



Christian
Reformed
Church

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

Date: February 26, 2019

Time: 9:00 AM

Venue: Redeemer University College, 777 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario

Chair: Anthony Elenbaas
Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk

Vice-Chair: Rita Klein-Geltink
Reporter: Joel Bootsma

Synodical Deputies:
None Required

Delegates:

Church	First Name	Last Name	Title
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	Jennifer	Lucking	Elder Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Marcia	Hosmar	Deacon Delegate
Hope	William	Koopmans	Pastor Delegate
Hope	David	Guichelaar	Elder Alternate
Hope	Chris	VanHouten	Deacon Delegate
New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
New Street	Trudy	Sykes	Elder Delegate
New Street	Ingrid	Dykstra	Deacon Delegate
Faith	David	Kloet	Elder Delegate
Faith	Brendan	DeRaaf	Deacon Delegate
Calvin	Ken	Benamins	Pastor Delegate
Calvin	Rob	Koning	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Eric	Heidbuurt	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate
Calvary	Chris	Mantel	Elder Delegate
Calvary	Bas	Hania	Elder Alternate
Hagersville Community	Henrietta	Heeg	Elder Delegate
Hagersville Community	Charlie	Arends	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Hayden	Regeling	Pastor Delegate
First Hamilton	Len	Moelker	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Jan	Disselkoen	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Anthony	Elenbaas	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Martin	Joldersma	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Sharon	Van Dokkemburg	Deacon Delegate
New Hope	Jess	Brand	Emerging Church
New Hope	Greg	Sinclair	Emerging Church
New Hope	Ginelle	Bucher	Emerging Church
Mt. Hope Community	Herma	Vander Meulen	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Mark	Demik	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Wim	de Vries	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	Alfred	Breukelman	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Zach	Alton	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pator Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Mark	Vandervliet	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor Delegate
Bethel	Jorita	Mulder	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Pauline	Vander Velde	Deacon Delegate-am
Maranatha	Ben	Ponsen	Pastor Delegate
Maranatha	Frank	Riewald	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Maurice	Houwer	Deacon Delegate

Meeting Details:

1. WELCOME

At 9:00 am, Chris Schoon, chair of the Classis Ministries Team, welcomed everyone present, and introduced David Zietsma, Vice President, External Relations and Enrolment, Redeemer University College.

2. OPENING WORSHIP

2.1. David Zietsma led in devotions based on Haggai 1. He also offered prayer for the churches of classis and for the day as a whole.

2.2. This was followed by sharing a number of newsworthy items.

2.2.1. Redeemer University received a \$11 million gift which has been allocated to reducing the annual tuition for students from \$17,000 to \$9,800 for the next five years.

2.2.2. President Robert J. Graham will be formally inaugurated into his position on Friday, March 1st.

2.2.3. Strategic Plan 2020 outcomes to date:

a. The long term debt has been reduced from \$30 million to \$17.6 million

b. New programs more fitting to the needs of students have been established.

c. Of interest to churches is the establishment of an urban and intercultural ministry program.

2.2.4. A new strategic planning process has begun based on the expected increased enrolment as a result of the generous gift that allowed tuition to be reduced substantially.

2.3. Rita Klein-Geltink led in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for Redeemer University College.

3. CALL TO ORDER

3.1. Chair of Classis, Anthony Elenbaas, called the meeting to order and offered some brief comments regarding the process for the day.

3.2. The stated clerk reported that all churches were represented by delegates as shown on the previous page.

3.3. The Chair asked all delegates to stand as evidence of their continued commitment to the Covenant for Office-bearers of the CRCNA.

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

3.5. Approval of Agenda

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the agenda and the addendum as communicated to the churches and delegates were approved for discussion and action where appropriate with minor variances in the sequence in which some of the items would be dealt with.

4. FIRST BALLOT TO ELECT MINISTER DELEGATES FOR SYNOD 2018

4.1. On behalf of the Classis Interim Committee, Ken Benjamins introduced the first ballot to vote for delegates to Synod 2019.

4.2. The ballots 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.

5. CANADIAN MINISTRIES PRESENTATION

5.1. Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director, shared about denominational ministries in Canada. Some of the highlights were:

5.1.1. They intentionally focus their work on local churches and avoid thinking of the Church as a hierarchy.

5.1.2. There is continued improvement in the Bridge App.

5.1.3. The Canadian Ministry Directory is easily accessible at <https://www.crcna.org/Canada>

5.1.4. They encourage churches to partner with other local churches, not just those that are CRC. In this context, they will make ecumenical grants of \$500 available as seed money for qualifying projects.

5.1.5. All offices and staff are readily accessible through the implementation of the “Click, Call, Chat” help project.

5.1.6. Structure and governance of the Canadian side of the bi-national denomination have changed substantially over the past number of years.

