



**Classis Alberta South & Saskatchewan
Of the Christian Reformed Church
Minutes of Spring Classis - March 10 & 11, 2016
River Park CRC, Calgary, Alberta**

VISION STATEMENT

Classis Alberta South & Saskatchewan is a regional group of Christian Reformed Churches dependant on the Holy Spirit, striving to function together as one body in Christ, share in worship, promote evangelism, diaconal ministries, and nurture through mutual accountability.

Place: River Park CRC Calgary
Officers: Chair: Rev. Matt Vanden Heuvel
Vice-Chair: Rev. Ed Jager
Clerk: Rev. J. Cameron Fraser

There was a pre-Classis meeting at 7:00 PM on Thursday March 10 at River Park Church with Rev. Cecil Van Niejenhuis of Pastor Church Relations, to discuss more effective church visiting with a view to preventing Article 17 separations. 24 delegates and others were present. The meeting was video taped. Several handouts were given. See # 12 below for a follow-up suggestion.

Delegates arrived on Friday morning and shared in fellowship and coffee during registration.

1. Classis delegates began a time of worship, led by Matt Mason of River Park CRC. Rev. Derek Van Dalen gave a devotional on unity in diversity, based on Ephesians 2:14-22. Classis was formally called to order and Chair Rev. Matt Vanden Heuvel extended a welcome to all the delegates and to visitors, as well as saying he felt honoured to be in this position.
2. The Credentials were presented and the roll was called: 45 delegates were present, including 9 first time delegates who signed the Covenant for Officebearers.

M/S to seat two pastors from New Hope-Hillside

CARRIED.

M/S to seat two pastors from the Lantern

CARRIED.

M/S to seat Rev. Paul Verhoef as advisor.

CARRIED.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Elder</u>	<u>Deacon</u>
Brooks	M. Boardman	Erich Van Der Linde	
Burdett		Bert Schussler	Edward Duffhues
Clgy. Covenant	M. Vanden Heuvel	Michelle Slomp	Lynn Kielstra
Clgy. Emmanuel	E. Jager	Andy Heim	Helen McCumber
Clgy. Lantern	E. Top M. Gritter		
Clgy. Maranatha	D. Melenberg	Jeff deKlerk	Harry Nutma
Clgy. New Hope Hillside	R. Braaksma J. Van Sloten		
Clgy. River Park	D. Van Dalen	Brian Purcell	Ian van de Burgt
Granum	H. Veldboom	Peter Weggeman	David Vandervalk
High River	D. Swinney	Glenn Dykstra	Arlie Nauta
Iron Springs	F. de Boer	Hieke Van Gunst	Bert Tanis
Lthb. First			Jake Appelfhof
Lthb. Maranatha	T. Maan	Christine Vanderberg	Denise Beusink
Medicine Hat		Dirk Vis	Art Aasman
Nobleford		Andrew Konynenbelt	Dan Hummel
Regina, Sonlight	C. Kooger		Marina Katerberg
Saskatoon, Bethel		Anthony Nienhuis Ken Bysterveld	Karen Jacobi
Taber	K. Vanderploeg	Harry Prummel	Steve Van Geest

3. Reviewed and M/S to adopt the AGENDA

CARRIED.

4. **Time Schedule.** Worship 9:00 – 9:30; Classis meets 9:30 to 12:00; Lunch (deacons and committees meet) 12:00 – 1:30; Classis 1:30– 6:00; Supper; Classis 7:15 – 9:00 as needed. The afternoon coffee break to be as convenient to the Agenda.

5. **Committee Appointments**

5.1 **Credentials Committee:** Burdett, Bethel - Saskatoon

5.2 **Nominations Committee:** River Park, Taber

5.3 **Expense Vouchers:** Jerry Borst, Treasurer

5.4 **Overture Committee:** Emmanuel - Calgary, High River. Overtures from Sonlight CRC, Regina; Taber 1st CRC.

