



Minutes

CLASSIS HAMILTON

of the CRCNA

May 30, 2023

9:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Hosted by Calvary CRC, Flamborough

([agenda](#) and [addendum](#))

Officers of Classis: Chair: Michael Bootsma Vice Chair: Anthony Elenbaas Stated Clerk: Ed W. Visser	Synodical Deputies: (off-site) Huron: Rev. Gary van Leeuwen Niagara: Rev. M. Jeff Klingenberg Toronto: Rev. Richard E. Grift
Reporter: Hope Brantford	Ballot Advisory Team: Host Church
Credentials Advisory Team: Hope Brantford (Chair) Hagersville Community (Reporter)	Overture Advisory Team: Ebenezer Jarvis (Chair) Faith Burlington (Reporter)

GROWING AS A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

9:00 a.m.

1. **Welcome & Opening Prayer** by **Vice Chair of Classis: Anthony Elenbaas**

2. **Devotions & Sharing of Ministry** Calvary Community CRC, **Gareth Harker & Benj VanderMeulen**
 - a. Ephesians 3:14-21, The source of power is God and him alone, and he gives that power to us through his glorious and abundant riches (v. 16). Though we have such a high view of the sovereignty of God, we tend to believe it's "our job to run the church". The signs of power are threefold: faith (v. 17), love (v. 17-18), and knowledge (v. 19). When we see these things at work in the church body, we see God's power at work (v. 20b). The significance of power is that it all points to God's glory. Whether in the mundane "business" of Classis or the ministries we collectively support, we need to constantly be reminded that it is all for God and for him alone (v. 20-21).

 - b. "The highlights of ministry at Calvary can be summarized into two messages: collaboration and relationship building. Our Gems, Cadet, and women's Coffee Break are working in collaboration with Calvin CRC Dundas. This allows the ministry to draw on more leaders. Each of these ministries experienced a busy year building relationships within their communities. We are in the middle of renovation plans. Pastor Gareth will be studying and rejuvenating on a sabbatical starting Aug 1-Nov 30. A core group from our church serves at a Local ministry called "Streetbeats in Hamilton" serving the homeless with a good meal and spiritual encouragement. Carpenteros is celebrating 21 years of collaborating with Honduras to bring basic living needs to over 30 communities by building relationships. This ministry includes many people from all over Classis Hamilton. The ministry year is winding down with transition in council. We have been blessed to have enough elders and deacons to allow their names to stand. We value our young children and look forward to our summer program called "Kids Konnect" where we reach out to our community kids with the gospel. We praise God for his presence at Calvary."

3. **Prayer for the Host Church** **Anthony Elenbaas**

4. **Call to Order & Instructions for the Day**

Chair: Michael Bootsma

- a. **Delegates** stand to indicate their affirmation to the [Covenant of Office Bearers](#)
- b. **A representative** from each church introduces their delegates and **shares something** from their congregation **for which they are thankful**.

c. **Attendance Confirmed as below**

Stated Clerk

Congregation	Deacon	Elder	Minister
Bethel CRC, Waterdown	N/A	Tess Tigchelaar	Rienie Feenstra (elder)
Calvary CRC, Flamborough	Darren Lammers	Ben Vandermeulen	Gareth Harker
Calvin CRC, Dundas	Luther Andree	Jeremy Schuurman	Ken Benjamins
Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis	Rob Miedema	Pete Brouwer alt Jack Eggink	N/A
Faith CRC, Burlington	James Walraven	Homer Lensink	Cara Dehaan
First CRC, Hamilton	Theresia Stephens	Gillian Bruce	Hayden Regeling
Grace Community CRC, Ancaster	John Vanderwillik	Corrie Mulder	Mark Verbruggen
Hagersville Community CRC	N/A	Pieter Wonder alt Jake Elgersma	N/A
Hope CRC, Brantford	Gary Dykgraaf	Herb Grootenboer	William Koopmans alt Doug Nieuwstraten
Immanuel CRC, Hamilton	Eric Tish	David Rumph	Michael Bootsma
Immanuel CRC, Simcoe		Mark Vandervliet	Jeff Vandermeer
Maranatha CRC, York	Mark Millard	Frank Riewald	Ben Ponsen
Meadowlands Fellowship CRC, Ancaster	Jenny Muizelaar	Wilma van der Woerd	Peter Bulthuis (elder)
Mount Hope Community CRC	Sandi Buwalda	Mark Demik	Joel Bootsma
New Hope Church, Hamilton (emerging church)	N/A	N/A	Steve Dykstra
New Street CRC, Burlington	John Dekker	Jerome Vos	

5. **Classis is Declared Constituted**

Chair

6. **Guests, visitors and others** were, Marcia Hosmar, Willemina Zwart, Melissa Kuipers, Greg Sinclair, Bart Velthuisen, Gary and Harmene Sytsma, Al Postma, Roshani Morton, Alice Klamer, Michael Fallon, and if we missed you, well, we missed you.

