



Christian Reformed Church

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

**Date:** September 24, 2019

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Venue:** Faith Christian Reformed Church, 2265 Mountainside Dr., Burlington L7P 1B6

<b>Officers of Classis:</b>		<b>Synodical Deputies:</b>
Chair:	Benjamin Ponsen	James Dekker – Classis Niagara
Vice Chair:	Everett Vander Horst	Gary van Leeuwen – Classis Huron
Stated Clerk:	Dick Kranendonk	Hendrick Bruinsma – Classis Toronto
<b>Reporter:</b>		<b>Ballot Committee:</b>
Ancaster CRC	Rita Klein-Geltink	To be appointed by the Chair

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

All communication to the Stated Clerk should go to: [clerk@classishamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@classishamilton.ca).

**STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING:**

Please note that the meeting will begin in executive session at 7:00 PM. The open session to examine Candidate Cara DeHaan is scheduled to begin at 8:00 PM.

**AVAILABILITY OF CANDIDATE’S SERMONS:**

The sermon to be preached by the Candidate is attached as is required by the Church Order. However, the candidate has also submitted a sermon on an Old Testament text and another on a Lord’s Day of the Heidelberg Catechism. Electronic copies of these additional sermons are available to all delegates on request.

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## 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.***

DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

<b>Church</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Ancaster CRC	Rita	Klein-Geltink	Pastor Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Lois	Verboon	Elder Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Jennifer	Kikkert	Deacon Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Everett	Vander Horst	Pastor Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Jeanette	Lodewyks	Elder Delegate
Meadowlands Fellowship	Marcia	Hosmar	Deacon Delegate
Hope	William	Koopmans	Pastor Delegate
Hope	John	Hensen	Elder Alternate
Hope	Phil	Louwerse	Deacon Delegate
New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
New Street	Geoff	Weinstein	Elder Delegate
New Street	John	Dekker	Deacon Delegate
Faith	Henry	Hess	Elder Delegate
Faith	Rob	Schaafsma	Elder Delegate
Faith	Gerri	Nyman	Deacon Delegate
Calvin	Ken	Benjamins	Pastor Delegate
Calvin	David	Numan	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Peter	Vos	Deacon Delegate
Calvin	John	Mantel	Elder Alternate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate
Calvary	Bas	Hania	Elder Delegate
Calvary	Ben	Boekenstein	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Randy	Slump	Elder Alternate
Calvary	Richard	Vandenberg	Deacon Alternate
Hagersville Community	Lea	Wilkening	Guest
Hagersville Community	Mark	Laing	Elder Delegate
Hagersville Community	Brian	Paterson	Deacon Delegate
First Hamilton	Hayden	Regeling	Pastor Delegate
First Hamilton	Jules	de Jager	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Kim	Schat	Deacon Delegate
First Hamilton	Marge	Postuma	Elder Alternate
First Hamilton	Nate	Van Benthem	Deacon Alternate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Michael	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Glenda	Hornsveld	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Linda	Deys	Deacon Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Greg	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Mark	Demik	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Doug	Nagtegaal	Deacon Delegate
Ebenezer	Wim	de Vries	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	Ben	Wyngaarden	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Phil	Helder	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pator Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Ernie	Rauwerda	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Bruce	Adema	Pastor Delegate
Bethel	Peter	van der Meulen	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Chris	DeWeerd	Deacon Delegate
Maranatha	Ben	Ponsen	Pastor Delegate
Maranatha	Paul	Heeg	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Jake	Termorshuizen	Deacon Delegate
Maranatha	Maurice	Houwer	Deacon Alternate
Maranatha	Cor	Boeke	Elder Alternate

