



MINUTES

CLASSIS HAMILTON

of the CRCNA

Tuesday, May 27, 2025, 9:00 AM to 2:09 PM

Final

Hosted by Immanuel CRC, Hamilton

(61 Mohawk Rd W, Hamilton, ON L9C 1V9, Canada)

([Agenda](#) and [Addendum](#) and [Addendum to the Addendum](#))

(Text in Blue and Underlined are links to documents)

Officers of Classis: Chair: Michael Bootsma* Vice Chair: Cara DeHaan Stated Clerk: Ed W. Visser	Synodical Deputies: (not needed)
Reporter: (see RoP Section 7.1) Grace Community	Ballot Advisory Team: (see RoP section 7.7) Host Church: Immanuel Hamilton
Credentials Advisory Team: (See RoP Section 7.4) Meadowlands Fellowship Mount Hope Community	Overture Advisory Team: (if needed) Immanuel, Simcoe Maranatha, York Advice for Overture Advisory Teams

* Michael Bootsma is Immanuel Hamilton's replacement for Anthony Elenbaas who served 2 of 3 meetings.

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer** **Vice-Chair Cara DeHaan**
 - a. Cara introduces the Stated Clerk, the Chair and herself, as Vice Chair. She welcomes all the gathered and leads our prayer.
2. **Devotions & Sharing of Ministry,** **Host church Immanuel CRC, Hamilton**
 - a. **Anne teGrotenhuis**, Music and Worship Co-ordinator of Immanuel CRC led us in opening devotions by leading us through several passages of scripture and songs, and based on Ephesians 1:17-23, centred us on Jesus Christ, the ascended Lord, who sits at the right hand of the Father ruling over all things for the sake of the Church.
 - b. **Melinda Flokstra**, an elder at Immanuel CRC, tells us a little of who they are and what they do. She gave us an update on ministry at Immanuel describing a very vibrant congregation with many things happening during the week as well as at Sunday worship. Anthony Elenbaas recently accepted a call to Orillia and Immanuel has been making adjustments to compensate for this loss, while considering how best to move forward.
3. **Prayer for the Host Church** **Cara DeHaan**

4. Call to Order & Instructions for the Day

Chair pro-tem Michael Bootsma

- a. **Guests are Welcomed** - Kyra Schat, Peter Bulthuis, Leo Joeono, Abby Lobert, Derek Bouma, David Zietsma, Sandy Werkman (via Zoom), Cody Miedema, Willemina Zwart, SOCO, Resonate, Gina Taylor CIC and ARC, and our Treasurer, Ken Tigchelaar.
- b. **Delegates Registered**
 - i. as shown in the chart below
 - ii. First time delegates* (there were six) signed the Covenant for Officebearers.

5. Constitution of Classis

- a. **Delegates stand** to signify their agreement with the Covenant for Officebearers.

b. Classis is Declared Constituted

Chair Michael Bootsma

Congregation	Deacon	Elder	Minister
Bethel CRC, Waterdown	Frank Voskamp	Rob Laman	John Glasbergen (elder) alt. Rob Laman
Calvary CRC, Flamborough	Richard Vandenberg* alt. Bill Dam	Joe Wassink alt. Bas Hania	Nick Groen (Elder)
Calvin CRC, Dundas	John DeWilde*	John Schotsman alt. Steve Koning	Ken Benjamins
Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis	Ron Veldhuis	Alfred Breukelman	N/A
Faith CRC, Burlington	John Dykstra*	Marian Lensink* alt. Jillian Langendoen	Cara deHaan
First CRC, Hamilton	Nella Sandrock alt. Lisa Nightingale	Jules de Jager alt. Joel Harsevoort	Hayden Regeling
Grace Community CRC, Ancaster	John Brinkman	Adrian Guldemon	Mark Verbruggen
Hagersville Community CRC	Jake Elgersma (elder sub for deacon)	Davis Miedema	Steven Eckersley
Hope CRC, Brantford	Phil Louwerse alt. Ben Koerssen	Dave Guichelaar alt. John Hensen	William Koopmans alt. Doug Nieuwstraten
Immanuel CRC, Hamilton	Clarence Beeksma	Melinda Flokstra*	Michael Bootsma
Immanuel CRC, Simcoe		Pat DeRuiter alt. Bob VanWingerden	N/A
Maranatha CRC, York		Ray Elgersma alt. Jon Boeke*	N/A
Meadowlands Fellowship CRC, Ancaster	Val Kloet alt. Kevin Ritskes	Ed VanBeilen	Marja Fledderus
Mount Hope Community CRC	Neil Roth alt. Alex Demik	John Demik alt. Ryan Flokstra	Joel Bootsma
New Hope Church, H'ton (emerging)			