7. A motion to **approve the [Agenda as distributed](#)** is

Adopted

8. A motion to **approve the Consent Agenda** is
- Approval includes,**
- a. **Adoption of [Classis Meeting Minutes Feb 28, 2023](#)**
 - b. **Appointment of Rev. Doug Nieuwstraten as church visitor**
 - c. **Appointment of directors, Doug Nieuwstraten – Term #1 Ben Ponsen – Term #6
Ken Tigchelaar – Term #4 Marcia Hosmar – Term #3
Ken Benjamins –Term #2**
 - d. **Reports received from Classis' Ministries**
 - i. [Mohawk Solid Rock Spring Newsletter](#) (Large file)
 - ii. [Candidacy Committee Report](#)
 - iii. [Campus Ministry Committee Report](#)
 - iv. [McMaster University Classis Report](#)
 - e. **Denominational Ministries Reports Received**
 - i. [Calvin University Report to Classis](#)
 - ii. [World Renew Spring Report](#)
 - iii. [Redeemer University Spring Report](#)

7. **[CIC and Stated Clerk Reports](#)**

- a. **Classis Interim Committee Report (CIC)** CIC Chair: Ken Benjamins
 - i. **Correspondence Received** from a church in Classis:

Could we please inform Pastors at the next Classis meeting to take their Classical appointments seriously, and ensure they fulfill their obligations? I believe Pastors know well in advance where they have been slotted in the schedule, so they should be able make it the necessary changes when needed. It should also be their responsibility to keep that obligation and find a suitable replacement.

RFI
 - ii. **From the CIC Report from April 20, 2023, item 2: Selection of Classis Chair;**
 - (1) A motion **that the Chair for Classis will be provided by the churches in alphabetical order and will serve for a one-year term commencing June 1st** [as [in this list](#)] is ADOPTED
 - (2) Note: Hope Brantford has agreed to provide **Rev. William Koopmans for the first year** RFI
- b. **Stated Clerk's Report** Ed W. Visser
 - i. **Question:** *"You're coming to end of your first year as our clerk, and I'm wondering if you have some words you can share in terms of how we could be more supportive ..."*
 - ii. **Answer:** *I think it's a little early to say for sure [it's actually only my second meeting, a year will be in November], but a couple of things I'm looking forward to: 1. that the addendum only completes the agenda, but that there's no new material, that is, not planned on the Agenda, 2. That churches fill in the credentials on or before the deadline mentioned.*
 - iii. **Question:** *Is there a way to have a document following the agenda and addendum that lists all the links to all the documents. This time we had an email with links to new documents, so I'm flipping between email and agenda/addendum. Maybe a website that has it all.*
 - iv. **Answer:** *Well, late materials that come after the addendum is part of what I was speaking earlier. Let's talk about that.*
- c. **A motion to approve the work of the CIC and stated clerk is** ADOPTED

8. **[The Youth Champion Position Review](#)** (contains several recommendations) Gareth Harker & Ben Ponsen
- a. **Recommendation that a paid position will best serve Classis Hamilton.**
 - i. It is clarified that this **recommendation is "yes" or "no"** to keeping it as a **paid** position. The position remains, but funding will either continue or cease.
 - ii. It is stated several times that this is not a review of the youth champion, but specifically if the work is to be reimbursed or not.

- b. After considerable and lengthy discussion, the **Recommendation that a paid position will best serve Classis Hamilton** is **DEFEATED**
- c. The CIC is charged with determining the date when pay for the position will end **Referred to CIC**
- d. **Followup note:** very soon following this meeting of Classis, some members of the CIC were in contact with the Youth Champion, John Bijl.

REFRESHMENT BREAK

10:49 a.m.

MINISTRY SESSION

11:11 a.m.

- 9. **Request: Meadowlands Fellowship, CRC Ancaster** is seeking to establish a new staff position, Pastor of Worship and Faith Formation, and fill that role with a person to be ordained as a commissioned pastor.
 - a. **Statement of [Need and job description](#)** is presented by **Peter Bulthuis**
 - b. A motion to **approve the need and job description** is ... **ADOPTED**
 - c. The **Synodical Deputies**, Revs. Jeff Klingenberg (Niagara), Gary Van Leeuwen (Huron) and Richard Grift (Toronto) [decided at another location], **CONCUR**
 - d. **Note:** approving **need and job description** is step one. **Step two** will be the presentation of a **learning plan** in keeping with the guidelines of the commissioned pastor manual, to be **followed by examination of a person to be commissioned pastor**, at a subsequent meeting of Classis.

