



Christian  
Reformed  
Church

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

**Date:** February 25, 2020

**Time:** 9:00 AM

**Venue:** Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, 61 Mohawk Rd. W., Hamilton, Ontario

**Chair:** Benjamin Ponsen

**Vice-Chair:** Willem de Vries

**Stated Clerk:** Dick Kranendonk

**Reporter:** Bruce Adema

**Synodical Deputies:**

None Required

Delegates:

<b>Church</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Ancaster CRC	Rita	Klein-Geltink	Pastor Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Gerald	Bruulsema	Elder Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Stuart	Bootsma	Deacon Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Everett	Vander Horst	Pastor Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Syd	Hielema	Elder Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Marcia	Hosmar	Deacon Delegate
Hope	William	Koopmans	Pastor Delegate
Hope	Fred	Reitsma	Elder Delegate
Hope	Ben	Schrik	Deacon Delegate
New Street	Rosanne	Vanderwoerd	Elder Delegate
New Street	John	Dekker	Deacon Delegate
Faith	Cara	DeHaan	Pator Delegate
Faith	Dave	Kloet	Elder Delegate
Faith	Ralph	Buitenhuis	Deacon Delegate
Calvin	Ken	Benjamins	Pastor Delegate
Calvin	Jerry	Noordam	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Alex	Mobach	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate
Calvary	Bernard	Teeninga	Elder Delegate
Calvary	Jane	Vanderzwaag	Deacon Delegate
Hagersville Community	Davis	Miedema	Elder Delegate
Hagersville Community	George	Elzinga	Elder Delegate
Hagersville Community	Brian	Paterson	Deacon Delegate
First Hamilton	Hayden	Regeling	Pastor Delegate
First Hamilton	Brian	Dijkema	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Jan	Disselkoen	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Michael	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	David	Rumph	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Sharon	Van Dokkemburg	Deacon Alternate
New Hope	Jessica	Brand	Emerging Church
New Hope	Ginelle	Bucher	Emerging Church
Mt. Hope Community	Bob	DeHaan	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Greg	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Doug	Dekker	Deacon Delegate
Ebenezer	Willem	de Vries	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	Nick	VanderHeide	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Daryl	VanBenthem	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pator Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	John	Oosterveld	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Ann	Oosterveld	Deacon Delegate
Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor Delegate
Bethel	Adriana	Traas	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Ben	Ponsen	Pastor Delegate
Maranatha	Ray E.	Elgersma	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Jake	Termorshuizen	Deacon Delegate

## Meeting Details:

### 1. WELCOME

At 9:00 am, Gareth Harker, chair of the Classis Ministries Team, welcomed everyone present, and introduced Michael Bootsma, Pastor of Immanuel CRC.

### 2. OPENING WORSHIP

2.1. Michael Bootsma and Anthony Elenbaas, co-pastors at Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton, led in devotions based on Colossians 1. Throughout the devotion time, we sang various hymns and spiritual songs including: *O Holy Ghost; Behold Our God; O God, Our Help in Ages Past; Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God; and Will You Come to Follow Me.*

2.2. First Anthony explained how his primary responsibilities as Pastor-Faith Formation are informed by various passages in Colossians 1; it is all encompassing but also particular. It is not focussed on a single age group, but on all members of the church; everyone belongs in this ministry.

2.3. Next Michael, Pastor-Outreach and Pastoral Care, who has been in the congregation for only six months, explained his previous history in Classis Hamilton. Based on the first chapter of Colossians, he also explained that they are called to serve each other as co-pastors as well as the congregation as a whole. In the area of Pastoral Care, Immanuel CRC has embraced the Care Teams that minister to all members of the church. In outreach his motto is that we need to get the Church (the believers) out of the church (the building) to do God's work.

### 3. REFRESHMENT BREAK FOR 20 MINUTES AT 10:00 AM

### 4. RETURN FROM REFRESHMENT BREAK

4.1. Willem de Vries led in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for Immanuel CRC and for the deliberations of the day.

### 5. CALL TO ORDER

5.1. Chair of Classis, Benjamin Ponsen, called the meeting to order, welcomed all delegates and guests, and offered some brief comments regarding the purpose and process for the day.

