



CLASSIS NIAGARA OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH



*To encourage, equip, and empower churches and ministries  
to engage God's people in mission!*



Website: [classisniagara.ca](http://classisniagara.ca); e-mail: [statedclerkniagara@gmail.com](mailto:statedclerkniagara@gmail.com)  
114th meeting of Classis -- Wednesday, May 20 2020

## MINUTES

**Chair:** Rev. Mike Vandyk; **Vice-chair:** Rev. Chris deWinter; **Stated Clerk:** Wendy de Jong  
Synodical Deputies: Rev. Hendrik Bruinsma, Rev. Siebert Van Houten, Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen

| CHURCH             | PASTOR  | ELDER  | DEACON         |
|--------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Bethany            | Colin Vander Ploeg                                | Ed Roorda  |                |
| Bethel             | Frank Engelage                                    | Bert Bouwers   | Kevin Heeg     |
| Covenant           | Janet Ryzebol                                     | Derek Ryzebol  | Mike Schilstra |
| Fruitland          | <i>There were no delegates from Fruitland CRC</i> |  |                |
| Grace              | Mike Vandyk                                       | Peter Hogeterp   | Henry Klein    |
| Jubilee Fellowship | Woodrow Dixon                                     | Karen Gerritsma  |                |
| Mountainview       | Mike Collins                                      | Christina Pleizier   |                |
| Providence         | Steve deBoer                                      | Rob Zwier  |                |
| Faith Fellowship   | Rick Meloen                                       | Bert Prinzen   |                |
| Riverside          | Wes Collins                                       | Joshua Bulk  | Devin Lunshof  |
| Smithville         | Peter Tuininga                                    | Rob Brinkert   | George de Boer |
| Trinity            | Chris deWinter                                    | Rick Kok   | Alex Brouwer   |
| The Bridge         |   | Hans Branderhorst* & Karin Vermeer*<br><i>via Providence CRC credentials</i> |                |
| Village Church     | Mark DeVos  | Hilda Vander Klippe*, Joy Buchowski *<br><i>via Covenant CRC credentials</i> |                |

Guests: Anna Bailey, Stephanie Collins, Zack DeBruyne, Terence Schilstra

### 1. PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE ON GOD

*Engaging in prayer with expectant hearts and minds so that our classis, churches and individual members are prayerfully dependent on God.*

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.1</b> | <b>Welcome &amp; Opening Devotions</b> - Rev. Mike Vandyk opened the meeting with a reading from 1 Samuel 3, connecting the call of Samuel with the call to ministry of Terence Schilstra whose call to The Table will be deliberated later in the meeting, and led in prayer. He welcomed everyone to this first ever virtual meeting. Vice-Chair, Rev. Chris deWinter explained some Zoom protocols to the delegates. |
|------------|---|

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.2</b> | <b>Constitution of Classis:</b> Chair Mike Vandyk read <i>Niagara Declaration of Agreement</i> with the Beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The delegates indicated their agreement with a show of raised hands, after which Classis was declared constituted. |
| <b>1.3</b> | <b>Roll-Call &amp; Credentials:</b> Mike Vandyk read the roll call as printed above. There were no overtures or nominations for classical committees on the credentials submitted.  |

| <b>2. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Providing opportunities to develop, equip and encourage lay and ordained leaders in every context and at every level to be on mission with God.</i> |  |
| <b>2.1</b>   | <b>Youth Ministry Champion report:</b> Anna Bailey did not have a report beyond what is written in the CMC minutes.  |
| <b>2.2</b>   | <b>Classical Ministry Leadership Team report:</b> Rev. Chris deWinter gave his last report as Chair of the CMLT. He spoke of the fruit and joy of this labour as evidenced in the examination of Terence Schilstra this morning, and thanked Classis for the opportunity to serve on this committee and be part of the journey of faith in supporting students preparing for the ministry. |

| <b>3. AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Encouraging God's people by intentionally sharing life and story together so that classis is being transformed into a community of grace and truth.</i> |   |
| <b>3.1</b>   | <b>Church Visitors</b> – The reports on visits to Bethel and Smithville CRCs were included with the agenda.   |
| <b>3.2</b>   | <b>Church Counselor reports:</b> Rev. Tuininga reported that Mountainview CRC called Mike Collins for a one year term so they are not actively pursuing any calls during this time. Fruitland CRC has been exploring a number of potential candidates with one conversation that looks promising, so we may hear more about that in the future. |

