

## Agenda for a Meeting of CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

**Date:** February 24, 2015      **Time:** 2:00 PM – 9:00:00 PM

**Venue:** Ancaster Christian Reformed Church, 70 Garner Road East (Hwy 53), Ancaster, Ontario

<p><b>Officers of Classis:</b>  Chair: Bruce Adema  Vice Chair: Joel Bootsma  Stated Clerk: John den Otter</p>	<p><b>Synodical Deputies:</b>  J. Dekker (Niagara), H. Praamsma (Toronto), R. Fisher (Huron) will participate in absentia</p>
<p><b>Reporter:</b>  Ancaster CRC, Ancaster: Rita Klien-Geltink</p>	<p><b>Ballot Committee:</b>  Members of Ancaster CRC</p>
<p><b>Credentials Committee:</b>  Hagersville Community CRC, Hagersville  Calvary CRC, Flamborough</p>	<p><b>Overtures Committee</b>  Immanuel CRC, Hamilton  First Hamilton CRC, Hamilton</p>

**Credentials:**

1. The credentials shall be returned to the Stated Clerk by email no later than February 3, 2015 with CC: (copy) emailed to both delegates. Please use the form sent along with the agenda. A signed paper copy is not required. *(PDF or a scanned in format is not appreciated)*
  
2. The credentials will be forwarded to the Credentials Committee to review the contents. The Committee will email their report to the Stated Clerk by February 10, 2015. This will be emailed by the stated clerk to all the delegates.

**Overtures:**

The Overtures Committee will email their report to the Stated Clerk by February 10, 2015 for distribution to the delegates of Classis as required.

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Meeting Details

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2:00:00 PM	OPENING DEVOTIONS
1. Opening Worship	
1.1. Devotion and Sharing of Ministry	Ancaster CRC
1.2. Prayer for Ancaster CRC	Joel Bootsma

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2:45:00 PM	BUSINESS
2. Call to order	Chair
2.1. Approval of Agenda	
2.2. Attendance	
Overview of delegates present/absent	Stated Clerk
3. Interim Committee	Henry Kranenburg
3.1. Election of Delegates for Synod 2015 – see Appendix #1 for delegate history	
3.2. Article 17c Pastor Jim Pot	
3.1.1 The CIC recommends:	
<b>THAT CLASSIS APPROVE:</b> Rev. Jim Pot’s request for a one year extension to his ministerial credentials.	
Grounds:	
1. He is presently employed in an Interim position.	
2. He is in conversation with another congregation for a future Interim role.	
3. He is actively engaged in seeking a Full-Time pastoral position.	
4. There is a demonstrated need for his preaching, pastoral and leadership gifts in the interim.	
3.1.2 Synodical Deputy Advice	
3.3. Shalom Chaplaincy Report – See Appendix #2	
The CIC recommends:	
3.3.1. <b>THAT CLASSIS ADOPTS:</b> Recommendations 1.1 and 1.2 including the recommendations following them (in the boxes).	
Ground:	
1. There is urgency to adopt these recommendations to ensure that the Shalom chaplaincy ministry operates in accordance with the laws governing registered charities.	
2. There is a need for certainty regarding potential liabilities for both the chaplain and the two classes that may or may not be covered by the insurance policy of either Classis.	
3.3.2. <b>THAT CLASSIS ADOPTS THAT:</b> Recommendations 2.1 through 4.1 be deferred until CMT has considered ways for a broader discussion within the churches regarding pastoral care of seniors.	
Grounds:	
1. The recommendations have implications for the future classical ministry share funding of the Shalom chaplaincy ministry as well as the need for, and funding of, similar ministries at other long-term care facilities.	

2. There is no compelling reason why these recommendations could not be deferred until a later Classis meeting.
  
- 3.4. Approval of the Work of the CIC – See Appendix #5  
 The CIC recommends:  
**THAT CLASSIS APPROVE:** the work of the Classis Interim Committee and that of the Stated Clerk as reported.
  
4. Overtures Committee
  - 4.1. Article #23 – See Appendix #4
  - 4.2. Communication to Synod – See Appendix #13
  
5. Classis Ministries Marian Lensink
  - 5.1. Classis Ministry Team Report
  
  - 5.2. Mission Director Report – See Appendix #7
  
  - 5.3. Chaplain Reports – See Appendix #8 and #9
  
  - 5.4. Approval of the Work of the CMT  
 The CMT recommends:  
**THAT CLASSIS APPROVE:** the work of the Classis Ministry Team and that of the Missions Director as reported.
  
6. State of the Church
  - 6.1. Church Visitor Reports – See Appendix #10
    - 6.1.1. Team A
    - 6.1.2. Team B
  
  - 6.2. Facilitated Discussion: Marian Lensink
  
7. Evening Session: Prayer

Appendix #1 - History of Delegates to Synod

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>MINISTER</b>	<b>ELDER</b>
<b>2014</b>	M. Jeffery Klingenberg	Adrian Guldemond
	Kenneth F. Benjamins	Andy Miedema
<b>2013</b>	Kevin P. DeRaaf	Jacob Ellens
	Henry P. Kranenburg	George Elzinga
<b>2012</b>	Paul Vanden Brink	Mark Vandervliet
	Kenneth F. Benjamins	Henry Brouwer
<b>2011</b>	Zachary J. Olson	Clarence E. Batterink
	M. Jeffery Klingenberg	Judy Cook
<b>2010</b>	Stephen F. Terpstra	Mark Vandervliet
	Kevin P. DeRaaf	Timothy Sheridan
<b>2009</b>	Martin Dam	Neil Paul
	William C. Veenstra	Adrian T. VanderVaart
<b>2008</b>	Kenneth F. Benjamins	Fred Reitsma
	James E. Pot John	W.J. Glasbergen
<b>2007</b>	Jeffrey P. Janssen	Al Martens
	Shawn R. Brix	George Bergshoeff
<b>2006</b>	John H. Bouwers	Dick L. Kranendonk
	William C.Veenstra	George Elzinga
<b>2005</b>	Gordon H. Pols	Cornelis Visser
	Kevin P. De Raaf	Homer W. Lensink

**Recommendations based on the Review Report and the CIC Sub-Committee Report:**

**Introduction:**

The Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Review Committee mandate and report dealt exclusively with the chaplaincy ministry; not Shalom Manor and Gardens as corporate institution. Shalom Manor and Gardens is a ministry of the Diaconal Conferences of Classes Hamilton and Niagara.

Local churches are reminded that concerns they may have about the operations and funding of Shalom Manor and Gardens should be addressed to the Board of Shalom via their diaconal representatives to their Diaconal Conference or to the Shalom Board of Directors directly. This includes concerns or confusion that may arise as a result of the \$15 per member assessment to support the operations of Shalom Gardens as approved by the deacons of the member churches of Shalom (more than just CRC churches). Classis Hamilton is not involved in the operations and financing of Shalom.

Communications have been sent out by Shalom Manor and Gardens that any questions or concerns by the churches of Classis Hamilton should be addressed to Joanne Van Dijk, identified as the Classis Hamilton Diaconal Representative. Joanne is not a representative of Classis Hamilton, but of the Diaconal Conference of Classis Hamilton, an organization established and operated exclusively by the deacons of the churches in Classis Hamilton.

**Recommendations by the CIC regarding Shalom chaplaincy ministry**

The Classis Interim Committee (CIC) has received a detailed report from the sub-committee that was assigned to review the recommendations of the Shalom Chaplaincy Review Committee which reported to the October meeting of Classis Hamilton. *(For ease of reference, and in recognition of the fact that many delegates change from meeting to meeting, we attach that report once again – see Appendix #3.)*

In addition, the sub-committee carefully reviewed the written responses from the local churches as requested at the October Classis meeting and developed its commentary and recommendations contained in the boxes out of those responses.

The CIC has accepted the report from the sub-committee and makes the following specific recommendations:

**1. That Recommendations 1.1 and 1.2 including the recommendations following them (in the boxes) be adopted.**

Ground:

3. There is urgency to adopt these recommendations to ensure that the Shalom chaplaincy ministry operates in accordance with the laws governing registered charities.
4. There is a need for certainty regarding potential liabilities for both the chaplain and the two classes that may or may not be covered by the insurance policy of either Classis.

**2. That Recommendations 2.1 through 4.1 be deferred until CMT has considered ways for a broader discussion within the churches regarding pastoral care of seniors.**

Grounds:

3. The recommendations have implications for the future classical ministry share funding of the Shalom chaplaincy ministry as well as the need for, and funding of, similar ministries at other long-term care facilities.

4. There is no compelling reason why these recommendations could not be deferred until a later Classis meeting.

Note: Churches need to understand that they will continue to be responsible to submit their assessed ministry shares for the Shalom chaplaincy ministry until such time as Classis decides otherwise.

Respectfully submitted  
CIC

**Report considered by the CIC and approved for distribution to all the churches**

**Recommendation 1.1: That the two Classes review the governance structure and the mandate of the Chaplaincy Committee, with input from Shalom, and make any revisions that they deem advisable. The final mandate will depend on which form of governance structure is adopted, but it should include authority and reporting requirements.**

*Commentary:*

*All responding churches agreed with this recommendation. However, a clear preference was indicated for Shalom Manor to take over the governance of the chaplaincy ministry by bringing it in house. If Shalom fails to take on this responsibility, the chaplaincy ministry should become an independently registered charity. Two churches indicated that operating the ministry as a joint venture is not an option that Classis Hamilton should consider. One church suggested that transferring the governance of the chaplaincy ministry back to Mountainview CRC would not be appropriate.*

**Recommendations:**

That Classis Hamilton adopt recommendation 1.1, but further communicate to Classis Niagara and the Board of Shalom Manor and Gardens that:

1. Classis Hamilton does not support entering into a joint ministry agreement.  
Ground: The implementation and ongoing reporting is extremely complex from an accounting and legal perspective.
2. Classis Hamilton is not prepared to take on the governance of the Chaplaincy Committee.  
Ground: Although Classis Hamilton recognizes that the original mandate for the Chaplaincy Committee as a ministry of both Classes, it did not detail the governance structure appropriate for the ministry from a legal perspective. At present, the flow of funds indicates that Classis Niagara is the governing agency.
3. Classis Hamilton is of the view that the chaplaincy ministry should become a ministry of Shalom Manor and Gardens itself.  
Grounds:
  - a. Shalom Manor and Gardens has a membership made up of diaconates of a broader range of Reformed denominations.
  - b. Neither Classis Niagara, nor Classis Hamilton has the ability or authority to formally communicate with churches of other denominations represented in the membership of Shalom Manor and Gardens.
  - c. Shalom Manor and Gardens is the corporation that is legally responsible to ensure that chaplaincy is provided to all its residents.
4. Should Shalom Manor decide that it does not wish to incorporate the governance of the chaplaincy ministry as its own; Classis Hamilton is of the view that the chaplaincy ministry should become either a ministry of Classis Niagara, or that it become an independent registered charity.  
Grounds:
  - a. All proposed forms of governance directly involving Classis Hamilton are rejected.
  - b. Classis Niagara has been the *de facto* governing body since it controls all finances and remuneration of staff and complies with all government reporting requirements.
  - c. Since Classis Niagara legally directs and controls all monetary arrangements with respect to the Shalom chaplaincy ministry, it can independently decide whether it wishes to operate this chaplaincy ministry itself, or whether it wishes to set it up as an independent registered charity.

