

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLASSIS OF THE SOUTHWEST, RCA
Meeting in Regular Session at Longview Community Church
In Phoenix, Arizona on March 25, 2014

Pastor Richard Caballero opened the meeting with prayer and blessing of the meal provided by Longview Community Church, we then recessed for dinner followed by a time of worship.

Worship and Prayer – Pastor Agustin Hubert provided the message during our worship time and we concluded with a prayer circle praying for our churches and communities.

Classis business meeting was called to order at 6:15PM with prayer by Rev. Dr. Jim Poit.

Roll Call:

Christ's Community: Rev. Dr. Randy Wieland, Commissioned Pastor Fred Bates, Commissioned Pastor Kelly DeYoung (excused), Elder Barry Ellington

Cortaro Vista: Rev. Dr. Ted VandeBerg, Elder Jim Noble

Longview Community: Pastor Richard Caballero, Commissioned Pastor Agustin Hubert, Elder Marilyn Hoffs, Elder Kermit Hoffs

Mescalero Reformed: Commissioned Pastor Ben Landegent, Elder Harlan Dennis, Elder June Denny

New Hope Community: Rev. Dr. Jim Poit, Rev. Gary Jarvis, Pastor Youm Yoon Oh, Commissioned Pastor Israel Camacho, Elder Lynn Fischer

Prescott Community: Rev. David Ellis, Elder

The United Church of Los Alamos: Pastor (excused), Elder (excused)

Regional Strategist: Rev. Gary Jarvis

Words of Hope Delegate: Rev. Bill DeBoer

Other Ministers: Rev. Bill DeBoer, Rev. Susan Hetrick, Dr. John Stapert

Excused: Reverends John Busman, Russell Dykehouse, Corrine Ellis, Floyd Goulooze, Richard Hine, Bob Otto, Edwin Parsil, Robert Spencer, Warren Thompson, John Van Mantgem, Loren Van Galder, Byron White, and Bob Meyers.

Absent: Reverends Fred Doidge, Anne Guild-Donovan, Dan Jansma, Richard Koerselman, Bruce Laverman, Judy Marvel, and Roland Van Es

Guests: Pastor Luis Mateos, Christ's Community Spanish Ministry, Pastor Merle DenBleyker, Hispanic Ministry Training Center, Pastor Jerry Holleman, CRC Home Missions, Ann Ballard, SW Classis Disability Advocate, Al Gargis, Cortaro Vista

Stated Clerk reported the roll call is complete and a quorum of delegates is present.

Recognition of Guests and Granting of Privilege of the Floor:

- All guests were introduced and Rev. Dr. Jim Poit granted the privilege of the floor to the guests.

Recognition of New Members:

- Commissioned Pastor Ben Landegent was introduced as the new Lead Pastor of Mescalero Reformed Church following his commissioning service on February 27, 2014 in Mescalero, NM. After reading the Declaration for Commissioned Pastors and signing the register, Rev. Dr. Ted Vandenberg led the Classis in prayer and a laying on of hands for Pastor Landegent.

Establishment of the Order of the Day:

- Rev. Dr. Jim Poit asked that the agenda be approved as submitted.

MSC to approve the agenda, with no changes, by voice vote 2014/19.

- Boundaries of the House: Longview Community Church meeting room
- Schedule of Recesses: as required
- Request for Suspension of Rules of Order
- Appointment of Tellers: Longview Community and Prescott Community Churches

Annual Signing of the Covenant of Accountability:

- Rev. Gary Jarvis led the Classis members and delegates in a reading of the covenant of accountability, after which, Classis members and delegates indicated their desire to comply by signing the register.

Regional Strategist Report: Rev. Gary Jarvis

- Rev. Jarvis shared about the mission, vision, and values of the Classis: in regards to Kingdom perspective, the importance of prayer, church health, multiplication (i.e., disciples, leaders and churches), and leadership development.
- He reported that a Classis website (www.swclassis.org) had been established to improve communication within our Classis.
- He then reviewed the Classis goals with a focus on the goal of having 30 new Commissioned Pastors and/or Ministers of Word and Sacrament candidates in 2014. Pastor Fred Bates reported that we recently examined four candidates in Reformed Worship & The Sacraments. They were Serena Beckman (Christ's Community), Cindy Jarvis (New Hope), Anne Stone (Prescott) and Maureen Williams (Christ's Community). He also reported that we currently have six candidates in the Reformed Theology unit. They are Serena Beckman (Christ's Community), Manny Correa (Orangewood CRC), Gregg Griffiths (Christ's Community), Yvonne Martinez (Christ's Community), Anne Stone (Prescott) and Maureen Williams (Christ's Community).

