



ADDENDUM TO THE AGENDA
CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
October 27, 2020

MEETING VIA ZOOM COMMENCES AT 8:45 AM FOR ORIENTATION WITH 9:00 AM OPENING

The section titled "Orientation for Delegates" in this Addendum, page 4, is intended to help delegates better understand the procedures at Classis Hamilton meetings as well as the obligations of each delegate. Please read those pages carefully and if you can suggest additional items for inclusion, please send them to the stated clerk who will gladly include them in future editions.

For first time delegates (and as refresher for others) the Agenda itself can be found at the following link: http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/agenda_october_27_2020.pdf.

All delegates will be asked to affirm their commitment to the Covenant for Office-Bearers in the Christian Reformed Church in North America by indicating their agreement when the Chair of Classis so indicates. The Covenant can be found on page 9.

Our Journey 2025 – Please watch this video regarding Our Journey 2025: <https://youtu.be/tgHbZ6swKpE>. It will not be shown at the meeting. However, it does tie into the Denominational Restructuring presentation in item 13 of the Agenda.

May the Lord be with you as you prayerfully prepare for classis.

PLEASE NOTE: Copies of the Agenda and this Addendum should be printed off by each delegate so that they have the necessary information available during the Zoom meeting.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick L. Kranendonk".

Dick L. Kranendonk,
Stated Clerk
clerk@classishamilton.ca
289-239-7564

Index

1. DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES 3

2. ORIENTATION FOR DELEGATES..... 4

3. COVENANT FOR OFFICE BEARERS..... 9

4. CIC REPORT – ADDITION 10

5. HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE..... 11

6. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT 12

1. DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

Church	First Name	Last Name	Title
Ancaster CRC	Rick	DeJonge	Elder Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Stuart	Bootsma	Deacon Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Everett	Vander Horst	Pastor Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Ken	Tigchelaar	Elder Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Marcia	Hosmar	Deacon Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Peter	Bulthuis	Elder Alternate
Hope	To Be Determined		
New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
New Street	Trudy	Sykes	Elder Delegate
New Street	John	Dekker	Deacon Delegate
Faith	Cara	DeHaan	Pator Delegate
Faith	Rob	Schaafsma	Elder Delegate
Faith	Jamie	Buisman	Deacon Delegate
Faith	Roy	Voorberg	Elder Alternate
Calvin	John	Schotsman	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Casey	VanderKruk	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Ben	Lammers	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate
Calvary	Joel	Wassink	Elder Delegate
Calvary	Jane	Vanderzwaag	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Bas	Hania	Elder Alternate
Calvary	Gwen	Bosveld	Deacon Alternate
Hagersville Community	Davis	Miedema	Elder Delegate
Hagersville Community	Brian	Paterson	Deacon Delegate
First Hamilton	Hayden	Regeling	Pastor Delegate
First Hamilton	Jules	de Jager	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Jan	Disselkoen	Deacon Delegate
First Hamilton	Darren	Brouwer	Elder Alternate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Anthony	Elenbaas	Pastor Delegate
New Hope	Ginelle	Bucher	Emerging Church
Mt. Hope Community	Mark	Demik	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Greg	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Sandi	Buwalda	Deacon Delegate
Ebenezer	Willem	de Vries	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	Dan	Wyngaarden	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Gerald	Nykamp	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	To Be Determined		
Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor Delegate
Bethel	Peter	van der Meulen	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Chris	DeWeerd	Deacon Delegate-am
Maranatha	Ben	Ponsen	Pastor Delegate
Maranatha	Ray E.	Elgersma	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Maurice	Houwer	Deacon Delegate
Maranatha	Cor	Boekee	Elder Alternate
Maranatha	Jason	Haanstra	Deacon Alternate

2. ORIENTATION FOR DELEGATES

Introduction:

Classis consists of three delegates from each member congregation – a pastor, an elder and a deacon. First-time delegates are asked to sign the *Covenant for Officebearers* at the registration desk. *Delegate Credentials* are processed by the church council and are to be submitted by the Council, to the Stated Clerk via email prior to the classis meeting by your council clerk.

Duration of Classis Meetings

- The meetings normally are held on Tuesdays. Start time is determined based on the length/needs of the agenda.

Classis Agenda:

- The Classis Agenda will, ordinarily, be in the hands of church councils eight weeks prior to the actual meeting date of classis. This is done to allow each church council to review the agenda prior to sending delegates.
- Delegates are to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the classis agenda. The assumption is that the agenda has been discussed at the delegates' local council meetings.

