



ADDENDUM TO THE AGENDA

CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

February 23, 2021

ACCESS TO MEETING VIA ZOOM COMMENCES AT 8:40 AM, MEETING COMMENCES AT 9:00 AM

Delegates and invited guests will receive an invitation to join the ZOOM meeting on February 22, 2021. Delegates are asked to, please, use a laptop since many other devices do not support the voting system available through the Zoom platform.

The section titled "Orientation for Delegates" in this Addendum, page 4, is intended to help delegates better understand the procedures at Classis Hamilton meetings as well as the obligations of each delegate. Please read those pages carefully and if you can suggest additional items for inclusion, please send them to the stated clerk who will gladly include them in future editions.

For first time delegates (and as refresher for others) the Agenda itself can be found at the following link: http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/agenda_february_23_2021.pdf.

All delegates will be asked to affirm their commitment to the Covenant for Office-bearers in the Christian Reformed Church in North America by so indicating when the Chair of Classis asks. The Covenant can be found on page 9.

Agenda Item 16. – An additional agenda item has been added after the Pulpit Supply presentation so please carefully read item 8. and its appendix item 8.1. in this addendum in preparation.

May the Lord be with you as you prayerfully prepare for classis.

Thank you,

Dick L. Kranendonk,
Stated Clerk

clerk@classishamilton.ca

289-239-7564

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1. DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

Church	First Name	Last Name	Title
Ancaster CRC	Theo	Breimer	Elder Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Fred	Hagen	Elder Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Stuart	Bootsma	Deacon Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Everett	Vander Horst	Pastor Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Ken	Tigchelaar	Elder Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Marcia	Hosmar	Deacon Delegate
Hope	William	Koopmans	Pastor Delegate
Hope	Matt	Ellens	Elder Delegate
Hope	Ben	Schrik	Deacon Delegate
Hope	Curt	Winter	Elder Alternate
Hope	John	Hensen	Elder Alternate
Hope	Dan	De Young	Deacon Alternate
New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
New Street	Jordan	Dykstra	Elder Delegate
New Street	John	Dekker	Deacon Delegate
New Street	Ingred	Dykstra	Deacon Alternate
Faith	Cara	DeHaan	Pator Delegate
Faith	Dave	Kloet	Elder Delegate
Faith	Audrey	Vandermeulen	Deacon Delegate
Calvin	Ken	Benjamins	Pastor Delegate
Calvin	Jeremy	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Derek	Vanderkruk	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate
Calvary	Bernard	Teeninga	Elder Delegate
Calvary	Richard	VandenBerg	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Bas	Hania	Elder Alternate
Calvary	Jane	Vanderzwaag	Deacon Alternate
Hagersville Community	Davis	Miedema	Elder Delegate
Hagersville Community	Mark	Laing	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Hayden	Regeling	Pastor Delegate
First Hamilton	Jules	de Jager	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Jan	Disselkoen	Deacon Delegate
First Hamilton	Willem	de Ruijter	Elder Alternate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Michael	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Michael	Zantingh	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Josh	Van Berkel	Deacon Delegate
New Hope	Steve	Dykstra	Emerging Church
Mt. Hope Community	Mark	Demik	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Greg	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Willem	de Vries	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	Gerald	Nykamp	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Phil	Helder	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pator Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Ada	Kloet	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Ann	Oosterveld	Deacon Delegate
Bethel	John	Kemper	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Peter	van der Meulen	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Chris	DeWeerd	Deacon Delegate-am
Maranatha	Ben	Ponsen	Pastor Delegate
Maranatha	Rob	Jagt	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Maurice	Houwer	Deacon Delegate
Maranatha	Nathan	Wamsteker	Elder Alternate
Maranatha	Jason	Haanstra	Deacon Alternate

2. ORIENTATION FOR DELEGATES

Introduction:

Classis consists of three delegates from each member congregation – a pastor, an elder and a deacon. *Delegate Credentials* are processed by the church council and are to be submitted by the Council, to the Stated Clerk via email prior to the classis meeting by your council clerk.

Duration of Classis Meetings

- The meetings normally are held on Tuesdays. Start time is determined based on the length/needs of the agenda.

Classis Agenda:

- The Classis Agenda will, ordinarily, be in the hands of church councils eight weeks prior to the actual meeting date of classis. This is done to allow each church council to review the agenda prior to sending delegates.
- Delegates are to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the classis agenda. The assumption is that the agenda has been discussed at the delegates' local council meetings.

