

**Classis Iakota
MINUTES
March 5, 2024
Trinity Christian Reformed Church
Rock Valley, Iowa**

Art. 3789: The meeting begins at 9:00am with a time of worship being led by Henry Lengkeek who reads and offers a reflection on Psalm 121; he concludes his message with the reading of Hebrews 12:1-3. After offering a prayer, he leads the delegates and guests in the singing of “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.”

Art. 3790: Below is the list of the delegates appointed by their councils who are present at this meeting:

| <u>Churches</u> | <u>Ministers</u> | <u>Elders</u> | <u>Deacons</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Corsica | Scott Nichols | Dennis Niewenhuis | Cal Zomer |
| Harrison | Gary Maas | Daryl De Vries | Dan Baas |
| Inwood | | Roger Bouwman | Jordan Folkerts |
| | | Gerald Zwart | |
| New Holland | Norlyn Van Beek | Bob Holleman | Tim Vander Ley |
| Platte | Drew Hoekema | Dennis Kok | Bob Middendorp |
| Rock Rapids | Doug De Groot | Bill Jansma | |
| Rock Valley – Calvin | Gideon Wamala | Dan Ver Burg | Rece Evans |
| Rock Valley – First | Matthew Haan | James Vanden Bos | Ryan Zomer |
| Rock Valley – Trinity | Stanley Groothof | Chad Kooima | Ryan Elbers |
| Amistad Christiana | Eddy Olguin | Miguel Palafox | Silvestre Gonzalez |
| Sioux Center – Bethel | John Lee | Paul Van Voorst | Dirk DeKoning |
| Sioux Center – Bridge of Hope | | Glen Boer | Tina Folkerts |
| | | Gail Ashmore | |
| Sioux Center – Covenant | Joel Kok | Chris Goedhart | Dwight Van Tol |
| Sioux Center – Faith | Bob Pollema | Denny Van Zanten | Peter Hoelsema |
| Sioux Center – First | Kurt Monroe | Jerry De Groot | |
| Sioux Center – Lebanon | Robert Drenten | Rick De Boon | Dan Dunn |
| Sioux Falls – Cornerstone Prison | Scott Van Voorst | Gordon Dyk | |
| Sioux Falls – First | | Nate Engbers | Kyle Bleyenburgh |
| | | Aaron Zylstra | |
| Sioux Falls – Shalom | Kyle De Young | Dave Pluim | Cameron Stuiwe |
| Valentine – Lakeview | Joshua Stammis | Dean Noteboom | Shane LaFortune |

Art. 3791: Classis is declared constituted by Scott Nichols, the Chairperson of the day, and while the delegates sing “Jesus, With Your Church Abide” the first time delegates and past delegates who haven’t re-signed the Covenant for Officebearers come forward to sign the Covenant, with the following councils on record for protesting the seating of women delegates, regarding this as a violation of the Word of God: New Holland CRC, Platte CRC, Calvin Rock Valley CRC, First Rock Valley CRC. Gary Maas serves as Vice-chair and Bernie Haan as Clerk.

Art. 3792: The Chair welcomes the delegates and visitors. The Vice-chair is assigned to keep track of the prayer concerns throughout the day with a view to the closing prayer.

Art. 3793: The Chair notes the time schedule for the day (9-noon, lunch, 1-3:15, coffee, 3:30-)

Art. 3794: The first overture from First Sioux Center CRC (see Agenda pp. 3-4) is presented by Kurt Monroe. After making some amendments, the following action is taken:

Motion to overture Synod 2024 to

1. declare that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108, along with all cases of unrepentant sin, addresses a salvation issue;

Ground:

The Scriptures and confessional standards (particularly Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87) make clear that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 does address a salvation issue and that unchastity and sexual ethics are salvation issues.

2. declare that it is a serious deviation from the teachings of the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church in any way to deny that either Heidelberg Q&A 87 or Q&A 108 address salvation issues or to deny that sexual ethics and unchastity are salvation issues;

Grounds:

- a. Officebearers in the CRCNA are denying that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 (and implicitly Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87) and sexual ethics are salvation issues.
- b. It is a serious deviation from the teachings of the CRCNA to reclassify that which is a matter of salvation as a disputable or questionable issue or some other classification; such serious deviations from the clear teachings of Scripture and our confessions endanger the eternal salvation of the sheep and the unity of the flock entrusted to the officebearers' care.
- c. This action is in keeping with the established guidance of Synod 2022 (cf. *Acts of Synod 2022*, pp. 897-898).

3. declare that any officebearer who denies that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87 or Q&A 108 address a salvation issue and/or denies that unchastity and sexual ethics are a salvation issue is worthy of special discipline in accordance with Church Order Article 83;

Grounds:

- a. Church Order Article 83 states, "Special discipline shall be applied to officebearers if they violate the Covenant for Officebearers, are guilty of neglect or abuse of office, or in any way seriously deviate from sound doctrine and godly conduct."
- b. Tolerating such denials of these salvation issues puts the CRCNA in danger of transgressing its own boundaries for what a true church is, which includes the proper exercise of church discipline "Belgic Confession, Art. 29).
- c. Officebearers in the CRCNA who deny that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87 and Q&A 108 and sexual ethics are salvation issues, instead of faithfully fulfilling the responsibility of their office to confront brothers and sisters regarding their sin, are leaving them in their sin, thus denying them the opportunity for repentance and subsequent reconciliation with God and their neighbors.

4. instruct all classes, councils, and officebearers in the CRCNA that it is our duty to uphold the clear teaching of the Scriptures and confessions on the nature of Heidelberg Q&A 87 and Q&A 108 and sexual ethics.

Grounds:

- a. As Christians, we are called to be people of the truth, with integrity and honor, and failure to promote and defend the faith is to break the Covenant for Officebearers.
- b. The church must make every effort to correct such a grievous error, that we might not continue to sin in the eyes of God.

-Adopted

The following negative vote is registered: Joel Kok

[This overture in its entirety can be found in the Appendix to these minutes.]

