



Christian
Reformed
Church

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

Date: May 28, 2019

Time: 9:30 AM

Venue: Ancaster Christian Reformed Church, 70 Garner Rd. E., Ancaster, Ontario

Chair: Anthony Elenbaas
Stated Clerk: Dick Kranendonk

Vice-Chair: William Koopmans
Reporter: Everett Vander Horst

Synodical Deputies:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| James Dekker | Classis Niagara |
| Ray Vander Kooij | Classis Huron |
| Jacob Van de Hoef | Classis Eastern Canada |

Delegates:

| Church | First Name | Last Name | Title |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Ancaster CRC | Rita | Klein-Geltink | Pastor Delegate |
| Ancaster CRC | Ed | Hensen | Elder 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 | David | Guichelaar | Elder Alternate |
| Hope | Ben | Schrik | Deacon Delegate |
| New Street | Trudy | Sykes | Elder Delegate |
| New Street | Jenny Lynn | Vos | Deacon Delegate |
| Faith | Lori | Steiginga | Elder Delegate |
| Calvin | Ken | Benjamins | Pastor Delegate |
| Calvin | Brad | Dykman | Elder Delegate |
| Calvin | Mel | Elzinga | Deacon Delegate |
| Calvary | Gareth | Harker | Pastor Delegate |
| Calvary | Joe | Wassink | Elder Delegate |
| Calvary | Chris | Bosveld | Deacon Delegate |
| Hagersville Community | George | Elzinga | Elder Delegate |
| First Hamilton | Chris | Schoon | Pastor Delegate |
| First Hamilton | Jules | de Jager | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Anthony | Elenbaas | Pastor Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Martin | Joldersma | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Hmltn | Sharon | Van Dokkemburg | Deacon Delegate |
| New Hope | Greg | Sinclair | Emerging Church |
| New Hope | Ginelle | Bucher | Emerging Church |
| Mt. Hope Community | Greg | Schuurman | Elder Delegate |
| Mt. Hope Community | Mark | Demik | Elder Delegate |
| Ebenezer | Wayne | Deboer | Elder Delegate |
| Ebenezer | Gerald | Nykamp | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | Jeff | Vandermeer | Pator Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | John | Oosterveld | Elder Delegate |
| Immanuel, Smc | Ann | Oosterveld | Elder Alternate |
| Bethel | Bruce | Adema | Pastor Delegate |
| Bethel | Walter | Klooster | Elder Delegate |
| Bethel | Pauline | Vander Velde | Deacon Delegate-am |
| Maranatha | Ben | Ponsen | Pastor Delegate |
| Maranatha | Frank | Riewald | Elder Delegate |
| Maranatha | Jake | Termorshuizen | Deacon Delegate |

Meeting Details:

9:30 AM - OPENING EXERSIZES

1. WELCOME AND OPENING

Chris Schoon, chair of the Classis Ministry Team, welcomed delegates and guests present, read the call to worship from Matthew 18:20, asked everyone to sing the opening hymn "Lord I Lift Your Name on High," and offered prayer asking the Lord's blessings on the day.

2. OPENING WORSHIP AND SHARING OF MINISTRY

- 2.1. The host church, Ancaster Christian Reformed Church, provided opening worship. Elder Ed Hensen led in a litany from Matthew 11:28-30 followed by a song of response "Come to Me, O Weary Traveler."
- 2.2. Rita Klein-Geltink, Pastor of Ancaster Christian Reformed Church led in an opening homily based on Exodus 24:3-18 under the title "More than Business as Usual." In response to which we sang "Beneath the Cross" together with "Will You Come and Follow Me." After pronouncing the blessing with the words of Matthew 28:18-20, worship was closed with singing "Canto de esperanza / Song of Hope."
- 2.3. Fred Hagen, Chair of Council of Ancaster Christian Reformed Church gave an extensive overview of what is happening at the church including challenges, blessings and opportunities. He highlighted the following:
 - 2.3.1. Since Pastor Adam Veenstra left, council appointed a Staffing and Operations Review Committee made up of three council members and two members of the congregation. All job descriptions and mandates were reviewed and twenty areas were identified which council was advised to address. As a result, council appointed two members of the congregation to serve as volunteer lead administrators for a period of one year. Their primary task is to address the twenty areas identified.
 - 2.3.2. Council also reviewed its governance structure and concluded that they have allowed it to drift away from what the Church Order states. Corrective action has been taken and as of May 6, 2019 council believes that its governance structure once again is in full compliance with the Church Order.
 - 2.3.3. There is a challenge in finding enough professing members willing and able to serve as elders and deacons. Council will be reviewing its current process which may include changing term limits to address this challenge.
 - 2.3.4. Council is working under a strategic plan that was approved in the fall of 2017. Six areas of change were envisioned in that plan, most of which still need to be implemented. These include: a name change; a balanced budget; a targeted staffing model; a blended worship style; identified ministry partners; and a repurposed facility.
 - 2.3.5. Over the past 1.5 years, an Implementation Team has been working primarily on the repurposed facility. On June 5th and 8th they will be presenting preliminary drawings of what this repurposed facility might look like. These considerations are possible because the church has been blessed with the sale of a significant amount of surplus land that will go a long way in funding this project.
 - 2.3.6. The church has a wide age range of members consisting of 90 members over age 70; a large group between ages 60 and 70; and a significant group of young families. The age difference means there are various opinions of what the church needs.
 - 2.3.7. The church has a vibrant Gems and Cadets program with participation from other churches. There are three men's Bible study groups, a very active Coffee Break program,

