



Christian
Reformed
Church

Agenda for a Meeting of CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Date: February 25, 2020 **Time:** 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Venue: Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, 61 Mohawk Rd., Hamilton, ON L9C 1V9

Officers of Classis: Chair: Benjamin Ponsen Vice Chair: Willem de Vries Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk	Synodical Deputies: Not Required
Reporter: Bethel CRC - Waterdown	Ballot Committee: Immanuel CRC, Hamilton
Credentials Committee: Calvary CRC, Flamborough Hagersville Community CRC, Hagersville	Overture Committee Immanuel CRC, Hamilton First Hamilton CRC, Hamilton

CREENTIALS:

1. The credentials shall be returned to the Stated Clerk by email no later than February 4, 2020 with CC: (copy) emailed to your delegates. Please note that there are additional questions on the credentials. Please fill them in where desired.
2. Also note the request for elder and deacon nominees for synodical delegate on the second page of the credentials. Your assistance is much appreciated.
3. The credential questions and observations will be forwarded to the Credentials Committee so that they will be able to advise Classis. The Committee will email their report to the Stated Clerk by February 11, 2020. Their report will be emailed by the Stated Clerk to all the delegates in the Agenda Addendum. The Overture Committee is also required to send their report to the stated clerk no later than February 11, 2020 so that it can also be included in the Addendum.

EMAIL ADDRESS:

All communication to the Stated Clerk should go to: clerk@classishamilton.ca.

Dear Church Councils,

You will note that an hour and a half has been set aside following the afternoon refreshment break to hear a presentation regarding safe church concerns as well as insurance coverage for both classis and the local churches. CMT and CIC ask that Councils encourage as many members of their local safe church teams as possible to attend this session. This matter is of significant concern and needs our combined participation to determine how best to address the challenges currently faced.

On behalf of CMT and CIC,
 Gareth Harker
 Gillian Bruce

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CLASSIS MEETING DETAILS

9:00 AM	OPENING WORSHIP AND EXERCIZES
OPENING DEVOTIONS	
1. WELCOME AND PRAYER TIME	Gareth Harker
2. DEVOTIONS AND SHARING OF MINISTRY	Immanuel CRC, Hamilton
3. PRAYER FOR IMMANUAL CRC, HAMILTON	Willem de Vries
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10:00 AM	REFRESHMENT BREAK
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4. CALL TO ORDER	Benjamin Ponsen
4.1. Welcome and Announcements	
4.2. Attendance	Dick Kranendonk
4.3. Delegates declare agreement with the Covenant for Officebearers	Benjamin Ponsen
4.4. Approval of Agenda	
4.5. Declare Classis Properly Constituted	
5. FIRST SYNOD DELEGATE BALLOT	Gillian Bruce
The nominees for the four synod delegates will be presented and the first ballot will be collected by the balloting committee. (Additional ballots will be called as needed during the meeting until the required delegates have been elected.)	
6. CMT REPORT (INCLUDING CLASSICAL MINISTRY COMMITTEES) (Appendix #1)	Gareth Harker
6.1. External Reports (Appendix #7):	
RECOMMENDED THAT: The external agency reports be received as information.	
6.2. Youth Ministry Presentation: (No written report, but 15 minutes granted for a verbal presentation)	
6.3. Candidacy Committee: (No written or verbal report this time)	
6.4. Campus Ministries Committee: (Appendix #1.1)	
6.5. Home Missions Committee: (No written or verbal report this time)	
6.6. OVERTURE THAT: Classis Hamilton regularly schedule time on its agenda for Shalom Manor to provide updates on its ministry (Appendix #1.2).	
Grounds	
1. Classis Hamilton has a historic and unique relationship with Shalom Manor through its deaconates.	
2. The major development underway at the Wellingstone Campus is of significant importance and interest to the churches and members of Classis Hamilton.	
3. Members of all ages (spouses, children, grandchildren) are deeply concerned about present and future care options their loved ones.	
4. Making a presentation at a meeting of Classis Hamilton is an efficient way to keep the leadership of local churches informed.	
6.7. RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the work to date of the Classis Ministries Team including the standing committees in so far as this has been disclosed in minutes previously distributed to the churches as well as in Appendix #1.	
6.8. MINISTRY PLAN PRESENTATION (Appendix #1.4)	Gareth Harker

7. CLASSIS INTERIM COMMITTEE Gillian Bruce
- 7.1. Interim Committee Report (Includes Stated Clerk’s report, Appendix #2)
- 7.2. **RECOMMENDATION THAT:** within the authority of Church Order, Article 42, classis assigns the Safe Church Director or the Classis Safe Church Team to visit the Safe Church Team of each church in classis on a yearly basis to evaluate the safe church policies and practices relating to safe church and abuse of power, and shall provide a written report of their work to the Classis Interim Committee on a quarterly basis and a summary report to the winter Classis meeting.
- 7.3. **RECOMMENDED THAT:** Cara DeHaan as nominated in Appendix #3 by the Candidacy Committee be approved.
- 7.4. **RECOMMENDED THAT:** Classis approve the work to date of the Interim Committee and of the Stated Clerk in so far as this has been disclosed in minutes previously distributed to the churches and in Appendix #2.
8. BALLOTING COMMITTEE REPORT: Final Vote for Delegates to Synod 2020
- 8.1. **RECOMMENDED THAT:** the ballots be destroyed.