Art. 3795: The second overture from First Sioux Center CRC (see Agenda pp. 4-6) is presented by Kurt Monroe. After making an amendment to the background, the following action is taken: **Motion** to overture synod to amend the Church Order, Supplement, Article 5, B. to read as following [new material to the supplement is highlighted in gray]:

1. Ministers (whether missionaries, professors, or others not serving congregations as pastors), elders, or deacons shall submit their "difficulties" to their councils for examination and judgment. Should a council decide that it is not able to judge the gravamen submitted to it, it

- shall submit the matter to classis for examination and judgment. If the classis, after examination, judges that it is unable to decide the matter, it may submit it to synod, in accordance with the principles of Church Order Article 28-b. These procedures shall follow the following timetable.
- a. A council shall have six months, or until the next classis meeting, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the gravamen is forwarded to classis, classis shall have six months, or until agenda items for the next synod must be submitted, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the gravamen appears before synod, synod's decision is binding, and the subscriber will have until the end of that calendar year to either 1) affirm the standards without reservation, 2) file a confessional-revision gravamen, or 3) resign from office.
 - b. If applicable, ministers can be honorably released at the conclusion of this process.
2. In all instances of confessional-difficulty gravamina, the matter shall not be open for discussion by the whole church, since this type of gravamen is a personal request for information and/ or clarification of the confession. Hence this type of gravamen should be dealt with pastorally and personally by the assembly addressed.
 3. A confessional-difficulty gravamen is a personal request for help in resolving a subscriber's doubts about a doctrine contained in the confessions that arise after the officer has, in good faith, subscribed themselves to the Covenant of Officebearers. It is not a request for an assembly to tolerate a subscriber's settled conviction that a doctrine contained in the confessions is wrong. Therefore, in all instances of confessional-difficulty gravamina, no assembly may exempt a subscriber from having to affirm all of the doctrines contained in the standards of the church.
 4. To honor the confidential and pastoral nature of the confessional-difficulty gravamen process and to maintain the integrity of the church's confessional covenant, the local council of an officebearer who has submitted a confessional-difficulty gravamen may not delegate that officebearer to a broader ecclesiastical assembly (classis or synod) until the difficulty has been resolved and the officebearer can affirm without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God. If the officebearer who has submitted a confessional-difficulty gravamen is nominated as a delegate to a broader assembly by an officebearer outside of his or her own council, he or she must decline the nomination.

Grounds:

- a. Confessional-difficulty gravamina were never intended as a permanent exception from our confessions. Therefore, we cannot let their illegitimate use as permanent exceptions from the confessions compromise the integrity of our confessional covenant.
- b. Due to the confidential nature of confessional-difficulty gravamina, delegates to broader assemblies (classis, synod) have no confidence that their fellow delegates hold to the same beliefs and are deliberating from the same biblical and confessional foundation.
- c. Adding a timetable to the guidelines and regulations will ensure that commitment to God's Word, commitment to the testimony of the creeds and confessions, and mutual trust among all officebearers of the CRCNA will be restored in a reasonable and prompt manner.

-Adopted

The following negative vote is registered: Joel Kok

[This overture in its entirety can be found in the Appendix to these minutes.]

Art. 3796: The overture from the Platte CRC (see Agenda pp. 6-9) is presented by Drew Hoekema
Motion that Synod 2024

- A. Instruct the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee [EIRC] to communicate with the RCA General Secretary and Commission on Christian Unity the following points, and to report back to Synod 2025 regarding responses received:
1. A desire for shared commitment to our confessional Reformed heritage, doctrine and practice.
 2. A concern regarding the nature of churches which have disaffiliated with the RCA as being in alignment with CRCNA positions.
 3. A request for clarification on the RCA's ongoing commitment in faith and practice to HC 108 and 109, specifically as it relates to the forbidding of unchastity, which encompasses homosexual sex.
 4. A request for clarification on whether RCA clergy have been, or are being, permitted to solemnize same-sex marriages, or to themselves remain in same-sex marriages or romantic partnerships, while remaining ministers in good standing.
 5. A request for response before Synod 2025.
- B. Provisionally declare the following decisions of Synod to be inoperative, until further review from Synod 2025 (upon receiving further response from the RCA to the above communication):
1. Articles 36(b)(9) and (10) of Synod 2005 (Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers between the CRC and the Reformed Church in America) [*Acts of Synod 2005* p. 740]
"9. That synod approve the Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers between the CRC and the Reformed Church of America subject to the additions or amendments to the Church Order (or supplements thereof) as recommended.
10. That synod propose...changes in Church Order Article 8 and its supplement."
 2. Article 20 of Synod 2014 (Resolution on the Relationship between the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America) [*Acts of Synod 2014* p. 504]
"That synod adopt the joint resolution prepared for the CRC synod and the General Synod of the RCA."
- C. Provisionally declare Church Order Article 8b, along with its supplement, 8D, to be inoperative until further review from Synod 2025.
- D. Request that Synod 2025 further review the ecumenical status of the Reformed Church in America as a church in communion.
- E. Prohibit CRCNA classes from delegating RCA-ordained ministers or commissioned pastors to future Synod meetings until the above decisions and articles in concern again become operative.
- F. Instruct the General Secretary to work with Thrive on developing a plan for how to potentially shepherd pastors and congregations affected by these decisions (i.e., RCA ministers called to CRCNA churches, union churches) for proposal to Synod 2025, while advising them to continue any current arrangements until further notice.

Grounds:

1. With over half of its member congregations leaving, most of whom are in alignment with the CRCNA, the RCA is no longer the same denomination as the one with whom these bonds were formed.
2. Scripture calls for a unity based upon common faith in Jesus Christ, not upon ethnic heritage, historical relationships, or common geography, and for separation from those tolerant of sin – sexual sin in particular.

3. Faithfulness as a church in communion requires encouragement toward faithful statements and faithful practices related to our common Reformed confession, especially regarding RCA clergy, who are permitted to seek a call in CRCNA congregations.
4. The presence of delegates ordained in the RCA at Synod meetings deliberating on the CRC's relationship to the RCA presents an obvious conflict of interest.
5. Since many congregations disaffiliating with the RCA align with the CRC position on human sexuality, we act out of solidarity with them and out of grave concern for the denomination they have left.

-Adopted

[This overture in its entirety can be found in the Appendix to these minutes.]

Art. 3797 The overture from the First Rock Valley CRC (see Agenda, pp. 9-10) is presented by Matthew Haan. After making some amendments, the following action is taken.

Motion to overture Synod 2024 to

Call all CRC churches who publicly state they are no longer willing to call practicing same-sex relationships a sin, to choose one of the following options:

1. Publicly repent of their decision and bring themselves back into compliance with the Bible's and our confessions' position on human sexuality, which has been acknowledged throughout all nations and generations of the Church catholic for nearly 2000 years, including the last 50 years of CRCNA synodical decisions. Public repentance will be indicated by the use of the attached form for the Public Acknowledgment of Sin and Declaration of Repentance.
2. Voluntarily disaffiliate from the Christian Reformed Church in North America by December 31, 2024.
3. If neither of these two things occur, Synod 2025 is to acknowledge that the fellowship-breaking actions and inactions of these affirming churches be effectively removed from the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church.
4. All churches and their governing classes who refuse to exercise church discipline over them will no longer have delegations recognized at Synod, nor will they have representation on the Council of Delegates or any other denominational bodies and agencies.