Executive of Classis

- The Executive consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair and the Stated Clerk. A Reporter is also appointed for each meeting and serves as the Vice-Chair at the next subsequent meeting.
- The chair is elected by classis in its October meeting to serve during the following calendar year. The vice-chair is appointed by rotation and the stated clerk is elected annually at the May classis meeting.

What May I Expect to Happen at Any One Classis Meeting?

- First time delegates are to sign the Covenant for Officebearers.
- The Classis Agenda will, ordinarily, be in the hands of church councils eight weeks prior to the actual meeting date of classis, and so delegates should have it at that time as well.
- Delegates may be requested to serve in the following capacities:
 - **Prayer:** for the ministries of classis, concerns of classis and/or for individuals.
 - **Committee work:**
 - Delegates in teams of two churches may be asked to serve on one of its advisory committees, Credentials, Ad hoc (as determined by previous Classis or Classis Interim Committee) or Overtures & Appeals. They are expected to submit their recommendations at least three weeks prior to the classis meeting.
- Though there is a degree of flexibility (especially where there is silence on a matter), classis abides by its own Rules of Procedure together with the rules of the CRCNA Church Order in conducting its meetings. The Church Order is determined by Synod and is held in covenant by all CR churches. The classis Rules of Procedure are at:
http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/rop_issue_2019_1.pdf

What Are Classis' Expectations of Me?

- Be on time for all sessions of classis.
- Delegates are expected to review the agenda with their council, sharing the thoughts of their council on any particular agenda item. Delegates are not obligated to vote according to their council's wishes. Classis is a deliberative body and the freedom needs to remain for delegates to

vote on the basis of the best information or perspective presented at classis. (*Church Order*, Article 34; & *Manual of CRC Government*, Article 34, Commentary #'s 1 – 4.)

- If you do not understand the procedure, or it is not clear what is being discussed, or you are uncertain of the implications of a decision, ***please ask***. It is important that all delegates deliberate and vote with good awareness of what is going on. Classis would rather take a moment to ensure that, also for the meaningfulness of your time there, than try 'rush' through the agenda.
- You are expected to remain at classis until the meeting is formally adjourned. If there is an urgent need to leave, or if you will be replaced at some point by an alternate, you are to seek the permission of the chair who will seek the consent of the assembly.
- Be aware that classis is a deliberative body and may make decisions from time to time that you do not necessarily agree with.
- Strong objection to a decision of classis may be voiced by stating your objection. If you wish to have your objection recorded, you will need to submit a written statement (within 24 hours) indicating your objection and reason(s) why.
- Delegates should report to their councils the decisions made at the classis meeting.

What do the Acronyms Used at Classis Mean?

It is always a challenge for persons coming to a meeting of an organization to understand the shortcut language often used. Part of that shortcut language is using acronyms. Here follows a list of more common ones often included in reports or heard at classis meetings.

- ARC – Audit Review Committee of Classis Hamilton
- CHCC – Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee
- CHCMC – Classis Hamilton Campus Ministries Committee
- CHHMC – Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee
- CHSCT – Classis Hamilton Safe Church Team
- CHYMT – Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Team
- CIC – Classis Interim Committee (also serves as the corporation's Board of Directors)
- CMT – Classis Ministry Team
- CRCNA – Christian Reformed Church in North America
- DMC – Diaconal Ministries Canada
- EPMC – Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidates
- RCA – Reformed Church in America
- RoP – Rules of Procedure of Classis Hamilton

THE PURPOSE OF CLASSIS ACCORDING TO CRCNA CHURCH ORDER

The purpose of classis cannot be clearly and easily stated. However, there are several aspects of classis and the classical structure that help to clarify the purpose of classis.

I. Definition of Classis

A classis shall consist of a group of Christian Reformed churches that come together to seek, discern, and submit to God's will; offer one another mutual support and accountability; find ways to live out a collective calling within their region; and allow for a healthy and sustained connection to the wider denomination. A classis shall consist of a group of neighboring churches. The organizing of a new classis and the redistricting of classes require the approval of synod. (Church Order, Article 39)

“Article 39 defines the classical assembly as a group of neighboring churches [that find ways to live out a collective calling within their region]. Each organized church belongs to a classis.” (*Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government (MCRCG) 2017*, Commentary, Items 1. & 2., p. 170)

“The classis is the official assembly of a group of neighboring (broadly defined) congregations. It consists of three official delegates (a minister, an elder, and a deacon) from each congregation and ordinarily meets every four months (see Church Order Art. 39 and 40). However, there are a number of classes that now meet two times per year rather than the three stipulated in the Church Order. (*MCRCG 2017*, Commentary, Item 1. b. p. 107).

