



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

Date: February 23, 2016 **Time:** 2:00 PM – 8:50 PM

Venue: Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, 211 Stonehenge Dr., Ancaster L9K 1R4

Officers of Classis: Chair: Rita Klein-Geltink Vice Chair: Everett Vander Horst Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk	Synodical Deputies: James Dekker Ronald Fisher Herman Praamsma
Reporter: Immanuel CRC - Simcoe	Ballot Committee: Members of Meadowlands CRC, Ancaster
Credentials Committee: Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis Immanuel CRC, Simcoe	Overture Committee #1 Hope CRC, Brantford New Street CRC, Burlington Overture Committee #2 Bethel CRC, Waterdown Faith CRC, Burlington

CREENTIALS:

1. The credentials shall be returned to the Stated Clerk by email no later than February 2, 2016 with CC: (copy) emailed to your delegates. Please note that there are additional questions on the credentials. Please fill them in where desired.
2. The credential questions and observations will be forwarded to the Credentials Committee so that they will be able to advise Classis. The Committee will email their report to the Stated Clerk by February 9, 2016. Their report will be emailed by the Stated Clerk to all the delegates.

OVERTURES:

The Overtures Committees will email their reports to the Stated Clerk by February 9, 2016 for distribution to the delegates of Classis as required.

EMAIL ADDRESS:

All communication to the Stated Clerk should go to: clerk@classishamilton.ca.

MINISTRY SESSIONS:

Our Classis Meeting is focusing on the theme: "Ministry in our Canadian Context."
 For the evening session, we'll be led through the Blanket Exercise by Danielle Rowaan of the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue and Christina deVries, member of the Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee. The following statement from Synod 2015 encourages us to engage this exercise:

"In obedience to Hebrews 12: 14 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 to be reconciled, the Blanket Exercise is a proven method to enter into Native Peoples' experience of inequality. The Blanket Exercise helps us live into other people's story no matter where we live. The Lord calls us to walk TOGETHER as we experience the hurtfulness done to people groups even as God in Christ walked amongst us and experienced our pain."

Please encourage your congregation to join us for this informative and transformative evening.

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CLASSIS MEETING DETAILS

2:00 PM	OPENING WORSHIP AND EXERCIZES
OPENING DEVOTIONS AND MINISTRY IN CANADA	
	Ken Benjamins
1. OPENING PRAYER TIME	John Veenstra
2. MINISTRY IN CANADA PRESENTATION (Appendix #1)	Darren Roorda
3. DEVOTIONS AND SHARING OF MINISTRY	Meadowlands Fellowship CRC
4. PRAYER FOR THE HOST CHURCH	John Veenstra
3:45 PM	ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION
5. CALL TO ORDER	Rita Klein-Geltink
5.1. Approval of Agenda	
5.2. Attendance	Dick Kranendonk
6. CMT REPORT (INCLUDING CLASSICAL MINISTRY COMMITTEES) (Appendix #2)	Ken Benjamins
6.1. Chair's Report	
6.2. Dr. Michael Fallon Sabbatical: Dr. Fallon is hoping to have an 8 month sabbatical in the near future. He is hoping to re-write his doctoral thesis so that it can address a broader audience. In light of the fact that Dr. Fallon has been our chaplain for 18 years and has never taken a sabbatical, the Campus Chaplaincy Committee recommends that he be granted his sabbatical, and that the following variations from the established sabbatical policy be permitted:	
1. The length of this sabbatical be 8 months (rather than 4 months).	
2. That 100% of salary be granted to Dr. Fallon during the sabbatical (rather than 80%)	
Note: The actual sabbatical will, in consultation with the Campus Chaplaincy Committee, be approved by the CIC as currently stipulated in the Sabbatical policy.	
RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve a one-time change in the Sabbatical Policy to increase the length of the sabbatical from 4 months to 8 months and to increase the salary during this specific sabbatical from 80% to 100% of regular salary.	
6.3. Response to External Reports (Appendix #7)	
RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the work of the CMT to date as reported to the churches in the Minutes and the attached report.	
7. CLASSIS MINISTRIES REPORTS	
7.1. CMT and Missions Director (Appendix #3.1)	Marian Lensink
7.2. McMaster/Mohawk Chaplain (Appendix #3.2)	Michael Fallon
8. INTERIM COMMITTEE	Henry Kranenburg
8.1. Interim Committee Report (Includes Stated Clerk's report, Appendix #4)	
8.2. RECOMMENDED: That for 2016, Classis elect two minister delegates and alternates in the normal manner as in prior years to fill both the minister and fourth position this year; that one elder and one deacon together with their respective alternate delegates be elected to fill the second and third position.	
8.3. Election of Delegates, Functionaries and Committee Members (Appendix #5)	
8.4. The Rules of Procedure, 5.1.6, currently reads as follows: " <i>Classical delegates who lose wages while representing their council may claim remuneration from Classis at a rate equivalent to that set by the immediate past Synod for synodical delegates on a per diem basis.</i> "	
RECOMMENDED THAT: the following replace the current wording of RoP 5.1.6: " <i>Classical delegates who lose wages while representing their council may by special exception be</i>	

considered for remuneration from Classis, if their delegating churches are not able to cover such expenses, at a rate to be determined from time to time by the CIC.”

- 8.5. Proposal to Appoint a Study Committee Relating to Synod Delegate Selection, post 2016.
RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis appoint an ad hoc committee to recommend guidelines for the selection of officebearers to synod; asking specific input from the churches to guide their work, and to make their recommendations not later than to the October agenda for classis.
- 8.6. Approval of Classical Interim Committee and Stated Clerk Work
RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the work to date of the Interim Committee and of the Stated Clerk in so far as this has been disclosed in minutes previously distributed to the churches and in Appendix #4.
- 8.7. Balloting Committee Report
RECOMMENDED THAT: the ballots be destroyed.

9. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

10. OVERTURES COMMITTEE REPORT

- 10.1. SHALOM CHAPLAINCY FUNDING – Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis (Appendix #6.1) Overture Committee
RECOMMENDED THAT: beginning January 2017, that Classis Hamilton begin reducing their ministry share assessment by 25% per year over the course of four years so that by 2022, Classis Hamilton will no longer collect a classical ministry share for the Shalom Manor chaplaincy.
- 10.2. ARTICLE 23 JOB DESCRIPTION – Bethel CRC, Waterdown (Appendix 6.2)
RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis Hamilton:
1. Acknowledge John Span’s return to Canada and the expiry of the Job Description upon which he had been ordained as a Commissioned Pastor.
 2. Take note of the letter from John Span, addressed to the Council of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, requesting continuation of his ordination as a Commissioned Pastor, with a revised task and calling.
 3. Endorse the attached Job Description as one fitting for a person in the office of Commissioned Pastor.
 4. Allow John Span to be re-ordained into the office of Commissioned Pastor, with the newly approved Job Description. We suggest that since John is well known to Classis Hamilton, and has been previously examined on biblical and theological knowledge and readiness for ministry among Muslim populations, that he be invited to share his vision and expectations of his new role, but not be asked to undergo another formal examination.
- 10.3. SAME SEX MARRIAGE – Hope CRC, Brantford; Calvin CRC, Dundas and Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis (Appendix 6.3)
RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis overture Synod 2016 to amend the CRCNA’s Church Order Article 69c to read as follows:
“Ministers shall not solemnize **nor bless** marriages, **or any other marital union**, which would be in conflict with the Word of God **wherein God instituted marriage to be a monogamous, lifelong, covenant relationship in Christ between one man and one woman, portraying Christ and his church.**” (Amendments made in **bold**)
- 10.4. TIMING TO ENGAGE IN SYNODICAL REPORTS – Hope CRC, Brantford (Appendix 6.4)

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis overture Synod 2016 to instruct the denominational offices to supply Synodical Study Committee reports no later than September 15.

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

DINNER

11. **BLANKET EXERCIZE:**

Danielle Rowaan and Christina deVries

8:45 PM Closing Devotions

Rita Klein-Geltink

Classis Handout for 2015-16

Dear Classis Participants,

In my time spent with you at Classis I wish to discuss some of the significant resources, tools and responses that we have been working on in the Canadian Ministry Office. Below you will find links to some of those resources which may also be available in print form at the Classis meeting itself.

As well, you will find a handout about the Emerging Ministry Plan that we will be working through at the Classis meeting in small groups. We also hope that the conversation about the CRC Ministry Plan makes it into your churches. More to come at the meeting...

Contents:

1. Ministry Plan Handout Attached (to be used in conjunction with local churches)
2. Web link to /Canada page: <http://www.crcna.org/Canada>
3. Refugee Response Link (resources and video): <http://www.crcna.org/Canada/social-justice-canada/refugee-issues>
4. Canadian Ministry Directory:
http://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/ministry_in_canada_directory_-_august_2015.pdf
5. Other CDN projects:
 - a. Youth Ministry Pilot Project
 - b. Denominational service practices with Classis Niagara Pilot
 - c. Preparing for Synod 2015: Doctrine of Discovery and the Blanket Exercise

THE EMERGING MINISTRY PLAN OF THE CRCNA: Possibilities for Congregations

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Desired future #1: Congregations of the Christian Reformed Church participate with each other and with their local communities to discern where the Spirit is working and to bear witness to Christ's presence.

Strategic Focus 1.1 Congregations discover and discern how God is at work in their churches and communities, bringing renewal and transformation.
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Step 1.1.1: Congregations assess their community assets, ministries and opportunities.
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Step 1.1.2: Congregations design experiments and develop plans and strategies that will enhance ministry contextualization and renewal.

