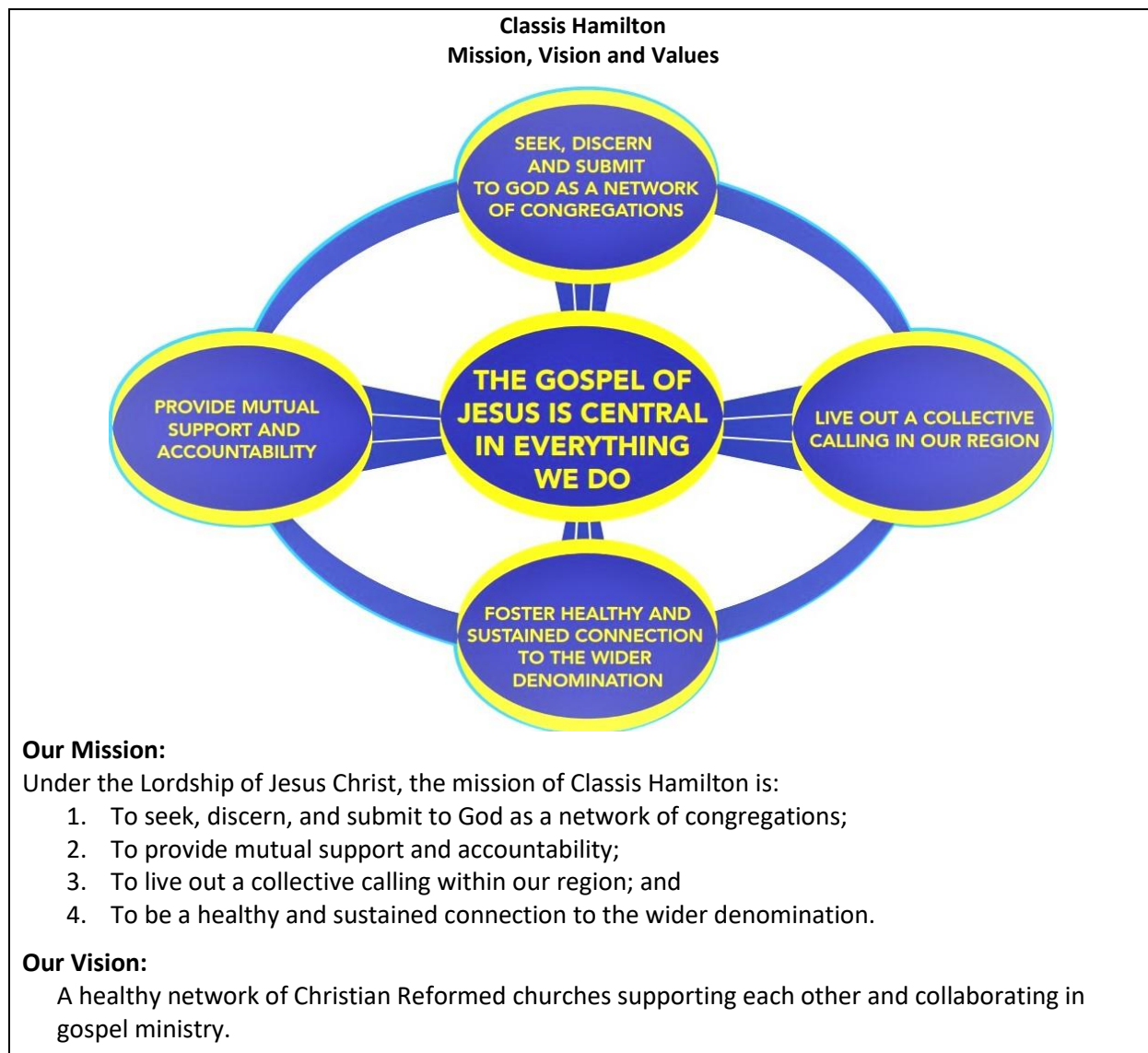




Minutes of a Meeting of CLASSIS HAMILTON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Date: February 23 and March 10, 2021 Time: 9:00 AM
Venue: Via Zoom, Host Church: Calvin CRC, Dundas



Meeting Officers and Functionaries

Chair: Ken Benjamins Vice-Chair: Michael Bootsma
Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk Reporter: Gareth Harker

Synodical Deputies:
None Required

Zoom Administrator
Al Postma

Meeting Delegates:

