

Report on the meeting of Classis Central US of the URCNA

Convening at the Lynwood United Reformed Church in Lynwood, IL — April 15-16, 2013

Delegates to the 34th meeting of Classis Central U.S. met with busy traffic and Spring rainstorms, but having arrived at the building of the Lynwood United Reformed Church they were greeted with Christian fellowship and a hot meal prior to beginning the meeting. Classis Central US convened at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 15, concluding by mid-afternoon of the following day.

The evening session began with approving the work of the convening Consistory, the Stated Clerk, and the Treasurer. Due to U.S. tax laws, a Consistory supervises the Treasurer, and the supervising Consistory sought advice how to be relieved of that duty, having served in that capacity for several years. Reports were then given from church visitors and those who served as delegates to bodies with whom we have ecumenical relations. The Classis approved the 2013 budget for \$3,750 that was proposed by the Immanuel URC of DeMotte, IN related to activities of the Classis Church Planting Advisory Committee. An update was also received on the work and prayer requests of Rev. Andrew Spriensma, who is stationed overseas as a chaplain in the U.S. armed forces. The bulk of the time in the evening consisted of discussing the request by Cornerstone URC in Sanborn, IA for concurring advice to release Rev. Larry Johnson from the ministry, according to article 9 of the Church Order. Much advice was given from various perspectives, with the general concern being that article 9 did not apply to this situation; concurring advice was not given. Classis then recessed for the evening.

In the morning session, delegates heard a greeting from Rev. William den Hollander, who serves as a Coordinator for the Committee for Church Unity with the Canadian Reformed Churches. Rev. den Hollander and his wife are spending time in the Chicago area, where he is preaching in area URCs and helping in the move toward federational union. He addressed the Classis, referring to the long-standing history between the CanRC and churches in the URCNA, recounting some of the efforts toward church union, noting that efforts are being made to address the issues still unresolved, and encouraging the delegates to continue in the work of the Lord toward church union. Rev. George Horner of the RCUS brought greetings on behalf of the South Central Classis.

Classis heard reports on the work God is doing at the church plants El Pacto de Gracia and Sioux Falls United Reformed Church. It was encouraging to hear how the Lord is building His church over time; delegates were reminded of the vast mission field that remains and the need for workers to go. Praise to God was also given as delegates heard how the Lord is blessing the work of the Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary in the Danville Correctional Institution.

Classis received other reports related to the work of the Lord in the Classis and federation prior to entering into executive session to give advice to four Consistories concerning discipline matters. After advice was given, the delegates recessed for lunch, enjoying a hot meal served by members of the Lynwood URC. Having reconvened, the Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA informed the Classis of a mission opportunity in Ecuador they are pursuing, and they invited the churches to join in prayer as well as other ways which may be presented in the future.

Next, two overtures were dealt with that sought minor revisions to the Classis *Rules of Procedure*. The first overture sought a number of revisions related to the duties of the Stated Clerk and the Treasurer; all but one of the requested revisions were approved. The second overture sought to have reports from most of the classis and synodical functionaries presented only at the April Classis meeting, rather than at every Classis meeting; this was approved. Classis then appointed church visitors for the East side of the Classis: Rev. Todd Joling and Rev. Tom Wetselaar were appointed as primary visitors, and Rev. Jacques Roets was appointed as alternate. The remuneration of the Treasurer was also taken up, per the *Rules of Procedure*; \$300/year was approved.

The next meeting of Classis Central US is scheduled to convene September 9, 2013, the Lord willing. The Consistory of the First United Reformed Church of Oak Lawn (IL) is the convening consistory.

Classis wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the members of the Lynwood United Reformed Church for their gracious hospitality; to the Consistory of Lynwood United Reformed Church for its work in preparing for this meeting; and to Rev. Keith Davis and Rev. Ted Gray for their commendable service as chairman and vice-chairman, respectively.