9. 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM LUNCH BREAK

10. SHARING OF SYNOD EXPERIENCE William Koopmans
11. REQUEST UNDER CHURCH ORDER, ARTICLE 24-d (Appendix #4) Benjamin Ponsen
12. REQUESTS UNDER CHURCH ORDER, ARTICLE 55 (Appendix #5) Benjamin Ponsen
- 12.1. Meadowlands Fellowship CRC requests approval for the following elders to administer the sacraments during the sabbatical absence of the pastor:
 Connie Bijl
 Justin De Moor
 Jennifer Lucking
 Ken Tigchelaar
- 12.2. Hagersille Community CRC requests approval for the following elders to administer the sacraments during the time of their vacancy:
 Davis Miedema
 Chris Bill

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

14. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT Meadowlands Fellowship CRC
15. PULPIT SUPPLY PRESENTATION (Appendix #6) Mark Vandervliet
- 15.1. Discussion.
- 15.2. Disposition of the matter.

2:30 REFRESHMENT BREAK

16. SAFE CHURCH PRESENTATION

CIC & CMT

13.1 Discussion.

13.2 **RECOMMENDED THAT:** Classis approve the search and appointment of a Safe Church Director to serve classis itself as well as the local churches of Classis Hamilton.

4:25 PM CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Chair of Classis

APPENDIX #1 – CLASSIS MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

Classis Hamilton Ministry Team (CMT)

January 14, 2020

The Classis Ministry Team has been kept busy with all the activities going on with several of our Classical Committees and our hopes and dreams for the future of Classis Hamilton. There are many exciting things going on in our Classis that also bring with them challenges and tough conversations.

Our committee has continued to oversee the work of the Ad Hoc Committee appointed conjointly by the Classis Interim Committee and CMT to develop a clear ministry plan and direction for Classis Hamilton for the coming years. Many of the Classical Committees and Classis functionaries have had a chance to review and provide feedback to the draft ministry plan document included in the Classis package for your review and feedback as delegates. Rev. Gareth Harker will present this draft document to the delegates of Classis for feedback and discussion. We continue to seek input to discern the direction God is leading us as a network of Christian Reformed Churches in the greater Hamilton area.

We have been maintaining contact with the Classis Home Missions committee in their efforts to discern where and how God may be leading us to plant a church in Classis Hamilton in the near future and look forward to hearing a presentation from them at Classis soon. Continue to pray for them as they seek to lead us in this discernment process. We also have been hearing of some of the joys and challenges of the Classis Youth Ministry Team as they also seek to discern how best we can serve younger generations in our area. We look forward to hearing an update on the survey they distributed in October as we grant them some time on the floor of Classis in February. We appointed Rev. Ken Benjamins as the CMT representative to serve on the hiring committee for the new Mohawk Chaplain role approved in the October 2019 meeting of Classis Hamilton.

One of our current concerns is an inability to successfully implement and maintain robust Safe Church policies both within Classis and as member churches. We acknowledge that many churches and individuals have a desire to do this, but not always the capacity to follow through. We are in the same situation as a Classis. We currently do not have a viable Safe Church team at the Classis level, nor the ability to adequately support and engage member churches in Safe Church compliance. We acknowledge that this is a significant area of exposure for us individually and collectively and hope to see some resolution to concerns very soon. We hope to facilitate a conversation at Classis on how best to move forward in this.

We also are continuing to look for new team members as Ken Benjamins will be completing his second term on CMT as of May 2020.

On behalf of the Classis Ministry Team,
Blessings,
Gareth Harker

APPENDIX #1.1 – CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORT

January 14, 2020 – Campus Ministry Committee Report to February Classis

As a new semester and year begins, your Campus Ministry Committee has been busy working through and responding to the decisions Classis made at the October meeting, namely:

1. *Assigning/Returning Dr. Michael Fall to full-time service at McMaster University, and*
2. *Creating a distinct campus ministry at Mohawk College, staffed with a half-time chaplain so as to continue the good pilot work done there by Dr. Fallon over the last decade.*

First, we are simply thankful to Classis for seeing and responding to the ministry needs & opportunities at both McMaster and Mohawk, and throwing behind each of these your prayers, support, and resources! This truly is your ministry, but as your trustees of this good work, we say: thank you!

Going forward: it is the work of the CIC and CMT to do the business of hiring on behalf of Classis, so now that Classis has made the decision: that ball is largely in their court (see the Classis Hamilton Rules of Procedure 6.3.3.). But the campus ministry committee has offered members to that hiring committee per the RoP, and will continue to watch with interest as the process gets underway.

In the mean time, we've begun looking at how the mandate of this committee might need to change to respond to the oversight needs of two distinct campus ministries. We've also begun looking at opportunities for advancement work and fundraising, recognizing the need and the push for this in the long run for mitigating the hefty price tag of good ministry. Seeking out opportunities for fundraising also honours the investment and commitment that you've made to this ministry—we want to see this ministry work and remain palatable for Classis in the long run as we as a Classis continue to explore further ways to enter into Gospel mission in the Hamilton/Haldimand/Norfolk/Brant region.

Beyond these large-scale structural matters there's also much good, ongoing ministry to do and oversee. The committee continues to appreciate and affirm the good work of our current Chaplain, Dr. Michael Fallon as he engages full time at McMaster this year. The move has already begun to bear fruit as Dr. Fallon has been able to be more present among the students in leadership, discipleship, and pastoral care—building up the community around the campus ministry. He's also simply had more energy for the role. So we're grateful to Classis for affirming this good change.

At Mohawk, Megan Woon, Shae-Lynn Knevel, Brian VanOosten, and myself have all been working, together with student leaders, in keeping our ministry presence on campus live and active in anticipation of a new chaplain coming soon. This is not a tenable long term solution—it involves a lot of juggling between our varied schedules, but for the interim, it keeps our ministry relationships going with staff and faculty on campus, with speakers, and with students so that a viable ministry is ready to be picked up in the fall by whoever Classis may hire for the role.