Grounds:

1. Synod 1926 asserted the right for ecclesiastical assemblies to take decisive disciplinary action even if the Church Order does not stipulate an exact process of action (Acts of Synod 1926, p. 329 and p. 330). It also made clear that a consistory worthy of discipline had "placed itself outside of the church relationship" (Acts of Synod 1926, p. 139).
2. Classis Hudson in 1992 recognized that one of the churches in its classis "had broken the bonds of fellowship with the denomination and therefore have placed themselves outside the fellowship of the CRC" (Minutes of Classis Hudson, Sept. 23, 1992, obtained from Heritage Hall). Synod itself said that the church that was no longer in fellowship with the denomination would be allowed to participate in Synod's process of appeals if it "would bring itself into conformity with the standards from which it was declared to have deviated" (Acts of Synod 1993, p. 610).
3. Synods 2022 and 2023 have given enough time for churches and Classes to discern their covenant fidelity to the fullness of God's Word related to human sexuality and the desire to be affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church.
4. In Paul's letter to Titus, he speaks to the need for the office-bearers of the church of Jesus Christ to resist false teachers. In Titus 1:9 Paul states that an elder "must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those

who oppose it.” And then, more directly, in Titus 3:10: “Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.”

5. This meets the burden of Synod’s instruction to “err on the side of caution, permitting full opportunity for other pastoral efforts to take effect” (Acts of Synod 1991, p. 771).
6. Our Lord and Savior commands his church to permit what His Word permits and to forbid what it forbids (John 20:23, Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:17,18, 20).
7. Discipline with the end goal of restoration has been sought. (Matthew 18:22, 1 Corinthians 5:5, Galatians 6:1, Hebrews 12:11).

Public Acknowledgment of Sin and Declaration of Repentance
for use by a council of the CRCNA

We, the Council of _____ Christian Reformed Church:

1. Acknowledge before God and His people that we have sinned against God and his church by persistently going beyond the teaching of our Lord, by breaking the unity of the church by refusing to submit to its instruction and discipline, and by refusing to bend our necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ.
2. Acknowledge before God and His people that we are truly sorry for our sin and believe that the Lord has forgiven us.
3. Reaffirm our union with Christ and desire to be readmitted to the covenant family of God.
4. Reaffirm, without reservation, that all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church are doctrines that are taught in the Word of God.
5. Promise to do all we can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen our love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring, and submitting to its authority.
6. Promise to be formed and governed by the forms of unity of the CRCNA, heartily believing, promoting, and defending their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.
7. Promise to join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere.

Signed: _____ [clerk of council]

Date: _____

Public Acknowledgment of Sin and Declaration of Repentance
for use by a classis of the CRCNA

We, Classis _____ of Christian Reformed Church North America:

1. Acknowledge before God and His people that we have sinned against God and his church by persistently abusing our God-given authority by refusing to fulfill our responsibility to lovingly discipline the councils and officebearers entrusted to our care and by breaking the unity of the church by refusing to heed its admonitions and warnings.
2. Acknowledge before God and His people that we are truly sorry for our sin and believe that the Lord has forgiven us.
3. Reaffirm our union with Christ and desire to be readmitted to the covenant family of God.
4. Reaffirm without reservation that all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church are doctrines that are taught in the Word of God.
5. Promise to do all we can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen our love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring, and submitting to its authority.

6. Promise to be formed and governed by the forms of unity of the CRCNA, heartily believing, promoting, and defending their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.
7. Promise to faithfully use our God-given authority as Scripture demands in the admonition and discipline of the officebearers and councils entrusted to our care.
8. Promise to join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere.

Signed: _____ [stated clerk of classis]

Date: _____

-Adopted

The following negative vote is registered: Joel Kok

[This overture in its entirety can be found in the Appendix to these minutes.]

Art. 3798: The Stated Clerk's Report (see Agenda, p. 11) is presented.

A. From correspondence with those who have a license to exhort and have requested that their license be renewed for another two years, the following action is taken:

1. **Motion** to renew the license to exhort for Jason Lief. **-Defeated**
2. **Motion** to renew the license to exhort for Barry Miedema. **-Adopted**
3. **Motion** to renew the license to exhort for Trevor Mouw. **-Adopted**
4. **Motion** to renew the license to exhort for Nathan Nieuwendorp. **-Adopted**
5. **Motion** to renew the license to exhort for Thomas Soodsma. **-Adopted**

B. On the classical credentials from the Rock Rapids CRC the council states that they would like to see some form of elder and deacon training from the classis. This is referred to the Classical Interim Committee.

C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Stated Clerk **-Adopted**

Art. 3799: The Classical Interim Committee Report (see Agenda, pp. 12-14) is presented by Kurt Monroe, the secretary of the CIC.

A. **Motion** to adopt the following changes to the Classical Rules of Procedure:

VIII. The Special Functions of Classis, A. Examination of Candidates, 10 [p. 12]:

Current text: *In the event of the examination of a female candidate, those churches who have registered their protest to the seating of female delegates will not participate in the examination of this candidate. The examination and vote will be conducted by the remaining delegates.*

Proposed text [edited text highlighted]: *In the event of the examination of a female candidate, delegates from the churches who have registered their protest to the seating of female delegates will be given the option not to participate in the examination of this candidate. The examination and vote will be conducted by the remaining delegates.*

VIII. The Special Functions of Classis, B. Calling Ministers From Other Denominations (*Colloquium Doctum*), 12 [p. 14]:

Current text: *In the event of the examination of a female minister, those churches who have registered their protest to the seating of female delegates will not participate in the examination of this minister. This examination and vote will be conducted by the remaining delegates.*

Proposed text [edited text highlighted]: *In the event of the examination of a female minister, delegates from the churches who have registered their protest to the seating of female delegates will be given the option not to participate in the examination of this candidate. This examination and vote will be conducted by the remaining delegates.*

VIII. The Special Functions of Classis, C. Examination of Commissioned Pastor, 6 [p. 15]:

Current text: *In the event of the examination of a female commissioned pastor, those churches who have registered their protest to the seating of female delegates will not participate in the examination of this minister. This examination and vote will be conducted by the remaining delegates.*

Proposed text [edited text highlighted]: *In the event of the examination of a female commissioned pastor, delegates from the churches who have registered their protest to the seating of female delegates will be given the option not to participate in the examination of this candidate. This examination and vote will be conducted by the remaining delegates.*