Executive of Classis

- The Executive consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair and the Stated Clerk. A Reporter is also appointed for each meeting and serves as the Vice-Chair at the next subsequent meeting.
- The chair is elected by classis in its October meeting to serve during the following calendar year. The vice-chair is appointed by rotation and the stated clerk is elected annually at the May classis meeting.

What May I Expect to Happen at Any One Classis Meeting?

- First time delegates are to sign the Covenant for Officebearers.
- The Classis Agenda will, ordinarily, be in the hands of church councils eight weeks prior to the actual meeting date of classis, and so delegates should have it at that time as well.
- Delegates may be requested to serve in the following capacities:
 - **Prayer:** for the ministries of classis, concerns of classis and/or for individuals.
 - **Committee work:**
 - Delegates in teams of two churches may be asked to serve on one of its advisory committees, Credentials, Ad hoc (as determined by previous Classis or Classis Interim Committee) or Overtures & Appeals. They are expected to submit their recommendations at least three weeks prior to the classis meeting.
- Though there is a degree of flexibility (especially where there is silence on a matter), classis abides by its own Rules of Procedure together with the rules of the CRCNA Church Order in conducting its meetings. The Church Order is determined by Synod and is held in covenant by all CR churches. The classis Rules of Procedure are at:
http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/rop_issue_2019_1.pdf

What Are Classis' Expectations of Me?

- Be on time for all sessions of classis.
- Delegates are expected to review the agenda with their council, sharing the thoughts of their council on any particular agenda item. Delegates are not obligated to vote according to their council's wishes. Classis is a deliberative body and the freedom needs to remain for delegates to

vote on the basis of the best information or perspective presented at classis. (*Church Order*, Article 34; & *Manual of CRC Government*, Article 34, Commentary #'s 1 – 4.)

- If you do not understand the procedure, or it is not clear what is being discussed, or you are uncertain of the implications of a decision, **please ask**. It is important that all delegates deliberate and vote with good awareness of what is going on. Classis would rather take a moment to ensure that, also for the meaningfulness of your time there, than try 'rush' through the agenda.
- You are expected to remain at classis until the meeting is formally adjourned. If there is an urgent need to leave, or if you will be replaced at some point by an alternate, you are to seek the permission of the chair who will seek the consent of the assembly.
- Be aware that classis is a deliberative body and may make decisions from time to time that you do not necessarily agree with.
- Strong objection to a decision of classis may be voiced by stating your objection. If you wish to have your objection recorded, you will need to submit a written statement (within 24 hours) indicating your objection and reason(s) why.
- Delegates should report to their councils the decisions made at the classis meeting.

What do the Acronyms Used at Classis Mean?

It is always a challenge for persons coming to a meeting of an organization to understand the shortcut language often used. Part of that shortcut language is using acronyms. Here follows a list of more common ones often included in reports or heard at classis meetings.

- ARC – Audit Review Committee of Classis Hamilton
- CHCC – Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee
- CHCMC – Classis Hamilton Campus Ministries Committee
- CHHMC – Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee
- CHSCT – Classis Hamilton Safe Church Team
- CHYMT – Classis Hamilton Youth Ministry Team
- CIC – Classis Interim Committee (also serves as the corporation's Board of Directors)
- CMT – Classis Ministry Team
- CRCNA – Christian Reformed Church in North America
- DMC – Diaconal Ministries Canada
- EPMC – Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidates
- RCA – Reformed Church in America
- RoP – Rules of Procedure of Classis Hamilton

THE PURPOSE OF CLASSIS ACCORDING TO CRCNA CHURCH ORDER

The purpose of classis cannot be clearly and easily stated. However, there are several aspects of classis and the classical structure that help to clarify the purpose of classis.

I. Definition of Classis

A classis shall consist of a group of Christian Reformed churches that come together to seek, discern, and submit to God's will; offer one another mutual support and accountability; find ways to live out a collective calling within their region; and allow for a healthy and sustained connection to the wider denomination. A classis shall consist of a group of neighboring churches. The organizing of a new classis and the redistricting of classes require the approval of synod. (Church Order, Article 39)

“Article 39 defines the classical assembly as a group of neighboring churches [that find ways to live out a collective calling within their region]. Each organized church belongs to a classis.” (*Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government (MCRCG) 2019*, Commentary, Items 1. & 2., pp. 165-166).

