Classis Georgetown MEETING MINUTES

Session #126

Thursday, October 29, 2026

Meeting at Cottonwood Church – 1101 Cypress Dr, Jenison, MI 49428

Our Vision

Classis Georgetown is a community of Christian Reformed Churches in Eastern Ottawa County who live and minister together, in Christ, to transform lives and communities.

Officers of the Day

President: Rev. Jeremy Rhodes
Vice-President: Rev. Cory Nederveld
Stated Clerk: Ms. Glenda Tebben

Article 1: OPENING OF CLASSIS	
1.1	Rev. Matt Palsrok, pastor of Cottonwood Church, welcomes delegates and guests to Cottonwood.
1.2	Classis president Rev. Jeremy Rhodes calls the meeting to order and gives a brief overview of the agenda.
1.3	A time of devotions is led by Rev. Matthew Wright, pastor of Cottonwood Church.

Article 2: CONSTITUTION OF CLASSIS

2.1 **Roll Call**

Roll Call of delegates is taken. All delegates signed the Covenant for Officebearers in the CRC.

Church	Pastor	Elder(s)	Deacon
Alive Ministries		Terry Haveman	Shelley Stuursma
Baldwin Street		Richard Meyer Duane Vork	
Bauer	Dave TenClay	Jeff Slager	Steve Westveld
Cottonwood	Matthew Wright	Keith Mulder	Aaron Dozeman
Evergreen Ministries		Sue Ensing Deb Kennedy	Cal Essenburg
Fairway	Jeremy Rhodes	Kurt Brace	Carl Kiel
First Hudsonville	David Jolman	Bill Brouwer	Andrew Power
Forest Grove	Jeffery Scripps	Randy Dozeman	Rich Beenen
Georgetown	Doug Kamstra	Scott Van Wyk	Dave VanderWaal
Hillcrest	Cory Nederveld	Paul Witte	Blair Miedema
Immanuel		Aaron Eggebeen	Keith Meinema, Jr.
Jamestown	Chris Bouma		
Messiah	Nate Meldrim	Eric Bolt	Dave Duimstra
Ridgewood	Michael TenHaken	Bernie Grysen	Laurie VanderBroek

Searchlight		Ryan Scholma	Sue Lyzenga
Strong Tower Ministries	Bryson Masiboh		
The Refuge	Derek Noorman	Kevin Kiekover	Carol Newman
Zutphen	Mark Elffers	Kraig Rotman	Mark Brinks

Other persons attending Classis for some or all of the meeting are:
Vision Team:
Mrs. Kathy Jelsema – Treasurer, Rev. Gerry Koning – Regional Pastor,
Ms. Glenda Tebben – Stated Clerk, Rev. Curt Walters – Hillcrest CRC
Guests:
Mrs. Jeanne Kallemeyn – COD rep, Mr. Fig VanderMolen – Youth Champion,
Ms. Holly Small – Calvin Theological Seminary, Rev. Scott Stark – Resonate Global Mission,
Ms. Idella Winfield – Thrive, Rev. Ron Bouwkamp, Hillcrest CRC, Rev. Gale Tien – Messiah CRC,
Rev. Shawn Gerbers – Bauer CRC, Rev. Matt Palsrok – Cottonwood Church,
Rev. Tom Walcott – Evergreen Ministries, Ms. Veronica Disher – Evergreen Ministries,
Ms. Terri Jasperse – Evergreen Ministries, Mr. Dan Winiarski – Cottonwood Church,
Mr. Brandon Seaver – Hillcrest CRC, Mr. Sam Kuipers – Georgetown CRC

2.2 **Credentials Committee: The Refuge and Zutphen CRC; Rev. Mark Elffers reports for the committee**

Credentials were received from eighteen churches. All credentials are in order.

