



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

Tuesday, September 25, 2018
hosted by Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church, Strathroy, Ontario

MINUTES

Officers & Appointments

Chair: Rev. Willemina Zwart (London-Good News)

Vice-Chair: Rev. Phil Apoll (Mount Brydges-Hope Community)

Stated Clerk: Ron Middel

Credentials & Instructions Committee: Sarnia-Living Hope and Wyoming

Overture Advisory Committee: Woodstock-Covenant and Woodstock-Maranatha

Balloting Committee: Strathroy-East

Delegates to Classis:

Church	Pastor	Elder	Deacon
Aylmer	Dirk Miedema	Graham Saarloos	John Marissen**
Blenheim	Tim Luimes	John Price	
Chatham-Calvary	Norman Visser	Jan Klooster	
Chatham-First	Nate Van Denend	Tim Bisschop	Nick Kielstra**
Chatham-Grace		Ron Nydam	Betty Schiestel
		Myrna Panjer	
Dresden	Andrew Zomerman	Ernie Kramer	Brian Devries
Essex		John van Niejenhuis	
Ingersoll		Clarence Beekman	Rita Reitsma
London-Bethel	Eric Groot-Nibbelink	Peter Ott	Ron DeSmit
London-Forest City	Nick Vander Ploeg (Comm Pastor)	Jesse Terpstra	
London-Forest City North	Ron Baker (Comm Pastor)		
London-Good News	Willemina Zwart	John Kapteyn	
London-Talbot Street		Harry DeJonge	
Mount Brydges-Hope	Phil Apoll	Minnie Smink	Shirley Bakker
St. Thomas-Destination	Beth Fellingner (Comm Pastor)		
St. Thomas-Fellowship			Margriet Linker
St. Thomas-The Junction	George Lubbers	John Hengeveld	Carol Zylstra
Sarnia-First	Dave Van Berkel	Michael DePooter	Pauline Plug
Sarnia-Living Hope	Mark Verbruggen	Dick Metselaar	Nancy Bouterse
Sarnia-Redeemer		Diana Wassink	Corene Hayes**
Strathroy-East	Derek Bouma	Harry Verburg	Paul Beimers**
Strathroy-Westmount	Peter Hoytema	Willy Nywening	Brenda Jurgens
Tillsonburg	Harold Winter	Rick Dykxhoorn	Murray Rodenburg
Wallaceburg	Josh Tuininga	Jim Kraayenbrink	Lucas DePooter**
Windsor-Ambassador		Kim Kostescu**	Debbie Hodgins**
Woodstock-Covenant	John Moelker	Bob Dieleman	Irene Geerlinks**
Woodstock-Maranatha	Daryl Meijer	Steve Booy**	Ada DeVor**
Wyoming	Bill Hoogland	John Krале	

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

Guests: (at various times throughout the meeting)

Diane Plug – CMC, Classis Diaconal Committee, Disability Concerns

Dr. Mike Wagenman – Western University Chaplain

Rev. Doug Rowley – Ridgetown College Chaplain

Yvonne Lammers – Classis Chatham Safe Church

Mary Anne Kingma – Classis Chatham Safe Church

Rick Zomer – Executive Director, Youth Unlimited

John Pollnow – Pastor of Youth and Discipleship, St. Thomas-Fellowship

Calvin Davies – Canadian National Gathering Planning Team

1. Welcome, Opening Worship, Ministry Reflection

The Worship Team from Strathroy East opened the meeting by welcoming all and led us in the singing of *Gather Us In, Oh How Good it Is* and *I Am Not My Own*.

Rev. Derek Bouma then welcomed delegates and guests and reflected on a few verses from 1 Samuel. He asked, “What is God up to in our lives?” He shared a prayer challenge: 1. That we might know God’s love. 2. That we might experience God’s presence and activity in our lives. 3. That we might know God’s will. 4. That God would give us the strength and courage to join Him in this work.

Rev. Bouma led in prayer and we were encouraged to reflect and spend time in prayer, both individually and in groups to consider what is God doing ... in us ... in our churches, etc.

2. Constitution of Classis

2.1 Rev. Bouma called the meeting to order.

2.2 Credentials Committee Report (Part One)

Rev. Mark Verbruggen reported for the Credentials Committee. All 28 churches were present with 66 delegates registered, including 9 first-time delegates. All first-time delegates have signed the Covenant for Officebearers.

