



CHRISTIAN
REFORMED
CHURCH

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

Tuesday, September 26, 2017
hosted by Destination Church, St. Thomas, Ontario

MINUTES

Officers & Appointments

Chair: Rev. Norman Visser (Chatham-Calvary)
Vice-Chair: Rev. Eric Groot-Nibbelink (London-Bethel)
Stated Clerk: Ron Middel

Credentials & Instructions Committee: Aylmer and St. Thomas-Fellowship
Balloting Committee: St. Thomas-Destination

Delegates to Classis:

Church	Pastor	Elder	Deacon
Aylmer	Louis Bosma (Comm Pastor)	Bruce VanKemenade	Jeff Robinson
Blenheim	Tim Luimes	John Price**	Marg Vanderende
Chatham-Calvary	Norman Visser	Marsha Brouwer	Ryan Griffioen
Chatham-First	Nate Van Denend	Henry Postma	Mark Pilon
Chatham-Grace		Richard Vyn**	Betty Schiestel**
Dresden		Myrna Panjer	
Essex	Aaron Thompson	Fred Smids	Brian deVries
Ingersoll		Hans Haverkamp	
		Richard Poortinga	Rita Reitsma
		Clarence Beckman	
London-Bethel	Eric Groot-Nibbelink	John Van Til	Rose Skinner**
London-Forest City	Nick Vander Ploeg (Comm Pastor)	Jesse Terpstra	
London-Forest City Nor			
London-Good News	Willemina Zwart	Jan Davies	
London-Talbot Street	Steve Dozeman		
Mount Brydges-Hope	Phil Apoll		Shirley Bakker
St. Thomas-Destination	Beth Fellingier (Comm Pastor)	Al Hooghiem	Linda Shaw
St. Thomas-Fellowship	Greg Fluit		Margriet Linker
St. Thomas-First	George Lubbers	Gerry Prins	Mary Anne Cross**
Sarnia-First	Dave Van Berkel	Marg Rekman	
Sarnia-Living Hope	Mark Verbruggen**	John Griffioen	Arnie Wildschut
Sarnia-Redeemer		Elaine Smit**	Martin Bouma
		Diana Wassink	
Strathroy-East	Derek Bouma	Gary VanSteg	
Strathroy-Westmount	Peter Hoytema	Gary Aalbers	
Tillsonburg	Harold Winter	Harry Dykxhoorn	Murray Rodenburg
Wallaceburg	Josh Tuininga		
Windsor-Ambassador			
Woodstock-Covenant	John Moelker	Rob Haverkamp**	Marjanne Scheltema**
Woodstock-Maranatha		Ralph Haverkamp	Chris Voskamp
Wyoming	Bill Hoogland		Nick Jonkman**

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

Guests: (at various times throughout the meeting)

Harry Verburg – Classical Treasurer

Dr. Mike Wagenman – Western University Chaplain

Nadeana Reece – Western University Intern

Kelly Sibthorpe – Fanshawe College Chaplain

Dr. Darren Roorda – Canadian Ministries Director, CRCNA

Fred Verwoerd – Interim President, Redeemer University College

Peter Bulthuis – Associate Director, Church Relations, World Renew

Maynard Wiersma – Executive Director, Christian Stewardship Services

Rev. Lesli van Milligen – Regional Catalyst, Faith Formation Ministries

John Joosse – Institute for Christian Studies

Rev. Dirk Miedema – Aylmer CRC

Marcel Kuiper – St. Thomas

Marianne Kingma – Safe Church Ministry

Diane Plug – CMC and Diaconal

Rev. Ron Vanden Brink – Diaconal Ministries Canada

1. Welcome and Opening Devotions

Pastor Beth Fellingner of Destination Church welcomed all. She and the Destination Praise Team led in opening devotions and a ministry reflection.

Beth opened by reading Romans 15:7 and we all read together The Welcoming Prayer (by Father Thomas Keating). Following sharing preamble #5 to *Our World Belongs to God*, delegates entered into an exercise “The Adventure of the Shoe”, followed by a time of sharing and prayer. Delegates and guests read together #34 of *Our Word Belongs to God* followed by a time of personal reflection.

2. Constitution of Classis

2.1 Pastor Fellingner called the meeting to order.

2.2 Credentials Committee Report (Part One)

Louis Bosma (Aylmer) reported for the Credentials Committee. 26 of 28 churches were present with London-Forest City North and Windsor-Ambassador offering regrets. 65 delegates have been registered, including 10 first-time delegates. All first-time delegates have signed the Covenant for Officebearers.

2.3 Pastor Fellingner declared Classis as constituted, introducing Rev. Norman Visser of Chatham-Calvary and Rev. Erick Groot-Nibbelink of London-Bethel as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Mr. Ron Middel was seated as the Clerk.

2.4 Chair Visser offered some opening remarks, and also welcomed our guests.

3. Campus Ministries Chaplain Reports

3.1 Western University

Dr. Mike Wagenman and this year’s Intern Nadeana Reece addressed the delegates.

