

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF CLASSIS HAMILTON

Revision 2026.1.24

1 INTRODUCTION

Our Mission, Vision, Values, and Ministries



OUR MISSION

Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the mission of Classis Hamilton is:

1. To seek, discern, and submit to God as a network of congregations;
2. To provide mutual support and accountability;
3. To live out a collective calling within our region; and
4. To be a healthy and sustained connection to the wider denomination.

OUR VISION

A healthy network of Christian Reformed churches supporting each other and collaborating in gospel ministry.

OUR VALUES

1. **Gospel centred ministry** – classis exists to demonstrate the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. All classis sponsored ministries will reflect this core value.
2. **Humble submission** – classis is called to humbly submit to Christ and to other member churches. In all our activities, we will devote ourselves to scripture and prayer, seek wisdom and discernment in cooperation, and submit to one another out of love and grace.
3. **Mutual encouragement** – our ministries will both extend the work of the local church through sharing resources and reinforce/undergird the work of the local church through mutual support and accountability.
4. **Supportive structures** – ministries should be well supported by policies and accountable governing bodies. We will adhere to all legal requirements and denominational church order, and our committees will submit all their work to classis for approval.
5. **Pursuit of excellence** - effectiveness of ministries will be measured through clearly defined outcome objectives.

2 TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>1</u>	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>1-1</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>DEFINITIONS</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>GENERAL RULES</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>CORPORATE STRUCTURE</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>CLASSIS MEETINGS</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>6.1</u>	<u>PREPARATORY MEASURES</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>6.2</u>	<u>OFFICERS OF CLASSIS</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>6.3</u>	<u>DUTIES OF OFFICERS</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>6.3.1</u>	<u>THE CHAIR</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>6.3.2</u>	<u>THE VICE- CHAIR</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>6.3.3</u>	<u>PAID STAFF (INCLUDING STATED CLERK)</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>COMMITTEES AND FUNCTIONARIES OF CLASSIS MEETINGS</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>7.1</u>	<u>THE REPORTER</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>7.2</u>	<u>DENOMINATIONAL AGENCIES AND ASSEMBLIES</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>7.3</u>	<u>REGIONAL FUNCTIONARIES</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>7.4</u>	<u>CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>7.5</u>	<u>OVERTURES AND APPEALS COMMITTEE</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>7.6</u>	<u>STUDY COMMITTEES</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>7.7</u>	<u>BALOTTING COMMITTEE</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>ELECTIONS</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>MATTERS LEGALLY BEFORE CLASSIS</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>9.1</u>	<u>APPEALS</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>10</u>	<u>RULES OF ORDER</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>10.1</u>	<u>MAIN MOTIONS</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>10.2</u>	<u>AMENDMENTS</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>10.3</u>	<u>TABLING</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>10.4</u>	<u>WITHHOLDING ACTION</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>10.5</u>	<u>CHALLENGING THE CHAIR</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>10.6</u>	<u>PROTESTING AND RECORDING OF NEGATIVE VOTES</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>10.7</u>	<u>RESCINDING A PREVIOUS DECISION</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>10.8</u>	<u>MANNER OF VOTING</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>11</u>	<u>CLASSIS DUTIES</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>11.1</u>	<u>CHURCH VISITORS (See Appendices, 14.1 for additional "Guidelines")</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>11.2</u>	<u>CLASSICAL COUNSELORS</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>11.3</u>	<u>CLASSIS PULPIT SUPPLY (See Appendices, 14.2 for additional "Guidelines")</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>12</u>	<u>EXAMINATIONS AND LICENSURE</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>12.1</u>	<u>EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES UNDER CHURCH ORDER ARTICLES 7 and 10 (See Appendices, 14.3 for additional "Guidelines")</u>	<u>17</u>

<u>12.2</u>	<u>EXAMINATION OF A MINISTER FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION UNDER ARTICLE 8</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>12.3</u>	<u>COMMISSIONED PASTOR UNDER CHURCH ORDER ARTICLE 23</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>12.4</u>	<u>LICENSURE TO EXHORT UNDER CHURCH ORDER ARTICLE 43-b</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>13</u>	<u>STANDING COMMITTEES</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>13.1</u>	<u>GENERAL PROVISIONS</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>13.2</u>	<u>CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE (CIC)</u>	<u>20</u>
[13.3 Removed]		
<u>13.4</u>	<u>CLASSICAL HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE (CHMC)</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>13.5</u>	<u>McMASTER UNIVERSITY AND MOHAWK COLLEGE CAMPUS COMMITTEE</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>13.6</u>	<u>CLASSIS HAMILTON CANDIDACY COMMITTEE (CHCC)</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>13.7</u>	<u>CLASSIS HAMILTON YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>14</u>	<u>APPENDICES</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>14.1</u>	<u>SECTION 11.1 GUIDELINES</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>14.2</u>	<u>SECTION 11.3 GUIDELINES</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>14.3</u>	<u>SECTION 12.1 GUIDELINES</u>	<u>29</u>