Strategic Focus 1.2: Ministry leaders,¹ both ordained and lay, discover and discern how God is at work in their communities, resulting in the birth of new churches and discipling communities.

Step 1.2.1: Ministry leaders and groups assess the assets, ministries and opportunities in their local communities.

Step 1.2.2: Leaders emerge from within local contexts to start new churches and discipling communities.

DISCIPLESHIP

Desired future #2: Congregations of the Christian Reformed Church are vibrant, grace-shaped communities engaged in lifelong discipleship with those of all generations.

Strategic Focus 2.1: Congregations are shaped by grace.
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Step 2.1.1: Congregations affirm that all that they are and do flows from grace, which defines every dimension of congregational life: culture, worship, discipleship, the ways ministry is structured, pastoral care, the ways power is exercised, etc.
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Strategic Focus 2.2: Congregations are places where all generations find spiritual homes and grow in belonging and maturity.

Step 2.2.1: Congregations sign up for the project and use its tools to assess, discern and strengthen practices whose fruit is belonging and maturity.
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Strategic Focus 2.3: Congregations discern God's call within their unique identities and contexts, giving rise to strong and creative discipleship practices and a broad range of resources.

Step 2.3.1: Congregations become aware of the faith formation resources available through a combination of regional workshops, interactions with regional personnel and denomination-wide communication and make discerning use of these resources.

Strategic Focus 2.4: Congregations engage children, youth and young adults in the life of the
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¹ Ministry leaders, ordained and lay, may be serving in existing congregations or connected in clusters, or may be individuals who have a very clear call to planting.

church.
Step 2.4.1: Congregational leaders engaged in youth and young adult ministry assist in developing and implementing an infrastructure to support these areas of ministry.
2.4.2: Five congregations in West Michigan participate in a joint CRC/RCA project called “Generation Spark,” whose purpose is to partner young adults with seniors so that together they provide focused ministry leadership.
2.4.3: NOTE: This step will not immediately impact congregations, as young adult ministry is complex and requires discernment work to be undertaken first.

Strategic Focus 2.5: Congregations are characterized by vibrant worship that engages people of all ages.
Step 2.5.1 Congregations have opportunities to grow, relearn preaching, incorporate testimony, re-imagine/retool the use of creeds and confessions, and teach fundamentals of worship.

LEADERSHIP

***Desired future #3:** Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church are places where clergy and lay leaders are developed, trained and empowered to lead effectively in today’s diverse and challenging contexts.*

Strategic Focus 3.1 Congregations and ministries discover, understand and respond to leadership needs in ways that meet their local contexts.
Step 3.1.1: Congregations identify and understand their need for various leadership skill sets.
Step 3.1.2: Congregations identify opportunities for development of current leaders, as well as new leadership positions unique to their context, and prepare specific implementation plans.
Step 3.1.3: Congregations enable individuals to discern God’s call to leadership in ways that honor their diversity (e.g., ability, multicultural-racial, socio-economic status, language, age, and gender) and include both ordained and lay leaders in ministry service.

Strategic Focus 3.2 Congregations and ministries are characterized by Spirit-filled leaders who have the skills to minister in their local contexts, both internal and external.
Step 3.2.1 PASTORS: (A) Congregations allow and encourage pastors to continue to develop holistically as leaders, always understood and expressed in contextual ways. (B) Congregations, in consultation with their pastors, evaluate existing skills and design or create annual development plans for their ordained clergy.
Step 3.2.2 LAY LEADERS: (A) Congregations encourage and empower lay leaders to develop holistically as leaders, always understood and expressed in contextual ways. (B) Congregations evaluate existing skills and design or create a development plan for their lay leaders. This development plan is evaluated and augmented annually, based on individual needs.
Step 3.2.3: Council members are equipped to evaluate leaders.

Strategic Focus 3.3 Congregations and ministries participate in leadership development efforts in mutually beneficial partnership throughout the world.
Step 3.3.1: Congregations identify and participate in global leadership development efforts as appropriate in their

contexts (e.g., local university chaplaincy, mission support of global Christian universities, volunteer faculty assignments, etc.)

Step 3.3.2: Congregations identify and participate in global leadership developments appropriate for the mission efforts they support.

Strategic Focus 3.4 Congregations and ministries create opportunities for women, racial-ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and young adults to discover and develop their leadership gifts and callings.

Step 3.4.1: Congregations develop, implement and share tools and programs especially for women and young adults, as well as tools and programs aimed at identifying and developing leadership gifts.

3.4.2: Congregations select and implement tools and programs especially for members of racial-ethnic minorities and those with disabilities, as well as tools and programs aimed at identifying and developing leadership gifts.

IDENTITY

Desired future # 4: Congregations and members of the Christian Reformed Church understand deeply, embrace fully and express freely what it means to be a part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Strategic Focus 4.1: Congregations and ministries develop ways to deepen our understanding of our shared identity as the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Step 4.1.1: Delegates to synod have the opportunity to engage in various learning sessions while at synod.

Step 4.1.2: Congregations are offered materials that build a sense of Christian Reformed identity in conjunction with specific events.

Strategic Focus 4.2: Congregations, ministries and members of the Christian Reformed Church understand, embrace and express our identity as part of Christ's church worldwide.

Step 4.2.1: Congregations and members express in clear and simple language what it means to be a part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America in the 21st century.²

Step 4.2.2: Congregations and colleges are encouraged to select a day in an identified span of time as part of a denomination-wide Day of Service and to identify community partners as well as intended participants (youth, intergenerational, etc.).

(Note: This seeks the same kind of unifying effect as the Sea to Sea rides.)

Step 4.2.3: Congregations send leaders, ordained and lay, to various gatherings that provide learning, sharing, and celebrating opportunities geared to a variety of interests and levels.

² This process should include within its scope a consideration of accompanying visual representations and use of the words *binational* and *international*.

Strategic Focus 4.3: Congregations, ministries and members understand, embrace and express our identity as a diverse church gathered from "every nation, tribe and tongue."

Step 4.3.1: Congregations that are not yet or only emerging as multi-ethnic churches use training and resources to further their journey toward becoming multi-ethnic.

Step 4.3.2: Ethnic minority members of the CRCNA use collaborative tables and dedicated personnel to provide continuous feedback on progress for all levels of the denomination.

Step 4.3.3: Ecumenical relationships, when appropriate, give rise to the presence of the CRCNA (or a new category of CRC-partner denominations) in countries other than Canada and the U.S.

Strategic Focus 4.4: Congregations, ministries and members respond to the call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly" with God.

Step 4.4.1: Congregations identify and set goals to address social justice issues that are affecting their local context and one affecting global partnerships.

Step 4.4.2: Congregations engage in active citizenship that encourages them and their leaders to be accountable for developing and implementing just policies.

COLLABORATION

Desired future #5: Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church interact together in ways that are effective, efficient, responsive, cross-culturally competent, easily accessible and sustainable.

Strategic Focus 5.1: Congregations and ministries of the Christian Reformed Church develop new ways of working together at all levels – local, regional, national and binational – that are effective, efficient, responsive, clear and sustainable.

Step 5.1.1: Congregations and classes participate in pilot projects so that together we learn how new delivery systems can emerge in ways that meet the goals of this strategic focus (efficiency, responsiveness, etc.).

Step 5.1.2: Congregations participate in healthy classes that serve church polity purposes as well as provide mutual support, continuing education, strengthening opportunities for established churches, and an impetus for new church development.

Strategic Focus 5.2: The Christian Reformed Church develops new ways of connecting congregations with the denominational services they need, as well as increased opportunities to participate in mission outreach, in a way that generates greater efficiency, accessibility, cross-cultural competence, clarity and sustainability.

Step 5.2.1: Congregations make use of channels for communication with denominational services that (a) reflect and make accessible the five-stream metaphor and (b) recognize that congregations are led by paid staff and volunteers as well as pastors and office-bearers.

Step 5.2.2: Congregations participate in the funding of denominational services and shared ministries in ways that are sustainable and that demonstrate broad ownership and alignment with congregational priorities.

APPENDIX #2 – CLASSIS MINISTRIES TEAM REPORTS

Classis Ministry Team Report (CMT)

Classis Ministry Team Report (CMT)—January 2016 Report

The CMT's primary role is to provide leadership and direction for all the activities of Classis. Since last summer we have had several "visioning" opportunities to see how we can do our work as Classis in a unified way. At our last CMT meeting we approved a working document to help us in that. It was agreed that we need more long-term planning—working along the lines of an "annual theme." An annual theme would help focus all of our ministries and meetings. Different classical events—such as education opportunities, round table discussions and worship events—distinguishable from regular classis meetings—could then also be planned in line with the theme. The CMT is also discerning how we can offer other events that support local church ministries—such as leadership and small group development. Exploring this will help give focus to the fine work of our Ministries Director, Marian Lensink.

The CMT also oversees the various ministries of Classis—such as Home Missions, Campus Ministry, Youth, Candidacy Committee, and the Safe Church Team. Marian provides an overview of some of these ministries in a different report in the agenda.