5.2. On behalf of the stated clerk, he reported that all churches were represented by delegates as shown on the previous page.

5.3. The Chair read the Covenant for Office Bearers and asked all delegates to stand as evidence of their continued commitment to the Covenant.

5.4. After this the Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** Classis Hamilton was properly constituted.

5.5. The Chair then showed the proposed Agenda and time-line for the meeting and **RULED THAT:** the agenda and the addendum as communicated to the churches and delegates are approved for discussion and action where appropriate with possible minor variances in the sequence in which some of the items would be dealt with.

### 6. FIRST BALLOT TO ELECT DELEGATES FOR SYNOD 2020

6.1. On behalf of the Classis Interim Committee, Gillian Bruce introduced the first ballot to vote for delegates to Synod 2020.

6.2. Not sufficient nominations for elder and deacon delegates had been received so the Chair of Classis encouraged the elder and deacon delegates to consider letting their names stand as well as to canvas their fellow elders and deacons by telephone to consider serving as delegates to Synod 2020.

6.3. The ballots which included the names of nominees already received were collected by the Balloting Committee and further voting took place during the meeting to reach the final delegate number. This process included motions permitting selected names with the most votes to go forward to the next ballot according to the Rules of Procedure as well as adding the names of additional elder and deacon nominees received during the meeting.

6.4. By the end of the voting process, the following were elected as delegates and alternates to attend Synod 2020.

**Minister:**

Delegate: William Koopmans, Hope CRC, Brantford

Alternate: Willem de Vries, Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis

**Elder:**

Delegate: Jake Ellens, Hope CRC, Brantford

Alternate: Bob De Haan, Mount. Hope Community CRC, Mount Hope

**Deacon:**

Delegate: Gwen Bosveld, Calvary CRC, Flamborough

Alternate: Stuart Bootsma, Ancaster CRC, Ancaster

**Other Office Bearer:**

Delegate: Ben Ponsen, Maranatha CRC, York

Alternate: Michael Bootsma, Immanuel CRC, Hamilton

7. CLASSIS MINISTRIES TEAM REPORT

7.1. Gareth Harker, Chair of the CMT, gave a brief verbal report of CMT's activities.

7.2. He then drew attention to the external reports in the Agenda.

On Motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the written reports from Canadian Ministries, World Renew, Redeemer University College, and Diaconal Ministries Canada are received for information.

7.3. Presentation by the Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Team:

Kennan Benjamins, on behalf of the Committee, gave a progress report on the local youth engagement survey that had been sent to the churches. He reiterated that the committee hopes to complete their report in time for presentation to the May classis meeting. He also noted that the previous deadline for receiving input from all the churches had been extended until March 31<sup>st</sup>. In response to comments and requests received from some of the churches, the committee had also agreed that local churches would be permitted to modify the survey questions so that written input from the youth could be obtained. However, he stressed that the survey questions had been designed for face-to-face interviews.

John Bijl, Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Champion, then made a brief announcement regarding the youth retreat for high school students planned for October 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>.

On Motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the verbal report from the Youth Ministry Team is received for information.

7.4. Campus Ministry Committee:

A written report from the Campus Ministry Committee had been included in the agenda.

On Motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the written report from the Campus Ministry Committee is received for information.

The Chair of Classis expressed special appreciation for those who have been providing leadership at Mohawk College.

7.5. Presentation by the Home Missions Committee:

Greg Sinclair, Chair of the Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee, provided a brief update to the written report contained in the agenda. The verbal update related to the church plant.

He shared that there will be a dessert social on March 24, at Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, to promote church planting. He also reported that the \$500 missional grant applications are now available for local churches.

On Motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the written and verbal report from the Home Missions Committee is received for information.

7.6. Overture from Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church

7.6.1. The Advisory Committee presented their report which did not support the recommendation in the overture from Meadowlands Fellowship CRC. Therefore, in accordance with the Classis Hamilton Rules of Procedure, the recommendation in the overture took precedence for discussion.

7.6.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton regularly schedule time on its agenda for Shalom Manor to provide updates on its ministry.