- 10. **Classical Counsellor Reports:**
Hagersville Community CRC – Ben Ponsen -
 Reports that their **call** has been **accepted by Rev. Steve Eckersley** from Immanuel CRC, Cornwall. They are planning on an **installation on July 2, 2023**, with **Pastor Jack Van de Hoef** from Bethel CRC, Brockville leading the service.

- 11. **Approval to Disband Sought by New Street CRC, Burlington:**
 - a. **The congregation has decided to disband effective July 31, 2023**, and now seeks Classis Approval as per Church Order Article 38-d, *when a council and congregation decide to disband or revert to unorganized status, the approval of classis is required. If any distribution of assets is required, the congregation and council shall consult with classis.* —Cf. Supplement, Article 38-d
 - b. **[Formal Request](#)** **Jerome Vos Chair of Council and Deacon John Dekker**
 - i. Jerome gives an oral summary of the history that led to today’s request, with additional comments from John Dekker.
 - ii. A few questions and discussion; mostly comments about the excellent process they’ve followed, the wonderful ministry they’ve engaged in, testimonies of the impact they’ve had, along with expressions of gratitude and sadness, and commendation for their vision that their members will have of continuing to impact in churches and in the neighbourhoods.
 - c. A Motion **that Classis Hamilton approve New Street CRC, Burlington’s request to disband per the provisions of Church Order Article 38-d** is **ADOPTED**
 - d. The Chair requests that the *delegates come forward to lay hands on Jerome and John, and leads our prayer.*
 - e. The prayer with spontaneously singing *“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.”*

12. **Classis Ministry Team (CMT)**

a. **Campus Ministry Committee**

Anthony Elenbaas

- i. [Report](#). A motion that **Classis Approve Sara Bouma (member of Meadowlands Fellowship) as member on Campus Ministry Committee**, is
- ii. **Mohawk College**, ([Report](#)), and a slide presentation
- iii. **McMaster University** ([Report](#)), and slide presentation
- iv. Thanks are expressed for their good and faithful work.

ADOPTED

Melissa Kuipers

Michael Fallon

LUNCH BREAK

12:18 p.m. - 1:07 p.m.

13. **Calvin University** ([report](#)) and slide presentation

Alice Klamer, Board of Trustee Representative

14. **Transitional Executive Director, Canada**

Rev. Albert Postma

- a. Al describes his work.
- b. Al introduced **Roshani Morton, director of advancement of Canada**, who describes her work and will connect with the pastors of classis for a Zoom meeting.
- c. **Question to Al:** What did you like most of the national gathering? Seeing all these people from all over
- d. **Question:** About the termination of previous directors? It's been a challenge. We are experiencing a deficit of trust, and people enter with suspicion. But there's a big shift- there is a US org and Can org and both work together, instead of a "US denomination and then there is Canada."
- e. **Question:** What's one of the biggest challenges facing Canada, in light of the Canadian National Gathering? Canada is growing in its diversity, and so is the CRC in Canada. That's the challenge "what does it mean to be multi-ethnic community and live well together?"
Newbigin's answer, "I am neither an optimist nor a pessimist. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead!"
- f. Chair thanks Al, and **Steve leads our prayer.**

15. **Canada National Gathering**, Marcia, Michael, Cara, and Sophia Fledderus. Cara reports that the four are committed to continue meeting together.

16. **Credentials Advisory Team Report** [Report emailed and here](#)

Hope, Brantford & Hagersville

a. **From First Hamilton:**

- i. *In an environment with a continued declining membership it seems unsustainable that classical shares continue to rise. We struggle to meet our own budget. How is Classis situated financially? Is there any relief that can be offered to churches this fiscal year? Can this be noted for consideration at the next budget approval meeting in October?*

Advisory Team Observations:

The nature of this series of questions appears to be somewhat rhetorical, intending more to raise awareness and to begin a discussion at the level of classis Hamilton rather than seek definitive answers at this particular meeting.

Recommendations:

That Classis Hamilton take note of the concerns raised by First Hamilton is

ADOPTED

That these concerns be taken into consideration in the proposal and adoption of future budgets

RULED

- ii. *Holding Classis on a weekday makes it inaccessible to delegates who work a traditional job. It would benefit from a greater representation of membership if it took place on a Saturday AM. As a trial, can Classis consider changing a future meeting to a Saturday morning in the upcoming 12 months?*

Advisory Team Observations:

The concern raised by First Hamilton has been voiced similarly in other classis, some of which have tried a Saturday meeting.

A survey of meeting dates for Classis Hamilton, going back as far as Jan. 17, 2017, indicates that in this time period the meeting of classis has not been held on a Saturday.

Recommendation:

That this matter of scheduling be referred to the CIC, with the suggestion that a one-time Saturday meeting be scheduled as a trial is

RULED

b. From Ebenezer Jarvis

The Council and congregation at Ebenezer, Jarvis, want to acknowledge the blessing of having guest pastors assigned to our church as Classical pulpit supply during our time of vacancy. However, we also have a concern and seek your advice as to how we ought to respond.

