# Minutes
## CLASSIS HAMILTON
## of the CRCNA
Final
## Meeting Tuesday, October 27, 2026
**Hosted by Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis, Ontario**
**(Agenda & Addendum)**

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|---|---|
| **Officers of Classis:**<br>Chair: Mark Verbruggen<br>Vice Chair: Michael Bootsma<br>Stated Clerk: Ed W. Visser | **Synodical Deputies:**<br>Rev. Robert Loerts (Niagara)<br>Rev. Richard Grift (Toronto)<br>Rev. Sid Couperus (Huron) |
| **Reporter:**<br>Ebenezer, Jarvis | **Ballot Team:**<br>Host Church: Ebenezer, Jarvis |
| **Credentials Advisory Team:**<br>Calvary, Flamborough<br>Calvin, Dundas | |

1. **Welcome & Opening Prayer** — **Vice Chair: Michael Bootsma**
2. **Devotions & Sharing of Ministry** — **The host church**
   a. **Devotions**: We confess our faith by singing, *The Church's One Foundation.* Rev. Jack Kerkhof (interim pastor for Ebenezer) leads our devotions, and shares some words from 1 Peter 2:1-5. He mentions two books worthy of reading: *"Who Stole My Church"*, and *"When Steeples Cry"*. These books help explain the many changes we are experiencing in the churches. A third book by Kenneth Bailey, *"The Shepherd"*, gives us a shepherd motif helping us better understand what it really means for us to be shepherds/pastors in our churches.

   b. **Sharing of Ministry: Ray Vandermolen** shares some highlights; in 2023 they celebrated their 75th anniversary, grateful for the blessing of God. In 2022, their pastor left to serve a church in Moline, Mi. It's been a long time without a pastor. Pastor Jack Kerkhof has served as interim and in June, Zeke McMurty, who studies in the Mid-America Seminary, began an internship. He hopes to be ordained in the URC. Many notable ministries are mentioned along with the fact that over 150 men gather from churches all over Haldimand county to study the bible. We sing, *"His Mercy is More".*

3. **Prayer for the Host Church** — **Michael Bootsma**

4. **Call to Order & Instructions for the Day** — **Chair: Mark Verbruggen**
   a. **Welcome** to delegates and guests, **Rev. Duane Vanderlaan**, installed at Bethel CRC, Waterdown (absent for a medical urgency),**Rev. Jeremy Vandermeer**, installed at Calvary, Flamborough, Synodical deputies: Rev. Robert Loerts (Niagara), Rev. Richard Grift (Toronto), Rev. Sid Couperus (Huron). Mike Bekendam( COD rep), Pastor Agus Sedawa (interim at Dundas), Derek Bouma (STM serving with Immanuel Simcoe), Willemina Zwart (SOCO), Beth Bellinger (Resonate), Abby Lobert (Solid Rock, Mohawk College), Mark Vanderwees (Diaconal Ministries), Steven McKnight (World Renew Delegate), Joel Vande Werken (Ecclesiastical Governance), Lee Carter (new Director of Thrive), Gayla Postma (CIC), Gina Taylor Lunshof (CIC, Treasurer)

b. **Attendance:** All are confirmed present except for Rev. Duane Vanderlaan. He notified the stated clerk that he had a medical urgency. (Two days later he reported all is well)**Stated Clerk**

c. **Credentials Advisory Team Report** **Delegates from Calvin & Calvary**
   i. by the time the addendum was published, all but 2 churches submitted credentials
   ii. No additional questions or overtures were received under Art. 41 of the Credentials

d. **Affirmation** of the ***Covenant for Office-Bearers*** **All Delegates**
   i. **Eight, first time** delegates signed the covenant at the registration table
   ii. **All delegates** stand to indicate their affirmation of the **Covenant for Officebearers**

5. **Classis Declared Constituted** **Chair**

6. **Delegates from the churches** (First time delegates marked with an *)

| | Congregation | Deacon | Elder | Minister |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bethel CRC, Waterdown | Chris DeWeerd | Denise Vander Lugt | Duane Vanderlaan (absent with notice) |
| 2 | Calvary CRC, Flamborough | Dave VanderMeulen | Kurt Sieders * | Jeremy Vandermeer |
| 3 | Calvin CRC, Dundas | John Scotsman | Jerry Noordam | Vacant |
| 4 | Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis | Wayne Zandstra * | Jeff Hogeterp<br>alt. Alfred Breukelman | Vacant |
| 5 | Faith CRC, Burlington | Leanne deWeerd * | Matthew Wright * | Cara deHaan |
| 6 | First CRC, Hamilton | Trish Hutten | Jules de Jager | Hayden Regeling |
| 7 | Grace Community CRC, Ancaster | Jonathan VanDruten | Paul Veldhuis | Mark Verbruggen |
| 8 | Hagersville Community CRC | NA | Davis Miedema | Steve Eckersley |
| 9 | Hope CRC, Brantford | Phil Louwerse * | Derek Statema *<br>alt. Mike Bekendam | Doug Nieuwstraten |
| 10 | Immanuel CRC, Hamilton | Clarence Beeksma | Theo Boven | Michael Bootsma |
| 11 | Immanuel CRC, Simcoe | Hilda Van Gyssel * | Raymond Oosterveld | Andrew Bergsma * (elder) |
| 12 | Maranatha CRC, York | Moe Houwer | Ray Elgersma | vacant |
| 13 | Mount Hope Community CRC | NA | John Demik | Joel Bootsma |

