

**Minutes of a Meeting of
CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

Date: October 27, 2015 **Time:** 10:00 AM

Venue: Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, 95 Oak Street, Simcoe, Ontario

Chair:	Bruce Adema	Vice-Chair:	Ken Benjamins
Stated Clerk:	Dick Kranendonk	Reporter:	Everett Vander Horst

Synodical Deputies:

James Dekker	Classis Niagara
Ron Fisher	Classis Huron
Hendrik Bruinsma	Classis Toronto

Prior to the opening of the classis meeting, the Chair received notice that the designated Vice-Chair, John Huyser is ill and will not be able to attend the meeting. The Chair requested Ken Benjamins to take the place of John Huyser. Ken Benjamins graciously accepted the appointment.

Delegates:

City	Church	First Name	Last Name	Title
Ancaster	Ancaster CRC	Rita	Klein-Geltink	Pastor
Ancaster	Ancaster CRC	Henry	Askes	Elder
Ancaster	Ancaster CRC	Ralph	Luimes	Deacon
Ancaster	Meadowlands Fellowship	Everett	Vander Horst	Pastor
Ancaster	Meadowlands Fellowship	Judy	Cook	Elder
Ancaster	meadowlands Fellowship	Ed	Witvoet	Deacon
Brantford	Hope	Ken	Benjamins	Pastor
Brantford	Hope	Willem	Vos	Elder
Brantford	Hope	Gerrett	de Vries	Deacon
Burlington	New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor
Burlington	New Street	Geoff	Weinstein	Elder
Burlington	New Street	John	Dekker	Deacon
Burlington	Faith	Homer	Lensink	Elder
Burlington	Faith	Marge	Kloet	Deacon
Dundas	Calvin	Ed	Scharinga	Elder
Dundas	Calvin	Fred	Dykman	Elder
Dundas	Calvin	Luther	Andree	Deacon
Flamborough	Calvary	Arnold	Wouda	Elder
Flamborough	Calvary	Drew	Neven	Elder
Flamborough	Calvary	Dave	Vandermeulen	Deacon
Hagersville	Hagersville Community	Jeff	Klingenberg	Pastor
Hagersville	Hagersville Community	Aaron	Miedema	Elder
Hagersville	Hagersville Community	Henny	Arends	Deacon
Hamilton	First	Chris	Schoon	Pastor
Hamilton	First	Mark	Devos	Elder
Hamilton	First	Dan	Postma	Deacon
Hamilton	Immanuel	Anthony	Elenbaas	Pastor
Hamilton	Immanuel	Bob	Brown	Elder
Hamilton	Immanuel	David	Rumph	Elder
Hamilton	Mt. Hamilton	John	Demik	Elder
Hamilton	Mt. Hamilton	John	Flokstra	Elder
Hamilton	Mt. Hamilton	Bob	DdHaan	Elder
Hamilton	New Hope	Danielle	Rowaan	Non-Voting Delegate
Jarvis	Ebenezer	Bernie	Wesselink	Elder
Jarvis	Ebenezer	Jack	Eggink	Elder
Jarvis	Ebenezer	Chris	Poorting	Deacon
Simcoe	Immanuel	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pastor
Simcoe	Immanuel	Roelie	Haak	Elder
Waterdown	Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor
Waterdown	Bethel	John	Kemper	Elder
Waterdown	Bethel	Janette	Wamsteker	Deacon
York	Maranatha	Maurice	Elgersma	Elder
York	Maranatha	Cor	Visser	Elder

Meeting Details

1. OPENING WORSHIP

- 1.1. John Veenstra, Classis Prayer Coordinator, led the body in a time of prayer.
- 1.2. Representatives of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church of Simcoe, gave an overview of what is happening in the life of the church; from in church building changes, community engagement programs and activities to a vibrant Friendship ministry in cooperation with two other downtown churches.
- 1.3. Ken Benjamins led in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for Immanuel Christian Reformed Church of Simcoe as well as offering prayer for John Huyser.

2. CALL TO ORDER

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:55 AM and gave some introductory information especially for first time delegates and the day as a whole. He noted that this is the first meeting at which deacon delegates are seated by virtue of their office and not by a vote of exception.

2.1. Attendance

The list of attendees is shown above. It was noted that all first time delegates signed the *Covenant of Officebearers* of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The Chair **RULED THAT:** the 42 officially registered delegates as noted on the previous page are properly seated and that the meeting is properly constituted.

2.2. Approval of Agenda

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the agenda and addendum as communicated to the churches is approved for discussion and action where appropriate.