II. Authority of Classis

Classis is a major assembly established with the authority of Christ given to the church to exercise that authority over the councils of the local churches.

“Each assembly exercises, in keeping with its own character and domain, the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to the church by Christ; the authority of councils being original, that of major assemblies being delegated.” (Church Order, Article 27-a)

“The essential authority of the church is to make the church what God calls it to be. Christ rules his church by his Word and Spirit. Each member, each special office, and each assembly is called upon to build up the body of Christ to fully represent him and do his work so that in all things his purposes may be accomplished in and through his church. Every member, officebearer, and assembly exercises this authority committed to the church by Christ.” (*MCRCG 2017*, Commentary, Items 1. a.-b., p. 109)

“The classis has the same authority over the council as the synod has over the classis.” (Church Order, Article 27-b)

“In matters that are properly the province of a major assembly, the Church Order declares that the major assemblies have authority over the minor assemblies—the classis has authority over the council...” (*MCRCG 2017*, Commentary, Items 2-b., paragraph 3, p. 110)

III. Delegation

The authority of classis is a delegated authority.

“Each assembly exercises, in keeping with its own character and domain, the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to the church by Christ; the authority of councils being original, that of major assemblies being delegated.” (Church Order, Article 27-a)

“The major assemblies are duly constituted assemblies of the churches and consist of delegates authorized to ‘take part in all deliberations and transactions of the assembly and transacted in agreement with the Word of God and according to the conception of it embodied in the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church, as well as in harmony with the Church Order’” (*MCRCG 2017*, Commentary, Item 2- b., paragraph 2, p. 110)

“The classis is the official assembly of a group of neighboring (broadly defined) congregations. It consists of three official delegates (a minister, an elder, and a deacon) from each congregation and ordinarily meets every four months (see Church Order Art. 39 and 40). ... (*MCRCG 2017*, Commentary, Item 1. b. p. 107) “The point of Article 34 is that the major assemblies are representative of the congregations constituting the minor assemblies. It needs to be emphasized that the meetings of classes are meetings of churches and not meetings of ministers, elders, and deacons. The churches send delegates but the classis meeting remains a meeting of member

congregations. ...Neither classes nor synod are “representative assemblies” like a legislature. Rather ...the assemblies of the church are “deliberative assemblies” in which the delegates that constitute the assembly are free to discuss and deliberate together for the wellbeing of the whole church represented in that assembly. This representation binds the church together. Each member church of a classis, and each member classis in the denomination, must be fully aware of the fact that it has opportunity by way of overture, communication, or appeal, and also through representatives, to make its contribution to every decision adopted by a broader assembly. (MCRCG 2017, Commentary, Item 1., paragraph 3, p. 148)

IV. Unity of the church

“To express and maintain the broader unity of the church and to reach out beyond the local boundaries, councils (minor assemblies) unite in broader (major) assemblies called ‘classes’.” (MCRCG 2017, Commentary, Item 2. b., paragraph 1, p. 110)

“The advantages to three meetings a year that should not be given up except for good cause are:

- 1) the opportunity to respond to the agenda of synod,
- 2) more frequent contact among the churches,
- 3) closer supervision of the work of classis,
- 4) the distribution of the burden of the work over three meetings instead of two.” (Acts of Synod, 1985, p. 725)

“The point of Article 34 is that the major assemblies are representative of the congregations constituting the minor assemblies. ...*This representation binds the church together.* ... (MCRCG 2017, Commentary, Item 1., paragraph 3, p. 148)

V. Matters of Concern

There are certain matters which are proper for classis to undertake and others with which classis should not concern itself.

“Article 28: Matters Legally Before Assemblies

- a. These assemblies shall transact ecclesiastical matters only, and shall deal with them in an ecclesiastical manner.
- b. A major assembly shall deal only with those matters which concern its churches in common or which could not be finished in the minor assemblies.” (Church Order, Article 28 a-b)

“Article 28-b says that a major assembly shall deal only with matters that concern its churches in common or that could not be finished in the minor assemblies.