“The classis is the official assembly of a group of neighboring (broadly defined) congregations. It consists of three official delegates (a minister, an elder, and a deacon) from each congregation and ordinarily meets every four months (see Church Order Art. 39 and 40). However, there are a number of classes that now meet two times per year rather than the three stipulated in the Church Order. (*MCRCG 2019*, Commentary, Item 1. b. p. 168).

II. Authority of Classis

Classis is a major assembly established with the authority of Christ given to the church to exercise that authority over the councils of the local churches.

“Each assembly exercises, in keeping with its own character and domain, the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to the church by Christ; the authority of councils being original, that of major assemblies being delegated.” (Church Order, Article 27-a)

“The essential authority of the church is to make the church what God calls it to be. Christ rules his church by his Word and Spirit. Each member, each special office, and each assembly is called upon to build up the body of Christ to fully represent him and do his work so that in all things his purposes may be accomplished in and through his church. Every member, officebearer, and assembly exercises this authority committed to the church by Christ.” (*MCRCG 2019*, Commentary, Items 1. a.-b., p. 105)

“The classis has the same authority over the council as the synod has over the classis.” (Church Order, Article 27-b)

“In matters that are properly the province of a major assembly, the Church Order declares that the major assemblies have authority over the minor assemblies—the classis has authority over the council...” (*MCRCG 2019*, Commentary, Items 2-b., paragraph 3, p. 106)

III. Delegation

The authority of classis is a delegated authority.

“Each assembly exercises, in keeping with its own character and domain, the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to the church by Christ; the authority of councils being original, that of major assemblies being delegated.” (Church Order, Article 27-a)

“The major assemblies are duly constituted assemblies of the churches and consist of delegates authorized to ‘take part in all deliberations and transactions of the assembly and transacted in agreement with the Word of God and according to the conception of it embodied in the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church, as well as in harmony with the Church Order’” (*MCRCG 2019*, Commentary, Item 2- b., paragraph 2, p. 103)

“The classis is the official assembly of a group of neighboring (broadly defined) congregations. It consists of three official delegates (a minister, an elder, and a deacon) from each congregation and ordinarily meets every four months (see Church Order Art. 39 and 40). ... (*MCRCG 2019*, Commentary, Item 1. b. p. 107) “The point of Article 34 is that the major assemblies are representative of the congregations constituting the minor assemblies. It needs to be emphasized that the meetings of classes are meetings of churches and not meetings of ministers, elders, and deacons. The churches send delegates but the classis meeting remains a meeting of member

congregations. ...Neither classes nor synod are “representative assemblies” like a legislature. Rather ...the assemblies of the church are “deliberative assemblies” in which the delegates that constitute the assembly are free to discuss and deliberate together for the wellbeing of the whole church represented in that assembly. This representation binds the church together. Each member church of a classis, and each member classis in the denomination, must be fully aware of the fact that it has opportunity by way of overture, communication, or appeal, and also through representatives, to make its contribution to every decision adopted by a broader assembly. (MCRCG 2019, Commentary, Item 1., paragraph 3, p. 143)

IV. Unity of the church

“To express and maintain the broader unity of the church and to reach out beyond the local boundaries, councils (minor assemblies) unite in broader (major) assemblies called ‘classes’.” (MCRCG 2019, Commentary, Item 2. b., paragraph 1, p. 106)

“The advantages to three meetings a year that should not be given up except for good cause are:

- 1) the opportunity to respond to the agenda of synod,
- 2) more frequent contact among the churches,
- 3) closer supervision of the work of classis,
- 4) the distribution of the burden of the work over three meetings instead of two.” (Acts of Synod, 1985, p. 725)

“The point of Article 34 is that the major assemblies are representative of the congregations constituting the minor assemblies. ...*This representation binds the church together.* ... (MCRCG 2019, Commentary, Item 1., paragraph 3, p. 144)

V. Matters of Concern

There are certain matters which are proper for classis to undertake and others with which classis should not concern itself.

“Article 28: Matters Legally Before Assemblies

- a. These assemblies shall transact ecclesiastical matters only, and shall deal with them in an ecclesiastical manner.
- b. A major assembly shall deal only with those matters which concern its churches in common or which could not be finished in the minor assemblies.” (Church Order, Article 28 a-b)

“Article 28-b says that a major assembly shall deal only with matters that concern its churches in common or that could not be finished in the minor assemblies.

