



CLASSIS CHATHAM
of the Christian Reformed Church in North America
www.classischatham.ca

Tuesday, September 24, 2019
hosted by Ambassador Community Church, Windsor, ON

MINUTES

Officers & Appointments (for this meeting)

Chair: Rev. Dave Van Berkel (Sarnia-First)

Vice-Chair: Rev. Mark Verbruggen (Sarnia-Living Hope)

Stated Clerk: Ron Middel

Credentials & Instructions Committee: Chatham-Grace and Essex

Balloting Committee: Windsor-Ambassador

Delegates in Attendance:

Church	Pastor	Elder	Deacon
Aylmer	Louis Bosma (Comm Pastor)	Andre Hooghiem	
Blenheim	Tim Luimes	John Price	
Chatham-Calvary	Norman Visser	Art Brouwer	
Chatham-First	Nate Van Denend	Gerry Lankhof	George Flikweert
Chatham-Grace		Mark Dieleman	Benna Nicolai**
		Henry Taekema	
Dresden	Andrew Zomerman	Greg DeVries	Tim Kramer
Essex		John van Niejenhuis	
Ingersoll		Walt DeRuiter	Rita Reitsma
London-Bethel	Eric Groot-Nibbelink	Peter Ogt	Richard Boer
London-Forest City	Rob Hogendoorn		
London-Good News	Willemina Zwart	John Kapteyn	Lynn Van Leeuwen**
London-Talbot Street	Steve Dozeman	Mitch Bukata**	
London-Vitalpoint	Ron Baker (Comm Pastor)		
Mount Brydges-Hope	Phil Apoll		
St. Thomas-Destination	Beth Fellingier (Comm Pastor)	David Feddema	
St. Thomas-Fellowship		Ys Boekestyn	Dave Scheele
St. Thomas-The Junction	George Lubbers	Trudy Prince	
Sarnia-First	Dave Van Berkel	Michael DePooter	
Sarnia-Living Hope	Mark Verbruggen	Rick Smink**	
Sarnia-Redeemer		Diana Wassink	Bill Barneveld
		Jenny Douma	
Strathroy-East	Derek Bouma	Hank Haan	Paul Beimers
Strathroy-Westmount	Peter Hoytema	Cathy VanArragon	Roger Voogt**
Tillsonburg	Harold Winter	Harry Dykxhoorn	Murray Rodenburg
Wallaceburg	Josh Tuininga	Jim Kraayenbrink	Bill DePooter**
Windsor-Ambassador	Darrell Edgar	Kim Kostescu	Matt Ball
Woodstock-Covenant	John Moelker	Jeff Hanenburg	
Woodstock-Maranatha	Daryl Meijer	Jake Bentum	Evelyn Tilstra**
Wyoming		John Krале	Nick Jonkman

** Denotes first-time delegates who signed the Covenant for Officebearers

Guests: (at various times throughout the meeting)

Harry Verburg – Classis Treasurer

Marianne Kingma – Classis Safe Church

Rev. Mike Wagenman – Western Campus Chaplain

Helena Allan – Fanshawe College Chaplain

Rev. Lesli van Milligen – Faith Formation Ministries

Tammy Heidbuurt – Diaconal Ministries Canada

John Klein-Geltink – Diaconal Ministries Canada

Jeff Robinson – Classical Ministries Committee

Yvonne Gibb – Windsor-Ambassador

Glenna Middel – Chatham-Grace Deacon

Nick Vander Ploeg – London-Forest City Commissioned Pastor

TOGETHER WE ARE A SPIRITUALLY DISCERNING COMMUNITY

1. Welcome, Opening Worship, Ministry Reflection

1.1 Rev. Darrell Edgar welcomed all and led in opening devotions by sharing his personal journey over the past year and how it was a very spiritually growing year. We sang together *Come People of the Risen King, Psalm 23*, followed with an opening prayer. Pastor Darrell then reflected on Numbers 27, starting at verse 15, a story of Israel standing on the edge of something new. We ended with the singing of *Devotions*.