## CLASSIS MEETING DETAILS

7:00 PM

OPENING IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

### OPENING IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. OPENING AND PRAYER Chair of Classis
2. CALL TO ORDER Chair of Classis
  - 2.1. Attendance Stated Clerk
  - 2.2. Affirmation of Covenant for Office-Bearers Chair of Classis
  - 2.3. Introductory comments Chair of Classis
3. INTRODUCTION OF STEVE BAARDA – (see Appendix #1) William Koopmans
  - 3.1. Questions by delegates and synodical deputies
  - 3.2. **Motion** to declare Steve Baarda eligible for call and deliberation
  - 3.3. After prayer, synodical deputies leave for their own deliberation
  - 3.4. Delegates vote
  - 3.5. Synodical deputies return and present their written report
4. EXECUTIVE SESSION CLOSING REMARKS Chair of Classis

### EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS

8:00 PM

CANDIDATE EXAMINATION SESSION

### 5. EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE – CARA DEHAAN

- 5.1. Devotions and prayer Chair of Classis
  - 5.2. Introduction of Candidate Gareth Harker
  - 5.3. Practica (*no time limit*) Gareth Harker
    - Inquiry into the Candidate's relationship to God and commitment to ministry
    - 5.3.1. Questions by delegates and synodical deputies.
    - 5.3.2. **Motion** to proceed.
  - 5.4. Sermon Evaluation (*no time limit*) Joel Bootsma and fellow delegate
    - Written and preached sermons to be evaluated (see Appendix #2 for preached sermon).
    - 5.4.1. Questions by delegates and synodical deputies.
    - 5.4.2. **Motion** to proceed.
    - 5.4.3. Concurrence by synodical deputies
  - 5.5. Biblical and Theological (*minimum of thirty minutes*) Rita Klein-Geltink
    - Inquiry into the candidate's biblical and theological judgement, competence and soundness.
    - 5.5.1. Questions by delegates and synodical deputies.
6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
    - 6.1.1. motion to admit and preliminary consideration
    - 6.1.2. prayer
    - 6.1.3. synodical deputies leave for their own deliberation
    - 6.1.4. delegates vote by ballot
    - 6.1.5. synodical deputies return and present written statement
  7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION ENDS**
    - 7.1.1. Remarks
    - 7.1.2. presentation of certificate (if approved).
  8. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
    - 8.1. Date and time of Ordination
    - 8.2. Classical mentor
  9. **ADJOURNMENT**
    - 9.1. Closing prayer
    - 9.2. Dismissal

### **Church Order, Article 14-e Application**

#### **Background:**

Steve Baarda, a former minister of the Word, has asked Classis Hamilton to declare him eligible for call in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

To provide the delegates with information as to the reason why Classis Hamilton should deal with Steve's application, CIC refers you to the relevant provision in Church Order, Article 14-e. That article states:

*“A former minister of the Word who was released from office may be declared eligible for call upon approval of the classis by which such action was taken, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies. The classis, in the presence of the deputies, shall conduct an interview that examines the circumstances surrounding the release and the renewed desire to serve in ministry. Upon acceptance of a call, the person shall be re-ordained.”*

The purpose for providing this document is not to go into “the circumstances surrounding the release and the renewed desire to serve in ministry.” That information will be shared with the delegates in executive session. The purpose of this document is to provide some factual background information and to explain the procedure that will be followed when classis is in session.

Steve last served as minister of the Word with Immanuel CRC, Simcoe. After considerable reflection on his call in 2006, he decided to ask to be released from Immanuel CRC, Simcoe under Church Order, Article 17-a. An agreement of separation was reached with the council of Immanuel CRC, Simcoe which went to classis in the fall of 2006 and was approved.

Church Order, Article 17-c provides that a minister released under Article 17-a is eligible for call for a period of two years. Since Steve did not entertain a call during those two years because he had chosen to become a licensed realtor, Classis Hamilton, at its Spring 2009 meeting, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, declared Steve as released from the ministerial office.

Although Steve has worked and resided in London, Ontario since 2006, his current application to be declared eligible for call once again must be dealt with by the classis that released him. That is why his application is being dealt with in executive session at this meeting of Classis Hamilton.