**Recommendation 1.2: That the three partners review this [liability insurance] issue.**

*Commentary:*

*It will not be necessary to follow up on this recommendation from the perspective of Classis Hamilton. If recommendation 1.1 is adopted by turning the chaplaincy ministry over to either Shalom Manor or the ministry as an independent charity, Classis Hamilton will automatically be removed from direct or indirect direction, control and supervision, and will not need insurance coverage for that ministry.*

**Recommendation:**

That Classis Hamilton receives recommendation 1.2 for information.

Ground: Assuming that the previous recommendation is adopted, Classis Hamilton will not be responsible for the governance of the chaplaincy ministry at Shalom Manor and Gardens.

**Recommendation 2.1: That a budget envelope giving system be implemented for the residents of Shalom Manor and Gardens to allow them to contribute to the Chaplaincy program.**

**Grounds:**

- 1) This allows the residents to continue the practice of giving that most of them are used to.**
- 2) This allows residents to support a program that serves them.**
- 3) This would give a charitable receipt to residents for tax purposes.**

*Commentary:*

*All responding churches supported this recommendation and it should be implemented by the new governing entity, whether that is Shalom Manor and Gardens, Classis Niagara, or the independent charity. It was also noted by one church that most Reformed residents at Shalom have the financial ability to voluntarily support the chaplaincy ministry so that it is fully funded. The financial capability of the residents is a significant change from the situation as it was 30 to 40 years ago. One church suggested that classical funding be changed for the 2015 fiscal year from a per member support to an even 50-50 support between the two Classes for the amount that is not raised from other sources. That church suggests that the direct Classis Hamilton ministry share support should be reduced by 5 – 10% per year until it is eliminated.*

**Recommendations:**

1. That Classis Hamilton advises Classis Niagara and Shalom Manor and Gardens to implement recommendation 2.1.  
Ground: The new governing body is the only body capable of properly implementing this recommendation.
2. That Classis Hamilton inform Classis Niagara that it will reduce its portion of the financial support for the Shalom Chaplaincy ministry in 2015 from a per member share to a 50/50 split between the two Classes.  
Ground:
  - a. This begins the process of recognizing that significantly fewer CRC members in Classis Hamilton than in Classis Niagara are residents of Shalom Manor and Gardens.
  - b. Since Classis Niagara has a significant cash surplus for the Shalom Chaplaincy in its balance of funds, this relatively minor adjustment in 2015 should not cause a hardship for Classis Niagara.
3. That Classis Hamilton will reduce its ministry share commitment for the Shalom chaplaincy ministry so that it will be eliminated by the year 2018.  
Grounds:
  - a. The residents at Shalom Manor and Gardens are generally capable of voluntarily supporting the chaplaincy ministry of benefit to them alone.
  - b. The suggested time frame will provide sufficient time for the new governance entity to achieve the goal of self-funding.

- c. Any shortfall that might exist in the chaplaincy ministry fund should be covered by the Shalom Manor and Gardens member Reformed churches on a proportionate basis instead of by the two CRC Classes.

**Recommendation 2.2: That the program administrator (currently the Chaplaincy Committee) consider asking other churches who have residents in Shalom to contribute financially to the Chaplaincy program, and consider giving them a voice in the chaplaincy program through the Chaplaincy Committee.**

**Grounds:**

- 1) It recognizes the responsibility of each church to provide spiritual care for its members.
- 2) It is reasonable that other churches help pay for this care to their members.
- 3) One non-CRC church already contributes to the costs of the program.
- 4) Other non-CRC churches already have a membership in Shalom.
- 5) This recognizes the intent of the founders to have Shalom be a home to people of all Reformed faiths.

*Commentary:*

*All respondents supported this recommendation. It is our view that this objective can be accomplished only if the two Classes withdraw themselves from actual or perceived control of the chaplaincy ministry. If Shalom takes over the ministry, its charter and by-laws already restrict membership to deacon delegates of Reformed churches. If the chaplaincy committee needs to register as an independent charity, it can adopt a structure restricting membership in that charity to churches that already have deacon representatives in the membership of Shalom. In either case, the direction, control and supervision as well as the funding of the chaplaincy ministry at Shalom will be congruent with the Shalom membership and its supporting churches in the broader Reformed community.*

**Recommendation:**

That Classis Hamilton endorses recommendation 2.2 as self-evident.

Ground: This recommendation is fully addressed in the prior recommendations.

**Recommendation 3.1: That the Chaplaincy Program at Shalom Manor and Shalom Gardens be continued.**

**Grounds:**

- 1) The number of CRC and other people of Reformed faith is sufficient to warrant a full-time chaplain.
- 2) Each member church of Shalom has an obligation to make available spiritual care at Shalom.
- 3) The need for a readily-available chaplain is greater than it was in the past.
- 4) The pastoral care and counselling provided are a valuable ministry to residents and their families and the staff.
- 5) The Manor and Gardens are parts of a single ministry of Shalom and are integrated in practice. It would be hard to do only the Manor ministry without doing the Gardens ministry.

*Commentary:*

*The prior recommendations already affirm this principle and all responding churches agreed with it.*

**Recommendation:**

The prior recommendations already assumed that the chaplaincy ministry at Shalom Manor and Gardens will not be terminated, so there is no need to adopt recommendation 3.1 separately.

**Recommendation 3.2: That each of the two Classes develop a model for care of residents in long-term care homes, including Shalom and other homes, defining what needs should be met, how these needs could be met, and how this work should be funded.**

**Grounds:**

- 1) **This recognizes the need for spiritual care of members in other long-term care homes in addition to Shalom, and the duty of churches to provide such care.**
- 2) **It recognizes the needs of the churches to use resources for care of these members in other homes.**
- 3) **It values the care for residents in other homes on an equal footing with care for residents in Shalom.**
- 4) **The number of CRC members in long-term care homes is likely to increase, perhaps dramatically, in the future. It would be wise to think far ahead.**
- 5) **The fact that the CRC, through the diaconates, owns Shalom Manor is not sufficient warrant for restricting funding of chaplaincy services to only Shalom.**

*Commentary:*

*One church expressed support for going down this road. One church expressed its disagreement with adopting this recommendation, and one church wishes to redirect its chaplaincy ministry support from Shalom Manor and Gardens to Parkview Meadows Christian Retirement Village in Townsend.*

**Recommendation:**

That Classis Hamilton informs the churches to present an overture for assistance if they are not able to minister to the pastoral needs of their members in long-term care.

**Grounds:**

- d. Church Order Article 28-b stipulates that Classis should deal only with those matters that cannot be carried out by the local churches themselves.
- e. No compelling grounds were provided in recommendation 3.2 or in the submissions made by the local churches in response to the report that meet the test of CO Article 28-b.
- f. Rather than closing the door on chaplaincy ministry to persons in long-term care homes at this time, it is appropriate to invite one or more local churches to make the case, especially important in light of the comment that the missional emphasis for such broader ministry should be considered.

**Recommendation 4.1: That the Classes acknowledge this report as the completion of the committee’s mandate and discharge the committee of its duties.**

*Commentary:*

*No church commented on this recommendation, but since Classis Niagara has already discharged its appointees to the committee, we consider it appropriate that Classis Hamilton does the same this at its next meeting.*

**Recommendation:**

That Classis Hamilton adopts recommendation 4.1.

*Commentary:*

*In consultation with the CMT with input from the local churches, we were requested to address the overall missional interest of Classis Hamilton in providing ministry to individuals in long-term care. No church specifically responded to this request for input.*

*It should be noted that the above recommendations with respect to Shalom Manor and Gardens do not suggest altering the current missional emphasis undertaken by the Shalom Chaplaincy Committee. The only changes with respect to chaplaincy at Shalom Manor and Gardens relates to the governance and funding that ministry.*

*With respect to missional ministry at other long-term care homes, we observe that this is primarily a responsibility of the local church and that a number of churches already do this type of ministry in their own community. Should Classis Hamilton wish to expand the ministry beyond what is already provided by local churches, or if it wishes to have Classis support local churches in such a ministry, this should be initiated at the request of a local church.*

**Recommendation:**

That Classis Hamilton asks its local churches to consider whether there is a need for Classis to begin or support ministry to long-term care residents and to submit an overture to Classis if they wish Classis to initiate or support this type of ministry in the geographic area of Classis Hamilton.

Grounds:

- a. Church Order Article 28-b stipulates that Classis should deal only with those matters that cannot be carried out by the local churches themselves.
- b. Classis needs to honour the principle contained in Church Order Articles 73 – 76 that the local church engages in missions and that the major assemblies should encourage and assist the congregations to carry out this work. Often congregations are satisfied with handing this work off to major assemblies and their agencies so that they can be relieved from direct responsibility. Contributing ministry shares to other bodies when the local congregation can do part, if not most, of the work is not the best course of action for the health and wellbeing of the congregation itself.

**To:** Classis Hamilton, Classis Niagara, and Shalom Manor Board  
**From:** Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Review Committee  
**Date:** 2014 August 22

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### Mandate of the Review Committee

The Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Review Committee (hereafter Review Committee) began with Classis Hamilton, which gave it the following mandate in 2013 May:

Classis Hamilton's mandate for the Committee is, among other issues that might be raised by Classis Niagara and Shalom Manor, to address the following:

1. What is the "direction, control and supervision" relationship between Classis Niagara, Classis Hamilton and Shalom Manor with respect to the Chaplain at Shalom Manor? Are there potential legal concerns that need to be addressed? (It is the understanding of Classis Hamilton that "direction, control and supervision" is currently exercised by Classis Niagara. Classis Niagara has appointed a committee on which two representatives from Classis Hamilton serve with vote and two representatives from Shalom Manor attend without vote. The committee is effectively under the "direction, control and supervision" of Classis Niagara since the Chaplain is legally under its employ. Classis Hamilton's two representatives serve on the committee by virtue of the annual contribution Classis Hamilton makes to Classis Niagara designated for the Chaplaincy at Shalom Manor.)
2. Is the current "ownership" and operation of the Shalom Chaplaincy the most favourable when viewed from the perspective of applicable provincial legislation? Is there potential for additional government funding for the Chaplaincy services provided to the residents and staff of Shalom Manor if the "ownership" issue were to be altered? Is government funding, if any, currently received by Shalom Manor from the government for Chaplaincy services properly allocated to the Shalom Chaplaincy budget?
3. Churches in Classis Hamilton are asking why only the Chaplaincy at Shalom Manor is being supported by Classis. There are a number of other senior homes where a significant number of CRC members live. The same issue may or may not be present for Classis Niagara, but Classis Hamilton believes that it needs to address this question. It is the current understanding of Classis Hamilton that about 44% of Shalom residents are CRC, approximately an even percentage are members of other Reformed churches and the remainder are members of non-Reformed churches or no churches at all (recognizing that these percentages may fluctuate).

Classis Niagara endorsed the committee and mandate at its meeting of 2013 October 16 as follows:

Article 17: Report of the Shalom Chaplaincy Committee: "... Classis Hamilton has proposed a review of the Shalom Chaplaincy and invited Classis Niagara to participate. Although the proposed mandate for this review was developed by Classis Hamilton, it does allow for additional input from Classis Niagara. After appropriate discussion, Classis Niagara approved the review and the mandate."