Church	First Name	Last Name	Title
Ancaster CRC	Theo	Breimer	Elder Delegate
Ancaster CRC	Fred	Hagen	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
Hope	William	Koopmans	Pastor Delegate
Hope	Matt	Ellens	Elder Delegate
Hope	Ben	Schrik	Deacon Delegate
New Street	Joel	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
New Street	Jordan	Dykstra	Elder Delegate
New Street	John	Dekker	Deacon Delegate
Faith	Cara	DeHaan	Pastor Delegate
Faith	David	Kloet	Elder Delegate
Faith	Audrey	Vandermeulen	Deacon Delegate
Calvin	Ken	Benjamins	Pastor Delegate
Calvin	Jeremy	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Calvin	Derek	Vanderkruk	Deacon Delegate
Calvary	Gareth	Harker	Pastor Delegate
Calvary	Bernard	Teeninga	Elder Delegate
Calvary	Richard	VandenBerg	Deacon Delegate
Hagersville Community	Mark	Laing	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Hayden	Regeling	Pastor Delegate
First Hamilton	Jules	de Jager	Elder Delegate
First Hamilton	Jan	Disselkoen	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Michael	Bootsma	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Michael	Zantingh	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Hmltn	Josh	Van Berkel	Deacon Delegate
New Hope	Steve	Dykstra	Emerging Church
Mt. Hope Community	Mark	Demik	Elder Delegate
Mt. Hope Community	Greg	Schuurman	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Willem	de Vries	Pastor Delegate
Ebenezer	Gerald	Nykamp	Elder Delegate
Ebenezer	Phil	Helder	Deacon Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Jeff	Vandermeer	Pastor Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Ada	Kloet	Elder Delegate
Immanuel, Smc	Ann	Oosterveld	Deacon Delegate
Bethel	John	Kemper	Elder Delegate
Bethel	Peter	van der Meulen	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Ben	Ponsen	Pastor Delegate
Maranatha	Nathan	Wamsteker	Elder Delegate
Maranatha	Maurice	Houwer	Deacon Delegate

Meeting Details:

1. WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

At 9:00 am, Gareth Harker, chair of the Classis Ministries Team, welcomed everyone present. He opened with prayer for the proceedings of the day and introduced Ken Benjamins, Chair; Michael Bootsma, Vice-Chair; Dick Kranendonk, Clerk; as well as the Zoom administrator, Al Postma. He then called a breakout session where smaller groups of delegates and guests were asked to introduce themselves to each other by stating who they were, what church they belonged to, and what role they filled in the local church or in their work.

2. OPENING DEVOTIONS

- 2.1. Ken Benjamins, pastor of Calvin CRC, Dundas, led devotions from Genesis 28:10-15. In this passage Jacob flees for his life. Alone and afraid God appears to him in a dream, proclaims rich promises, and reveals to him that heaven and earth are connected by a stairway of angels. Angels implement God's promises on earth and carry the prayers and praises of God's people into heaven. Jacob's dream is a summary of the book of Revelation. Revelation reveals the "scene behind the scenes." Heaven and earth remain connected today because of Christ who is the staircase (John 1: 51). In the end heaven itself will come upon the earth and we will behold God's glory. This encourages us in the midst of our fears and isolation.
- 2.2. After the devotion, the delegates and guests were divided into their breakout rooms once again where they were asked to reflect on the devotion.
- 2.3. Next Jeremy Schuurman, elder of Dundas CRC, shared a ministry update. He traced a brief history of the congregation from the 1950s until the present. There have been many ups and down, but overall, the congregation is positive and constantly experiences the blessings of God in the ongoing ministries. The pandemic has presented special challenges but has also opened new opportunities.
- 2.4. The earlier breakout groups once more met to share stories of something positive that has been happening in their church or ministry during the pandemic.
- 2.5. Vice-Chair, Michael Bootsma then prayed for Calvin CRC.