6. Approvals

- a. **A motion that Classis approve the Consent Agenda with items on addendum** is ... **ADOPTED**
- b. **A motion that Classis approve the Agenda with today's addendum** is ... **ADOPTED**

7. CIC and Stated Clerk Reports

- a. **Classis Interim Committee Report** (CIC) **CIC Chair: Ken Benjamins**
 - i. **Members on the CIC** (and Board of Directors) are: Ken Benjamins (president), Ken Tigchelaar (Treasurer), Doug Nieuwstraten, Gina Taylor, and, newly approved, Hayden Regeling. Also on the CIC as *ex officio* members are the chair of Classis and the stated clerk.
 - ii. **Retirement of Rev. Ron Vanden Brink**
 - (1) The Council of Faith CRC, Burlington, requests that Classis Hamilton approve the upcoming retirement of Rev. Ron Vanden Brink, effective November 23, 2025 (his 66th birthday), and communicate this decision of Classis Hamilton to the Synodical Services office. Faith has held Pastor Ron's ministerial credentials since he began serving as the director of Diaconal Ministries Canada in 2016, and Faith will continue to do so in his retirement.
 - (2) **Recommendation: That at the request of the Council of Faith CRC, Burlington, and with the provisions of Church Order Article 18 and supplement, Classis Hamilton approves the retirement of Rev. Ron Vanden Brink, due to age, effective November 23, 2025** is ... **ADOPTED**
 - iii. **Pulpit Supply: CIC Recommends that Classis Pause the scheduling of pulpit supply for one year starting Sept 2025,** is ... **ADOPTED**
Grounds:
 - (1) with the number of vacancies (6 by the Fall) there is an unusual increase on pastors to be away from their own congregations (on top of every thing else).
 - (2) Increasingly, churches are expressing preferences, either of person or gender making scheduling difficult
 - (3) Churches whose pastors are assigned for pulpit supply, need to find a replacement. Vacant churches can just as well find replacements to fill their own pulpit.
 - (4) There are retired pastors available to help out from Classis Hamilton and surrounding Classes.
 - (5) Trying this for one year will tell whether there is a need for resuming scheduling and what alterations, if any, are needed.
 - iv. **Listening Circles** (summaries were previously distributed), now seeking any input from Classis delegates for CIC review and final advisory report. **RFI**
 - v. **Extend Licensure to Exhort for Ray Hendriks:**
 - (1) **From Ray:** *"I preach approximately twice a month with maybe 20 commitments last year. I have preached in numerous churches in the classis including Dundas, First, Meadowlands, Mount Hope, New Street, Living Hope, Hagersville, York and Jarvis."*
 - (2) **Recommendation: That Classis Extend Licensure to Exhort for Ray Hendriks for an additional 3 years as stipulated in our Rules of Procedure** is ... **ADOPTED**

- vi. [Determine need for Licensure to Exhort](#)
 - (1) **Recommendation:** *That Classis declare the need for granting a licensure to exhort is established* is ... **ADOPTED**
 - (2) With the need established, **an examination will be scheduled for the fall meeting** **CIC**
- vii. **Recommendation** *that Classis Approve a second, three year term for our Synodical Deputies, Michael Bootsma and alternate, Doug Nieuwstraten, is ...* **ADOPTED**
- viii. **Recommendation** *that Classis approve Rev. Cara DeHaan as Counselor for Bethel CRC (as requested and agreed between Bethel and Rev. DeHaan) is ...* **ADOPTED**
- ix. [Communication from Faith CRC, Burlington](#) update re: Rev. Kevin DeRaaf's Credentials
Recommendation: *That Classis receive Faith's Communication that all is now in good order regarding Rev. Kevin DeRaaf's ministerial Credentials held by Faith CRC* is **ADOPTED**
- x. **CIC notes that for the time being we will continue the status quo regarding affirmation of Covenant for Officebearers.**
- xi. **Note that Rev. Ken Benjamins is leaving Classis Hamilton for Classis Niagara; Ken speaks about the blessings of serving and being helped by the people in Classis Hamilton. Chair leads us in prayer of thanks, for miracles in Ken & Mary Ann's life, children, thanks for his service, dedication, wisdom, and asks God to bless them in Wellandport.**
- xii. **A motion that Classis Approve the work of the CIC** is ... **ADOPTED**
- b. **Stated Clerk's Report** **Ed W. Visser**
 - i. [Draft Rules of Procedure](#) (for review, amendment and eventual adoption)
 - (1) Over the last few years, Classis has made changes to the Rules of Procedure. CIC decided to update and refresh them. The Link above leads to that draft edited edition.
 - (2) You'll find much of the document unchanged. ~~Strikeout red text~~ indicates text to be removed, **green text** indicates new, additional text.
 - (3) **Delegates are encouraged to review and submit suggestions, corrections etc, and that a final amended version will be presented to Classis for approval in due time.**
Some very helpful edits and corrections have already been suggested - thank you!
 - ii. **Region 2 Nominee for trustee on the board of Calvin University**
 - (1) **Note:** Calvin University received only one nomination for the position of Region 2 Calvin University Board Trustee.
(Region 2 is comprised of Classes Huron, Ontario South West, Hamilton, Toronto, Quinte and Eastern Canada. All these Classes will vote the ballot – the total votes determine the outcome.
 - (2) **Nominee:** *John Valk is a member of Fredericton (N.B.) Christian Reformed Church. He served as an elder at his previous church. He is a retired professor of World View Studies at the University of New Brunswick and has many years of experience within the academic community. He served on an organization promoting Christian Literacy in Canada and served as a campus chaplain. He comes from a family of many Calvin alumni.*
 - (3) All, except one blank ballot, were affirmative, so **the nomination** is... **APPROVED**