1.2 Ministry Reflections – Value: *Disciples Making New Disciples*
This was the third meeting of classis with a new agenda format, as well as an intentional focus and reflection on the core value of *Disciples Making New Disciples*. Rev. Willemina Zwart facilitated this session. Three churches shared their joys and struggles on this value. Following each report, another church offered prayers for the church that had just reported.
Reporting: Mount Brydges-Hope Community / Praying: Wyoming
Reporting: Tillsonburg / Praying: London-Bethel
Reporting: Woodstock-Maranatha / Praying: London-Good News

2. Constitution of Classis

2.1 Rev. Edgar called the meeting to order.

2.2 Credentials Committee Report (Part One)

John van Niejenhuis (Essex) reported for the Credentials Committee. All of the 28 churches were present, with 64 delegates registered, including 7 first-time delegates. All first-time delegates had signed the Covenant for Officebearers.

2.3 Rev. Edgar declared Classis as constituted, introducing Rev. Dave Van Berkel of Sarnia-First and Rev. Mark Verbruggen of Sarnia-Living Hope as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Mr. Ron Middel was seated as the Clerk.

2.4 Chair Van Berkel offered some opening remarks, introduced several guests, and then led us through the agenda.

3. Canadian National Gathering Presentation

Rev. Willemina Zwart (London-Good News), Pastor Beth Fellingner (St. Thomas-Destination), Yvonne Gibb (Windsor-Ambassador) and Henry Taekema (Chatham-Grace), along with other representatives that attended the National Gathering, led and assisted the delegates through a number of practical exercises to encourage and support each other in reaching our communities.

4. Morning Refreshment Break

TOGETHER WE HAVE SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5. Church Visitor Reports

Reports were received for Aylmer, St. Thomas-Fellowship and Essex. The Church Visitors each took a moment and shared highlights, joys and encouragements from the visits.

6. Church Counselor Reports

- 6.1 Aylmer: Rev. John Moelker reports that Aylmer has a faithful search committee in place. They are in the preliminary stages of dialoguing with a potential pastor.
- 6.2 Chatham-Grace: Rev. Nate Van Denend reports that Grace is having extended conversation with someone at this time.
- 6.3 Essex: Rev. Norman Visser reports that Essex has extended a call to Rev. Paul Droogers of Drayton, ON.
- 6.4 Ingersoll: Rev. Daryl Meijer reports that Ingersoll Search Committee continues to meet and asks that we keep them in our prayers.
- 6.5 Sarnia-Redeemer: Rev. Dave VanBerkel reports that Redeemer Search Committee continues to meet and hopes to vote on a pastor in the near future.
- 6.6 Wyoming: Rev. Peter Hoytema reports that Wyoming has a search team in place and are beginning their search.

TOGETHER WE DO MINISTRY

7. Classis Leadership Structure Models and Structure

- 7.1 Rev. Nate Van Denend led the delegates in a conversation following the report presented at our last meeting. Churches had been encouraged to review a number of conversation questions prior to the meeting and were given the opportunity to discuss them. Ideas to address the replacement of new council members were discussed under three categories: recruitment, expectations and mentoring. Several churches shared some unique things that they are doing in their churches.

8. Classical Ministries Committee (CMC) Report

Chair of CMC, Rev. Norman Visser presented the CMC Report.

- 8.1 Pastor Beth Fellingner, together with a team of four others, have completed a review of the Classical Prayer Coordinator mandate, which will be reviewed at the next meeting of CMC.
- 8.2 CMC was asked to consider another model of Church Visitation recently instituted in Classis Quinte. CMC had some concerns with the model and the Stated Clerk was instructed to follow-up with Classis Quinte.
- 8.3 Rev. Dave VanBerkel and Rev. John Moelker have formulated a number of questions to assist in the evaluation of classis committees.
- 8.4 Classis was advised that London-Vitalpoint is moving towards becoming an organized church.
- 8.5 Following a nomination and election process, Rev. Norman Visser was elected as the Chair of CMC, replacing Rev. Derek Bouma.
- 8.6 After receiving a recommendation from the Western Campus Ministry Board, CMC recommends that Nick Vander Ploeg (London-Forest City) be approved to serve on their Board. M/S ... carried.
- 8.7 At the recommendation of the Classical Finance Committee, CMC recommends the following to classis:
Classical Mileage Rate: That we use the Revenue Canada "Reasonable Per-Kilometer Allowance" rate for kilometers driven after the first 5,000 kilometers for all kilometers driven, such rate being \$0.52 per kilometer for 2019, and to adjust on an annual basis.