- a. Matters of common concern
Projects and programs that can be carried on by the minor assemblies should be done by these assemblies and not by the major assemblies. A council should not ask classis to do work the council is capable of doing... However, church councils may refer to classis any matter that concerns all the churches of classis in common.” (MCRCG 2017, Commentary, Item 1., paragraph 3, p. 111-112)

Those matters of concern include the following:

- 1) Business matters that impinge upon all churches, e.g. examination of candidates for ministry. (Church Order, Articles 10, 23, 24, 43, 82-84)
- 2) Accountability of the churches

- i. Church offices (Church Order, Article 2)
 - ii. Discipline (Church Order, Article 82-84)
- 3) Provide advice to the churches—through Church Visitors (Church Order, Article 42)
- 4) Evangelism & Ministry of Mercy (Church Order, Article 75 a-b)
 - i. Assist local churches
 - ii. Perform evangelistic work through a classical ministry plan when that work is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches.
 - iii. Perform mercy ministries through a classical ministry plan when that work is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches.
- 6) Provide financial assistance to those preparing for ministry by granting financial aid administered through a Student Fund Committee. (Church Order, Article 21)

3. COVENANT FOR OFFICE BEARERS

COVENANT FOR OFFICEBEARERS IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH (2012)

We believe the inspired Word of God as received in the Old and New Testaments of Holy Scripture, which proclaims the good news of God's creation and redemption through Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the authority of God's Word, we submit to it in all matters of life and faith.

We affirm three creeds—the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith. In doing so, we confess our faith in unity with followers of Jesus Christ throughout all ages and among all nations.

We also affirm three confessions—the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort—as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith. These confessions continue to define the way we understand Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ.

Grateful for these expressions of faith, we promise to be formed and governed by them. We heartily believe and will promote their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.

Along with these historic creeds and confessions, we also affirm the witness of Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony as a current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context.

We also promise to present or receive confessional difficulties in a spirit of love and fellowship with our brothers and sisters as together we seek a fuller understanding of the gospel. Should we come to believe that a teaching in the confessional documents is irreconcilable with God's Word, we will communicate our views to the church, according to the procedures prescribed by the Church Order and its supplements. Further, we promise to submit to the church's judgment and authority.

We honour this covenant for the well-being of the church to the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Delegates will be asked to indicate their affirmation of the Covenant in a manner as requested by the Chair of Classis.

4. FUNCTIONARY & DELEGATE NOMINATIONS – UPDATE REPORT

Youth Ministry Team

Brady Deboer – Brady is youth ministry director for Jarvis CRC, has agreed to serve on the Classis Youth Ministry Team.

5. SHALOM MANOR REPORT



February 5, 2021

SHALOM MANOR HAMILTON CAMPUS OF CARE

CLASSIS HAMILTON - SUMMARY & UPDATE

It is my privilege to bring greetings to you from our Board of Directors and staff of Shalom Manor and Gardens, update you on the work that is taking place in Grimsby, and our expansion plans for a new campus in Hamilton.

2020 was a difficult year for all of us as we managed our way through the impacts of the pandemic. We were acutely impacted in the seniors living sector. We had a number of outbreaks amongst our staff and several of our family caregiver populations, but we are pleased to say that none of our residents have contracted COVID-19. We are thankful to God for His mercy in sparing Shalom Manor and Gardens from any large outbreak and give Him praise. We continue to be diligent in our testing of staff and caregivers, and our infection control practices. We are excited that over 98% of our residents are now fully vaccinated.

During the last year, we also became much more aware of the need for long-term care and assisted living spaces in Ontario, and the necessity of specifically designing homes for infection protection and control. As a result, we recommitted ourselves to seeing the vision of a new campus in Hamilton come to fruition with innovation in elder care.

For over 40 years, Classis Hamilton has played a significant role in establishing and operating Shalom Manor in Grimsby through your many prayers, volunteer hours and sacrificial giving. When Shalom Manor Grimsby was established, the Hamilton Classis and Niagara Classis envisioned a second campus in the Hamilton area which would provide services to the elderly in Hamilton, but also in communities further west such as Brantford, Burlington and beyond.

The ground work has now been laid after years of planning, in collaboration with Mount Nemo Christian Nursing Home and Wellington Christian Home. We are developing relationships with our supporting communities, local and provincial politicians, and supporting corporations. These relationships are of utmost importance to ensure successfully opening the elder care campus in Hamilton by 2025. We look forward to continuing to work closely with our Hamilton Classis churches.

We ask for your continued prayers for the project, as well as for the residents and staff at Shalom in Grimsby. Particularly, that we would have favour with the Ministry of Long-Term Care and the City of Hamilton as we work to get appropriate approvals. Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to our continued partnership and bringing you up-to-date information as the project proceeds.