Regarding Campus Ministry: Michael Fallon is hoping to have an 8 month sabbatical in the near future. He is hoping to re-write his doctoral thesis so that it can address a broader audience. Campus ministry is recommending that he be granted his sabbatical. Chaplaincy funds will be able to cover an interim chaplain. In November the Kuyper Lecture Series was privileged to have Dr. Michael LeRoy, President of Calvin College, as its guest speaker. A new initiative was offered in the fall: "The All Ontario CRC—MA University Student Summit." It was a blessing for many CRC students across Ontario.

Originally it was planned that the February meeting of Classis would be a shorter meeting. But in light of overtures and other things—it was decided to start Classis in the afternoon. The theme for the day is "Ministry in our Canadian Context."

Ken Benjamins
Chair of the CMT

Ken Benjamins
Chair of the CMT

APPENDIX #2.1 – CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORT

McMaster University and Mohawk College Committee Report

Greetings to the Representatives of Classis Hamilton from your Campus Ministry Committee.

It has been a busy semester for your campus ministry. To see some of our activities please check out Michael's report. From the committee's perspective we were particularly excited about a new initiative our ministry organized in the fall. This was the first, all 'Ontario CRC-MA University Student Summit.' This event was not just a benefit to our students at McMaster and Mohawk but we also blessed University students connected to our denomination across Ontario. We were also pleased to see so many of our denominational agencies participate in the Summit.

Our committee would like to thank Chris Schoon for his service to classis and the committee. Chris' term has ended which means we are looking for a minister to replace him. Currently our committee members are: faculty representatives are Dr. Daniel Machiela McMaster University and Professor Bob Brown, Mohawk College; Alumni Representatives, Lisa Nightingale and Justin Adema; and myself as a member of the clergy. We have several student representatives that take turns attending the meetings.

Last September our Chaplain Dr. Fallon submitted a proposal for a Sabbatical for the upcoming fall and winter semesters. His proposal is that he would like to revisit and rewrite his Doctoral thesis in the hope that he can find a publisher. His thesis "People of the Covenant: Dutch Reformed Immigration into Canada after World War II," is essentially our story. Dr. Fallon has served in his position for 18 years without taking a Sabbatical. We recommend that his request be granted and that he be given this time to step away from his position to focus on what he considers some unfinished business. We are also recommending he take the time to rest and refresh himself. We further recommend that he receive his full salary and benefits during his sabbatical.

One other factor is part of our consideration here. In 2018 we will be celebrating our 50th year of our Classis being in covenant with McMaster University. Along with the University of Toronto which began in the same year, our relationship with McMaster is the longest existing covenant our denomination has with an institution of higher learning.

Due to Dr. Fallon's gift for earning grants and our stewardly money management, we are in a position to cover his sabbatical with our chaplaincy funds. We have several names we are discussing to cover his sabbatical at this point.

Thank You.



Rev. Bruce Adema
Chair of Classis Hamilton Campus Ministry Committee

APPENDIX #3 – CLASSIS STAFF REPORTS

APPENDIX #3.1 – MISSION DIRECTOR REPORT

Mission Director Report – February 2016

Over the last few months my work could be described as having ‘many irons in the fire’. The list is varied; I’ll try to be brief.

The **Safe Church Team** is gaining some momentum. We are still searching for a co-chair to work with Jessica Koning of Dundas Calvin CRC. We’ve decided to increase our meetings (from 2 to 3/year), by adding a winter meeting, which occurred this past week. Each meeting involves a segment of training as well as opportunity for members to share their challenges. It is awesome to see the mutual learning that occurs, and to watch members help each other find solutions to their questions. At our last meeting, we were delighted to have 13 people in attendance, and we had some great conversation around safe church policies.

The Safe Church team is encouraging people to attend a **Safe Church Conference at Waterloo CRC, on Saturday, March 5th**. This conference is of particular interest to youth ministry staff as well.

In addition, on **Thursday, April 7th**, the **Safe Church Team will have a guest speaker to address the issue of Child Abuse**, including various types of abuse, how to recognize signs of abuse, what to do if abuse is suspected, etc. Those who work with children and youth are encouraged to attend as well.

The **Home Missions Committee** at its last meeting had a presentation from John Bouwers on behalf of Home Missions, to talk about trends in church planting. With finances becoming more of a challenge, church plants will require greater partnership at a local level, including shared leadership, accountability and funding. In addition, John encouraged the committee to identify missional activity that is already occurring, and find ways to support what God is doing in our Classis. I’m working to gather these stories, so please let me know - where is God stirring in your churches?

The **Youth Ministry Team** continues to work to support the Youth Leaders of our churches. Although we had to cancel our plans for a leadership breakfast due to low numbers, there is a desire to support youth leaders through a coaching relationship. Smaller format breakfast meetings are being planned with a couple of churches at a time, with a view to help leaders through challenges. The youth team is also planning an evening workshop, in conjunction with Meadowlands Fellowship. Ron deVries of Faith Formation Ministries (CRCNA), will be coming on Jan. 24th, at 6:00pm to Meadowlands Fellowship CRC to lead a workshop on the topic of passing on our faith to the next generation. This will be of particular interest to parents of teens and pre-teens, as well as youth staff and volunteers.

John Veenstra, **Classis Prayer Coordinator**, continues to work to connect with churches and prayer coordinators, with focused prayer meetings occurring 3x year. The next prayer gathering is planned for Thurs. Jan. 28, 2016, 7:30pm – 9:00pm at Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton. Everyone is welcome to come and learn, and pray!

Following the October Classis Meeting, and its discussion around **Ministry to Seniors**, I’ve been working to plan a workshop on how to minister to Seniors in our churches and our neighbourhoods. The details are just being finalized as this report is being written; more details to follow.

A number of churches are continuing to develop their **small group ministry**. I’ve been working to gather the coordinators of these church teams. We meet together for mutual learning and peer coaching around ways to grow and develop a healthy and missional small group ministry in our churches. If you or your church would like to be involved in this developing cohort, please contact me.

Over the past few months, I've been working to update our **website**, www.classishamilton.ca. All the events that have been discussed above can be found on the website, and we will work to keep the site current.

It continues to be my pleasure to work with all of you in the Classis, in a variety of ways. Please contact me if you have comments or questions.

Marian Lensink, Mission Director
marian@classishamilton.ca

**McMaster University and Mohawk College CRC Campus Ministry
Chaplain's Report January 2016**

Blessings to you and all the members of Classis Hamilton. I hope this new year will be a time of personal and professional growth for you and the members of your churches. In my initial Fall report, I discussed one of the key philosophical tools we use to help students connect with God on campus. In this report, I would just like to note some of last semesters' activities where we employed that approach.

“All Ontario University Summit: Called to God and His Kingdom.”

Let me start with a brand new initiative. It had long been a dream of mine to bring together the students from all of our CRC Campus Ministries in Ontario. This past November we did that. We hosted the very first CRC-MA `University Student Summit' at Mount Mary Retreat Centre in Ancaster. Approximately 80 students attended. The 30 students that came from our Classis Hamilton, McMaster and Mohawk Fellowships served as gracious hosts. The feedback we received from our student attendees was very positive and it has been universally recommended that this become a regular event. In addition, to the students and CRC Chaplains from the University of Guelph, Queen's University, Western University, Brock University, York University, Wilfred Laurier University and Waterloo we also had representatives from several of our denominational agencies (Home Missions, World Missions, Disability Concerns, World Renew) speak to the students at our `Table Talk Sessions.'

“Abraham Kuyper Speaker': Dr. Michael K. Le Roy President of Calvin College.”

This year our Kuyper speak was President Michael K. LeRoy of Calvin College. Dr. Le Roy gave two excellent talks during his time at McMaster. The first at the Kuyper Banquet and the second at the public Kuyper address to the University. I also arranged for Dr. Le Roy to have a private meeting with Dr. Patrick Deane the President of McMaster University and lunch with Sean Van Koughnett the Dean of Students at McMaster. These meetings were informative, congenial gatherings served to strengthen ties between McMaster University and Calvin College.

“All Things' & `Solid Rock Mountaineers' CRC Fellowships”

Our two Fellowships – the educational and social cornerstones of our ministry had good attendance last semester. We are please to note that we have added Dr. Paul Heerema (Professor in the Engineering department) to our Speaker's Bureau.

The Mohawk Fellowship has been entirely rebuilt this year via a consistent `outreach effort' to that College. The vast majority of the students who attend SRM are not CRC. Of the CRC students who attend, most are actually from other classis. If you know any students who attend Mohawk College, please make them aware of our existence or tell us, and we will be happy to contact them. It is helpful to have a core of CRC students involved in the fellowship. In addition to bringing awareness of our ministry at Mohawk to students in our classis, we are also in need of host support for our “All Things – Fellowship” at McMaster. If you know anyone or have any small groups that have a heart for University students and might be interested in being involved in this ministry, please share our need.

Student Leaders

This year we are blessed with a team of 12 gifted and dedicated Student Leaders. I invest in them and as part of a two prong strategy of leadership development, they help me run our various small groups and sports teams. This year 6 of those leaders will be graduating, so during this winter semester they will be working on and presenting their exit talks (a Reformed understanding of their discipline) at their particular fellowship. Whereas all are involved in Kingdom building, one of my leaders will be starting at Calvin Seminary next year. Currently we have one student graduating from Calvin seminary and one in their first year.

Worship, Small Groups and Sports Teams - Gathering and Social Events and Hikes

In addition to our main large fellowships we have several small groups and sports teams that serve in more particular ways for students to deepen their faith and develop relationships in more intimate settings. These small groups are run by the above mentioned student leaders.

