



Christian
Reformed
Church

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

Date: October 25, 2016

Time: 12:30 PM

Venue: Hope CRC, 64 Buchanan Cres,, Brantford, Ontario

Chair: Rita Klein-Geltink
Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk

Vice-Chair: Ken Benjamins
Reporter: Kevin DeRaaf

Synodical Deputies:

William Koopmans
Ray VanderKooij
Herman Praamsma

Classis Chatham
Classis Huron
Classis Toronto

Delegates:

Church	First Name	Last Name	Title
Ancaster CRC	Rita	Klein-Geltink	Pastor Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Corrie	Mulder	Elder Delegate*
Ancaster CRC	Jim	Bezemer	Deacon Delegate*
Meadowlands Fellowship	Kevin	Vander Meulen	Elder Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Jody	Bruulsema	Elder Delegate*
Meadowlands Fellowship	Marcia	Hosmar	Deacon Delegate
Hope	Andrew	Zomerman	Pastor Delegate
Hope	Tim	Vaandering	Elder Delegate
New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
New Street	Adrian	VanderVaart	Elder Delegate
New Street	Jenny Lynn	Vos	Deacon Delegate*
Faith	Kevin	DeRaaf	Pastor Delegate
Faith	Ken	VanderStoep	Elder Delegate*
Faith	John	Wesselson	Deacon Delegate*
Calvin	Ken	Benjamins	Pastor Delegate
Calvin	Ken	Tigchelaar	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Don	Koning	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate*
Calvary	Benj	Vandermeulen	Elder Delegate
Calvary	Bill	Dam	Deacon Delegate*
Hagersville Community	Jeff	Klingenberg	Pastor Delegate
Hagersville Community	Aaron	Miedema	Elder Delegate
First	Chris	Schoon	Pastor Delegate
First	Justin	Cook	Elder Delegate
First	Gina	Taylor	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Henry	Kranenburg	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	David	Rumph	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	John	Geerts	Deacon Delegate*
Mt. Hamilton	Bob	DeHaan	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hamilton	Greg	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Daryl	DeKlerk	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	Peter	Brouwer	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Leonard	Bootsma	Deacon Delegate*
Immanuel, Smc	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Mark	Vandervliet	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor Delegate
Bethel	Paul	Groen	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Jack	Traas	Deacon Delegate
Maranatha	Mark	Vandermeer	Deacon Delegate
Maranatha	Henk	Vaarkamp	Elder Alternate

* First time delegates.

Meeting Details

1. OPENING WELCOME AND PRAYER

- 1.1. Ken Benjamins, chair of the Classis Ministries Team, welcomed everyone present including the synodical deputies and guests. He then entered into prayer asking for the Lord's blessings on the gathered delegates for the afternoon and evening agenda.

2. OPENING WORSHIP

- 2.1. The host church, Hope Christian Reformed Church provided opening devotions. Dan DeVries led us in song and reflected on a portion of Scripture.
- 2.2. Dan DeVries also shared of the ministries taking place at Hope; ministry in the community and among the youth.
- 2.3. Ken Benjamins led in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for Hope Christian Reformed Church of Brantford.

3. CALL TO ORDER

The chair called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM and gave some introductory information for the day as a whole.

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

3.2. 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 as well as two additional items dealing with the timing of the winter and spring classis meetings to be dealt with under the CIC section of the agenda were approved for discussion and action where appropriate.

3.3. Vice Chair took the Chair

At this point, the Chair deferred to the Vice-Chair to preside over the next item on the agenda since the candidate was employed at her church.

4. EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE ADAM VEENSTRA

4.1. Introductory Comments

The Vice-Chair reminded the delegates that the examination of Adam Veenstra had been tabled on March 22, 2016 after he sustained the Practica section. For that reason, the Practica examiner was asked to introduce Adam Veenstra to the delegates who were new at this meeting and to conduct a very brief Practica question and answer session.

4.2. Introduction of Adam Veenstra and Practica Review

Bruce Adema introduced the candidate and proceeded with a brief review in the area of **Practica**, an inquiry into the candidate's relationship to God and commitment to ministry. Opportunity for discussion was given to the delegates and synodical deputies.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis proceed to the next area of inquiry.