Blessings,

John Peneycad, CEO

EXTENDING THE BLESSING

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

When Shalom Manor Grimsby was established as a Christian home for the aged in the 1970s, our founders, the joint Classes of Hamilton-Niagara of the Christian Reformed Churches, envisioned a second location in the Hamilton area to provide services to our elderly in communities further west, such as Burlington, Brantford and beyond.

Shalom Manor, Mount Nemo Christian Nursing Home and Wellingstone Christian Home share the vision to develop a Christian home that will feature a continuum of care on one campus, blessing our parents and grandparents well into the future. Located at 1411 Upper Wellington Street, Hamilton, the new home will be a Campus of Care that serves the aging reformed Christian Dutch-Canadian communities.

The pillars of our flagship Elder Adult Christian Campus in Hamilton will include:

- Christian values of servant leadership and spiritual care.
- Person-centred care and service, promoting a culture of quality, innovation and transformative change.
- Community spirit and fellowship providing enrichment, vitality and energy to the lives of our residents through an intergenerational campus.
- An "Aging in Community" philosophy that will exemplify an age-friendly model.



A COMMUNITY OF CONTINUUM CARE

The new six-storey facility will provide residential and service options for over 260 seniors. The vision includes a full range of amenities to serve our growing community of elders that will complement the current independent living apartments at Wellingstone Christian Home. This continuum of care will minimize the need for our residents to move throughout the home and allow for support of those in the adjacent buildings at Wellingstone.

The Campus of Care will feature:

Long-Term Care Home offering care to 128 of the most frail and vulnerable members of the community. Our design surpasses the Ministry of Long-Term Care design standards by including:

- Private rooms for every long-term care resident.
- Showers that will offer dignity and privacy in 60% of our long-term care resident rooms.

Shalom Manor Hamilton will be the first home in Ontario to provide these two unique features, offering not only additional privacy and dignity but will also ensure the organization is well prepared for potential future pandemics.



Assisted Living Apartments offering 72 units with onsite services including meals, housekeeping and supports with activities of daily living. Our assisted living residents will experience an environment for healthy aged living through movement and activity such as physiotherapy, walking paths and an exercise studio.

Memory Care Houses offering dementia care for 56 individuals in small-house environments with 14 residents in each house. This model will allow for resident programming to be more focused, catering to each individual's unique needs.

An Intergenerational Space to create programming opportunities between the residents of the home and children attending the campus, whether through daycare or school programs.

Campus Village Centre offering vitality through spaces for residents and elders living in the broader community providing services and amenities, including:

- A large auditorium to allow us to worship and openly practice our Christian faith during worship throughout the week as well as ongoing programming, concerts and recreation activities.
- Café and bistro that will offer catered meals.
- Health promotion and education centre with clinic, exercise rooms and training rooms for staff.
- Community Liaison Services and administrative offices.

Life Lease Retirement Living at the current independent living units at Wellingstone will become part of the continuum of care at the new Care Centre.

Our goal is to begin construction in 2022 with a projected completion date to align with the closure of Mount Nemo Christian Nursing Home in Burlington in 2024.



PROJECTED COSTS

Shalom Manor has already been provided financial blessings to realize our vision for the new \$125M Hamilton Campus of Care by:

- Equity contributions from Shalom, Mount Nemo & Wellingstone.
- Government capital contributions.
- Government of Ontario commitment for operational funding for 128 additional long-term care beds.

With the Lord's help and blessing, \$22M will need to be raised through support from the broader Reformed community for the new campus.

*The balance of the required funding, outside of campaign/government funding, will be carried through a mortgage.

For more information, please contact:

Jonathan Zwier, Project Manager
E: financedirector@shalommanor.ca
P: 905.945.9631 Ext. 1154

John Peneycad, CEO
E: ceo@shalommanor.ca
P: 905.945.9631 Ext. 1150



6. OVERTURE COMMITTEE REPORT

Overtures report to Classis:

On January 27th 2021, the Overtures committee from Maranatha CRC and Immanuel CRC met to discuss and deliberate on the 3 overtures we had received from Meadowlands Fellowship. The first thing we want to do is give thanks for Meadowlands and for those who put the time, effort and energy into these 3 thoughtful, thorough and very pertinent overtures. We met for an hour, agreed on our responses and then committed to meet with Meadowlands to discuss before submitting to Classis for review. Please see our Overtures Report, submitted February 9th, 2021.

Please note that we have simply used the shorthand titles from the appendix in the agenda to Classis to delineate the 3 overtures. Please read the agenda of Classis, pages 20-29 for the full Overture titles, grounds and full explanation.