iii. **Approve Sandy Werkman as Classis Hamilton Regional Disability Advocate**

(1) **Recommendation from Lindsay Wieland Capel** (crcna.org/disability):

Excerpt from her email: *Sandy goes to Hope CRC and is interested in serving Classis Hamilton as your Regional Disability Advocate. This means that she can connect and support Church Disability Advocates at the churches in your classis and can help support and encourage churches who do not have an advocate. Sandy ... is equipped for the role and will be a blessing to your classis. We provide support to Regional Advocates as they do their role ...*

(2) **A Motion That Sandy Werkman be appointed as Classis Hamilton Regional Disability Advocate** is ... **ADOPTED**

(3) **Introductory report** from Classis Hamilton Regional Disability Advocate, Sandy Werkman, via zoom is ... **RECEIVED**

iv. **A Motion That Classis Approve the work of the Stated Clerk** is .. **ADOPTED**

8. **Classis' Ministries**

a. **Classis Candidacy Committee** **Cara DeHaan**

The Recommendation *that Classis approve the disbursement of forgivable loans as outlined [in the report], for a total of \$55,650 USD* is ... **ADOPTED**

NOTE: if students are not ordained in the CRCNA, and our rules of procedure are unchanged, these monies are not forgivable.

b. **A Motion that Classis Approve the work of the Candidacy Committee** is ... **ADOPTED**

c. **Campus Ministry Committee (Report)** **Willemina Zwart**

i. **Mohawk Solid Rock** (Approved in consent agenda) **Abby Lobert**

(1) Abby is present and briefly addresses Classis

ii. **All Things** (McMaster) (Approved in consent agenda) **Michael Fallon**

iii. **Emerging Leader - All Things** (Approved in consent agenda) **Micah Stam**

d. **A Motion That Classis Approve the work of the Campus Ministry Committee** is ... **ADOPTED**

e. **Classis Hamilton Home Mission Committee Report** **Joel Bootsma**

i. The CHHMC recommends that **Classis approve** the following from the report:

(1) **Church Plant:** There's great potential for a church plant to be forming in Bethel CRC (Waterdown), with the vision of a church planter reaching Spanish-speaking people living and working in the region. A church planter has been identified, and the team at Bethel is working to bring him from Mexico for a visit. Our Classis is partnering with Bethel, Resonate, and Classis Toronto in supporting this church plant initiative.

(a) **That Classis commit, in principle, \$80,000 over 5 years to this endeavour** **ADOPTED**

(2) **Act 5** works with young adults, encouraging them to think and engage missionally in Hamilton. Each year they run a program for a Gap Year cohort (18-20 year olds) and a Residency cohort (age 21+). Jon Berends is the director, and is happy to come to speak to churches in our Classis about Act 5.

(a) ***That Classis approve \$10,000/year for the next 3 years to Act 5 [amended to add] pending Classis budget approval for 2026*** is ... **ADOPTED**

- (3) **SOCO** – Participants in the South Coast Beach Project engage in intentional Christian living, while delving into themes of kingdom living and engaging with the local community through seasonal full time work.