One of these groups is our Worship Team. We have been blessed with a number of gifted musicians both at Mac and Mohawk. Back in the summer they led worship at the CRC-MA Bi-National Conference in Michigan. Last semester they led the worship at our Student Summit and we had one worship night a month here at McMaster.

It is also exciting to see how the Men's and Women's group leaders are equipping the students who attend the groups to lead Bibles studies/ discussions ... Some of our other activities we had this past semester are our 'Welcome BBQ,' 'Christmas Social,' 'Dundas Valley Fall Hike,' 'Spenser's Gorge Colours Hike' these are some of our key community gatherings that took place this past semester. We thank God for these opportunities to connect with students, staff and faculty.

Living Rock and World Renew

This past semester we ran our annual "Hoodie Drive – All Things & Solid Rock for Living Rock" a mission in down town Hamilton that that works with street engaged youth. This coming semester we are looking at doing a fundraiser for World Renew. Last year on International Women's Day we raised enough funds to put 8 women in Uganda into the Bee Keeping business.

Prayer Concerns: Please pray for McMaster University and Mohawk College and all the students, staff and faculty who attend these fine institutions. Pray especially for those of us sharing the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ on these campuses. Pray that we may do this in a way that has integrity and glorifies God.

Thank you.

Michael Fallon

fallonm@mcmaster.ca or (289) 660-6134

APPENDIX #4 – CIC AND STATED CLERK’S REPORT

Following is a list of the significant items of interest from the CIC minutes since the last Classis meeting:

1. *Shalom Chaplaincy Reserve*

The CIC received notification that the reserve as shown on the Financial Statement of Classis Niagara with respect to the Shalom Manor Chaplaincy stood at \$24,831.00 as of December 31, 2014. This information will be considered by the CIC as part of the budget planning process.

2. *Change of Director and Office*

In light of the resignation of one of the directors, the CIC appointed Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo as director in his place and the BoD appointed her as secretary-treasurer.

3. *Reasonable Reserve Funds*

The BoD recommended and the CIC accepted that Classis normally maintain reserves in the General Fund up to but not exceeding 30% of the overall Budget on the accrual basis of accounting. Specifically designated funds such as for future church plants, the McMaster Mohawk Campus Chaplaincy or Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee are not part of the General Funds if they are externally restricted.

4. *Wage Loss Replacement*

An amendment is proposed for classis to the Rules of Procedure as follows: “Classical delegates who lose wages while representing their council may by special exception be considered for remuneration from Classis, if their delegating churches are not able to cover such expenses, at a rate to be determined from time to time by the CIC.” Prior to this wage loss reimbursement was based on the rate annually set by Synod. However, Synod had abolished its policy a number of years ago.

5. *Ministry Committee Budget Requests*

CMT was asked to develop a strategy for a budget approval process for ministry committee budget requests to ensure that the CIC can properly advise Classis that budget requests have been properly vetted and how the anticipated expenses may be met.

6. *Guidance for Local Church Governance*

At the October Classis meeting, the following was assigned to CIC: “That CIC provide guidance and or advice as it pertains to church structure and its conformity or non-conformity to the church order.” The CIC responds that the governance presentation by Ralph Luimes made during the afternoon session of Classis Hamilton on October 27, 2015 and shared electronically with all delegates and churches serves as its response.

7. *Election of New CIC Member*

Due to the resignation of John Huyser there is a vacancy on the CIC and the BoD. Classis elects persons to the CIC and the CIC elects persons from among its members to serve on the BoD. Because of the vacancy, the CIC presents the nomination(s) to be elected at this classis meeting.

8. *Website*

The new website is now fully operational. From here on all documents to be distributed to the churches will be posted on the website so that churches and delegates can download what they wish.

9. Candidacy Committee Request: CHCC requested the approval of the CIC to amend the CTS student funding overture to Synod 2016 approved by Classis at its October meeting. The CHCC considers this request editorial in nature to change the negative to the positive. The relevant sentences are as follows:

While Synod has affirmed the work of the denominational Candidacy Committee and the desire to make room for students trained at seminaries other than CTS, concerns persist that it is critical to the nature and character of the CRCNA that our leaders are equipped with a Reformed worldview and that ~~those educated outside of CTS are not being equipped within a Reformed worldview and with the necessary theological framework for ministry in the CRCNA the necessary theological framework for ministry in the CRCNA which non-Reformed schools are not necessarily providing~~. We have come to believe that the probability of such a worldview is much higher from CTS students and we are concerned about non CTS trained leaders.

CIC approved the request since it is only an editorial change, CIC.

10. Classical Counselor: Some churches calling a second pastor may not be aware of the Church Order procedure outlined in Article 42-c with regard to the need to request classis for the appointment of a classical counselor to be engaged in the calling process from the beginning of that process. Churches are reminded of this requirement.

Dick L. Kranendonk – Stated Clerk,
clerk@lassishamilton.ca

APPENDIX #5 – DELEGATE, FUNCTIONARY AND COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The following are openings and nominated as of September 14, 2015. Nominations will be accepted up to and including at the Classis meeting itself.

SYNODICAL DEPUTIES

Primary:

Aleternate:

CAMPUS MINISTRY COMMITTEE (minister required)

Anthony Elenbaas

CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE

To complete the term of a vacancy

CLASSIS MINISTRY TEAM

Mark Vandervliet (second term)

Tammy Heidbuurt (first term)

CLASSIS HAMILTON HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Everett Vander Horst (second term)

YOUTH MINISTRIES TEAM

Jeff Klingenberg (second term)

CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

Chris Schoon (second term)

DELEGATES TO SYNOD

Minister _____

Elder _____

Deacon _____

History of Synod Delegates:

YEAR	MINISTER	ELDER
2015	Rita Klein-Geltink Henry P. Kranenburg	Martin W. Tigchelaar Fred Reitsma
2014	M. Jeffery Klingenberg Kenneth F. Benjamins	Adrian Guldemond Andy Miedema
2013	Kevin P. DeRaaf Henry P. Kranenburg	Jacob Ellens George Elzinga
2012	Paul Vanden Brink Kenneth F. Benjamins	Mark Vandervliet Henry Brouwer
2011	Zachary J. Olson M. Jeffery Klingenberg	Clarence E. Batterink Judy Cook
2010	Stephen F. Terpstra Kevin P. DeRaaf	Mark Vandervliet Timothy Sheridan
2009	Martin Dam William C. Veenstra	Neil Paul Adrian T. VanderVaart
2008	Kenneth F. Benjamins James E. Pot	Fred Reitsma John W.J. Glasbergen
2007	Jeffrey P. Janssen Shawn R. Brix	Al Martens George Bergshoeff
2006	John H. Bouwers William C.Veenstra	Dick L. Kranendonk George Elzinga

APPENDIX #6 – OVERTURES

APPENDIX #6.1 – SHALOM CHAPLAINCY FUNDING FROM EBENEZER CRC, JARVIS

To: Clerk of Classis Hamilton

From: The Council of Jarvis-Ebenezer CRC

Date: April 10, 2015

Re: Overture Regarding Classical Ministry Share for Shalom Manor Chaplaincy

Background: Classis Hamilton has long been a faithful supporter of Shalom Manor since the first formation committee originated back in 1964. And since 1986, Classis Hamilton and Classis Niagara have jointly supported the chaplaincy with classical ministry shares starting with its first chaplain, Rev. De Bruyne. Since 1992, the chaplaincy was upgraded to a full time position to best meet the spiritual needs of Shalom Manor residents and staff. The 2015 total overall cost of the chaplaincy at Shalom is estimated to be \$102,711.

The current ministry share is determined on a per member basis by dividing the cost to be covered less estimated collections and a private donation divided by the sum total of professing members from Classis Niagara and Classis Hamilton. For 2015, with a share of \$11 per member: Classis Hamilton contributes \$40,381 and Classis Niagara \$30,393. Additional offerings and donations from residents and a \$5000 pledge from a non-CRC church are expected to bring in \$31,937 to cover the remaining chaplaincy costs for 2015.

Changing Situation: The almost 30 year history of Shalom's chaplaincy support is worthy of celebration. And there is little doubt as to its continuing importance. This history reflects our faithfulness to our elderly members as well as our obedience to God's Word. Scripture is quite clear that the care of not just the orphan but the widow is an important piece of social justice responsibilities in God's eyes.

So the necessity of care is still present; however, multiple changes have taken place over the years where we find that more and more Classis Hamilton members no longer consider Shalom Manor their first choice. Since 1983 a large number of senior residents from Jarvis Ebenezer and Immanuel Simcoe, and Hagersville Community have chosen to reside at Parkview Meadows. Other churches can cite their own examples as well. In order to be true to Scripture, serious consideration must be given to be sure that for each church-our senior members are receiving the necessary support and spiritual care at their respective facility. Partially due to the large number of seniors requiring additional care as well as increasing hospital visits, Ebenezer changed its pastorate model to a co-pastorate in the Fall of 2010.

This population shift of Classis Hamilton residents away from Shalom is further complicated when you consider that Ontario's Community Care Access Centre now regulates the movement of senior residents into long term care. While there are still some admission honor agreements in place with the province, the greater likelihood is that based on the geographics, CCAC is more likely to place Niagara area residents in need of urgent placement into a local facility such as Shalom thereby reducing the number of beds available to Classis Hamilton area residents and church members. However, it should be noted that Classis Hamilton continues to pay the larger portion of the ministry share based on classis numbers. Classis Hamilton has 3671 while Classis Niagara has 2763. A growing number of churches within our classis have no members at Shalom Manor nor do they expect to in the future. For 2015, Classis Hamilton has only 14 members at Shalom Manor according to the 2015 Spiral Directory.

