



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

119th meeting of Classis
Wednesday, February 23, 2022 - held via ZOOM
9:00 am – 4:30 pm

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

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

classisniagara.ca/february-2022/

DELEGATES, PLEASE NOTE:

- We will meet **online via ZOOM**, rather than in person. The Zoom link will be sent out on Feb. 21.
- Please email your completed Classical Credentials form - <https://classisniagara.ca/credentials-form/> by **February 18** to statedclerkniagara@gmail.com.
- All the documents needed are posted on the Classis Niagara website on the second tier – <https://classisniagara.ca> “Classis Agenda & Meeting Documents.” If you prefer a hard copy please print your own.
- The Core Value highlighted in this meeting is **Disciples Making New Disciples**. The main items on this agenda will be a time of interactive learning led by Amy Schenkel and Willemina Zwart from Resonate
- Additionally, the agenda also includes the election of delegates to Synod. Elder and deacon nominations are needed.
- Any guests wishing to attend the meeting are asked to notify the Stated Clerk in advance.

5. COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS – UPDATED FROM EARLIER AGENDA

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	<p>Canadian Catalytic Conversation Report: Classis delegates, participants, and Acting Executive Director (Canada) will report, followed by a Q & A time Minutes-Canadian Catalytic Conversation II-2022-01-29</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>AFTERNOON BREAK – 3:00 - 3:15 pm</i></p>	2:00
5.2	Delegates for Synod 2022 – (page 8)	3:15
5.3	Canada Corp & Council of Delegates meeting Report: Wendy de Jong – (page 10)	3:40
5.4	<p>Overture to Classis Niagara to amend the 2022 budget (see page 11 for full overture) MOTION: Covenant CRC 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.</p> <p><i>Note, this motion was tabled at the December 8, 2021 meeting. The Credentials Committee advised “We agree that it should be added to the agenda. We believe it has merit and recommend Classis accede to the request to discuss the overture as it is time sensitive.”</i></p> <p><i>The material below has been submitted by the administrators of the Bridge App as additional information for Classis to consider when discussing this overture.</i></p>	3:45
5.5	<p>Classis Ministry Council report (page 12) MOTION: To approve the work of the Classis Ministry Council</p>	4:00
5.6	<p>Stated Clerk report & Pulpit Supply List (page 15) MOTION: To approve the work of the Stated Clerk</p>	4:15
5.7	<p>Closing Prayer & Adjournment – Rev. Mike Vandyk</p> <p>Printed Reports – Received for Information CRCNA Report to Classis – Interim Canadian Ministries Director World Renew - Winter Letter to Classis Niagara Redeemer University College</p>	4:30

Classis Niagara of the Christian Reformed Church
Classis Ministry Council, February 9, 2021, 9:30 am

MINUTES

Present: Wendy de Jong, Joanne Drenth-Van Dyke, Frank Engelage, Karen Gerritsma, Janet Ryzebol, Erick Schuringa.
Regrets: Colin Vander Ploeg

Opening Prayer: Erick read a few verses from Ephesians 4, offered prayer, and welcomed Frank Engelage, alternate stated clerk, who has agreed to join the CMC as Vice-Chair.

Motion: to approve the Classis Minutes of December 8, 2021 and the Classis Ministry Council minutes of December 9, 2021. **Carried**

February 23, 2022 Meeting

- Smithville CRC had offered to host an in-person meeting. Given that the provincial guidelines that come into effect on February 21 continue to require proof of vaccination for meetings, ongoing polarization about masking and vaccination, and challenges experienced with the hybrid style meeting of October, it was agreed to proceed with an online Zoom meeting for February 23rd. Wendy will thank Smithville for their willingness and explore whether they would be open to hosting the May 25 meeting instead.
- Review of Supplemental Agenda: Two additions have been received: material from the Bridge App staff for consideration in relation to the overture, and the minutes of the Canadian Catalytic Conversation which are included as a link in the supplemental agenda. We anticipate the Niagara delegates will bring a report. As far as we are aware there are no overtures or communications coming through any of the churches.
- To date there is only one deacon nomination that has come in to stand as a Synodical delegate.

Stated Clerk items: Wendy de Jong

- Rev. Jack Vander Veer has requested that his Ecclesiastical Credentials be sent to Classis Quinte. His calling church is First CRC in Kingston where he is doing chaplaincy work.
- Polarization and covid fatigue have significantly impacted Riverside CRC and possibly other church communities in our Classis. As part of our covenanting together as churches we agreed that they may welcome some additional support by way of interaction with their regional pastor or church visitors. The Pastor Church Relations office has provided some excellent resources that may be useful as well. Joanne will connect with their church council inviting them to consider exploring further avenues of support.
- Jubilee Fellowship's recent videos on Facebook of their pastor's position on inclusion and a recent baptism of a child of a same-sex couple have elicited correspondence and commentary in the wider CRC community. No action is before us at this time. Wendy is staying abreast of developments and will ask Frank to step in as Alternate Stated Clerk as needed to avoid a conflict of interest.

Core Value Team Minutes: Minutes of the Brock University Chaplaincy Team, Leadership Development Team and Disciples Making Disciples Team were received for information. The DMD has provisionally approved a grant to the Village Church from their new ministry initiative fund, dependent on their receiving Canada Summer Jobs funding. Approval of new members on the BUCT team are primarily with the councils of the two champion churches and come to CMC and Classis by information via the minutes.

Closing: Janet offered closing prayer after which the meeting was adjourned.



THE bridge app

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Participation in The Bridge App for 2022 for Classis Niagara

At your classis meeting of December 8, 2021 a motion was made to table a motion regarding the financial support of The Bridge App for 2022. This motion is coming before you at your February 2022 meeting. The following communication is our attempt to provide you with background information as to the continued financial support of The Bridge App for Classis Niagara on a per classis basis.