3 DEFINITIONS

- a. “appeal” means the right of church members and assemblies to request adjudication by the assembly next in order if it is believed that injustice has been done or that a decision conflicts with the Word of God or the Church Order. Appeals are normally assigned to an appeals committee to advise Classis regarding the matter at a subsequent meeting.
- b. “Church Visitor” means an officebearer appointed by Classis to serve on one of the two Church Visitor Teams mandated to ascertain whether the officebearers of the church faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and promote the building up of the body of Christ and the extension of God’s kingdom.
- c. “Classical Counselor” means an officebearer appointed by Classis to ensure that a church in the process of calling a minister of the Word observes ecclesiastical regulations and sound process.
- d. “CIC” means the Classis Interim Committee which also is the Board of Directors for all matters of property, i.e., cash, physical assets and personnel.
- e. “committee” means the ministry committees of Classis but does not include the CIC in its function as Board of Directors of the Corporation and its appointed committees.
- f. “corporate matters” means those matters that are governed by the Ontario Corporations Act which are generally restricted to the administration of moneys received and the employment contracts of classis’ personnel.
- g. “credentials” means the document submitted to the Stated Clerk identifying the officebearers and the offices of those who are delegated to a particular meeting of Classis as well as various items of communication to Classis on which the local church council seeks clarification or advice, or on which it desires a discussion on the floor of the ensuing Classis meeting.
- h. “delegates” means those officebearers who are elected by their local church councils to deliberate and make decisions at both ecclesiastical and corporate meetings of Classis Hamilton.
- i. “ecclesiastical matters” means those matters that are governed by the Church Order where they are not in conflict with the Ontario Corporations Act, in which case the Ontario Corporations Act and General Operating By-law #1 will prevail.
- j. “officebearers” means all those who currently serve as ministers, elders, deacons, and commissioned pastors within the churches of Classis Hamilton.
- k. “overtures” means communications from church councils or classical committees requesting Classis Hamilton to make decisions for itself or to pass on a request for a decision to synod. Normally overtures will include one or more elements such as: a change in mutually covenanted articles in the Church Order or the Classical Rules of Procedure, the establishment of a new ministry, or the establishment of a new ministry position.
- l. “study committee” means individuals appointed by Classis to study a particular question placed before Classis by a local church council or a committee of Classis itself and come with recommendations to a future Classis meeting.

4 GENERAL RULES

Introduction

All ecclesiastical matters of Classis shall be governed by the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church. The purpose of these rules of procedure is to further flesh out provisions of the Church Order as they apply to the specific mission and operations of the ecclesiastical matters within Classis Hamilton. These Rules of Procedure shall apply to all activities of Classis, but upon majority vote, they may be suspended, amended, revised, or abrogated. (**NOTE: All Corporate matters dealing with money and personnel are governed by General Operating By-Law Number 1.**).

1. Classis shall meet three times per year. Each regular meeting shall ordinarily be held on the fourth Tuesday of February; the fourth Tuesday of May; and the fourth Tuesday of October.
2. Extraordinary meetings of Classis shall be called when
 - 2.1. Classis so decides
 - 2.2. at least five churches submit a request to the Classical Interim Committee for a meeting
 - 2.3. the Classical Interim Committee ascertains the necessity
3. Classis shall be composed of three delegates from each constituent church council, consisting of one minister, one elder and one deacon, authorized by proper credentials accepted by email.
4. All regular sessions of Classis are open to all members of its churches. Officebearers of member churches may have the privilege of the floor when recognized by the Chair, except during “executive sessions” and “strict executive sessions.” During “executive session” all delegates, officebearers in member churches, members of the CIC and synodical deputies may be present. During “strict executive sessions” only the delegates, members of the CIC and synodical deputies may be present.
5. Any committee requesting Classical funding will receive financial support the following year only if it submits for approval of Classis a proposed budget, prepared by the Audit Review Committee, to be included by the CIC in the agenda material for the October meeting of Classis. Exceptions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances made known to the Interim Committee prior to the deadline for agenda materials for the October Classis meeting, or communicated and accepted during the previous May Classis meeting.

5 CORPORATE STRUCTURE

The Corporate Structure is dealt with in the ~~General Operating Bylaw Number 1.~~
[Note: we'll get the correct title]

6 CLASSIS MEETINGS

6.1 PREPARATORY MEASURES

1. The deadline for agenda materials shall be six weeks prior to the meeting of Classis. Councils shall receive the agenda materials no later than five weeks prior to the date of the scheduled Classis meeting. Late materials shall normally be referred to the next meeting of Classis.
2. The Stated Clerk shall be notified of the names and email addresses of all Delegates on the Credentials no later than three weeks prior to the meeting of Classis.
3. All overtures and appeals reports shall be sent to the Delegates two weeks prior to the meeting of Classis.
4. The location of the classis meetings shall be determined by the Stated Clerk following a list of the churches in alphabetical order.

6.2 OFFICERS OF CLASSIS

1. The officers of Classis shall be the
 - Chair
 - Vice-Chair
 - Stated Clerk
2. **Chair selection:** The Chair is selected for a one year term from a list of the churches in alphabetical order maintained by the stated clerk. The one-year term shall commence on June 1st. Ordinarily, the chair of Classis will be a delegate from their respective church for the one-year term in which they serve, but is not required to be a delegate. The chair must be currently serving as an office-bearer in one of the member churches of Classis Hamilton. In the event that the chair is not a delegate, the chair shall not have the deciding vote.
3. Through alphabetical rotation, in sequence of the churches from a list maintained by the stated clerk a vice-chair, and a reporter shall be provided for each meeting of Classis. The reporter of one meeting shall function as the vice-chair of the next meeting.
4. Except for the Stated Clerk, officers shall ordinarily be ministers, but may also be elders or deacons.