Overture: The Council of Jarvis Ebenezer CRC by means of this overture propose a long-term wind down of the ministry share for the chaplaincy itself. **We propose that beginning January 2017, that Classis Hamilton begin**

reducing their ministry share assessment by 25% per year over the course of four years so that by 2022, Classis Hamilton will no longer collect a classical ministry share for the Shalom Manor chaplaincy.

Grounds:

- 1) In order to discuss funding changes, an overture is required per the CIC. The April 2, 2015 minutes of the Classis Hamilton CIC indicated that the CIC would not be offering future funding recommendations for Shalom Manor. In the minutes - (It was noted that the churches now have the information pertaining to the ministry, and so, may bring forward an overture to request changes to the formula if they so desire.) Hence an overture is necessary.
- 2) The movement of seniors from our own churches into more localized long-term care facilities such as Parkview Meadows will continue. As Scripture warrants continuing care for our seniors, our support dollars for their spiritual care will in essence need to follow our seniors to remain obedient. We anticipate this need will only grow as the baby boomers in our church retire and eventually require long-term care.
- 3) This proposal only looks to eliminate over 5 years, the classical ministry share portion of the chaplaincy—not the ending of the chaplaincy program itself. Each church congregation can still prayerfully determine for themselves whether to provide chaplaincy funding to Shalom Manor through their deacons via offerings if they feel led to do so.
- 4) The 18 months offered in this proposal before the reductions begin should provide more than sufficient time to find replacement dollars and assess future commitments on a church by church basis. The subcommittee made up of Classis Niagara, Classis Hamilton, and the Shalom Board have already offered some very helpful alternatives for consideration including formalizing a weekly budget envelopes for Shalom residents regardless of denomination at worship services as well as contacting other non-CRC churches whose members are represented at Shalom Manor.
- 5) A growing number of Classis Hamilton churches such as Ebenezer have no residents in the population of Shalom Manor, nor do we expect to in the future.
- 6) While not all Shalom residents receiving spiritual care can support the chaplains, many could consider commitments towards covering the cost. In fact, many other Christian Homes are self-sufficient. 306 CRC Holland Christian Home residents in Brampton contribute 100% of the cost for three ministers totalling \$280,000. HCH has approximately 800 residents. Parkview Meadows Chaplaincy Cost is covered through their general fund as well as Ontario provincial granting assistance totalling roughly \$40,000 for the part-time care of 64 residents in Gardenview. This cost is further minimized by utilizing the local ministerials to offer two services per week as well as on-call back-up support by Pastor John Huyser at Ebenezer and Pastor Richard Moore from St. Paul's Anglican in Jarvis.

Related Communication from SMCC:

**Proposal to Classis Niagara and Classis Hamilton
Approved by Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee – December 9, 2015**

Foreword:

The context in which the ministry of our Chaplain at Shalom Manor and Gardens is changing. It is because of this context within Shalom as well as changes in the broader context that the Shalom Manor Chaplaincy committee seeks to broaden our governance and the funding model for the Chaplaincy ministry.

Proposal:

The Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee (SMCC) requests the approval of a join resolution of both Classis Hamilton and Classis Niagara at their respective meetings in February 2016. The SMCC will present a proposal, to both Classis, for a new model of governance and financial support for the Chaplaincy ministry at Shalom Manor & Gardens. This new model will, at minimum:

1. Broaden the governance of the Chaplaincy ministry to include all interested Reformed denominations and congregations residing in the Hamilton and Niagara regions;
2. Broaden the financial support to include all Reformed denominations and congregations who participate in the governance of the Chaplaincy ministry;
3. An interim report of the work of the SMCC will be made available to both Classes in time for the October 2016 meetings with final recommendations to be received in time for the February 2017 meetings.
4. We ask each classis to table and/or hold off implementation of any overtures dealing with the current funding model pending the final report of the SMCC on this matter.

Related Communication from Classis Niagara

January 7th, 2016

Following the lead of Report of Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Review Committee of August 22nd, 2014, Classis Niagara mandates the Shalom Manor & Gardens Chaplaincy Committee to:

- 1) Present an expanded governance structure to include other interested Reformed Denominations and interested congregations.
- 2) Present an expanded financing model to include those Reformed Denominations and congregations that are participating in the governance of the ministry.

Classis Niagara will vote on this motion at the February 2016 meeting of Classis and is asking Classis Hamilton to do the same. Even though the Report of Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Review Committee of August 22nd states on page #1 "The committee is effectively under the "direction, control and supervision" of Classis Niagara since the Chaplain is legally under its employ, Classis Hamilton still has two representatives on the present governing structure. (The Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Committee is served by 2 members of Classis Niagara, 2 members of Classis Hamilton and 2 Members of the Shalom Board.)

The present ministry context of our Chaplain at Shalom Manor & Gardens has been changing over the years. Years ago when the ministry began, most of the residents at Shalom Manor were members of the Christian Reformed Church. This is no longer true. At one point in 2014 46% of the residents were members of the Christian Reformed Church. Most of the remaining residents were members of other than CRC Reformed denominations. Some were from mainline denominations and some residents had no church affiliation. The Shalom & Gardens Chaplaincy Committee believes that it is good for the ministry and right for the residents of Shalom Manor & Gardens to expand the governance of and the funding for the Chaplaincy ministry to reflect the present context.

If this proposal is approved by both Classes, the Shalom Chaplaincy Committee will provide both Classes with an interim report at the fall 2016 meeting of Classis and a final proposal for the winter meeting of 2017. With this proposal being put forward we are asking Classes to put on hold any overtures that are dealing with the funding of the Shalom Chaplaincy ministry that are before classis at this time.

Serving Christ Together,
Richard Loerop
Clerk of Classis Niagara

APPENDIX #6.2 – ARTICLE 23 MATERIALS FROM BETHEL CRC, WATERDOWN

Waterdown,
December 14/2015

To the Bethel CRC Council:
via Peg VanderMeer, Clerk:

Greetings in Christ:

Now that we have returned from Egypt where we were able to use the benefits of being a commissioned pastor to the upbuilding of the Egyptian church we have recently finished our deputation circuit. We visited 14 Christian Reformed churches in about a 1 hour radius from Waterdown. During this time we shared about the work in Egypt, and in my role as a commissioned pastor, I was able to preach, bring God's greetings and blessing and administer the Lord's Supper. Sometimes this was in the form of pulpit supply for vacant churches, and sometimes the local pastor was present. At one venue when I preached, Rev. Koops the Synodical Deputy was present, and at another the head of Christian Reformed World Missions, Steve Kabetu was present. All in all the ordination status has been a great benefit. Thank you kindly, Bethel Council for holding my ordination credentials.

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully request the Bethel Council to petition Classis Hamilton at its early winter 2016 meeting to have my status of commissioned pastor continue. My job title has changed from being the Vice-Principal of the Alexandria School of Theology in Cairo, to being a Global mission capacity builder while we are in Canada.

[*see job description approved by Interserve Canada and Christian Reformed World Missions, Canada.]

The grounds for asking for the continued status are as follows:

1. We firmly believe that the principal vehicle for advancing the Great Commission is the Church. We believe that our knowledge and experience in missions can be of great benefit to the CRCNA. We have experienced the fact that preaching is an excellent vehicle to teach and inspire local congregations both for their local outreach and their global outreach. Thus further invitations for preaching would benefit from this ordination status.
2. In the case where we visit a congregation that is vacant and it is a Lord's Supper Sunday, this ordination status would permit me to administer the Lord's Supper.
3. In meeting with clergy of other denominations, and even religious leaders of other faiths, the ordination status shows that my giftings have been scrutinized and approved by a governing body---in this case the CRCNA---and this affords a certain legitimacy to my position. This would be especially important in teaching settings and in our continued mentoring relationships and leadership development efforts overseas.

Thank you kindly for your work on our behalf.
John Span also for Anne Span

To: Classis Hamilton of the Christian Reformed Church
From: The Council of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Waterdown ON
12 January 2015

Dear brothers and sisters of Classis Hamilton,

It has been our privilege to hold the Commissioned Pastor credentials for our brother John Span during the time he and his family served the Church as a missionary in Egypt. We were encouraged by the reports of good work done in building up the Church of the Lord in that land.

Because of extenuating circumstances, not related to the effectiveness of John's ministry, the Span family has returned to Canada earlier than expected. Despite the change in location, John remains a missionary with Interserve, and continues to be endorsed by Christian Reformed World Missions. The work that John is now undertaking is significantly different from the one upon which he was granted ordination as a Commissioned Pastor, but we believe is equally appropriate for ordination to that office.

As you can see from the accompanying job description, John will be developing resources for the churches as he completes the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. He will serve the churches as a missions consultant, preacher, advisor on ministry among Muslim people, and as a recruiter of missionaries for CRWM. Therefore, we request that Classis Hamilton:

5. Acknowledge John Span's return to Canada and the expiry of the Job Description upon which he had been ordained as a Commissioned Pastor.
6. Take note of the letter from John Span, addressed to the Council of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, requesting continuation of his ordination as a Commissioned Pastor, with a revised task and calling.
7. Endorse the attached Job Description as one fitting for a person in the office of Commissioned Pastor.
8. Allow John Span to be re-ordained into the office of Commissioned Pastor, with the newly approved Job Description. We suggest that since John is well known to Classis Hamilton, and has been previously examined on biblical and theological knowledge and readiness for ministry among Muslim populations, that he be invited to share his vision and expectations of his new role, but not be asked to undergo another formal examination.