### **Members of the Review Committee**

For Classis Hamilton: Herman Proper, Dick Kranendonk

For Classis Niagara: Mel Elzinga, Theo Meester

For Shalom Manor Board of Directors: Joanne van Dijk, Dick VanDyke

The committee elected Dick VanDyke as Chair of the Committee and Herman Proper as the Secretary and Reporter.

### **Work of the Review Committee**

The committee held its first meeting on 2013 June 25 and met seven times in total. It consulted with a number of people including the chaplain and CEO of Shalom Manor.

### **Comments on the Process and Mandate**

There are several indications that the various partners no longer have as clear an understanding as they should have of the relationship of the chaplaincy program to the two Classes and Shalom Manor. The Classes had somewhat different versions of the mandate given to the "Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee" (to be called "Chaplaincy Committee" in this report). The members of the Chaplaincy Committee had unclear understandings of voting rights and these were changed by the committee members or chairs of the committee from time to time as the membership of the Chaplaincy Committee changed. We hope that our review will encourage the partners to take seriously the challenges and opportunities addressed in this report so that everyone will be clear about the right relationship.

### **Background – Beginnings and Current Character of the Chaplaincy Program at Shalom**

Knowing the beginnings of the chaplaincy program is important for understanding what was intended with the program and for designing appropriate modifications to the program if desired.

### **Shalom Manor: A Home for All People of Reformed Faith**

Shalom Manor and the Chaplaincy Program at Shalom have been unique from their beginnings and still are. Shalom Manor is the only long-term care home in Canada where a CRC Classis has provided spiritual and pastoral care to the residents on a classis-wide or multi-classical basis. Shalom Manor was established by the *diaconates* of what are now Classis Hamilton and Classis Niagara during the mid-1960s. The home was and still is owned by the Diaconal Conference of Classis Hamilton and Classis Niagara. However, from the start, the home was envisaged as being for more than CRC members; it was specifically intended to "be open to all people of Reformed Faith" (Classis Hamilton Minutes, May 19, 1965). (Note: The home is now owned also by diaconates of other member churches.)

In the early years, Shalom was able to restrict admittance to members of the CRC and other Reformed denominations and most of the residents were in fact CRC. The residents are no longer mostly CRC though the great majority are still from Reformed denominations (see Appendix 3 for statistics). The percentage of CRC residents and Reformed residents may change as admission decisions are made by the government of Ontario's Community Care Access Centre, but it is required to "consider the applicant's preferences relating to admission, based on ethnic, religious, spiritual, linguistic, familial and cultural factors" (Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, S.O. 2007, c. 8).

The change in composition of the residents has already had impact on the membership and Board composition of Shalom Manor.

### **The Chaplaincy Program: A Service for Church Members in the Home**

In the beginning, the churches provided worship services through pulpit supply because they owned the home; the rationale was that they were providing worship for their own members. In 1987, the first part-time chaplain was hired and worked under the supervision of the Grimsby CRC. In 1988, Classis Hamilton and Classis Niagara jointly decided to establish a Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee “to administer the chaplaincy program on behalf of the two Classes,” with part of the rationale being to relieve the Grimsby (now Mountainview) CRC of the administrative work of supervising the chaplain’s work. The committee was given a mandate (see Appendix 1) and charged with bringing recommendations to expand the chaplaincy to a half-time position. The primary focus of the chaplaincy program was to provide worship services through the chaplain’s preaching and arranging pulpit supply; pastoral visiting was to be supplemental and the chaplain’s role was coordinating in nature. Over the years, the chaplaincy program has changed significantly. The chaplain’s position became full-time in 1992 and expanded to include most of the pastoral care and counselling. The chaplaincy service has been extended to the additional residents of Shalom Gardens. These changes were made by the Chaplaincy Committee as per its mandate with approval given by the two Classes when they approved the annual per-member ministry share.

#### **Direction, Control, and Supervision (Mandate Part 1)**

The original mandate of the Chaplaincy Committee makes clear that the “direction, control, and supervision” of the chaplaincy program rests with the two Classes jointly. This agreement was made at a joint meeting of the two classes on September 21, 1988. See Appendix 1 for the original mandate as given in the minutes of Classis Hamilton for this meeting.

The two Classes initiated the Chaplaincy Committee to relieve Grimsby CRC of supervising the chaplain’s work and they approved a mandate that gave the Chaplaincy Committee the authority to operate the chaplaincy program on their behalf. Together the two Classes direct, control, and supervise the committee, though the committee is given the power to do almost everything. The committee must “present a budget for each year to the Classes, and recommend a per-member quota for the chaplaincy.” The committee also has the mandate “to supervise the work of the chaplain.” In practice, the committee was also responsible to hire the chaplain; there is no record that either Classis approved the actual persons hired or the various expansions and changes to the program. The Classes reserved for themselves the authority to approve the recommended per-member ministry share to be paid by the churches.

It is clear that the two Classes are partners on an equal footing with respect to the program. The two Classes together initiated the Chaplaincy Committee and together they have ultimate “direction, control, and supervision.” However, they have *de facto* delegated most of this to the committee and as a result it appears that they may not have adequate control over the program in light of their obligations as charitable organizations.

The two Classes and Shalom appoint their own representatives to the Chaplaincy Committee and the two Classes pay their per-member share for the program. As a practical matter, the finances (church contributions, chaplain’s salary) go through Classis Niagara. Classis Hamilton pays its ministry shares to Classis Niagara as a practical way to manage the program to comply with charity law. We are not certain if current procedures fully comply with regulations.

We think that the partners need to review their governance of this ministry and develop a sound agreement as to the governance model they will use. Possible arrangements could be:

1. A joint ministry agreement;
2. Making the Chaplaincy Committee an independent registered charity;
3. Making this a ministry of a local church, such as Mountainview CRC;
4. Making this a ministry of Shalom Manor

We also noted that the two Classes have different mandates for the Chaplaincy Committee. This could put the Chaplaincy Committee in a confusing position.

**Recommendation 1.1: That the two Classes review the governance structure and the mandate of the Chaplaincy Committee, with input from Shalom, and make any revisions that they deem advisable. The final mandate will depend on which form of governance structure is adopted, but it should include authority and reporting requirements.**

### **Regulatory Requirements for Shalom Manor**

Shalom Manor has regulatory obligations under the Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007; SS 14 & Reg. 85, to “ensure that there is an organized program for the home to ensure that residents are given reasonable opportunity to practise their religious and spiritual beliefs, and to observe the requirements of those beliefs. 2007, c. 8, s. 14” (see Appendix 2).

The “organized program for the home” could be operated by Shalom or by someone else that Shalom allows to operate it. The latter is the current situation with the “CRC chaplaincy program at Shalom” operated by the two Classes and Shalom. In the past, when most of the residents were from the CRC, there was little discussion as to whether this was a “CRC chaplaincy program at Shalom” or a “Shalom chaplaincy program.” Today the reality is different as the proportion of CRC residents is less than half of the total. As of May 2014, the percentage of known CRC residents in the Manor and Gardens combined was 46 percent and of all known Reformed residents was 81 percent. (See Appendix 3 for a report of all residents.)

### **Liability Insurance for Classes Hamilton and Niagara**

Our information appears to indicate that the partners and the chaplain may not be adequately covered with liability insurance in the event of, or allegations of, accidents or abuse.

**Recommendation 1.2: That the three partners review this issue.**

## [Ownership, Operation, and Funding of the CRC Chaplaincy at Shalom \(Mandate Part 2\)](#)

### **Ownership and Funding of the Chaplaincy Program**

The current chaplaincy program is funded from four sources plus support in kind from Shalom. These sources are the two Classes, residents by way of collections and donations, and one non-CRC church (see details in Appendix 4).

The government funding that Shalom receives includes some funding to support the “organized program” for religious practice that Shalom is required to provide. Based on information we had available, it appears that changing the “ownership” and operation of the program would have no effect

on the government funding that Shalom Manor receives. Currently it is a CRC program; changing it to a program owned and operated by Shalom Manor would not increase government revenues.

### **Options for Funding the Chaplaincy Program**

As stated above, Shalom was originally envisioned as a home intended to “be open to all people of Reformed Faith.” The two CRC Classes and Shalom set up the chaplaincy program to ensure that the residents would be able to worship every Sunday. Perhaps the early founders thought the residents would be mainly people from the CRC; if so, the current composition of residents might be a surprise to them. This is shown in Appendix 3.

Given the fact that the current percentage of CRC members is less than half (46% in May 2014), it seems reasonable to suggest that the funding be revisited in the sense that other churches also contribute to a program that blesses their members. In fact, one other local church does make an annual contribution of \$5,000 as noted in Chart 1. In addition, it would seem reasonable to provide residents of Shalom Manor and Gardens with budget envelopes so that they have the opportunity to directly support the ministry which serves them exclusively.

**Recommendation 2.1: That a budget envelope giving system be implemented for the residents of Shalom Manor and Gardens to allow them to contribute to the Chaplaincy program.**

**Grounds:**

- 4) This allows the residents to continue the practice of giving that most of them are used to.
- 5) This allows residents to support a program that serves them.
- 6) This would give a charitable receipt to residents for tax purposes.

**Recommendation 2.2: That the program administrator (currently the Chaplaincy Committee) consider asking other churches who have residents in Shalom to contribute financially to the Chaplaincy program, and consider giving them a voice in the chaplaincy program through the Chaplaincy Committee.**

**Grounds:**

- 6) It recognizes the responsibility of each church to provide spiritual care for its members.
- 7) It is reasonable that other churches help pay for this care to their members.
- 8) One non-CRC church already contributes to the costs of the program.
- 9) Other non-CRC churches already have a membership in Shalom.
- 10) This recognizes the intent of the founders to have Shalom be a home to people of all Reformed faiths.

i)

### **Care for Senior Members in Other Homes (Mandate Part 3)**

The main question to be answered in this section is how churches should provide care for their members in long-term care homes.

### **The Chaplaincy Program at Shalom**

The nature of the residents has changed significantly in the last number of years. Residents are generally older and needier than in the past and more deaths occur each year than in the past. Therefore the ministry work takes more time and individual care and the ready availability of a chaplain is more important than in the past.

**Recommendation 3.1: That the Chaplaincy Program at Shalom Manor and Shalom Gardens be continued.**

**Grounds:**

- 6) **The number of CRC and other people of Reformed faith is sufficient to warrant a full-time chaplain.**
- 7) **Each member church of Shalom has an obligation to make available spiritual care at Shalom.**
- 8) **The need for a readily-available chaplain is greater than it was in the past.**
- 9) **The pastoral care and counselling provided are a valuable ministry to residents and their families and the staff.**
- 10) **The Manor and Gardens are parts of a single ministry of Shalom and are integrated in practice. It would be hard to do only the Manor ministry without doing the Gardens ministry.**

**Spiritual Care for Church Members in Other Long-Term Care Homes**

We recognize that each church has the duty to provide spiritual care for its members in other long-term care homes besides Shalom. The number of such resident members has grown in recent years.

Currently, Classis-paid spiritual care is not available at any homes except Shalom. Individual churches may provide these services in some homes and some also continue to provide spiritual care to their members at Shalom. The services that could be provided in other homes may include elders' visits, worship services, social visits, recordings of worship services from home, the bringing of the Lord's Supper, and counselling and support at times of illness and death.