Please join us in giving thanks to God for His faithful presence and work at McMaster and Mohawk! And, please continue to pray for Dr. Fallon, the campus ministries at McMaster and Mohawk, as well as the Mohawk team as we move into a season of transition and continued ministry. A reminder too, that Dr. Fallon is available to the churches of Classis to preach and speak to this good work!

On behalf of the Campus Ministry Committee,



Rev. Anthony Elenbaas, Chair

APPENDIX #1.2 – OVERTURE RE: SHALOM MANOR

Overture to Classis Hamilton re. Receiving reports from Shalom Manor January, 2020

Background

Shalom Manor is a seniors' retirement complex and ministry to seniors well known to our members. The churches of Classis Hamilton were founding members of Shalom Manor and through its deacons each church has continuing fiduciary obligations that include voting and financial responsibilities. Currently Shalom is involved in a multi-million dollar, large-scale development at Wellingstone Christian Home. They are making preparations to build a 128 bed long-term care facility as well as 125+ units for assisted living.

Shalom's Board has asked twice in the past year for time at meeting of Classis Hamilton to update the churches on this significant project. Classis, through its Classical Ministry Team, has repeatedly turned down their request, on the following grounds:

Our policy, laid out in the Rules of Procedure, is that only ministries and agencies officially connected to Classis and/or the Christian Reformed Church have access to the floor of Classis. Although Shalom Manor is connected to the deacons (officially, I might add), and although the deacons have "voting and financial responsibilities" to this ministry, Shalom Manor, non the less, does not fit "the parameters of Classical responsibilities." Shalom Manor has a legal relationship with the deacons. It does not have a legal relationship with Classis Hamilton.

Instead of the opportunity to address Classis directly, Shalom Manor was invited to set up a table that church delegates could peruse during their refreshment and lunch breaks. The Board of Shalom Manor was quite disappointed at this response. Lacking a formal or legal relationship with Classis, the Board has no more options for seeking access to the floor.

Overture

The Council of Meadowlands Fellowship CRC overtures Classis Hamilton to regularly schedule time on its agenda for Shalom Manor to provide updates on its ministry.

Grounds

5. Classis Hamilton has a historic and unique relationship with Shalom Manor through its deaconates.
6. The major development underway at the Wellingstone Campus is of significant importance and interest to the churches and members of Classis Hamilton.
7. Members of all ages (spouses, children, grandchildren) are deeply concerned about present and future care options their loved ones.
8. Making a presentation at a meeting of Classis Hamilton is an efficient way to keep the leadership of local churches informed.

**Classis Hamilton Ministry Plan
Mission, Vision, Values, Ministries, and Funding**



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 clearly worded 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.

OUR MISSION LIVED OUT

Each of the ministries and activities that classis undertakes must fit within one of the four foci of the Mission Statement. However, to distinguish each ministry focus that is primarily internally directed from those that are primarily outwardly directed, two categories of ministries are identified.

Internally Focussed Ministries

1. Consider Overtures for classis itself or to forward to synod.
2. Nominate or elect delegates to synod and denominational agencies.
3. Examine Candidates for Ministry.
4. Mentor/Develop Leaders/Pastors.
5. Carry out church visits.
6. Encourage safe church practices.
7. Administer and/or monitor the permanent and sponsored activities and ministries.

Outwardly Focussed Ministries

1. Chaplaincy ministries – campus ministries, hospital chaplaincies, etc.
2. Church planting and community engagement initiatives.
3. Youth and children’s ministries.

OUR FUNDING OF MINISTRIES

1. Internally focussed ministries will continue to receive 100% funding, subject to periodic evaluation regarding their continued usefulness and effectiveness.
2. Outwardly focussed ministries will receive classis funding determined and agreed upon by classis. Ministries will be urged to develop self-sustaining funding models (Historically funded programs, e.g., campus ministry, will also be asked to develop self-sustainability.)

APPENDIX #2 – CIC AND STATED CLERK’S REPORT

Following is a list of the significant items of interest from the CIC since the last Classis meeting other than those that are already included in the classis agenda:

1. Safe Church: The issue of significant concern to CIC in its capacity as the Board of Directors of Classis Hamilton is the lack of a safe church policy for classis itself. In addition, there appears to be an inability for the local churches to not only have a safe church policy, but to monitor a responsible implementation of their policy. As a result, it appears that only seven of our 16 churches were able to provide classis with a certificate of abuse insurance. Since Classis Hamilton is not able to provide assurance to its insurance provider that at least 90% of the local churches have the required coverage, classis itself is not able to obtain abuse insurance coverage. This matter will be addressed in more detail during the afternoon session of the February 25th classis meeting.
2. Safe Church Monitoring: As a follow-up to the above matter at the January 16th meeting and additional information discussed by and received from Synod 2019, CIC decided to present the following recommendation to classis:
That within the authority of Church Order, Article 42, classis assigns the Safe Church Director or the Classis Safe Church Team to visit the Safe Church Team of each church in classis on a yearly basis to evaluate the safe church policies and practices relating to safe church and abuse of power, and shall provide a written report of their work to the Classis Interim Committee on a quarterly basis and a summary report to the winter Classis meeting.
3. Safe Church Director: After consultation with the Classis Ministry Team, it became apparent that a volunteer Safe Church Team without a robust monitoring mandate would not be able to address the above issues. Furthermore, it may be necessary for classis to appoint a Safe Church Director who has the knowledge and skills to address the safe church concerns in a way that remains compliant with the letter and intent of both the Church Order as well as synodical decisions issued from time to time. An example of a recent synodical decision is “abuse of power” dynamics. If classis would entertain such a move, CMT and CIC suggest that the currently approved Mission Director position be replaced with the Safe Church Director.
4. Ad-Hoc Ministry Evaluation Committee: In the area of classis ministry position evaluations, an ad-hoc committee was appointed jointly with CMT. This ad-hoc committee recommended that classis first establish a clear ministry plan so that a subsequent evaluation process to evaluate existing ministries and positions as well as newly proposed ministry activities and positions can be assessed based on the overall ministry plan. The ministry plan will be discussed at the meeting and feedback will be solicited so that the final plan can be presented to the May meeting of classis for approval.
5. Steve Baarda: Steve has requested that an oversight committee be appointed to follow up on the decision of the September 24, 2019 classis meeting. His request to the CIC stated: *“I feel it is important to do this in order to be truly open to any opportunities that may come. For me it is less about the opportunities and more about my willingness to be obedient to God. So, yes, let’s take the next steps and engage in some form of process.”* In light of this request, CIC assigned the stated clerk to contact a number of people with the request that they consider serving on the Steve Baarda oversight committee and to report their progress to CIC on a regular basis. William Koopmans did significant research and gathered much pertinent background information which he will share with the oversight committee once it is in place.
6. Access to the Floor of Classis by Para-Church Agencies: CIC instructed the stated clerk to send the overture from Meadowlands Fellowship CRC to the overture committee together with background information so that they will be able to serve classis with an informed recommendation.