2.3 Rev. Bouma declared Classis as constituted, introducing Rev. Willemina Zwart of London-Good News and Rev. Phil Apoll of Mount Brydges-Hope Community as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Mr. Ron Middel was seated as the Clerk.

2.4 Chair Zwart offered some opening remarks, introduced our guests and then led us through the agenda.

3. Campus Ministries Chaplain Reports

3.1 Western University

Dr. Mike Wagenman addressed the delegates sharing that Western campus ministry is starting their 49th year. This year’s programs are just beginning with approx. 50 people attending weekly programs. They are also attempting to more closely connect with those outside of the campus. Rev. Wagenman shared a short video presenting what ministry looks like at Western.

3.2 Ridgetown College

Rev. Doug Rowley also shared a short video of what the Ridgetown campus ministry looks like, showcasing student involvement, study, worship and ministry.

3.3 Fanshawe College

Harry Verburg reported for the Fanshawe Chaplain Search Committee. Chaplain Kelly Sibthorpe continues in the ministry there until his replacement can be found. The Search Committee has been active and has conducted interviews. They hope to have a recommendation for classis in the near future.

3.4 Following the presentations Rev. Phil Apoll offered prayer for our campus ministries.

4. **Classis Renewal (New Agenda Forma)**
 - 4.1 Rev. Willemina Zwart presented reflections and recommendations for a new agenda format and credential form for future classis meetings.
 - 4.2 Goal: classis should only do the things that it can do better than a local church or better than denominational ministries.
 - 4.3 Four Lenses of Classis (from Rev. Al Postma): our plan is to shape our future meetings around these four lenses:
 - Spiritually Discerning Community
 - Network of Support & Accountability
 - Collective Calling
 - Connection to the Wider Church
 - 4.4 Five Core Values (from Classis Niagara):
 - Prayerful Dependence on God
 - Authentic Community
 - Disciples making New Disciples
 - Leadership Development
 - Covenantal Relationships
 - 4.5 Following the presentations Rev. Harold Winter offered prayer for our renewal process.
5. **Morning Refreshment Break**
6. **Classical Church Planting Team Presentation**
 - 6.1 Rev. Mike Wagenman introduced those present from the committee.
The Committee has been active and has produced a short list of locations with the goal to start with a church plant by the fall of 2019. Rev. Wagenman shared that the committee feels that God is pointing them to the city of Leamington, however they are also considering several other locations.
Delegates were assigned group tables, and Pastor Beth Fellingner introduced a practical exercise for the groups to work on and provide feedback to the committee.
 - 6.2 Rev. Tim Luimes offered prayer for this process and for our Lord's blessing on this work.
7. **London-Good News Overture re: Chaplaincy Program**
 - 7.1 Chair declared conflict for this item and turned the chair over to Vice-Chair Rev. Phil Apoll.
 - 7.2 Rev. Daryl Meijer reported for the Overture Pre-advice Committee, presenting their report and recommendations. They advise classis to adopt the overture from Good News as presented. CMC to establish a committee, and provide a timeline for the reporting back to classis with findings and recommendations.
Rev. Peter Hoytema asked and encourages that the study committee appointed engage with Mark Wallace from Resonate as there have been substantial reviews done in the past.
Rev. Derek Bouma, Chair of CMC, asks that volunteers who are willing to serve on this committee make themselves known to the Stated Clerk today.
 - 7.3 Following discussion it is M/S to support the pre-advice committee recommendation ... carried.
 - 7.4 Rev. Josh Tuininga prayed for our campus and ad hoc committees.
8. **Classical Ministries Committee (CMC) Report**

Chair of CMC, Rev. Derek Bouma reviewed the CMC Report.

 - 8.1 Pastor Beth Fellingner, together with a team of four others, continue to review the outdated Classical Prayer Coordinator mandate and will be bringing recommendations to CMC.
 - 8.2 Considering the statement that *classis should only do the things that it can do better than a local church or better than the denominational ministries*, CMC discussed the wisdom of evaluating all of our Classis ministries on a regular basis. Rev. Dave VanBerkel and Rev.

John Moelker have agreed to meet and come back to CMC with a proposal how we should proceed.

