



CLASSIS NIAGARA OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH



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



MINUTES – May 26, 2021

Website: classisniagara.ca; e-mail: statedclerkniagara@gmail.com

Chair: Rev. Jeff Klingenberg; **Vice-chair:** Rev. Janet Ryzebol; **Stated Clerk:** Wendy de Jong
Synodical Deputies: Hendrik Bruinsma, Siebert VanHouten, Gary van Leeuwen

ROLL CALL

CHURCH	PASTOR	ELDER	DEACON
Bethany	Colin Vander Ploeg	Bas Brouwer	
Bethel	Jeff Klingenberg	Otto Bulk	
Covenant	Janet Ryzebol	Elly Boersma Sarkany	Henrietta Hunse
Fruitland		Al Voorberg	
Grace	Mike Vandyk	George Sportel	Henry Veld
Jubilee Fellowship	Woodrow Dixon	Alice Klamer	Ingrid Beck
Mountainview	Erick Schuringa	Isaac Van Geest	Nick Kiers
Providence	Steve deBoer	Rob Zwier	
Faith Fellowship	<i>Faith Fellowship was unable to send delegates</i>		
Riverside	Wes Collins		Rick Hessels
Smithville	Peter Tuininga	Paul Heerema	
Trinity		Richard Kok	Alex Brouwer
The Bridge		Hans Branderhorst (via Providence CRC Credentials)	
Village Church	Mark DeVos	Hilda VanderKlippe* (via Covenant CRC Credentials)	

- Hans Branderhorst of the Bridge, and Hilda VanderKlippe of The Village Church, were seated with privileges of the floor.
- Guests for all or portions of the day: Anna Bailey, Joanne Drenth-VanDyke, Karen Gerritsma, Bob Loerts, Frank Engelage, Terence Schilstra, Andrew Wunderink, Jonathan Zwier
- Presenters for the ministry reports: Lesli Van Milligen, Ron Vanden Brink, Beth Fellingner, Peter Bulthuis, Shawn Brix, Ron VandenBurg, Paul VanderSteen, Cindy Stover, Shannon Perez, Becky Jones, Dorothy VanderSteen, Al Postma

1. 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.

- 1.1 Welcome & Opening:** Rev. Jeff Klingenberg welcomed everyone to the meeting. For opening devotions he read from the *Today* reflection from Numbers 11:4-15 about the Israelites grumbling about the lack of food in the dessert. He encouraged us to embrace the grind of our work, also as classis, to be a blessing, consumed, gathered up and ground to become the leaders God wants us to be. He then led in a prayer asking for the Spirit's blessing on the meeting.
- 1.2 Constitution of Classis** by the Chair, Rev. Jeff Klingenberg read the Niagara Declaration of Agreement with the beliefs of the CRCNA. The delegates indicated their agreement by raising their hands. Classis was declared constituted
- 1.3 Committee appointments:** The appointments of the delegates of Bethel and Fruitland to the Credentials Committee and of the delegates of Trinity and Providence to the Advisory committees were confirmed.
- 1.4 Roll Call and Report of the Credentials Committee -** Al Voorberg, delegate of Fruitland CRC, read the Roll Call. He reported that most churches completed the questions regarding the Synodical Human Sexuality Report. The feedback on the questions will be given to the CMC.
- 1.5 Report of the Overtures Advisory Committee:** There were no overtures presented.
- 1.6 Classis Ministry Council report:** Mike Vandyk led delegates through the work the CMC carries out between Classis meetings. He highlighted the recommendation that Classis continue its support of the chaplain's work at Shalom Manor, in connection to the commitment made 5 years ago to reconsider Classis' commitment, and presented several motions on behalf of the CMC.
MOTION: That Classis Niagara continue to support 30% of the Shalom Manor Chaplaincy program through Classical Ministry Shares on an ongoing yearly basis. **CARRIED**
MOTION: To authorize an overhaul of the Rules & Regulations to clarify and to bring them in line with current practice. **CARRIED**
MOTION: To approve the work of the Classis Ministry Council; the transfer of Commissioned Pastor Credentials of Mike Collins to Immanuel CRC, Brampton, and the Emeritus Pastor Credentials of John Heidinga to Community CRC in Kitchener: **CARRIED**
- 1.7 Stated Clerk report -** Wendy de Jong referred delegates to her report in the agenda and added a few updates regarding transfer of credentials as mentioned earlier and upcoming webinars and conferences for the Stated Clerks.
MOTION: To approve the work of the Stated Clerk: **CARRIED**
- 1.8 Classis Functionaries Report:** Wendy de Jong presented the Functionaries report as per the agenda along with two additions, namely adding David Scholman to the CMLT and approving a request from Redeemer University to nominate Arjan Vos as the Classis Niagara Board member.
MOTION: To approve the appointments listed on the functionaries report, as well as the addition of David Scholman to the CMLT, and the nomination of Arjan Vos as Redeemer University Board member: **CARRIED**
- 1.9 Council of Delegates Report:** Wendy de Jong, COD representative, gave a brief update on the May COD meetings, highlighting the times spent in devotions and with the Colossian Forum as crucial to the tone and spirit of the meetings. Some difficult decisions were made regarding structure with the SALT report adopted.