In **June 2021** the attached ([Schedule A](#)) document was forwarded to your CMC for consideration in budget preparations for your Fall 2021 classis meeting. In this meeting you voted to support The Bridge App on a per classis basis. This amount was included in the budget that you approved for 2022.

Allow me to point out from the Background Information paragraph on page one:

“The Bridge App, with ongoing integration, is a COVENANTAL agreement between three key partners: The Bridge App Inc., the CRCNA and local churches.”

The second page highlights the reduced price that churches in the CRC enjoy because of this covenantal agreement. **There is no price increase over the 2021 price.**

Also attached for your information ([Schedule B](#)) is a document highlighting some analytical data regarding the use of The Bridge App and its various features by the churches in Classis Niagara. It is clear that some churches are using features more frequently than others. However, all churches listed are using the app in one way or another.

Of importance to notice is the blue column highlighting PAR (Pre Authorized Remittance) participation. As we slowly migrate administration of the PAR program for the churches in Classis Niagara and across the country from its current software platform to The Bridge App, we are grateful that we have a new

generation technical solution available. Donations made by way of The Bridge App for 2021 totalled in excess of \$4.3 million.

We are confident that you can see the value to all the churches in Classis Niagara in using The Bridge App going forward and that supporting the financial cost of The Bridge App on a per classis basis honors the decision made at the Fall 2021 meeting.

As we look towards a 2023 pricing model for use of The Bridge App for CRC's across Canada, we will use feedback from the classes in addition to the shared funding model that we currently are using.

Schedule A

Methods of Participation in The Bridge App for 2022

Mission

The mission of The Bridge App is simple – to create a bridge between ministry resources and local churches and their disciples, with an aim to strengthen individuals within the local church context.

Background Information

The Bridge App, with ongoing integration, is a COVENANTAL agreement between three key partners: The Bridge App Inc., the CRCNA and local churches. The app was created in 2017 and has been used by Canadian CRC's since 2018.

As the leadership, staff and members of local Christian Reformed churches respond to the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic, The Bridge App has been an invaluable tool for many congregations. The Announcements, Prayer, Directory and Watch functions help to maintain personal connections while the Give function enables members to continue to support their church's budget and 'second offering' causes.

Notes

Over the last few years several classes have automatically included the cost of The Bridge App in their budget without making it a separate item to vote on in the fall classis meeting. This shows confidence in the value of The Bridge App to your member churches. We appreciate this confidence and support.

Special Pricing for CRC's

Option One: For individual local CRC churches

The Bridge App Inc. will offer a 40% discount from the generic baseline pricing that is available to the general public. The cost will be \$450 per year or roughly \$37.50 per month.

Option Two: For all churches within a classis using lump sum pricing

The classis pricing is \$6500 per classis and is a real savings for any classis larger than 14 churches which represents the 'threshold' using the individual CRC pricing of \$450 per church/year. [450 X 14 = \$6300]

As an example of savings, see below:

Example: Classis Huron

- 25 local ministry entities (churches, church plants and campuses) = \$11,250 (using the CRC individual church pricing above)
- Savings using classis pricing = \$4,750
- Cost/church if all used The Bridge App = \$260/year/church
- Cost/church/month if all used The Bridge App = \$21.66/month

**THESE PRICES ARE BEING HELD AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THEY WERE FOR 2021.
THERE IS NO PRICE INCREASE.**

Analytics for Usage of The Bridge App in Classis Niagara for 2021

Organization	Users	Active Users	Announcements	Events	Prayers	Directory Households	# of Donations	\$ Value of Donations	Participate in PAR Program
Bethel CRC - Dunnville	99	51	52	n/a	n/a	174	11	495.00	✓
Jubilee Fellowship	42	42	43	n/a	42	235	8	4,500.00	✓
Providence CRC - Beamsville	199	124	204	5	76	145	632	146,668.72	✓
Trinity CRC - St. Catharines	37	14	8	1	1	63	n/a	n/a	
Smithville CRC	110	60	162	n/a	n/a	168	817	102,870.00	✓
Riverside CRC - Wellandport	47	18	41	n/a	n/a	96	n/a	n/a	✓
Mountainview CRC	189	126	48	n/a	55	346	1001	152,813.00	✓
Bethany CRC - Fenwick	99	50	211	171	n/a	158	259	50,953.00	✓
Faith Fellowship - Niagara Falls	5	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	n/a	n/a	
Covenant CRC - St. Catharines	12		n/a	n/a	n/a	256	n/a	n/a	✓
Grace CRC - Welland	21	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	91	n/a	n/a	✓
The Bridge - Niagara Falls	7	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	98	8,227.00	
NOTES:									
1. Total number of churches using The Bridge App = 12									
2. Only Brock Campus Ministry and The Village Church do not use any of the features of The Bridge App.									
3. 9 churches are currently participating in the PAR (Pre-authorized remittance program). This program is in the process of being migrated and administered through The Bridge App.									
CALCULATIONS FOR INVOICING:									
1. Invoicing on a per classis basis would be 14 x \$450.00 = \$6300.00									
2. Invoicing on a per church basis would be 12 x \$450.00 = \$5400.00									

Next meeting: *May 25, 2022, host church to be determined*

Agenda Deadline: April 13, 2022

Chair: Rev. Mike Vandyk; Vice-chair: Rev. Erick Schuringa

Credentials: Jubilee (chair) and Mountainview (reporting)

Overture Advisory: Grace (chair) and Covenant (reporting)

Following meeting: Retreat to be held in October 2022 at the Gethsemane Retreat Center in Wellandport. Dates to be confirmed.