There is a variety of models that could be considered in providing care to residents of long-term care homes, whether at Shalom or at other homes. Possibilities include: additional "chaplains" using retired pastors or specially commissioned office-bearers, whether elders or deacons; commissioning special congregational members for visiting; providing volunteer-led worship services at homes, something that some churches do already. This work could be coordinated through local churches or clusters of churches, through each Classis, or through several chaplaincy committees or a single expanded Chaplaincy Committee for Long-Term Care Home Residents. The chaplains and other workers could be hired for a whole classis or a cluster of churches, be they local or Classis-wide volunteers, or be arranged through an agency such as Shalem, or be provided through some other arrangement.

We need to do some creative thinking of possibilities for the future!

**Recommendation 3.2: That each of the two Classes develop a model for care of residents in long-term care homes, including Shalom and other homes, defining what needs should be met, how these needs could be met, and how this work should be funded.**

**Grounds:**

- 2) **This recognizes the need for spiritual care of members in other long-term care homes in addition to Shalom, and the duty of churches to provide such care.**
- 3) **It recognizes the needs of the churches to use resources for care of these members in other homes.**
- 4) **It values the care for residents in other homes on an equal footing with care for residents in Shalom.**
- 5) **The number of CRC members in long-term care homes is likely to increase, perhaps dramatically, in the future. It would be wise to think far ahead.**
- 6) **The fact that the CRC, through the diaconates, owns Shalom Manor is not sufficient warrant for restricting funding of chaplaincy services to only Shalom.**

### **Some Ideas for the Chaplaincy Ministry at Shalom and Other Homes**

In the past, the chaplaincy ministry at Shalom was overseen by Grimsby CRC (now Mountainview CRC). This model may have advantages that warrant returning to it and adapting it for care in other homes. For each long-term care home, there could be one church that has oversight of the program, whether there is a chaplain or not. If there were a chaplain, this church could be the calling church and hold the chaplain's ministerial credentials (if an ordained minister or commissioned pastor) and oversee his or her life and doctrine. The work of this chaplain could be supervised by this church as well, or by a local or central Chaplaincy Committee. The costs of the Classis or Classes-wide programs could be borne by all churches equally through a per-member or per-resident ministry share as well as by means of voluntary budget envelope contributions by residents.

### **Conclusion**

Our Committee completed its review based on the mandate assigned to it and presents this report for consideration by the partners (the two Classes and Shalom). The report makes a few recommendations, but does not make specific recommendations as to the best form for governing the ministry going forward. As noted in the report there are a number of alternative governance structures from which the partners will need to choose the desired structure. We have also made a number of recommendations for revised funding going forward. The desired method(s) should be determined once the desired governance structure has been settled between the partners.

As far as future ministry to members in long term care is concerned, each classis will need to discuss this aspect independently. Each of the two Classes may come up with a different approach that may be unique to its needs.

**Recommendation 4.1: That the Classes acknowledge this report as the completion of the committee's mandate and discharge the committee of its duties.**

## Appendixes

### *Appendix 1: The Original Mandate of the "Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee"*

The **Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee mandate** as approved during the only joint session on record of the two Classes held on September 21, 1988 reads as follows (in the minutes of Classis Hamilton):

**"A.** That Classes Hamilton and Niagara initiate a Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee which is mandated to administer the chaplaincy in the Home on behalf of the two Classes. The membership of the chaplaincy committee will consist of a minister and an elder of each Classis, two members of the board of Shalom Manor, and one resident of the home designated by the board, while the chaplain will serve as an **ex officio** member. The terms of office will be three years, scheduled so that each year one third of the membership retires.

The task of the chaplaincy committee will include the following:

- to supervise the work of the chaplain
- to provide moral support for the chaplain
- to prepare a work description
- to set the annual salary and benefit provisions
- to present a budget for each year to the Classes, and recommend a per family quota for the chaplaincy
- to present regular reports to both Classes and to the board of the Home

#### G R O U N D S:

1. Such a committee will be advantageous to the morale of the chaplain, since the work is somewhat one sided and could be wearying.
2. The composition of the committee brings all participating agencies together, and should enhance good communication.
3. The committee will relieve the Grimsby CRC of its supervision of the chaplain's work at Shalom Manor, so that its consistory may not be unduly burdened. **Adopted.**

**"B.** That Classis request the Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee to make recommendations concerning the following factors involving the chaplain and the chaplaincy:

- to enlarge the chaplaincy to a half time ministry
- to consider the primary focus of the ministry to be on the worship services, and that the pastoral visiting should be considered supplemental and coordinating in nature
- to consider the chaplain to be responsible for filling the Shalom pulpit on Sunday, and to encourage him to arrange pulpit exchanges as needed
- to provide for the fact that Classis Hamilton will discontinue its pulpit supply for Shalom Manor after December, 1988. **Adopted."**

### *Appendix 2: Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007*

**14.** Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that there is an organized program for the home to ensure that residents are given reasonable opportunity to practise their religious and spiritual beliefs, and to observe the requirements of those beliefs. 2007, c. 8, s. 14.

#### **Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007 – Regulations**

##### **Religious and spiritual practices**

**85.** (1) This section applies to the organized program for the home to give residents reasonable opportunity to practise their religious and spiritual beliefs required under section 14 of the Act.

(2) Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that the program includes arrangements to provide worship services, resources and non-denominational spiritual counselling on a regular basis for all residents who desire them based on availability within the community.

(3) The licensee shall ensure that,

(a) mechanisms are in place to support and facilitate residents' participation in the program;

(b) arrangements are made for one-to-one visitation, according to the resident's wishes, based on availability within the community; and

(c) arrangements are made to facilitate the participation in the program of residents who have hearing or visual impairments, based on availability within the community.

(4) The licensee shall ensure that there is a designated lead for the program who has sufficient knowledge and experience to co-ordinate religious services and spiritual care in a multi-faith setting.

*Appendix 3: Resident Composition at Shalom Manor and Shalom Gardens*

**Chart 2: Residents by Church Affiliation as of 2014 May**

Church	Manor	Gardens	Total Residents	Percentage of Total
Anglican	1		1	<1
Baptist	2		2	<1
Canadian Reformed	21	3	24	13
Catholic	4		4	2
Christian Reformed	59	22	81	46
Free Reformed	11	2	13	7
Netherlands Reformed	1		1	<1
Orthodox (URC) Reformed	12	3	15	8
Protestant	4	3	7	4
Reformed	11	3	14	8
Unknown	17	3	20	11
<b>TOTAL REFORMED</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100</b>

*Appendix 4: Financial Information on the Chaplaincy Program*

<b>Chart 1: Funding of the Chaplaincy Program as Shown in Budget for 2014</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classis Hamilton CRC – 3680 active members x \$11.00 per member</li> <li>• Classis Niagara CRC – 2991 active members x \$11.00 per member</li> <li>• Residents by way of collections and donations</li> <li>• One non-CRC Church</li> </ul>	\$40,480 \$32,901 \$22,353 <u>\$5,000</u>	40.2% 32.7% 22.2% 5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100,734</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shalom Manor Contribution – in kind (see Appendix 4: Financial Information on the Chaplaincy Program for details)</li> </ul>		
<b>Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thirty four of the fifty seven collections scheduled for 2014 (60%) are designated for the Shalom Chaplaincy Fund</li> <li>• Shalom is allotted by the government a small amount of the Program and Support Services for spiritual and pastoral care.</li> </ul>		

**Details on Shalom's Contribution to the Chaplaincy Program**

Shalom pays for the rest of the Chaplaincy costs out of the recreation budget, including the partial cost of the Lead Person. Shalom does use the Program and Support Services envelope of government funding to support the spiritual care that it must provide.

- provides and maintains the pastor's office (phone, internet, etc...)
- provides and maintains the worship sanctuary
- coordinates and provides volunteers to porter residents to and from services
- provides and operates the audiovisual equipment for services
- provides technical supports for residents during worship services
- prepares and distributes orders of service (large-print and regular bulletins)
- provides television link to rooms and apartments
- arranges for volunteers to assist at additional ministry functions

## OVERTURE TO SYNOD FROM CLASSIS HAMILTON REGARDING ARTICLE 23

### Back Ground

Classis Hamilton has been privileged in the last number of years to approve and supervise a number of Commissioned Pastors in their role as chaplains and missionaries. We are grateful for the way Article 23 of the Church Order allows for individuals, who are called to ministry, to be ordained for particular roles of service. In some instances, however, the process for approving the position and examining the candidate has been met with confusion, awkwardness and embarrassment for some—if not all—of the parties involved. Questions and disagreements have arisen over the transfer of credentials, changes to job descriptions, and the termination of Commissioned Pastor positions. Part of the problem stems from different interpretations of the Church Order and perceived (mis)understandings of the requirements of Article 23 and its Supplement. We believe it is prudent that Synod clean up the language of the Church Order and clarify what is to be understood and expected in the process of approving, ordaining and supervising Commissioned Pastors under Article 23.

### Overture

Classis Hamilton overtures Synod to provide further explanation and clarification regarding the following five areas associated with Article 23:

1. The Principle.

There is a misunderstanding of the principle of article 23. Because there is a long and complicated history behind this article, the church is sometimes confused by its current intended purpose. In 2012 Synod changed the name of the office associated with article 23 from “Ministry Associate” to “Commissioned Pastor”—giving the impression that article 23 now allows people to be ordained into a “mini-minister” or “minister-lite” position. This is not the intended purpose of the name change. The intended purpose of article 23 is to provide *limited* but *real* ecclesiastical authority for a *specific* ministry role (be it in education, music, mission/evangelism, chaplaincy, etc.) for a *particular* area of ministry in God’s kingdom (be it the local church, mission field, educational institution, etc.). We believe Synod should reaffirm and clarify this intended purpose of article 23.

2. Classical Approval.

There is lack of clarity on how Classis approves the position and the person seeking ordination under article 23.

- i. The process for approving an article 23 position involves two steps. First the *position* must be approved (with the concurrence of Synodical Deputies); then the *person* called to this position must be examined and approved. It has become frequent practice that these two steps occur on the same day at the same classis meeting. We believe this is not according to the spirit of the Church Order. An article 23 position should be thoroughly critiqued and approved *before* a candidate can even be legitimately called (and approved) for such a position. A proper approval process should ordinarily involve *two* Classis meetings: At the first meeting the *position* is critiqued and approved—providing the *right* for a candidate

to be called to it. At the second meeting the person is then examined and approved. An awkward situation occurs when a position is not approved (or should not be approved) but a candidate is standing ready to be ordained into it. Synod should clarify *that a candidate cannot be called to a position that has not been approved by Classis with the concurrence of the Synodical deputies.*

- ii. Sometimes it is difficult to discern what constitutes a legitimate job description. *Synod should provide more guidelines to help a Classis evaluate a proposed job description for a Commissioned Pastor position.*
- iii. It sometimes happens that *after* a job description has been approved by Classis that it begins to change and evolve into something different. Neither the Church Order, nor the Supplement, provides guidelines for how Classis should be involved in this. How much change is allowed before Classis should review a Commissioned Pastor's job description? *Synod should specify an appropriate procedure and mechanism to evaluate and approve changes that need to be made to a previously approved job description.*

### 3. Supervision.

There is lack of clarity over how a Commissioned pastor is supervised with integrity.

