORLD RENEW
No report.

Article 29
ADJOURNMENT
Chairperson Dan Kinnas concluded this classis meeting with prayer.

**Next regular meeting of Classis Grandville:
Thursday, January 19, 2022**