7. Stated Clerk's Communications: The stated clerk continues to receive and send many communications from and to many parties: to numerous to mention. These communications often are in the nature of comments or advice relating to matters arising in local churches. Where the information or commentary is considered sensitive, it is shared with the CIC before it is sent out. When there is clear Church Order or synodical support for commentary, it is sent out but always available to the CIC.

Dick L. Kranendonk – Stated Clerk,
clerk@lassishamilton.ca

APPENDIX #3 – DELEGATE, FUNCTIONARY AND COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Nominations for delegates to Synod 2020 will be accepted as part of the credentials up to and including February 4, 2020.

History of Synod Delegates:

YEAR	MINISTERS	ELDER/DEACON
2019	William Koopmans Gareth Harker	Darrel Ouwehand Marcia Hosmar
2018	Joel Bootsma Anthony Elenbaas	Mark Vandervliet John Dekker
2017	Kenneth F. Benjamins Ed Visser	Judy Gook/Elder Gina Taylor/Deacon
2016	Chris Schoon Andrew Zomerman	Gary Sytsma/ Elder Gina Taylor/ Deacon
2015	Rita Klein-Geltink Henry P. Kranenburg	Martin W. Tigchelaar Fred Reitsma
2014	M. Jeffery Klingenberg Kenneth F. Benjamins	Adrian Guldemond Andy Miedema
2013	Kevin P. DeRaaf Henry P. Kranenburg	Jacob Ellens George Elzinga
2012	Paul Vanden Brink Kenneth F. Benjamins	Mark Vandervliet Henry Brouwer
2011	Zachary J. Olson M. Jeffery Klingenberg	Clarence E. Batterink Judy Cook
2010	Stephen F. Terpstra Kevin P. DeRaaf	Mark Vandervliet Timothy Sheridan

Nominees for Synod 2020 Delegates:

Ministers:

Not able to go – *Everett Vander Horst, Jeff Vandermeer,*

Able and willing to go:

William Koopmans – Pastor at Hope CRC, Brantford; currently serves on the CIC of Classis Hamilton and on the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee of the CRCNA. He has served previously at Synod, including being an officer. He is also the Classis Hamilton COD member.

Elders:

Jake Ellens – Is an elder at Hope CRC, Brantford and has served as an elder a number of terms. Has served Classis Hamilton on the Student Fund Committee, Classis Restructuring Committee, Ad-Hoc committees and has served as a Church Visitor. He currently serves on the Classis Interim Committee and the Audit Review Committee. Jacob has been a delegate to Synod three times.

Deacons:

None so far

Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee: Cara DeHaan, pastor at Faith CRC, Burlington.

APPENDIX #4 – REQUEST UNDER CHURCH ORDER, ARTICLE 24-d



January 16, 2020

Mr. Dick Kranendonk
Stated Clerk, Classis Hamilton

Re: Mike Collins

This letter is to inform Classis Hamilton that the one-year position of *Community Pastor* at Faith CRC under which Mike Collins was ordained as Commissioned Pastor was eliminated on October 23, 2019 and that Faith CRC now asks Classis Hamilton to concur that Mike Collins be released as Commissioned Pastor.

This position was approved as a one-year contract position by Classis Hamilton under Article 23(a) of the Church Order on October 16, 2018 and Mike Collins began his work as Community Pastor October 23, 2018.

Mike served well in his time with us, and we wish him God's blessing as he continues to seek out ways to serve God and our communities with the gifts and talents God has given him.

Yours in Christ,

Rob Schaafsma
Clerk, Faith CRC Burlington

APPENDIX #5 – REQUESTS UNDER CHURCH ORDER, ARTICLE 55



January 14, 2020

To Classis Hamilton;

In anticipation of a pastoral absence due to a sabbatical later this year, the Council of Meadowlands Fellowship CRC requests approval for four elders to administer the sacraments.

This request is in keeping with the guidelines found in Article 55 of the Church Order, which requires the approval of Classis in such a case. While we do have two members who are commissioned pastors and therefore already approved for administering sacraments, we want to ensure that we have enough people available, especially during the summer months (the sabbatical will be from May 25-December 31).

