



Christian
Reformed
Church

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

Date: May 22, 2018

Time: 9:30 AM

Venue: First Hamilton CRC, 181 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, Ontario

Chair: Jeff Klingenberg
Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk

Vice-Chair: Anthony Elenbaas
Reporter: Joel Bootsma

Synodical Deputies:
None required

Delegates:

Church	First Name	Last Name	Title
Ancaster CRC	Rita	Klein-Geltink	Pastor Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Ryan	Game	Elder Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Wendy	Vording	Deacon Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Judy	Cook	Elder Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Marcia	Hosmar	Deacon Delegate
Hope	William	Koopmans	Pastor Delegate
Hope	Ryan	Haan	Deacon Delegate
Hope	Fred	Reitsma	Elder Alternate
New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
New Street	Rosana	van der Woerd	Elder Delegate
New Street	John	Dekker	Deacon Delegate
Faith	Dave	Hook	Elder Delegate
Faith	Dan	Tersingi	Deacon Delegate
Calvin	Ken	Benamins	Pastor Delegate
Calvin	Sid	Boonstra	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Rod	Gorter	Elder Alternate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate
Calvary	Brian	Vyn	Elder Alternate
Calvary	Dave	VanderMeulen	Elder Alternate
Hagersville Community	Jeff	Klingenberg	Pastor Delegate
Hagersville Community	Charlie	Arends	Elder Delegate
Hagersville Community	Brian	Paterson	Deacon Delegate
First Hamilton	Chris	Schoon	Pastor Delegate
First Hamilton	Len	Moelker	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Gina	Taylor	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Anthony	Elenbaas	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Martin	Joldersma	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Sharon	Van Dokkemburg	Deacon Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Roelof	Peereboom	Pastor Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	John	Flokstra	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	John	Demik	Elder Delegate
New Hope	Greg	Sinclair	Emerging Church
New Hope	Jeff	Neven	Emerging Church
New Hope	Ginelle	Bucher	Emerging Church
Ebenezer	Daryl	DeKlerk	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	John	Miedema	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Keith	Miedema	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pator Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Mark	Vandervliet	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor Delegate
Bethel	Alicia	Hutchings	Deacon Delegate
Maranatha	Frank	Riewald	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Jake	Termorshuizen	Deacon Delegate

Meeting Details:

1. WELCOME AND OPENING

Chris Schoon, Pastor of First Hamilton CRC, welcomed delegates and guests present, asked everyone to sing an opening hymn, and offered prayer asking the Lord's blessings on the day.

2. OPENING WORSHIP AND SHARING OF MINISTRY

- 2.1. The host church, First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church, provided opening devotions. Chris Schoon led in opening devotions based on Acts 11:19-30.
- 2.2. CAP – Rachel Cook, a member of the congregation shared about the community outreach taking place, especially through the Christians Against Poverty (CAP) program. She shared the stories of a number of community members and how the program had impacted those individuals as well as the congregation.
- 2.3. Calling of a Second Pastor – Len Moelker, an elder of the congregation then shared the process the church and its council had gone through to discern God's will with respect to calling a second pastor. He reported that a candidate had been identified a year ago, but that call fell through. At the present time, the council with the support of the congregation is ready to extend a call to a person who will appear before Synod 2018 to be declared as a candidate in the denomination. The formal call will be extended once the candidate has been approved by synod.
- 2.4. Congregational Life – Chris Schoon then shared about some other activities taking place in the congregation either for the first time or after a long period of inaction. Examples shared were the College and Careers program for people 18 to about 35 years which began in the past year and the CADETS and GEMS programs which hope to begin in September.
- 2.5. Anthony Elenbaas led in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church and all its ministries and activities. He also prayed for the Borgdorff family because of the loss of husband and father, Peter Borgdorff, the day before.
- 2.6. After the prayer, the delegates and guests engaged in a time of prayer led by Marian Lensink.

3. CALL TO ORDER, ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA APPROVAL

- 3.1. The Chair of Classis called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM and gave some introductory information for the day as a whole. He officially shared that Peter Borgdorff, a former executive director of the denomination, died the day before. He asked Willian Koopmans who had worked with Peter in various capacities to share a few observations about Peter's dedication to the work of the denomination.

3.2. Attendance

The list of attendees is shown above. All first time delegates signed the *Covenant for Officebearers* of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

The Chair noted that pastor delegate, Everett Vander Horst was absent since he would be traveling to Grand Rapids to conduct the private burial service of Peter Borgdorff. Later in the meeting it was noted that Pastor Ben Ponson was also absent due to emergency root canal surgery that morning.