6.3 DUTIES OF OFFICERS

6.3.1 THE CHAIR

1. Shall ensure that the meeting is opened with devotions at the appointed time and shall receive the List of Delegates, their credentials and the list of names of the Delegates. The Chair shall declare Classis duly constituted.
2. Shall ensure, as much as possible, that business is conducted expeditiously and that delegates observe the rules of order and decorum.
3. Shall place before Classis every motion that is made and seconded and shall clearly state every question before a vote is taken.
4. Shall remain impartial on every matter under discussion. When the Chair wishes to participate in the discussion s/he shall relinquish the chair to the Vice-Chair. The Chair shall not resume the chair until the pending matter has been concluded. The Chair may speak, while holding the chair, only to state fact or to inform Classis regarding points of order.
5. Shall duly exercise the prerogative of declaring a motion or a person out of order. If the ruling is disputed, Classis shall sustain or reject the ruling by majority vote.

6. Shall not preside over matters that directly concern the Chair, the church s/he serves as an office-bearer.
7. Shall see to it that classical meetings are concluded with appropriate remarks and with prayer.

6.3.2 THE VICE- CHAIR

1. Shall assume all the responsibilities and duties of the Chair when the latter is not able to preside.
2. Shall render all possible assistance to the Chair.

6.3.3. PAID STAFF (INCLUDING STATED CLERK)

The “Staff Job Descriptions” is a separate standalone internal document including all job descriptions for remunerated positions and is administered by the Classis Interim Committee.

6.3.3.1 The following principles will apply to the procedure for hiring employees of Classis:

1. Since Classis is the hiring body, it is important that Classis have a direct voice in selecting its employees.
2. The CIC has been mandated by Classis to serve as the Board of Directors and to act on its behalf between regular sessions of Classis.
3. It is usually in the interest of Classis and its ministries that vacant positions be filled in a timely manner.

6.3.3.2 The following procedure will normally apply in the hiring procedure:

1. When there is a vacancy, the CIC will appoint an ad-hoc search committee consisting of members of the responsible Classis ministry and one or more members of the CIC.
2. CIC will provide the search committee with a salary range for the position.
3. The search committee will be mandated to advertise the position, interview candidates and recommend its preferred candidate to the CIC along with a salary recommendation.
4. The CIC will review the recommendation of the search committee and, if satisfied that the recommendation is in the interest of Classis, the CIC will offer employment pending ratification by Classis.
5. The candidate may be expected to begin the work in the position prior to the Classis meeting, with the understanding that its continuance is dependent on Classis ratification. If the candidate does not desire or is unable to work in a provisional situation, the starting date may be delayed until after Classis ratification.
6. If the candidate has accepted an offer of employment, the candidate will be presented to the next meeting of Classis in the context of an introductory conversation/interview so that Classis and the person filling the position may meet and get to know each other.
7. Following that introduction/conversation, Classis will vote on a motion to ratify the work of the CIC in this matter.

7 COMMITTEES AND FUNCTIONARIES OF CLASSIS MEETINGS

7.1 THE REPORTER

The Reporter shall prepare an appropriate report of the happenings at the meeting, and shall submit it for publication to every church of Classis and to the church publications during the week that Classis meets.

7.2 DENOMINATIONAL AGENCIES AND ASSEMBLIES

Classis shall elect or nominate delegates to the following agencies and assemblies as required:

1. Calvin University (represented regionally)
2. Calvin Theological Seminary (represented regionally)
3. Redeemer University
4. Diaconal Ministries Canada
5. World Renew
6. CRC Synod
7. CRC Council of Delegates

7.3 REGIONAL FUNCTIONARIES

1. Synodical Deputy and Alternate
2. Regional Pastors

7.4 CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee shall be composed of two delegations from the churches, or six delegates to Classis.
2. The mandate of the Committee shall be to study the credentials of the delegates regarding the answers given to the questions from Article 41 of the Church Order, and the instructions that councils may send to Classis.
3. The Committee shall present a report and recommendations to the Clerk of Classis at least two weeks prior to the meeting of Classis.

7.5 OVERTURES AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee shall be composed of two delegations from the churches, or six delegates to Classis.
2. The mandate of the Committee shall be to study the overtures sent by the Councils of the member churches as received by the Stated Clerk.
3. The Committee will discuss its report with the church or committee which submitted the overture to ensure both parties understand each other's position before submitting the report to the Stated Clerk.
4. The Committee shall present a report and recommendations to the Stated Clerk at least two weeks prior to the meeting of Classis.

7.6 STUDY COMMITTEES

1. Study Committee Members shall be appointed by Classis or by the Classical Interim Committee.
2. The mandate of a Study Committee shall be articulated by Classis or the Classical Interim Committee when a particular matter requires consideration beyond what can be reasonably provided during the meeting of Classis or in line with the mandate and ability of the CIC.

3. Study committees shall present their reports at least eight weeks prior to the subsequent meeting of Classis, or at such a time as determined by Classis.

7.7 BALLOTING COMMITTEE

1. *The committee shall be composed of tellers supplied by the host church.*
2. The mandate of the committee shall be to distribute and count the ballots when elections take place at the meeting of Classis.

8 ELECTIONS

1. All active ministers of Classis and where applicable, all nominated elders or deacons or confessing members of the churches of Classis are eligible for election except where specific ordained offices are required, provided that Classis is assured they will allow their names to stand.
2. To be elected, nominees must receive at least 50% + 1 of the valid votes.
3. In electing minister delegates to Synod, (first and fourth delegate) the first ballot will be an open ballot; on all subsequent ballots Classis will decide which nominees will stand based on the number results of the previous ballot without names attached. Ordinarily, alternates will be considered the two runners up with the highest vote.
4. In electing elder (second) and deacon (third) delegates to Synod, voting shall take place from those elders and deacons who will be in office at the time of that synod meets and whose names are appropriately nominated. Ordinarily, the alternate for each office will be considered the runners up with the highest vote.
5. Preferably, no two delegates shall be members of one church.