We request approval for the following elders:

Connie Bijl
Justin De Moor
Jennifer Lucking
Ken Tigchelaar

If there is any further information that is needed, please let us know.

For the Council,

Everett Vander Horst,
Pastor

Come and See

211 Stonehenge Drive, Ancaster, ON, L9K 1R4 (905) 304-4219 www.MeadowlandsFellowship.ca

January 16, 2020

To Classis Hamilton,

As you are aware, Hagersville Community Christian Reformed church (HCCRC) is currently without a Pastor. The council and its members are grateful for those who have been able to lead our worship services on a weekly basis.

The Consistory of HCCRC , in keeping within the guidelines of Article 55 of the church order, would like to request from Classis Hamilton the approval of two Elders, Davis Miedema and Chris Bill to administer the Sacrament of the Lords supper during the Good Friday worship service.

If any further information is needed please let us know,

HCCRC Consistory,

Chris Bill

APPENDIX #6 – PULPIT SUPPLY PRESENTATION

Classis Hamilton Pulpit Supply

This report comes with a request to re-evaluate the provision of Pulpit Supply for vacant churches in Classis Hamilton.

“Pulpit Supply” or “Classical Appointments” has been a long-standing practice throughout the Christian Reformed Church. With this practice churches covenant to support one another during times of being without a pastor (vacancy).

In recent years – at least in Classis Hamilton – it has become increasingly challenging to administer and provide pulpit supply. This was evidenced when, at a meeting of Classis Hamilton, it was decided to reduce the Pulpit Supply support from two Sundays per month to one Sunday per month, in part because many churches were vacant. In addition to this, provisions were included giving churches providing such a Classical Appointment the option, instead of sending their own Pastor, of arranging for an available qualified preacher to fulfill that covenanted responsibility. The rationale for this was to facilitate a desire not to interrupt the focus of a series of sermons.

The challenge of providing (continuing) Pulpit Supply is not new to Classis Hamilton. In May, 2015 Norman Visser wrote a blog in “The Network” entitled “Classical Appointment – An Endangered Species?” Although he didn’t cite any Classes that had discontinued it altogether, he wrote about a trend to curtail the provision of Pulpit Supply. He references a report to Synod recommending discontinuing the committee providing “The Living Word” reading service sermons (one of the authors was our own Pastor Ken Benjamins). Rationale included the “abundance of commissioned pastors, retired pastors, people with classical licenses to exhort, and others who can be called upon to preach. In addition, the availability of recorded sermons and sermon podcasts means that in many areas (though not all) churches very rarely have to resort to a “reading sermon.” And, he adds: “Furthermore, church order changes allowing the sacraments to be administered by an elder approved by classis further reduce a church’s dependence on classical appointments”.

In his own push-back against discontinuing Pulpit Supply, Visser frets that “The classical appointment reflected the idea that for all of our differences and peculiarities as preachers and as congregations (no interchangeable parts) we were still part of a body that was greater than ourselves. This sense will be further weakened if the classical appointment goes extinct.” In two responses, reflecting both sides of this issue: George Vink writes “The classical appointment could/should remain as a tangible expression that we’re interested in each other’s well being, get to know each other a little, and consequently work together more effectively at classical and denominational level. Pastors have to give some leadership to keep the bonds/sinews that connect us....” and Steve Dozeman writes “for those churches/pastors fulfilling classical appointments, there is the question of how often is it healthy for the primary pastor to be gone ...” and again “There are probably better and more creative and innovative ways to support our sisters and brothers in our classis and denomination who are without a pastor than through classical appointments.”

All that being said (and there’s much more can be said), the local character of each congregation is becoming more and more unique to their local community’s missional focus.

Another challenge: How do we support - or how does a congregation fulfill their covenanted responsibility - when their pastor is on sabbatical?

And also worth considering is the (un)fairness of exempting churches where the (normally) two-pastor church is vacant of one of their pastors. (*expressing only my personal view*). Classis Hamilton’s guidelines state: “Congregations that have TWO pastors involved in preaching, where one of the Pastors leaves, may request pulpit supply via the Stated Clerk. This will be granted when said pastor was involved in preaching in 3 or more services per month.” Meanwhile, those churches that (normally) only have a single pastor continue to be part of the pulpit supply rotation.

Given these reflections, **the following alternatives are being recommended for consideration:**

Alternative One: Discontinue the practice of providing Pulpit Supply to vacant congregations except for those churches whose Pastor is delegated to Synod (my preferred recommendation).

Grounds:

1. Congregations are missionally focused on their local communities to the extent that the unique characteristics of that focus produces a reluctance to yield the rhythm of a series of sermons to the interruption of providing and or receiving pulpit supply.
2. There is a generous supply of retired preachers and denominationally based (at the Mainway office) and educationally based (at Redeemer University College) to provide access for vacant congregations to needed ministerial resources.

Alternative Two: Continue our current practice of providing Pulpit Supply (1 x per month; September thru May) but remove the provision where two-pastor congregations have the option of requesting pulpit supply if they are vacant of their “preaching Pastor” along with any exemption from the pulpit supply rotation for two-pastor congregations with only one Pastor.

Alternative Three (the ‘do nothing’ alternative): No change from current practice.

APPENDIX #6 – EXTERNAL REPORTS

APPENDIX #6.1 – WORLD RENEW



Classis Hamilton Report – Feb. 25, 2020

Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Canadian Director of Church and Community Engagement

Thank you, brothers and sisters of Classis Hamilton, for your churches' support of the work of World Renew. Without your prayers, and your donations of time, talents and treasure, there would be many communities around the world that would have less, and feel less than now. You have walked alongside folks to listen, encourage and embolden. During this fiscal year (since July 1), the churches in this classis have given \$130,558.73 for the work of World Renew.