The Chair **RULED THAT:** the officially registered delegates and alternates as noted on the previous page were seated and that the meeting was properly constituted.

3.3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. CLASSIS HAMILTON MINISTRIES TEAM REPORT

4.1. Chris Schoon, chair of the CMT, highlighted a few items of the CMT's activities as well as the written report contained in the agenda.

4.1.1. He then **MOVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton elect Anthony Elenbaas as the Chair of Classis effective June 1, 2018 until May 31, 2019.

4.1.2. Since this motion related to the election of a person, the current classical rules of procedure required that the election was by ballot.

4.1.3. The ballot for all individuals to be elected as functionaries or committee members of classis was collected by the balloting committee at this point.

4.1.4. He then asked representatives of the various ministry committees to present their individual reports.

4.2. Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee – On behalf of the Committee, Michael Fallon highlighted the report and recommendations contained in the agenda.

4.2.1. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves disbursements from the Student Support Fund for Derek Ellens in the amount of USD \$15,972.00 as a forgivable loan for his full-time enrolment in the M.Div. program at Calvin Theological Seminary for the 2018-2019 academic year.

4.2.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves the actions of the CHCC as recorded in its Report in the Agenda.

4.3. Classis Hamilton Campus Ministries Committee – Chair of the Committee, Bruce Adema, asked Michael Fallon, Campus Chaplain, to present a brief verbal report to augment his written report in the agenda. Bruce then shared a written report with the delegates showing the outcome of a short roundtable discussion that had taken place at the February classis meeting. As a follow-up to that document, Bruce asked the delegates to form into small groups to discuss the following three questions and to provide him with a written summary of their observations.

4.3.1. What model of campus ministry seems to hold the greatest promise for effective engagement with students, staff and faculty? What do we want to accomplish?

4.3.2. What funding model is most appropriate for this ministry? Reflect on the capacity of classis and its member churches to support expanding ministry plans.

4.3.3. What other thoughts or insights would you like to share with the Campus Ministry Committee? Answers to this question do not need to be limited to Mohawk College.

4.3.4. After the completion of this exercise and closing comments by Bruce, the Chair of Classis asked the delegates to receive the reports of the Campus Chaplain.

4.3.5. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton receives the written and verbal Reports from the Campus Chaplain as information.

4.4. Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Team – Daryl DeKlerk reported for the Team. He drew attention to the activities that had taken place since the last meeting of classis, some successful and some not so much. He also shared information about the second annual youth retreat that will be taking place at the end of September. He further reported on the very invigorating All Ontario Youth Retreat that had taken place the past weekend and how, in answer to prayer, the Holy Spirit had been present in some miraculous ways. The Team continues to look for ways in which more intentional leadership development can take place.

- 4.5. Classis Hamilton Safe Church Team – Marian Lensink reported on behalf of this Team. She noted that this would likely be the last time that she will be reporting for this Team since Al Karsten, a member of Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, has accepted the leadership position to serve as chair of this Team. She also reported that the Team had arranged a learning session with Bonnie Nicholas, Director of Safe Church Ministries of the CRCNA, which was recently held at Meadowlands CRC focussing on recent developments like the #MeToo movement. Churches of Classis Niagara were also invited to send representatives. Thirty local church representatives were present. She then announced that the Canadian Ministries office is in the process of establishing a half time position for this ministry in Canada. She asked Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director to provide some more information on this development. Darren pointed out that this half time appointment did not constitute a new salary position with the denomination, but that it will be a reduction of a previous full time disability concerns position to part time and that the designated person would spend the other part time on safe church matters.
- 4.6. Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee – In the absence of Everett Vander Horst, Marian Lensink also gave a brief report for this Committee. She noted that the long term focus is still on church planting, but that other smaller incremental steps were currently being encouraged for the churches of classis. For this purpose, the Committee has reached out to the local churches to encourage them to apply for small grants to initiate new outreach projects. Local church councils also have been asked to provide feedback to the committee in relation to a communication sent to all church councils by Everett.
- 4.7. Chris Schoon then drew attention to the report in the agenda submitted by World Renew. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** The external agency report from World Renew is received as information.
- 4.8. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves the work of the Classis Ministries Team to date as reported to the churches in the Minutes and the agenda.