(a) ***That Classis approve \$10,000/year for the next 3 years to SOCO [amended to add] pending Classis Budget approval for 2026*** is ... **ADOPTED**

- (4) **Diaspora Ministry Leaders Retreat** – this summer (August 21-23) sees the 4th retreat for diaspora leaders in Classis Hamilton and Classis Toronto. At this retreat, the question for reflection is: *How can you be a good neighbour, friend, and witness for Christ to your neighbours who come from a different cultural or religious background?*

(a) ***That Classis support this retreat for \$5,000*** is ... **ADOPTED**

ii. ***That Classis Approve the work of the Classis Home Missions Committee*** is ... **ADOPTED**

Regarding Funds, Budgets, mandates, Ken, our treasurer, explains, “...we did get into ... trouble with the auditors for not following procedure on a couple things. Thankfully, our book keeper and DBK were able to work things out and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) was ok with how this was done. Please be reminded that all decisions regarding the disbursement of funds must be approved by classis. The CIC and the Audit Review Committee (ARC), can only work out the directives given by classis. This rule also applies to our committees. The Canada Revenue Agency has strict rules regarding these things and we need to be careful to follow them. Some of us may already have been contacted by members of the CIC or the ARC as we try to do our work and support our agencies. ...If you’re not sure please ask questions of the treasurer or the ARC before committing to anything. We may not side-step, or “interpret” the Rules, Regulations and Mandates of Classis to “fit” our situation. What we can do is propose a rule change to Classis and if approved, then budget the amount desired. We may not just draw off surplus for any project no matter how well-intentioned.

From ARC & CIC, Gina: in Oct 2016, an amount of \$200,000 was allocated for church planting, not Act 5, nor SOCO.

9. **Gather Sharing Houston** a [slide presentation](#) showing and telling Classis about Gather Houston was prepared and shared by Cara. Fourteen from our Classis attended. She suggests maybe Classis might think about having its own gathering, or even among congregations or local classes using a similar format. **Cara DeHaan**

10. **Additional Reports or Communications Continued**

- a. [World Renew](#) (Plus brief comments)
b. [Youth Champion Spring Report](#)

Steve McKnight, new Board Delegate
John Byl, RFI

11. **Classis Church Counsellor Reports:** (as available)
 - a. Bethel CRC – **Derek Bouma**, describes his work as STM, helping “vacant” churches work through the time and challenges they may have, helping them ultimately in the search for their next pastor
 - b. Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis – **Delegate Alfred Breukelman**: without a pastor for a few years, Pastor Search Team guided by Ed Visser. The search has been challenging, but moving forward. Council is working well together, blessed by guest preachers.
 - c. Immanuel CRC, Simcoe – **Doug Nieuwstraten** (no report)
 - d. Maranatha CRC, York – **Joel Bootsma**, Things are going well in York, Cody Miedema works amongst them
 - e. Calvary CRC – **Ken Benjamins**; Calvary CRC has an intern, Leo Joeono, for the summer. A calling committee is in place. A service for installation of new office bearers and public profession of faith is set for June 22.

12. **Church Visitor Reports** **combined report coming**

13. **Credentials Advisory Team Report**
 - a. As of the Addendum due date, no communications/requests were received from the churches
 - b. As of the Addendum due date, six churches had not submitted their credentials.

14. **Adjourn for the Annual General Membership Meeting (AGM)**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' ACTIONS		President: Ken Benjamins
1. Establish Quorum		RULED
2. Proof of Notice for the Meeting		RULED
3. Approve Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of May 28, 2024		ADOPTED
4. Approve Addendum to the Minutes of the AGM May 28, 2024		ADOPTED
5. Approve that <i>Ken Benjamins, Ken Tigchelaar, Doug Nieuwstraten, and Gina Taylor Lunshof are hereby elected as directors of Classis Hamilton for twelve months commencing May 27, 2025.</i>		ADOPTED
6. New Member – Approve: <i>Rev. Hayden Regeling as a director the Board of Directors for twelve months commencing May 27, 2025</i>		ADOPTED
7. RECOMMENDED that the 2024 Management Letter be approved.		ADOPTED
8. RECOMMENDED that the audited financial statements and the Auditor's report thereon for fiscal 2024 be approved .		ADOPTED
9. Ken Tigchelaar, Treasurer, explains funding, mandates, etc ,		RFI
10. RECOMMENDED that <i>DBK Accounting Professional Corporation be re-appointed as auditor for fiscal 2025.</i>		ADOPTED
11. Adjournment of the Annual General membership meeting.		