4.3. Sermon Evaluation

On behalf of the sermon evaluators, two delegates from Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis, Daryl DeKlerk presented a verbal report on the evaluation of Adam Veenstra's preached sermon and the manner in which he conducted a worship service at Ancaster CRC, Ancaster, on Sunday September 25, 2016. The reporter also provided a critique of the written Old Testament and Catechism sermons submitted by Adam Veenstra. Opportunity for discussion was given to the delegates and synodical deputies.

On motion was duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis proceed to the next area of inquiry. The synodical deputies concurred.

4.4. Biblical and Theological Position

Andrew Zomerman examined Adam Veenstra on his biblical and theological judgment, competence, and soundness. Opportunity for additional questions was given to the delegates and synodical deputies.

4.5. Executive Session

The Vice-Chair declared an executive session and asked all those present who were not delegates, members of the CIC, or office bearers in their local churches to leave the meeting.

4.6. Motion to Admit

A motion was duly made and seconded to admit Adam Veenstra to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church.

- 4.6.1. The Vice-Chair offered a prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the consideration of the decision at hand.
- 4.6.2. The synodical deputies were excused to prepare their recommendation.
- 4.6.3. The delegates voted by ballot.
- 4.6.4. The motion to admit Adam Veenstra to the ministry of the Word was approved.
- 4.6.5. The synodical deputies returned and stated that they concurred with the decision of classis. They provided a written statement to that effect. The Vice-Chair thanked the synodical deputies.

4.7. Motion to Destroy Ballots

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

4.8. End of Executive Session

The Vice-Chair declared executive session ended, returned presiding back to the Chair and invited Adam Veenstra and guests back into the meeting.

- 4.8.1. The Chair congratulated Adam Veenstra on behalf of classis and presented him with the Classical Diploma. She also gave him words of encouragement as he begins his ordained ministry at Ancaster CRC in Ancaster, Ontario. The delegates were invited to sing the doxology.
- 4.8.2. The Chair declared a recess to give the delegates and guests time to personally congratulate Adam Veenstra.

5. REFRESHMENT BREAK

A refreshment break took place at this point in the meeting to permit the delegates and guests to congratulate Adam Veenstra

6. FAITH FORMATION PRESENTATION

Lesli Van Milligen made a verbal and visual presentation of the services provided to local churches by Faith Formation Ministries.

7. CANADIAN MINISTRIES PRESENTATION

7.1. Darren Roorda provided classis with an update of the denominational Ministry Plan and how that informs the direction and activities of Canadian Ministries.

7.2. Roorda also put the National Gathering held in May in the overall context of the Ministry Plan.

8. CLASSIS MINISTRIES TEAM

8.1. Ken Benjamins, Chair of the CMT, provided classis with a brief overview of the ministry activities taking place in classis by its various committees.

8.2. Bejamins introduced Kevin DeRaaf who was nominated by the CMT to be the Chair of classis for the year 2017. Delegates were asked to mark their ballots which were collected later during the meeting.

8.3. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis approve the work of the CMT to date as previously communicated to the churches in the CMT minutes.

8.4. Safe Church Presentation

On behalf of the Classis Safe Church Team, Fred Bennink provided up-to-date information about the purpose and activities of local church safe church teams. He encouraged the churches to ensure that safe church policies are not only in place, but that they are properly implemented. This can best be done by means of an annual audit. He also encouraged churches to consider the services provided by Plan to Protect. They can be accessed via this link:

<http://www.plantoprotect.com/en/home/>.

9. STAFF REPORTS

9.1. Mission Director

Marian Lensink, Mission Director, presented a written report in the agenda and also shared further verbal information regarding her dual role as Resource Coach for Classis Niagara and Classis Hamilton. The tasks of her function as Mission Director and Resource Coach reinforce each other.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the Mission Director's reports be received as information.

9.2. Campus Chaplain

Michael Fallon, McMaster University and Mohawk College Chaplain, presented a written report in the agenda. But because he has left on sabbatical since then, Seth Adema, chaplain during Michael's sabbatical shared verbal comments about his work with the delegates. This gave the delegates an opportunity to meet Seth.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the McMaster/Mohawk Chaplain's reports be received as information.

10. PRAYER

- 10.1. The Chair offered prayer for all the ministries that had already reported.
- 10.2. The Vice-Chair offered prayer for the Classis Hamilton staff members.

11. CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE REPORT

Henry Kranenburg, President of the CIC, drew the attention of the meeting to the minutes of the CIC and Board of Directors that had previously been distributed to the churches. He also identified the pages in the agenda that are part of the CIC report, including the persons whose names appear on the ballot for election as functionaries on various classical committees. He then presented motions as follows:

11.1. Guidelines for Scheduling and Conducting Candidate Examinations

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the guidelines in the report regarding Article 10 as approved by the CIC be received and that these be included as an appendix to the Rules of Procedure.

11.2. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:**

- a. Rule of Procedure 12.2.3 will read: "Shall give a financial statement regarding classical ministry share receipts at the October meeting and provide Classis with an annual statement of classical receipts at the May classis meeting."
- b. Rule of Procedure 5.2.4 will read: "Except for the Stated Clerk, officers shall ordinarily be ministers, but may also be elders or deacons."
- c. Rule of Procedure 5.1.3 will read: "Ministry Committees are required to submit their reports to the CMT no later than eight weeks prior to the meeting of Classis. The CMT shall summarize the reports provided by the Committees and include these summaries in its report to the Delegates to be included in the classis agenda."

11.3. Selection of Delegates to Synod

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton, for the next two years (2017, 2018) delegate to Synod two pastors, one elder and one deacon, and review this decision in the fall of 2018.

11.4. Approval of Classis Ministry Shares

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the classical ministry share budget for 2017 of \$72.47 per active confessing member was approved.

11.5. Election of Functionaries

The following were elected by ballot for a three year term:

- Church Visitors – Wayne Visser and Jake Ellens (both second term)
- CMT – Gareth Harker (first term)
- Home Mission – Everett Vander Horst and Gerald Klein-Geltink (both second term)
- Campus Ministry – Bruce Adema (second term) and Aaron Schat (first term)
- Candidacy – Femke Visser-Elenbaas (first term)

11.6. Change in Date of the Winter Classis Meeting

The officers informed the delegates that a late communication from Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis, stating that Candidate Willem DeVries accepted their call to serve them as minister of the Word. This requires an examination to be scheduled. Rather than calling a special meeting of classis, the officers recommended to change the winter date from February 28th to January 17th for 2017.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the date for the winter 2017 classis meeting be changed from February 28th to January 17th.

11.7. Change in Date of the Spring Classis Meeting

Classis was informed by via the Agenda Addendum that a late communication from the Visser Foundation resulted in an unavoidable necessity to change the date of the May classis meeting since most pastors will be away in the Middle East on the previously scheduled date.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the date for the spring 2017 classis meeting be changed from May 23rd to June 6th.

[**Clerk's Note:** New information was received on October 26th that the Pastors will not return until June 6, 2017. As a result, the CIC dealt with this new information and decided to change the sprint classis meeting date to May 16, 2017]

11.8. Approval of CIC and Stated Clerk's Work

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

11.9. Motion to Destroy Ballots

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

At this point, Henry Kranenburg informed the delegates that this was his last Classis Hamilton meeting since he accepted a call to West Edmonton CRC and will be moving early in January.

12. CHURCH VISITORS SUMMARY REPORT

On behalf of the two Church Visitor Teams, Jake Ellens submitted a report to the delegates. He noted that churches are eager to share the good things that are happening in their congregations. However, he encouraged delegates to take a message back to their councils that the Church Visitors are there to help councils when they face challenges. He compared church visits to home visits. The purpose is to enquire about spiritual and congregational health.

He also noted that the combined Church Visitor Teams had completed ten of the fifteen visits in the past year. That amounts to 66.67% of the churches, which he did not consider good enough.

13. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

There were no items raised on the credentials in accordance with Article 41 of the Church Order. Consequently there was no credentials committee report.

14. OVERTURE COMMITTEE #1 REPORT

14.1. The reporter for advisory committee #1 informed classis that they had revised their recommendations as printed in the Agenda Addendum and distributed the revised document to the delegates. The change had been made after further consultation with various

potentially affected parties. The revised document was deemed to be properly before the delegates.

