



CLASSIS NIAGARA OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, May 21, 2008
Fruitland Christian Reformed Church, Stoney Creek



Officers: Rev. Steve deBoer, Chairman; Rev. E.J. deWaard, Vice-Chairman; John TeBrake, Stated Clerk

1. **Opening:** Rev. Andrew Beunk, of the host church, welcomed the delegates and guests to Fruitland. He led in opening devotions
2. **Constitution of Classis:** The Chairman, Rev. Steven deBoer, welcomed delegates and visitors to this meeting of Classis Niagara. He invited the Fruitland delegates to read the roll call, which indicated that all churches were represented and that credentials were received for all delegates. Classis approved that Pastor Mike Collins of the Thorold Church Plant be seated as a delegate, and Mr. Wes Collins also of the Thorold Church Plant be welcomed as a companion with the privilege of the floor in matters concerning the Church Plant. The delegates from the Maranatha CRC reported that Mr. Ken Van Dyk who was declared a candidate for the Ministry of the Word in the CRC by our Classis, has accepted a call from the Faith Fellowship CRC in Fairview, AB. Four first-time delegates signed the Form of Subscription, and the Chairman declared Classis constituted.
3. **Reports of the Executive Committee (of the Classical Ministries Committee) and the Stated Clerk:** On behalf of the Executive Committee the Stated Clerk John TeBrake led delegates through the reports of the April 1 and May 14 meetings of the Executive Committee. In order to bring clarity and consistency to the way in which churches pay Classical Ministry shares, the Committee recommended, and Classis approved: **“That the numbers submitted by churches to the Denominational office in the fall of each year for the following year’s yearbook, and which will be printed in that yearbook, will be the number to be used for that year’s classical ministry share amount.”** *(thus the Ministry Shares for 2009 will be based on the numbers printed in the 2009 denominational yearbook).*

The following two recommendations from the Executive Committee were also approved by Classis:

- a. **The Executive Committee recommends that only one hard copy of the Agenda and of the Minutes of each meeting be distributed to each Council.**
- b. **The Executive Committee recommends that the allowance for lost wages for elder delegates to Synod be increased from \$100 per day to \$150 per day**

The work of the Executive Committee was approved by Classis.

The Stated Clerk then referenced his correspondence report as presented in the agenda, and the work of the Stated Clerk was approved by Classis.

4. **Report of the Classical Ministries Leadership Team:** Rev. Derek Bouma reported that at the present time the CMLT is providing financial student aid to three individuals (Kyle Kooistra, Roelof Peereboom, and Wes Collins). In order to ensure sufficient funds are available for future needs, the CMLT recommended that **“Ministry Shares for the CMLT be \$4 per member for 2009.”** This was approved by Classis. The CMLT also requested **“permission to use CMLT funds to contact a lawyer to update the ‘Forgivable Loan Agreement’.”** This was approved by Classis subject to the committee **first exploring if there are any current agreements in use by other classes that it could adapt before approaching a lawyer.**

The report of the CMLT was approved by Classis.

5. **Report of the Nominating Committee:** Rev. Greg Fluit led the delegates through the recommendations of the Nominating Committee, as follows:
 - a. Rev. Derek Bouma be reappointed to the CMLT for a three year term.
 - b. Rev. Steve DeBoer be appointed to the CMLT for a three year term.
 - c. Karen VanDyk be reappointed to the Safe Church team for a three year term.
 - d. Classis Niagara ratify Riverside CRC’s appointment of Joe VanTuyt as their representative on the Safe Church Team.

- e. Rev. Lloyd Burghart be reappointed to the Brock Chaplaincy Committee for a three year term.
- f. Rev. Jerry Hoytema be appointed the primary synodical deputy for Classis Niagara subject to approval by Synod.
- g. Hanna Vanderwier be reappointed to the Youth Leader Support Team for a three year term.
- h. Classis Niagara ratify Rehoboth CRC's appointment of Rev. Rudy Ouwehand as their representative on the Safe Church Team.
- i. Classis Niagara ratify Covenant CRC's appointment of Nicole Ormel as their representative on the Safe Church Team.
- j. Classis Niagara ratify Fruitland CRC's appointment of Clarence Nywening as their representative on the Safe Church Team.
- k. Rev. Rudy Ouwehand be appointed the alternate synodical deputy for Classis Niagara subject to approval by Synod.
- l. Rev. Steve DeBoer be appointed the Niagara representative to the Shalom Chaplaincy Committee for a three year term.
- m. Peter VanBerkel (Trinity CRC) be appointed the Niagara representative to the Redeemer Board for a three year term.

Classis approved the recommendations and the work of the Nominating Committee.