Overture #1 – To Delay Human Sexuality Report: As an overtures team, we wholeheartedly agree with the overture and the grounds given for submission and move that it would be brought to the floor of Classis as written.

Overture #2 – To Strike an Additional Synodical Committee: As an overtures team, we disagree with this overture on the following 2 grounds:

Ground #1: The core argument, as we read the overture, is that we as a CRC denomination may make the same pastoral mistake adopting of the Report on Human Sexuality pertaining specifically to those in “committed, long-term same-sex marriages or partnerships” in 2021 that we made in 1973 with the promotion of conversion therapy. We did not see the correlation between the 2 arguments and here is why:

- In 1973, it could be reasonably assumed, based upon the scientific and pastoral knowledge of the day, that conversion therapy was a valid and pastoral option. The report rightly notes the change in understanding between 1973 and 2021. In 2021 this cannot be reasonably assumed anymore. The passing years have changed our thinking.
- In 2021, it can be reasonably assumed what the answer would be if you met and interviewed 10 (or 100) couples who are in a loving monogamous same-sex relationship/marriage and their response to this report. This report would most likely be very hurtful, damaging and offensive to these couples.
- We wondered if the main concern of the Overture was that we can already reasonably assume the probable hurt, damage and offense experienced by monogamous same-sex couples that this report would cause.

As such, we as an Overtures Committee, would recommend that Meadowlands rework this overture to more forcefully convey what we believe is the heart of the Overture with this suggested change in wording, “Regrettably, the committee did not (listen) to those with actual experience in committed, long-term same-sex marriages or partnerships.” Then the hurt of the 1973 conversion therapy response could be given as an unfortunate outcome of the 1973 report as opposed to grounds for this Overture.

Ground #2: Some questions were raised about the use of Song of Songs as a theological consideration for the listening to those in committed long-term same-sex marriages and would simply suggest that a bit more reasoning be given as to why this text, written about the love that a man and woman share, could also apply to the love that a same-sex couple could share.

Putting this all together, we cannot support the Overture. Striking up an additional committee to interview couples in committed long-term same-sex marriages would require additional time & resources to gather information that can, for all intense purposes, be surmised. Although we agree with the premise of this overture, we would suggest that Meadowlands submit this to Synod as Advice in order to draw attention to the concern.

Overture #3 – To Not Adopt Recommendation D of the Synod Study Report: As an overtures team, we agree with the overture and the grounds given for submission and move that it would be brought to the floor of Classis as written.

In conclusion, we again want to thank Meadowlands Fellowship for the care and concern that they have put into these three Overtures and humbly submit our responses first to Meadowlands for their comments and feedback and then to Classis as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Vandermeer, reporter for Classis Overture Team.

7. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (Bethel CRC, Waterdown & New St. CRC, Burlington)
February, 2021

We received five items that were sent in with the credentials.

1) From Immanuel CRC, Hamilton: *Immanuel CRC Hamilton supports the overture submitted by Ancaster Meadowlands Fellowship.* (a note of clarification: Immanuel is seeking to support the overture that seeks to delay Synod's conversation on the sexuality report for a year).

Recommendation:

To receive for information as Classis considers the overtures from Ancaster Meadowlands Fellowship.

Grounds:

After connecting with Immanuel CRC, this course of action is deemed sufficient.

If desired, Immanuel CRC can ask to be recognized on the floor of Classis during discussion of this issue, in order to speak "for" this overture.

2) From Ancaster CRC (in answer to the question, "What aspect of ministry would you like to discuss at classis?): *liability insurance*

Recommendation:

That Classis (through CIC) connect with insurance experts to advise Classis on our insurance needs, and to investigate the possibility of getting insurance to cover chaplains, other employees, and perhaps volunteer staff such as SafeChurch leaders.

That Classis Hamilton (through the CIC) reach out to neighbouring classes to see how they operate with insurance issues.

To encourage Ancaster CRC to bring their concerns about being an employer forward as Classis discusses and renews our Ministry Plan and Mission.

Grounds:

Campus ministry is rooted in Classis, and Classis is responsible for ensuring that employees are adequately insured.

3) From Immanuel CC, Simcoe (in answer to the question, "What aspect of ministry would you like to discuss at classis?): *Ongoing work with concerned members.*

Recommendation:

After connecting with Immanuel CC, we recommend to receive the following for information and encouragement:

The classis visiting team – Ken Benjamins, William Koopmans, and Len Moelker – are working and walking with Immanuel CC during this time. Dialogue continues and things are moving forward, slowly and steadily. Covid-19 has impacted the work, but not derailed it.