7. **The Present Agenda and Addendum** (not including the consent agenda) is ... **ADOPTED**

8. **The following Consent Agenda including material from the addendum** is ... **ADOPTED**

1. **Approve Minutes of Classis Meeting May 26, 2026**
   (Note: Within days of the meeting these minutes were reviewed and approved by the CIC and the delegates who had attended Classis).

2. **Classis and Regional Ministries Reports Received**
   a. Redeemer University **David Zietsma**
   b. Spring Thrive Play list **Becky Jones**
   c. Report from our Delegates to Synod 2026 **Doug Nieuwstraten**
   d. Mohawk Solid Rock **Abby Lobert**
   e. Update from CHHMC (Home Missions Committee) **Joel Bootsma**
   f. Classis Restrucuring Taskforce - for information for Classis **Referred to CIC**

3. **Denominational Ministries Reports Received**
   a. World Renew **Chris Orme**
   b. Letter General Secretary, Executive Director Canada, & U.S. Director of Ministry Operations
   c. Video from the General Secretary, Tim Sheridan & Elaine May
   d. CRCNA Leadership, Letter and Video
   e. Canadian Indigenous **Ministry** Committee Newsletter
   f. Canadian Church Administration and Finance Guide **Roshani Morton**
      i. Deacon's Story Deck
      ii. Ministry Shares; Canada Pledge Guide
      iii. Deacon's Video Deck
      iv. Numbers Unleashed
   g. Resonate Church Planting Strategic Plan FAQ
   h. Information regarding Synod 2027 (For Stated Clerks, but helpful for all)
   i. Diaconal Ministries Canada **John Wildeboer**
   j. Moving Forward in Faith - cover letter
   k. Moving Forward in Faith **Diaconal Ministries Canada** and **Resonate Global Mission**
   l. Thrive Partnering with the Children's Spirituality Summit to hold a Conference **Rick Zomer**
   m. Seafarers Chaplain Opening **Stated Clerk, Classis BCNW**
   n. COD Summary of Oct 2026 meeting, pluse separate Canada and USA board meetings

4. **For Councils and Clerks**
   a. Regional Church Administrator Gathering in Burlington
   b. Invite to Administrators to the Gathering

10. **Classis Interim Committee Report (CIC)** **Chair: Doug Nieuwstraten**
    a. **Members** on the CIC (also serving as Board of Directors) are: Doug Nieuwstraten (president), Hayden Regeling, Gina Taylor (treasurer), Gayla Postma and, Adrian Guldemond. Also on the CIC as ex officio members are the chair of Classis and the Stated Clerk (not directors).
    b. **The role** of the CIC is to take care of Classis matters between the meetings of Classis -- reporting or making recommendations to the following meeting of Classis as per the provisions of the Rules of Procedure section 13.2

c. **Prepared for Mr. Steve Baarda's** Art 14-e interview, and prepared for **Mr. Peter Kranenburg's** Art 10 Examination.

d. **Processed the Ministerial Credential of Rev. Jeremy Vandermeer** from Trinity Edmonton, AB, and forwarded to Calvary, Flamborough.

e. **Processed the Ministerial Credential of Rev**. **Duane Vanderlaan** from Drayton CRC to Bethel CRC, Waterdown.

f. **Motion:** ***that Classis Approve the work of the CIC*** is ... **ADOPTED**

11. **Stated Clerk's Report** **Ed W. Visser**

a. We **temporarily held the membership of four families from the Meadowlands Fellowship** Church (memberships transferred before Meadowlands disaffiliated). One has been returned to Meadowlands (at the member's request) and the last three have all been forwarded to the CRC each has selected as their covenant congregation.

b. **Arranged** for CIC and Classis' Agendas, Minutes, correspondence and other arrangements.

c. This month **begins the fifth year** for me **as your stated clerk**.

d. **Recommendation:** ***that Classis approve that Rev. Hayden Regeling serve as church counselor for Calvin CRC, Dundas*** is ... **ADOPTED**

e. **Motion:** ***that Classis Approve the work of the Stated Clerk*** is ... **ADOPTED**

