

Classis Report
Classis Central US of the URCNA

September 11-12, AD 2022

Delegates to the 54th meeting of Classis Central US gathered at the Lynwood United Reformed Church in Lynwood, Illinois beginning at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, September 11 and did not adjourn until late into the afternoon of the next day. After the opening preliminaries on Monday evening, classis put their shoulder to the wheel and began the first of two exams on the agenda.

The first exam was a candidacy exam for Mr. Praveen Muthusamy, a native of India and now, with his wife Sharon, is a member of the Community URC in Schererville, Indiana. He graduated this past May from Mid-America Reformed Seminary and has been put forward by his consistory for the candidacy exam. He spent two summers as a student pastor serving the Hills URC in Minnesota and one summer at the Immanuel URC of DeMotte, Indiana. The exam proceeded through the evening and resumed the next morning. Mr. Muthusamy acquitted himself well. His consistory voted that he sustained the exam in all areas and the classis concurred with their decision.



The second exam was a *colloquium doctum* for Rev. Stephen Lauer, an



OPC minister and former church planter for the OPC who has been serving as stated supply for the Covenant URC in Kansas City for the last nine months. Rev. Lauer gave good testimony of his faith and qualifications for the pastoral minister and classis declared him eligible for a call by the Kansas City congregation.

In addition to the exams, reports were received from classical functionaries including the convening consistory, the Stated Clerk, the Treasurer, and the Classis Church Planting Committee. Classis was informed that the church plant in Chicago Heights has been closed and that Rev. Sernas has accepted a call to the PCA. Fraternal greetings were received by letter from Classis Minnkota. An overture from Oak Glen was postponed for the next classis meeting.

Around 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, the delegates began dealing with many requests for advice from the churches. Eight churches requested advice on various matters including several cases of spiritual discipline. Discipline cases are difficult, but the faithful exercise of discipline is a mark of the true church and a means of bringing glory to God as well as calling sinners to repentance.

Covenant URC, Kansas City asked for, and was granted, concurring advice for the emeritation of Rev. Allen Vander Pol effective December 31, 2022. Rev. Vander Pol, who was not present at classis, has served for 42 years as a minister of the Gospel. Prior to that he also spent two years in Nigeria teaching theology to pastors and evangelists. His first pastoral charge was the Holland CRC in Minnesota beginning in 1980. In 1986 he went to New Zealand and served the RCNZ in Nelson and then returned to the US in 1990 to serve the First CRC of Minneapolis. In 1997 he accepted the call of the Trinity URC in Cape Coral, Florida where he labored until 2011. In 2011 he began working full time with MINTS International Seminary. He wrote courses in systematic theology and taught in Myanmar, India, and the Philippines. He has also taught in Zambia, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Serbia, and Kyrgyzstan. Rev. Vander Pol and his wife Marcia, and their youngest son Joshua (in ninth grade), now reside in Kansas City where Rev. Vander Pol is winding down his work with MINTS and has been helping the Covenant URC in their vacancy.





The Rock Valley URC asked for, and received, concurring advice to grant the emeritation of their pastor, Rev. Joel Vander Kooi effective November 7, 2022. Rev. Vander Kooi has been a minister of the Gospel for 36 years. He began his ministry in the Bethel CRC of Listowel, Ontario in 1986 and served there until 1992. He then served the Walker CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan. During his time there he helped lead the congregation in affiliating with the United Reformed Churches in 1997. In 2004 he accepted the call of the Bethel URC in Calgary, Alberta and served there until 2013 when he accepted the call of the Rock Valley, Iowa URC. It is his plan to serve in Rock Valley until November and then he and his wife Janet look forward to moving back to Alberta to be near their children and grandchildren. He hopes to continue to be of service to the churches in the various ways open to emeritus ministers.

Classis received a brief report from URCNA church planter, Rev. Collin Welch who is working in Madison, Indiana. He also gave a brief report on the work of his colleague in Classis Eastern US, the recently ordained Rev. Austin Rifle who is planting a church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Classis also dealt with a request from the Wellsburg URC for salary support for their pastor for the next two years. Classis granted the request.

Rev. Vander Kooi ably chaired the meeting and at the conclusion thanked the delegates for their diligent work in the service of the churches and thanked the host church for their warm and generous hospitality. Classis adjourned around 6:00 p.m.

Classis is scheduled to meet again April 10-11, 2023, and be hosted and convened by the Oak Lawn United Reformed Church, Illinois.