Grounds:

While it's healthy for Classis to receive a brief update and be assured that the required work is taking place, any further discussion belongs to Immanuel CC and the church visitors, and not the floor of this meeting of Classis.

After connecting with Immanuel CC, this course of action is deemed sufficient.

4) From Immanuel CC, Simcoe: *We would strongly encourage Classis to give Pastor Willemina 20 - 30 minutes at the next meeting to present the new ministry initiative, the South Coast Beach Project. She can give most recent updates on how it's unfolding, and share God's faithfulness in connecting to Christian young adults through this ministry. The SCBP is a ministry of Immanuel CRC and in partnership with Resonate Global Mission.*

Recommendation:

That the CIC, in creating the next agenda, allocate an appropriate amount of time for Pastor Willemina to present the new ministry of the SCBP.

Grounds:

It's good and encouraging for us to hear about SCBP; this is important work.

This ministry is larger than just Simcoe, and is intended to resource CRC's across Canada (not to mention right here in Classis Hamilton).

As Willemina is relatively new in our Classis, it may serve as a good introduction.

5) from Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis: *(We are) trying to chart a path forward for online Communion even after restrictions are lifted.*

Recommendation:

To receive as information.

Grounds:

After connecting with Ebenezer CRC, this course of action is deemed sufficient.

More informal channels can be used (e.g. Pastors' Networks) to encourage this and other churches as we find healthy ways forward re: the celebration of Communion.

THE FIRST HAMILTON CRC AND BOKMA FAMILY CONCERNS

At the October 2019 meeting classis tabled a motion as outlined in the attached Appendix #8.1. That appendix provides the background information for the recommendation made by the CIC to bring the motion tabled forward. CIC proposes to deal with this matter during the February 23, 2021 meeting. The purpose for addressing this matter at the February 23rd meeting is to obtain the approval of classis to adjourn the session on February 23rd and continue the meeting in executive session on March 9, 2021 at 7:00 PM via Zoom.

The CIC has agreed not to place any specific recommendations or motions on the agenda as possible outcomes of the executive session. CIC believes that it is better for all parties and delegates to have a broad discussion not bound by motions about the expected involvement of an ordained minister of the Word in the life and ministry of the local church holding the credentials when the work in which the minister is engaged is within the confines of classis itself.

Ideally, such a question should be dealt with in the abstract, but since it clearly relates to the concerns of both First Hamilton CRC and Josiah Bokma, the discussion cannot exclude the experiences of these two parties. For that reason, CIC is recommending that Josiah Bokma (either alone, or together with a spokesperson) may be present at the meeting and that First Hamilton CRC may have its former council chair Brian Dijkema (who was deeply involved in the discussions) to attend and speak as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That classis agrees to continue this meeting in executive session on March 9, 2021 via Zoom at 7:00 PM.
2. That the executive meeting be framed around the following questions:
 - a. Is it appropriate for a CRC church to continue to hold credentials for and supervise the ministry of an ordained CRC Minister of the Word who is no longer engaged in worship or ministry at that church due to adherence at another local church of another denomination?
 - b. If so, how should that oversight be administered in a way that honours CRCNA Church Order?
 - c. If not, what are the recommended actions for First Hamilton CRC, a church in our classis finding itself in this situation?
3. That First Hamilton CRC may request the stated clerk to send a Zoom invite to Brian Dijkema to attend the March 9, 2021 executive meeting with the right to be its spokesperson.
4. That Josiah Bokma be invited to attend the March 9, 2021 executive session with the right to speak and that he may request the stated clerk to send a Zoom invite to another member of a CRC church to be his spokesperson.
5. That no motions be presented to the March 9, 2021 meeting to ensure the broadest discussion possible.

8.1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY CIC

Here follows the background information regarding what led up to the current recommendation by the CIC.

First, you will find the discussion at the October 2019 classis meeting that culminated in the ruling by the Chair of Classis to defer further discussion of the request by First Hamilton CRC to honourably release Josiah Bokma from the office of minister of the Word. To be clear, the core issue was whether the Bokma family had effectively resigned their membership in First Hamilton CRC.

Second, you will find a brief description of what transpired between the October 2019 classis meeting and the current questions which CIC would like the delegates to address in executive session.

THE OCTOBER 2019 DISCUSSION AND RULING

Excerpt from the October 2019 minutes:

7. ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT #2

7.1. Request from First Hamilton CRC:

7.1.1. First Hamilton CRC had requested Classis Hamilton to declare Josiah Bokma to be honourably released from the office of minister of the Word in accordance with Church Order, Article 14-b.