#### **Procedure:**

1. After the opening devotions and prayer, Pastor William Koopmans will provide a summary of the circumstances surrounding Steve's release from Immanuel CRC, Simcoe as well as a brief commentary regarding Steve's current application in light of the provisions of the Church Order.
2. The delegates and synodical deputies will then have the opportunity to interview Steve to *“examines the circumstances surrounding the release and the renewed desire to serve in ministry.”*
3. Once the delegates and synodical deputies are satisfied that all their questions have been addressed, a motion will be made and seconded to declare Steve eligible for call. There will be brief deliberation of the motion.
4. Then prayer will be offered asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, after which the synodical deputies will leave to a different room to deliberate and prepare their written report.
5. The delegates will then vote on the motion before them.
6. The synodical deputies will return to give their written report after having been told the outcome of the vote by the delegates.

7. If the two decisions are in agreement, the declaration whether or not Steve is eligible for call is then made by the Chair of Classis. If there is disagreement between the two decisions the delegates and synodical deputies will enter into a brief period of negotiation to see if common ground can be achieved. If that is not the case, the matter is then referred to Synod 2020.

## APPENDIX #2 – PREACHED SERMON

TOGETHER ON A JOURNEY: ULTRAMARATHON EDITION (draft!)

Cara DeHaan

Text assigned by Classis Hamilton: 2 Corinthians 4

To be preached Sept 22, 2019

Faith CRC, Burlington

### **Prologue / Context**

For the last two weeks we have explored the tagline of Faith Church: “Together on a Journey.” On September 8, using Revelation 7, we looked at our journey’s Destination: all nations worshipping the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, flourishing in shalom. Last Sunday, using Luke 3-4, we looked at our Guide for the journey, the Triune God: the Father who loves us, the Saviour-Rabbi who gives us life and models ministry for us, and the Spirit who empowers us. Today we look at the Nature of our journey, using 2 Corinthians 4.

2 Corinthians is a letter written by the apostle Paul to first-century Christians in Corinth. A lot of the New Testament is written by Paul and about Paul, so we know a fair bit about him. He was a Jew well trained in the law. Initially Paul was convinced that followers of Jesus were preaching falsehoods about God and leading people astray. So Paul leads the way in persecuting early Christians, dragging them to prison, flogging them, and trying to get them to recant their faith in Jesus Christ.

But then Paul meets Jesus Christ for himself. Jesus calls out to him while he is traveling to the city of Damascus to persecute Christians there. Jesus blinds him, then fills him with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit transforms Paul into a missionary and teacher who helps Jesus to build his church throughout the Mediterranean world.

On his second missionary journey, Paul tells the story of Jesus in Corinth and starts some small congregations there. At the time of this letter, he has left Corinth to spread the gospel elsewhere, but he keeps in contact with the Corinthians through letters and messengers. We see in 2 Corinthians that his relationship with these Christians has been tumultuous. One of Paul’s purposes in this letter is to justify his character, his doctrines, and his ministry.

We pick up in chapter 4, right after Paul has been describing how his ministry, the ministry of the Spirit, is continuous with, but different from, the ministry of Moses. “This ministry” in 4:1 is the “ministry of the Spirit which brings life, righteousness and transformation of character to those who believe the gospel” (Kruse 101).

### **Read 2 Corinthians 4**

#### **Introduction**

This week I learned about Ultramarathons. Ultramarathons are technically any footrace longer than the official length of a marathon, 42.1 km, or 26.2 miles. So 50 km or 100 km, for example. The longest official footrace in the world takes place in Queens, New York, called the Self-Transcendence 3100 Mile Race (that’s 5000 km) – laps and laps around the downtown, for 50 days. For many ultramarathons, though, it’s not just about the distance or the time, it’s about the “severe course

obstacles” that are present, such as inclement weather, elevation change, or rugged terrain (Wikipedia). Racing through the Sahara Desert or Death Valley in California, over the Alps in Switzerland, through the extreme cold and wind of the Arctic in the Yukon.

What’s it for? Pushing yourself to the extreme. There’s a Death Race held in the Rockies in Alberta each August which advertises: “Finishing is the prize and the bragging rights are priceless.”

Ultramarathons are extreme. They are not for the faint of heart.

