

Classis Central U.S. Highlights
March 19, 2024

On the afternoon of March 18, Classis Central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches in North America met at Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa for its 57th meeting. Prior to the convening of classis, Rev. John Fikkert addressed the gathering on “Caring for Ministers.” Rev. Fikkert is an ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and is the director of their Committee on Ministerial Care. This address dealt with both how ministers should care for their own spiritual, mental and physical health as well as how the churches, especially consistories, should care for their ministers.

Once classis convened, the main work of the afternoon was the conducting of an ordination examination for Mr. Elijah Anderson. Mr. Anderson has been called by Cornerstone United Reformed Church in Sanborn, Iowa to work especially among the Latino population in Northwest Iowa. After having been examined in areas of practica, church polity, confessional knowledge, reformed doctrine and ethics, the assembly unanimously agreed that Mr. Anderson had sustained his ordination examination.

During the evening hours of Monday, classis turned its attention to giving advice to numerous consistories who sought guidance on the exercise of their pastoral oversight. Recognizing the solemnity of the nature of the work, the assembly offered advice and prayer.

Before recessing for the evening, the delegates gave concurrence to a request from the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church in Kansas City, Missouri for the emeritation of their pastor, Rev. Stephen Lauer in light of his chronic illness. The concurrence for emeritus status was given in the hope that Rev. Lauer will be able to heal and take up full-time ministerial labors at some point in the future.

On Tuesday morning, classis turned its attention to numerous overtures. By adopting one overture, it was decided to divide equally monies received from surplus funds associated with the sale of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal, approximately \$38,000, between the Classis Home Missions Fund and the Classis Church Assistance Fund. Two other adopted overtures ask synod to consider moving to a delegated synod comprised of six ministers and six elders from each classis rather than two delegates from each church and to consider establishing a federation fund for the reimbursement of travel costs for synodical delegates. Synod 2024 will receive and deliberate on these two overtures.

The spring meeting of classis is the occasion for receiving numerous reports from both classical and synodical committees. While these reports are routine in nature, they do indicate the on-going labors of committees on behalf of the churches.

A notable action of the morning on Tuesday was the request from the Consistory of Doon URC for the emeritation of Rev. John Vermeer. Reflecting on his many years of humble, steady labor in the ministry and within Classis Central U.S., classis concurred with the consistory’s request for emeritation, effective August 5, 2024, Lord willing.

Classis was led in its deliberations by the chairman, Rev. John Bushnell of Sioux Center URC in Sioux Center, Iowa with Rev. Kirk Gibbons of Christ Reformed Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota serving as vice-chairman. The next meeting of classis is set for September 9 & 10, 2024, Lord willing, and will be convened and hosted by Rock Valley URC in Rock Valley, Iowa.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. G. Lubbers, Stated Clerk