-Adopted

- B. It is communicated to classis that Bridge of Hope Ministries provided the CIC with the clarification of two distinct job descriptions, (see Article 3760 C. 1. & 2. of the 9/19/23 Minutes of Classis Iakota) so Bridge of Hope Ministries may proceed with the ordination of Sam and Gail Ashmore as Commissioned Pastors for Bridge of Hope Ministries.
- C. Both the councils and the standing committees are encouraged to discuss the nomination process for classical functionaries and think about ways to improve this process, and then provide input to the CIC by July 1 so that the CIC might be able to bring a recommendation to classis at the fall 2024 meeting.
- D. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee. **-Adopted**

Art. 3800: Elections/action through the day renders the following results:

- A. Classical Interim Committee Alternate – Bob Drenten (term ends March '27)
- B. Stated Clerk – Bernie Haan (term ends March '27)
- C. Classical Missions Team – Gary Maas (term ends September '26)
- D. Classical Missions Team – Gideon Wamala (term ends March '27)
- E. Classical Ministerial Leadership Team – Orlan Gulker (term ends March '27)
- F. Classical Ministerial Leadership Team Alternate – Bob Drenten (term ends March '27)
- G. Classical Safe Church Team – Henry Lengkeek (term ends March '27)
- H. Synodical Deputy – Cliff Hoekstra (term ends June '27)
- I. Synodical Deputy Alternate – Dan De Groot (terms ends June '27)
- J. Council of Delegates – Bob Drenten (term begins in June)
- K. Calvin Seminary BOT – results of Iakota voting: John Lee—51; Brian Oschner—2
- L. Delegates to Synod
 - a. Minister delegate – Kurt Monroe
 - b. Minister alternate delegate – Steve Zwart
 - c. Elder delegate – Stan Wynia
 - d. Elder alternate delegate – Neil Van Schouwen
 - e. Deacon delegate – Jevon Groenewold
 - f. Deacon alternate delegate – Cameron Stuive
 - h. 4th Officebearer delegate – Drew Hoekema
 - i. 4th Officebearer alternate delegate – Bob Drenten

Art. 3801: The Classical Safe Church Team Report (see Appendix) is given by Safe Church coordinator, Tara Boer, who highlights the fact that the team now has a Facebook page.

- **Motion** to approve of the work of the Classical Safe Church Team. **-Adopted**

Art. 3802: The Minn-I-Kota Youth Ministry Report (see Agenda, pp. 19-20) is presented jointly by Lee De Groot and Doug De Groot.

- A. Lee reports that she has been with this ministry now 14 years and shares that her and Doug's work with this ministry was interrupted this past year by some health problems: she needed hip surgery and Doug had double cataract surgery.
- B. Lee mentions that the ministry is gearing up for their annual Jr. High Retreat and Doug shares a couple of testimonials from those who attended past Jr. High Retreats.
- C. The chair commends this ministry for its ongoing work within our region.

Art. 3803: Steve Zwart, to be installed on March 17 as the new pastor for the First Sioux Falls CRC, offers a prayer prior to the delegates enjoying a delicious meal prepared by the host church.

Art. 3804: Ron Vos, the classical delegate on the World Renew Board, uses some PowerPoint slides to

- highlight a 6-week series webinar entitled "Food & Faith" that's been going on;
- provide the delegates with some remarkable statistical information about World Renew's response to the Ukraine conflict;
- encourage youth leaders to consider mission trips for youth to World Renew sites.

Art. 3805: The Classical Missions Team Report (see Agenda, pp. 14-15) is given by Gary Maas, the chair of the CMT.

- A. Joshua Stammis gives a brief report regarding Prairie Light Youth Camp, expressing a need for more volunteers and asking that the churches keep praying for this ministry.
- B. Scott Van Voorst gives an update regarding the current challenges at the Cornerstone Prison Church and reminds the delegates of the April 1 banquet in support of this ministry that's held annually at Trinity CRC.
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Classical Missions Team. **-Adopted**

Art. 3806: Kurt Monroe, the chair for the Classical Ministerial Leadership Team gives a verbal report.

- A. He reports that classis continues to provide for Trevor Mouw and that the team has recently had an interview with Rylan Brue.
- B. **Motion** to approve the work of the CMLT. **-Adopted**

Art. 3807: The Finance Committee Report (see Agenda, pp. 15-16) is given by Bob Drenten

- A. It is reported that the classis financial books for the year ending 2023 were audited and suggestions to the classical treasurer and the committee were provided by the auditors in areas where improvements could be made.
- B. **Motion** that Classis Iakota reimburse host churches \$15 per meal served and the Finance Committee be given the task of reviewing this amount annually, basing future reimbursement on the amount set annually by the US General Services Administration. **-Adopted**
- C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Finance Committee. **-Adopted**

Art. 3808: Church Visitor Reports are reviewed.

A. The Chair notes the Church Visitor reports to New Holland CRC, Harrison Community Church, and Platte CRC that are given in the Agenda (pp. 16-18).

B. **Motion** to approve the work of the Church Visitors. *-Adopted*

Art. 3809: Church Counselor Reports

A. An oral report is given by Scott Nichols, the counselor for the New Holland CRC.

B. Bernie Haan reports on behalf of Dave Heilman, the counselor for the Inwood CRC.

C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Church Counselors. *-Adopted*

Art. 3810: Regional Pastors Report

A. The Chair notes the report in the Agenda (p. 19) from Dave Smit, the regional pastor for the pastors in Iowa.

B. Kyle De Young, the regional pastor for the South Dakota pastors, reports that he has been using Zoom meetings as part of his way of staying in touch with these pastors.

C. **Motion** to approve the work of the Regional Pastors. *-Adopted*

Art. 3811: The Classical Treasurer's Report is given by Robert Van Ruler

A. The Treasurer's Report for 2023 is distributed and various items in the report are noted, along with informing classis that the excesses in the various funds under the Classical Home Missions Team were put into a CD for 8 months at a higher interest rate.

B. The Treasurer requests once again that each church provide him with accurate membership numbers.

C. **Motion** to approve the work of the classical treasurer. *-Adopted*

Art. 3812: Kathleen Ridder, representing Classis Iakota on Calvin University's board addresses classis, calling upon the churches to be praying for this institution in the wake of President Wiebe Boer's resignation and the search now for a new president.

Art. 3813: Bob Drenten reports on behalf of the Calvin Theological Seminary board (see Agenda, pp. 20-21). This is his final report since his term on this board is complete. The one item in his written report that he highlights is the partnership that CTS has formed with the Missional Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona, noting that this partnership will include sharing faculty, resources, and opportunities for the students.