**Grounds**

1. Classis Hamilton has a historic and unique relationship with Shalom Manor through its deaconates.
2. The major development underway at the Wellingstone Campus is of significant importance and interest to the churches and members of Classis Hamilton.
3. Members of all ages (spouses, children, grandchildren) are deeply concerned about present and future care options their loved ones.
4. Making a presentation at a meeting of Classis Hamilton is an efficient way to keep the leadership of local churches informed.

7.6.3. Approval of CMT's Work:

The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** the work of the CMT to date as reported to the churches in the CMT minutes and the classis agenda is approved.

7.6.4. Rita Klein Geltink then offered prayer for the Classis Ministries Team, the Youth Ministry Team, the Candidacy Committee, and the Campus Ministry Committee.

8. MINISTRY PLAN PRESENTATION

8.1. On behalf of the Classis Interim Committee and the Classis Ministry Team, Gareth Harker presented the draft Ministry Plan document, as developed by the Ad Hoc Ministry Review Committee consisting of members of both bodies, for initial discussion.

8.2. Various comments and observations were made which were noted by the members of the ad hoc committee for further consideration.

8.3. The final document, together with some implementation sections, will be presented at the May classis meeting if at all possible. This work needs to be completed before the ad hoc committee can complete their primary assigned task to evaluate the current ministries of Classis Hamilton as well as to set up regular review criteria and criteria to consider new ministries that might be proposed to classis.

8.4. Syd Hielema then offered prayer for the ad hoc committee and the further development of the Ministry Plan document.

9. CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE REPORT

9.1. Gillian Bruce highlighted a few items from the CIC and Stated Clerk's Report. She then made the following Motion which was seconded.

9.2. **MOTION:** That within the authority of Church Order, Article 42, classis assigns the Safe Church Director or the Classis Safe Church Team to visit the Safe Church Team of each church in classis

on a yearly basis to evaluate the safe church policies and practices relating to safe church and abuse of power, and shall provide a written report of their work to the Classis Interim Committee on a quarterly basis and a summary report to the winter Classis meeting.

- 9.3. A discussion followed where varying opinions regarding the meaning and intent of the motion were brought forward by delegates and guests.
- 9.4. A delegate then **MOVED** an amendment to strike the words: "Safe Church Director or the" and to insert the words: "or its designate" after Classis Safe Church Team. The amendment was seconded. After discussion of the amendment the amending motion was **DEFEATED**.
- 9.5. Some further comments were made after which the Chair of Classis called for the question. The original motion presented by the CIC was **ADOPTED**.
- 9.6. The Chair of Classis then reiterated what one delegate had already stated during the discussion that passing the above motion meant that all the churches of Classis Hamilton have committed to support and facilitate the implementation of the motion just passed.
- 9.7. Appointment of a Committee Member  
On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT**: Cara DeHaan as nominated by the Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee is approved as a member of that committee.
- 9.8. Approval of the work of the Classis Interim Committee  
On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT**: the work of CIC & the Stated Clerk as reported in its minutes and the Agenda is approved.
- 9.9. Cara DeHaan then asked all the members of the CIC, the stated clerk and the Chair of Classis to stand in the middle of the room and asked the delegates to lay their hands on them while led in prayer for the work of the CIC, its members and advisors. She also prayed for the lunch to follow.

## 10. LUNCH BREAK UNTIL 1:15 PM

## 11. OPENING OF AFTERNOON SESSION

- 11.1. Jessica Brand opened the afternoon session with prayer.
- 11.2. Michael Fallon, on behalf of the Classis Candidacy Committee, introduced Derek Ellens, a student at Calvin Theological Seminary, who has completed all his work except for the comprehensive exam which is to take place in March. Derek had been supported both with encouragement and financial support by Classis Hamilton through the work of the Candidacy Committee.
- 11.3. Derek then spoke a few words of appreciation and thanked classis for its support during his years of study at CTS.
- 11.4. Michael then prayed for Derek to be sustained during his comprehensive exam and as he faces the external calling process so that he may discern where God wishes him to serve after he has been declared a candidate by Synod 2020.