- i. Some Commissioned Pastors work among several agencies, ministries and para-church organizations that supposedly interconnect together. Sometimes it is difficult to see *where* or *how* the supervision takes place. Synod should reaffirm that a proposed article 23 position should clearly indicate—not only that lines of accountability are in place—but *how the lines operate together to form a consistent whole.*
- ii. Our current Church Order does not provide enough guidance for how a local church ought to supervise the doctrine and life of a Commissioned Pastor. For example, how does a local church supervise a missionary who lives in a foreign country? How does a Council supervise his or her preaching and the administration of the sacraments? (Incidentally, this concern applies to Ministers of the Word who work as missionaries as well) We ask Synod to *provide guidelines, methods and procedures that churches can adopt for their unique circumstances so that Classis and Synodical Deputies can be confident that honest and real supervision will take place.*

### 4. Termination and Transfer of Ministry.

Some are led to believe that a Commissioned Pastor retains his or her office even though he or she no longer serves that particular ministry. *Synod should clarify that once a Commissioned Pastor leaves a specific ministry role the office associated with that ministry is terminated. Synod should further clarify that a person can only retain his or her office if the Classis has granted special permission due to special circumstances (for example: The Commissioned Pastor leaves one field of service to join another which is virtually identical to the first). Synod should also clarify under what circumstances a Commissioned Pastor should be re-examined in order to enter a different position under article 23.*

5. Moving Credentials from One calling Church to another.

It sometimes happens that a Commissioned Pastor leaves his or her calling church to join another. The Church Order does not address how the credentials ought to be transferred.

We request Synod to clarify *that a transfer can only happen if:*

- i. The sending church and the receiving church agree to the transfer—with the understanding that the receiving church agrees to take over the supervision of the doctrine and life of the Commissioned Pastor.*
- ii. The job description remains unchanged. Alteration of the position's job description requires the approval of Classis and the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies.*
- iii. Classis formally approves the transfer.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Classis Hamilton

## Appendix #5 - Stated Clerk's Report

For the period following the October Classis Meeting, the Classis Hamilton Board of Directors and the Interim Committee made the following decisions/recommendations:

### Board of Directors (BoD) Activities:

1. The treasurer informed the BoD that the insurance policies pertaining to Classis have been reviewed and that additional insurance coverage for the MacMaster/Mohawk Chaplaincy has been added to the main policy. As a result the stand alone policy for MacMaster/Mohawk Chaplaincy could be cancelled resulting in significant savings.
2. Local churches are reminded that concerns they may have about the operations and funding of Shalom Manor and Gardens should be addressed to the Board of Shalom via their diaconal representatives to their Diaconal Conference or to the Shalom Board of Directors directly. This includes concerns or confusion that may arise as a result of the \$15 per member assessment to support the operations of Shalom Gardens as approved by the deacons of the member churches of Shalom (more than just CRC churches). Classis Hamilton is not involved in the operations and financing of Shalom.

### Classis Interim Committee (CIC) Activities:

1. Article 23 Overture  
An overture, written by an Ad Hoc committee of the CIC on Article 23 will be brought forward to Classis for their approval at the upcoming meeting. Please see Appendix #4 in this agenda for the full report.
2. Written Reports for Classis  
The CIC has agreed that the Stated Clerk will issue a separate document containing the "written reports" along with the agenda for the upcoming Classis meetings. It was noted that the reports are all sent out as they come in to the Clerks and Pastors of our member churches. Packaging them along with the agenda is purely a reminder of what reports were issued between the meetings of Classis.
3. Shalom Chaplaincy  
Church responses to the Shalom Chaplaincy report were considered for the final report for Classis consideration at this upcoming meeting. Please see Appendix #2 in this agenda for the full report. Do note that the initial report presented at the October 2014 Classis meeting has also been included in the agenda for your convenience and can be found in Appendix #3
4. Calvary CRC, Flamborough  
Jeff Janssen's credentials have been transferred to Classis BC South East. Ken Benjamins was appointed Councillor for Calvary CRC.
5. Job Description, Syd Hielema  
The CIC has received a revised copy of the Job Description for the position of "**Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries**" (see Appendix #6) and verified that it met the requirements set out at the October meeting of Classis which stated:

*Classis Hamilton declare that the job description supplied to us [as shown in Appendix #3] - along with the right to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, which will be identified in the job description – is appropriate for one called to ministry as a Commissioned Pastor, with the understanding that the final draft will be ready by February 2015 taking into account the comments and suggestions of the advisory committee*

The Synodical Deputies have been given a copy of the job description and indicated that it is much improved. With that, the CIC now considers this item as closed.

John den Otter  
Stated Clerk – Classis Hamilton

***Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries***

**POSITION DESCRIPTION – Syd Hielema**

**Job Title:** Team Leader  
**Reports to:** Director of Ministry and Administration  
**Status:** Fulltime, salaried.

**PURPOSE:**

The team leader develops the vision and strategy for Discipleship and Faith Formation Ministries in consultation with the DMA, the team and ministry leaders throughout the denomination. He/she serves as the denominational voice and ears for DFFM, embodying the responsively respectful posture at the heart of this ministry. The team leader works closely with the DFFM team collectively and individually, encouraging the strengths of each member to shine and the team to function as a closely-knit, fruitful body.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** include the following:

1. Articulating and refining the mission, vision and strategy.
  - a. Prepare mission, vision and strategy documents, and revise these (together with the team) as circumstances require.
  - b. Coordinate the mission, vision and strategy with discerned patterns of need in the CRCNA, denominational ministry plans and the plans of partner ministries as is possible.
  - c. Engage in research and writing that strengthens DFFM’s mission, vision and strategy.
  - d. Develop and implement strategy in the area of youth ministry.
  
2. Serving as the voice and ears of the ministry.
  - a. Represent DFFM within binational CRCNA ministry structures.
  - b. Speak and/or lead workshops that implement the DFFM mission throughout the CRCNA.
  - c. Write materials that implement the DFFM mission.
  - d. Preach the Word and administer the sacraments as local congregations request; submit to supervision of doctrine and life by calling congregation.
  - e. Together with the DFFM team, practice listening strategies that will enable the ministry to work from a deep sense of what lives in congregations throughout the denomination and be nimbly, flexibly, and respectfully responsive to what is heard.
  
3. Team management and care.
  - a. Chair weekly team meetings.
  - b. Supervise the DFFM team; receive monthly written reports from each member of the core team, and hold a one hour one-on-one monthly conversation with each core team member.
  - c. Coordinate the gifts and strengths of each team member with both the needs of the ministry and the collective team dynamics; seek the flourishing of each team member.
  - d. Prepare a monthly team leader’s report for discussion with the entire team.
  - e. Discern ministry priorities together with the team.

4. Administration.
  - a. Prepare weekly reports for the Director of Ministry and Administration, and meet with the DMA biweekly.
  - b. Prepare and administer the DFFM budget.
  - c. Serve on the Ministry Plan Development and Administration Group.
  - d. Serve on the Canadian Ministries Team.

#### **SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. DFFM core team (3 staff, 1.95 FTE)
2. PT regional catalyzers (number to be determined)
3. Administrative staff (2, very PT)

#### **QUALIFICATIONS**

The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill and/or ability required.

1. Faithfully exemplifying a strong, vibrant, personal Christian faith marked by spiritual humility and moral integrity with a membership in a CRC (or willing to become a member of a CRC).
2. Demonstrated commitment to the pursuit of God's mission in North America through the church and reconciliation ministry in diverse, racial, and ethnic communities.
3. Effective oral and written communication skills.
4. Capacity to integrate big picture visioning, creative strategizing and sturdy implementation.
5. Demonstrated interpersonal, relational and teamwork skills.
6. Strong adaptive leadership skills.
7. Flexible, able to adapt to changing priorities.
8. Demonstrated success in leading and supporting organizational change.
9. A working knowledge of the CRC is critical.

#### **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

1. Relevant Masters degree is required.
2. Minimum of ten years experience in ministry (congregational and/or otherwise; some congregational experience is essential).
3. Significant leadership experience.

#### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Periodic travel throughout North America

#### **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job.

### **Classis Mission Director Report – February 2015**

During this past season, my work as Mission Director has focused primarily on the Safe Church Team, the Youth Ministries Team and the Classis Home Missions Committee. The reports for these committees are included below.

In addition, at the October Classis Meeting, we appointed John Veenstra as the Prayer Coordinator for Classis Hamilton. I've been working with John to begin gathering prayer people together, in an effort to grow the prayer ministry within the Classis. I'm excited about the potential of learning more about prayer, and of going deeper in prayer as John serves in this capacity. At the February Classis Meeting, we'll be spending some focused time together in prayer. I look forward to what God will do among us as we submit to him both individually and corporately.

At the time of writing, I've been serving for one year in this role as Mission Director. The past year has been one of becoming familiar with Classis churches, pastors and other personnel. I've enjoyed visiting and connecting with many and I've appreciated the opportunity to simply become acquainted with the work of Classis. I look forward to this next year with eager anticipation, as I begin to focus more intentionally on areas of ministry and mission that are already happening. I'm eager to encourage collaboration among churches, while finding ways to provide equipping opportunities as needed. I'm excited to explore new ways of doing mission together, and in our respective communities. I'm thankful for the people that God has put in place in our churches who also are eager to follow the Lord's leading. I look forward to greater missional activity both as a Classis, and in our churches.

### **Classis Home Missions Committee**

The CHMC has begun to explore church planting for Classis Hamilton. We've been pursuing some demographic data, and as well as identifying what other denominations are doing in our area. In an effort to learn more about the current trends in church planting and missional movements, we invited Adrian VanGiessen, Regional Leader for CRC Home Missions, to share with our team. Adrian addressed the realities of our current culture. He challenged our team to identify the missional activity that is already happening in our classis and churches, and to consider ways that we can be a catalyst for on-going missional movement.

In keeping with our desire to encourage missional movement, our committee introduced a questionnaire to all churches at the October Classis Meeting. This questionnaire sought to determine what is happening missionally in our Classis, in an effort to support the work of churches and perhaps begin some collaboration among ministries. The committee, together with the Mission Director is working to discern and learn from these completed surveys. It is our hope that this will lead to greater missional movements as churches work together for mutual support, encouragement, accountability and shared ministry.

The CHMC urges the churches of Classis Hamilton to be courageous and experiment with missional activity and initiatives. We are all encouraged to trust the Spirit of God to lead us where He is already at work.

### **Safe Church Team**

The Safe Church Team hosted a conference in November, at Ancaster CRC. Bonnie Nicholas, Director of Safe Church Ministry with the CRCNA, in Grand Rapids came to speak about the importance of Safe Church policies and practices. Workshops were offered in the morning. After lunch Bonnie facilitated a helpful conversation around how to deal with specific issues that could arise within churches. The forty people in

attendance were largely from Classis Hamilton, although attendees also came from Chatham, Oshawa, Fenwick, Palmerston, Waterloo, Woodstock and St. Catharines. Over the lunch hour, representatives from the Classis Hamilton team gathered to discuss ways that the team could improve its work.

In late November, the SC team met in Brantford where Fred Bennink of Ancaster CRC gave a presentation on the need for Safe Church policies from an insurance perspective. Members of church councils were invited to attend as well and we appreciated the response of those who came. Thanks to Fred for his presentation and preparation which was helpful and informative.