- 6. Classical Safe Church Team:** Rev. Ryan Braam reported that each church except one now has a representative to the Classical Safe Church Team, and that the one church without a representative is working to correct that. He thanked the churches for their efforts to have full representation.
- 7. Church Counselor Reports:**
- a. Rev. Duane VanderLaan reported that Maranatha CRC has a search committee in place, is working on its profile, and hopefully will be actively searching for a pastor by the end of June. Its interim Pastor, Rev. Jerry Hoytema, will be finished with his work there by the end of June
 - b. Rev. Derek Bouma reported that he has signed the revised profile for the Bethel CRC, and that Bethel is beginning to prepare a job description for a Senior Pastor. Bethel will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this month.
- 8. Church Visitor Reports:** the reports of visits to the Trinity, Mountainview, Rehoboth, Providence, Riverside, and Covenant churches were presented, with opportunity for questions and discussion following each.
- 9. Denominational Historical Committee:** Classis Niagara's liaison to the Historical Committee, Rev. Greg Fluit, encouraged the churches to continue to send their records and minutes of their meetings to Heritage Hall at Calvin. This would serve the denomination in having up-to-date records, and would also serve the churches by providing back-up records.
- 10. Presentations:**
- a. Diaconal Ministries Canada: Mr. Hans Kater, National Director gave information as to resources available to churches through the DMC. In particular, he spoke of opportunities for diaconal participation through Operation Manna, and he also highlighted the Community Opportunity Scan (COS), a tool to help churches determine their relationship with their community.
 - b. Back to God Hour: Ms. Alice Klamer, Classis Niagara's regional representative to the BTG Board, provided a video of the work of the BTG all over the world, and the response it is receiving from the many people in countries and languages it reaches
 - c. Sea to Sea – Ending the Cycle of Poverty Tour: Mr. Terry Veldboom introduced a number of participants in the ride and administrators of the logistics of the tour that will ride from coast to coast, through the USA and Canada, and is planning to make a stop in the Niagara Region August 23-25. A worship rally is planned for Queenston Heights on the afternoon of Sunday, August 24. Churches in Classis Niagara have been invited to participate in various aspects of the weekend. There will be costs associated with hosting the group and with the worship rally, but the planners hope to have these costs covered by sponsors. The Chairman offered encouragement to the committee for this event. A motion to “**designate up to \$5,000 from surplus classis funds, if needed, for the Sea to Sea rally**” was approved by Classis.
 - d. Disability Concerns: Ms. Claudia DeHaan, one of two Regional Advocates for Classis Niagara, informed Classis that the position of Director for Disability Concerns has now been approved to be a full-time position (it had been a three-year term position). She introduced delegates, especially pastors, to the book *Compassionate Journey* which deals with the urgent matter of pastoral care for those dealing with disabling conditions. She encouraged churches to adopt the new church policy on disabilities.
- 11. Classical Ministries Committee:** The Classical Ministries Coordinator, Mr. Frank Engelage, reported. Highlights included:

- a. One of the new functions of the CMC is to be a contact point for all the ministries of Classis Niagara
- b. Youth Leadership Support Team – there is no representation from this group, they are going through a transition. Churches are asked to note the need for new members and contact Frank Engelage or Rev. Greg Fluit
- c. Prayer Coordinator – this position remains vacant and churches are asked to consider possible persons to provide this leadership
- d. Leadership Development Program – this program sponsored by Home Missions currently has had nine participants from Classis Niagara so far; some financial participation by Classis Niagara will be included in the budget to be proposed at the fall meeting of Classis Niagara.
- e. Shalom Manor Chaplain – Rev. Fred VanderBerg, the chaplain, supported his written report by a verbal one. He noted the importance of teamwork among all disciplines
- f. The Brock Campus Ministry Committee and the Brock Chaplain – both have written reports in the agenda. Classis was reminded of, and accepted, the invitation to hold its meeting at Brock University and hosted by the Chaplaincy Committee in February 2009
- g. The work towards incorporation of Classis Niagara, and the application for a registered charity by the Canada Revenue Agency, is ongoing

The work of the Classical Ministries Coordinator was approved by Classis.

12. **Dinner Break:** Ms. Hilda VanderKlippe led in prayer for the dinner. Rev. Jim Dekker announced that he would be leaving and Classis approved the seating of Ms. Alida van Dijk as his replacement delegate.
13. **Thorold Church Plant (“the Village Church”):** Pastor Mike Collins with his son Wes shared that this ministry would now be known as “the Village Church”. There is a launch team of some 16 persons who meet twice per month and on some Sundays do some kind of “Serve” work in Thorold. A community scan has been completed that enabled them to connect with many components of the community. Although there are many reasons for thanks, there are also some discouragements that they are dealing with. Delegates shared in a time of prayer to give thanks and to pray for this ministry
14. **Board of Trustees (BOT) of the Christian Reformed Church:** Our representative to the BOT, Rev. Andrew Beunk, reported that of the 188 delegates to Synod this year, there would be 107 first-time delegates. Among the BOT highlights he provided were that the Back to God Hour would be renamed the Back to God Ministries International; that Faith Alive Christian Resources is experiencing a decrease in its sales of material directed towards children’s ministries; and that there is some consideration of the Belhar Confession, which originated in South Africa, to determine if it is one the CRCNA should include among its confessions. Rev. Beunk also provided delegates with information about Denominational Ministry Share giving by our Classis and our congregations.
15. **Credentials Committee:** Delegate Elder Bob Teeuwesen of the Maranatha CRC reported that the committee had reviewed the credentials from the churches, and that there had been one question with respect to Church Order Article 41. The Jubilee Fellowship CRC Council has indicated that they “would like guidance on policy for allocating Ministry Shares when budget doesn’t permit 100% to both Classical & Synodical shares”. A similar question had been raised by Bethany CRC previously. After some discussion, it was moved and approved that **‘the issue of Ministry Share obligations be left to the CMC to bring forward to the agenda of the next Classis Meeting.’** It was agreed that Classis recognize that items brought forward under Article 41 would be referred to the CMC to bring forward to subsequent meetings of Classis.
16. **Closing:** the Vice-Chairman, Rev. E.J. deWaard, thanked Rev. deBoer for his leadership during the meeting, and offered a closing prayer.
17. **Next meeting:**
 - Date:* October 15, 2008
 - Agenda Deadline:* September 1, 2008
 - Location:* Maranatha CRC
 - Chairman:* Rev. E.J. deWaard
 - Vice-chairman:* Rev. Andrew Beunk
 - Credentials:* Smithville (to chair) and Grace
 - Overture Advisory:* Riverside (to chair) and Providence
 - Following meetings (2009):* February 18 hosted by Brock University Chaplaincy Committee; May 20, and October 21

Website: www.classisniagara.ca