- 8.3** At a previous meeting of classis, Ingersoll CRC suggested that we have a discussion at a future meeting of classis on moving from charity to justice in the area of food insecurity and poverty. Pastor Beth Fellingner and Rev. Willemina Zwart are working on a proposal that classis sponsor a local church to host a large group simulation event open to all of our churches. More to come on this.
- 8.4** The Leadership Structure Study Committee is now in place and has met once in September.
- 8.5** CMC was encouraged to hear that London-Forest City North plans to begin a multisite in Exeter, beginning in the New Year. They are in contact with Classis Huron.
- 8.6** CMC is aware of the recommendation from the Classis Renewal Group to Synod 2018, encouraging all classes to develop, implement and share their ministry plans (related to Church Order, Article 75). This will be a topic at the Stated Clerk and Classis Leader's Conference, planned for January in Burlington and will be discussed at a future CMC meeting.
- 8.7** CMC approved a recommendation from the denominational Safe Church Committee that classis pay a \$1,500 honourarium to our Safe Church Coordinator. The denomination has agreed to pay the first year on the condition that classis continues year after year.
- 8.8** CMC noted that the Nominating Committee is still seeking a replacement to serve classis as Regional Advocate for Disability Concerns.
- 8.9** CMC recommends that Brad Ypma (London-Bethel) to serve on the Classical Student Fund Committee. M/S to approve ... carried.
- 8.10** CMC reviewed the 2019 Classical Ministry Share Budget and recommends approval to classis. This will be dealt with later at this meeting.
- 8.11** At the request of Aylmer CRC, CMC recommends that classis grant emeritus status to Rev. Dirk Miedema as he plans to retire effective January 27, 2019 on the basis of age. M/S to approve ... carried.
The Chair recognized the lengthy time that Rev. Miedema has faithfully served in our classis. She thanked him, and wished him God's blessings.
- 8.12** As Rev. Miedema is retiring and plans to move out of our classis, he is also resigning as our Synodical Deputy. The Nominating Committee recommends that our Alternate Synodical Deputy Rev. Eric Groot-Nibbelink (London-Bethel) become our Synodical Deputy and that Rev. Norman Visser (Chatham-Calvary) become the alternate. M/S to approve ... carried.
- 8.13** Following the report Rev. Peter Hoytema offered prayer for our CMC and our financial matters.

9. Lunch and Committee Meetings

Before breaking for lunch the Chair led in prayer giving thanks for the morning session and asked a blessing on our meal.

10. Afternoon Devotions

Rev. Derek Bouma invited Rev. Peter Hoytema to come forward to acknowledge the life, ministry and passing of Rev. Walter DeRuiter. Rev. Hoytema offered a prayer, thanking our God for Rev. De Ruiter's ministry, also for the service of Rev. Dirk Miedema as he retires. Rev. Bouma read scripture, *The Great Commission* introducing us to the next agenda item.

11. Effective Outreach Stories

- 11.1** Delegates participated in an open mic session to learn and encourage each other in our outreach. The attending churches shared stories of outreach opportunities and programs that they have participated with.
- 11.2** The Chair closed the session with prayer, asking for strength and compassion for us to reach out to those around us.