Every church should have an abuse prevention policy in place that has been reviewed by an attorney or insurance agent, and shared with all church staff and volunteers. The CRCNA has lots of resources to help churches with developing policies; just check the website [www.crcna.org/safechurch](http://www.crcna.org/safechurch) or contact Bonnie Nicholas directly.

The Safe Church team has struggled to find a chair; at the time of writing conversations are underway with someone who is interested in considering the role. Each church is encouraged to ensure that you have a representative on this team as well, to assist your church in its compliance and to support other churches as together we provide safe environments for all who are engaged in the ministries of our churches.

### **Classis Youth Ministry Team**

The CYMT has gained much excitement and enthusiasm over this past season; we are energized about the potential for encouraging the youth ministry personnel in our classis.

In an effort to foster connection, the team hosted a Youth Leader's Breakfast, with about 35 leaders in attendance from across the classis. Breakfast was provided by the Immanuel Youth Team, as a fundraiser for their mission trip. During breakfast, short presentations were given by Syd Hielema regarding his new role with Faith Formation at the CRCNA, as well as Amanda Bakale of World Renew. Heather deHaan gave a short update about plans for the next All Ontario Youth Convention. After enjoying a great breakfast, attendees gathered in groups to discuss best ideas in youth ministry as well as the challenges. This was a helpful exercise to share ideas, and encourage one another in ministry. Evaluation forms were completed, which gave suggestions of topics for future events.

The CYMT is hoping to plan another event, in the spring, as youth leaders seem eager for this kind of connection. Youth Leaders were encouraged to attend the Soul Care Retreat, in Ancaster, on Feb. 20 – 22 as an opportunity to be refreshed and renewed.

If you are wondering if your youth leaders are connected to our team, or if you have any questions please contact the Committee Chair, Pastor Jeff Klingenberg.

Marian Lensink,  
Mission Director

### **Prayer Coordinator Report**

Most of my time involved in this ministry since I started last fall has been in getting to know the people involved, and in planning and prepping. Twice I have met with Marian Lensink and Judy Cook. We are working to update and maintain the list of each congregation's prayer volunteers. We have invited them to meet in the host church in the morning of the day Classis will meet so we can intercede for the delegates, the leadership and the issues as well as the folk on the agenda. I am looking forward to

meeting with them, getting to know them and learning from them what the “prayer issues” among us are. For the evening of that day we are hosting a Prayer Summit for all who are coming to our Classis meeting. We encourage all of you to attend and, with us, to lift up your hearts and voices to God for the renewal and blessing of our church life and service.

John Veenstra

905 635-8799

[cnortenwheeler41@gmail.com](mailto:cnortenwheeler41@gmail.com)

***Shalom Manor & Gardens Chaplaincy Report***  
***Fall, 2014***  
***(Classis Hamilton & Niagara)***

I am sitting behind my desk composing this report on the last day of 2014. Traditionally, this has been a time to reflect. Perhaps, it is a good time to reflect on my ministry as chaplain during this past year. I will begin on a personal note.

This year saw an increase in time that I spent doing local church ministry. I was a participant on a church visiting team for Classis Niagara; visiting and reporting on the ministry of various churches. I participated as a sermon evaluator for the Classical examination of candidate Woody Dixon. For much of the year, I lead worship services every second Sunday afternoon at Smithville CRC, a congregation without a pastor. It was good to be more closely involved with the church. I spent more time with colleagues this year. For a morning every month, I meet with three colleagues. We hold each other accountable, share things that cannot be shared with others and pray for one another. This too has been good.

I serve as spiritual leader for the EduDeo Niagara Hands team. We have been meeting regularly through the year in a small group format, being formed by the Spirit to serve in Nicaragua. We will be leaving on January 19, 2015. In this year, I began and completed a directed reading course entitled, "God's Justice In the Biblical Story." I took the course through Trinity College, associated with the Toronto School of Theology. Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat was my instructor. There was a lot of required reading, many written responses to hand in and a paper to write. What was the pay off? I am better able to articulate what God's justice looks like as disclosed in the Scriptures. Though often expressed using different words, when I visit pastorally with a resident or a family member(s), questions concerning God's justice are raised a significant number of times. I think that taking this course has made me a better chaplain.

Much of the activity described above took place in evenings and on weekends. This made for a busy, but good year. I will transition to reflect on my ministry at Shalom Manor & Gardens.

On a Saturday afternoon in either late October or early November (my events calendar is in my office at Shalom and I am at home), we held our semi-annual Memorial Service. We remembered twenty-four residents who had died the previous half year. The auditorium was packed. I experience this as a meaningful service. When a resident dies, within two, sometimes three days, his/her room is occupied by a new resident. It is at this time that I try to make contact with the resident and their family. There is little time to remember the resident who just died. It is during the Memorial Service, when each deceased resident's name is announced, the resident's picture projected on the large screen, followed by a time of silence, that I remember.

Sometimes I remember the conversations that took place with family members as their loved one was in the last stage of dying. During this final stage there are times when the dying resident becomes very restless; showing signs of fear, anxiety, sometimes moaning phrases like, "I'm going to hell," or "Oh God," or "I'm not a child of God." Understandably, this greatly troubles the family members who are tenderly caring for their dying parent.

We find time to talk. We usually meet in my office. Together we examine the possibilities. Is their loved one in pain? I encourage them to talk to the nurse about this possibility. Is the body of their loved one experiencing fear and anxiety as the body struggles in its epic fight against death? And is this fear and anxiety expressed by their loved one in a religious language they know so well groaning, "I am going to hell?" Or, is there a spiritual warfare going on? Is the devil trying to steal one of God's children just before they die? This is a question often asked by family members. We talk about the possibilities. We refer to Scripture. We pray, placing the family and their dying loved one in God's loving and powerful hands.

I continue to be awed and silenced in the presence of death. I feel deeply humbled and greatly privileged to be invited into this holy space by the families. I will say a few words about the people who I work with.

I work most closely with the activity manager and the department which she heads. Without their assistance, the Sunday services, the Memorial services, the special religious services, the Remembrance Day service and the Bible studies would not be what they are. We work very well together. The nurses of the Manor and the Gardens contact me when they sense that a resident needs spiritual care. Without them, I would miss many key ministry moments. I am grateful for the chaplaincy committee. Not only do they supervise my ministry effectively, they show interest in the ministry and bless me with generous encouragement and support. And finally, I am grateful for the support which the churches of both Classis give. Thank you!!

Blessings in this New Year, Fred van der Berg

McMaster University & Mohawk College CRC Campus Ministry  
February 2015. [fallonm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:fallonm@mcmaster.ca)

Greetings Friends

Blessings to you and all the members of our Classis Hamilton community. At one time in our ministry, we would select a theme or passage and try to shoe horn that concept into our year. When I first got together with our new leadership team this fall, I shared with them, as I later shared with our broader community at McMaster & Mohawk, that when you boil it down to its basic element, what we are called to do as a Christian community, is to tell a story. And that is the story of Jesus Christ

This idea of story continued to develop as the weeks passed. The week after I spoke at "All Things," Pastor Chris, a member of our classis steering committee came and spoke about story and two weeks after that, Dr. Daniel Machiela another member of our committee came and he also presented his journey in a story form. Later in the semester at "Solid Rock Mountaineers" and "All Things: – all the students in our fellowship have had an opportunity to tell their stories. One popular program to tell a story has been our "Music Matters" nights. On those nights, students have an opportunity to share a favourite piece of music and the reasons which make that song a favourite, often evoked a story - stories everywhere.

One thing that makes the Gospel story compelling is if you can find your story, within the story of Jesus Christ. Whereas for some students the words to do this might come easy. For many others, this can be a challenge. Why is this a challenge for some? Some of our students have grown up in Christian family, perhaps they went to a Christian grade school and high school. Many have told me that outside of a particular catechism class or random discussion, they never really had a need to think seriously about their faith. Their thinking had never been challenged by being in a philosophically different environment (and all that that entails) before. Others, maybe new Christians are not that far along yet. Their story or questions, is quite different. "So I am saved – now what?" And of course, we have young people in our fellowships that are wondering – who is this Jesus, why does he matter and what do I really think of this?

We are particularly excited about our growth at Mohawk College last semester. We had a few CRC students join our community on that campus but fully 80% of our fellowship there are not CRC. These students come from a variety of Christian and non-Christian backgrounds and have come in due to our outreach programs. If you know of any students in your congregation attending Mohawk, please let them know about us. Also, we are looking to connect with more faculty at Mohawk College. If you know of anyone teaching there, please let me know. Thank you. God bless you all.

*Michael D. Fallon*

Appendix #10 – Church Visit Reports

Appendix #10.1 – Status of Visits

As of January 9, 2015 the following reports have been received and are on file:

<b>Church</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Last Visited</b>	<b>Visitor 1</b>	<b>Visitor 2</b>	<b>Team</b>
Ancaster	Ancaster	05-Mar-13	Ken Benjamins	Herman Proper	A
Meadowlands Fellowship	Ancaster	09-Oct-14	Paul Vanden Brink	Wayne Visser	A
Hope	Brantford	08-Oct-13	Martin Dam	Herman Proper	A
Hagersville Community	Hagersville	04-Nov-14	Paul Vanden Brink	Wayne Visser	A
Immanuel	Hamilton	10-Jan-13	Ken Benjamins	Martin Dam	A
Ebenezer	Jarvis	13-May-14	Dam/Vanden Brink	Wayne Visser	A
Immanuel	Simcoe	20-Mar-13	Martin Dam	Herman Proper	A
Maranatha	York	29-Jan-13	Ken Benjamins	Herman Proper	A
Burlington	Burlington	14-May-13	Jeff Janssen	John Veenstra	B
Faith	Burlington	12-May-14	Jerry Hoytema	Jake Ellens	B
Calvin	Dundas	01-Apr-14	Jerry Hoytema	Jake Ellens	B
Calvary	Flamborough	05-Mar-14	Jerry Hoytema	Jake Ellens	B
First	Hamilton	26-Feb-14	Jerry Hoytema	Jake Ellens	B
Mount Hamilton	Hamilton	12-Feb-14	Jerry Hoytema	Jake Ellens	B
Bethel	Waterdown	06-May-14	Jerry Hoytema	Jake Ellens	B

**Addressing the Questions of Church Order Article 41 now Article 42**

- It is noted that Church Order Article 41 is now Article 42. The visitors addressed the requirements of church order article 42 and in each instance the councils responded affirmatively.

**Particular blessings, concerns, practices or situations to draw to the attention of Classis**

- There were no matters of concern that require any action on the part of classis, but there are a number of blessings and some matters that are a concern to the churches. Below are excerpts from our reports to the councils.

**Blessings**

**Faith Burlington**

- Faith's vision and mission is to build relationships within the community where they are placed. Comments were made that such relationships are growing. However, a comment was also made, when asked what kind of church Faith seeks to be, that at this time Faith church is a "regional church" with many people coming to Faith church from outside its immediate geographic area. But it was strongly felt that a shift was happening from "regional" to "missional". Members are building relationships with people from their immediate community; a program called "Food for Life" distributes fresh food; Coffee break invites neighbours; monthly dinners attract community people, and a service is held every Sunday in a group home evidencing ministry to the community in addition to the Cadet, Gems and VBS programs.
- Home Church" has replaced the Sunday evening services and many members are part of a "Home Church" where they reflect on the message of the day, pray and care for each other. Home church is an effective small group ministry. During the winter, for about a 6 week period, Faith church offers Sunday evening educational courses such as parenting, dealing with Finances, the work of the Holy Spirit, etc.