Respectfully submitted,
Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Waterdown ON
Elder Peg VanderMeer, Clerk

Job Description for John Span for 2016

Job Title: Global mission Capacity Builder

Description: This job description is built around 15 years of mission field experience in Muslim-majority countries, coupled with demonstrated gifts for leadership training, building capacity in churches, and academic ability. It requires membership in the CRCNA and the status of a commissioned pastor.

Accountability:

- Interserve: as the formal employer Interserve performs annual performance reviews of the Spans as employees. As a partner with CRWM [Christian Reformed World Missions] it will engage the Spans in items related to a healthy working partnership. The Spans will report on a semi-annual basis to the director of Interserve as to any partnership/employment issues arising.

- CRWM as an agency of the CRCNA [Christian Reformed Church of North America] denomination and a partner with Interserve requires that the Spans facilitate ongoing communication for the health of this partnership, and will meet on an as needed basis for any church relations issues that arise.
- Bethel Christian Reformed Church as the sponsoring church that holds John Span's ministry credentials as a "commissioned pastor" requires quarterly written reports (e.g. March 1st; June 1st; September 1st; and January 1st) as to the accomplishment of the job description tasks outlined below. The reports will be sent to the Chair of Council, the Pastor and the Clerk.

1. [See Appendix 1 for detailed description] To be engaged professional development in advanced Reformed theological PhD studies in the area of apologetics which will increase capacity for:
 - a. Assisting Canadian churches, especially those of the CRCNA and of a Reformed persuasion to reach out wisely and Biblically to the "religious other" and especially their Muslim neighbours.
 - b. To be equipped to train the global Church for effective Great Commission efforts and this might include overseas teaching assignments, seminars or journal publications.
 - c. To be further equipped to serve the Church in the Middle East and particularly the Anglican Diocese of Egypt in its theological training efforts in continued mentorship and personnel and curriculum development. [A PhD will be required to teach the Master's level programs.] [65% of time.]
2. To build up the capacity of Canadian churches and especially those of the CRCNA in their passion for and action in global mission and responding wisely to refugee situations. This will be achieved by:
 - a. Preaching at CRCNA churches.
 - b. Conducting educational seminars at CRCNA churches.
 - c. Recruiting for new personnel for CRWM.
 - d. Working with the CRCNA Salaam project on items such as Meetings For Understanding for engaging Muslims.
 - e. Writing articles for the Network CRCNA
 - f. Serving other churches and prayer groups associated with Interserve.
 [15% of time]
3. To continue to develop and deepen collaborative efforts especially with respect to missiology and particularly Reformed missiology. This will be achieved by:
 - a. Participating in consultations
 - b. Networking with key groups such as Biblical Missiology
 - c. Establishing the groundwork for a future missiological journal or reviving Interserve's *St. Francis Magazine* [or equivalent] for dealing with outreach and discipleship in the Arab world.
 - d. Communication with partner churches and donor base.
 [10% of time]
4. Special assignments as mandated by CRWM and Interserve. These may include:
 - a. Writing and research assignments
 - b. Training seminars
 - c. Filling requests by churches.
 [10% of time]

Approved by Richard Piet: Director of Interserve Canada, Monday, November 23/2015

Approved with amendments by Steve Kabetu: Director of CRWM Canada, December 11/2015

Overture to Synod 2016 of the Christian Reformed Church Regarding Christian Marriage

To Classis Hamilton re: Church Order Article 69c – Amendment

From the Councils of Brantford Hope CRC, Jarvis Ebenezer CRC and Dundas Calvin CRC

Initial Statement

We, the Classis of Hamilton urge the Christian Reformed Church Synod to amend Church Order Article 69c to include clear and unambiguous language concerning the biblical, God-ordained definition of marriage – between one man and one woman, and not any other arranged marital union.

Rationale for Amendment

Historical Rationale

- I. Historically in the Christian Church, marriage has always been between one man and one woman. In fact, broader society knew of no culture in all of history to approve of so-called same-sex marriage until the year 2001. The amended wording would leave no question about the minister’s responsibility toward the solemnization of any other “marriage” which conflicts with the word of God.
- II. The Christian Reformed Church [CRCNA] has declared homosexual practice to be incompatible with obedience to the will of God (Acts of Synod 1973, Report 42), and in 1980 (Acts of Synod 1980, Report 29 concerning marriage guidelines) recognized marriage in all instances as a sacred union between one man and one woman. This adopted report reads, “Marriage is not a human invention nor an experiment in social relationships which can be altered or abandoned at will. It is a God-ordained, monogamous structure, requiring faithful commitment on the part of husband and wife” (1980 Acts of Synod, p. 469). Therefore, we urge that Church Order Article 69 reflect our own denomination’s historical and biblical understanding of marriage, “between one man and one woman.”
- III. The current wording of Article 69c and the interpretation of “marriages which would be in conflict with the word of God” remains ambiguous. This ambiguity leaves ministers to decide which marriages would be in conflict with the word of God. An amended Article 69c not only clarifies our biblical understanding of Christian marriage, but also avoids the vulnerability of leaving the current reading of Article 69c open to individual interpretation.
 - A. Henry DeMoor, in his 2010 *Christian Reformed Church Order Commentary*, page 368, comments on “marriages that would be in conflict with the word of God, whatever that may be taken to mean, specifically.” DeMoor’s comments here indicate the unclear parameters of Church Order Article 69c.
 - B. Peter Borgdorff, in his 2008 *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*, page 268, writes that “the instruction as applied to a specific situation may be open to interpretation.” He is referring specifically to Article 69 regarding “marriages which would be in conflict with the word of God.” His commentary here leaves Article 69c vulnerable to the allowance of solemnizing marriages that have been historically and are presently in conflict with the word of God in the CRCNA, i.e. so-called “same-sex marriages.”

Therefore, we find it necessary to amend the wording of Article 69c to accurately reflect the Scriptural marital institution between one man and one woman.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

- I. Concerning the Nature of Marriage

- A. Genesis 2:23-24 -- Marriage was instituted by God at creation. In Genesis 2 God creates woman as unique from man and out of that difference he institutes marriage: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (v. 24).
 - B. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 -- For God's Old Testament community, Israel, it was clear that the sexual activity reserved for and encouraged in marriage was an "abomination" for those of the same sex. This is often deeply challenging for those of us with same-sex attraction to live with, so the church's love and support in singleness must be exceptional, as the 2002 synodical study report encouraged.
 - C. Matthew 19:3-6 -- Jesus reaffirms God's will for marriage with the explicit language of Genesis. He ties language from Genesis 1:27 ("made them male and female") to Genesis 2:24. For Christ the male-female difference is essential for marriage.
 - D. 1 Corinthians 7 -- The apostle Paul affirms the goodness of being unmarried and "devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit," as he himself was (v. 25-35). The church should be affirming of this vibrant vision of singleness. Further to marriage, in 7:39 we hear God's command to marry only those who "belong to the Lord."
 - E. Ephesians 5:31-32 -- The apostle Paul illuminates the purpose of marriage and its tie to male-female difference, further declaring it to be a "mystery" which has now been revealed in the union of Christ and his church, an image that finds its fullest realization in the new Jerusalem "prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Revelation 21:2). For God's New Testament community, the covenant of marriage reflects the covenant of grace. "Its model, and in fact its fulfillment, is the covenant which unites Christ and the church" (Acts of Synod 1980, p. 473).
 - F. Throughout Scripture, we see many descriptions of marriages between husbands and wives, males and females. There is not one recorded marriage in Scripture between partners of the same sex.
- II. Concerning the Guilt of Solemnizing Unbiblical Marriage
- A. 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Peter 2 -- The apostles Paul and Peter warn of sexual immorality in the church and the false teachers "with eyes full of adultery... (who) seduce the unstable" (2 Peter 2:14). The church is called to "put out of your fellowship" those who are proud of sexual immorality "so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 5:2,5) From the truth and grace that Jesus embodied, and with his compassion, our heart should be for both the salvation and sanctification of God's people.
 - B. Ephesians 4:17-19; 5:6-11 -- The apostle Paul describes a contrast in terms of light and darkness between God's covenant community and unbelievers. He commands us to "not be partners with them" (5:7, cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 2 Timothy 3, 1 Peter 4). This applies to individual marriage partnerships and also more broadly to the church's definition of marriage vs. a secular society's. Solemnizing a marriage covenant contrary to God's will makes ministers partners with a deviant design of marriage, disobeying God's command to "have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness" (Eph. 5:11).
 - C. 2 John 9 -- There is today in our churches concern by some about being 'behind the times' regarding marriage; however the apostle John warns against "anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ." This is particularly aimed at teachers. A minister who blesses or solemnizes a marriage outside of Christ or a union between partners of the same sex is not continuing in the teaching of Christ. Our Church Order should reflect this.
 - D. James 3:1 -- Though the current discussion regarding same-sex attraction and marriage affects many, this overture is concerned in particular with the work of the church's teachers. The teachers must be held to great standards, because as James teaches us, the Lord will hold teachers to great standards. If those who teach "will be judged more strictly," it is imperative that the CRCNA expect its ministers,

Seminary professors, those with a license to exhort and employees of denominational agencies to continue in Christ's teaching.