## 12. EXPERIENCE OF DELEGATES to SYNOD 2019

- 12.1. William Koopmans, minister delegate, and Marcia Hosmar, deacon delegate, shared some highlights of their experience at Synod 2019.
- 12.2. They encouraged all delegates to consider letting their names stand for nomination as delegates to synod in future years. The experience is well worth the effort.

### 13. CHURCH ORDER MATTERS

- 13.1. Mike Collins has completed his job at Faith CRC, Burlington. Church Order, Article 24-d requires classis to concur with his release.  
On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Mike Collins is released from Faith CRC, Burlington in accordance with Church Order, Article 24-d.
- 13.2. Meadowlands Fellowship CRC requested classis to permit elders Connie Bijl, Justin De Moor, Jennifer Lucking, and Ken Tigchelaar to administer the sacraments during the sabbatical of Rev. Everett Vander Horst under C.O., Article 55.
- 13.3. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Meadowlands Fellowship CRC's request is approved.
- 13.4. Hagersville Community CRC requests classis to permit elders Davis Miedema and Chris Bill to administer the sacraments during the time that they do not have their own minister of the Word under C.O., Article 55.
- 13.5. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Hagersville Community CRC's request is approved.

### 14. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 14.1. The Chair of Classis declared an executive session and asked all those who were not delegates, office-bearers in the CRCNA or CIC members to leave the meeting.
- 14.2. Classis heard the verbal reports by various oversight committees regarding progress made on their respective assignments.
- 14.3. The Chair of Classis placed the motion tabled at the October 22<sup>nd</sup> classis meeting back on the table which was to withhold action on honourably releasing Josiah Bokma in accordance with C.O., Article 14-b until after a discussion by classis representatives had been held with Josiah and to bring this matter back to classis at its February meeting.
- 14.4. A report from the representatives who met with Josiah Bokma was presented as well as matters that arose after the October classis meeting. In light of these further developments, the following motion was adopted.  
On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** CIC is hereby authorized to call a special executive session classis meeting to hear and adjudicate the appeal that was filed after the October classis meeting.
- 14.5. As a result of the appeal, the October 22<sup>nd</sup> motion is further tabled until the appeal has been dealt with.
- 14.6. Willem de Vries offered prayer for all the matters addressed during the executive session.
- 14.7. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** executive session ended and guests were invited back into the regular session.

### 15. DENOMINATIONAL GOVERNANCE

- 15.1. William Koopmans, the Classis Hamilton Council of Delegates member, made a presentation of what has changed in the bi-national governance structure of the denomination as a result of a legal opinion provided to the Canadian Board of Directors by one of the foremost Canadian legal experts on charity law.
- 15.2. The legal opinion had been shared with both the Canadian denominational lawyer as well as his USA counterpart. Both advised that the legal opinion was sound and that the legal issues must be addressed.
- 15.3. It was stressed that the changes would only minimally, if at all, affect the bi-national nature of the denomination for ecclesiastical matters. The change is only with respect to direction and control over property and personnel matters in each country.

- 15.4. Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director, provided a brief overview of how the legal change has affected staffing at the Canadian office for the coming year. Additional changes may become necessary as the bi-national COD works through the technical issues during the next year.
- 15.5. Synod 2020 will receive the full report of what has happened and classes and congregations will be fully informed as changes take place. Opportunity for input from local congregations to the Canadian Board of Directors will also be possible.

#### 16. MOTION TO DESTROY THE BALLOTS

- 16.1. At this point in the meeting the election of delegates to Synod 2020 had been completed so the Chair of Classis asked for a motion to destroy the ballots.  
On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the ballots for the election of delegates to Synod 2020 be destroyed.

#### 17. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

- 17.1. The Credentials Committee reported that three items had been brought to their attention from the credentials of the churches. Two of these items had to do with pastors' availability to attend Synod 2020. The other was a request to set aside time for prayer for Laura and Henry Hess as well as the leadership of Faith CRC, Burlington. Laura is battling cancer and is going through chemotherapy and Henry, consequently, found it necessary to resign as Chair of Council to be able to be with and support Laura.  
The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** classis immediately enter into prayer as requested.
- 17.2. Davis Miedema offered prayer for Laura and Henry Hess as well as the leadership of Faith CRC.