9 MATTERS LEGALLY BEFORE CLASSIS

1. Overtures from councils
2. All matters from church Councils as they appear on the credentials of the delegates. Significant and substantive requests for action, requiring the consideration of all Councils, shall normally be referred to the next meeting of Classis.
3. Reports of classical delegates to denominational boards and of representatives of other agencies.
4. Reports of standing committees, advisory committees, and study committees.
5. Appeals and protests by church members or Councils when all the pertinent Church Order provisions have been met.

9.1 APPEALS

Classis, at its October 27, 2020 meeting, adopted the following procedure to be followed in appeals under Church Order, Article 30-a:

1. Each party will make an opening statement summarizing the issues as they understand them which must be limited to the specific issue under appeal.
2. The appellant, or his/her representative, will make a more detailed presentation including stating the policy authorities to which the appeal is made. In the process of outlining the case, the appellant may call witnesses with direct knowledge of the issues.
3. The respondent will proceed in the same way as the appellant with the same right to call witnesses.
4. If either party asks witnesses to speak, the other party will have the right to ask them questions. The delegates also have the right to ask questions of witnesses, but only as to fact or for clarification.
5. The appellant and respondent will have the right to summarize their cases and participate in the preliminary deliberation dealing with facts and further clarification.
6. The Chair of Classis, or a person designated by the Chair, then enters into prayer for the deliberations.
7. Both the appellant and respondent will then recuse themselves.
8. The delegates then enter into their own deliberation and vote by ballot whether they sustain the appeal or not.
9. The Chair of Classis then invites the parties back into the meeting and announces the decision.
10. Unless there are other subsidiary issues to be addressed, the session will be closed with prayer for all concerned.

10 RULES OF ORDER

10.1 MAIN MOTIONS

1. When a delegate places a request for consideration and action of a particular, defined matter before Classis, the Chair shall consider it a main motion. Such a motion is properly before Classis when
 - 1.1. the mover is recognized by the Chair
 - 1.2. the motion is acceptable to the Chair in its verbal or written form
 - 1.3. the motion is seconded by another delegate
2. The Chair shall consider a main motion improper when
 - 2.1. it conflicts with the Scriptures, the Reformed Confessions, the Church Order, or the laws of Canada or Ontario
 - 2.2. another motion is being considered at the same time
 - 2.3. it conflicts with an earlier decision of Classis
 - 2.4. it interferes with Classis' freedom of action relating to a matter already introduced but not yet completed
 - 2.5. it is not substantively different from a defeated motion
3. When an advisory committee brings a recommendation to not support a motion in an overture, the recommendation(s) in the overture shall take precedence.
4. When one or more delegates request that a motion with more than one part be divided, the Chair shall allow such a division, and each part shall be voted on separately, unless Classis decides this course of action is unnecessary.

10.2 AMENDMENTS

1. When a delegate places before Classis a request to alter the meaning or wording of a main motion before the vote is taken, the Chair shall consider this secondary motion an amendment to the main motion. Such an amendment is proper when it proposes to strike out, to insert, or to substitute words, clauses, sentences, or paragraphs of the main motion.
2. The Chair shall consider an amendment improper when
 - 2.1. it nullifies the main motion
 - 2.2. it radically alters the intent of the main motion
 - 2.3. it is not germane to the main motion

10.3 TABLING

A motion to table or postpone the main motion is proper. Such a motion is not debatable.

10.4 WITHHOLDING ACTION

If Classis prefers not to take action regarding a matter, it may adopt a motion to withhold action.

10.5 CHALLENGING THE CHAIR

When a delegate is not satisfied with a ruling of the Chair, he may challenge the chair. The Vice Chair will assume the chair for the vote on whether to sustain the Chair in the ruling he made.

10.6 PROTESTING AND RECORDING OF NEGATIVE VOTES

It is the right of any member to protest against any decision of Classis. Protests should be registered immediately, or during the session in which the matter concerned was acted upon. Protest must be registered individually and not in groups. Delegates may, if they feel the need, ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made immediately after the vote is taken.

10.7 RESCINDING A PREVIOUS DECISION

A motion to rescind a previously adopted matter shall ordinarily be presented at a subsequent meeting of Classis, and not at the same meeting during which the original decision was made.

Note: Should Classis make a decision which is at variance with a decision of a previous Classis, without having rescinded the earlier decision, the most recent decision shall invalidate all previous decisions.

10.8 MANNER OF VOTING

1. The delegates of Classis shall vote in a manner selected by the Chair by the raising of one hand, saying "yes", or saying "aye" to the question whether they are in favour or opposed to the adoption of the motion.
2. In significant or sensitive matters, the method of voting shall be by ballot. The Chair may rule a motion to require a ballot, or a delegate may make a motion that a vote on a particular matter be taken by ballot.