16. **Resume Meeting of Classis Hamilton**

17. **Ministry Minute** (an impromptu opening while we wait the arrival of Dr. Zietsma)
- Willemina Zwart, Resonate, SOCO
 - Cara DeHaan invites us to prayer events for Synod.
18. **Council of Delegates and Canadian Ministries Board Report** **William Koopmans**
- Giving is down considerably**, but more so in the USA than in Canada
 - Resonate's Budget has gone from \$7 million to \$2 million, a 70% decrease.
 - There were significant reserves which Resonate needed to spend down. That has been accomplished through funding church plants and so on. Now the challenge is to have a balanced budget given the decline in giving. That called for staffing cuts, some retired and not replaced, some ministry initiatives were reduced, some church plant grants could not continue.
 - If decline in giving continues**, then in 8 years time there will be funds only for the governance part of the denomination and no ministry initiatives. Some efforts have been made to mitigate this; for example, selling off the old denominational building in Grand Rapids and acquiring a smaller, lower cost, more energy efficient building.
 - The executive of the board and subcommittees are populated equally with Canadian and USA representatives.
 - Canada Ministry Board and the USA Board meet separately and each deals with matters that are germane to their own regions and ministries.
 - It is in the Canadian Ministries Board that care is given to meet CRA requirements about our ownership and direction of funds raised in Canada by the Canadian churches and exercise genuine control over how those funds are spent.
 - Asked about the difference between officebearers needing the sign the CfO and non-officebearers on the COD. There is no equivalent to the CfO for non-officebearers. If someone is appointed today to the COD, they are expected to reflect upon whether they in good conscience affirm and agree with the standards of the CRC, etc. If they can not, they ought not to become a member of the COD. But what happens in the course of their service they come to realize they're not sure about this position. An officebearer could initiate a gravamen, but there is not a gravamen procedure for a non officebearer, but there needs to be something similar. But they should have a conversation with the executive of the COD to come to an understanding of the issues, and it may be that the person is asked to step down.
 - A letter was written by the CMB**, and is now posted, to *"express our shared understanding of the diverse experiences we are all undergoing within the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) across Canada."*
19. **Redeemer University** ([Report](#) approved on consent agenda) **President David Zietsma**
- Record 1094 students, 555 in housing, ~280 grads.
 - President Zietsma was asked what's the main thing we should pray about? Answer: how do we navigate resources and needs, while maintaining a tuition amount that Christian families can afford.
 - Asked about the denominational complement of Faculty and Staff, he reported that the Faculty and Staff come from wide variety of Reformed denominations as well as Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. The student complement is approximately 30% CRC, 10% other Dutch Reformed iterations (URC, Can Ref, Netherlands Reformed); PCA, Reformed Baptist, Pentecostal and 10% Roman Catholic. 20% of the students report no denominational affiliation.

20. **Opportunity is given for some Final Words:**

- a. **William Koopmans:** (retiring). 44 years ago, when William was 22, Louise and he were married, then to Calvin Seminary for a crash course in Hebrew. God has led him through a diversity of experiences. Joy and Blessing describe the journey. 100 Classis meetings, 20+ Synods. Served on the Eccumenical and Interfaith Committee and many other areas. He had no idea how God would involve him, but his life's been enriched, and blessed. His life verse is "Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through me." In these challenging times, I need to be rooted again in this reality. What a joy, fulfilment, and blessing to be in Christ.
- b. **Ken Benjamins:** (transferring to Wellandport, in Classis Niagara). Not retiring yet, just moving. Has noticed that with age love for people grows. Nothing I'd rather do than keep preaching the gospel. Psalm 27, I am confident of this, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

21. **Adjournment:**

- a. **Michael Bootsma leads** our prayers of thanks.
- b. [Privately, on behalf of Classis, the stated clerk asks the chair to extend our thanks to the people of Immanuel for the day of hosting, devotions, refreshments and meal.]

22. **Next Meeting of Classis (Tuesday, October 28, 2025)**

- a. **Requests for Budget 2026 Due July 31, 2025**
- b. **Agenda Materials**Due ...**September 16, 2025**
- c. **Credentials**Due ...**October 7, 2025**
- d. **Addendum Materials**.....Due ...**October 14, 2025**
- e. **Classis****Meets October 28, 2025**, Hosted by **Immanuel CRC, Simcoe**

Just Around the Corner (in 2026)

Agenda Materials Due ... January 13, 2026

Credentials Due ... February 3, 2026

Addendum Materials Due ... February 10, 2026

Classis Meets Saturday, February 21, 2026 ... Hosted by **Maranatha CRC, York**
(Our 3rd of 3 Saturday meetings).

Edw. Visser