| <b>4. DISCIPLES MAKING NEW DISCIPLES</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Empowering and equipping churches and individuals to multiply ministries that will reach their local communities so that not-yet Christians may embrace Christ as Lord.</i> |   |
| <b>4.1</b>   | <b>Brock Campus Chaplaincy Ministry Report:</b> Chaplain Zack DeBruyne shared a video report on the website for delegates to view separately. He expressed his appreciation for the support of Classis and also offered to preach this spring and summer for any pastors who may be looking for a Sunday off if they are not able to take vacation as planned, etc.   |
| <b>4.2</b>   | <b>Village Church:</b> Mark DeVos shared stories of the small group Alpha meetings taking place in a Tim Hortons near by and of their intention to start a new one in the Pen Centre with some of the mall staff participating. He asked for our prayers that these efforts bear fruit in reaching new people for Christ.   |
| <b>4.3</b>   | <b>The Table:</b> Terence Schilstra gave thanks for the ways he has experienced God's provision for their family in the purchase of a new house very close to the Prince of Wales school where The Table meets and shared about a women's group led by his wife, Karen, that meets weekly with a diverse group of women in the community, many of whom are not Christians, as they share life together and explore and engage in scripture and faith development. |
| <b>4.4</b>   | <b>The Bridge:</b> Hans Branderhorst gave a brief update on ministry at The Bridge. Due to Covid-19 the newly begun breakfast program had to be discontinued. They meet weekly via Zoom for worship, support and encouragement.   |

## 5. COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

*Encouraging God's people to engage in the various relationships and activities of the church with accountability so that our institutional and relational obligations are met.*

- 5.1 **Sharing stories of Missional Ministry and Deepening Spiritual Discipleship:** Reports from Providence, Smithville & Jubilee Fellowship CRC were included with the agenda. Oral reports will resume at the October meeting in order to continue sharing and learning from one another.
- 5.2 **Covenant Relations Report on Church Visiting:** The material gleaned at the February meeting will be shared at the October Classis meeting.
- 5.3 **Regional Pastors report:** A report will be given at the October meeting.
- 5.4 **Safe Church Team report:** Delegates were referred to the written report in the agenda.
- 5.5 **Council of Delegates** – Chris de Winter provided an update on the COD meeting of May 7 & 8, 2020. Due to the cancellation of Synod 2020 there will be a special meeting of the COD in June to deal with any items that cannot wait until 2021. They proposed a skeletal structure for the new Canada Corp for the next year to ensure the necessary structural elements were in place to maintain a unified bi-national ministry. Stanley Jim, the Classis Red Mesa delegate gave a heartbreaking report on the impact Covid-19 has had on the Navajo people, which is per capita the most impacted community in the U.S. Ministry Shares Reimagined will be reviewed in June, although in light of the financial impact many churches and agencies are experiencing, it is likely churches are looking at a longer transition from the current method to the new way of calculating ministry shares.
- 5.6 **Classis Ministry Council Report** – Mike Vandyk highlighted some key items from the CMC minutes: a potential combined Reformation Day service; the Classis retreat planned for October 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the discussions revolving around the financial surplus accumulation and usage.
- 5.7 **Stated Clerk Report** – Delegates were referred to the written report in the agenda. The new website has been delayed due to technical glitches, but will hopefully be ready in the next few days. This is the third of four major projects to be undertaken, with classical abuse prevention insurance still outstanding.
- 5.8 **Classis Functionaries Report** – Committee members and representatives who have completed their term were thanked for their service. Classis approved the new appointees.