Pulpit Supply Rate: To adjust the payment for leading a service (i.e. Pulpit Supply) every three years using the Ontario Consumer Price Index as a guide, with the next adjustment to be made for the year 2022.

M/S to approve both ... carried.

- 8.8** CMC reviewed the 2020 Classical Ministry Share Budget and recommends approval to classis. This is an item later on the agenda.

- 8.9** As the CRCNA's Classis Renewal Group recommended to Synod 2018 that classes develop, implement and share ministry plans (related to Article 75 C.O.), a vision statement for classis was developed and presented at our last meeting of classis for consideration and feedback.

This Vision Statement is now presented for approval: *"To catalyze and encourage a movement of CRC churches that proactively advance the great commission in Southwestern Ontario."*

M/S to approve ... carried.

These four pastors, Rev. Derek Bouma (Strathroy-East), Rev. Rob Hogendoorn (London-Forest City), Rev. Mark Verbruggen (Sarnia-Living Hope) and Rev. Norman Visser (Chatham-Calvary) are now asked to continue in their work and draft a Ministry Plan for our classis.

- 8.10** London-Good News requests Emeritus Status be granted for Commissioned Pastor Kelly Sibthorpe (C.O. Article 24-e and Supplement). Letter of Request along with a Job Description for Commissioned Pastor, Emeritus was received which closely mirrors his previous approved Job Description approved in May 2019.

M/S that classis grant emeritus status to Commissioned Pastor Kelly Sibthorpe, and that he retain the ability to perform official acts of ministry, including preaching the Word and the administration of the sacraments within classis, and the ability to perform marriage ceremonies in the CRC ... carried.

9. Lunch and Committee Meetings

Prior to breaking for lunch, Rev. Rob Hogendoorn offered prayer, giving thanks for the Spirits leading during the morning session and asked for a blessing on our meal together.

10. Afternoon Devotions

Rev. Edgar opened the afternoon session by reading Psalm 66 and prayer.

11. Campus Ministries Chaplain Reports

11.1 Ridgetown – Chaplain Rev. Doug Rowley sent his regrets.

11.2 Fanshawe College – Chaplain Helena Allen referred to her report. They are off to a good year, focusing on building relationships. She is excited to this new beginning at Fanshawe. She is thankful for the support and prayers for campus ministry.

11.3 Western University – Chaplain Rev. Mike Wagenman referred to his report. Theme this year is based on Jesus' words *"If you seek, you will find"*. They use programs, i.e. Alpha, to gather students in, to begin conversations, and to deal with questions they have. They are blessed to have a great group of student leaders who assist. They are off to a great year and thank classis for our support.

12. Classical Church Planting Team Presentation

Rev. Daryl Meijer and Rev. Mike Wagenman reported for the committee.

12.1 Demographic Study: Rev. Meijer began by sharing some background information and presented the results and summary of a Demographic Study that was commissioned by the Team over the past few months, seeking where in classis to begin a new church plant. As a result, the Team's attention is drawn to Windsor. They ask for prayers as they continue to seek God's leading over the next little while as they consider the demographic study and

talk to churches in area. The Team's plan is to come to February meeting of classis with a full recommendation of where the next church plant should be. They welcome feedback.

- 12.2** Grant Request from London-Vitalpoint: Rev. Mike Wagenman reflected on ministries that are nontraditional, and led to the ministry of Vitalpoint Church. Classis is asked to consider a grant request to Vitalpoint recommended by the Church Plant Committee. This \$60,000 funding request is to assist London-Vitalpoint Church, with a campus (multisite) in the town of Exeter.