children's worship and kidz connect on Sundays, as well as a FISH (Friends in Service for Him) program for young people. There is also a community garden that supplies vegetables to Neighbour to Neighbour. In addition, a group of volunteers knit approximately 1400 hats and scarves for the Good Shepherd Centre, etc.

2.3.8. In cooperation with Meadowlands Christian Reformed Church, a SERVE project has been sponsored for a number of years already.

2.4. The Vice-Chair of Classis led in prayer for the host church.

10:15 - REFRESHMENT BREAK FOR 20 MINUTES

3. CALL TO ORDER, ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA APPROVAL

3.1. The Chair of Classis called the meeting to order at 10:40 AM and gave some introductory information for the day as a whole. He also asked all guests to introduce themselves.

3.2. Attendance

The list of attendees is shown above.

3.3. All delegates were asked to stand and did so to declare their adherence to the Covenant for Officebearers of the denomination

3.4. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** the meeting was properly constituted.

3.5. Approval of Agenda

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the agenda and the addendum as communicated to the churches and delegates were approved for discussion and action where appropriate.

4. CLASSIS HAMILTON MINISTRIES TEAM REPORT

4.1. Chris Schoon, chair of the Classis Ministries Team, highlighted a few items of the CMT's activities as well as the written report contained in the agenda. His report included a comment that it had been difficult to recruit new members to serve on the CMT.

4.1.1. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton elect Ben Ponsen as the Chair of Classis effective June 1, 2019 until May 31, 2020. The motion was seconded and carried.

4.1.2. He then informed the delegates that John Bijl had been found willing to join the CMT as a regular member.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves John Bijl as a member of the CMT.

4.1.3. A late nomination for Regional Disability Concerns Advocate had also been received and included in the agenda addendum.

On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Bernie Voortman is elected as Regional Disability Concerns Advocate for Classis Hamilton.

4.1.4. He then asked representatives of the various ministry committees to present their individual reports.

4.2. Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee – On behalf of the Committee, Femke Visser-Elenbaas highlighted the report and recommendations contained in the agenda.

4.2.1. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves Jessica Joustra as a member of the Classis Hamilton Candidacy Committee.

4.2.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton suspend the financial need restriction and the need for its determination in its policy number 7 for one year.

GROUNDS:

1. The Committee does not have a clear understanding as to what has to be considered in the process of determining financial need.
2. The Committee's responsibilities in both encouraging and financially supporting seminary students have increased significantly in the past two years.
3. The committee has sent an overture to Classis Hamilton that, hopefully, will address this matter [which overture was subsequently withdrawn].
- 4.2.3. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approve the disbursements from the Student Support Fund in the following amounts:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Derek Ellens: Entering 4 th year M.Div. Distance Learning at CTS | \$5,505 USD |
| Brad Bootsma: Entering 2 nd year M.Div. at CTS | \$15,972 USD |
| Matthew Guichelaar: Entering 1 st year M.Div. at CTS | \$15,972 USD |
| Jolene Veenstra: Entering 2 nd year at McMaster Divinity School | \$1,750 CAD |
| Ben Wimmers: Entering 2 nd year at McMaster Divinity School | \$2,542 CAD |
| Joshua Schoon: Entering 1 st year M.Div. at CTS | \$15,972 USD |