- a. Matters of common concern
Projects and programs that can be carried on by the minor assemblies should be done by these assemblies and not by the major assemblies. A council should not ask classis to do work the council is capable of doing... However, church councils may refer to classis any matter that concerns all the churches of classis in common.” (MCRCG 2019, Commentary, Item 1., paragraph 3, p. 107-108)

Those matters of concern include the following:

- 1) Business matters that impinge upon all churches, e.g. examination of candidates for ministry. (Church Order, Articles 10, 23, 24, 43, 82-84)
- 2) Accountability of the churches

- i. Church offices (Church Order, Article 2)
 - ii. Discipline (Church Order, Article 82-84)
- 3) Provide advice to the churches—through Church Visitors (Church Order, Article 42)
- 4) Evangelism & Ministry of Mercy (Church Order, Article 75 a-b)
 - i. Assist local churches
 - ii. Perform evangelistic work through a classical ministry plan when that work is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches.
 - iii. Perform mercy ministries through a classical ministry plan when that work is beyond the scope and resources of the local churches.
- 6) Provide financial assistance to those preparing for ministry by granting financial aid administered through a Student Fund Committee. (Church Order, Article 21)

3. COVENANT FOR OFFICE BEARERS

COVENANT FOR OFFICE-BEARERS IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH (2012)

We believe the inspired Word of God as received in the Old and New Testaments of Holy Scripture, which proclaims the good news of God’s creation and redemption through Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the authority of God’s Word, we submit to it in all matters of life and faith.

We affirm three creeds—the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith. In doing so, we confess our faith in unity with followers of Jesus Christ throughout all ages and among all nations.

We also affirm three confessions—the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort—as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith. These confessions continue to define the way we understand Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ.

Grateful for these expressions of faith, we promise to be formed and governed by them. We heartily believe and will promote their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.

Along with these historic creeds and confessions, we also affirm the witness of Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony as a current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context.

We also promise to present or receive confessional difficulties in a spirit of love and fellowship with our brothers and sisters as together we seek a fuller understanding of the gospel. Should we come to believe that a teaching in the confessional documents is irreconcilable with God’s Word, we will communicate our views to the church, according to the procedures prescribed by the Church Order and its supplements. Further, we promise to submit to the church’s judgment and authority.

We honour this covenant for the well-being of the church to the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Delegates will be asked to indicate their affirmation of the Covenant by standing when asked by the Chair of Classis to do so.

4. CIC REPORT – ADDITION

As reported in the Agenda, Appendix #3, p.9, item 8.:

“According to the requirements of Church Order Supplement Article 30-a, 3, a meeting needs to be arranged prior to January 2021 to meet deadline for the Josiah Bokma appeal. In view of the continued COVID-19 pandemic, it might not be possible to hold an in-person special executive session of classis within the prescribed timeframe. It had been agreed with the appellant and the respondent that hearing the appeal in person was desirable. The agenda addendum will include specific recommendations after CIC has consulted with Kathy Smith and Dee Recker as well as with the appellant and the respondent.”

After consulting with Kathy Smith and Dee Recker and discussing their responses, the CIC decided that the best way to proceed would be to hold an in-person special executive session of classis before the end of the year. Since CIC’s discussion was compatible with the desire of both the appellant and respondent for an in-person meeting, there was no need to further consult with the appellant and respondent.

It was also noted that an in-person classis meeting would appear to come under the local municipal by-law restrictions for private corporate meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the City of Brantford appears the most likely location to permit an in-person corporate meeting. For that reason, CIC decided that Hope CRC, Brantford should be selected as the host church for the special executive session of Classis Hamilton.

NOTE: The appeal will deal with the specific matter brought to classis by Josiah Bokma. Any matter that may arise as a result of the decision of classis regarding the appeal will need to be addressed at a subsequent meeting. Consequently, synodical deputies will not be present at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That Classis agree to call a special executive session of Classis Hamilton on December 8, 2020 at Hope CRC, Brantford at 7:30 P.M.

5. HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Home Missions Committee of Classis Hamilton Report

The Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee has provided a grant to the South Beach Project led by Willemina Zwart as reported in the agenda, Appendix #1.2. Since the meeting will now take place in a virtual format, Willemina Zwart has provided a video providing some understanding of what the project is about and to encourage the churches to help connect prospective young people with the project. The video can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-z6315-y9QM>

Please view this video before the meeting since it will **NOT** be shown during the meeting.

6. *CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT*

Credentials Committee Report

No requests or communications were received on the credentials requiring the attention of the credentials committee or classis.