Art. 3814: The Council of Delegates Report is given by John Lee, who shares some of the highlights of February meeting of the COD (these highlights were made available to the delegates):

- Synod 2025 will be held at Redeemer University (Ancaster, Ontario)
- Approval was given to "God With Us" serving as the theme for Synod 2024
- A new initiative called *Gather* was endorsed by the COD whereby five classes at a time will be brought together over the next 18 months to address membership decline in our churches. Representatives from Classis Iakota are scheduled to gather with four other classes in Boston sometime this fall.
- A taskforce has been formed to create updated pastor compensation guidelines for churches.

Art. 3815: Brad Meinders, the Central US Regional Mission Leader from Resonate Global Missions, uses a document that was recently sent to the councils, to point out the three main initiatives of this ministry as a way of supporting the local church and each classis: congregational gospel witness, intercultural gospel witness, and church planting.

Art. 3816: The delegates break into two assigned groups of ministers, two assigned groups of elders, and two assigned groups of deacons to engage in conversation using questions provided by the Classical Interim Committee (see Agenda, p. 2).

Art. 3817: After the delegates return from the small groups, Gary Maas offers a closing prayer, citing various needs and concerns that came up throughout the course of the meeting.

Art. 3818: Motion to adjourn is made at 3:25pm and the meeting concludes with the singing of the Doxology. **-Adopted**

Next Meeting: September 17, 2024 at the Platte CRC

Rev. Bernie Haan
Stated Clerk

APPENDIX

Overture #1 from First Sioux Center CRC That synod 2024 declare that Heidelberg Catechism 108 and sexual ethics are salvation issues

Background:

Leading up to and following synods 2022 and 2023, a common argument has been made for maintaining “unity” with, and withholding discipline from, those who disagree with both synods’ affirmations that “unchastity” in Heidelberg Q&A 108 “encompasses adultery, premarital sex, extramarital sex, polyamory, pornography, and homosexual sex, all of which violate the seventh commandment.”¹ That common argument is this: Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 does not address a “salvation issue” and should therefore be treated as some form of *adiaphora* (a matter judged to be not essential to the faith: a “questionable” or “disputable” issue about which Christians can disagree).

The argument that HC 108 does not address a “salvation issue” (and that sexual ethics broadly speaking are not a “salvation issue”) is made numerous times in the agendas for both synods 2022 and 2023 and is used as the foundation of arguments for maintaining “unity” and refusing to discipline those who disagree with position of the CRCNA. For example, Neland Avenue CRC’s response to the decisions of synod 2022 states: “But we do agree on paying attention to the call of the Holy Spirit and the fact that this issue is not a salvation matter that should shatter churches or denominations.”² In the same report from the *In Loco* committee for Neland Avenue CRC, an elder from Neland Avenue offered the same line of argumentation for remaining a member and officebearer of that church: “I’m still at Neland because I don’t think this issue, though very important, is a salvation issue.”³ The same line of argumentation was employed already in 2022 by classis Chicago South, who attacked the Human Sexuality Report, saying that “the report works against its call to repentance and hospitality, erects barriers to open conversation, and continues to support a culture of shame by claiming the church’s teaching on sexuality already has confessional status, by arguing sexual ethics are a matter of salvation ...”⁴

The CRCNA’s own confessions, however, rule out the possibility of such arguments. In fact, the Heidelberg Catechism itself explicitly states that unchastity is certainly a salvation issue. Q&A 87 says:

¹ *Acts of Synod 2022*, 922.

² *Agenda for Synod 2023*, 328.

³ *Ibid.*, 330.

⁴ *Agenda for Synod 2022*, 657. Other examples from the agendas of both synods could be cited. This line of argumentation is also frequently found in the publications and public statements of individuals and organizations advocating for the classification of human sexuality as *adiaphora* and for “space for disagreement” within the CRCNA on the issue of human sexuality.

Q. Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and unrepentant ways.

A. By no means. Scripture tells us that no unchaste person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous person, no drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like will inherit the kingdom of God.

In order to argue that unchastity and sexual ethics (along with idolatry, adultery, theft, covetousness, drunkenness, slander, robbery, or the like) are not “salvation issues,” we would be required to revise or remove Q&A 87 from the catechism. If we did not revise or remove Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87, the argument that sexual ethics is not a salvation issue would always be confessionally incoherent (and as we believe our confessions to be a faithful summary of Scripture’s teaching, also biblically incoherent).

Overture:

Classis Iakota therefore overtures synod 2024 to

1. declare that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108, along with all cases of unrepentant sin, addresses a salvation issue;

Ground:

The Scriptures and confessional standards (particularly Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87) make clear that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A108 does address a salvation issue and that unchastity and sexual ethics are salvation issues.

2. declare that it is a serious deviation from the teachings of the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church in any way to deny that either Heidelberg Q&A 87 or Q&A 108 address salvation issues or to deny that sexual ethics and unchastity are salvation issues;

Grounds:

- a. Officebearers in the CRCNA are denying that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 108 (and implicitly Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87) and sexual ethics are salvation issues.
- b. It is a serious deviation from the teachings of the CRCNA to reclassify that which is a matter of salvation as a disputable or questionable issue or some other classification; such serious deviations from the clear teachings of Scripture and our confessions endanger the eternal salvation of the sheep and the unity of the flock entrusted to the officebearers’ care.
- c. This action is in keeping with the established guidance of Synod 2022 (cf. Acts of Synod, pp. 897-898).

3. declare that any officebearer who denies that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87 or Q&A 108 address a salvation issue and/or denies that unchastity and sexual ethics are a salvation issue is worthy of special discipline in accordance with Church Order Article 83;

Grounds:

- a. Church Order Article 83 states, “Special discipline shall be applied to officebearers if they violate the Covenant for Officebearers, are guilty of neglect or abuse of office, or in any way seriously deviate from sound doctrine and godly conduct.”
- b. Tolerating such denials of these salvation issues puts the CRCNA in danger of transgressing its own boundaries for what a true church is, which includes the proper exercise of church discipline “Belgic Confession, Art. 29).
- c. Officebearers in the CRCNA who deny that Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 87 and Q&A 108 and sexual ethics are salvation issues, instead of faithfully fulfilling the responsibility of their office to confront brothers and sisters regarding their sin, are leaving them in their sin, thus denying them the opportunity for repentance and subsequent reconciliation with God and their neighbors.

4. instruct all classes, councils, and officebearers in the CRCNA that it is our duty to uphold the clear teaching of the Scriptures and confessions on the nature of Heidelberg Q&A 87 and Q&A 108 and sexual ethics.