1.10 Safe Church Team report: Approval of draft Classis Niagara Safe Church Policy - Further to efforts to obtain Abuse Prevention Declarations from each church, the insurance company also requested a safe church policy specific to Classis Niagara. The proposed policy applies only to Classis meetings, retreats, etc., and does not replace the policies of any particular church. Delegates were encouraged to review their own church policies and be reminded of the importance of living into safe practices in our congregations..

MOTION: To approve the Classis Niagara Safe Church Policy: **CARRIED**

1.11 Regional Pastors report: Andre Basson referred delegates to the written report by Jim Dekker and gave a brief report of their work, much of which is confidential. He was able to meet a few pastors to lunch before Covid hit and now maintains contact primarily by phone. He has found the Spiritual Direction regional pastors cohort very useful as they can share ideas with a wide range of pastors across North America. He attended a regional pastors get-away in Florida two years ago which was very worthwhile and is interested in attending a similar event in November in Albuquerque should funding be provided. Jim Dekker has already registered to go. Andre and Jim were thanked for their support to the pastors in Classis.

1.12 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CMC Chair Rev. Mike Vandyk led this portion of the meeting which brings *us into compliance with Canada non-profit corporation regulations.*

1.12.1 MOTION: To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on May 20, 2020: **CARRIED**

1.12.2 MOTION: To approve the election of Members to the Board of Directors consisting of Erick Schuringa, Colin Vander Ploeg, Janet Ryzebol, Karen Gerritsma and Andy Wunderink: **CARRIED**

1.12.3 MOTION: To approve the Financial Statements for 2020, presented by Treasurer, Joanne Drenth-VanDyke & to approve the work of the Treasurer: **CARRIED**
Joanne highlighted several items from the Financial Statements. The surplus has grown due to Covid since some planned expenditures did not happen and there are currently no seminary students being supported financially.

1.12.4 MOTION: To approve the Auditors Report of the 2020 Financial Statements: **CARRIED**

1.12.5 MOTION: To approve of the appointment of Grant Thornton, LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants, as auditors for 2021: **CARRIED**

The Annual General Meeting was adjourned and regular session resumed.

1.13 Shalom Manor presentation: Jonathan Zwier, Project Manager for Shalom Manor, gave a report on the new building project in Hamilton and what they are hoping to accomplish with the capital campaign. Delegates were shown a proposed site map which is quite progressive in its scope and recognition of shared living spaces, outdoor space and community presence. The new home will be built on the Mount Hamilton CRC property. The fundraising has been going well. Eight of the Classis Niagara churches have identified a fundraising coordinator for their congregation. Jonathan pointed out that this project has brought about significant collaboration with the Canadian Reformed, Free Reformed and Orthodox Reformed churches. He also clarified that placements must abide by government regulations with crisis situations getting first priority, spousal relocation being second, and cultural preferences being third. The increased diversity of residents allows them to maintain the