12. **Classis' Ministries**

a. **Candidacy Committee Report** (now Classis Ministry Leadership Team) **Mark Verbruggen, reporter**
(Report Includes the following recommendations)

i. **Motion:** ***That a forgivable loan in the amount of $2000 CDN be granted to Nathan Visser for the academic year 2026/27*** is ... **ADOPTED**

ii. **COMMITTEE NAME:**
**Recommendation:** ***That the name of our committee be changed to Classis Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT) from Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee and change our Rules of Procedure accordingly*** is ... **ADOPTED**
Ground: This fits the nomenclature of our denomination and prevents confusion with the denominational name of the Candidacy Committee.

iii. **LENDING AND LOAN FORGIVENESS TERMS:**
**Recommendation:** ***That going forward loan forgiveness for candidates be forgivable at 10% per year over 10 years of service in the CRCNA, and that we change our Rules of Procedure accordingly*** is ... **ADOPTED**
Ground: Five years of service is too short a time of service to the CRC for such large loans.

iv. **Recommendation:** ***That loan recipients who move to the Reformed Church in America or another denomination prior to 10 years of service must repay their loans regardless of whether their credentials stay in the CRC, and that we change our Rules of Procedure accordingly*** is ... **ADOPTED**

Ground: Five years of service in the CRC is too short for such large loans.

v. **Recommendation:** ***That students attending Calvin Seminary in residence, through the distance education program, or for their EMPC year be funded in the amount applied for up to the amount of full tuition paid in Canadian funds, which is accepted by the seminary at par, and that we change our Rules of Procedure accordingly*** is ... **ADOPTED**

Ground: The classes in the distance program and EMPC are required so should be funded at the same level as those required for the in-residence program.

vi. **Recommendation:** ***That the amount loaned to students attending non-CTS be capped at 50% of tuition charged by CTS, and that we change our Rules of Procedure accordingly*** is... **ADOPTED**

Ground: This allows us to support our denominationally-owned seminary and limits the amount of funding should a student choose to go to a very expensive seminary.

vii. **Recommendation:** ***That loans be interest free for the duration of repayment, and that we change our Rules of Procedure accordingly*** is ... **ADOPTED**

Ground: This was proposed to classis in October 2025 and agreed to in principle.

viii. **Recommendation:** ***That our policy requiring appropriate undergraduate degrees and academic transcripts be deleted*** is ... **ADOPTED**

Ground: The denominational Candidacy Program already requires these.

[**It was asked what are qualified seminaries**. Answer, "Qualified Seminaries include: Calvin Theological Seminary; McMaster Divinity School; Tyndale Seminary; ACTS at Trinity Western University. Other seminaries will be considered on a case by case basis with regard to their appropriateness in preparing students for ministry in the CRCNA" (CMLT RoP).]

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

c. **Campus Ministry Committee** **Willemina Zwart**

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

ii. All Things (McMaster) **Mark Verbruggen** gives an oral report on behalf of **Michael Fallon**

d. **Motion:** ***that Classis Approve the work of the Campus Ministry Committee*** is ... **ADOPTED**

e. **Classical Home Missions Committee** **Willemina Zwart reports**

i. Report

f. **Motion:** ***that Classis Approve the work of the Home Missions Committee*** is ... **ADOPTED**

13. **Approval of the Proposed Budget for the Work and Ministry of Classis Hamilton in 2027**
    a. **Presentation** of the **Proposed 2027 Budget** (Updated) **Gina Taylor, Treasurer**

    b. **Summary**: *Total budget is $263,055.00, down from $267,650.00 a 1.6% decrease which results in a cost per member for Classis ministry shares of $114.97 in 2027 up from $98.19 in 2026 an increase of 17%.*

    c. **Recommendation**: ***That Classis approve and adopt the proposed 2027 budget as the official budget for the 2027 fiscal year*** is ... **ADOPTED**

14. **Examination for Ordination:** following Church Order Article 10 & supplement

    a. **Introduction of Candidate Mr. Peter Kranenburg** **Steven Eckersley**

    b. ***Practica*** **Steven Eckersley**
        i. **Motion**: ***That Classis proceed with the exam*** is ... **ADOPTED**

    c. **Sermon Evaluation** (addendum #3) **Gina Taylor Lunshof & Mark Verbruggen**
        i. **Motion: *That Classis proceed with the exam*** is ... **ADOPTED**
        ii. Synodical Deputies ... **CONCUR**

    d. **Biblical and Theological Position** **Hayden Regeling**

    e. **Motion: *That Classis admit Mr. Peter Kranenburg to the Ministry of the Word***

    f. **Chair Declares Executive Session**, (discussion and voting by ballot).