5. CLOSING OF MORNING SESSION AND LUNCH BREAK

At 12:10 Anthony Elenbaas offered a prayer of thanks to God for all the reports presented during the morning session and prayed for a blessing for lunch.

6. RETURN FROM THE LUNCH BREAK AND PRAYER FOR SYNOD

Chris Schoon led in a time of prayer for Synod 2018, our delegates by name and the denominational leadership as a whole.

7. CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE REPORT

- 7.1. Ken Benjamins, President of the CIC, introduced two motions that the CIC published in the agenda. The first dealt with sharing information via a brief video about the synod experience by delegates so that officebearers would become more informed about the workings and experience of synod which might encourage them to let their names stand to be delegated to future synods. The second dealt with replacing the formal signing of the Covenant for Officebearers with the same practice adopted by synod.
- 7.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton adopts that all delegates to Synod 2018 and subsequent synods each be asked to provide an up to five minute video of their experiences and observations about synod to be placed on the website.
- 7.3. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis follow the precedent set by synod for the delegates to stand up at the request of the Chair of Classis to

indicate their commitment to the Covenant for Officebearers at the beginning of each classis meeting, and that Rule of Procedure 5.3.1. is considered amended accordingly.

- 7.4. He then reported that the ballots collected during the morning session confirmed that the following were elected:
 - CHAIR OF CLASSIS – Anthony Elenbaas
 - STATED CLERK – Dick Kranendonk
 - CLASSIS HAMILTON YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM – Ryan Flokstra and Cloe Winter
 - McMASTER & MOHAWK CAMPUS MINISTRY COMMITTEE – Lisa Nightingale
 - CLASSIS HAMILTON HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE – Steve Dykstra and Greg Sinclair
 - 7.5. He then drew attention to the denominational ministry share report in the Agenda Addendum. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** Classis Hamilton receives the Denominational Ministry Share Report for 2017 as information
 - 7.6. He then presented the communication from Darren Roorda contained in the Agenda Addendum dealing with the National Gathering to take place from May 24 – 26, 2019 in Edmonton, Alberta. Since Darren was present, the Chair of Classis asked him to provide some additional information. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** Classis Hamilton takes note of the communication from Canadian Ministries regarding the Canadian National Gathering to be held in Edmonton from May 24 – 26, 2019, including the “gatherer” selection process.
 - 7.7. Ken then asked classis to approve the work of the CIC and Stated Clerk. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves 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.
 - 7.8. Since the voting for the day had been completed, the Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** the ballots be destroyed.
8. PRESENTATION BY MOUNT HOPE COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
- 8.1. Roelof Peereboom made a presentation regarding the move of the congregation from Mount Hamilton to Mount Hope as well as the resulting change in the name of the church effective May 1, 2018. He also shared how the work and changes over the last number of years had caused the church to ask council members to continue to serve well beyond their normal terms. These persons are now tired and need to be relieved and replaced by others. The congregation had gone through a time of very significant change which is not easy to embrace for those who do not like change. However, it is difficult to find persons willing to serve as officebearers. The church requests prayers by the churches of classis for healing of possible hurts and for a vibrant future ministry in the new community. On a more positive note, he shared that a number of visitors in the Mount Hope community had attended one or more worship services to ‘check them out.’
 - 8.2. The Chair of Classis spoke words of encouragement to the relocated and renamed Mount Hope Community Christian Reformed Church.
9. OVERTURE COMMITTEE #1 REPORT
- 9.1. New Hope Christian Reformed Church, an emerging church that has now existed for ten years, requested Classis Hamilton to approve the transition from ‘emerging’ to ‘established’ church.
 - 9.2. On behalf of the Overture Committee #1, Daryl DeKlerk presented a report which supports Classis Hamilton to approve the request.
 - 9.3. **MOTION** duly made and seconded **THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves the request by New Hope Christian Reformed Church to constitute its first council.

- 9.4. After some discussion, an amendment to the above motion was made and seconded to include the phrase "to become an organized church and" immediately prior to the words "to constitute its first council." The amendment was seconded and carried.
- 9.5. The new main motion now read, On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves the request by New Hope Christian Reformed Church to become an organized church and to constitute its first council.