- 14.2. Since the recommendation of the advisory committee with respect to the continued ministry share funding of the Shalom Chaplaincy Ministry was different than what the tabled overture from Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis had recommended, the tabled Ebenezer overture took precedence and was placed on the floor for discussion.
- 14.3. After a brief discussion of the Ebenezer recommendation, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried **THAT:** Classis take up the advisory committee's recommendation.
- 14.4. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** effective January 2018, 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 Shalom Manor Chaplaincy Ministry.
- 14.5. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis approve the transfer of "covenanted governance" to the Board of Shalom Manor with the understanding that a steering committee be formed to supervise the work of the chaplain on behalf of the Board (as requested by Shalom Chaplaincy Committee).
- 14.6. To the advisory committee recommendation **THAT:** the churches continue to seek ways to minister to seniors in their own communities while we support our Deacons in the ministry at Shalom Manor, the delegates voiced their agreement with a unanimous **AMEN.**

15. OVERTURE COMMITTEE #2 REPORT

- 15.1. Regarding the request from CHHMC that Classis Hamilton approve supporting the Crosstowne church plant in the amount of \$3,000, the advisory committee reported that there had been a breakdown in communication between the various bodies that had looked at this request. Consequently, the CHHMC will bring the matter for presentation at a future Classis meeting.
- 15.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** that Classis Hamilton accede to the overture from Bethel CRC of Waterdown to raise the Classis Hamilton pulpit supply reimbursement from \$100.00 to \$150.00 per service.

16. RESPONSE TO DELEGATE AND AGENCY REPORTS

- 16.1. CMT Chair, Ken Benjamins asked whether there were any questions relating to the written reports that had been included in the agenda. There were none.
- 16.2. Andrew Zomerman, delegate to the Redeemer University College Board of Governors, was given the floor to present verbal information regarding the state of the university and the mutually agreed departure of President Krygsman at the end of October. Questions were asked that affect pastors serving churches in such close proximity to the university. Some of these pastors have both faculty and staff as members of their churches which sometimes places them in challenging positions because there is not a clearly defined process of communication between area pastors and the university.

17. CLOSING OF THE AFTERNOON SESSION

- 17.1. Since this was his last Classis Hamilton meeting, the Chair thanked Henry Kranenburg for his many years of service in various capacities for Classis Hamilton. Henry Kranenburg has accepted a call to West Edmonton CRC in Alberta and will be moving early in 2017. The delegates joined in thanking Henry Kranenburg with loud applause. The Chair noted that Pastor Henry was the senior active minister in Classis Hamilton.

- 17.2. In addition to Henry Kranenburg leaving Classis Hamilton resulting in his time as Regional Pastor coming to an end, the resignation as Regional Pastor of Ralph Koops at the end of 2016 was also noted. CIC in consultation with Pastor-Church Resources will seek to fill these vacancies with qualified retired or active pastors.
- 17.3. The Chair then led in prayer thanking God for a good meeting as well as for the many years of service Henry Kranenburg has given to classis. She also asked for God's blessing on the meal and therewith concluded the afternoon administrative session at 6:40 PM.

18. DINNER BREAK

19. EVENING SESSION ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

After some opening songs at 7:35 PM, Marian Lensink, Mission Director, asked the guests to seat themselves among the delegates at their tables.

The evening was capably facilitated by Katie Karsten and Marian Lensink who presented a number of questions to the delegates and guests as follows:

1. Recall a time when you were a stranger. Name elements of a 'welcome' that may/did make a difference.
2. What does it look like for your church to welcome the refugee? In light of the losses and uncertainties for the newcomer, what are the things that your particular church has to offer?
3. Name barriers in your church to 'welcoming the stranger'? What might be helpful to overcome the barriers? What is God showing you?
4. With the repeated news coverage about refugees, the shared scripture, the stories of welcome in churches, the barriers in place, what are you learning? What do you hear God saying to the church?

After discussing the above, Katie presented the following as possibilities for local churches:

- Share a story about refugees in your children's message
- Invite a "Journey with Me" workshop into your church's calendar
- Hold a Refugee Sunday
- Challenge your church to hold an event to listen to refugee stories
- Invite a refugee for dinner
- Watch a film about refugees with your youth group or your small group

A helpful video called Introduction to the Refugee Highway 2016 was included in the presentation and can be viewed here: www.iafr.org (International Association for Refugees)

20. CLOSING PRAYER

At 9:30 PM, Marian Lensink thanked the evening presenters and gave the closing prayer of thanks to the Lord, after which the meeting adjourned.

21. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Classes Hamilton is to convene on Tuesday, January 17, 2017 at Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis. However, that meeting will be hosted by Hagersville Community CRC.

NOTE: The agenda deadline for the January meeting is December 6, 2016.