3. TEN MINUTE BREAK

4. CALL TO ORDER

- 4.1. Chair of Classis, Ken Benjamins, called the meeting to order, welcomed all delegates and introduced some guests who had been invited to the meeting. He offered some brief comments regarding the process for the day, especially in light of the electronic limitations that might be experienced.
- 4.2. He pointed out that a number of items that were in the printed agenda would not be dealt with:
 - 4.2.1. Synod 2021 was cancelled so there would be no need to elect delegates, and
 - 4.2.2. In light of Synod 2021 being cancelled, Meadowlands Fellowship CRC had notified the stated clerk that they withdrew their overtures 2 and 3.
 - 4.2.3. He also noted that one item had been added in the agenda addendum dealing with a motion that had been tabled at the October 2019 meeting regarding the membership status of the Josiah Bokma family in First Hamilton CRC.
- 4.3. The Chair then asked the stated clerk to report on the attendance. The stated clerk reported that all the churches were represented by the delegates reported on their credentials except for one delegate from Hagersville Community CRC.

- 4.4. The Chair drew attention to the Covenant for Office Bearers that was printed in the Agenda and asked all delegates to indicate their continued commitment to the Covenant by filling in the Zoom poll. All delegates confirmed their commitment.
- 4.5. After this the Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** Classis Hamilton was properly constituted.
- 4.6. The Chair then **RULED THAT:** The Agenda and the Addendum as communicated to the churches and delegates as amended by items 3.2.1. – 3.2.3. above are approved for discussion and action where appropriate.
- 4.7. The Chair then recognized Ken Tigchelaar, elder delegate from Meadowlands Fellowship CRC who gave a brief explanation regarding their journey toward overtures 2 and 3 and his understanding as chair of their council for the reason for the withdrawal of these two overtures.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- 5.1. The Chair drew the attention of the delegates to the following matters which had been presented as a consent agenda in the agenda for classis.

CONSENT AGENDA

CMT REPORT (INCLUDING CLASSICAL MINISTRY COMMITTEES)

External Reports:

RECOMMENDED THAT: The external agency reports from World Renew, Canadian Ministries, Redeemer University, Diaconal Ministries Canada, and Calvin Theological Seminary be received as information.

Campus Ministries Committee

Home Missions Committee

Candidacy Committee

RECOMMENDED THAT: Classis approve the disbursement of \$11,226.48 (as forgivable loans) to support 2 students for the 2021-22 school year, as outlined below. These funds will be taken from the 2021 Candidacy Committee budget but remain consistent with our treatment of all students who have applied for support for the 2020-21 academic year.

All numbers are in CAD.

Student	Need or Tuition	Policy Eligibility	Recommended Support
Ben Wimmers: 3rd year McMaster Divinity	\$5,360.69	50%	\$2,041.61
Peter Krannenberg: 1st year CTS Distance	\$16,077.92	75%	\$9,184.87
Total CAD:			\$11,226.48

Sholom Manor

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 and as included in the agenda.

Youth Champion Report

McMaster Chaplain Report

Classis Interim Committee Report (Including reports from the Stated Clerk’s Report and Safe Church Directors)

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 the agenda.

- 5.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the consent agenda as noted above is approved.

6. AFFIRMATION OF MOHAWK CAMPUS CHAPLAIN APPOINTMENT

- 6.1. Anthony Elenbaas, Chair of the Campus Ministry Committee, introduced Melissa Kuipers as the person who had been selected by the search committee and conditionally appointed by the CIC to serve as the Mohawk Campus Chaplain. Her work in that position had begun early in January. It was now time for classis to listen to a conversation with Melissa and to ratify the appointment. After the introduction and conversation, a motion was made to ratify Melissa's appointment.
- 6.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis ratify the appointment of Melissa Kuipers as the Mohawk Campus Chaplain.
- 6.3. Aaron Schat then thanked Michael Fallon for his many years of service as the Mohawk Campus Chaplain in addition to his primary duties as McMaster Campus Chaplain.
- 6.4. Lisa Nightingale then prayed for Michael and his ministry at McMaster University.
- 6.5. Anthony officially welcomed Melissa to her new ministry at Mohawk College.
- 6.6. Willemina Zwart prayed for Melissa and her ministry.
- 6.7. Melissa can be reached at: mohawksolidrock@gmail.com.
- 6.8. The Chair of Classis thanked the Campus Ministry Committee and the Search Committee for their good work.

7. MINISTRY PLAN

- 7.1. Gareth Harker, on behalf of the CMT and CIC as well as the ad hoc committee, presented the plan. The Ministry Plan had been further revised after the February 2020 feedback from classis. Gareth Stated that the Ministry Plan was being presented for either approval as written or defeat. He stressed that it serves classis as a living document which can be amended and improved by classis at any time, but that it was not open for amendments at this meeting.
- 7.2. A few questions and observations were made. Delegates who made observations were encouraged to have their councils make recommendations for amendments at subsequent classis meetings.
- 7.3. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis approves the Ministry Plan.
- 7.4. The Ministry Plan has been published on the website and can be accessed here: http://www.classishamilton.ca/files/ClassisHamilton/ministry_plan.pdf

8. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

On behalf of the Credentials Committee, Joel Bootsma reported that they had received five items for which they would provide recommendations.