Grounds:

- a. As Christians, we are called to be people of the truth, with integrity and honor, and failure to promote and defend the faith is to break the Covenant for Officebearers.

b. The church must make every effort to correct such a grievous error, that we might not continue to sin in the eyes of God.

**Overture #2 from First Sioux Center CRC
That synod 2024 amend Church Order, Supplement, Article 5, B**

1. Background:

At every level of the Christian Reformed Church's ecclesiastical life (council, classis, and synod), officebearers are required to indicate their confessional covenant with one another around our forms of unity by either signing the Covenant for Officebearers or, in the case of synod, standing together to signify their confessional covenant with their fellow delegates. As signatories, officebearers "promise to be formed and governed by them" and profess that they "heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming [their] preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them." As Church Order, Supplement, Article 5, A, 1 says, "The person signing the Covenant for Officebearers affirms without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God."

In order to assure that councils and classes within the Christian Reformed Church North America are not using the confessional-difficulty gravamen as a means of allowing those who cannot "affirm without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God" to either begin their service as officebearers or continue in service as officebearers without any desire or effort to resolve the "difficulty" at the council level or by submitting the matter to classis or synod for examination or judgment. This practice renders the integrity of our covenant as officebearers uncertain, particularly at the classical and synodical levels where, due to the confidential and pastoral nature of the confessional-difficulty gravamen process, delegates cannot know the nature or weight of any confessional difficulties that their fellow officebearers from other councils might have submitted. In short, delegates to classis and synod do not know (and cannot know) if their fellow delegates have "difficulties" with the confessions, what the nature and type of those difficulties might be, and if the delegates to the ecclesiastical body are in confessional covenant or not. This is clearly problematic and unsustainable.

To restore the integrity of the confessional covenant of classes and synod and to maintain the pastoral sensitivity of the confessional-difficulty gravamen process, those who have submitted confessional-difficulty gravamen should not be delegated to those ecclesiastical bodies that do not and cannot know the nature of their difficulties (i.e. classis and synod) until their difficulties are resolved with appropriate pastoral care and confidentiality and until they can affirm "without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God." To further preserve the integrity of the confessional covenant of the council and the mutual accountability of councils, classis, and synod, a reasonable timeline should be observed for providing help to officebearers with difficulties and for classical and synodical examination and judgment of those difficulties.

2. Overture:

Classis Iakota overtures synod to amend Church Order, Supplement, Article 5, B. to read as follows [new material to the supplement is highlighted in gray]:

1. Ministers (whether missionaries, professors, or others not serving congregations as pastors), elders, or deacons shall submit their "difficulties" to their councils for examination and judgment. Should a council decide that it is not able to judge the gravamen submitted to it, it shall submit the matter to classis for examination and judgment. If the classis, after examination, judges that it

is unable to decide the matter, it may submit it to synod, in accordance with the principles of Church Order Article 28-b. These procedures shall follow the following timetable.

- a. A council shall have six months, or until the next classis meeting, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the gravamen is forwarded to classis, classis shall have six months, or until agenda items for the next synod must be submitted, whichever is greater, to provide the necessary information and/or clarification being sought. If the gravamen appears before synod, synod's decision is binding, and the subscriber will have until the end of that calendar year to either 1) affirm the standards without reservation, 2) file a confessional-revision gravamen, or 3) resign from office.
 - b. If applicable, ministers can be honorably released at the conclusion of this process.
2. In all instances of confessional-difficulty gravamina, the matter shall not be open for discussion by the whole church, since this type of gravamen is a personal request for information and/or clarification of the confession. Hence this type of gravamen should be dealt with pastorally and personally by the assembly addressed.
 3. A confessional-difficulty gravamen is a personal request for help in resolving a subscriber's doubts about a doctrine contained in the confessions that arise after the officer has, in good faith, subscribed themselves to the Covenant of Officebearers. It is not a request for an assembly to tolerate a subscriber's settled conviction that a doctrine contained in the confessions is wrong. Therefore, in all instances of confessional-difficulty gravamina, no assembly may exempt a subscriber from having to affirm all of the doctrines contained in the standards of the church.
 4. To honor the confidential and pastoral nature of the confessional-difficulty gravamen process and to maintain the integrity of the church's confessional covenant, the local council of an officebearer who has submitted a confessional-difficulty gravamen may not delegate that officebearer to a broader ecclesiastical assembly (classis or synod) until the difficulty has been resolved and the officebearer can affirm without reservation all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church as being doctrines that are taught in the Word of God. If the officebearer who has submitted a confessional-difficulty gravamen is nominated as a delegate to a broader assembly by an officebearer outside of his or her own council, he or she must decline the nomination.

3. Grounds:

- a. Confessional-difficulty gravamina were never intended as a permanent exception from our confessions. Therefore, we cannot let their illegitimate use as permanent exceptions from the confessions compromise the integrity of our confessional covenant.
 - b. Due to the confidential nature of confessional-difficulty gravamina, delegates to broader assemblies (classis, synod) have no confidence that their fellow delegates hold to the same beliefs and are deliberating from the same biblical and confessional foundation.
 - c. Adding a timetable to the guidelines and regulations will ensure that commitment to God's Word, commitment to the testimony of the creeds and confessions, and mutual trust among all officebearers of the CRCNA will be restored in a reasonable and prompt manner.
-

Overture to Classis from the Platte CRC Ecumenical Relations with Reformed Church in America

Initial Statement

We, the Council of Platte Christian Reformed Church, Platte, SD, urge Classis Iakota to adopt the following:

Classis Iakota overtures Synod 2024 to re-examine the ecumenical relationship of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) to the Reformed Church in America (RCA) to reflect recent large-scale changes in the RCA and in Christian solidarity with brothers and sisters in congregations who felt obligated to leave the RCA due to practices that do not align with stated positions.

Rationale

Historical

The CRCNA and RCA share a common heritage. Though after 1857, focus was often placed on the great differences and animosity between these two theological ‘cousins,’ the more recent past has seen a closer working together. On paper, it seemed as if the reasons for any original split were becoming obsolete and irrelevant. This culminated in the so-called “Pella Accord,” a joint resolution from Synod 2014 that “the RCA and CRC should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately” (*Acts of Synod 2014, Article 20, p. 504*).

More recent years, however, have seen significant changes, particularly in the RCA. While the CRCNA has continued to affirm its historical theology and practice regarding human sexuality, inaction in the RCA to defend its stated positions have led a majority of congregations to disaffiliate from the denomination. While the RCA has officially stated positions that align with those of the CRC, these churches have cited unaddressed *practices* by congregations and classes which do not align with the *positions* of General Synod that are shared by the CRC.

