



CLASSIS NIAGARA OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH



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



*classisniagara.ca statedclerkniagara@gmail.com*

Special meeting of Classis  
Wednesday, December 8, 2021 - held via Zoom  
7:30 pm – 9:00 pm

**Chair:** Rev. Bob Loerts; **Vice-chair:** Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg; **Stated Clerk:** Wendy de Jong

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## AGENDA

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### DELEGATES, PLEASE NOTE:

- Please email your completed Classical Credentials form - <https://classisniagara.ca/credentials-form/> by **December 6** to [statedclerkniagara@gmail.com](mailto:statedclerkniagara@gmail.com).
- The meeting will take place by Zoom. You will be sent an invite with meeting ID & password on December 7. Voting will be done by a show of hands, or via Zoom poll.
- Any guests wishing to attend the meeting are asked to notify the Stated Clerk in advance.
- All delegates will be asked to affirm their agreement with the *Declaration of Agreement with the beliefs of the CRC* with the reading of the Statement below.

## 1. COVENANT 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	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening Devotions:</b> Rev. Bob Loerts	7:30
1.2	<p><b>Constitution of Classis</b> by the Chair, Rev. Bob Loerts</p> <p>Affirmation by delegates of the <i>Niagara Declaration of Agreement</i> with the Beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.</p> <p>“We are assembled as delegates to this meeting of Classis Niagara to deliberate and decide on the matters on the Agenda before us.</p> <p>We promise to do this work in obedience to the revealed will of our Lord Jesus Christ and in full agreement with what we as Christian Reformed Churches confess.</p> <p>We believe that the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, the only infallible rule for faith and life.</p> <p>We affirm three creeds—the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith.</p> <p>We also affirm three confessions—the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort—as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God.</p> <p>Along with these historic creeds and confessions, we recognize the witness of Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony.</p> <p>As we deliberate and make decisions consistent with these beliefs, to the best of our ability and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we commit to respectful dialogue on matters discussed in the spirit of Eph 4:2, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” In this way we seek to build up the unity and well-being of the church of Jesus Christ in the Niagara Region.</p> <p><i>[After the reading of these words, delegates are asked to rise to indicate their agreement with the beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.] Adopted by Classis Niagara, May 2019</i></p> <p>Classis declared constituted</p>	
1.3	<p><b>Committee appointment confirmations:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Credentials: <b>Fruitland</b> (Chair) and Faith Fellowship (reporting)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Advisory re overtures/protests: <b>Grace</b> (chair) and Smithville (reporting)</p>	
1.4	<b>Roll Call &amp; Report of the Credentials Committee</b>	
1.5	<b>Proposal to serve as the convening Classis of the Canadian Catalytic Conversation-Two event</b>	7:45
1.6	<b>Voting/Selecting 4 delegates to attend</b>	8:30
1.7	<b>Items or Overtures raised on the Credentials Forms:</b>	8:45
1.8	<b>Adjournment:</b> Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg	9:00

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – host church needed  
Chair: Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg; Vice-Chair: Rev. Mike Vandyk  
Credentials: Faith Fellowship (*Chair*); Jubilee (*reporting*)  
Overture Advisory: Smithville (*Chair*); Covenant (*reporting*)

## 1.6 Proposal to serve as the convening Classis of the Canadian Catalytic Conversation-Two event

**What:** Joint meeting of all Canadian CRC Classes. According to Church Order Article 44a: A classis may take counsel or joint action with its neighboring classis or classes in matters of mutual concern.

**When:** Saturday, January 29, 2022 12-3 pm EST over Zoom.

**Who:** Delegates, members of CRCNA Canada Corporation, host team, Canadian Ministry staff, and a few knowledgeable guests

**Why:** Our “matter of mutual concern” is the future of the CRC in Canada. The passing of the SALT report, the firing of Darren Roorda, and the conversations taking place around these things have many people confused or concerned, while others are admittedly unaware or uninterested. We are, it seems, at a critical juncture in the Canadian CRC experience. The reasons we need to meet now are:

1. SALT implementation has already begun with JMA and budgetary decisions; hiring processes are under way. The COD meets in February (16-18, 2022) and we would hope to have something of a collective Canadian response there.
2. Clarity and cohesion. There are different ideas and directions being proposed. It would be helpful to hear each other and discern together. CanCorp is interested in input and we are interested in finding a common stance.
3. Re-connection. Differing opinions can lead to division. It is a time to stand together in at least an understanding of each other.
4. Canadian ministry. Everyone seems to agree on at least one thing – we need to find a way to bless Canadian ministry. See Appendix A below for a sampling of areas where distinct Canadian experiences come into play.

**How:** Each classis CMC/CIC/CEC (the ones who plan meetings) is encouraged to call a Classis Contracta (mini-classis meeting) where you work out who will be your four (4) delegates to the “ClassisCanada” meeting. We assume this could easily be done over zoom in less than an hour. We request that you do this ASAP so that we can continue preparing with accurate knowledge of participation and questions raised. An agenda and a significant information package will be completed by mid-December for the January meeting.

Thank you for considering this. If you have any questions, please reach out by sending an email to [ClassisCanada2022@gmail.com](mailto:ClassisCanada2022@gmail.com) and one of our team members will get back to you. We are an ad hoc

group of interested CRC leaders who are seeking to keep a complex yet important conversation on the table and moving forward in a positive direction.

In Christ,

Rev. Erick Schuringa

Rev. Richard Bodini

Lead Members of the Ad Hoc committee

#### Appendix A

1. The capacity to develop and implement ministries in Canada that relate well and respond to the Canadian context, within a Reformed world-and-life view, is important and has practical implications for a wide-range of ministry areas, including, as examples:
  - a. Chaplaincy ministries, which operate differently in Canada, as identified by CRC Canadians active in this field. The CRC has missed opportunities for ministry and influence because there is no mechanism to organize a Canadian CRC presence in this field. This is a growing field of ministry for which people trained in a Reformed world and life view are well-suited.
  - b. Race Relations, because racism has a different face in Canada than in the US, the factors that contribute to it are different, and the avenues for working against racism are different. Requests in the past to develop a Canadian strategy were denied, with insistence that the Toronto office be treated in a similar way to the Chicago or California office. This has implications for the effectiveness of resources allocated for ministry in Canada and the support available to Canadian churches who wish to engage in anti-racism in Canada.
  - c. Prison ministries, because the prison system in Canada works very differently than prison systems in the United States.
  - d. Social support systems and health care systems, which are different in Canada in ways that affect local ministry and outreach to persons affected by them.
  - e. Social justice ministry, for which there is existing recognition of difference and a positive track record of why that has been important.
  - f. Indigenous ministries, which have also been recognized for a distinctive approach in Canada that fits for our context and are widely respected as a consequence.
  - g. International development through World Renew Canada, which has also resulted in significant government grants that would not be possible without having a co-director in Canada