

Classis Central U.S. Press Release
September 12, 2024

On the evening of September 9, Classis Central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches in North America met at Rock Valley United Reformed Church in Rock Valley, Iowa for its 58th meeting. In light of the earlier flooding that had caused extensive damage to the facilities of the church, it was a testimony to God's goodness and the diligent labors of many volunteers that the meeting was able to take place in the building of Rock Valley URC.

After a meal, during which fellowship was enjoyed, the preliminary opening matters of constituting classis were completed. Then the body set itself to its main work of the evening – a work that continued through most of Tuesday morning - the conducting of a candidacy examination for Mr. Joe Hamm. Mr. Hamm is a member of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, SD and a recent graduate of Greenville Presbyterian Seminary in Greenville, SC. After having been examined in areas of practica, Bible knowledge, biblical exegesis, confessional knowledge, reformed doctrine, church history, ethics and church polity, the assembly concurred that Mr. Hamm had sustained his candidacy examination and is eligible to be declared a candidate for the office of minister of the Word by his consistory.

On Tuesday afternoon, classis turned its attention to three overtures and three communications. The first overture requested classis to overture an upcoming synod to change how candidacy exams take place. The proposed change was to allow up to half of the exam to be conducted outside of a meeting of classis by being taken in writing under the supervision of a proctor. Classis did not adopt the overture. The other two overtures both dealt with how classis operates. The first simply requested classis to calculate its classical "askings" per family within the individual churches of classis rather than per church in classis. The second requested classis to allow for the option of submitting electronic credentials of the delegates rather than exclusively by hard copy. Classis adopted both of these overtures.

The various communications primarily dealt with requests for funds to be distributed from the Classis Church Assistance Fund. Both of the requests were for a continuation of the allocation of funds and both were approved.

One item on the agenda that was a great cause of joy was the information from the Consistory of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls, SD. This consistory is in the process of planting a daughter church in northwest Sioux Falls to be pastored by Rev. Benjamin Davenport. Classis gave its concurring advice for Rev. Davenport to be appointed to this work and also provided monetary support for the work from the Classis Home Mission Fund.

A matter of potential clarification, especially for church councils and diaconates, is that Classis Central U.S. has three distinct funds: a General Fund, a Church Assistance Fund, and a Classis Home Mission Fund. While the General Fund is funded by the "askings" of the churches, the Church Assistance Fund and Classis Home Mission Fund are funded by free-will offerings or gifts of the churches of classis.

Another action of significance taken by classis dealt with a request from the Consistory of Redeemer United Reformed Church in Saint John, IN. After many years of faithful service, most notably within Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Rev. Dr. Cornelis Venema was granted the status of minister emeritus.

Throughout its meeting, classis had the privilege of hearing fraternal greetings from a number of representatives of various churches including Classis Minnkota of the Christian Reformed Church, the South Central Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), and the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC).

Classis was led in its deliberations by the chairman, Rev. Steve Swets of Redeemer URC in Saint John, IN with Rev. David Klompfen of Community Reformed Church in Schererville, IN serving as vice-chairman. The next meeting of classis is set for April 14 & 15, 2025, Lord willing, and will be convened and hosted by Redeemer URC in Saint John, Indiana.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. G. Lubbers, Stated Clerk