With the departure of these churches, some of whom had previous RCA-CRC joint affiliation, the RCA of 2024 is no longer the RCA of 2014. If churches leaving the RCA share the official CRCNA position reflected by our Foundation-laying Report on Human Sexuality, we ought to have grave concern about the character of the RCA that remains.

Thus, it is imperative to begin a dialogue about current RCA practices and whether we really are aligned in doctrine and practice.

Biblical and Theological

The Biblical priority of unity drove the CRCNA and RCA to explore greater partnership; however, what is the focus of Christian unity? The Biblical focus on love is grounded in truth (Eph 4:15). Though our churches share common heritage and geography, if the church represents the Kingdom of Christ, unity can only be found in common faith.

Commands toward unity in the New Testament letters are balanced out by calls for the church to remain watchful, and perhaps even to separate. In 1 Corinthians 5, a church celebrates its tolerance of a sexually immoral man, only to be admonished by the Apostle Paul, who calls for the man to be put out from the church for the sake of his salvation. Throughout 1 John, the Apostle John warns the church of the spirit of Antichrist (2:18-27; 4:1-6), going so far in 2 John as to warn believers not to associate or partner with false teachers (vv. 10-11). When our Lord Jesus speaks to the seven churches through John, He praises those who reject certain practices (2:6) while He criticizes those who tolerate them (2:14-15).

The spirit of Matthew 18 calls us, then, to approach the RCA directly to ask about their current doctrine and practice as we evaluate whether we are as aligned as churches in communion ought to be. Though Christ's words here speak specifically to individuals, it seems applicable and wise for denominational relationships among the same theological family.

Ecclesiastical

Our Ecumenical Charter states, "*Unity is intrinsic to the truth of the gospel and to our confession...the unity of the church is a unity in truth, the truth that is Jesus Christ, as revealed in Holy Scripture.*" While we reach out to people striving for visible oneness in the church, "passion for the truth of Christ calls us to reject all forms of unity that compromise unequivocal witness to Jesus Christ." The present state of the RCA, and our present form of unity with them, may compromise unequivocal witness to Jesus Christ.

As a fellow Reformed denomination, the RCA affirms the Three Forms of Unity. Our primary concern regards a potential failure to promote and defend two primary areas of our common confession:

1. Heidelberg Catechism [HC] 108 and 109 – though on paper, the RCA has made several statements that align with the CRC, in practice, there have been reports of the ordination of openly-practicing homosexual clergy and of clergy solemnizing same-sex marriages without consequence.
2. Belgic Confession [BC] 29 – this inaction thus would reflect a lack of the "third mark" of the true church: "It practices church discipline for correcting faults." While the CRCNA must surely examine itself on this area and repent for a lack of discipline correcting many varied sins, the third mark appears to be increasingly missing from the RCA.

Practical

In recent years the entire Dakota Classis of the RCA, along with many other congregations throughout Iowa, have disaffiliated themselves from the RCA. In many of our communities, we enjoy solid working relationships with these congregations that share our Reformed convictions. Now, however, our church order and ecumenical relationships reflect us having a closer relationship to a distant denomination that we no longer recognize than to these church families.

In our area, as well as others across the denomination, dialogue has been taking place to discern relationships with the Kingdom Network (KN) and the Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC). Recent Synods have begun the process of seeking greater unity with these brothers and sisters.

As our brothers and sisters in these churches acted out of a stand for Biblical truth on matters of Scriptural authority and anthropology, it is our obligation then as a church in communion to question the current doctrine and practice of the RCA.

Overture

That Synod 2024:

- A. Instruct the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee [EIRC] to communicate with the RCA General Secretary and Commission on Christian Unity the following points, and to report back to Synod 2025 regarding responses received:
 1. A desire for shared commitment to our confessional Reformed heritage, doctrine and practice.
 2. A concern regarding the nature of churches which have disaffiliated with the RCA as being in alignment with CRCNA positions.
 3. A request for clarification on the RCA's ongoing commitment in faith and practice to HC 108 and 109, specifically as it relates to the forbidding of unchastity, which encompasses homosexual sex.
 4. A request for clarification on whether RCA clergy have been, or are being, permitted to solemnize same-sex marriages, or to themselves remain in same-sex marriages or romantic partnerships, while remaining ministers in good standing.
 5. A request for response before Synod 2025.

- B. Provisionally declare the following decisions of Synod to be inoperative, until further review from Synod 2025 (upon receiving further response from the RCA to the above communication):
1. Articles 36(b)(9) and (10) of Synod 2005 (Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers between the CRC and the Reformed Church in America) [*Acts of Synod 2005* p. 740]
 “9. That synod approve the Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers between the CRC and the Reformed Church of America subject to the additions or amendments to the Church Order (or supplements thereof) as recommended.
 10. That synod propose...changes in Church Order Article 8 and its supplement.”
 2. Article 20 of Synod 2014 (Resolution on the Relationship between the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America) [*Acts of Synod 2014* p. 504]
 “That synod adopt the joint resolution prepared for the CRC synod and the General Synod of the RCA.”
- C. Provisionally declare Church Order Article 8b, along with its supplement, 8D, to be inoperative until further review from Synod 2025.
- D. Request that Synod 2025 further review the ecumenical status of the Reformed Church in America as a church in communion.
- E. Prohibit CRCNA classes from delegating RCA-ordained ministers or commissioned pastors to future Synod meetings until the above decisions and articles in concern again become operative.
- F. Instruct the General Secretary to work with Thrive on developing a plan for how to potentially shepherd pastors and congregations affected by these decisions (i.e., RCA ministers called to CRCNA churches, union churches) for proposal to Synod 2025, while advising them to continue any current arrangements until further notice.

