

Classis Central U.S. Press Release
March 5, 2025

On the afternoon of March 2 Classis Central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches in North America convened at Community United Reformed Church in Schererville, Indiana for its 63rd meeting.

The assembly was guided in its work by the efficient leadership of Rev. Jody Lucero of Providence Reformed Church in Des Moines, Iowa with Rev. Daniel Hofland of Doon United Reformed Church in Doon, Iowa serving as vice-chairman. As is customary, the meeting began with all the delegates rising to assent to the *Form of Subscription* indicating their whole-hearted adherence to the Three Forms of Unity.

One unique matter of business that is a source of joy and encouragement was the provisional acceptance by classis of Redeemer Reformed Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota. This congregation was most recently a part of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) but amicably separated from them and has now been provisionally received within the URCNA, a reception that will be on the upcoming agenda of synod for final acceptance within the federation.

Monday afternoon's business was mostly the receiving of routine reports from classical and synodical functionaries and committees. Classis also heard updates from Rev. Roberto Rossi who serves as a Navy chaplain and Rev. Elijah Anderson who serves among the Latino communities of northwest Iowa. Classis continued its financial support to the Latino Mission of Cornerstone URC in Sanborn, Iowa, including \$35,000 a year of financial support.

Monday evening presented an occasion for a *colloquium doctum*, a learned theological discussion, with two ministers of Redeemer Reformed Church in Golden Valley, Rev. Jim Sawtelle and Rev. Caleb Janson. Both men gave an excellent account of their theological and pastoral knowledge and experience and were declared by classis to be ministers within the URCNA. Rev. Caleb Janson serves as minister of the Word and sacrament within Redeemer, while Rev. Jim Sawtelle, who had served as Redeemer's minister since its inception, has transitioned into chaplaincy work.

During Tuesday morning, the assembly considered two overtures and one appeal. The first overture dealt with adjusting the language of the Church Order Article 31 and Appendix 7 to remove ambiguity and give internal consistency by clarifying that a church member has the right to appeal a decision of his own consistory or any decision of an assembly in which he is personally involved. Classis acceded to this overture and will pass it along to the upcoming synod for their consideration.

The second overture was a request to ask synod to create a study committee to give clarification on pornography use and ministerial qualifications. After discussion, this overture was not acceded to, in part because the delegates believed it was too narrow in scope and because our Church Order includes articles that deal with gross sins of office-bearers that warrant suspension and deposition.

Classis adjudicated one appeal from a consistory who believed classis erred in an earlier meeting when it approved the work of the church visitors regarding a particular matter. Classis did not sustain this appeal.

Classis was also presented with a request from a consistory to grant concurring advice to depose a minister who had recently been suspended for sins against the 8th and 9th commandments. After careful and lengthy deliberation, classis granted concurring advice to depose.

Before adjournment, classis appointed or re-appointed numerous committee members and functionaries. It also scheduled its next regular meeting of classis for September 14 & 15 to be convened and hosted by Sioux Center United Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Greg Lubbers, Stated Clerk