Delegates Chris Schoon and David Guichelaar declared a conflict of interest since their respective sons were being considered for financial support. They refrained from voting on this motion.
- 4.3. Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee – Chair of the committee, Greg Sinclair, asked Terrence Schilstra and John Bouwers to make presentations regarding the church planting activities the committee is currently engaged in.
- 4.4. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Marcia Mantel is elected as member of the Classis Hamilton Home Missions Committee for a term of three years.
- 4.5. Greg Sinclair offered prayer for the work being done by Terrence Schilstra and John Bouwers in church planting activities.
- 4.6. Classis Hamilton Safe Church Team – Lawrence Uyl, a member of the Safe Church Leadership Team, presented a brief verbal report of what the team has been doing.
 - 4.6.1. He shared that the primary coordinator for Classis Hamilton, Al Karsten, had sustained a serious accident some time ago and that in the interim, until Al's full recovery, communications should be directed to Lawrence. Lawrence can be reached at: lawrenceuyl@gmail.com.
 - 4.6.2. He also shared that a training session will be held at the denominational office in Burlington on September 28, 2019 for those individuals who have an interest in learning more about what a Safe Church Panel would do. The Safe Church Team will then be able to draw participants from among these trained members should a panel be required in the future. All church councils are encouraged to identify members in their congregation who might profit from such training.
 - 4.6.3. Next he shared that the Circle of Grace available for local church children's ministries is a valuable program. The team is hoping to put on a workshop about this program later in the fall.
 - 4.6.4. Finally, he shared that churches with a safe church policy have a responsibility to ensure that their policy is properly implemented. The team is looking for direction from classis as to whether and how a policy implementation program might be implemented without interfering with the autonomy of the local church. One method might be that the team visits each local church and asks how the policy requirements are recorded and whether the required annual training actually takes place.
- 4.7. Classis Hamilton Youth Ministries Team
 - 4.7.1. No written or verbal report was presented by the Youth Ministries Team at this meeting.
- 4.8. Classis Hamilton Campus Ministries Committee

- 4.8.1. No written or verbal report was presented by the Campus Ministries Committee at this meeting.
- 4.9. The Chair of Classis then **RULED THAT:** the external reports from the Canadian Ministries Director and Redeemer University College are received as information.
- 4.10. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the work of the CMT to date as reported to the churches in their Minutes and the Classis agenda is approved.
5. CLASSIS HAMILTON INTERIM COMMITTEE REPORT
- 5.1. Ken Benjamins, President of the CIC, highlighted some of the items contained in the written report. He drew special attention to the fact that the General Membership Meeting taking place later in the day will need to elect the directors of the corporation. He also pointed out that an amendment was needed in the Rules of Procedure regarding the minister, elder and deacon delegates who may be seated at classis in accordance with Church Order, Article 40-a.
- 5.1.1. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton nominate William Koopmans, Jake Ellens, Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo, Gillian Bruce and Rita Klein-Geltink as a single slate of nominees to serve as directors of the corporation to be elected during the annual general meeting of members later in the day.
- 5.1.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the revised wording of RoP 4.3 be: "Classis shall be composed of three delegates from each constituent church council, normally consisting of one minister, one elder and one deacon, authorized by proper credentials accepted by email. Alternate delegates may be appointed by the local church from among all the officebearers."
- GROUND:
- This brings the practice of Classis Hamilton in line with the letter and spirit of Church Order, Article 40-a.
- 5.2. Ken then asked classis to approve the work of the CIC and Stated Clerk. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis Hamilton approves 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.
6. REPORT BY THE CLASSIS HAMILTON YOUTH MINISTRY CHAMPION
- 6.1. John Bijl had submitted his written report which was printed in the agenda. He took the time allocated to him at the meeting to highlight the Fall Youth Retreat held in September 2018. He further encouraged all the churches to promote the Fall Youth Retreat for 2019, details of which will be shared with each of the churches. Finally he drew attention to the Youth Leaders Retreat planned for October. More information about this retreat will also be shared with the churches.
- 6.2. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** the written and verbal report by John Bijl is received as information.

12:00 PM LUNCH BREAK UNTIL 1:00PM

7. PRAYER FOR SYNOD, OUR DELEGATES AND THE DENOMINATIONAL STAFF
- 7.1. William Koopmans briefly explained the voluminous materials in the Agenda for Synod 2019 and led the delegates in a time of prayer for synod as a whole, the Classis Hamilton delegates and the denominational staff.

8. SYNODICAL DEPUTIES

- 8.1. The Chair of Classis acknowledged the arrival of the synodical deputies and welcomed them to the meeting.