3. REFUGEE CONCERNS

Danielle Rowaan, assisted by Katie Karsten, on behalf of the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue, made a well-received, interactive presentation on refugee issues that are of concern to the local churches, the communities in which refugees live and the country as a whole. They stressed that they are available to make similar presentations at the local church level. Churches are encouraged to make their requests directly to the Burlington, Ministry in Canada Office. They can be reached at: <http://www.crcna.org/Canada/about-ministry-canada>.

4. MINISTRY IN CANADA

Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director made a presentation to Classis about Ministry in Canada of the CRCNA. During his brief presentation, he highlighted the Canadian website <http://www.crcna.org/Canada> as well as the Canadian National Gathering to take place in May 2016 at Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo. The event will be a healthy blend of worship, fellowship, conversation, application and planning all intended to strengthen the Christian Reformed Church in Canada as we know it locally from Charlottetown to Victoria. Every church will receive an invitation to send delegates.

5. LUNCH BREAK

The Chair declared a 45 minute lunch break

6. PAUL VANDENBRINK RELEASE, ARTICLE 14-b

On motion duly made, seconded and ratified by ballot vote **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton declares that Rev. Paul VandenBrink is honourably released from ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North America according to Church Order, article 14-b.

The Synodical Deputies concurred with the decision of Classis.

Anthony Elenbaas offered prayer for Paul VandenBrink.

7. EXAMINATION OF THERESA BAKKER IN RESPECT OF ARTICLE 23-a

Andrew Zomerman examined Theresa Bakker on behalf of Classis to authorize Immanuel CRC of Simcoe to ordain her for the position of Pastoral Care Worker at Parkview Meadows Christian Retirement Village. After Andrew concluded his examination, the delegates were given an opportunity to question Theresa.

Upon completion of the examination period, the Chair declared Executive Session which was concluded after the ballot vote had been taken.

On motion duly made, seconded and ratified by ballot vote, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton declares Theresa Bakker eligible for ordination to the office of commissioned pastor while serving in the position of *Pastoral Care Worker for Parkview Meadows* under the supervision of the council of Immanuel CRC of Simcoe.

Theresa Bakker is invited back into the meeting and the Chair presented her with a Certificate acknowledging that she has sustained the classiscal exam. Andrew Zomerman offered a prayer of thanks to the Lord for Theresa and asked Him to bless Theresa as she enters this new phase of her continuing ministry at Parkview Meadows Retirement Village.

8. CMT REPORT

Ken Benjamins reported on the activities of the Classis Ministry Team since the last meeting and nominated the name of Rita Klein-Geltink to serve as Chair of Classis for the 2016 calendar year. His report also included the activities of the Classis ministry committees. Chris Schoon, Chair of the Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee was given the floor to report on some of the significant matters to be brought to the attention of Classis. These included the introduction of two students in the final stages of their candidacy process; Mark Devos and Courtney Mooney (Courtney had to leave prior to this introduction because of prior commitments). Chris also took time to explain the regulatory and financial challenges faced by the CHCC with respect to students wishing to obtain their seminary education at Calvin Theological Seminary.

9. GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE

In response to the request on the credentials of Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Waterdown, the Classis meeting held on February 24, 2015 to hold an education session on Church Governance as it relates to a Corporation in the Province of Ontario, at an upcoming Classis meeting, it was decided that the Classis Ministry Team should organize such a session. The CMT assigned a subcommittee to prepare such an educational session. Ralph Luimes makes the presentation on behalf of the subcommittee and the CMT. Handouts are provided to all delegates. Ralph also said that this material should be made available to all Classis in Ontario.

10. STAFF REPORTS

- 10.1. Marian Lensink gave a brief verbal report, augmenting her written report in the Agenda, of her work as Mission Director since the last Classis meeting. The Chair **RULED THAT:** Classis receives the reports of the Mission Director as information.
- 10.2. Michael Fallon was not able to attend the meeting for his verbal report. Chris Schoon augmented Michael's written report in the Agenda with a number of highlights relating to the task of CRC chaplain on the McMaster and Mohawk campuses. The Chair **RULED THAT:** Classis receives the reports by and on behalf of the McMaster and Mohawk chaplain as information.

11. APPROVAL OF WORK OF CMT

On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the work of the CMT in so far as it has been communicated by means of the minutes and verbal reports is approved.

12. ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

- 12.1. The following persons were elected by ballot to: serve on classical committees, be delegated to another agency, or nominated for consideration by a denominational agency.
 - 12.1.1. To serve as **Chair of Classis** for calendar year 2016:
Rita Klein-Geltink
 - 12.1.2. To serve on the **CMT** for a term of three years:
Alice VanWingerden
 - 12.1.3. To serve as **Church Visitor** on Team A for a term of three years:
Siebert VanHouten
 - 12.1.4. To serve as **Church Visitor** on Team B for a term of three years:
Jeff Vandermeer
 - 12.1.5. To be nominated for consideration by the **Calvin College** Board of Trustees as a nominee for Region 4:
Isaac Hoogland
 - 12.1.6. To be nominated to serve as a director on the Board of Governors of **Redeemer University College:**
Andrew Zomerma

13. BUDGET DISCUSSION

The CIC presented the budget which created some discussion on funds available for the CHHMC. The President of the CIC, Henry Kranenburg explained the reasons why the amount requested by CHHMC had been removed as recorded in the CIC minutes of September 10, 2016. The chair of the CHHMC pointed out that it is their understanding that the money in their fund is legally restricted for church planting. The CIC will need to clarify this understanding, but in the meantime the CHHMC requests \$1.25 per confessing member to give it some certainty that they will have funds available to undertake some initiatives that are not directly related to a church plant.

- 13.1. On motion was duly made, seconded and ratified by vote count, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the budget is amended to add \$1.25 for CHHMC to cover general committee expenses.
- 13.2. Since there are a number of overtures relating to the funding requests for seminary students to be dealt with later in the meeting, the Chair **RULED THAT:** the approval of the overall budget is deferred until after the report of Overture Committee #1 has been dealt with.

14. CHURCH VISITOR GUIDELINE

On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** an addition is made to the guidelines for Church Visitors to ask the churches whether they have an Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Policy in place and, if so, whether they have implemented that policy.

15. APPROVAL OF WORK OF THE CIC

15.1. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the work to date of the Interim Committee and the Stated Clerk as that has been communicated by means of the minutes and written reports submitted to the churches is approved.

15.2. The Chair **RULED THAT:** the ballots for all votes taken at the meeting are to be destroyed.

16. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

16.1. Bethel CRC, Waterdown, had the following request:

Our diaconate team, in coordination with our care workers, would be interested in knowing if any other churches have a best practice document on how best to coordinate the work and communication of an elder/deacon/careworker team.

On recommendation of the Credentials Committee, the Chair **RULED THAT:** the Classis Hamilton Mission Director is instructed to request that the churches submit any resources they may have developed and then circulate those resources among the churches of Classis Hamilton for the mutual benefit of all.

16.2. Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis had the following request:

The Council notes with our full concurrence that Garry Sytsma has expressed his desire to serve on the Denominational Board of Trustees for a second term.

The Credentials Committee noted that the churches of Classis have already concurred so that no action is required on this request.

17. CHURCH VISITORS REPORT

17.1. The Church Visitors presented their Summary Report for the year as found in the Agenda Addendum, pp, 10-15. They observed one trend relating to governance and structural changes. They have some questions as to how these new structures fit within Reformed church polity and the Church Order. In one church a new office has been instituted, known as the Board of Stewards whose members are ordained in the same manner as elders and deacons. The Chair **RULED THAT:** that the CIC provide guidance and or advice as it pertains to church structure and its conformity or non-conformity to the church order.

17.2. Having served their respective terms faithfully, the body by **VOCAL CONSENT:** agrees that the retiring Church Visitors, Jerry Hoytema and Paul VandenBrink are hereby thanked for their valued years of service.

18. OVERTURES COMMITTEE #2

Overtures Committee #2 presented its report in relation to the overture received from Bethel CRC, Waterdown regarding pulpit supply for vacant churches. Overtures Committee #2 presented two recommendations in response:

18.1. On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis set aside ½ hour at its October meeting to discuss the value and concerns around our current system of Classical Appointments.

The discussion took place at this point and demonstrated a relatively wide range of views regarding pulpit supply and the challenges faced by church pastors in meeting the needs of both their own congregations and desires of vacant churches. The reporter of Overture

Committee #2 made notes of the comments made and will present these to the committee charged with providing Classis with further advice.

- 18.2. On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton ask the CMT to form a committee to evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of our current Classical Appointment system and propose a new set of guidelines that both reflects the vision of Classis Hamilton and the diversity of ministry approaches in our churches. The committee ought to take into consideration the concerns raised by the Bethel CRC overture, the results of the Classis discussion and seek further input from the individual churches and pastors of Classis.