FOUNDATIONS

- 9.5.1. This is in accord with Church Order art. 38-b, "When a council is being constituted for the first time, the approval of classis is required."
- 9.5.2. We note with thanks to God that New Hope has had a kingdom presence in the East Hamilton community for the last 10 years. The supplement for art. 38 (point 1) states, "Ordinarily the congregation shall have been in existence for at least three years," which New Hope meets.
- 9.5.3. We have confirmed that with at least 45 adults who are faithful contributors to the life of the church, "The congregation includes a sufficient number of members who meet the biblical requirements for church office and are committed to use their personal spiritual gifts in providing leadership and support to the congregation and its ministry." (in accord with CO art. 38-b supplement, point 2) There is an appropriate method of nominating and affirming Leadership Team members on a 3-year rotating basis.
- 9.5.4. It is evident from the financial statements provided that, "The congregation exercises financial stewardship for the continuing development and effectiveness of its ministry... that reflects its capacity and commitment toward financial self-support, including personnel expenses and classical and denominational ministry shares." (in accord with CO supplement, art. 38-b, point 3)
- 9.5.5. The community in which New Hope is located "offers the potential for continuing ministry, and the congregation gives evidence of its continuing commitment to fulfil the great commission with the resources and opportunities God gives." (in accord with CO supplement, art. 38-b, point 4)
- 9.6. Classis delegates expressed their joy of New Hope CRC wishing to entertain this next step in the life of its existence.

10. OVERTURE COMMITTEE #2 REPORT

On behalf of the Overture Committee #1, William Koopmans reports as follows:

- 10.1. Regarding the Youth Ministry Catalyst overture.
 - 10.1.1. We applaud the goal/vision of the overture which seeks to engage youth in our churches and ministries.
 - 10.1.2. A Youth catalyst cannot replace the ministry of youth leaders at the local level. A Youth Catalyst can only assist and encourage their important work.
 - 10.1.3. The Youth Committee has been working on this position since 2017. It is time to give it a try. The overture notes that the position will be reviewed in three years.
 - 10.1.4. Therefore, we recommend that classis adopt the overture.
 - 10.1.5. **MOTIONS** duly made and seconded:
 - a. Classis Hamilton approve the proposed Youth Ministry Catalyst position for an initial period of 3 years, at 8 hours/week to support the youth ministry staff and volunteers in churches in Classis Hamilton, beginning in January, 2019; and
 - b. if (a) is approved, that Classis Hamilton also approve the hiring process for this position.

- c. **Remuneration:** \$25.00/hour to be evaluated annually, consistent with other paid positions in our classis.
- 10.1.6. A delegate commented that there might be unintended consequences for classis with respect adopting the above motions as a result of the newly enacted amendments to the *Labour Relations Act* of Ontario which came into force on January 1, 2018. His understanding of that Act's amendments is that once a volunteer position has been declared a paid position it cannot revert back to a volunteer position. In addition a paid position must meet the equal pay provisions of the Act which requires employers to compare and justify the remuneration of all salaried positions to meet the equal pay principles.
- 10.1.7. In light of this caution, the overture committee accepted the inclusion of the words "subject to review by CIC with respect to labour law concerns" between the word "position" and "for" in motion a.
- 10.1.8. Therefore, on motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves the proposed Youth Ministry Catalyst position, subject to review by CIC with respect to labour law concerns, for an initial period of 3 years, at 8 hours/week to support the youth ministry staff and volunteers in churches in Classis Hamilton, beginning in January, 2019.
- 10.1.9. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approve the hiring process for the position, also subject to review by CIC with respect to labour law concerns, which reads as follows:
 - "A job description for the role will be sent to the churches of Classis Hamilton by June, 2018. In this way we will seek a candidate who is already locally connected. Applications will be screened in July by the Classis Interim Committee, and applicants interviewed by September. A qualifying candidate will be evaluated and/or approved by classis in October, 2018."
- 10.1.10. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Motion c. in the overture is tabled, subject to the findings of the CIC with respect to the labour law issues.
- 10.2. Regarding the Ministry Shares Overture (First Hamilton CRC)
 - 10.2.1. We [the Overture Committee #2] recommend that classis not accede to the overture. First Hamilton CRC is free to resubmit an overture that addresses how the churches can prioritize ministry share giving in a way that is fair and equitable, and in a way that allows the broader denomination to be part of the conversation.
 - 10.2.2. As a result of the negative recommendation, the Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** The First Hamilton motions are open for discussion.
 - 10.2.3. **MOTIONS** duly made and seconded: **(a)** The First Hamilton CRC Council recommends that Classis Hamilton employ a new funding partnership model with member churches based on a pledged percentage of each church's operating budget rather than the current share model which divides the costs of agreed upon ministries between the churches based on confessing adult membership numbers. **(b)** If adopted, and by extension, First Hamilton CRC Council recommends that Classis Hamilton adopt a policy of encouraging member churches to give to the Denomination based on a similar model.