Matters submitted to Classis by way of credentials (all received for information):

From Hillcrest CRC (additional comments):
Rev. Curt Walters will attend as a guest/Vision Team member. (We understand that he has the privilege of the floor).
Brandon Seaver will also attend as a guest to give a Synod 2026 report

From Zutphen CRC (additional comments):
Zutphen CRC is grateful for all of the believing women in our classis and their many spiritual gifts. However, in accordance with Church Order Article 40-a Supplement b, we believe that the seating of women delegates at a classis meeting is a violation of the Word of God. We would like to record our protest on the appropriate credentials.

From Evergreen Ministries (additional comments):
Additional Visitors to Classis (non-voting): Tom Walcott, Veronica Disher, Terri Jasperse
We request that the following be read aloud:
Brothers and Sisters in Christ, recognizing and respecting that the churches of Classis Georgetown hold a variety of beliefs and practices regarding women in church office, we feel compelled to affirm the ministry and spiritual gifts of the women pastors, elders, and deacons present in Classis Georgetown. Our council believes that these office-bearers are anointed by God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and called by their congregations to be faithful servants and witnesses to God's love and mercy. Sincerely, The Council of Evergreen Ministries
We also have made the following motion, as already included in the October classis agenda:
MOTION: Evergreen Ministries moves that when a church in Classis Georgetown attaches a statement either in support of or opposed to women in church office, Classis Georgetown follow the lead of Synod and, while recording the statements for protest or affirmation in the minutes, read the statement that Synod 2023 approved.

Article 3: CLASSIS WORK: WE HEAR FROM OUR CLASSIS LEADERS

3.1 **Executive Session is declared**

Upon review of the Church Visitors report on the meeting held with the Council of Evergreen ministries, Classis moves to Executive Session to discuss if the council members from Evergreen Ministries should be seated as delegates at this meeting.

MOTION: To seat the delegates from Evergreen Ministries.

Motion is discussed.

Motion CARRIED.

Executive session ends.

3.2 **CRCNA "Greetings" Video**

We receive greetings from Rev. Zachary King, General Secretary, CRCNA, Rev, Tim Sheridan, Director of Church Planting, and Rev. Elaine May, Congregational Renewal Consultant.

3.3 **Motion from Evergreen Ministries**

Classis chair Rev. Jeremy Rhodes ruled that the motion from Evergreen Ministries would not be taken up prior to the Church Visitors report.

3.4 **Vision Team Report**

Rev. Jeremy Rhodes reviews the Vision Team section of the report.

MOTION: To approve the work of the Vision Team: **CARRIED.**

3.5 **Stated Clerk report**

Ms. Glenda Tebben elaborated on several items on the written report:

Rev. George Cooper's resignation as emeritus Minister of the Word in the CRCNA.

MOTION: Classis Georgetown recognizes that Rev. George Cooper, following his desire to resign as emeritus minister of the Word in the CRCNA, no longer retains the title of Minister of the Word in the CRCNA nor the authority to perform official acts of ministry in the CRCNA: **CARRIED**.

Classis Churches Updates:

- Baldwin Street CRC is looking for a lead pastor. Rev. Dave Jolman serves as their church counselor.
- Georgetown CRC's Search Committee continues to meet. Rev. Doug Kamstra is their STM; a call has been issued to a potential pastor.
- Rev. Neil Jasperse continues to serve as the STM at Immanuel CRC. Immanuel issued a call to Rev. David Spoelma of Foundation Church in Holland and gratefully reports that Rev. Spoelma accepted this call and will begin his work at Immanuel in January 2027.

MOTION: To approve the work of the Stated Clerk: **CARRIED**

Glenda is thanked for her work on our behalf.