11 CLASSIS DUTIES

11.1 CHURCH VISITORS (See Appendices, 14.1 for additional "Guidelines")

1. Church Visitors and alternates shall be appointed by Classis for a term of three years, beginning and ending in May. There will be a minimum of two teams of three officebearers each. At least one member of each visiting team shall be a minister. All are eligible for re-election to a maximum of two terms. An officebearer, once elected, shall complete the three-year term as church visitors, even after leaving office in the case of an elder or deacon.
 - 1.1. The number and lists of churches shall be assigned to each team by the CIC.
 - 1.2. Church Visitors teams will notify councils in writing/email of a desired visit early enough so that a meeting of council may be held before the visit.
 - 1.3. Church visitors shall function according to the regulations of the Church Order and the pertinent synodical decisions which is on the CRCNA website and can be found here https://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/2015_church_visiting_guide.pdf.
 - 1.4. Church visitors shall be available to churches to give advice when called upon by a council.
2. Church visitors shall
 - 2.1. As soon as possible submit to the Council a written report of their visit. A final version of this report is to be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Classis.
 - 2.2. Provide a written summary report for each October classis meeting regarding the visits they have made during the previous year. This report is to be circulated with the agenda and shall contain the following:
 - 2.2.1. a statement that the questions in CO Article 42 have been addressed. any particular blessings, concerns, practices or situations that they have become aware of in a particular church that deserves the actions or attention of Classis. Councils concerned will be notified of this prior to the submission of the report.
 - 2.2.2. any advice they have given which needs Classis' approval
 - 2.2.3. common trends and/or problems they have become aware of and which the church visitors believe merit the attention of Classis
 - 2.2.4. any recommendations for Classis to deal with

11.2 CLASSICAL COUNSELORS

1. Upon request, Classis shall appoint a Counselor to serve the church on Classis' behalf through advice and counsel in accordance with the provisions of the Church Order, Article 42-c.

11.3 CLASSIS PULPIT SUPPLY (See Appendices, 14.2 for additional “Guidelines”)

1. As an expression of our Vision for “healthy and vibrant churches, ministries and members” through mutuality and community, we understand providing pulpit supply support to be a communal matter—churches helping each other, rather than pastors helping churches.
2. Provision of support is to be based upon the worship practices of the receiving congregation (all services normally scheduled for that Sunday).
3. The Pastor must be a preaching minister of the sending church.
4. Two-pastor congregations have the option of requesting pulpit supply if they are vacant of their “Preaching Pastor.” If the 2nd Pastor has preached less than once per month in the past 12 months, then they will not be considered a “Preaching Pastor”.
5. Two-pastor congregations with only one Pastor are not exempted from the Pulpit Supply rotation.
6. The Classis Interim Committee shall be responsible for preparing a pulpit supply schedule. Such schedule shall be posted on the Classis Hamilton website to maintain consistency.
7. Ordinarily the Stated Clerk will maintain a list of retired ministers and other licentiates available to preach on the Classis website.

12 EXAMINATIONS AND LICENSURE

12.1 EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES UNDER CHURCH ORDER ARTICLES 7 and 10 (See Appendices, 14.3 for additional "Guidelines")

1. Organizational Arrangements
 - 1.1. The Classis Interim Committee shall prepare all arrangements for the Classis examination. No credentials are required from the candidate since the synodical declaration of candidacy is adequate affirmation that the physical and academic requirements have been met. The Stated Clerk shall send a copy of the requirements and procedure to the candidate.

12.2 EXAMINATION OF A MINISTER FROM ANOTHER DENOMINATION UNDER ARTICLE 8

1. A Colloquium Doctum is a friendly interview with a minister from another denomination who wishes to enter the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.
2. Application for a Colloquium Doctum shall be made to the Classis Interim Committee in either of two ways:
 - 2.1. By the Council that desires to extend a call
 - 2.2. By the minister personally (if there is as yet no calling church)
3. Upon receipt of the application, the Classis Interim Committee shall make all necessary arrangements for the Colloquium Doctum in accordance with synodical and Classis regulations. Cf. Church Order Supplement Article 8 E.
4. One minister from Classis shall be appointed to conduct the Colloquy before Classis.

12.3 COMMISSIONED PASTOR UNDER CHURCH ORDER ARTICLE 23

The CIC is responsible to ensure that all documentation required prior to the examination is in order.

12.4 LICENSURE TO EXHORT UNDER CHURCH ORDER ARTICLE 43-b

1. Licensure to exhort in the churches of Classis may be granted to those who request it, after the need for such service has first been established.
2. The examination for licensure to exhort shall be limited to members of the Christian Reformed Church who are gifted, well informed, consecrated, and able to edify the churches.
3. Classis shall require the following documents from the applicants:
 - 3.1. A recommendation from the applicant's council
 - 3.2. Written request for licensure from the applicant, including the reasons for the request
4. The Classis Interim Committee shall assign a sermon text to the applicant and arrange for the applicant to lead a worship service in the applicant's home church, using that assigned text for the sermon. The committee shall also arrange for two sermon critics who shall attend the worship service and report to Classis.
5. The Classis Interim Committee shall arrange for an examination of the applicant in the following areas:
 - 5.1. Knowledge of the Scriptures, Reformed Confessions, and theology
 - 5.2. Sermon evaluation

5.3. Practica and Ethics

6. Licensure shall be for three years, after which it may be renewed every three years at the written request of the exhorter and by the approval of Classis.