9. REPORT BY THE CLASSIS HAMILTON CAMPUS CHAPLAIN

- 9.1. Michael Fallon verbally added to his report contained in the Agenda and answered some questions regarding his current state of health. Michael had experienced a detached retina early in the year which had required him to withdraw from active ministry for about a month after his surgery. He was able to report that he is now fully engaged in campus ministry at McMaster and Mohawk once again.
- 9.2. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** the written and verbal reports by Michael Fallon are received as information.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION DECLARED

- 10.1. At this point the Chair of Classis declared executive session and asked those present who were not delegates, officers of classis, office-bearers in the local churches, ordained pastors, members of the church visitor team, and CIC members to leave the meeting.
- 10.2. The delegates and synodical deputies entered into a time of discussion, voting and reporting upon the conclusion of which the Chair of Classis declared the executive session ended.
- 10.3. The Chair of Classis instructed the stated clerk to enter into the minutes the following motions and actions taken during the executive session.
- 10.4. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis approves the request to release Pastor Roelof Peereboom from the ministry at Mount Hope Community CRC according to article 17 of the Church Order.
- 10.5. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis approve the compensation package.
- 10.6. The **SYNODICAL DEPUTIES CONCURRED** with the two above noted decisions of classis.
- 10.7. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** Classis instructs the Classis Interim Committee to create an "Oversight Committee" for Pastor Roelof of no less than three persons to plan and monitor an evaluation of readiness for the ministry, as laid out in the Supplement, under article 17-a of the Church Order.
- 10.8. The Chair of Classis **RULED THAT:** Classis offer special prayer for Pastor Roelof, Kristin and their family, and for Mount Hope Community CRC. The prayer was offered by Jake Ellens.

11. ARTICLE 12-c JOB DESCRIPTION

- 11.1. The Chair of Classis noted that the addendum to the agenda included a communication from First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church to classis that its lead pastor, Chris Schoon, had accepted the position of Director of Faith Formation Ministries with the denomination. Further to that communication First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church requested classis to declare the job description of Director of Faith Formation Ministries as being consistent with the calling of a minister of the Word according to Church Order, Article 12-c. Since that request required the concurrence of the synodical deputies, the information supporting the request had also been sent to the synodical deputies present at the meeting.
- 11.2. On motion duly made, seconded and carried **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:** the work described in the job description for Director of Faith Formation Ministries is consistent with the calling of a minister of the Word.
- 11.3. The **SYNODICAL DEPUTIES CONCURRED** with the decision of classis.

2:40 PM REFRESHMENT BREAK

12. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING BREAK

- 12.1. The meeting of classis was adjourned for a time so that the Annual General Meeting of Members could be conducted. The minutes of that meeting were recorded separately and will be presented to the 2020 Annual General Meeting for approval.

13. FACILITATED CONVERSATION

- 13.1. Gareth Harker, member of the Classis Hamilton Ministry Team, shared with the delegates the summary of the facilitated discussion which had taken place at the February meeting of classis in response to the questions posed.

- 13.1.1. What are some challenges in your churches?

1. Missing/underrepresented demographics (often youth / young adults)
2. Financial capacity
3. Leadership availability

- 13.1.2. How has our relationship changed?

1. From business to mission/ministry
2. More resources
3. Deepening divide between rural and urban
4. Less knowledge of Classical ministries

- 13.1.3. How do we currently partner with other member churches?

1. Special services and events
2. Lack of connection to one another
3. Greater connections with churches of other denominations

- 13.1.4. How **could** we partner in the future?

1. Outreach and community engagement
2. Shared resources (people, financial) for shared programs
 - a. VBS, Retirement Community, 'Orchard Home', Refugee Sponsorship, Affordable Housing/Living, Missionary Support

- 13.1.5. What would a pastor-less Classis look like?

1. Committees and ministry functions would suffer
2. Split on whether or not lay leaders would 'step up'
3. Uncertainty over whether we would engage more or less (become more focused on maintenance at the local level)

- 13.2. Based on the above summary responses, Gareth invited the delegates to dig a little deeper by responding to some follow-up questions. The responses were gathered and the Classis Ministry Team will once again review and summarize them for further feedback to classis and the congregations.

14. CLOSING DEVOTIONS AND ADJOURNMENT

- 14.1. The Chair of Classis declared that all matters on the agenda had been dealt with.
- 14.2. The Vice-Chair of Classis then thanked the Chair of Classis for the excellent way he had led classis during the past year which was followed by a heartfelt applause by the delegates.
- 14.3. The Chair of Classis then entered into a brief time of devotions by reading 1 John 4:7-12 and closing in prayer, after which the delegates sang the doxology together.
- 14.4. He then declared the meeting adjourned.

15. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Classis Hamilton will be held on October 22, 2019 at the Burlington Denominational Office with New Street Christian Reformed Church as the Host Church. Time when the meeting will commence will be determined at a later date.