### **The Corinthians resist Paul’s extreme version of the Christian life.**

The way Paul describes the Christian life in 2 Cor 4, it’s also extreme. Not for the faint of heart. Look at v.8-9. Paul says, “I am hard pressed on every side. I am perplexed. I have been persecuted. I have been struck down.” Paul keeps piling it on. “I carry around in my body the death of Jesus. I am being given over to death for Jesus’ sake. Death is at work in me. Outwardly I am wasting away.”

Paul’s life as a Christian has been extreme! Later in 2 Corinthians he comes back to this theme, listing how he’s been flogged, imprisoned, shipwrecked, stoned, close to death again and again. And not only physical difficulties. He’s been rejected, he’s been the object of slander, he’s had emotional turmoil again and again, as he ministers among Christian communities like Corinth (2:1-13, 6:4-10, 11:23-28).

From what we can piece together from Paul’s letters, the Corinthian Christians don’t get Paul and all his suffering. For them leadership looks like rhetorical skill and miraculous powers. Leaders are impressive, with a commanding presence. They boast of their own accomplishments. They seek status for themselves. And they may promise similar health and wealth to their followers. If leaders experience the sort of hardships Paul mentions, then this suffering becomes an opportunity to demonstrate how strong and indestructible and self-sufficient they are. Bragging rights for winning the ultramarathon.

But Paul says: “No! It’s not about me! I preach Jesus, not myself. All of these hardships are a natural outcome of preaching about Jesus. My Lord, the risen Jesus Christ, met me on the road to Damascus. He shone his light into my heart, to show me the glory of God. And now I give my life to sharing this knowledge and this ministry with others—for their sake. Listen to me! I am experiencing hardship for *your* sake. I am *your slave* for Jesus’ sake.” The NIV translates *doulos* in v.5 as “servant,” but it really means more like a “slave,” one owned by another.

“Listen,” Paul is saying. “If you love Jesus, you are going to do what he did. You are going to spend your life giving yourself away so others may live.”

“Me?” Paul says, “I’m just a jar of clay.” Clay was the most common material for making vessels—it was ordinary, it was fragile, it was subject to decay. Paul is saying, “I am ordinary. I am vulnerable. I am human.” No self-glorification. No attempts to avoid the hardships of life.

The first thing that happened when Paul met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus is that Paul became blind. For three days. This powerful Jewish leader, wreaking havoc on the earliest Christians, had to be led into the city of Damascus and cared for for 3 days. The first thing Jesus did for Paul was to show him how vulnerable he was. And then, Jesus tells his messenger, Ananias, to go commission Paul to be Jesus’ missionary to the Gentiles. Listen to this, he tells Ananias: “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Yes, the journey of the Christian life could feel as extreme as an ultramarathon, but the point is not self-glorification.



### **We struggle to accept Paul's vision of the Christian journey.**

Paul's phrase, "We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus" – I couldn't get it out of my head this week. It's as hot as the Sahara. It's as harsh as the Arctic.

"Come join our church! We're journeying through Death Valley together." That'll preach! ... um, no! ... Or could it?

I've got some of the Corinthian church in me. I like the idea of powerful speakers offering life and health and joy and status. There's a part of me who wants to *be* one of those powerful speakers. And yet – I'm not even ordained as a minister yet – and I realize how exhausting it would be to strive for that sort of status. That kind of power.

Because Paul is right. I am a jar of clay. I am vulnerable and fragile and limited. And so are you. We are human. We are fragile bodies that fail us as we age. We work out, get massages, go to physio to keep our bodies going. We wear clothes that hide at least some of our imperfections. We apply make up. We dye our hair. But we know: each day we're one day closer to death.

And we carry wounds from the past or present that make it hard to love others. We all hide our hurts. We *try* to hide it. "Everything's fine," we say. Fine. I'm fine. But we're not fine.

For those of us who have met Jesus like Paul did, who experience his light and love in our hearts, we have permission to admit we're not fine. We are vulnerable. We have human limitations.

But Paul is also saying something else: that when we love Jesus, we will seek to give our lives away, just like Jesus did. Philippians 2 says that Jesus willingly lowered himself to become a slave for people, to the point of death for their sake.