Grounds:

1. With over half of its member congregations leaving, most of whom are in alignment with the CRCNA, the RCA is no longer the same denomination as the one with whom these bonds were formed.
 2. Scripture calls for a unity based upon common faith in Jesus Christ, not upon ethnic heritage, historical relationships, or common geography, and for separation from those tolerant of sin – sexual sin in particular.
 3. Faithfulness as a church in communion requires encouragement toward faithful statements and faithful practices related to our common Reformed confession, especially regarding RCA clergy, who are permitted to seek a call in CRCNA congregations.
 4. The presence of delegates ordained in the RCA at Synod meetings deliberating on the CRC’s relationship to the RCA presents an obvious conflict of interest.
 5. Since many congregations disaffiliating with the RCA align with the CRC position on human sexuality, we act out of solidarity with them and out of grave concern for the denomination they have left.
-

**Overture to Classis from First Rock Valley CRC
Public Acknowledgement of Sin and Declaration of Repentance**

The council of the First Rock Valley CRC is asking Classis Iakota to overture Synod 2024 to:

Call all CRC churches who publicly state they are no longer willing to call practicing same-sex relationships a sin, to choose one of the following options:

1. Publicly repent of their decision and bring themselves back into compliance with the Bible's and our confessions' position on human sexuality, which has been acknowledged throughout all nations and generations of the Church catholic for nearly 2000 years, including the last 50 years of CRCNA synodical decisions. Public repentance will be indicated by the use of the attached form for the Public Acknowledgment of Sin and Declaration of Repentance.
2. Voluntarily disaffiliate from the Christian Reformed Church in North America by December 31, 2024.
3. If neither of these two things occur, Synod 2025 is to acknowledge that the fellowship-breaking actions and inactions of these affirming churches be effectively removed from the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church.
4. All churches and their governing classes who refuse to exercise church discipline over them will no longer have delegations recognized at Synod, nor will they have representation on the Council of Delegates or any other denominational bodies and agencies.

Grounds:

1. Synod 1926 asserted the right for ecclesiastical assemblies to take decisive disciplinary action even if the Church Order does not stipulate an exact process of action (Acts of Synod 1926, p. 329 and p. 330). It also made clear that a consistory worthy of discipline had "placed itself outside of the church relationship" (Acts of Synod 1926, p. 139).
2. Classis Hudson in 1992 recognized that one of the churches in its classis "had broken the bonds of fellowship with the denomination and therefore have placed themselves outside the fellowship of the CRC" (Minutes of Classis Hudson, Sept. 23, 1992, obtained from Heritage Hall). Synod itself said that the church that was no longer in fellowship with the denomination would be allowed to participate in Synod's process of appeals if it "would bring itself into conformity with the standards from which it was declared to have deviated" (Acts of Synod 1993, p. 610).
3. Synods 2022 and 2023 have given enough time for churches and Classes to discern their covenant fidelity to the fullness of God's Word related to human sexuality and the desire to be affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church.
4. In Paul's letter to Titus, he speaks to the need for the office-bearers of the church of Jesus Christ to resist false teachers. In Titus 1:9 Paul states that an elder "must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." And then, more directly, in Titus 3:10: "Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them."
5. This meets the burden of Synod's instruction to "err on the side of caution, permitting full opportunity for other pastoral efforts to take effect" (Acts of Synod 1991, p. 771).
6. Our Lord and Savior commands his church to permit what His Word permits and to forbid what it forbids (John 20:23, Matthew 16:19, Matthew 18:17,18, 20).
7. Discipline with the end goal of restoration has been sought. (Matthew 18:22, 1 Corinthians 5:5, Galatians 6:1, Hebrews 12:11).

Public Acknowledgment of Sin and Declaration of Repentance
for use by a council of the CRCNA

We, the Council of _____ Christian Reformed Church:

8. Acknowledge before God and His people that we have sinned against God and his church by persistently going beyond the teaching of our Lord, by breaking the unity of the church by refusing to submit to its instruction and discipline, and by refusing to bend our necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ.
9. Acknowledge before God and His people that we are truly sorry for our sin and believe that the Lord has forgiven us.
10. Reaffirm our union with Christ and desire to be readmitted to the covenant family of God.
11. Reaffirm, without reservation, that all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church are doctrines that are taught in the Word of God.
12. Promise to do all we can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen our love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring, and submitting to its authority.
13. Promise to be formed and governed by the forms of unity of the CRCNA, heartily believing, promoting, and defending their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.
14. Promise to join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere.

Signed: _____ [clerk of council]

Date: _____

Public Acknowledgment of Sin and Declaration of Repentance
for use by a classis of the CRCNA

We, Classis _____ of Christian Reformed Church North America:

9. Acknowledge before God and His people that we have sinned against God and his church by persistently abusing our God-given authority by refusing to fulfill our responsibility to lovingly discipline the councils and officebearers entrusted to our care and by breaking the unity of the church by refusing to heed its admonitions and warnings.
10. Acknowledge before God and His people that we are truly sorry for our sin and believe that the Lord has forgiven us.
11. Reaffirm our union with Christ and desire to be readmitted to the covenant family of God.
12. Reaffirm without reservation that all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church are doctrines that are taught in the Word of God.
13. Promise to do all we can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen our love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring, and submitting to its authority.
14. Promise to be formed and governed by the forms of unity of the CRCNA, heartily believing, promoting, and defending their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.
15. Promise to faithfully use our God-given authority as Scripture demands in the admonition and discipline of the officebearers and councils entrusted to our care.
16. Promise to join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere.

Signed: _____ [stated clerk of classis]

Date: _____

Classis Heartland & Iakota Safe Church Report Spring 2024

Prepared by: Tara Boer, Iakota & Heartland Safe Church Coordinator Data

Prepared: 02/12/24

Iakota & Heartland Classical Safe Church Team Members: Pastor Henry Lengkeek (Trinity CRC-Iakota), Heidi Van Roekel (Bethel CRC-Iakota), Pastor Jesse Walhof (Living Water CRC-Heartland), Kristi Habben (Sibley CRC-Heartland) Tara Boer (Hope CRC, Heartland)

Classical Safe Church Team Tasks:

- The Safe Church Team serves in a consultative role for churches in classis who are developing (or reviewing/revising) congregational safe church policies
- The Safe Church Team serves as a resource for churches dealing with allegations of abuse.
- The Safe Church Team serves as a clearing house of best practices and periodic trainings for Classis Heartland and Classis Iakota with regard to abuse awareness and prevention.

Team Meeting:

A Safe Church Team meeting was held on 01/18/24 via zoom (due to weather) to discuss agenda items about committee members' services to churches for policy development, issues pertaining to abuse and church order, and discussion about how to strengthen relationships with safe church team members within each congregation. The safe church team receives regular support via email and zoom from Amanda Benckhuysen in Grand Rapids for ongoing consultation.

Safe Church Team Goals:

The team continues to ask all churches to develop a safe church policy and aim to advance the scope of their work through adding an age-appropriate abuse prevention curriculum in the Sunday school classrooms. Initiating background checks for volunteers is best practice for your ministry. If your church has not identified a lead safe church team member, please do so and provide us with his/her contact information. Members of safe church teams within the classes are welcome and encouraged to join the Iakota and Heartland Safe Church Team private facebook group for additional support and resourcing.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of our committee if you would like to talk about any safe church needs your church may have. You may communicate with any committee member or contact Tara directly at 712-898-6468 (cell) or tara.boer@dordt.edu

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