3.6	**Treasurer's Report – Mrs. Kathy Jelsema** Mrs. Jelsema reviews the financials. We will end the 2026 fiscal year with excess funds. Our Classis is blessed with healthy finances. We pray for wisdom in using these funds. Forms have been distributed to the churches requiring membership count and a request for ministry share pledges. Churches are asked to provide this information to the treasurer by November 15, 2026. We are looking to find an assistant treasurer for Classis. **MOTION:** To approve the work of the Treasurer: **CARRIED**
3.7	**Classis Georgetown 2027 Budget presentation – Mrs. Kathy Jelsema** Mrs. Jelsema gives an overview of the proposed 2027 budget. The proposed budget reflects changes to a number of line items that have decreased. Only one increase is seminary aid (we are thankful for this). There is a decrease in the proposed budget by 29.7% (over the 2026 budget). If there is a deficit at the end of 2027, the rent for Strong Tower will be covered through the Church Planting Fund **MOTION:** To approve the 2027 budget: **CARRIED** Kathy is thanked for her work on our behalf.
3.8	Rev. Chris Bouma led in a prayer of thanks for the work and ministry of our Classis Leaders. We praise God for allowing us to serve his church and bring him glory.

Article 4: CLASSIS WORK: WE HEAR FROM OUR CLASSIS REPRESENTATIVES	
4.1	**Council of Delegates (COD) report – Mrs. Jeanne Kallemeyn** Written highlights of the meeting of October 14-16, 2026 are received. Mrs. Kallemeyn gives praise and thanks for the spirit of unity at the meeting as well as gratitude that God has provided amazing leaders in the ministries of the CRCNA.
4.2	**Thrive report – Ms. Idella Winfield, Great Lakes Regional Connector** Ms. Winfield highlights the Fall 206 Thrive report. She shares a newly released workbook for elders – Elder Essentials (each church received a copy).
4.3	**Classical Ministry Leadership Team report – Rev. Jeffery Scripps** Rev. Scripps gives thanks for two students requesting aid. If we are to continue to educate pastors as best we can, the cost will continue to rise.

4.4	**Church Visitors report – Rev. Jeffery Scripps** Four visits have been made by our church visitors (Alive Ministries, Cottonwood, Evergreen Ministries, Zutphen CRC). Rev. Ron Bouwkamp, a church visitor, reported on the meeting with Evergreen Ministries, expressing the difficulty experienced in discussing the road blocks in relation to the Covenant for Officebearers in a large group setting. So that conversation can move forward in a pastoral way, a meeting will be held with the church visitors and a small group from Evergreen. A report will come to the next Classis meeting.
4.5	**The Credentials Committee reads the additional comments on the credentials from Evergreen Ministries (see Article 2.2)** **MOTION:** To untable the motion presented by Evergreen Ministries (Article 3.3): **CARRIED.** **MOTION:** Evergreen Ministries moves that when a church in Classis Georgetown attaches a statement either in support of or opposed to women in church office, Classis Georgetown follow the lead of Synod and, while recording the statements for protest or affirmation in the minutes, read the statement that Synod 2023 approved. **Motion is seconded**. **Discussion on the motion** **MOTION:** To table the motion from Evergreen Ministries and create a committee of two-four people that come with a joint statement that both egalitarians and complementarians can say 'yes' to. The committee will report back to the February meeting: **CARRIED.** **Note: The Vision Team will form the committee.**

Article 5: DINNER AND FELLOWSHIP	
5.1	Rev. Jeremy Rhodes prays for dinner.
5.2	Delegates and guests enjoy a delicious meal and a wonderful time of fellowship. Volunteers from our host church are thanked for their efficiency and hospitality.