**Calvin Dundas**

- The church is blessed with faithful and strong preaching that centers on the gospel of Jesus Christ. A wonderful way in which the church has been blessed has been in her involvement with Mission Services, a downtown Hamilton ministry that provides care and assistance to addicts, the poor and the lonely. Since Calvin's involvement five years ago not only have the attendees of Mission Services been blessed, but church members have been abundantly blessed as they walked hand-in-hand with these image bearers of God. Through this ministry a number of people have made public profession of their faith.
- In terms of giving the deacons have been active in providing care for the needy and the congregation has been generous in providing for various ministry opportunities to those in need.
- The elders likewise have been active and faithful to their calling with approximately 85% of the membership receiving annual home visits. In response to the question what as elders is your greatest joy one elder stated "that people get the gospel".

### **Calvary Flamborough**

- One of the council members remarked that "we hold on to the baptismal promise of communally caring for each other". Caring is especially expressed in times of need with prayer, cards and meals. The elders extend pastoral care to those in their district and faithfully make home visits. Elders mentioned that they are blessed when making these visits.
- Calvary has an active children's ministry and part of this ministry is called Kidz Connect. One of the events for Kidz Connect takes place in the summertime where as many as 180 children attend. Approximately 60 of these are from Calvary while others are from the broader community.
- The congregation is blessed by the faithful preaching of the Word. The deacons have joyfully been involved in a backpack drive and have collected 80 backpacks for the needy.

### **First Hamilton**

- Members enthusiastically responded with a number of ways in which they as church are blessed. The mentally and physically disabled are well cared for, including those at Homestead. Members of the church truly care for each other. Friendship Club is running well with an attendance of 15 to 18 people.
- Council expressed that there is a wonderful sense of renewal which comes to expression through openness and dialogue among members, and that there is a desire to move forward. Members can attest to God's faithfulness as well as the prayers of faithful people. Council and congregants are very appreciative of the preaching provided by Pastor Chris as well as his excellent administrative and communication skills which benefit the church. There have been a number of baptisms, in fact about 12 per year, for the past three years. As one member stated, "We are overflowing with children and young people having about 100 people under the age of 18". The diaconate is active in providing a ministry of compassion, stewardship and social justice to both the church as well as the community.

### **Mount Hamilton**

- In response to the question in what ways the congregation was both edified and blessed, council mentioned that when the need arises, people are there to serve one another. One member responded that we have a loving congregation. "We are blessed with excellent preaching even though we are vacant."
- There is a prayer meeting every month as well as a time of prayer prior to the morning worship service. Also, services are available electronically to Wellingstone Christian Retirement Home which is much appreciated by the seniors. Approximately 30 residents of Wellingstone are members of Mount Hamilton. In a discussion on the leadership of elders and deacons council responded that there is evidence of good leadership which is seen through the action of their fellow office bearers. The deacons felt that their most rewarding work was in visiting those in need including those who have moved to nursing homes, like Shalom Manor. The elders felt most rewarded in their work of serving their districts and getting to know the people in their districts.

### **Bethel Waterdown**

- Our first observation was that there was a good and warm atmosphere in Council. We observed a sense of excitement, renewal, and joy in being involved as office bearers in serving and giving leadership to Bethel church. When asked where the church was experiencing God's blessings an elder responded, "that making a home visit is a real blessing".
- The pastoral elders are assisted in their work by pastoral visitors and caregivers from the congregation. Those who have needs get visited. Bethel gets very involved as a congregation and about 75% of members are involved with small groups. Pastor Bruce mentioned that the people are an encouragement to each other and that, "they are kind and loving".
- It was noted that Bethel has a vibrant youth ministry with much leadership. The junior youth, that is grades 7 and 8 and the senior youth or grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 have about a 75% to 80% participation of available young people.

### **Ebenezer Jarvis**

- We were warmly welcomed by all council members. Council expressed excitement about the many good things that God is doing in their midst. A strong GEMs program and boys club program are in place and include a number of community children. Coffee Break continues faithfully to minister to a large number of women.
- There were 7 young people who professed their faith this past year and 29 attended the All Ontario Youth Convention. 1 adult also professed their faith and received baptism.
- At the pastoral level, council was pleased to report that Rev. Daryl DeKlerk has accepted their call. Meanwhile the work of Pastor John was well received this past year. And elections for new office bearers and the transition to a new council went smoothly this year. Elder home visits are capturing approximately 80-85% of members.

### **Concerns**

- A common concern among the churches is inactive members and how to bring them back into the fold. Some council's expressed profound pain that some members are wayward and a frustration in knowing how to deal with this. Another concern that was raised is about adequately disciplining members who seem to be stagnant in their faith. While perhaps not unusual some churches are struggling to retain members while others are blessed with increasing growth.

### **Visitor's advice given to councils that requires Classis approval**

- No advice was given to the councils that require Classis approval.

### **Common trends or problems which merit the attention of Classis**

- A number of churches are concerned with the number inactive or fringe members. The question arises as to how to retain members. Some of the churches no longer have a second worship service but have found creative ways in engaging the congregation in different ways that has been rewarding.

- We observe that growth through evangelism and conversion is a matter for concern that warrants the attention of Classis.
- With all the visits we as church visitors felt that there was a common sense of love and caring for the members and for each other and the Councils reported that they were diligent in pastoral care.

**Recommendation's to Classis.**

- There are no recommendations from the church visitor's, but we would like to suggest a revision to the method of reporting our visits to Classis. Attached is a letter addressing our concerns.

**Submitted by:**

Rev. Paul Vanden Brink, Rev Jeff Klingenberg and Wayne Visser (Team A)

Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema and Jake Ellens (Team B)

## Appendix #11 – Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Committee

**Spring, 2015**

**Submitted by Yvonne Schenk, CAMC chairperson**

The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) has the specific role of educating and mobilizing CRC members and congregations to live in reconciled relationships as covenant (treaty) people before our Creator.

CAMC works toward three goals:

- ② **Awareness and Education** of CRC members and communities of the shared history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada, of the present lived reality of Aboriginal people in Canada, and of the need for reconciliation and renewed relationships;
- ② **Engaging and Building Relationships** with our Aboriginal neighbours to better understand each other and journey down the path of justice and right relationships; and
- ② **Advocacy and Seeking Justice** for Aboriginal peoples, who remain among the most marginalized and oppressed people groups in Canada.

Our committee is currently made up of:

*Tal James – regional member, British Columbia and Alberta*

*Jean deBeer – regional member, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern Ontario*

*Yvonne Schenk – member-at-large; chairperson*

*Christina deVries – regional member, Southern and Eastern Ontario, Quebec and Maritimes*

*Lori Ransom –member at-large*

*Bert Adema – Indian Metis Christian Fellowship, director*

*Harold Roscher – Edmonton Native Healing Centre, director*

*Michele Visser-Wikkerink – Indigenous Family Centre, director*

*Shannon Perez – Justice and Reconciliation Mobilizer, CRC denomination staff*

*Danielle Rowann – Justice Communications and Education Coordinator, CRC denomination staff*

We are very happy and excited to announce that the small group curriculum “Living the 8th Fire” is ready for use. One of the questions the Centre for Public Dialogue and CAMC has faced following the reForming Relationships tour and the Blanket Exercise is “What’s next?” This curriculum is one of the answers to that question. It is made up of 7 small group sessions, based on the CBC’s 8th Fire series and encourages all of us to walk the road of reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours. You can find this curriculum at:

<https://aboriginalministry.wordpress.com/workshops> .

The reForming Relationships art tour and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) are coming to an end. The final TRC will take place in Ottawa May 31-June 3, 2015. The reForming Relationships tour will be there as well, for the final tour showing of Ovide Bighetty’s artwork at a downtown Ottawa location (to be determined). The Canadian Aboriginal Committee will be in Ottawa to meet together and to mark the end of both the TRC and the art tour. From Ottawa, the art work will make its way back to Regina, to the Indian Metis Christian Fellowship, where the art tour began. We are so thankful to God for this art tour and for the conversations, relationships and the opening of hearts and minds toward each other that continue from this experience.

CAMC will continue to connect with the contacts that developed through the reForming Relationships tour. We hope these contacts will become champions for Aboriginal Ministry. These champions would keep their congregations aware of the Justice and Reconciliation work being done in the denomination and would be a way for congregations to connect directly with CAMC if they would like further resources and/or would like to find new ways to do justice.

This is our vision: to continue to find ways to connect with churches and communities and through these connections to develop ways to actively live out reconciliation with our First Nations brothers and sisters. We encourage you to visit our toolkit webpage: <https://aboriginalministry.wordpress.com> and our Facebook page. We welcome your feedback.

Thank you and may God bless you in your ministries where you have been planted.



January 2015 Classis Report  
... year 139 of Calvin Theological Seminary

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At their meeting in mid-October, 2014:

- Approved revisions to the Seminary's MA degree programs that included granting permission for the faculty to offer the MA programs in distance format as soon as feasible with regard to staffing, financing and enrollment.
- Received reports on the scholarship offerings currently available at Calvin Seminary and encouraged the Development Office to work with donors on ensuring robust funding in three broad categories that correlate to programs of study or student populations: Ordained Ministry; Leadership; International students (outside of North America). For some currently endowed scholarships, the donors may want to broaden the parameters of their protocols. The development office was also encouraged to have scholarship protocols for full-time study at the seminary be inclusive to distance learners in a full-time program in addition to students in residence.
- At the conclusion of the meeting, trustees and faculty members enjoyed a working lunch and engaged a structured conversation around 3 strategic planning questions: What are the challenges facing Calvin Seminary today? What are its opportunities? What values or criteria should we keep in mind in setting priorities for Calvin Seminary?
- The Board of Trustees approved a continuation of the 4.5% spending rule for Fiscal Year 2016. The Board has been bringing this rate down with a stated desire to land at 4%, but the Board also recognizes that moving to 4% would impact the amount of dollars available for scholarships.

## PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

- President Medenblik is finishing up his fourth and final year serving as the Reporter for the CRC Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC); this task force hopes to present its report at Synod 2015.
- President Medenblik traveled to Egypt from November 11 to 18 with Joel Boot, Christian Reformed Director of Ministries and Administration, and Gary Bekker, Director of Christian Reformed World Missions. While there, he participated in the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo (ETSC) as well as the church denomination in which Calvin Seminary graduates Naji Umran and Anne Zaki are serving. A link to the story on this trip can be found here: <http://www.crcna.org/news-and-views/crc-signs-fellowship-agreement-church-egypt>.
- Since August, President Medenblik has preached at numerous Sunday services in Michigan, South Dakota, Iowa, and British Columbia; he has also attended various church services on behalf of students getting ordained or installed in West Michigan. He also convened a seminary "delegation" to worship with and visit the Chinese Church in the Lansing community.