Nadeana shared her story how she became, and her involvement with Western Campus Ministry. They shared some of the programs and activities they are running, i.e. Alpha Program, Alternative Spring Break. Mike also shared a story of a student who professed to be an atheist who came to the chaplain’s office who is now reading scripture, praying. Mike asked that we pray that she be brought to completion.

3.2 Fanshawe College

Chaplain Kelly Sibthorpe shared a story of a student who attended their Bible study and has now dedicated her life to Christ and is going to be baptized.

Kelly shared some challenges with the administration of the college who are challenging the validity of the work of the chaplains. Kelly asks for our prayers that God would speak to the

leaders of the college.

Following their reports, Rev. Eric Groot-Nibbelink (London-Bethel) led us in prayer for the campus ministries.

4. Redeemer University College

The Chair welcomed the Fred Verwoerd, Interim President to address the delegates and guests. Redeemer is thankful to be celebrating their 35th year with 650 enrolled students. Redeemer is in the midst of a \$20 million capital campaign and are focused on reducing their debt. They are also in the process of searching for a new president.

Mr. Verwoerd also shared of the challenges of Christian education. He shared that the government of Ontario has applied for intervener status in the Trinity Western Law court case arguing against Christian Education.

Mr. Verwoerd asks for our prayers for Redeemer.

Following a question period, Rev. Phil Apoll (Mount Brydges-Hope Community) led in prayer for Redeemer.

5. Morning Refreshment Break

6. Canadian Ministries Director, CRCNA

The Chair welcomed Dr. Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director to the podium.

Rev. Roorda reported on the activities that the denomination has been doing recently through our Canadian office. He is happy that Canadian ministries have turned the corner and the pendulum has swung back to a focus on the local church.

Rev. Roorda referred to his written report and introduced three proposals for our consideration:

- 6.1** Proposal One - Opportunity to participate in an increasingly improving digital tool for every local church: The Bridge App. For our classis cost is \$6,000/year for a minimum of two-year commitment.

Rev. Derek Bouma, Chair of the Classical Ministries Committee (CMC) introduced the motion and moves to support and integrate the use of The Bridge App for all of its churches over the course of a minimum of two years. Motion is seconded and following discussion ... motion carried.

- 6.2** Proposal Two – An invitation to support the important work of forming and shaping our new leaders on Canada

Rev. Derek Bouma moves to support the January 2018 *New Pastors to Canada Gathering* for \$500.00. Motion is seconded ... carried.

- 6.3** Proposal Three – Re: Canadian Youth Ministry Champions Team

Rev. Derek Bouma moves to support the January 2018 *Canadian youth Ministry Champions Team* meetings for \$350.00. Motion is seconded ... carried.

- 6.4** Rev. Roorda introduced Maynard Wiersma, Director of Christian Stewardship Services who gave an educational and encouraging presentation on stewardship “Sparking Generosity in Your Congregation”.

Diane Plug (Sarnia-First) led us in prayer for Canadian Ministries and CSS.

7. Church Counselor Reports

- 7.1** Chatham-Grace: Rev. Nate Van Denend reported that Grace has appointed a Search Committee and are beginning the process of working on their profile.

- 7.2** Dresden: Rev. Josh Tuininga reports that Dresden has appointed a Search Committee and have began the process.

- 7.3 Ingersoll: Rev. Daryl Meijer not present to report.
7.4 Sarnia-Redeemer: Rev. Dave VanBerkel reported that Redeemer has also appointed a Search Committee and began the process.

8. **Introduction to Church Renewal Lab**

Rev. Harold Winter (Tillsonburg) introduced The Church Renewal Lab.

“The Church Renewal Lab is a two-year renewal journey for the purpose of developing intentional missional congregations that make more and better disciples who transform lives and communities in Christ.”

“A Simple Reality ... Either a church is on a constant path of renewal **or** it is on a sure path of decline.”

Rev. Winter encouraged our congregations to consider and discuss participation in this journey and invited elders, deacons, ministers and church leaders to lunch at London-Bethel on Wednesday, November 8th.

9. **Classical Ministries Committee (CMC) Report**

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

- 9.1 9.1.1 CMC discussed next steps in formulating a new strategy for youth ministries in classis. The Youth Ministry Team and other classis youth leaders are being encouraged to meet in the near future. Assistance is being offered by the youth ministry focus of Faith Formation Ministries.

9.1.2 Rev. Willemina Zwart was elected as the Vice-All for CMC. Officers of classis are Chair Rev. Derek Bouma (Strathroy-East), Vice-Chair Rev. Josh Tuininga (Wallaceburg) and Rev. Willemina Zwart (London-Good News). At the advice of the Classical Finance Committee our corporate documents are being updated.

9.1.3 CMC spent significant time discussing the overall purpose, mission and “how” we do classis. We agreed to invite Classis Renewal Coordinator, Rev. Al Postma to a future meeting to present on the topic of classis renewal. Rev. Postma has agreed to attend our winter session of classis to present and facilitate this discussion. CMC agreed to begin our meetings of classis with an intentional time of prayer, possibly with a focus on specific classis issues, concerns or specific agenda items. Beth Fellingner will connect with prayer coordinators of various churches and ask what would be helpful from classis in the area of prayer.