13 STANDING COMMITTEES

13.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Classis Hamilton, through its standing committees, seeks “to be used by God to renew the greater Hamilton region through a gospel movement of healthy and vibrant churches, ministries and members.”
2. Every committee of Classis (not including committees of the Board of Directors, in accordance with the General Operating Bylaw Number 1) serves Classis but shall not replace Classis in its ecclesiastical responsibilities in any way. All committee work of Classis appointed committees shall receive the approval of Classis before becoming effective.
3. All committee members ordinarily shall serve their full term. Committee members ordinarily shall be elected for a three-year term and ordinarily shall not serve more than two consecutive terms of office.
4. Standing committee members and various functionaries ordinarily shall be elected in May. Synodical delegates are elected at the winter classis meeting.
5. Advisory committees shall be appointed at least five weeks prior to the meeting of Classis. The Stated Clerk, in consultation with the CIC, shall assign the specific issues to each committee in sufficient time before the meeting to enable the committee to prepare a well-articulated set of recommendations.
6. Classis shall reimburse travel expenses incurred by committee members while on Classis business, but shall not compensate for lost wages.
7. Standing committees shall elect their own officers.

13.2 CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE (CIC)

1. Mandate: Classis has a Classis Interim Committee (CIC) in order to enable Classis churches, ministries and members to contribute to this over-arching mission by providing effective and efficient administrative support and responsibility for the administration relating to all property matters.
2. Key Responsibilities:
 - 2.1. Communication: To facilitate timely and effective flow of communication within the organizational structure of classis.
 - 2.2. Appointment: To oversee the timely recruitment, selection, and nominations of the stated clerk, church visitors, regional pastors, church counselors and the like.
 - 2.3. Ecclesiastical Matters: To process all matters relating to Church Order and classis Rules of Procedure including credentials, requests, overtures to Classis or Synod, and other correspondence of a church order nature.
 - 2.4. Legal Matters: To ensure that all corporate and legal matters as stated in General **Operating Bylaw Number 1** are properly pursued and implemented.
 - 2.5. Leadership: To assist Classis in discerning and developing its overall mission/vision/values by being attentive to the ways in which God is moving in our region and in our ministries and by being proactive in pursuing innovative ways in which we can join in that mission.
 - 2.6. Structures: To establish, maintain, and modify Classis structures in a manner consistent with the mandate above. All modifications are subject to the approval of Classis.
 - 2.7. Shape: To determine the overall shape of the Classis agenda and to call additional meetings as necessary.
 - 2.8. Communication: To facilitate effective and concise written and/or oral reporting of the Classis Ministries/Committees and Denominational Ministries pertaining to Classis Hamilton.
3. Membership:

The membership of the Classis Interim Committee shall consist of five (5) persons filling the following positions renewable for a maximum of 6 one-year terms.

 - President
 - Vice President
 - Members-at-Large
4. Meetings: The CIC shall meet as required to fulfill its mandate.
5. Accountability: The CIC shall report on its own work and the work of the Stated Clerk at each Classis meeting and determine the time allotment necessary for administrative matters.

[NOTE 13.3 was removed intentionally]

13.4 CLASSICAL HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE (CHMC)

1. Mandate: To maintain contact with representatives of the local congregations of Classis Hamilton regarding outreach, evangelism and Missional activities in order to:
 - a. Discern God's leading
 - b. Promote resources, workshops, conferences etc., for Missional learning and growth
 - c. Identify and encourage collaboration where such will enhance the ministry.
2. The structure of the committee:
 - 1.1. Ordinarily shall be composed of six members;
 - 1.2. Two of the members shall be active ministers within Classis;
3. The tasks of the committee:
 - 3.1. To promote, encourage and facilitate workshops, conferences, and other resources which will provide the congregations of Classis Hamilton with opportunities to discuss, learn and implement strategies and ideas for evangelism, outreach and Missional living.
 - 3.2. To promote, cooperate and assist in initiating and/or secure funding for planting new churches within Classis Hamilton.
 - 3.3. To work in partnership with Resonate Global Missions regarding new and continuing mission opportunities within Classis Hamilton. Encourage collaboration where such will enhance the ministry being advanced.
 - 3.4. To spend time intentionally listening to the Holy Spirit in prayer in order to discern where God is leading with regard to Missional activity and opportunities within Classis Hamilton
4. The committee ordinarily shall report at every meeting of Classis.

13.5 McMaster University and Mohawk College Campus Committee [updated Nov 2022]

1. Preamble: One of the expressed purposes of the Christian Reformed congregations that make up Classis Hamilton is to partner together in shared ministry. Classis has agreed to “decide upon and oversee purposeful ministries that reach out to our local communities and region with the love of God. We will prayerfully seek, establish, and maintain these shared ministries as a Classis and, where appropriate, partner in the leadership and financial needs of these ministries.” The McMaster University & Mohawk CR Campus Ministry is one such shared ministry of Classis Hamilton.

2. Mandate: To further the work of the Campus Ministry and its Campus Minister(s), Classis Hamilton has formed and mandates a committee to support and supervise the work of the Campus Minister(s), and to evaluate and establish direction for the campus ministry.

3. Tasks: The mandate of the committee shall include, but not be limited to, the following tasks and responsibilities:

- 3.1. Provide an environment of on-going support for the Campus Minister(s), the ministry, and its core participants through dialogue and prayer.
- 3.2. Provide on-going supervision to the Campus Minister(s) to ensure that the work is in accordance with expressed purposes of the ministry and in promotion of a life of healthy balance, personal wellness, and spiritual vitality.
- 3.3. Engage in regular, intentional times of Campus Minister and campus ministry evaluation and review in order to re-focus the direction of the ministry as appropriate to the changing context of each campus.
- 3.4. Support the Campus Minister(s) in promoting the campus ministry and in sharing the fruit of its cultural engagement with the member churches of the classis.
- 3.5. To attend to the financial sustainability of the ministry in accordance with the budget approved by Classis Hamilton that may be augmented by additional fundraising. All moneys received, whether as a result of fundraising or otherwise, must be deposited in the bank account administered by the Classis Audit Review Committee.
- 3.6. To, at the discretion of the committee, create structure and process to attend to the unique needs of the McMaster and Mohawk Ministries as time and circumstance may require.