- 8.1. The comment from Immanuel CRC, Hamilton in support of overture 1 to defer Synod 2021 was considered moot since that synod has been cancelled.
- 8.2. There was a commentary from Ancaster CRC regarding abuse insurance coverage for classis staff. The credentials committee had presented a recommendation as to how to address this concern. The Chair of Classis as well as the Safe Church Directors pointed out that everything in the recommendation had been in process for some time. The Safe Church Directors pointed out that they have been in communication with all Canadian stated clerks, the denominational Safe Church staff, as well as Resonate Global Missions and that they are close to completing the necessary work to be able to obtain abuse insurance coverage for staff and volunteers of Classis Hamilton. One of the biggest holdups has been that the local churches must demonstrate that they have abuse liability coverage in place before classis is able to obtain such insurance. In light of this information and with the concurrence of the Ancaster CRC delegates, the Credentials Committee withdrew their recommendations on this matter.

8.3. Immanuel CRC, Simcoe noted their ongoing work with a number of concerned members. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** the following is received as information and encouragement to Immanuel CRC, Simcoe:

The classis visiting team – Ken Benjamins, William Koopmans, and Len Moelker – are working and walking with Immanuel CRC during this time. Dialogue continues and things are moving forward, slowly and steadily. Covid-19 has impacted the work, but not derailed it.

8.4. Immanuel CRC, Simcoe also requested that classis be better informed regarding their work with Willemina Zwart and the South Coast Beach Project. The Credentials Committee recommended that the CIC, in creating the next agenda, allocate an appropriate amount of time for Pastor Willemina to present the new ministry of the SCBP. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** this recommendation be referred to the CIC for consideration.

8.5. Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis wished to inform classis that they are trying to chart a path forward for online Communion even after the coronavirus pandemic restrictions are lifted. On recommendation of the Credentials Committee, the Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** this communication is received as information.

8.6. The Chair thanked the Credentials Committee for their work.

9. COUNCIL OF DELEGATES REPORT

9.1. William Koopmans presented a verbal report of the recent activities and concerns of the COD, especially as that related to the cancellation of Synod 2021 and the study reports that were to be dealt with at synod this year. He also addressed the progress being made in corporate restructuring of the Canada and USA Corporations to comply with the laws of both countries as well as maintaining a single bi-national ecclesiastical denomination. Of significant concern for the COD were the threats and racially insensitive comments against staff members of the Office of Social Justice. The work of the COD requires many hours of work and many Zoom meetings during the pandemic time.

9.2. The Chair of Classis thanked William Koopmans for the many hours he spends on behalf of classis for his work on the COD.

10. PULPIT SUPPLY PRESENTATION

10.1. Ben Ponsen had agreed to address the report that was tabled at the February 2020 classis meeting as it had been presented by Mark Vandervliet at that time. Ben gave a short summary of the current rules applicable to pulpit supply within classis. In answer to his question no delegate disagreed with his summary report of the current status.

10.2. Ben then introduced the following proposal for moving forward:

Continue our current practice of providing Pulpit Supply (1 x per month; September thru May)

- Pulpit Supply will be filled by the “Preaching Pastor” of the Church
 - The ability to provide a substitute will come to an end.
 - Pastors / Churches are free to work with the vacant church to arrange an alternate Sunday should there be a conflict with the Sunday scheduled.
- Remove the provision where two-pastor congregations have the option of requesting pulpit supply if they are vacant of their “Preaching Pastor”
 - Unless the 2nd Pastor has preached less than once per month in the past 12 months.
- Remove any exemption from the Pulpit Supply rotation for two-pastor congregations with only one Pastor.

This Alternative will uphold, as George Vink writes, “a tangible expression that we're interested in each other's wellbeing, get to know each other a little, and consequently work

together more effectively at classical and denominational level”, while at the same time giving churches & pastors the flexibility desired.

10.3. After some brief comments by Ben, the Chair of Classis asked for a motion from the floor to implement to proposal.

10.4. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis adopts the proposed revision to the pulpit supply policy.

11. ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MARCH 10, 2021

11.1. The Chair of Classis provided a brief history of a motion that had been tabled at the October 2019 classis meeting, as well as subsequent development, regarding the membership status of the Bokma family in First Hamilton CRC as well as the status of Josiah Bokma’s ordination.

11.2. He shared with the delegates that at one point, First Hamilton CRC had terminated the membership of the Bokma family which resulted in an appeal by Josiah Bokma under Church Order, Article 30-a.

11.3. After further discussion with the CIC, First Hamilton CRC has rescinded its decision to terminate the membership of the Bokma family. That action was taken after CIC committed to First Hamilton CRC to recommend to classis that a discussion take place on the floor of classis regarding the underlying concerns that led them to originally terminate the membership of the Bokma family.

11.4. The fact that First Hamilton CRC has rescinded their earlier decision has made the appeal moot and, as a result, the CIC has recommended a number of actions to be taken by classis as stated in the following motions.

11.5. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis agrees to continue this meeting in executive session on March 10, 2021 virtually via Zoom at 1:30 PM.

11.6. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the executive meeting be framed around the following questions:

- a. Is it appropriate for a CRC church to continue to hold credentials for and supervise the ministry of an ordained CRC Minister of the Word who is no longer engaged in worship or ministry at that church due to adherence at another local church of another denomination?
- b. If so, how should that oversight be administered in a way that honours CRCNA Church Order?
- c. If not, what are the recommended actions for First Hamilton CRC, a church in our classis finding itself in this situation?

11.7. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** First Hamilton CRC may request the stated clerk to send a Zoom invite to Brian Dijkema to attend the March 10, 2021 executive meeting with the right to be its spokesperson.

11.8. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Josiah Bokma be invited to attend the March 10, 2021 executive session with the right to speak and that he may request the stated clerk to send a Zoom invite to another member of a CRC church to be his spokesperson.

11.9. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** no motions be presented to the March 10, 2021 meeting to ensure the broadest discussion possible.

12. CLOSING OF CURRENT SESSION TO RECONVENE ON MARCH 10, 2021 at 1:30 PM

12.1. The February 23, 2021 session of classis was closed at 12:20 PM with Prayer by Vice-Chair, Michael Bootsma.

13. MARCH 10, 2021 EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 13.1. The Chair of classis called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM, led in devotions from James 1:19-25. He emphasised what James says in that passage about our communications and he encouraged the delegates to “be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...” He then offered opening prayer.
- 13.2. The stated clerk reported the following changes in attendance from those who had been present on February 23, 2021:
- a. Ancaster CRC: Stuart Bootsma was not able to be present and no alternate took his place.
 - b. Meadowlands Fellowship: Marsha Hosmar was replaced by Joanne Spoelstra.
 - c. New Street: Jordan Dykstra was replaced by Anneke Kramer.
 - d. Calvary: Richard VandenBerg was replaced by Jane Vanderzwaag.
 - e. Hagersville: Mark Laing was replaced by Brian Paterson.
 - f. First Hamilton: Hayden Regeling could not be present and no alternate was available
 - g. Immanuel CRC: Hamilton: Michael Bootsma was replaced by Anthony Elenbaas and Josh Vanberkel could not be replaced with an alternate.
 - h. Maranatha: Rob Jagt could not be present and no alternate was able to take his place.
- 13.3. The Chair of Classis asked all delegates in attendance to indicate their agreement with the Covenant for Office-Bearers. All did so by means of a Zoom poll.
- 13.4. The Chair of Classis then **RULED THAT:** Anthony Elenbaas would serve as the vice-chair for this session, after which he briefly outlined the agenda as noted in Article 11 above.
- 13.5. He then declared this session of classis properly constituted and ruled that executive session was now in effect. Only delegates, members of the CIC, invited spokespersons or support persons, and the regional pastor for First Hamilton CRC were permitted to be present.

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS CONCLUDED AT 3:45 PM

- 14.1. The Chair of Classis asked First Hamilton CRC, Meadowlands Fellowship CRC, Josiah Bokma, or any other council to seriously consider the comments they had heard from the delegates during the executive session.
- 14.2. Anthony Elenbaas closed the session in prayer.

15. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of Classes Hamilton is to convene on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at a venue and time to be announced later. Agenda deadline is April 13, 2021.