Let me illustrate something of the impact you have made:

World Renew ministered to a total of 918,663 participants worldwide who experienced powerful change in their lives in 2019.

- 241,154 participants changed their story through World Renew's community development programs.

- World Renew helped 677,509 participants recover from an international disaster.

- With your support, World Renew helped 206 refugees resettle in Canada.

- 258 churches in the U.S. and Canada were involved in justice activities with World Renew.

- 511 global volunteers served others in North America and around the world.

- 1,330 communities worldwide joined World Renew through a local church or outreach ministry

- World Renew placed 12 international relief managers in Bangladesh, Honduras, Malawi, Madagascar, or Niger.

- 256 North American congregations were engaged in partnerships with churches internationally.

- 1,900 Free A Family® donors gave US \$719,683, helping to free 2,221 families from poverty.

- Last year, DRS placed 2,784 volunteers from 36 denominations on disaster sites, and repaired or rebuilt 290 damaged homes, giving 243,196 hours of their time to serve others.

A. General Updates:

There are quite a few general updates that are important here:

In order for World Renew to continue to its work well, efficiently and effectively in a continually changing environment (both in North America and around the world), there have been ongoing transition in the Burlington and the Grand Rapids offices.

- The website is undergoing changes, one of which is that there is a Canadian and an American iteration.

- We are re-imagining our interactions with the churches to ensure the best possible connections, the best possible responses and the best engagement, supporting both churches, participants and World Renew.

- The same with interactions with donors; striving for responsive engagement.
- in order to support these changes in the way we do things, several staff positions have been added to both the US and Canadian World Renew offices.
- Diaconal Ministries Canada, and World Renew Canada are continuing to work together better, sharing resources, plans and passion so that the churches are better served.

B. Upcoming Offering Dates

The CRC in North America continues to have the tradition of designating certain Sundays throughout the year for specific offerings, for specific agencies of the CRCNA (among other organizations). World Renew receives no member shares; all the funds used to support participants across the world, are received from donors, like your churches. That being the case, let me recommend these specific offering dates to you congregations:

1. **March 8: Canadian Foodgrains Bank:** Funds are used to give food security to 10s of 1000s of people annually.
2. **March 29: Refugee Resettlement:** The World Renew program housed in the CDN office, supports churches and community groups sponsoring refugees fleeing from ravaged regions of the world.
3. **May 10: Maternal, Newborn and Child Health:** World Renew works with families to support pregnant mothers, and the first 1000 days of a child's life.



C. Community Development: Stories of Transformation

Dennis DeGroot, a World Renew board member from British Columbia, writes an amazing story about his experience of being part of a regular partnership review in Uganda. Here are a few



excerpts:

Agnes Atim and her husband Moses Ogwang know what Micah 4:4 is all about in a very practical way. For, "Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid..." In fact if they had 700 children rather than the ten they do have, each would be able to sit under his or her own orange tree and enjoy the fruit of their labors. This family has worked hard to achieve the kind of shalom that Micah was talking about. They have turned their 12-acre farm into a little piece of paradise and they no longer live in the fear that comes with poverty. Everywhere you look, something is blooming, growing, ripening, drying, and giving this family the security they longed for. With the help of World Renew training in Conservation Agriculture and a Village Savings and Loan program, life looks very different today. But the training not only impacted their food security it impacted their relationship.

This was a truly beautiful experience; to hear these men and women speak with confidence about how saving money was not part of their previous experience and they always felt vulnerable to the challenges of everyday life, money for school fees, medications or seeds for next year's crops was always a challenge. The savings and loan program changed all of that. They were themselves amazed at how the funds grew to levels previously unimagined; a loaves and fishes miracle of sorts.

Wives and husbands spoke shyly, but honestly about how prior to training there was often discord in the family whereas now decisions about money were made together. We were proudly

shown a photo of a previous WR intervention of goats. A number of families received goats which also, 'miraculously' multiplied into herds of goats, providing protein and milk. There was so much pride and a feeling of empowerment for their own lives that emanated from the happy group, a sense of hope for the future.

We then drove to various family compounds to get closer to what we had heard about. Agnes and Moses' family compound exudes peace. Though homes are simple, the entire acreage was a bounty of fruits and vegetables: bananas, guavas, and 700 orange trees. Cassava, amaranth, Irish potatoes, and ground nuts. The family now exports their orange crop into Kenya; not just a farm but a business. Moses said that he could never have imagined a million shillings. That is now a reality for the family who work the land together when the children are home from school.

The day was coming to an end but we could well imagine what it might be like at this family farm to sit in the shade of an orange tree as the sun set, to sit in peace and unafraid, husband and wife together, talking about the day's work, what needed doing tomorrow, about their children's schooling and the good prices for oranges.

D. Disaster Response

Update International:

We want you to see the global impact of the work God accomplishes through World Renew: Since July, 2019, we have been led to work in 19 countries impacting 290,000 people. God has resourced World Renew to give \$1.13M USD to projects funded through the US, and \$2.45M CDN to projects funded through Canada, partnering with over 29 implementing partners. And that's just from July, 2019 through the end of the calendar year. The disasters are: storms, drought, earthquakes, floods, and conflicts.

Update Domestic: Canada and US:

A simple, quick statistic: World Renew's Disaster Response Service (DRS) is responding by house-building, needs assessment and personal support in areas where **eight different disasters** impacted communities across North America.

E. Refugee Settlement Activities:

These statistics are for Jan. 1, 2019 – Dec. 5, 2019, and *they're awesome!* World Renew is a SAH (*Sponsorship Agreement Holder*) and was given a total of 209 "Private sponsorship of Refugees" spaces this year, the most ever.