Pastor Ron Baker assisted by answering several questions. The new campus is planned to launch in Exeter, September 29th and these funds are to assist with operational costs and staff in the first year.

Rev. Wagenman shared the following grounds:

1. The funds are available in the Church Plant Team account.
2. The support of Vitalpoint Church does not hinder our further church planting plans.
3. It has been 8 years since Classis Chatham funded a church plant.
4. Vitalpoint Church was initially a multisite from Forest City Community Church and since their ministry plan represents a significant new expansion of ministry, should received meaningful support from classis.
5. The support of Vitalpoint Church is supported by Resonate and the CRC church planting initiative, done in communication with Classis Huron.
6. The support of Vitalpoint Church at this amount is consistent with best practices elsewhere in the CRCNA.

- 12.3** M/S that \$60,000 from the Church Plant Fund be provided to assist Vitalpoint with this multisite initiative in Exeter.

- 12.4** After discussion, it is M/S to table this motion so the following motion can be considered first ... carried.

- 12.5** As some concern was raised over the site leader being related to the lead pastor, a motion was presented to declare that there is no conflict of interest in this situation. M/S ... carried.

- 12.6** The original motion (12.3) is considered, resulting in the motion being ... carried.

- 12.7** Rev. Norman Visser, Chair of CMC, explained some of the history of the Church Plant Fund, and also explained that CMC will be discussing a clear process for grants moving forward.

13. Report of the Credentials Committee (Part 2)

Rev. Norman Visser reported on the following submission received on the credentials:

- 13.1** Aylmer: "Since there are a large number of vacant churches in our classis, is it possible to have a video sermon library so that vacant churches could show them?"

Response: Committee shares the concern over the number of vacant churches and the demands this places on congregations of classis, both vacant churches and sending churches. We observe that video sermons are readily available online.

- a) Many CRCs including several churches in Classis Chatham post videos of their services/sermons on their websites. These are easily accessible.
- b) Sermons from the Calvin College chapel are available.
- c) Calvin Seminary has a library of audio sermons.

The Credentials Committee believes that classis does not have the resources to curate a sermon library and recommends that churches be directed to the already named resources.

- 13.2** Wallaceburg: "Classis declares a need for more exhorters."

Response: Committee recommends

- a) That classis declare a need for exhorters.
- b) That classis encourage congregations to identify gifted persons and encourage them to apply for license to exhort.

M/S to declare a need for exhorters ... carried.

- 13.3** Blenheim: "How to optimize the Bridge App. Are there churches that are using it effectively? Is there a need from other churches for training?"

Response: Committee notes that this request had been made in the past, but has not been included on the agendas because other items took priority.

The Credentials Committee has also been in contact with Dorothy Vander Steen, The Bridge App Program Manager and learned that:

- All but 5 churches/ministries in Classis Chatham have signed on to the app
- 329 people are active users, with an average of 49.11 log ins per user
- A blog listing creative uses of the app is available on *the network* (under church communications/bridge app).
- Dorothy took part in Classis Chatham Church Administrators Day in October 2018 that included a presentation on the app.
- In Dorothy's judgment training at classis would not be the best use of resources because most delegates would not be App administrators, but a workshop for administrators could be hosted alongside of a classis meeting.
- Another video Town Hall meeting for administrators is being planned
- Dorothy suggests that smaller churches that do not have administrators identify a person with the gift of admin. Her team can work with that person to optimize the use of the App.

The Credentials Committee recommends that the Classical Ministries Committee receive this as information when planning future meetings and/or days for church administrators.

- 13.4** Sarnia-First: "We're finding the traditional "elder home visits" are not welcomed (or done) by more and more people these days. Have any churches found an effective alternative to these traditional home visits? How do your shepherding elders stay connected/checked in with people? And how do you keep track of who's been visited, who hasn't, etc.?"

Response: Committee recommends that if Sarnia 1st's concerns are not addressed by the discussion of the leadership structure study committee report earlier in the day, then this subject be the focus of the "Ministry Reflections – on the value "Leadership Development" at a future meeting of Classis.