## ACADEMICS

- Professor Sarah Schreiber was ordained as Minister of the Word at Grace Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids in November. Rev. Schreiber began teaching Old Testament at the Seminary this past fall, 2014.
- Faculty search committees have been formed for two positions at Calvin Seminary: Moral Theology or Moral and Philosophical Theology and Missiology and Missional Ministry. All churches are encouraged to submit referrals and nominations for these positions to Calvin Seminary; the postings can be found on the seminary website: <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/about/jobopenings/>
- Calvin Seminary faculty is recommending to the Board of Trustees that Dr. Lyle Bierma be appointed as P.J. Zondervan Professor of the History of Christianity, with primary duties in our PhD program. The faculty believes that he will help our PhD program continue its strengths in Reformation and Post-Reformation thought. Like retiring Professor Richard Muller,

Professor Bierma studied at Duke University with Dr. David Steinmetz. His research has focused on early Reformed covenant theology and the Heidelberg Catechism. He is now researching John Calvin's understanding of baptism as a means of grace. He also recently took up the role of Director of Doctoral Studies.

- Calvin Seminary, in conjunction with the Hispanic Pastor Ministry certificate program (*now in its second year*) led by Old Testament Professor Mariano Avila, welcomed Dr. Justo L. Gonzalez and Dr. Catherine Gonzalez in late September. During their visit to Calvin Seminary on September 25 and 26, Dr. Justo Gonzalez facilitated a public lecture, was the guest of honor at an evening dinner event, and led a Spanish-speaking community worship service on Calvin's campus. His wife Catherine was the guest speaker in a small group gathering of women students, faculty and staff from the Seminary as well as women from the community. News stories on these presentations can be found in the Fall FORUM.
- Calvin Seminary co-sponsored with Calvin College the 2014 Stob Lectures, held in the Calvin College Chapel in November. This year the featured lecturer was Dr. Jeremy Begbie who is the Thomas A. Langford Research Professor in Theology at Duke Divinity School; Senior Member at Wolfson College, Cambridge; and Affiliated Director in the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge. Dr. Begbie presented on "What's Transcendent About the Arts?" [ *Please note, Dr. Begbie does not allow his presentations to be recorded due to copyright restrictions.* ]

## SERVING THE CHURCH

### Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP):

- The Center for Excellence in Preaching, directed by Rev. Scott Hoezee, is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year! Praise God for his faithfulness through this useful tool. [View](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/2015/01/06/cep-celebrates-10-years/) a special video created in celebration of the anniversary: <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/2015/01/06/cep-celebrates-10-years/> or <http://vimeo.com/116012764>
- Rev. Scott Hoezee also had a new book published, which debuted in early December, titled *Actuality: Real Life Stories for Sermons that Matter*. This book debut was highlighted with a special gathering of Seminary friends on Tuesday, December 2 in the Seminary Chapel, including a question and answer period facilitated by Rev. Peter Jonker, Pastor of Preaching at LaGrave Christian Reformed Church and friend and former Seminary classmate of Rev. Hoezee. The link can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/114145931>. Also accessible from: <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/2014/12/02/actuality-real-life-stories-for-sermons-that-matter/>

### Institute for Global Church Planting and Renewal

- The second biennial missional conference in the planning stages, to be held November 18 & 19, 2015 at Calvin Seminary and Calvin College. This year's theme is Missional Living of Scripture and will feature keynote presentations by Christopher Wright, Richard Hayes, and Ruth Padilla DeBorst among others.
- A 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort for the Church Renewal Learning Lab, led by Rev. Keith Doornbos, started their 2-year journey in June, 2014, as part of the pilot phase of this initiative. Future plans are also in the making for one regional Learning Lab cohort within this pilot timeframe in an area to be determined.

## Students

- At a fall chapel kick-off, each student, faculty and staff member was offered a free copy of the book "The Story" by Max Lucado and Randy Frazee; this book highlights the Bible as one continuing story of God and His people. The contents of the book are being used as a guide for our chapel services, as well as to shape other community conversations and events.
- Spouse & Family Ministry: The spouse and family ministry program sponsored a Family Zoo Day on Saturday, September 13 at Boulder Ridge Wild Animal Park where 150 parents and children attended. A dinner attended by Calvin Seminary and Western Theological Seminary spouses was held on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Alpen Rose restaurant in downtown Holland, Michigan. Approximately 40 women from each Seminary were in attendance to fellowship and hear speaker and author, Lynn Austin. Later in October, approximately 50 women from the Seminary attended a Women's Night Out event that featured speaker Carol Kent.
- Several student leaders worked with Dean Jeff Sajdak to plan and convene a special Town Hall to have a time of lament about Ferguson and racial injustice and divisions. This was the theme...  
*God, our help in ages past, we come to you in mourning.  
We confess, when faced with the pain and grief we have witnessed in Ferguson, that we don't know what to say.  
By your Spirit, in our mourning, help us know how to pray...*

- Then later in December, we gathered once again to lament in a special chapel service, this time surrounding Pakistani student Eric Sarwar to share his tears and sorrow for the “slaughter of the innocents” in a Pakistani school that took more than 140 lives.

#### **Admissions**

- Calvin Seminary welcomed a diverse class of incoming students for 2014-2015. We continue our global reach with 31% of our students hailing from outside North America. We find ourselves at the crossroads of rising global Christianity, with growing numbers of students coming from places where the Church is experiencing exciting growth. Our students continue to represent denominational diversity, with about half of our incoming students coming from denominations outside the Christian Reformed Church.
- The Admissions office is accepting applications and nominations for Facing Your Future (FYF) 2015! FYF is a life-changing summer program for high school students who are trying to discern where God is calling them next. The program includes mentorship, engaging vocational and theological exploration, making new friends while staying in college dorms, and traveling to an *Excursion Site* throughout North America. Check out [www.calvinseminary.edu/fyf](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/fyf) for more info. Applications are due January 20, 2015.

#### **Development**

- This year Calvin Seminary celebrates its 139th anniversary and to mark this special time students, faculty, staff, Board members, donors, and other friends gathered at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park on October 23rd. The group enjoyed a delicious meal, heard updates from President Medenblik and Board Chairman, Sidney Jansma, Jr., and were inspired by the personal stories of three current seminarians. We also recognized the 14 new scholarships established in 2014.
- Calendar year end giving is an important source of funding encouragement to the seminary. The Development staff worked faithfully and well to present this need to our many stewardship partners who responded with generosity that greatly encourages us.

#### **Administration**

- A simpler, smarter (separating internal from external), and much-needed upgraded website design has been implemented. The purpose for this upgrade was in part to better target our key audiences – prospective students, donor partners, and ministry practitioners. For all the latest events and other Seminary activities, please feel free to check it out at [www.calvinseminary.edu](http://www.calvinseminary.edu)

On behalf of the Board of Trustees,  
Calvin Theological Seminary

Rev. Jeff Klingenberg  
CTS Board Member, Zone 4 (Classis Chatham, Hamilton, Huron, Niagara)

Pastor, Hagersville Community Christian Reformed Church

January 13, 2015

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ of Classis Hamilton,

Greetings in the Lord. We, the Council of Ebenezer CRC of Jarvis, prayerfully submit this communication for your consideration. We send it as an overture that at our Classis meeting on February 24, 2015 this be approved by all of us as a communication to Synod 2015.

“There are many of us who are now more honest about our experience of same-sex attraction than we were in the past. Nearly all of us have friends or family we wrestle with through questions of sexual identity. We confess we haven’t often loved each other well in those struggles. For instance, while there is great tension in being called by Scripture to sexual celibacy (whether in heterosexual or homosexual identity) our love and inclusion has often favoured those who are married. The CRC synodical reports of 1973 and 2002 contain great wisdom for loving those of us with same-gender attraction, and we do well in our sanctification to read the reports afresh and live into God’s will.

Consistent with the exegesis and pastoral recommendations of those synodical reports, we encourage our brothers and sisters in the faith to resist the temptation to “biblically” justify gay marriage. We view such attempts as forcing a secular Western sexual ethic into Scripture (eisegesis). As the church we don’t even have a right to change biblical morals. We are simply the messengers of the gospel of Christ, called to imitate his way of life. (Ephesians 5:1-3, Hebrews 6:12)

Scripture explains how Adam and Eve fell for the seductive question, “Did God really say that...?” (Genesis 3:1) The Bible laments many occasions when “everyone did as he saw fit.” (Judges 21:25) God gives us enough examples to know that idolatrous accommodation needs godly resisting (ie. Noah, the Judges, Old Testament kings, Jesus’ words to the Pharisees). Paul had to chastise the Corinthian church for approving an unbiblical sexual ethic, exclaiming, “And you are proud!” (1 Corinthians 5:2) God even warns that, “If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and worship other gods’... do not yield to him or listen to him.” (Deuteronomy 13:6-8) We appeal in Christian love to members of the CRC like Wendy VanderWal-Gritter and those of similar mind: do not take pride in accommodating to a secular sexual ethic. To say we need to collapse the tension for LGBTQ+ members or ‘get with the times’ is to say ‘worship other gods’.

We of course sympathize with the pastoral and missional pressure to accommodate, especially given the cultural shift toward acceptance of gay practice. It is certainly the path of least resistance to think, ‘If you can’t beat them, join them’. There is even reason for healthy fear: people will kill for sex. Unborn babies in the US and Canada are already largely unprotected victims of unbridled sex drives. Another step could be killing even the right of association for people wanting to affirm biblical sexual values. The vehemence in Canada with which the BC, Ontario, and Nova Scotia law societies are opposing the proposed law school at Trinity Western University in Langley, BC could be an indication of the resistance Christians can expect. There is urgency and relevancy to the work of the denominational Committee for Pastoral Guidance on Same-Sex Marriage that was commissioned by Synod 2013.

It does not help us, then, when a member of that committee like Wendy VanderWal-Gritter writes a book like *Generous Spaciousness* endorsing gay practice. To quote Dr. Gene Haas of Redeemer University-College:

“This is a deeply-flawed book. While it contains numerous accounts of people with same-sex attraction and in same-sex relationships which provide moving insights into their struggles, fears, desires, and hopes, the main arguments in the book for evangelicals to embrace ‘generous spaciousness’ are faulty, misleading, and

erroneous.” – Book review of *Generous Spaciousness*, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (Winter, 2015)

While VanderWal-Gritter has contributed much to the discussion from her deep compassion, we question the appropriateness of her inclusion on the denomination’s committee now that her book was released in 2014. In both her book and her capacity as director of New Direction Ministries of Toronto, she openly and actively subverts the grounds of her committee’s mandate, which state, “The reports from 1973 and 2002 have served the denominational very well by laying out the biblical principles and foundations clearly, where read and applied.” (Minutes of Synod 2013, art. 93)

The ethical revisionism espoused by her and others like James Brownson of Western Seminary (RCA) is dangerous to the biblical faithfulness and vitality of the Christian Reformed Church. There are too many declining denominations that would gladly welcome VanderWal-Gritter and Brownson, churches that have unmoored themselves from Scripture and shipwrecked the faith in the name of inclusiveness. Let us not be one of them! Can we trust that God has a compassion much deeper than our own for those of us with same-gender attraction, and that he’s long-revealed it in his word?

We take courage from God’s word to Joshua: “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ...Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:6-9)

Strength is also found in knowing that many Christians across the ages and around the world today have relied on the Lord in oppressive contexts. As we acknowledge the possible shift in the West to a time when “all men will hate you because of me,” may we remember our Lord Jesus’ words that “he who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 10:22) May the God of life lead us in being culture-makers (not followers) as we love mercy, seek justice, and walk humbly with our God.

Sincerely,

The Council of Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church of Jarvis  
Harry VanBenthem, clerk