4. The voting members of the McMaster University and Mohawk College Campus Ministry Committee shall be comprised of classically approved members primarily from Classis Hamilton who are committed to a Reformed witness and familiar with the university or college context. The Committee shall include:

- The Campus Minister(s) (non-voting)
- Two ministers serving within Classis Hamilton
- Two faculty/staff members, one each from McMaster University and Mohawk College
- Two alumni, one each from McMaster University and Mohawk College
- Up to two students each from McMaster University and Mohawk College (non-voting, non-Classis-appointed)

- Up to one member at large (e.g. with expertise in fundraising, etc.)

5. Terms of service:

- 5.1. Members shall normally be elected for a three year term and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms of office.
- 5.2. Voting members shall be elected by Classis at its Fall meeting. The committee shall elect its own officers.
- 5.3. By the Fall meeting of Classis, the committee shall normally recommend to the Stated Clerk the names of people for appointment to the committee.
- 5.4. Student members shall serve at the invitation of the committee and its Campus Minister(s) for a one year term renewable for up to four years.

13.6 CLASSIS HAMILTON CANDIDACY COMMITTEE (CHCC)

1. The Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee (CHCC) serves Classis Hamilton and its congregations by offering support to those from within classis who are preparing for full time ordained ministry in the Christian Reformed Church of North America via Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8 or 23.
Article 6: Seminary Graduates seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA;
Article 7: Those with extraordinary gifts seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA;
Article 8: Those ordained in other denominations and seeking ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA;
Article 23: Those seeking ordination as a Commissioned Pastor in the CRCNA
2. The CHCC shall ordinarily be comprised of five individuals, at least two of which ordinarily will be Ministers of the Word.
3. The CHCC will regularly encourage pastors and councils to seek out youth with leadership gifts for ordained ministry in the CRC through at least the following means:
 - a. Actively promoting discernment events such as Calvin Theological Seminary's annual "Facing Your Future" summer program, "Discerning Your Call" weekend seminars, and local initiatives to encourage discernment of calling to ordained ministry in the CRCNA.
 - b. Annually publishing candidacy requirements and funding possibilities for CRC ordained ministry through the agenda of Classis Hamilton, church bulletin notices, and the Classis Hamilton Website.
 - c. Acting as Classis Hamilton's source for up-to-date information regarding CRC candidacy requirements through Church Order Articles 6, 7, 8, and 23.
4. The CHCC will receive and process applications from students preparing for ordained ministry in the CRCNA consistent with the CHCC Policies and Procedures documents approved by Classis Hamilton. The policies are available at the following link: [CHCC Policies and Procedures](#)
5. The CHCC will interview all prospective students, focusing on their character, knowledge, skills, experience, gifts, their internal and external call, and financial need.
6. The CHCC will be available to students preparing for ordination, and along with the Synodical Candidacy Committee, guide them through the steps toward ordination.
7. The CHCC will make recommendations to Classis Hamilton regarding financial assistance for Students. Assistance will be offered in the form of forgivable loans, based upon need and available resources. Though all students will be given due consideration, preference will be given to students enrolled at Calvin Theological Seminary, our denominationally supported school for training pastors. Financial assistance in the form of forgivable loans will be offered as outlined in the CHCC Policies and Procedures documents.
8. The CHCC will forward amounts of all forgivable loans to the Classis Audit Review Committee for tracking purposes. The CHCC will also make the Audit Review Committee aware of any situations where repayment plans need to be coordinated between students and the Audit Review Committee as outlined in the CHCC's Policies and Procedures documents, such as:

a. when students do not accept a call to a qualified ordained ministry position in the CRCNA;

b. when students enroll in additional graduate theological education;

c. when students withdraw from the candidacy program.

Repayment plans will be coordinated according to the accepted terms of the Forgivable Loan Agreement.

9. The CHCC will develop and keep current policies for funding application and forgivable loans and procedures for application of students.

13.7 CLASSIS HAMILTON YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM

Vision: God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, calls us to nurture the covenant youth of Classis Hamilton and those they invite to grow in their knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and to join Him in his great work of reconciliation.

Mission: The mission of the Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Team is to be used by God to encourage, promote and facilitate the development and growth of healthy, vibrant Youth and Young Adult Ministries in Classis Hamilton congregations.

The mandate of the committee shall be:

- a. To encourage healthy youth ministry from age 11 to 25, focused on youth (gr.'s 9-12), College & Careers and Young Adult Ministries (post high school to 25yrs)
- b. To coordinate the Classis Hamilton youth services
- c. To listen to the joys and concerns of youth, youth ministry groups, churches or Classis and respond to these voices in a timely fashion
- d. To make recommendations to Classis which reflect youth-ministry needs
- e. To encourage and promote leadership training for youth leaders
- f. To encourage and promote leadership development training for our youth
- g. To support the Classis youth champion who links us with the work of the CRC's Faith Formation Ministries concerning matters of mutual interest
- h. To establish an annual budget to promote and support the work of the Classical Youth Ministry Team
- i. To send our minutes to the clerk of Classis and to report briefly to Classis up to three times a year.