	Christian aspect that applies across the board, to celebrate the heritage of many residents, and to be hospitable good neighbours rather than exclusive. Al Voorberg as a board member thanked Jonathan Zwier for his work, after which Pastor Janet Ryzebol offered prayer for Shalom Manor.
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<h2 style="margin: 0;">2. PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE ON GOD</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;"><i>Engaging in prayer with expectant hearts and minds so that our classis, churches and individual members are prayerfully dependent on God.</i></p>	
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2.1	<p>Reports & Prayers for our denominational ministries and agencies: The remainder of the morning was devoted to hearing reports from various ministry agency leaders. Each presenter spent a few minutes reflecting on some key aspects of their work, some of the additional challenges incurred as a result of the pandemic, inviting delegates to make use of their resources or upcoming conferences and expressing appreciation for the financial and prayer support given by Classis Niagara churches. After the presentations, delegates went into breakout rooms to pray together for these ministries. The links to each presentation will be included at the end of the minutes and posted on the Classis website under Classis Agenda & Meeting Documents - ministry-reports</p>
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<h2 style="margin: 0;">3. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;"><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></p>	
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3.1	<p>Youth Ministry Champion report: Anna Bailey outlined some of the ways she is connecting with folks via Zoom and how Covid has significantly changed what youth ministry looks like. She hopes to reconnect with everyone later this summer or fall. There is a classis wide youth service planned out of Mountainview that youth groups will be participating in. She participated in the portfolio project at SDCH. The Leadership Development team is providing another scholarship for a grade 12 graduate. Anna encouraged church leaders to take time to reflect on how ministry could and should be recalibrated from lessons learned during the pandemic, and particularly to tend to the mental wellness of our kids and teens and to listen well to the experiences of their teens over the past year.</p>
3.2	<p>Classical Ministry Leadership Team report: Woodrow Dixon reported on the turnover in the team with Wendy finishing her term, David Scholman joining, and Joanne Drenth VanDyke who is taking on the financial and student loan work. Currently there are no students needing financial support.</p>

<h2 style="margin: 0;">4. AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;"><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></p>	
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4.1	<p>Church Counselor reports: Rev. Tuininga reported on Fruitland CRC. The elders have done a survey to help determine their future. The feedback was very mixed with some indicating the church should close and others asking to keep it going. This is a challenging time for this congregation and we are encouraged to hold them in prayer. Rick Kok, one of the delegates from Trinity CRC requested that they receive a church counselor. The CMC will assign one at their next meeting.</p>
4.2	<p>Release of Allen Kleine Deters as Minister of the Word: The synodical deputies Hendrik Bruinsma, Siebert VanHouten and Gary van Leeuwen were welcomed to the meeting. Executive Session was declared. With concurrence of the synodical deputies, Classis accepted the recommendation of the Oversight Committee for the honourable release of Allen Kleine Deters.</p> <p>MOTION: That Classis Niagara honorably release Allen Kleine Deters from ministry according to his wishes per Article 14b of the Church Order, and that Classis Niagara pray for him and bless him as he continues to discern God's will for this next season of his life and ministry. CARRIED</p>

5. DISCIPLES MAKING NEW DISCIPLES

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.