6. Classical Administrative Reports: Received for information unless noted otherwise.

6.1 Classical Ministries Committee.

Met on January 13, 2016 at Covenant CRC, Calgary, to prepare the agenda for Classis and discuss related matters. See minutes available on website.

6.1.1 M/S to approve the work of the Classical Ministries Committee **CARRIED.**

6.2 Classical Interim Committee.

Met on November 5, 2015 at High River CRC to prepare oversight committee mandates for Rev. Ron Smeding and Bethel CRC, Saskatoon.

6.12 M/S to approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee **CARRIED.**

6.3 Classis Stated Clerk Report.

Prepared minutes of October 30, 2015 Classis meeting, available on website.

Prepared minutes of November 5, 2015 CIC meeting and January 13, 2016 CMC meeting, available on website.

Processed some 400 emails, including several with CIC/CMC members and both Canadian and US denominational offices.

Corresponded with synodical deputies re. their letter of apology available on website.

Took part in correspondence with Canadian Director and others re. ecumenical opportunities with the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Forwarded draft overture from Sonlight CRC, Regina.

Forwarded correspondence to clerks of council re. National Gathering in Waterloo, May 6-8.

Forwarded various other pieces of correspondence to clerks and pastors.

Processed both permanent and temporary licenses to perform marriages.

Prepared and distributed winter/spring classical appointments.

Requested written reports from classical and denominational agencies.

Corresponded with River Park re. arrangements for Classis.

Corresponded with Rafik Kamel and pastors appointed as his examiners.

Sought and received concurrence of synodical deputies for Rafik's exam to proceed in accordance with church order.

Prepared agenda for current Classis.

6.3.1 M/S to approve the work of the Stated Clerk as reported in Agenda: **CARRIED.**

6.4 Classical Treasurer's Report. Jerry Borst reporting. He made note of funds available for pastors' further education.

6.4.1 M/S to approve the financial report. **CARRIED.**

6.5 Classical Home Missions Committee. Melonie Michaud reporting. The HMC has been asking over the last couple years how the committee can best serve the local church. Only one request has been received in about the last 3 years. In February, the HMC met with pastors in Calgary and asked them that very question. This was a great discussion and gave some momentum

going forward. (HMC hopes to have a similar conversation with the southern Alberta pastors in the near future.)

6.6 Classical Ministry Leadership Team. See written report. Rev. Paul Verhoef reporting. The CMLT, Classis is prayerfully and financially supporting 2 students currently, but expects to be supporting more students come Fall 2016. Already 4 students have requested support, and in the question time, there was reference to more potential seminary students. The process for exceeding the CMLT budget line will be through a direct CIC request, if necessary. All the churches were invited to pray for the students pursuing ministry as listed in the written report (with brief bios) – and by doing so in congregational worship, also to encourage local members to consider their potential call to ministry.

Classical Safe Church Ministry. Rev. David Swinney reporting. He has agreed to take on the role of chairperson. Elza Bouwman will be administrator and educator. Continuing to pray for additional people to join the team.

- Letter drafted to be sent to the individual councils concerning the status of safe church as well as protection policies. It would be appreciated if this information was provided as soon as possible, as well as a contact person.
- Classis Alberta North uses a Canadian company called Plan to Protect. This company specializes in training as well as policy creation. For more information go to www.plantoprotect.com.
- John Telinde contacted and has agreed to continue to act as convener should an advisory panel be required.

6.8 Classical Campus Ministry Team. See report attached to Agenda. Revs. Rich Braaksma and Paul Verhoef reporting. Rich Braaksma (Chair) reported that the Campus Ministry Committee is supporting investigation about further campus ministry, with a special focus on the UofLethbridge (in our Classis geography, we have UofCalgary, Mount Royal U, UofRegina, UofSaskatchewan, and UofLethbridge, as well as community colleges and other institutions). He then invited Paul Verhoef to come and share highlights of the campus ministry's last months. Paul spoke about the Kaleidoscope Project (engaging in inter-cultural and inter-religious discovery and engagement), about Spiritual Direction via Pearl Nieuwenhuis, about hosting the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and hosting Dr. Larry Hurtado from the Univ. of Edinburgh.