- 12. Classis Chatham Safe Church Update and Report**
- 12.1** Yvonne Lammers, Chair of the Classis Chatham Safe Church Team, educated us of the role and activities of our local safe church teams, and the classis team. “Awareness ... Prevention ... Response”
Yvonne promoted the Classis Chatham Safe Church Counselling Fund, which is available to all of our members. The Team has made a video available to show in our churches to promote safe church and the fund.
- 12.2** Rev. Daryl Meijer offered a prayer for Safe Church and their efforts.
- 13. Youth Unlimited Presentation**
- 13.1** Rick Zomer, Executive Director of Youth Unlimited. Youth Unlimited is preparing to celebrate their 100th anniversary in 2019. Rick offered an update of the history, activities and programs of Youth Unlimited.
- 13.2** Pastor Beth Fellingner offered a prayer for the ministry of Youth Unlimited.
- 14. Canadian National Gathering 2019**
- 14.1** Planning Team member Calvin Davies, reported of the plans for the May 24-26, 2019 event, at Kings College in Edmonton. Who: “leaders from 50% of all Canadian CRC churches.” Why: *To take seriously the health and direction of the CRC in Canada*. How: “A spiritual journey over the course of a weekend to strategically celebrate, discern and envision bold next steps for the CRC in Canada local, regionally and nationally (i.e. congregation, Classis, denomination.” Theme: “a pilgrimage from emptiness to fullness.”
- 14.2** Rev. Dirk Miedema offered a prayer, asking for a blessing on the preparation and the gathering.
- 15. Synod 2018 Delegates Report**
- Rev. Tim Luimes and Diane Plug, two of our delegates to Synod 2018 briefly reported. They spoke of their highlights and experience, and as well reported for the sub-committee’s they served on.
- 16. Report of the Credentials Committee (Part 2)**
- Rev. Bill Hoogland reported on the following submission received on the credentials:
- 16.1** Woodstock-Covenant: “How do we involve the age group of 25-35 year old members of our Church? There are many members in that age bracket and we want them to feel included and part of the Ministry at our Church and become involved. How do other Churches make this possible?”
Response: Committee recommends three things. First, you invite them to participate. They need to be personally asked. Second, consider assigning them as a mentor to those younger. Third, teach them the spiritual discipline of tithing.
- 17. Church Counselor Reports**
- 17.1** Chatham-Grace: Rev. Nate Van Denend reports that the Grace search committee is active and continuing with their search.
- 17.2** Essex: Rev. Norman Visser reports that Essex is also active and continues with their search.
- 17.3** Ingersoll: Rev. Daryl Meijer reports that Ingersoll search committee is working with council and things seem to be going well.
- 17.4** Sarnia-Redeemer: Rev. David VanBerkel reports that Redeemer has completed their church profile and are working on vision and mission before they proceed.
- 18. Church Visitor Reports**
- 18.1** Reports were received for London-Good News, London-Talbot Street, Strathroy-

Westmount, Tillsonburg, and Windsor-Ambassador.

- 18.2** Re London-Talbot Street Report: It was observed that London-Talbot Street has implemented a leadership structure without the office of deacon. Concerns of the new structure were shared by several delegates, also commenting that more conversation is important. How does this leadership structure fit within our confessions and church order? It was noted that classis has just struck a committee to deal with the issue of church leadership and Talbot Street is encouraged to be part of this committee. Harry DeJonge, Chair of Elders of Talbot Street shared the history of their decision to disband the position of ordained deacons. Three volunteer teams, a Global Missions Team, Local Missions Team, and a church Care Team are now doing the work of deacons.
- 18.3** M/S that we ask the Council of Talbot Street to make a presentation at our next meeting of classis to offer clarity of why the decision was made to do away with the office of deacon as it relates to our confessions and church polity ... carried.
- 18.4** At the conclusion of discussion, Rev. George Lubbers offered a prayer for a spirit of unity as we work and proceed through this.

19. Classical Standing Committee Reports

- 19.1** Nomination Committee: The Functionary and Committee schedule was received.
- 19.2** Church Planting Team: May 3 and July 12, 2018 Minutes – RFI
- 19.3** Finance: July 25, 2018 Minutes – RFI
- 19.3.1** Classical Treasurer Harry Verburg presented the 2019 Classis Ministry Share Budget, which is \$63.75 per professing member, a 3.21% increase. The increase is largely due to decline in professing membership. Following opportunity to ask questions it is M/S to approve ... carried.
- 19.4** Youth Ministry Team: Rev. John Moelker (Woodstock-Covenant) reported for the committee. They are looking at a team of three Youth Champions for our classis. Two are in place and one more is still required.

20. Other Provided Reports

- 20.1** Calvin Theological Seminary – RFI
- 20.2** Redeemer University College – RFI
- 20.3** World Renew – RFI
- 20.4** Faith Formation Workshops for Churches – RFI

21. Announcements/Encouragements

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

22. Unfinished Business – none

23. Closing & Adjournment

- 23.1** Vice-Chair Rev. Phil Apoll thanked the Chair for her capable leadership in the good spirit she led the meeting in. The Chair then closed the meeting with prayer.
- 23.2** Adjournment at 3:03 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 in the agenda.

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

NEXT AGENDA DEADLINE

Tuesday, December 4, 2018 @ 5:00 p.m. (reports to be submitted to Stated Clerk)

UPCOMING SESSIONS OF CLASSIS CHATHAM

Saturday, February 2, 2019 @ Wallaceburg
Tuesday, May 28, 2019 @ Sarnia-Living Hope
Tuesday, September 24, 2019 @ *host required*