- E. Belgic Confession Article 32 -- The CRCNA confesses that "we reject all human innovations and all laws imposed on us, in our worship of God, which bind and force our consciences in any way." Our Church Order needs to live out this confession in its stipulations regarding ministers and the human innovation of same-sex marriage. In the joy and strength of Christ we should not fear the antithesis, as Abraham Kuyper called it, between the church and world.

Practical Rationale

- I. Currently we are seeing an increase in various questionable interpretations of Scripture with regard to marriage. With a clear definition of Christian marriage in the Church Order, we will be able to preserve the unity of the church against those fracturing it with deviant interpretations of marriage. Office-bearers, employees of CRCNA agencies, and all those in positions of authority that represent our Lord Jesus in the CRCNA who would not uphold the proposed article 69c in their preaching, teaching, pastoral care or practice would be subject to the admonition and discipline of the church, as per Church Order articles 78-84 so that the unity of the church under God's word may be preserved.
- II. With government decisions in the United States and Canada over the past 20 years, the CRCNA now finds itself in a cultural context that holds to a new and deviant definition of marriage. Therefore it is necessary for Synod to clarify and distinguish the CRCNA from the world around it and clearly define what Christian marriage is, in order to clarify its ministers' roles in the formation of biblical marriages.
- III. This amendment would bring our Church Order into harmony with CRCNA synodically approved forms for Marriage (1912, 1979):
 - A. The first form (1912) indicates that marriage is between a man and a woman. It reads: "The holy bond of marriage was instituted by God himself... making a man in his own image... God created woman of man's own substance and brought her to the man... For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."
 - B. The second form (1979) indicates even more clearly the monogamous complementary nature of Christian marriage: "In marriage, as instituted by God, a man and a woman covenant to live together in a lifelong, exclusive partnership of love and fidelity."

Overture

The aforementioned Councils overture Classis Hamilton to overture Synod 2016 to amend the CRCNA's Church Order Article 69c to read as follows:

"Ministers shall not solemnize **nor bless** marriages, **or any other marital union**, which would be in conflict with the Word of God **wherein God instituted marriage to be a monogamous, lifelong, covenant relationship in Christ between one man and one woman, portraying Christ and his church.**" (Amendments made in **bold**)

Grounds

- I. Historically, the Christian church and the CRCNA have repeatedly recognized this definition as God's will for marriage. Yet Article 69c of the Church Order remains ambiguous and open for interpretation in its current wording.
- II. Scripture teaches that marriage is a monogamous covenant relationship in Christ between one man and one woman, and the active participation of a minister in the formation of a marriage contrary to God's good designs, whether through solemnization or blessing, would make that minister complicit in the guilt of that sinful union.
- III. Practically, the presently the CRCNA Church Order Article 69 assumes a definition of marriage involving one man and one woman; however, recent state changes in North America have allowed for the legality

of an unbiblical definition of marriage. This is new impetus for the CRCNA to put assumptions aside and to create boundaries for its ministers and others as they work for the flourishing of Christ's church through clearly-defined biblical Christian marriages.

Respectfully submitted,
Hope CRC, Brantford
Calvin CRC, Dundas
Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis

APPENDIX #6.4 – TIME LINE FOR SYNODICAL STUDY REPORTS FROM HOPE CRC, BRANTFORD

Overture for Synod

Hope CRC of Brantford overtures Classis to send the following Classical Overture to Synod 2016:

Overture to Synod Regarding the Time Line for Synodical Study Reports

Introduction

Periodically Synod establishes study committees to help the churches deliberate important issues in a positive and responsible manner. Problems develop, however, when the churches do not have sufficient time to engage the study committee reports. Substantial reports require appropriate time for reading and deliberation at the Council level. Sometimes it is necessary to establish a committee to formulate an appropriate overture—which often requires another Council meeting or two to process. Deadlines for Classis need to be kept in mind—not to mention synodical deadlines. Sometimes classes require more than one meeting to rightly engage synodical reports and process the appropriate overtures to synod.

In 2015 the Denominational offices forwarded *three* substantial study committee reports to the churches on October 30. This required the churches to study and deliberate the relevant documents in the few remaining months of the fall, write overtures during the busy season of Christmas, in order to submit them on time for the winter Classis meeting, so that the overtures could be processed for the agenda deadline for Synod set for March 15. We contend that this tight time frame seriously hinders the deliberative process. We acknowledge that the reports forwarded in the fall of 2015 were sent out earlier than usual. Ordinarily, Study committee reports come out in November. This is too late for the churches to do justice to synodical study committee reports.

Overture

Classis Hamilton overtures Synod 2016 to instruct the denominational offices to supply Synodical Study Committee reports no later than September 15.

Grounds: This provides more time for the churches to engage the study committee reports and process the necessary overtures in a reasonable time frame.

Respectfully submitted,
Hope CRC

APPENDIX #7 - EXTERNAL REPORTS:

APPENDIX #7.1 - WORLD RENEW



Classis Report for early winter, Feb., 2016, Classis Hamilton *Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Associate Director of Church Relations*

Greetings to the delegates of the churches to the meeting of Classis Hamilton in 2016. First of all, we pray that each of you, and your families, and your churches, have a blessed, enriching, safe New Year. May you continue to work and rest in God. Thanks again for your incredible support for the work being done by YOUR World Renew. Let me just say that when I total the offerings from this classis from Sept. through November (that includes the World Hunger Campaign), the total for the churches of this classis is \$55,935.00 (not including gifts from individuals, nor the gifts that the Carpentaros use). So: thank you so much! And thank you for your other support as well: churches connecting with countries and missionaries, individuals volunteers who go out with DRS. And thanks especially to the board members in Classis Hamilton: Ed Scharringa and Jason DeBoer. Gentlemen: you are extremely helpful to the Board and to this classis.

A. Staff Changes:

The last few months have seen a flurry of staff changes in the Canadian World Renew team.

- We have welcomed Dan Galenkamp to the Church Relations team as the part-time CR associate. Dan also works with DMC part-time, and is a graduate of Redeemer University College. Dan is the maternity leave staff person while Maria Oliveira is away.
- We have welcomed Rhonda Elgersma as the new MPP coordinator. Rhonda comes with great experience in having managed a Christian NGO in Mexico for a number of years. We are grateful she's been brought to our team. Rhonda is also a graduate of Redeemer University College.
- Dec. 14 will have marked the last day of Michelle Kikkert's work on the Communications team before she goes on maternity leave. Her position has been filled by Cameron Phillips, also Redeemer University College graduate.
- We are grateful that Pam De Wilde has accepted a full-time position working in the Refugee office with Rebecca Walker.
- (There are more mat. leaves coming... God has blessed the World Renew team members with new life, and has blessed the whole team by sending just the right people to continue doing His important work.)

B. Important Synodically-Approved Offering Dates, 2016:

- Mar. 6: CFGB, Canada: The important work of this organization, made up of 15 churches or church-related agencies will be highlighted on this day. Resources will be sent to the churches.
- April 10: Refugee Sunday: At this time, the refugee sponsorship work being done churches and groups across Canada will be both celebrated and encouraged. Thank you, Classis Hamilton, for your support in assisting refugees to resettle.
- May 22: Maternal and Child Health: This theme is one that has been a strong thread throughout much of what World Renew does. Thanks for your support for our work!

- Oct. 10: Thanksgiving: The offering of this day has highlighted the Free A Family® program (although any World Renew program can be emphasized here).
- Nov. 6: World Hunger: A major campaign with World Renew, supported by devotionals and other resources for individuals and families.
- Dec. 25: World Renew: The traditional Christmas offering has been one that supports World Renew's programs in any of the 20+ countries in which World Renew works with partners to share the love, grace and mercy of our Lord.

In all of these cases, churches will (automatically) receive resources for your members. For more information and resources, please visit www.worldrenew.net/churchresources.

C. Community Development: Stories of Transformation:

World Renew has been working in **Zambia** since 1990. World Renew is addressing the issues outlined above by working alongside Zambian churches and organizations to transform communities. Two of the partner organizations are church diaconal ministries reaching out to the needs of the rural poor in the communities in and outside the church. These outreach programs focus on the long-term chronic needs of the most impoverished Zambian people. A large focus of the work is improving the agricultural and health skills of those that struggle to grow enough food to feed themselves and find basic access to health care. Other areas of focus include literacy, maternal health, income generation, diaconal development, and HIV and AIDS prevention. This description is true for so many of World Renew's programs world-wide. Please read more at www.worldrenew.net

D. Disaster Response: North America and International:

-Disaster Response Services (DRS) continues to do important work across **North America**. Volunteers with this arm of World Renew are actively engaged in many cities and states, particularly in the US. Learn more at www.worldrenew.net/drs.

-World Renew was on the ground directly after **Hurricane Haiyan in the Philippines**; since that time, it has helped to build 1392 permanent houses, and supported 590 fishing families, among other activities. Ken Kim, the director of Disaster response says: "The past two years of rebuilding have not been easy ones but very rewarding to see so many people and lives transformed. We thank God for enabling World Renew to mount this two year response to assist these families and improve their lives in the long-term."

-With respect to World Renew's response to the **Nepal earthquake**: individuals and churches across the United States and Canada heard about the needs and responded generously, giving more than \$2.1 million towards World Renew's earthquake response. World Renew leveraged these donations through its memberships and associations to raise an additional \$450,000. It has since carried out six months of disaster response efforts. Read more at www.worldrenew.net/nepalearthquake.