#### 18. AFTERNOON 15 MINUTE REFRESHMENT BREAK WITH RETURN AT 3:50 PM

#### 19. SAFE CHURCH PRESENTATION

- 19.1. Due to the late hour, the scheduled 90-minute time allocated to this session was reduced to 25 minutes. This meant that some of the activities envisioned by the presenters could not be carried out.
- 19.2. Jake Ellens, the facilitator and partial presenter, introduced Becky Jones, the part time Safe Church & Disability Concerns person at the Burlington CRCNA office.
- 19.3. Becky made a presentation by PowerPoint which can be accessed on the Classis Hamilton Website here:  
[http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/safe\\_church\\_classis\\_hamilton\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/safe_church_classis_hamilton_presentation.pdf)
- 19.4. There are a number of links in the PowerPoint that can lead to further documents.
- 19.5. Elaine Van Wyngaarden led us through a brief presentation about the Circle of Grace which she highly recommended to the churches. Further information about the Circle of Grace can be found here: [http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/circle\\_of\\_grace\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/circle_of_grace_presentation.pdf)
- 19.6. Jake Ellens then presented the insurance issues and concerns that Classis Hamilton has experienced. Various possible solutions have been considered in cooperation with the Burlington CRCNA office. However, the only workable and reliable solution is when the local churches obtain their own abuse insurance certificate so that Classis Hamilton then will be able to purchase its own insurance. The full report of the insurance findings was provided in the CIC minutes of January 16, 2020 sent to the churches at an earlier date.
- 19.7. As a result of the presentation and discussion, the following motion was presented.



- 19.8. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** classis approved the search and appointment of a Safe Church Director to serve classis itself as well as the local churches of Classis Hamilton.
- 19.9. Part of the mandate of the Safe Church Director will be the motion that was passed at paragraph 9.9.2. of these minutes. A commitment was made that the complete job description which will incorporate the mandate of the previous Safe Church Team will be presented to classis at its May 26, 2020 meeting.
- 19.10. Jake Ellens, Becky Jones and Elaine Van Wyngaarden were thanked for the valuable information and effort they had put in their respective presentations.

## 20. PULPIT SUPPLY PRESENTATION

- 20.1. Mark Vandervliet, pulpit supply coordinator, highlighted a few items in the written report he had provided in the agenda. He then focussed on three ways in which the concerns he had identified over the past number of years might be addressed. The proposals were as follows:
  - 20.1.1. **Alternative One:** Discontinue the practice of providing Pulpit Supply to vacant congregations except for those churches whose Pastor is delegated to Synod.
  - 20.1.2. **Alternative Two:** Continue our current practice of providing Pulpit Supply (1 x per month; September thru May) but remove the provision where two-pastor congregations have the option of requesting pulpit supply if they are vacant of their “preaching Pastor” along with any exemption from the pulpit supply rotation for two-pastor congregations with only one Pastor.
  - 20.1.3. **Alternative Three:** No change from the current practice.
  - 20.1.4. The Chair of Classis first polled the elders and deacons of each church, though a spokesperson, to state what they found positive or negative about the pulpit supply system. The answers were varied.
  - 20.1.5. He then asked the pastor of each church to express what they found beneficial or negative about the pulpit supply system from their perspective. The responses were equally varied.
  - 20.1.6. A delegate then made a **MOTION THAT:** Classis Hamilton discontinue the practice of providing classical pulpit supply to vacant congregations except for those churches whose pastors are delegated to synod.
  - 20.1.7. After discussing this motion, it was **DEFEATED.**
  - 20.1.8. A delegate then noted the late hour and made a **MOTION THAT:** further consideration of this report be tabled until the next classis meeting. The motion was seconded and **ADOPTED.**

## 21. CLOSING

At 5:20 pm, the Chair of Classis thanked everyone for their work and participation during the day and asked Bruce Adema to pray for Safe Church and the Pulpit Supply matters as well as to offer thanks to God for the meeting of the day as a whole.

## 22. NEXT MEETING

- 22.1. The next regular meeting of Classes Hamilton is to convene on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at a venue and time to be announced later. Agenda deadline is April 14, 2020.
- 22.2. A special executive session meeting may be called at an earlier date to deal with the motion in minute 14.4 above.