This is a listing of the applications submitted:

PSR (Private Sponsorship of Refugees) Cases

- CRCs = 31 CRCs have submitted 55 applications representing 133 refugees
- Beyond CRCs = 15 BCRC's submitted 24 applications representing 60 refugees
- Community Sponsors (CS) = 4 CS's submitted 15 applications representing 16 refugees

BVOR (Blended Visa Office Referred) Cases

- CRCs = 4 CRCs submitted 8 applications representing 16 persons refugees

In-Canada JAS (Joint Assistance Sponsorship) Case

- CRCs = 3 CRCs partnered together to submit 1 application for 1 refugee

Arrivals Statistics

- 34 CRCs have welcomed 147 refugees.
- Beyond CRCs & Community Sponsors have welcomed 77 refugees.

Total = 224 refugees welcomed, from 13 countries.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! And thank you to the churches across Canada for *welcoming the stranger*.

F. What else can the people and the churches of Classis Hamilton do?

May I suggest one, most powerful bridge: prayer. Pray for:

- trauma healing in Nigeria,
- families in Uganda,
- appropriate disaster responses in North America,
- wisdom and thoughtfulness in gender relations.

Do poke around the website; and then share the website with one person who doesn't know about World Renew. She/he will be grateful you did!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "P. Bulthuis".

Peter Bulthuis, Director, Church and Community Engagement Canada

Canadian Ministries Director Classis Letter – Winter 2020



Outcomes of the National Gathering: I am just so thankful for the ways in which the National Gathering in Edmonton have created changes in attitudes, practices and planning in a variety of ways across Canada. Each classes' response has been different but they range from a concentration on discipleship, evangelism, reconciliation or spiritual practices within classis to a plan to re-write the classis ministry plan.

Finances: As of the writing of this report, the giving in the Canadian Christian Reformed Church has maintained a steady state year over year. We are grateful for this faithfulness as it allows our collective ministry to be extended through places such as *The Centre for Public Dialogue* but also to spend extra effort on important conversations about the future of missions and church planting from coast to coast. Together with the considerations of ongoing support for the local church, when financial giving is strong, we can do more together. If you are a church whose financial giving needs support locally, let us help you with that. Reach out to myself or Peter Elgersma for assistance.

New Pastors to Canada Gathering – On January 20-22 we will be hosting a gathering for new lead pastors in Canada. This will be the third time we have hosted this bi-annual gathering and with approximately 10-15 pastors that attend, this has been a wonderful way to continue in creating alignment and effectiveness across the denomination in Canada. When we all work together in a direction that both strengthens our local expressions and extends the collective ministries we share such as World Renew, Resonate or our Social Justice impact...we become increasingly Christ-like as an institution.

Stated Clerks across Canada – January will also mark one of our regular meetings with Stated Clerks; this time by video. These meetings are always good for reconnecting and resourcing especially in a time when several of our Stated Clerks are new-ish to the job. I am so pleased with the collaboration I see amongst them and so very happy to play a part in fostering it. One of our key issues in January 2020 is to consider insurance coverage for classes across Canada.

Calvin Seminary – Introducing a new servant in Canada – Calvin seminary is hosting a new position through the Canadian side of the church. Allow me to introduce you to him: His name is Pastor Shawn Brix and he most recently pastored in Peterborough, Ontario

- He graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) in 1995 and has since served congregations in Acton, Burlington, and Peterborough, Ontario.
- As the Canadian Church Relations Liaison, he is tasked with building and strengthening bridges between CTS and Canadian CRC churches and ministries.

In Shawn's own words: "I hope to help identify and develop ministry leaders, provide continuing education opportunities for pastors and other church leaders, and help strengthen local churches by extending the resources and tools CTS has to offer."

Update on the Bridge App – Thank you to all of you who have been part of the Bridge App covenantal experiment. It has gone so well that [WayBase](http://waybase.com) (waybase.com) has determined it to be the app of choice for their national initiative that will also go international at some point. WayBase' goal through the initiative is to connect ALL Christian charities across Canada for impact and influence. We are happy to be a key part in it and it will mean some great advantages for CRC churches. Stay tuned.

As well, we are on the cusp of finally launching automatic checking in the 'Give' function. The terms and conditions will be much more financially affordable than other key competitors such as Tithely. In addition, we as the CRC have something to financially gain as churches sign up. Including additional functionality with 'Give', other features, and more key changes from Waybase, I am excited about what the next phase will bring!

Ecumenical Grants – I have been so delighted in the participation so far! There have been four grants awarded thus far. Below are churches that have received the awards and the example of what they are using the funding for.

1. Hope Fellowship in Courtice, Ontario is working through a prayer campaign with other local churches and with Dunamis.
2. Discovery, Bowmanville, ON, is planning a "Church in the Park" event.
3. EastHill Community, in Vernon BC is looking at some options including a reconciliation program across churches.
4. New Westminster, BC, is using the funding for number of events with local congregations, as described in the testimonial below:

Since October 2018, New Westminster CRC, together with House for All Nations Church (an Indonesian Mennonite Brethren congregation), Nanoom (a Korean Christian gathering) and people from other neighbouring congregations have been gathering in an ecumenical initiative called "Multicultural Worship Night" - a monthly worship of people from various denominational and ethnic/cultural backgrounds. We intentionally worship and pray in different languages and through different cultural expressions to foster a multicultural, multi-congregational community in Christ.