5.1.7. Connections 2 which had been piloted in a number of classes as the original Connections Project is now being rolled out denomination wide.

6. 15 MINUTE REFRESHMENT BREAK AT 10:00 AM

7. CLASSIS MINISTRIES TEAM REPORT

7.1. Chris Schoon, chair of the CMT, gave a brief verbal report of CMT’s activities and challenges.

7.2. Chris Schoon then drew attention to the external reports in the Agenda.

The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** the written reports from World Renew, Canadian Ministries, Calvin Theological Seminary, Redeemer University College, and Diaconal Ministries Canada are received for information.

7.3. Presentation by the Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee:

Greg Sinclair, chair of the Committee, made a few brief comments and introduced Jess Brand of New Hope CRC. Jess gave a few highlights about a project carried out with the \$500 grant received from the Committee. Greg then asked Ron Vandenbrink to give a brief update regarding the progress of church planting work of the Committee. Ron then introduced Terence Schilstra who had been retained by Committee to conduct community analysis in three areas within Classis Hamilton. The first analyses took place in South-West Brantford, a “community” of about 23,000 people which is expected to double in size within ten years. The process of discerning the need and God’s will for the area included a prayer walk through the community. This analysis was completed. The second analysis will take place in Stoney Creek and the third location is yet to be determined.

7.4. Presentation by the Youth Ministry Team:

John Bijl, the Youth Ministry Champion of Classis Hamilton, gave a brief report of the activities that have taken place and that are planned for the coming year. He informed the delegates that the successful youth retreats that have taken place in September of each year will be

continued and that detailed information will soon be shared with the churches. Delegates were asked to note for their congregations a “save the date notice” for the next youth retreat to take place from September 27 to 29, 2019.

7.5. Presentation by the Safe Church Team:

Al Karsten, on behalf of the Safe Church Leadership Team consisting of Elaine van Wyngaarden, Lawrence Uyl and himself, gave a report of their activities and challenges. A few highlights reported were as follows:

- 7.5.1. They appreciate the great response they have experienced in those who have come out to the training sessions.
- 7.5.2. They are delighted that all the churches of classis have a policy in place. Now the focus is on ensuring that the policies are properly implemented. He encouraged the delegates to support this important work of their local teams.
- 7.5.3. They have had challenges finding people willing and able to serve on an Advisory Panel of trained individuals who can be called upon should a need for their services arise. They are now looking to work together with neighbouring classes to set up a training program for those who might be willing to serve on such an Advisory Panel, but who feel that they are not qualified.
- 7.5.4. The “Circle of Grace” will be one of the programs the Team hopes to focus on during this year. Circle of Grace is a program that equips children and youth to understand and participate in a safe environment for themselves and others.
- 7.5.5. They continue to covet the prayers of the churches for their work as they move forward in this ministry.

7.6. Approval of CMT’s Work:

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the work of the CMT to date as reported to the churches in the CMT minutes and the classis agenda is approved.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

8.1. 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.

8.2. Classis also adopted the following resolution:

Classis mandated the the CIC to establish a committee of no less than three competent office bearers to engage the issues at Bethel CRC with the goal of achieving reconciliation.

It is understood that this committee shall:

1. Have authority to engage all parties involved.
2. Ensure that a trained mediator is employed to serve the reconciliation process.
3. Guarantee that all pertinent information, including the minutes of the “strict Executive session,” be made available to Pastor /Church Resources and the trained mediator.

9. BREAK IN EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 11:30 AM

The Chair of Classis declared a break in the executive session to participate in the Redeemer University Professor/Pastor Exchange Luncheon to which all delegates had been invited.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION RESUMED AT 1:00 PM

10.1. The executive session resumed to share a few matters for information.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDED AT 1:15 PM

The Chair of Classis declared executive session ended and asked the Classis Interim Committee to present its report.

12. CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE REPORT

12.1. Ken Benjamins, President of the CIC, drew the attention of the delegates to the relevant reports contained in the agenda. Since this was the first meeting after the Rules of Procedure were amended in October 2018 to no longer require a ballot vote for nominees to serve when there are single nominees to fill the vacancies, a motion to affirm the selections made was presented as follows:

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** The appointment of Ralph Koops as Church Visitor Team A member, Anthony Elenbaas as Campus Ministry Team member, and Siebert Van Houten and Ed Visser as primary and alternate synodical deputy respectively, is approved.

NOTE: Since the name of the Chair of Classis was included in the motion, he turned the meeting over to the Vice-Chair during this part of the meeting. The Vice-Chair returned the meeting back to the Chair after the vote was taken.