For Paul, giving his life away meant persecution and flogging and imprisonment. It might not mean that for us. But it does mean loving our neighbours so much we could say we are their slaves. Whoa. Now that's an extreme journey.

### **Through Paul's weakness and death-carrying, God reveals his power and glory.**

Ultramarathon racers subject themselves to crazy obstacles and conditions in order to prove themselves. And if they finish a race, they get the glory. That's what the teachers in Corinth were expecting too. You do the hard work of suffering, you do the hard work of leading, and you get the glory.

But Paul tells a different story. "I preach Jesus Christ," he insists. "I'm hard pressed, but I am not crushed. Why? Because of Jesus. I am perplexed, but I am not in despair. Why? Because of Jesus. I am persecuted, but I am not abandoned. Why? Because of Jesus. I am struck down, but I am not destroyed. Why? Not because of my own strength! I am a jar of clay, remember? No, because of Jesus! In my vulnerability, in my clay-pot-ness, *God* gives me the power to withstand hardship. I preach Jesus Christ!"

Paul has met the risen Jesus. Jesus shone so brightly in all his splendour and glory on that Damascus Road that Paul was blinded. And so he knows that the Jesus who became a slave to the point of death, is also the Jesus who arose, who ascended, and who rules over the world bringing abundant life.

"When I follow Jesus," Paul says, "I can embrace my human fragility, like Jesus did. And I can give my life away, just like Jesus did. Why? For two reasons. One, when I give my life away, I see life growing in others—I see life in you, Corinthian church! And two, I know that someday I won't suffer anymore. Sometime I will no longer carry around in my body Jesus' death. I will share in the glory of Jesus Christ by

being resurrected just like he was. Jesus is transforming me to be like him, and someday that transformation will be complete!”

It’s almost like Paul is saying, “What is my only comfort in life and in death? That I am not my own, but belong, in body and soul, in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A #1).

### **God’s power gives us strength to withstand suffering and live boldly.**

Life can feel like an ultramarathon. Our journey as Christians, as humans, will take us through deserts, over mountains, maybe through mind-numbing laps around Queens, New York. But not for the faint of heart? To the contrary. It *is* for the faint of heart—all of us jars of clay, who receive God’s power to strengthen us.

When we preach Christ, not ourselves, then God shines his light in and through us. When we admit we’re vulnerable and weak, then God works powerfully in us. When we step off to the side, then God gets centre stage and he gets glory! When we acknowledge that our bodies are wasting away, then God fills us with anticipation and hope for the future. When we live giving ourselves away like Jesus did, then God displays his resurrection power in us. People see Jesus in us and want to get to know him better!

Let’s be a people who are willing to show one another the cracks in our jars – *because* then we are more likely to see God’s glory through those cracks as well.

And let’s be a people who give ourselves away, sharing in Jesus’ death so that we may also share in Jesus’ resurrection.

This week I worked on my sermon in an unfamiliar Tim Hortons, and I met Karen and her son. Karen was raised Roman Catholic, but years ago, when she became a single mom, she got fed up with the church because she felt like it was full of cliques, and none of them had room for her and her children. They weren’t family to her. Her son, once a factory worker now on EI, was similarly fed up with church: how can it expect people to contribute to the offering but then be unwilling to help its own members? What might our lives look like if we consistently provided a place of community and generosity for people like Karen and her son?

Early in August I attended the CRCNA Inspire Conference in Detroit. The 700 or so attendees were blown away by the presentation of Rev. Mary Hulst, the University Pastor at Calvin University. Hulst inspired the church to be a place where Millennials would thrive (people aged 22-35). She said, “Millennials are asking us: how do we live sold out to Jesus? They’re not interested in casual Christianity, cultural Christianity, polite Christianity—because *we taught them to want the real thing!* They want us to find our fire again. They want to follow Jesus, and they want our help in doing that” (Inspire conference). I wonder if being jars of clay, vulnerable with one another and completely dependent on the power of God to sustain us, might be a good place to start.