At a recent Council meeting, we were made aware that some of the pastors in Classis Hamilton, and no doubt, pastors from other Classes, are not in agreement with denominational decisions, especially as relates to the recent HSR report. We would like to know how we can be made aware of pastors who hold a differing view from that of the denomination's position, and if their views are not in keeping with a Reformed understanding of Scripture, before they are assigned to preach

Advisory Team Observations:

Jarvis Council has raised a sensitive matter that could potentially have considerable significance for the manner in which the churches of Classis Hamilton work together.

It should be noted that if pastors "are not in agreement with denominational decisions, especially as relates to the recent HSR report" and have signed a gravamen, it is expected that they would not preach or teach against the position of the denomination. Perhaps, in answer to the concern raised by Ebenezer Jarvis, that reminder should be stated periodically and maybe even included as a reminder to accompany the classical preaching assignment schedules. However, within the working arrangement of classical appointments, it would not seem wise or appropriate to attempt to differentiate between those who hold views acceptable to Jarvis and those who have positions that Jarvis might deem to be problematic.

The specific request of Jarvis is stated as:

"We would like to know how we can be made aware of pastors who hold a differing view from that of the denomination's position, and if their views are not in keeping with a Reformed understanding of Scripture, before they are assigned to preach."

In all candidness, that request under our present arrangement would not seem to be workable.

Nevertheless, all who are assigned to preach in Jarvis can be reminded of the concerns of this church and asked to be respectful of their situation.

In the opinion of the credentials committee Jarvis really has only a couple of choices:

- (a) to accept pulpit supply assigned to them with the understanding that our pastors ought not to teach or preach in a manner that contradicts the position of the denomination.
- (b) to withdraw their congregation from inclusion on the classical appointment schedule.

Recommendation:

That Classis Hamilton take note of the concern raised by Ebenezer Jarvis and receive the observations provided above as their answer to the concern that was raised.

RULED

17. Adjourn for Annual General Membership Meeting (AGM)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' ACTIONS		President: Ken Benjamins
1. Establish Quorum (By-Law 5.2)		Ruled
2. Proof of Notice for the Meeting (By-law 5.4)		Ruled
3. A motion to approve the Minutes of AGM May 31, 2022 is		Adopted
4. Election of Members of the CIC/BOD (By-law 5.1)		
A Motion that,		
Doug Nieuwstraten – Term #1	Ben Ponsen – Term #6	Ken Tigchelaar – Term #4
Marcia Hosmar – Term #3	Ken Benjamins – Term #2	
<i>be elected as directors of the corporation for a one-year term commencing June 1, 2023, is</i>		Adopted
5. Approve the Audit Report on the 2022 Financial Statements (Corporations Act 96.1)		
A Motion that: <i>the audited financial statements and the Auditor's report thereon for fiscal 2022 be approved is</i>		ADOPTED
6. Appoint the Auditor (By-Law 5.1.c)		
A motion that , <i>the DBK Accounting Professional Corporation be re-appointed as auditor for fiscal 2023, is</i>		ADOPTED
7. Closing of Annual General membership meeting is		RULED

18. Resume Meeting of Classis

DENOMINATIONAL MATTERS SESSION

1:00 p.m.

19. Overture from Meadowlands Fellowship

Withdrawn

- [Overture](#) (initiate a third party investigation into the dismissal of Rev. Roorda)
- [Advisory Team's Report](#)
- Overture was [withdrawn](#) before the meeting with reasons. Noted here since the Overture and Advisory Team Report had been distributed.

20. Re: Pulpit supply - please **confirm need** and **request** for pulpit supply for the fall **by the end of June**

inform Stated Clerk

21. Upcoming Dates for Classis (also see the Classis Calendar)

- Committee Budget Requests** due **July 31, 2023**
- Confirm need for [Pulpit Supply](#) with Clerk** **June 23, 2023**
- Agenda Material** for Oct 24 due **September 12, 2023**
- Addendum Material** for Oct 24 due **October 03, 2023**
- Classis Meets** **October 24, 2023, Hosted by Calvin CRC, Dundas**
(420 Highway 5 West Dundas, Ontario L9H 5E2)

22. Adjournment

- Closing Remarks & Prayer **Chair**
- Adjournment Declared at 2:15 p.m.** **Chair**
- The **Chair** is **thanked** for his good leadership this past year. **Amen.**

Thanks also to the Host church for their good care of our physical needs.

Just Around the Corner

2024 Jan 16 Agenda Materials Due
2024 Feb 13 Addendum Materials
2024 Feb 27 Classis Meets at Faith CRC, Burlington

Further Down the Road

Hosting Classis

2024 May - First Hamilton
2024 Oct - Hagersville