Membership:

1. The committee shall consist of a minimum of 5 members who reflect the commitment and expertise that Classis deems necessary. Preferably members will represent each of the following areas of ministry (plus a number of at-large positions):

1 Pastor
1 youth educator,
1 elder/classis representative
1 parent of adolescent/teenage youth
1 youth in high school
1 Classis Youth Champion by virtue of office

2. The committee shall appoint a secretary and a chairperson/convener.
3. Terms of serving will be three years with option to renew.
4. The committee shall appoint 2 members to serve as delegates to and champions of Faith Formation Ministries (one adult and one youth or young adult).

14 APPENDICES

14.1 SECTION 11.1 GUIDELINES

Continuing Education Learning Covenant

Synod of 2016 approved the “Continuing Education Learning Covenant” which is an opportunity for spiritual growth and professional training for pastors and ministry staff. Education can be accomplished through workshops, classes, spiritual retreats, guided groups, online programs, or supervised individual study. Councils are called to (a) establish a policy for continuing education, (b) to establish the expectation that their pastor(s) and ministry staff annually engage in an appropriate program of continuing education for ministry, and (c) to hold ministers and other ministry staff accountable for obtaining continuing education and for the content of the programs.

Classis has been requested by synod to assist the churches in an annual review of the learning covenant for pastors.

As church visitors we ask you the following:

- A. Are you aware of this program?
- B. If so, what steps have you or are you undertaking to establish a policy for continuing education?
- C. Are you engaged in an annual review of continuing education of pastors and other ministry staff?
- D. Do you hold ministers and other ministry staff accountable for obtaining continuing education? How?
- E. Have you provided ministry staff time to be engaged in this type of education?
- F. What resources/formats have you found to be most helpful?
- G. Has sufficient funding been made available for this program?
- H. Do you find the program effective?

14.2 SECTION 11.3 GUIDELINES

Pulpit Supply is arranged in accordance with Classis Hamilton Rules of Procedure Article 11.3.

- Classis provides pulpit supply one full Sunday each month (ordinarily the 3rd Sunday) from September through May; in some churches this means there may be 2 services to fill. No assignments will be made for the months of June thru August (except for Synod) to encourage the use of Seminarians seeking summer assignments.
- Classical appointments will not be scheduled on the following days: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, the first Sunday in January, Palm Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. When statutory holidays fall around the third Sunday, the schedule will be adjusted to the second Sunday for that month.
- Assignments will be distributed evenly among sending congregations. Changes in pulpit vacancies will ordinarily be adjusted in the schedule prior to each of three periods (Sept – Nov; Dec – Feb; Mar – May) approximately 6 weeks in advance of each period.
- Sending and receiving Churches may negotiate an alternate Sunday in that month provided there is agreement on any changed date. The default remains the assignment on the Classis Supply schedule.
- Pulpit supply assignments are filled by the church - not by the pastor. These commitments have been covenanted together and may therefore be considered obligations of collegiality and a sharing of burdens. In the case where the pastor of the sending church is on sabbatical, the sending and receiving church will consult to make an alternate arrangement.

- The sending Church will send one of the preaching pastors employed on staff. The sending church must inform the receiving church in advance which pastor will fill the vacant pulpit.
- To meet other worship service needs, congregations with pastoral vacancies may make use of the published contact list of additional ordained Pastors and Commissioned Pastors in Classis Hamilton, as well as those licensed to exhort.
- Any congregation whose pastor is elected to serve as Synodical delegate will receive a one full Sunday pulpit supply with expenses paid by Classis. The churches assigned to fill these appointments are contingent upon the receiving church's pastor(s) attendance at Synod.
- Expenses will be paid on a per worship service basis as follows:
 - Mileage will be paid to the visiting pastor. Two Hundred dollars (\$200.00) per service will be sent to the sending church unless otherwise directed by the sending church.
 - Sending churches are encouraged to contact the receiving church prior to a classical appointment to verify whether any changes need to be made; please arrange these changes among yourselves. Remember to notify the churches and/or pastors involved of any changes (please consider 4 to 6 weeks as a reasonable advance notification/negotiation period).
 - Any changes to dates or pastors are to be arranged between the sending and receiving churches; please do not involve those who schedule pulpit supply except to forward information for an upcoming schedule.

14.3 SECTION 12.1 GUIDELINES

1. That Classis do its best to ensure proper following of procedure as outlined in the CRC Church Order and the Classis Hamilton Rules of Procedure, including having the required sermon of the candidate in the hands of the clerk for distribution with the agenda (at least 5 weeks prior to the meeting).
2. That the sermon critics give clear indication of a negative critique of the written sermons at least one week prior to the examination, if that critique suggests not proceeding with the examination.
3. That the sermon critics go over their report with the candidate after the sermon on the required text has been preached, and at least two days prior to Classis meeting.
4. That Classis invite delegates and Synodical deputies who would like copies of the additional sermons to request them from the clerk. While Classis does not want to make Classis a committee of the whole, we believe this transparency and availability will be more helpful to the process and dialogue.
5. That the chair of Classis, when there is an examination, take time to explain the process, the goals of each section of examination, and the roles of all involved, before the examination begins. This will be of help to delegates who may be there for the first time, as well as experienced delegates who may be helped by a reminder. It will also be helpful to guests who are present at what is a public meeting, enabling them to both better understand and appreciate what the examination is about.