With the grant we have received from EIRC, we were able to have a service in June that included what we called "Community Celebration Dinner" just before we took a summer break. As an ecumenical/multicultural gathering, having a meal together was a great blessing and enhanced this ministry. The grant helped us with the cost of food and promotion. We had about 80 people join us that night.

Our focus so far has been getting to know each other, and the emphasis was on the unity of the church in Christ and the diversity in the family of God. Starting the fall, the mission of God and how we together can reach out to our neighbours will be an important theme for our upcoming gatherings.

The grant application process for 2019-2020 has begun and eligible Canadian CRC congregations can apply by sending an email to Peter Elgersma at pelgersma@crcna.org.

Ministry Share Reimagined: Many of our classes are trying to discern what they might do given the influx of change they are expecting around the "Ministry Share Re-Imagined" thrust you have heard about starting from Synod 2019. At this point, our Canada Corp chair has determined that the issue of this process will be visited by the Canada Corp directors in its February board meetings in an effort to discern its application on all levels for the Canadian context. Stay tuned for more following the Canada Corp meetings held in late February.

Partners and their resources: The ecumenical work we do as a church can be valuable on a local scale. I am constantly asking and imploring entities like the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to work in such a way that there is payoff for the local scene. Here are their two web links for you so that you might find material from them ranging from scientific research, bible studies, worship material for the Week of Christian Unity and others.

A special thanks to many CRC volunteers who serve in a variety of ecumenical roles. See [here](#) for complete description. Feel free to reach out to any of them in regards to questions about how their ministry efforts in these settings can serve you in your church setting.

Canadian Council of Churches: <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/>

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada: <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/>

Also note our partnership with the 4 C's: Canadian Council of Christian Charities which can be a key help for so many administrative matters at a church level: <https://www.cccc.org/>

New Canadian staff for Disability Concerns and Safe Church: Disability Concerns serves all of the Christian Reformed churches with 1.6 FTE staff. We multiply the efforts of our small staff through several means: recruiting and equipping volunteer disability advocates in CRC churches and classes, working closely with RCA Disability Concerns ministry, and creating and curating print and online resources. With a recent staff transition, it's a good time to introduce our Canadian staff. She can be reached at bjones@crcna.org.



“Becky Jones is excited to begin work with Safe Church and Disability Concerns at the Burlington office. She has two girls who are both attending high school – one just starting, one just ending. Becky has been working as the Volunteer Coordinator at the Art Gallery of Burlington and brings a passion for art with her as she transitions to this new role. Before being the Volunteer Coordinator, she practiced as an art therapist, working with people with mental health issues and cognitive delays. Becky is currently enrolled at Martin Luther University College –Wilfrid Laurier, working towards her Master of Arts in theology, spiritual care and psychotherapy.”

Last but not least: Please do not hesitate to reach out to any CRC staff person in Canada as there is so much support you in for your local context. We would love to serve you to create impact and health! Click [here](#) for a full directory listing of all the ministry in Canada. Print it out for the church too! <https://www.crcna.org/Canada/ministry-canada-directory>

Blessings in 2020 to all of you in your differing contexts,

Darren Roorda
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APPENDIX #6.3 – REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Report to Classis Hamilton of the Christian Reformed Church: Winter 2020

As the first semester of 2019 draws to a close, Redeemer is pleased to see the positive impact that tuition and fee restructuring has had on enrolment. A recent student expressed her gratitude in being able to attend this fall. “My mom works part-time, and my dad runs a non-profit, so sending four girls to university has become a difficult task for them. The only reason I was able to come to Redeemer was because of the drop in tuition. I’m here because I want to open a Christian women’s shelter in my hometown. This is the only school that would allow me to do Non-Profit Management in hand with Social Work. It has been a lot of work, but it is going to be so worth it!”

February 2020 will feature Gratitude Week once again where students thank a large community of donors who support Redeemer. Redeemer students are thankful for these generous contributions that make their Christian university education possible.

The campus theme for this year is “Come and See” from John 1:39, where Jesus calls to the disciples to see where he lives and who he is. Faculty, staff, and students have been blessed by the chapel services, held every Wednesday during the year, centred around this theme led by Rev. Josiah Bokma and many guest speakers.

Redeemer is blessed with a faithful faculty and staff, and this fall, we were pleased to welcome Kevin Johnson as the new Dean of Students and June Hulbert as the Associate Vice President-Human Resources. These are key roles as members of the leadership team that will help Redeemer’s mission move forward in God’s service.

This fall, Dr. Jim Vanderwoerd, Professor of Social Work, spoke on “Sex After the Revolution: Called to be Faithfully Comprehensible” for Redeemer’s bi-annual Pastor Professor Exchange. There was a time for questions and discussion following the talk, considering ways to bring these conversations back to churches. This winter, the Pastor Professor Exchange will run on February 26, 2020 with Dr. David Beldman, Associate Professor of Religion and Theology, speaking on “Reading Judges for the 21st Century.” Redeemer looks forward to hosting this event and connecting with pastors in the surrounding community.

For the past two years, Redeemer has been denied Canada Summer Jobs program funding. Redeemer has two cases before the Federal Court of Canada with respect to these denials. Please pray for those involved and for a timely and just resolution of these cases.

As the Re Campaign ends, and we see all that has been accomplished through it, we look forward to Redeemer’s new strategic plan which will be announced in early 2020. Redeemer is blessed and grateful for a community of believers who support the mission of preparing the next generation of Christians to bring the gospel’s transformative power to all kinds of careers and vocations. Your contribution through offerings and ministry shares is vital in keeping Redeemer an excellent liberal arts and sciences university that is unabashedly Christ-centred. May God’s blessings be evident in your work with your church families and in your broader community.

Sincerely,
Dr. Robert Graham
President