    g. **Chair Declares Open Session**
        i. Mr. Peter Kranenburg and guests are invited to return
        ii. The Chair declares that the motion
            (1) ***That Classis admit Mr. Peter Kranenburg to the Ministry of the Word*** was **ADOPTED**
            (2) and that the **Synodical Deputies** **CONCUR**
        iii. The **Classis Diploma** is presented
        *iv.* Mark invites all ministers forward and leads our thankful Prayer
        v. Appointment of a Mentor (this is in process as per regulations)
        vi. Date of Installation ... **Nov 22, 2026**

**LUNCH BREAK** **1:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.**

15. **Classis Church Counsellor Reports:**
    a. Bethel CRC, Waterdown, – Cara DeHaan; work as counselor is complete -- newly installed pastor, Rev. Duane Vanderlaan
    b. Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis, – Jack Kerkhof; retired as counselor, they need to find another
    c. Immanuel CRC, Simcoe, – Doug Nieuwstraten; Derek the STM reports
    d. Maranatha CRC, York, – Joel Bootsma; new pastor elect Peter Kranenburg
    e. Calvary CRC, Flamborough, – Doug Nieuwstraten; Newly installed Rev. Jeremy Vandermeer
    f. Calvin CRC, Dundas, – Siebert VanHouten; retires as counselor, Hayden Regeling is their new Church Counselor

16. **Thrive** (oral comments introducing self and Thrive) **Lee Carter, new Director & Becky Jones**

17. **Interview with Mr. Steve Baarda Requesting to Be Declared Eligible for Call per CO Art 14-e.**
(See agenda for background and process)
    a. **The Chair Declares executive session**
    b. **Syd Hielema conducts the interview**
    c. **Classis votes by ballot, Synodical Deputies present their decision**
    d. **The Chair Declares Open Session**
    e. **Mr. Baarda is invited to return**

    f. **Mr. Baarda is informed *that the Motion:***
        i. ***that Classis Hamilton Declare Mr. Steve Baarda eligible for call in the CRCNA as provided in Art 14-e and supplement*** is ... **ADOPTED**
        ii. And that the **Synodical Deputies** ... **CONCUR**
        iii. **Prayer** follows led by **Syd Hielema.**

    g. **Note**: in this process we've discovered an apparent discrepancy between Art 14-e and its supplement.
        i. **Art 14-e indicates**, in part, that *A former minister of the Word who was released from office may be **declared eligible** for call upon approval of the classis by which such action was taken, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies*.

        ii. Even the form used by the Synodical Deputies is titled**, Church Order Article 14-e: Former Minister Declared Re-eligible for Call**

        iii. **However, the supplement says**, in part, *The classis, with the concurrence of the synodical deputies, shall then make a decision regarding whether to **endorse the request** to begin the process for readmission. If approval is given to proceed, the classis shall notify the Candidacy Committee to guide the applicant through the completion of any requirements for ministry imposed by synod subsequent to the original ordination.*

        iv. So, the article indicates that the Classis with Synodical Deputies' concurrence decides to declare someone eligible for call. The supplement says Classis endorses the request to begin the process.

        v. **Classis and the Synodical Deputies resolved the situation** by acknowledging the precedence of the Church Order Article. Via their reporting form, the synodical deputies notified the synodical office of the discrepancy and the Stated Clerk will communicate with the Candidacy Committee as per the supplement.

        vi. Classis will hold off making the declaration of eligibility for call public until the candidacy committee has been advised. Mr. Steve Baarda is aware of this.

18. **Council of Delegates Report** (Post addendum publish) oral remarks **Mike Bekendam**

19. **Upcoming Dates for Classis** (also see the Classis Calendar)

    a. For ***Saturday***, February 20, 2027 Meeting of Classis
        i. **Agenda** material Due Jan 12, 2027
        ii. **Credentials** Due Feb 02, 2027
        iii. **Addendum** material Due Feb 09, 2027
        iv. **Classis Meets** **Saturday, Feb 20, 2027**,
            Hosted by **Grace Community CRC, Ancaster**
    b. **Officers**
        i. **Chairperson**: **Mark Verbruggen**, Grace Community, Ancaster
        ii. **Vice-Chair**: **Mount Hope Community, Mount Hope**

20. **Adjournment of Classis**
    a. **Closing Remarks & Prayer** **Chair**
    b. We sing ***Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow***
    c. **Adjournment Declared** (around 3:30 pm) **Chair**

## *Our Thanks to the people of Ebenezer CRC, for hosting Classis Hamilton*

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**Just around the corner**

**For SPRING May 25, 2027**

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| **Agenda** Materials Due: | April 13, 2027 |
| **Credentials** Due: | May 04, 2027 |
| **Addendum** Materials Due: | May 11, 2027 |
| **Meeting**: | May 25, 2027 |
| **Host Congregation:** | **Bethel CRC, Waterdown** |
| **Chair:** | **Mark Verbruggen**, Grace Community, Ancaster |
| **Vice Chair:** | **Bethel, Waterdown** |

Stated Clerk,