### MOTIONS:

1. To change the regular meeting days of the Third Wednesday to the Fourth Wednesday of February, May & October. **CARRIED.**
2. To approve adding the following in the Rules & Regulations, Section 1 - Meetings:  
*"In exceptional circumstances when in-person meetings are not permitted due to legal stipulations, such as in times of war or pestilence, meetings may be held via appropriate internet based technological platforms, which are configured to ensure all matters before the Classis can be conducted virtually, respecting the persons attending the virtual meeting, adequate privacy restrictions, and confidential voting mechanisms."* **CARRIED.**
3. To approve the work of the Classis Ministry Council and of the Stated Clerk. **CARRIED.**
4. To approve the appointment of all new committee members as indicated on the Classis Functionaries Report: **CARRIED.**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 5.9   | <b>Examination of Candidate Terence Schilstra</b> , provisionally called as Pastor of The Table, Missional Expression, by Covenant CRC, Article 10: Mike Vandyk welcomed the Synodical Deputies to the Zoom meeting.   |
| 5.9.1 | <b>Introduction of the Candidate</b> – Rev. Mark DeVos introduced Terence Schilstra and spoke briefly about his ministry and heart for sharing the gospel.   |
| 5.9.2 | <b>Examination of Candidate Terence Schilstra:</b> Due to the inability to meet in person, the examination process was adapted with the practica examination, sermon evaluation and Biblical and Theological position taking place earlier on recorded video. These videos as well as the printed sermon evaluation were distributed to the delegates in advance. Examiners were Rev. Steve deBoer (practica); Rev. Fred VanderBerg and elder Christina Pleizier (sermon evaluators); and Rev. Jeff Klingenberg (theological). In each part of the examination opportunity was provided for questions from delegates and the Synodical Deputies. |
| 5.9.3 | A <b>MOTION</b> was made to admit Candidate Terence Schilstra to the Ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed church in North America. Classis moved into <b>executive session</b> as required by Church Order Article 10, its procedures were followed (there are no separate minutes of this session, as it followed the Church Order). The delegates voted by Zoom poll. Upon return to the general session of Classis, the chair informed that Classis <b>APPROVED</b> the ordination of candidate Terence Schilstra as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA via Church Order Article 10.   |
| 5.9.4 | The Synodical Deputies concurred with this decision and signed the Church Order Article 10 Synodical deputy form, with the request that a mentor be assigned and a date for installation set.<br><br>Terence was congratulated on sustaining his examination and welcomed to the Ministry of the Word. A number of delegates expressed words of encouragement and blessings for Terence and his family.  |
| 5.9.5 | <b>Closing Prayer &amp; Adjournment:</b> Pastor Chris deWinter thanked the delegates for their service, and invited all to extend their hands in blessing as he prayed a blessing on Terence. The meeting was adjourned.   |

**Next meeting:** *October 3, 2020, Saturday afternoon,*

*final portion of the retreat held at Gethsemane Ministries Retreat Centre, Wellandport*

*Agenda Deadline: September 2, 2020*

*Chair: Rev. Chris de Winter; Vice-chair: Rev. Woodrow Dixon*

*Credentials: Trinity (chair) and Bethany*

*Overture Advisory: Jubilee Fellowship (chair) and Mountainview*

**MAY 20, 2020 -- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

The regular meeting of Classis was briefly adjourned. Chairman Mike Vandyk explained the purpose of the Annual General Meeting, which is required for the Corporation of Classis Niagara in accordance with the Ontario Non-Profit Corporations Act, and brings Classis Niagara in compliance with the act. Mike led Classis through the following motions:

**5.9.1 Election of members to the Board of Directors**

Hilda VanderKlippe, Disciples Making New Disciples Team  
Karen Gerritsma, Brock University Chaplaincy Team  
Colin Vander Ploeg, Covenantal Relationships Team  
Mike Vandyk, Chairperson  
Andrew Wunderink, Authentic Community Team

**MOTION:** That Classis Niagara elect the above named individuals to serve as the Board of Directors of the Corporation for a one (1) year term: **CARRIED.**

**5.9.2 Approve the proposed By-Law No.1 to replace the original By-Law of January 28, 2010**

**MOTION:** That Classis Niagara approve and adopt the revised By-Law No. 1: **CARRIED.**

**5.9.3 Approve the Auditors Report of the Financial Statements of 2019**

**MOTION:** That Classis Niagara approve the audited 2019 Financial Statements: **CARRIED.**

**5.9.4 Approve the appointment of Grant Thornton, LLP, Chartered Accountants, to audit the Financial Statements of 2020**

**MOTION:** That Classis Niagara approve the appointment of Grant Thornton as Auditors for 2020: **CARRIED.**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.