Article 6: CLASSIS WORK: WE HEAR FROM OUR CLASSIS REPRESENTATIVES (continued)	
6.1	**Regional Pastors report – Rev. Gerry Koning** The Regional Pastors of Classis Georgetown are pastors for pastors Delegates watch a video about the Pine Rest EAP program. This is a free counseling service and is a very helpful program for all employees (full or part-time) of our churches and their families. Rev. Koning encourages churches to take advantage of this program. He serves as our HR representative at Pine Rest. Connect with Pine Rest and say, "I have an EAP with Classis Georgetown" The Regional Pastors are thanked for their work with the pastors of our classis.
6.2	**Youth Champion report – Mr. Fig VanderMolen** Fig highlights all that is going on with the youth in our churches: collaborative ministry, monthly meetings, afterschool programs, lunches at schools; highlighting the significance of youth ministry in our classis. He is thankful for youth leaders that have a heart for youth. On a side note, Fig shares greetings from Rev. Matt Slack (England). Fig is thanked for his work and ministry with youth and their leaders in or classis.
6.3	**Synod 2026 report – Mr. Brandon Seaver** Rev. Mark Elffers and Rev. Dave TenClay along with Elder Brandon Seaver and Deacon Mason Witte served at Synod 2026. We thank them for their service. Mr. Seaver reviewed the summary. He highlighted various decisions made by Synod, especially in relation to the overtures sent by our classis.
6.4	Rev. Dave TenClay leads in a prayer of thanks for our classis and denominational representatives, our students at seminary, our regional pastors and the EAP program at Pine Rest, the youth ministry programs in our churches that are central to carrying out our baptismal promises, and the work of Synod 2026. He prays for a sense of unity in the work that was accomplished.

Article 7: CLASSIS WORK: VOTING	
7.1	Delegates vote by ballot for a new member of the Classis Vision Team and a classis representative for the Council of Delegates. Rev. Michael TenHaken becomes the new value steward of Collaborative Relationships on the Classis Vision Team. Rev. Cory Nederveld will serve as our classis representative on the Council of Delegates.

Article 8: CLASSIS RESTRUCTURING	
8.1	**Rev. Cory Nederveld** is a member of the taskforce that has been formed to review the current classis structure and to make recommendations about classis realignment. A few classes are already in discussion and there was a gathering of Michigan classes on August 19, 2026 at Ivanrest CRC. Realigning classes would provide additional human resources, not just financial resources. The taskforce report is due September 2027.
8.2	Our classis will hold a meeting/gathering on Thursday, January 21, 2027 at 7:00 PM at Hillcrest CRC to discuss realigning our classis and/or merging with another classis. Each church is asked to send 2-3 members to join the discussion. More information will be sent to the churches about this meeting.

Article 9: CHURCH PLANTING	
9.1	**Rev. Mark Elffers**, a delegate to Synod 2026, reviewed the unanimous decision made at Synod to develop a comprehensive ten-year church planting strategy. This church planting initiative is encouraging and inspiring.
9.2	Rev. Elffers presents four questions and answers about church planting: **Why should we plant churches?** Look at the examples in scriptures (especially in the Book of Acts) – so that lost will be converted, discipleship (importance of this) – baptize and teach **What type of churches should we plant?** Healthy, engaging churches with robust discipleship that emphatically proclaim the pure gospel that we are saved by grace alone and use the Heidelberg Catechism for all age groups **How do we go about this?** We must activate local churches because churches plant churches. This is our Antioch moment. Councils and congregations need to get excited, look for opportunities to do this. All must be done with prayer (reminder of prayer meetings on Friday mornings at Ridgewood at 7 AM). **What steps would this take?** Put down a plan and start talking about this. Have the strategic conversation accompanied by much prayer.
9.3	Rev. Elffers hopes for a cooperative spirit among churches and asks that this can be a line item on our Classis meeting agenda for future meetings. This is a ten-year strategic plan; we must dialogue with other and keep talking!

Article 10: CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION	
10.1	President Rhodes thanks Cottonwood for serving as hosts.
10.2	President Rhodes leads in the benediction.
10.3	President Rhodes declares Classis is adjourned.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 25, 2027 at (host church still needed)
Agenda Deadline: Monday, January 11, 2027
Credentials Committee: Fairway CRC and First Hudsonville CRC

Following meeting, Thursday, May 6, 2027 at Zutphen CRC

Respectfully submitted,
Glenda Tebben, Stated Clerk