E. Refugee Settlement Activities:

110 churches have inquired about **sponsorship**. Most of the inquiries have been since September 2015. When we explain the process to sponsor to churches and explain that there are many other refugee populations in the world in need of resettlement the overwhelming majority of CRCs express interest in sponsoring any refugee populations not necessarily Syrian refugees. Churches have requested information sessions and the workshop *Journey With Me*. We are busy responding to those requests. Churches too have been active in inviting other churches in their communities to participate. We are also planning to set up info session webinars for CRCs across the country. Please see www.worldrenew.net/refugees, or www.crcna.org/Canada/social-justice-canada/refugee-issues

F. Prayer Requests for Classis Hamilton:

Thank God for the end of the Ebola disease in West Africa; pray for the victims of disasters, and the people send to assist; pray that the horrible Syrian conflict will end.

G. What Else Can the churches of Classis Hamilton Do?

Volunteer with GVP (Global Volunteer Program) or DRS (Disaster Response Services). Sponsor a refugee family. Get involved in the GOOD SOIL CAMPAIGN: Write a letter to your Member of Parliament urging the Canadian government to invest in smallholder agriculture in developing countries. Tell your MP that you care about poverty and hunger in the world. Let them know that Canada can reduce hunger by investing in agriculture and supporting small-scale farmers in developing countries, especially women. Engage and mobilize your congregation by holding a “Harvest of Letters” activity at your church. Visit www.worldrenew.net/goodsoil for more information and to find resources that will help you get started in advocating for small-scale farmers.

Contact Peter Bulthuis (pbulthuis@worldrenew.net; 800-730-3490, ext. 4237) for more ideas on what you can do. To learn more about World Renew’s ministry, please visit www.worldrenew.net.

Blessings,



Peter Bulthuis



WINTER 2015: CLASSIS HAMILTON

Greetings from Redeemer University College! We are pleased to be able to share with our partners in ministry some of our news.

As reported in *Tangents*, Redeemer, like many other Christian colleges, has seen its enrolment numbers declining for a few years. There are several factors contributing to this, mostly fewer university-aged students across Ontario and amongst these students, a growing interest in technology-related programs and a shift away from a more comprehensive liberal arts and sciences degree. That shift has also led to enrolment decreases in several of Ontario's publicly-funded universities, especially those with a greater concentration of arts programs. We have also seen that among many families raised in traditions that emphasized Christian education, there is now less conviction about the need for Christian educational institutions, including Redeemer.

Despite these challenges, we remain confident of the future. As part of Redeemer 2020's strategic plan, we have initiated several new projects to ensure the Christian university education provided by Redeemer remains relevant in these changing times. We have launched new programs in areas such as Media and Communication Studies, created a Centre to promote experiential learning opportunities and career support for students, improved our digital infrastructure and developed a more focused and strategic communication and marketing strategy. As a result of these initiatives, Redeemer is well-placed to equip and enable students to impact the front lines of today's culture.

With ears and eyes open to His leading, and strengthened by the faithful support of many, including the churches of Classis Hamilton, young Christians will continue to be transformed and find their callings at Redeemer. Thank you for partnering with us as we move forward.

Visit www.redeemer.ca/information-for/churches to learn how your church can benefit from the student-led Alpha Praise worship team or obtain a faculty speaker.

COMING EVENTS

Redeemer is hosting a number of events this winter that may be of interest to you, your ministry staff and your congregation. For more on each, please visit redeemer.ca/events.

JANUARY 26-30:

The Redeemer University College Theatre Arts Department presents *Cotton Patch Gospel*, a musical that uses the Gospels of Matthew and John to re-imagine the story of Christ in a small town in Georgia.

MARCH 30:

The World and Our Calling lecture series features Dr. Amy L. Sherman, Senior Fellow at the Sagamore Institute's Centre on Faith Communities and Senior Fellow for the International Justice Mission.

CHURCH IN THE BOX (CITB)

A student-led ministry dedicated to uniting the community of Redeemer and the surrounding area in worship. Through these monthly worship services involving music, prayer, and drama, a community of believers can come to know God in a more full and real way. Services start at 7:00 p.m. in Redeemer's Auditorium and all are welcome to attend. Scheduled services include January 17, February 7 and March 13.



While at Redeemer my knowledge has grown immensely and I learned many new things in the academic field. Things like how kidney's work in Biology, to how I should write a good essay in English, to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs in psychology. However, Redeemer did much more than that for me. Redeemer also taught me about community and serving others. Most of all it taught me how important it is to have a relationship with God.

Selena Kloet '16 (Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis) is majoring in English

APPENDIX #7.3 – CANADIAN MINISTRIES



January, 2016

Dear Classis,

My work continues on your behalf in the following

areas: The Ministry Plan Process:

- Is maturing and getting ready for greater implementation. As the pieces come together we are being mindful of their Canadian fit and context.

Leadership Development:

- We are hosting a gathering of “New to Ministry in Canada” leaders this month. A total of 13 people will be travelling to our office in Burlington for 2-3 days of learning and prayer together about what it means to be a leader in the CRC in Canada. As well, we will have youth ministry champions, who are working with Syd Hielema under the banner of Faith Formation, meeting during this time. Portions of these meetings will feature a shared time together.
- Twice per year the stated clerks and I join in video conference to review work at a classical level. This creates an area of information sharing, learning, and development of ideas or initiatives (Student Funding in Canada as a unique contextual approach, Governance Models to align churches to CNCA/ONCA regulations).
- Working towards a stronger linkage and support into *Dunamis* as a means of growth in the area of prayer for local churches and denominational leadership.

Communications:

- A new crcna.org/Canada website has been launched! Check it out for news across Canada about ministry in your local context, helpful resources and social justice engagement tools.
- A “Ministry in Canada” directory has been developed. This can be found on the website noted above. We are currently developing phase two of this directory in that a list of partner agencies in ministry will be listed.
- The CRCNA-Canada Corp. board and the Canadian Ministries office is considering the integration of a communications person solely designated for Canadian CRC ministry. This position would help improve our two way dialogue with churches in the Canadian context.
- In the area of refugees and other social justice issues, communication is key and consistent amongst churches. A cross-agency approach about local ministry regarding refugees was developed and its integration has proven very successful.

Administration:

- Regular monthly meetings of the *Canadian Ministries Team* continue to occur. Members consist of a representative of each agency and specialized ministry of the CRC that work in the Canadian context.
- The denominational budgeting process now includes delineation of Canadian and US priorities and initiatives. This will help the Canadian CRC discern and determine a more fulsome Ministry Plan as a nation as it works with its ministries in the Canadian context.

Connecting:

- Work continues on a *Connecting* pilot project that is happening in Classis Niagara. This project is exploring a new intentional way of connecting to each church in the classis with a personal customer service approach. As well, a technological resource has been developed for the churches to utilize. Expansion of this project to other classes is planned for later this year. Stay tuned!
- We continue to seek to strengthen our linkages and integration with ecumenical partners. Practical approaches toward ministry effort are being discussed with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the Reformed Church in America and organizations such as Kairos.
- A national gathering is being planned for May 6-8 at Wilfrid Laurier University. For more details, check the crcna.org/Canada website.

There is much more to say that builds on the aforementioned. For some classes where I will be present, I look forward to sharing with you at your next classis meeting. If you are not the delegate for this classis, feel free to get in touch with me at any time through email or by phone.

May God greatly bless your ministries,



Darren Roorda
Canadian Ministries Director



DIACONAL MINISTRIES
CANADA

Dear Friends,

January 7, 2016

Diaconal Ministries Canada's (DMC) mission is to *inspire, equip and encourage deacons, churches and their partners as they join in God's transforming work in communities.*

A few highlights:

1. Deacons & Classis:

Almost all classes in Canada now include deacon delegates. DMC has been receiving good questions from a number of clerks about the role of deacons at classis. As church leaders, deacons will want to experience that the "agenda" has relevance to them as well.

2. DMC's Executive Committee for 2015-16:

Chair – Melissa Van Dyk (Vancouver, BC) Secretary – John Knibbe (Calgary, AB)
Vice-Chair – Peter Kralt (Beamsville, ON) Treasurer – Lesley Toussaint (Toronto, ON)

3. DMC's Website and Facebook:

Join the DMC Network by becoming a friend on Facebook. [Click here](#) and like the page! The sign-on is easy or you can go to our website for our blog. Stories are featured on a regular basis.

4. DMC's Ministry Shares:

What are ministry shares for DMC used for? [Click here](#). Thanks for being partners-in-ministry!

5. DMC Staff Transitions:

Hans Kater and Madeline Robins will both "retire" from DMC in 2016. Both of us have been richly blessed by working with DMC since the time it became a national organization in 2001.

6. Diaconal Ministry Developers (DMDs):

In addition to our 6 staff members, there are also close to 20 [DMDs](#) across Canada who are equipped to serve diaconates and churches.

7. Resources:

Contact us or visit the website for resources in DMC's 3 strategy areas. These areas of ministry are 1) engaging communities, 2) equipping deacons and 3) doing justice.

Thanks!

We deeply enjoy the good response for Diaconal Ministry Shares, the Operation Manna offering and church offerings that make our work possible. We are very grateful for the opportunity to motivate and mobilize deacons and churches across Canada.

Hans Kater – National Director for DMC (hkater@crcna.org)

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