GROUNDS:

 - a. **It reflects our local church practice:** This model of pledging a percentage of our individual churches' operating budgets is in keeping with our own church practices of encouraging our members to give sacrificially in accordance with their means. By extending this practice to classical and denominational funding, we in turn

encourage our churches to honour these covenant partnerships in accordance with their means.

- b. **It acknowledges financial capacity:** The share model employed by Classis Hamilton and the Denomination, while equitable according to church membership size, does not take into consideration church financial capacity. In addition, there is no natural constraint imposed upon the share model that incorporates into the classical and denominational budget processes the financial constraints of the member churches.
- c. **It honours partners with financial constraints:** Just as no individual income and capacity to give is the same, so too, the churches' incomes, expenses, and capacity to engage financially in ministry partnerships are not the same. This should not mean that those churches with less financial capacity are seen as delinquent partners, rather classical (and by extension denominational) ministries should reflect the joint capacity of all the churches, each church contributing as they have decided (2 Cor. 9:7).
- d. **It assists Councils with prioritization:** When faced with classical and denominational shares that are more than churches feel they can afford, Councils often find themselves making difficult budgetary decisions. How do they continue to honour both their covenant partnerships and their call to local church ministry? A percentage model allows for clear prioritization of local, classical, and denominational ministries.
- e. **The timing is right:** Synod 2016 asked for the share system to be looked at, and two Classes in our denomination have already adopted a model of pledged percentage giving.

10.2.4. After some discussion regarding how **MOTION (a)** would operate in practice because of the specific wording that appeared to be confusing, the Chair of Classis called for the question. **MOTION (a) WAS DEFEATED.**

11. REFRESHMENT BREAK

12. Upon returning from the refreshment break, the officers of classis permitted a delegate to introduce a follow-up motion with respect to the consequences of the defeat of the First Hamilton CRC overture. **MOTION** made and seconded: That classis request the CIC to develop a process to explore the issues raised by the discussion on ministry shares today, bringing back appropriate recommendations as needed.

12.1. A delegate observed that CIC need not to develop a process since it is already clearly established. The process is for First Hamilton or another church to submit a new overture.

12.2. The **MOTION WAS DEFEATED.**

13. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

13.1. The Credentials Committee presented its report regarding the matters raised on the credentials received from the local churches.

13.2. Faith CRC, Burlington Submitted the Following Request:

13.2.1. Last year our Council sent the following request to classis: "We would like to have a conversation about aligning the classis ministry vision with the new denominational ministry plan, Our Journey 2020."

13.2.2. We are aware that classis acted on our request [at the January 17, 2017 meeting], but are unsure about what form this action has taken and would like to hear an update.
Thank you.

13.2.3. **Committee Advice:** A response to this question be given by the Classis Ministry Team.

13.3. Further, your Credentials Committee noted this item from the Classis Interim Committee which stated:

“There were many churches with deacons missing at the most recent classis meeting or only two delegates were present from a number of churches. CIC asks classis to set some time aside to discuss this matter.”

13.3.1. **Committee Advice:** That the Classis Ministry Team be asked to set aside 20 minutes at the October 2018 meeting of Classis Hamilton for this discussion. Also, in the meantime, the CMT would ask the churches of Classis Hamilton to address this question individually, and then provide a synopsis of their response to the Stated Clerk ahead of that meeting for inclusion in the Agenda.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton adopts the advice of the Credentials Committee.

14. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At this point the meeting was adjourned to conduct the Annual General Meeting after which the classis meeting resumed for closing devotions. A separate set of AGM minutes will be included in the May 2019 Classis Hamilton agenda.

15. CLOSING DEVOTIONS

At 3:45 PM, the Chair of Classis thanked everyone present for the way the presentations were made and the good spirit evident throughout the meeting. He led in brief devotions by reading Psalm 46 and closed the meeting with prayer.

16. ANNUAL LISTING OF DELEGATES, FUNCTIONARIES AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As required by the Rules of Procedure, the Stated Clerk is to provide an updated list of Delegates, Functionaries and Committee Members attached to the minutes of the May classis meeting. The list can be accessed at this link: <http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/functionaries.pdf>

17. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Classis Hamilton is to convene on Tuesday, October 23, 2018 at Calvary CRC, Flamborough. 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.