19. OVERTURES COMMITTEE #1

Overtures Committee #1 had been tasked with dealing with a number of overtures addressing student funding, an overture to Synod 2016 and a proposal to the Canadian Classes. The Committee presented three recommendations stated as motions below. The first motion generated significant discussion and led to the Overture Committee's motion being tabled for a period of time in favour of the overture recommendation presented by Ancaster CRC as recorded in the Agenda Appendix #8.1, p. 21. In the end, the Ancaster recommendation did not carry and the Overtures Committees recommendation prevailed as follows:

- 19.1. On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton cap potential financial assistance for the 2016/17 academic year at \$60 000.
- 19.2. On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton overtures Synod 2016 as noted in the CHCC recommendation found in Agenda, Appendix #8.3, p. 26.
- 19.3. On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:**
- 19.3.1. Classis Hamilton encourage the CHCC (along with the Clerk) to pursue this discussion with other Canadian Classes and the CRC Ministry in Canada Office in Burlington.
- 19.3.2. The CHCC (together with other classes) does not follow through on a Canadian seminary ranking system, but rather maintains a list of eligible seminaries that the Classes may provide funding for.

20. BUDGET CONTINUED

In light of the decision of Classis with respect to the CHCC funding recommendation for 2016-17 academic year, and the addition of funding for the CHHMC's expenses, the following revised resolution is presented.

On motion was duly made, seconded and carried, **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the classical ministry share budget for 2016 of \$66.88 per active confessing member be approved.

Based on the historical ministry share allocation requests, the internal allocations are now as noted on the next page. Earlier in the afternoon, Classis was reminded that the historical understanding of reserve funds will need to be readdressed in light of current regulatory requirements. A proposed policy will be presented to the CIC by the Finance Committee prior to the current yearend.

CLASSIS HAMILTON MINISTRY SHARES
2016

	Amount			Share			
	2016 Budget	% of Total	2015 Budget	2016 Budget	2015 Budget	2015/16 \$ Incr/(Decr)	2015/16 % Incr/-Decr
Number of Members	3,720		3,671			49	1.33%
Classis Expense Fund	34,296.00	13.8%	43,324.00	9.22	11.80	(2.58)	-21.88%
McMaster Campus Ministry	108,650.00	43.7%	108,614.00	29.21	29.59	(0.38)	-1.28%
Classical Candidacy Committee	60,000.00	24.1%	40,000.00	16.13	10.90	5.23	48.02%
Shalom Manor Chaplaincy	40,381.00	16.2%	40,381.00	10.86	11.00	(0.14)	-1.32%
Diaconal Conference Board	-		-	-	-	-	
Youth Ministry	800.00	0.3%	2,000.00	0.22	0.54	(0.33)	-60.53%
CHHMC Expenses	4,650.00		-	1.25	-	1.25	100.00%
Classis Prayer Co-ordinator	-		-	-	-	-	
Classis Ministry Team	-		-	-	-	-	
	\$ 248,777.00	100.0%	\$ 234,319.00				
	66.88		63.83	66.88	63.83	3.05	4.77%
2015 Special Assessment re: Candidacy Committee						7.32	

21. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN AGENCY REPORTS

No questions were asked so the Chair **RULED THAT:** the written reports from outside agencies are received as information.

22. EVENING SESSION

The evening session was devoted to a CMT presentation called, *Ministry to Seniors*, ably facilitated by Marian Lensink, the Classis Hamilton Missions Director. Delegates from Classis Niagara had been invited to join this session and 20 of their delegates participated. A number of interested guests also participated. One of the concerns that had given rise to this joint session of the two Classes had been the governance and funding of the chaplaincy ministry at Shalom Manor and Gardens. The discussions began by focussing on the broader questions of discerning what the local churches were already doing with respect to ministry to seniors, particularly those in long term care, and moved toward the broader perspective for the communities and the two Classes. Finally the discussion focussed in on the governance and funding question of chaplaincy at Shalom Manor and Gardens. Marian Lensink took the notes recorded at the various tables together with the plenary comments received and is working those into a final report to be shared with the churches of both Classes.

The Chair of Classis Niagara's Executive Committee thanked Classis Hamilton for having invited the Classis Niagara delegates to participate in this important discussion and stated that, in his view, everyone would be going home with some new learning and understanding. He particularly thanked Marian Lensink for her excellent facilitation.

23. CLOSING PRAYER

At 9:05pm, Chair of Classis, Bruce Adema, requested Marian Lensink to close this meeting of Classis Hamilton by giving the closing prayer of thanks to the Lord for a good and fruitful meeting and to declare the meeting adjourned.

24. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Classes Hamilton is to convene on Tuesday, February 23, 2016, venue to be announced later based on the facility needs of the CMT.