Overture to General Synod: Rev. Gary Jarvis

Rev. Jarvis presented for Classis approval, an overture to General Synod to make an appropriate change to the Book of Church Order to allow elder who are commissioned by their Classis as a commissioned pastor to be eligible to be elder delegates to higher assemblies, namely the General Synod and the applicable regional synod. Specifically that change would be:

BCO Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Section 9

Sec. 9 The commissioned pastor shall be a temporary member of classis, ~~but~~ and shall not serve as replace an elder delegate from a church, during the period of commissioned service.

MSC to send the overture to General Synod by voice vote 2014/20.

Rev. Susan Hetrick offered prayers of encouragement for the Regional Strategist.

Leadership Team Report: Rev. Dr. Jim Poit

- Rev. Poit gave an overview of the Regional Synod of the Far West's reorganization and the elimination of regional strategist positions at the Classis level. They have agreed to fund our Regional Strategist position through 2014. The Leadership Team has been discussing what a Classis Strategist position would consist of and will eventually bring that information to Classis for approval.
- Rev. Poit commended Rev. Dr. Randy Wieland and elder delegate Wayne Ribbens on their handling of the situation related to Glass & Garden Community Church.

- Rev. Poit reported on the Consistory Training Retreat held recently and asked those churches that attended to report on what they were doing in response to the training. Rev. Poit would like to see this as an annual event and with greater participation.

Rev. David Ellis offered prayers of encouragement for the Leadership Team.

Mission Southwest Report: Rev. Gary Jarvis

- Rev. Jarvis discussed how we can better measure discipleship growth and distributed a *“Discipleship Making Progress Report”* form for review and discussion.
- *Equipping Team* – Pastor Richard Caballero introduced Pastor Merle DenBleyker as the new director of the Hispanic Ministry Training Center. On April 6, 2014 at 5PM they will be celebrating the first graduating class from the HMTC with a special service held at Longview Community Church. All are invited.
- *Expand Team* – It was reported that they are scheduling meetings with all the churches to build relationships with Mission Southwest and to share the vision.

MSC to conduct a joint RCA/CRC Classis meeting on September 19 & 20, 2014 by voice vote 2014/21.

Pastor Jerry Holleman offered prayers of encouragement for Mission Southwest.

Church Health Team Report: Rev. Dr. Randy Wieland

- Rev. Wieland reported on the initial outcome of the lawsuit regarding Glass & Garden. The judge dismissed the suit with prejudice. They have since filed another lawsuit and are now waiting on the judge’s ruling.
- Rev. Dr. Ted VandeBerg reported that Rosemont Community Church celebrated their final worship service on February 23, 2014. They focused on 60 years of ministry. The Board of Trustees is now focused on dealing with property, assets and members. All members were transferred to Cortaro Vista until such time that they request letters of transfer.
- Rev. Wieland reported that the Mescalero Reformed Church transition has gone well.
- Rev. Wieland then reported that the team has come up with assignments for each church to send encouragement teams to another Classis church’s consistory for a period of three years. The teams would be made up of one Minister of Word and Sacrament or Commissioned Pastor, one elder and one deacon. Encouragement teams are to meet with their assigned consistory at least once a year. Assignments are as follows:

Church Encouragement Team	Church Consistory
Christ’s Community Church	Prescott Community Church
New Hope Community Church	Christ’s Community Church
Prescott Community Church	Longview Community Church
Mescalero Reformed Church	New Hope Community Church
Longview Community Church	Cortaro Vista Community Church
Cortaro Vista Community Church	Mescalero Reformed Church

- Regional Synod of the Far West is also offering mini-leadership retreats for churches. It is designed for all current and future leaders and their spouses...elders, deacons, staff, ministry team leaders, etc. It is recommended that multiple churches come together to hold a retreat.
- Distributed copies of *“10 Healthy Missional Markers”*.

- Distributed copies of the Vitality brochure that outlines congregational vitality path.

Pastor Fred Bates offered prayers of encouragement for the Church Health Team.

Stated Clerk's Report on Actions Ordered and Unfinished Business: Lynn Fischer

- Approval of minutes included in the information packet.

MSC to approve minutes of the September 26, 2013 regular meeting, November 8, 2013 special meeting, and February 27, 2014 special meeting by voice vote 2014/22.

Referrals/Communications/Appeals:

Presentation of 2013 General Synod Book of Church Order Changes: Approval/Disapproval

1. Classis Petitioning for a Candidate's Certificate of Fitness for Ministry (*MGS 2013, R-24, p. 130*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/23.

2. Examining for Licensure and Ordination (*MGS 2013, R-25, pp. 130-131*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/24.

3. Coordinating Supervision of Candidates (*MGS 2013, R-26, p. 131*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/25.