14. Classical Standing Committee Reports

- 14.1** Nomination Committee: The Functionary and Committee schedule was received.
15.1.1 Nominee to Council of Delegates of CRCNA (to replace Beth Fellingner): As the Committee has not been able to present a nominee for consideration, the floor was opened for nominations. None were received.
Churches are encouraged to seek potential nominees and notify the Stated Clerk for consideration at our February meeting.
- 14.2** Youth Ministry Team: May 14 Minutes – RFI
- 14.3** Fanshawe Campus Committee: April 11 Minutes – RFI
- 14.4** Western Campus Committee: April 15 Minutes – RFI
- 14.5** London Campus Board: May 21 Minutes – RFI
- 14.6** Church Plant Team: May 16, Jun 13, July 18 Minutes – RFI
- 14.7** Safe Church Committee: May 25 Minutes, and Safe Church Report – RFI
- 14.8** Finance: Treasurer Harry Verburg reports that overall our classis is very healthy.
15.8.1: July 31 Minutes – RFI
15.8.2: The proposed 2020 Classis Chatham Ministry Share Budget was presented. Budget is \$61.10 per confessing member, a decrease of 4.15%.
M/S to approve the 2020 Classis Chatham Ministry Share Budget ... carried.

TOGETHER WE ARE PART OF A DENOMINATION

15. Faith Formation Ministries – New Resources

Rev. Lesli van Milligen introduced and reviewed several resources that are now available or will be

shortly.

16. Synod 2019 Report

Rev. George Lubbers (St. Thomas-The Junction) and Rev. Phil Apoll (Mount Brydges-Hope Community) attended and gave brief reports of Synod and how they were blessed to participate. They highlighted several of the discussions and decisions.

17. Other Provided Reports

- 17.1 Canadian Ministries Director Fall Report – RFI
- 17.2 Calvin Theological Seminary Communication – RFI
- 17.3 Redeemer University Report – RFI
- 17.4 World Renew Report – RFI
- 17.5 Resonate Global Missions Report – RFI

CLOSING

18. Announcements/Encouragements

Delegates were offered the opportunity to encourage each other and share information regarding various ministries and events.

18.1 Rev. Willemina Zwart spoke and this Sunday is her last as pastor of London-Good News. She explained the new ministry planned for Port Dover .. the *South Coast Beach Project*. This new ministry is shaped by a similar ministry, the *Ocean City Beach Project*. Pastor Willemina is hopeful that the new ministry will be operational in 2021. Video on the *Ocean City Beach Project* can be easily found on YouTube.

The Chair wished God's richest blessings to Pastor Willemina in her new ministry.

18.2 After a very successful day last year, plans are in the works for our 2nd Annual **Church Administrator's Day** on Wednesday, October 23, 2019 @ Westmount CRC, Strathroy. This event is planned as *A Day of Learning and Growing Together* for our church Administrative Assistants, both part and full-time.

We are asked to encourage our church administrators to attend.

18.3 John Klein-Geltink asks us to encourage our Deacons to attend one of the planned Deacon's Workshops. October 9th at Chatham-Grace; October 16th at London-Bethel; or October 23rd at Sarnia-Living Hope.

19. Unfinished Business – none

20. Closing & Adjournment

20.1 Vice-Chair Rev. Mark Verbruggen ... thanked. The Chair then thanked Ambassador for being great hosts and closed the meeting with prayer.

20.2 Adjournment at 4:18 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Ron Middel, Stated Clerk. Items may have been dealt with in a slightly different order, or differently due to time flexibility and adjustments in the agenda.

Send comments and questions by email to statedclerk@classischatham.ca

NEXT AGENDA MATERIALS DEADLINE: Tuesday, December 3, 2019 @ 5:00 p.m.

UPCOMING SESSIONS OF CLASSIS CHATHAM

Saturday, February 1, 2020 @ Chatham-Grace

Tuesday, May 26, 2020 @ Woodstock-Maranatha

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 @ **Host Required**