FOUNDATIONS:

- a. Josiah and his wife had ceased attending First Hamilton CRC about one year ago, and
- b. They were actively engaged since that time with a church and church plant of another denomination.

7.1.2. The Advisory Committee made a **MOTION**: to accede to the request from First Hamilton CRC to release Josiah Bokma as minister of the Word based on the information provided. The motion was seconded.

7.1.3. A brief discussion followed regarding the proper Church Order article that applied in the situation.

7.1.4. A question posed by a delegate as to whether the Advisory Committee had discussed the proposed action with Josiah. The answer was that the committee had made its advice solely based on the written material presented. The Advisory Committee stated that it was not their task to investigate the matter further.

7.1.5. A delegate then made a **MOTION**: to withhold action until after a discussion by classis representatives had been held with Josiah and to bring this matter back to classis at its February meeting. The motion was seconded.

7.2. Executive Session Declared:

7.2.1. A delegate requested that classis enter into executive session. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT**: the request is granted.

7.2.2. All those present who were not current office-bearers in the CRCNA or members of the CIC were asked to leave the meeting.

7.2.3. After discussion the Chair of Classis asked for a voice vote on the motion to withhold action. The motion **CARRIED**.

7.2.4. The Chair **RULED THAT:** the decision for classis to discuss the main issue with Josiah Bokma is assigned to the CIC and that a report of the discussion be presented at the next classis meeting.

7.3. Executive Session Ended:

The Chair of Classis declared executive session ended and invited the guests back into the meeting.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WHAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN OCTOBER 2019 AND NOW

1. The CIC established a committee to determine Josiah's understanding of the main issue. That report was provided to classis during executive session on February 2020. The core conclusion in that report was that the Bokma family did not agree that they had resigned their membership in First Hamilton CRC.
2. Incomplete commentary was provided to First Hamilton CRC by the stated clerk in December 2019 in response to a question as to how the tabled October 2019 motion should proceed, which resulted in First Hamilton CRC's subsequent misinterpretation of that commentary. The stated clerk has apologized for providing incomplete information which led First Hamilton to take a subsequent action as described in 4. below.
3. In January 2020, First Hamilton CRC received a request from the Bokma family to transfer their membership to Meadowlands Fellowship CRC.
4. Shortly after receiving that request, First Hamilton CRC decided to terminate the membership of the Bokma family, based in part on the commentary provided by the stated clerk. (It should be noted that First Hamilton acknowledged that they did not follow the suggestion made by the stated clerk in his incomplete commentary.)
5. In response to the termination of membership, the Bokma family filed an appeal on February 7, 2020.
6. At the February meeting of classis, the CIC was asked to call a special executive session meeting of classis once the response to the appeal had been received from First Hamilton CRC. Both parties agreed that the matter should be dealt with during an in-person meeting.
7. The subsequent COVID restrictions prevented the in-person meeting from taking place so the meeting scheduled for December 8, 2020 had to be postponed.
8. During discussions between the time the December 2020 meeting was scheduled and now, CIC reached out to both Josiah Bokma and First Hamilton CRC to keep them abreast of what was happening. The contact with First Hamilton CRC in particular dealt with the best way to deal with the issue at the foundation of the October 2019 request to classis as well as the crux of the appeal by the Bokma family. CIC was of the view that First Hamilton CRC had two primary concerns, i.e., (1) what are the membership obligations of an ordained minister of the Word in the CRC, and (2) how does first Hamilton CRC extract itself as the calling church of an ordained minister of the Word in a situation where they no longer feel comfortable with that minister's absence with respect to their expectation of membership obligations.
9. After a number of discussions with members of the CIC, First Hamilton CRC decided to rescind their decision to terminate the membership of the Bokma family on the understanding that classis will have a discussion in executive session regarding the obligations of membership in the CRC of a minister of the Word. First Hamilton CRC will not take action on the request by the Bokma family to transfer their membership until discussion at classis has taken place.
10. First Hamilton CRC has communicated its decision to both CIC and Josiah Bokma. Both CIC and Josiah Bokma expressed their appreciation to First Hamilton for rescinding their January 2020 decision to terminate the Bokma family membership. All parties have committed themselves to the discussion at

classis on the question of what should be involved for an ordained minister of the Word to be a member of a local CRC within Classis Hamilton.

11. The recent decision by First Hamilton CRC to rescind their previous decision, makes the outstanding appeal and response moot.