



CLASSIS NIAGARA OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH



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



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Special meeting of Classis
Wednesday, December 8, 2021 - held via Zoom

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

MINUTES

CHURCH	PASTOR/ELDER	ELDER	DEACON
Bethany	Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg	George de Roo	Steve Van Lochem
Bethel	Rev. Frank Engelage	Jim DeKlerk	David Engelage
Covenant	Rev. Bob Loerts	Elly Sarkany	Bill Kort
Fruitland	Elder Al Voorberg	Ben Nywening	
Grace	Rev. Mike Vandyk	George Sportel	Denis Normandin
Jubilee Fellowship	Rev. Woodrow Dixon	Rachel Janecek	
Mountainview	Rev. Erick Schuringa	PJ Vermeer	Nick Kiers
Providence	Rev. Steve deBoer	Dan Baarda	Josh Kooiman
Faith Fellowship		Rick Meloen	
Riverside	Leo Van Tuyl	Ben Lunshof	
Smithville	Elder Paul Heerema	Daryl Haanstra	
Trinity		Lucas Teeuwesen	
The Bridge		Hans Branderhorst, Cathy Benjamins	
Village Church			
The Table	Rev. Terence Schilstra		

CMC Members and Guests: Joanne Drenth-VanDyke, Karen Gerritsma, Janet Ryzebol, Dorothy VanderSteen

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 **Welcome & Opening Devotions:** Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg introduced the officers of the meeting and thanked everyone for attending this meeting on short notice. Colin read the well-known Advent reading from John 1 and led in prayer.
- 1.2 **Roll Call & Report of the Credentials Committee:**
Credentials: **Fruitland** (Chair) and Faith Fellowship (reporting) - Elder Rick Meloen of Faith Fellowship read the Roll Call. The credentials were in order. Delegates were reminded to submit their Ministry Share pledges in the next few weeks.
Advisory re overtures/protests: **Grace** (chair) and Smithville (reporting): Covenant submitted an overture on their credentials form. The chair asked the Credentials Committee to give their recommendation on this overture when this will be considered later in the meeting.
- 1.3 **Constitution of Classis:** Chair, Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg read the Affirmation by delegates of the *Niagara Declaration of Agreement* with the Beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Delegates acknowledged their agreement after which Classis was declared constituted.
- 1.4 **Proposal to serve as the convening Classis of the Canadian Catalytic Conversation-Two event:** Erick Schuringa, Chair of the CMC which brought the motion, and member of the ad hoc organizing team, gave a brief overview of the purpose of this event, and clarified some concerns as to how this event relates to the overture tabled in October, the departure of the Canadian Ministries Director, and the role that Canada Corp has in this event, which is that of listening observers. If Classis Niagara supports serving as the convening classis, Wendy will provide administrative support to the ad hoc organizing team and liaison with Canada Corp. This gathering does not have official status, but aims to provide an opportunity for persons from across Canada to listen to one another, listen to concerns about the SALT report and its impact on Canadian ministry, and discern together if further steps or action may be advantageous. If so, any action item would have to come as overtures from individual Canadian classes.
Concerns were expressed about the lack of a clear agenda and clarity as to the purpose and desired outcome of this event, as well as comments stressing the importance of listening to one another, especially when we may perceive significant differences. Ultimately it is hoped that this gathering will be a place of rebuilding trust, listening to concerns about the SALT report, and effective contextual ministry in Canada.
MOTION: That Classis Niagara serve as the host classis of the proposed Canada wide 'Canadian Catalytic Conversation-Two' to take place on January 29, 2022. **CARRIED**
- 1.5 **Selecting delegates to attend:** Each Classis is asked to send 4 delegates. Those who expressed willingness to attend were Steve DeBoer and Dan Baarda of Providence CRC, and Terence Schilstra from The Table. Additional persons interested were asked to confirm with the Stated Clerk in the next few days. *Note: Confirmed delegates are Steve DeBoer, Terence Schilstra, Bill Kort (Covenant) and George Sportel (Grace).*
- 1.6 **Items or Overtures raised on the Credentials Forms:** Rick Meloen read the motion from the overture Covenant submitted on their credentials form.

1.7	<p>MOTION: “Covenant overtures Classis Niagara to remove the line item from the 2022 Classis Niagara Budget for the Bridge App (See Classis Expense Fund, The Bridge App - \$6,800). Churches who wish to continue use of the Bridge App can continue to subscribe individually.” The Credentials Committee recommends that Classis accede since there is urgency to make the decision now as it impacts the 2022 budget. Bob Loerts referenced the data compiled by our Classis treasurer, Joanne Drenth-Van Dyke, indicating a number of churches do not make any or only minimal use of the Bridge App, and that there would be a cost savings of \$1800/year if churches paid individually rather than as a classis.</p> <p>MOTION TO TABLE: A second motion was made to table the overture to the February Classis meeting since churches haven’t had a chance to consider the matter. It was noted that classis can make budgetary changes mid-year and this item will be reconsidered. Covenant was thanked for their research. CARRIED</p> <p>Adjournment: Vice-Chair, Frank Engelage, thanked Colin for chairing at very short notice. The delegates were thanked for their willingness to attend this special meeting. Colin offered closing prayer, after which the meeting was adjourned.</p>
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Next meeting: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – Smithville CRC
 Chair: Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg; Vice-Chair: Rev. Mike Vandyk
 Credentials: Faith Fellowship (*Chair*); Jubilee (*reporting*)
 Overture Advisory: Smithville (*Chair*); Covenant (*reporting*)