9.1.4 Sarnia-First requested at our last meeting of classis that they would like to discuss “promoting stewardship in the congregation”. CMC discussed various options of response and understands that the reality is that many of our churches struggle with stewardship. Mr. Maynard Wiersma of Christian Stewardship Services will be making a presentation at this meeting.

9.1.5 CMC appointed church counselors for the following church vacancies:

- Chatham-Grace – Rev. Nate Van Denend
- Dresden – Rev. Josh Tuininga
- Ingersoll – Rev. Daryl Meijer
- Sarnia-Redeemer – Rev. David VanBerkel

9.1.6 At the receipt of a Classical Remuneration Survey from a neighbouring classis, and to keep in line with other classes, CMC has asked our Finance Committee to consider increases for classical mileage and pulpit supply, as well as the honourariums that our Stated Clerk and Treasurer receive.

9.1.7 In accordance with Article 55 CO, CMC approved a request from Sarnia-Redeemer church for an elder to administer the sacrament of communion during their vacancy. Redeemer has a ministry to shut-in members where they offer a mid-week communion service every third Wednesday afternoon of the month.

- 9.2 CMC recommends approval of several administrative changes to our *Rule of Classis* as follows: Page 5, Section III, 1, B; Page 9, Section V, 2, A; Page 22, Section XI, Appendix A,

General Points; Page 27, Section XI, Appendix D. M/S to approve ... carried.

9.3 Following recommendations from the Nominations Committee, CMC makes the following recommendations:

- M/S that Margriet Linker (St. Thomas-Fellowship) be appointed to CMC as Deacon Member at Large ... carried.

- M/S that Barry Wright (Dresden) be appointed to CMC as Elder Member at Large ... carried.

- M/S that Rev. Eric Groot-Nibbelink (London-Bethel) be appointed as Synodical Deputy Alternate for Classis Chatham ... carried.

9.4 CMC acknowledges that the Calvin Worship Symposium is in conflict with our winter session of classis, scheduled for Saturday, January 27, 2018. CMC recommends that we delay our winter meeting by one week to Saturday, February 3rd, 2018. M/S ... carried. CMC has also agreed to have a bigger discussion at our next meeting to consider permanently changing the dates of our classis meetings.

10. Rev. Darren Roorda led in prayer giving thanks for the morning session and asked for a blessing for lunch.

Lunch and Committee Meetings

11. **Afternoon Devotions**

Pastor Beth opened the afternoon session by discussing goals for future church plants and shared some of the ministry at Destination. She showed a video made by Destination Church and led in prayer.

12. **Report of the Credentials Committee (Part 2)**

Louis Bosma reported on the following submissions received in the credentials:

12.1 Wallaceburg: "Is it possible to have more Saturday meetings so delegates do not have to take time off work to attend?"

Response: It is possible, however the Stated Clerk advises that this issue as reviewed recently following a three-year trial period of having the winter meeting of classis held on a Saturday. Following a survey soliciting input from churches of classis, and 55 responses received, classis approved a recommendation from CMC that we continue our current practice of having the January meeting on a Saturday.

Committee's advice is not to entertain having more Saturday meetings at this time. Referred to CMC if they wish to discuss further.

12.2 Chatham-First: "How can the deacons give an individual cash for their expenses?"

Response: Committee sought clarification and was given an example where a person asks for food and they are given cash or a gift card. Committee recommends seeking advice from the Classical Treasurer or recommends the church seek clarification from CRA. CMC may also wish to examine further. Diane Plug recommends that they contact diaconal developers and they will receive advice from them.

13. **Classical Standing Committee Reports**

13.1 Nomination Committee: The Functionary and Committee schedule was received.

13.2 Church Planting Team: July 25, 2017 Report – RFI

13.3 Safe Church: May 6, 2017 Report – RFI

13.4 Finance: July 17, 2017 Report – RFI

13.4.1 Classical Treasurer Harry Verburg presented the proposed 2018 Budget, which amounts to \$61.76 per professing member for 2018. M/S to approve ... carried.

14. **Other Provided Reports**

14.1 Ridgetown Campus Ministry – RFI

- 14.2 World Renew – RFI
- 14.3 Redeemer University College – RFI
- 15. **Announcements/Encouragements**
 - 15.1 Diane Plug made a brief announcement earlier in the meeting reminding deacons of a November 18th meeting at Chatham-Grace to discuss The Deacons Role: *Moving from the Standard Version to New Revised Version.*
- 16. **Unfinished Business** – none
- 17. **Closing & Adjournment**
 - 17.1 Vice-Chair Rev. Eric Groot-Nibbelink thanked the Chair for his wonderful leadership handled with sensitivity and humour today.
 - 17.2 The Chair offered closing remarks, thanked Destination Church for hosting, and closed the meeting with prayer.
 - 17.3 Adjournment at 2:10 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 12, 2017 @ 5:00 p.m. (reports to be submitted to Stated Clerk)

UPCOMING SESSIONS OF CLASSIS CHATHAM
Saturday, February 3rd, 2018 @ London-Good News
Tuesday, May 22, 2018 – Host Required
Tuesday, September 25, 2018 – Host Required