6.9 Faith Formation Committee Report. Christine Vanderberg reporting, with Rev. Ron DeVries and Ellen Breakenridge. The committee has continued to meet since the last report to Classis, working towards developing some concrete methods for councils/churches to use for promoting faith formation. A devotional with a corresponding guidance/answer portion, based on the survey responses done at last year's spring Classis meeting, is being prepared by Pastor David Swinney and will be made available and sent out to all churches in early April. The committee asks that this be taken back to church councils to work through and to use it as a benchmarking tool to evaluate how faith formation is happening, what is working well and what needs some attention.

- A tool kit is being developed for churches, their ministries and their ministry leaders to use to share faith formation resources. It will include book and video titles, links to websites, as a start. The intent is to have it be a part of Classis' website. A similar toolkit is being planned at the denominational level as well and is expected to be live by the summer.
- Another SERVE mission is planned for the beginning of July in conjunction with First CRC in Edmonton and the church plant The Avenue.
- Now that FFC is a standing committee, it will be revisiting its mandate and plans to bring that to this body at the Fall Classis meeting.
- Ellen Breakenridge is now the Youth Champion for Classis. She can be reached at ellendanette84@gmail.com Cell: [403-331-1263](tel:403-331-1263)

6.10 Classical Prayer Coordinator Report. 1. We had 7 people praying either on site or off site throughout the day at classis. The prayer was evidently effective in the timely completion of a heavy agenda. 2. Please encourage the intercessors in your congregations to make contact with Rev. Martin Boardman so we can grow the intercessory cover for classis events in the future.

6.11 Church Visitor Team Reports. No reports.

6.12 Regional Pastor's Report. Rev Ken Vanderploeg reporting for Rev. Corvers, who has been unwell. Rev. Corvers has met with three pastors since the last Classis meeting.

6.13 Saskatoon Bethel Oversight Committee Report. No report as Rev. George Koopmans was unable to attend Classis, due to a funeral in Medicine Hat.

6.14 Rev. Ron Smeding Oversight Committee Report. Rev. Charles Kooger reporting.

Ron is working close to full time in the Saskatoon Public School system as a substitute teacher. He is taking a course through Tyndale Seminary in the Spiritual Formation area of theology, on the practice of prayer, and finding it enriching and challenging. He is also signed up for one course when this one is completed in a month. Ron is not currently in contact with any congregations, and is content with that, as he and Lynne desire to remain in Saskatoon until their youngest son completes grade 12 in 2017. They express thankfulness to God for his provision, experience peace in their place of life, and will continue to work toward the next chapter of the journey.

7. Denominational Agencies Visitors/Reports.

7.1 BOT, CRCNA. See under 7.4 below.

7.2 BOT, Calvin College. See report attached to Agenda.

7.3 BOT, Calvin Seminary. No report.

7.4 Director of Canadian Ministries. See report attached to Agenda. Rev. Darren Roorda reporting. Peter De Boer reported on the Board of Trustees (see written report attached to Agenda) as part of Rev. Roorda's report. Rev. Roorda provided some historical background to his role and spoke of various initiatives to refocus denominational ministries in Canada in terms

of equipping local churches to do ministry. Contextualization has been happening. Canadians are able to express ourselves more in a way that is appropriate to our context. For instance, Salaam 2.0 is now an exclusively Canadian ministry.

Rev. Roorda highlighted the emerging CRCNA Ministry Plan “Our Journey 2020” as part of a process of asking the question “How does a ministry plan fit in a local and national context.” Delegates were asked to form groups and identify one of the 5 desired futures: 1. Church and Community; 2. Discipleship; 3. Leadership; 4. Identity; and 5. Collaboration, and give input on goals their church felt needed to be addressed within the ministry plan. A “Ministry in Canada” directory has been developed, with resources to help our churches and their leadership. Darren also spoke of the “New to Ministry in Canada” leaders gathering, as well as the forthcoming National Gathering, May 6-8, and urged more churches to nominate participants, as the application deadline had been extended for that purpose.