- 5.1 Proposal: Classis Niagara with Niagara International Students and Hilda VanderKlippe:** Hilda introduced a video of the Niagara International Student ministry and it's impact on the lives of so many students over the years. This proposal for an official recognition of the role and work done by Hilda for many years opens new doors at the university. She will be working closely with Zack DeBruyne whose main focus is Brock students. Appreciation was expressed for Hilda's work, commitment and passion. Currently this is not a paid position but we may need to consider this in future if someone else takes on this role who is not financially able to do so on a volunteer basis. Hilda thanked Classis for their endorsement and support.
- MOTION 1:** That Classis approve an unpaid staff position of Assistant Chaplain to International Students at Brock University; the Assistant Chaplain will be working together with chaplain Zack.
- GROUNDS:**
- It would open doors at Brock for the ministry to International Students, giving this ministry official status at the University
 - This position will be under the supervision of the BUC team. **CARRIED**
- MOTION 2:** That Classis would endorse Hilda VanderKlippe for the Assistant chaplain position at Brock University.
- GROUNDS:** Hilda has already been doing ministry with International Students in an official capacity for the last 8 years. **CARRIED**
- MOTION 3:** That Classis endorse the ministry of Niagara International Ministries and approve an annual amount of \$2000.00, as of 2021, for reimbursement of expenses related to the ministry of Niagara International Students at Brock University and Niagara College. Funding to go through the Brock Ministries Fund. **CARRIED**
- 5.2 Village Church Report:** Mark De Vos reported that this season without doing live church has been very hard. Some folks newer to the faith have disengaged and he is not sure if they will return. Their original goal to serve as a catalyst of planting 5 missional expressions is somewhat unclear as they determine the impact the pandemic has had.
- 5.3 The Table:** Terence Schilstra shared a story that illustrates the challenges of making disciples in terms of investment, time and energy and sometimes living with the reality of having to take two steps back. Terence has recently published a book "Peace of the City: A handbook for missional expressions" and invited everyone to an online launch party. All proceeds will go directly to the ministry of The Table.
- 5.4 Bridge Church Plant:** Hans Branderhorst & Andy Wunderink gave an update on The Bridge, Third Space Café and The Hub. They have had a significant connection with the arts community, the Indigenous artists community, and with many folks who are homeless. This has in turn led to some navigating of conflict with other tenants and businesses as they balance how to be good neighbours to everyone in the Queen Street neighbourhood. They are working with Faith Fellowship to meet the daily needs of some of their guests. This winter they were humbled and blessed to serve over 9,000 meals to the homeless, and asked for additional funds to keep this vital work continuing over the summer and fall.
- MOTION:** To approve supporting the Bridge Church Plant for an additional \$10,000 to be released from the Mission Development reserve funds for 2021. **CARRIED**

5.5	Closing Prayer & Adjournment – Rev. Janet Ryzebol thanked Pastor Jeff for his leadership and good humour throughout the meeting, and closed with prayer. The meeting was adjourned.
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Next meeting: *October 27, 2021, possibly in-person – potential host church needed*

Agenda Deadline: September 15, 2021

Chair: Rev. Bob Loerts; *Vice-chair:* Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg

Credentials Committee: Fruitland (*Chair*); Faith Fellowship (*Reporting*)

Overture Advisory: Providence (*Chair*) and Smithville (*Reporting*)

Following meeting: Wednesday, February 23, 2022

– unless we are able to schedule a weekend retreat earlier in February

Links to denominational ministries & agencies

May 2021 presenters at Classis Niagara

OUR JOURNEY 2020 - Lesli van Milligen, Lvanmilligen@crcna.org; crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject; crcna.org/OurJourney/resources

DIACONAL MINISTRIES CANADA – diaconalministries.com

Ron Vandenbrink, National Director, rvandenbrink@crcna.org;

Mark Vanderwees, Regional Ministry Develop, mvanderwees@crcna.org, dmc@crcna.org,

WORLD RENEW – Peter Bulthuis - pbulthuis@worldrenew.ca, worldrenew.net/canada

RESONATE GLOBAL MISSIONS – Beth Fellingner, Regional Mission Leader for Eastern Canada, bfellingner@crcna.org, resonateglobalmission.org

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY -- Shawn Brix, sbrix@calvinseminary.edu, calvinseminary.edu/

REFRAME MEDIA – Paul VanderSteen, pvandersteen@reframeministries.org - reframeministries.org

REFRAM MEDIA - KIDS CORNER - ronvandenburg@reframeministries.org
youtube.com/c/kidscornertv

CRCNA JUSTICE MOBILIZER -- Cindy Stover – cstover@crcna.org, publicdialogue.crcna.org/justice

CANADIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES – Shannon Perez, sperez@crcna.org,
<https://www.crcna.org/indigenous>, crcna.org/hearts-exchanged

SAFE CHURCH MINISTRIES -- Becky Jones - bjones@crcna.org
[Abuse of Power Training Sign up](#) [Safe Church 2021 webinar series](#)

DISABILITY CONCERNS -- [Regional advocate job description](#)
[Annual Disability Concerns Canadian Conference 2021](#)
[Annual Disability Concerns Leadership Training Event](#)

THE BRIDGE APP – dorothyvandersteen@crcna.org, bridgeapp@crcna.org, [how-bridge-app-can-assist-your-congregation](#)

CLASSIS RENEWAL & PASTOR CHURCH RESOURCES -- apostma@crcna.org, crcna.org/pcr