12.2. Approval of CIC's work.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** 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 the agenda is approved.

13. MINISTERS' PENSION PLAN & CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY PRESENTATION

13.1. Keith Oosthoek, a member of the Board of Trustees of Calvin Theological Seminary and also Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Ministers Pension Fund made a presentation to the delegates highlighting the work of both organizations and the progress they have made to date.

13.2. The Chair of Classis thanked Keith for his presentation and promised that both organizations would be remembered in the closing prayer of classis.

14. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

14.1. Calvary CRC, Flamborough, had presented a request to be addressed by the Credentials Committee:

The Council of Calvary CRC would like Classis Hamilton to work together in drafting a position statement and/or policy on the recreational use of cannabis in light of the Canadian government's recent legalization of marijuana. Since this is currently only a Canadian concern, and no official denominational position statement exists, we believe it is important for Canadian Classes to take some leadership in helping churches clearly articulate and implement policies on the recreational use of marijuana from a Reformed Biblical Worldview.

14.2. The Credentials Committee recommended that Calvary CRC, Flamborough should formulate their request into an overture.

The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** Calvary CRC, Flamborough is invited to bring an overture to classis to have classis overture synod to appoint a denominational study committee.

Grounds:

- The legalization of recreational cannabis use is a process playing out not only across Canada, but also in the United States.
- The denomination has an approved position on the use of alcohol, which demonstrates a concern for guidance in the area of substance use/abuse.
- There is no easily accessible mechanism to communicate/coordinate a study committee among Canadian CRC's only.
- An overture is the best way to formally test the interest of Classis in pursuing such a position/policy.
- An overture is the best way to begin the process of pursuing such a study.

15. FACILITATED CONVERSATION FOR TWO HOURS

- 15.1. Gareth Harker and Chris Schoon, on behalf of the Classis Ministries Team, lead the delegates through a conversation. The elder and deacon delegates were asked to sit at tables where no other elder or deacon of their own church was sitting to ensure cross-pollination of thoughts and ideas. The pastors were asked to congregate around a separate table for this conversation. Each table was asked to assign a reporter who would write down the responses which were collected at the end of the session to be discussed by the CMT for input to further discussions at future classis meetings.
- 15.2. After presenting some 30,000 foot questions, including: "What does it mean for us to be Classis?", "Are Ministry Shares and Shared Ministry the same thing?" and "What does it mean for Classis to be Classis between official Classis meetings?", the delegates were then asked to address the following.
- 15.3. Share with the table one joy/celebration you have as a church right now, and one challenge you have.
- 15.4. If you have been in Classis Hamilton for some time, what are some changes you've seen that have affected (positive and negative) the relationships between the churches of Classis? If you are new to Classis Hamilton (or Classis in general), how do you see (now or in the future) churches working together for shared ministry goals?
- 15.5. In what ways have you experienced Classis outside of Classis meetings? Is there another congregation in Classis Hamilton that your church feels close to? Are there ways in which your congregation has felt distant or alone within Classis Hamilton? What has contributed to feeling close to or distant from other churches in Classis Hamilton?
- 15.6. Try to imagine what it would look like for all the churches in Classis Hamilton to be without a pastor at the same time. How would Classis function? Who would be the key stakeholders? Would the bond between churches be stronger? Weaker? Unchanged?
- 15.7. What is something (a dream) your church would like to see come to fruition that you would need to partner with other churches or organizations in order to achieve it?

16. BALLOTING COMMITTEE REPORT

- 16.1. The balloting committee reported that the following delegates to Synod 2019 have been elected:

Minister delegate	William Koopmans
Minister alternate	Rita Klein-Geltink
Elder delegate	Darrel Ouwehand
Elder alternate	TBD
Deacon delegate	Marcia Hosmar
Deacon alternate	TBD
Fourth delegate	Gareth Harker
Fourth Alternate	Ken Benjamins

16.2. Since there were not sufficient nominees for elder and deacon received prior to the meeting to fill the alternate positions, by common consent **IT WAS AGREED THAT:** the delegates and churches search for possible nominees and provide names of those willing to serve as alternate elder or deacon delegate to the CIC prior to noon, March 12, 2019 so that an elder and deacon alternate delegate might be added to the above list.

16.3. Destruction of Ballots

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** The ballots are destroyed.

17. CLOSING

The Chair of Classis thanked everyone for their work and participation, read John 15:9-17 and closed in prayer, asking God to bless the presentations that had been made and to use the decisions made for the welfare of the congregations.

18. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Classes Hamilton is to convene on Tuesday, May 28, 2019 at New Street CRC, Burlington. Time of meeting commencement and details will be communicated in the agenda to be sent to the churches no later than five weeks prior to the meeting.