4. "Academically Equivalent Degree" (First Instance) (*MGS 2013, R-27, p. 132*)
MSFailed to approve by voice vote 2014/26.

5. "Academically Equivalent Degree" (Second Instance) and Preparation for Office Bearing (*MGS 2013, R-28, pp. 133-134*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/27.

6. Ordained to an Office (*MGS 2013, R-29, p. 133*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/28.

7. New "Constitutional Inquiry" Question (*MGS 2013, R-32, p. 140*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/29.

8. Health Insurance for Ministers of Word and Sacrament (*MGS 2013, R-61, pp. 259-260*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/30.

9. Preamble and Formularies Constitutional (*MGS 2013, R-82, p. 360*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/31.

10. Declarations for Licensed Candidates, Ministers, General Synod Professors, and Commissioned Pastors (*MGS 2013, R-83, p. 362-363*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/32.

11. "Celebrating the Baptismal Covenant: A Combined Order for Baptism, Profession of Faith, and Reaffirmation of Faith" (*MGS 2013, R-69, pp. 298-308*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/33.

12. "Celebrating the Baptismal Covenant: The Order for Baptism of Children" (*MGS 2013, R-70, pp. 308-314*)
MSC to approve by voice vote 2014/34.

Proposed By-laws changes second reading:

- ARTICLE V COMMITTEES OF CLASSIS (Sections A & B)
Original Text: Section A
A. The Leadership Team
1. Membership

- a. The Leadership Team shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Church Health Team Leader, Church Health Team Assistant Leader, Two Multiplication Team members, the Stated Clerk and Treasurer, and the Regional Strategist. The President and Vice-President may serve as Team Leader or Assistant Leader.
- b. The President of Classis shall be the presiding officer of the Leadership Team.
- c. The Regional Strategist shall be the vision-caster of the Leadership Team.
- d. The Leadership Team shall conduct all its business in harmony with the Book of Church Order.

Proposed Revised Text: Section A

A. The Leadership Team

1. Membership

- a. The Leadership Team shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Church Health Team Leader, Church Health Team Assistant Leader, Two Multiplication Team members, the Stated Clerk and Treasurer. The President and Vice-President may serve as Team Leader or Assistant Leader.
- b. The President of Classis shall be the presiding officer of the Leadership Team.
- c. The Leadership Team shall conduct all its business in harmony with the Book of Church Order.

Original Text: Section B

B. Church Multiplication Team:

The Church Multiplication Team (Team) will consist of representatives appointed by the Classis of the Southwest, RCA and Classis of Arizona, CRCNA.

1. Purpose: To catalyze a church multiplication movement in the geographic area served by the Classis of the Southwest (RCA) and Classis of Arizona (CRCNA) through empowering, equipping, and encouraging churches and leaders for the planting of churches.
2. The Classis of the Southwest, RCA shall appoint three persons to serve as Team members. Additional members may be added by the Team as needed, from within the bounds of the Classis of the Southwest, RCA to address specific church multiplication activities. The individuals will be selected based on gifts of the individual and a strong desire to see the kingdom multiply.

Proposed Revised Text: Section B

B. Church Multiplication a.k.a. Mission Southwest

Mission Southwest Team (MS Team) will consist of representatives appointed by the Classis of the Southwest, RCA and Classis of Arizona, CRCNA.

1. Purpose: To catalyze a church multiplication movement in the geographic area served by the Classis of the Southwest (RCA) and Classis of Arizona (CRCNA) through empowering, equipping, and encouraging churches and leaders for the planting of churches.
2. The Classis of the Southwest, RCA shall appoint four voting representatives to serve as MS Team members. Additional voting representatives may be added or deleted by the Classis of the Southwest as requested by Mission Southwest. Additional, non-voting members may be added by MS Team as needed, from within the bounds of the Classis of the Southwest, RCA to address specific church multiplication activities. The individuals will be selected based on gifts of the individual and a strong desire to see the kingdom multiply.

MSC to accept the changes as written by voice vote 2014/35.

General Synod Delegates: June 12-17, 2014, Pella, Iowa

- Pastor Delegates: Rev. Susan Hetrick and Rev. Gary Jarvis
- Elder Delegates: Gerald Bouma (New Hope) and Jim Noble (Cortaro Vista)

Treasurer's Report: Lynn Fischer, Classis Treasurer

- The 2014 year-to-date Treasurer's reports were included in the information packet. The Treasurer commented on several items in the reports.

MSC to receive the reports for information by voice vote 2014/36.

MSC to adjourn the meeting at 8:52PM with a circle of prayer 2014/37.

Respectfully submitted,

Frederick F. Bates
Classis Clerk in training

Rev. Dr. Jim Poit
President