There is a new web presence, an overview of what it means to be CRC today. See <https://www.crcna.org/Canada>. See also <http://www2.crcna.org/pages/publicdialogue.cfm> for various social justice issues.

7.5 World Missions. Bill and Ko Spyksma reporting.

Still happening around the world and at home-- we are all called to GO.

Preparing of unification of the Home and World ministries. Questionnaires across Canada and US are seeking input and wisdom.

-**Egypt**--discipling, teaching; **Nigeria**--church planting, translation, literacy, education, agriculture; **Japan**--hard place to evangelize, as only 1% of population is Christian. Small home churches; **Central America**--ministry in dark places (prisons, streets). Training centres in Honduras and Nicaragua; **Canada**--Montreal Network, Salaam 2.0.

Needed: Lifetime career missionaries from Canada; Prayer -- for people, for leaders, that His kingdom, His glory, His gospel may GO forth with power; Financial support.

7.6 Diaconal Ministries Board. See report attached to the Agenda.

7.7 Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee. See report attached to Agenda.

7.7.1 Indian Metis Christian Fellowship. Bert Adema reporting for both.

- The method and geographical location for selecting a CAMC representative has changed. It is no longer a classical appointment. Embiny Pearl McDonald has been approved to take Jean De Beer’s place on the committee.
- The ministry of Indian Metis Christian Fellowship (IMCF) expressed appreciation for the ongoing support of prayers and donations.
- IMCF continues to develop opportunities to share the gospel through culturally appropriate means.
- IMCF is pursuing a project which will produce a script and a theatrical production featuring the art work ‘Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin – the Creator’s Sacrifice theatrical along with a video documentary of this initiative.

7.8 Home Missions Board. No report.

7.9 Disability Concerns. See report attached to Agenda.

7.10 The Kings University. See report attached to Agenda. Dan VanKeeken, VP for Institutional Advancement reporting. Kathy Macfarlane, Associate Director of Development, was also present. Kings is thriving (need 16% of budget to be from donations.) They have 18% more applications than previously. The King's educational program has a high placement rate. The business school emphasizes that "money is to make people". Name is now "The King's University". The men's soccer team and the women's volleyball team reached the national finals for the first time.

7.11 World Renew. See report attached to Agenda. George Lubberts reporting. He handed out t-shirts as awards for answers to (simple) skill-testing questions about World Renew, highlighted some aspects of the written report, and gave thanks that the work in High River was completed last Fall.

7.12 Ministry to Seafarers. See report attached to Agenda. Ernst de Vries gave out information packages for the churches and spoke briefly about the new ministry at Port Alberni, BC.

7.13 Back to God Ministries International. See report attached to Agenda.

7.14 Salaam 2.0. See report attached to Agenda.

8. Examination of Rafik Kamel, called by Bethel CRC, Saskatoon, to serve as Commissioned Pastor.

8.1 Introduction of the Candidate.

8.2 Practica by Rev. Paul Verhoef

Questions from delegates.

MOTION to proceed.

8.3 Sermon Evaluation by Revs. Charles Kooger & Ed Jager

Questions regarding the sermon and its delivery from delegates.

MOTION to proceed.

8.4 Biblical & Theological Position by Rev. Dale Melenberg

Questions from delegates.

8.5 Move to Executive Session:

MOTION to admit the candidate.

Discussion by the delegates.

Delegates **VOTE** by voice. Motion **CARRIED**.

Chair declares end of Executive Session.

Chair presents the decision reached during Executive Session.

Delegates laid hands on Rafik, and Cameron Fraser led in prayer.

9. Brief reports for prayer by: Burdett, Calgary--Emmanuel, Lantern, New Hope, River Park--High River, Lethbridge First, Medicine Hat, Taber. Postponed to Fall meeting. It was noted that Nobleford had extended a call, which was declined.

10. Reports from Advisory Committees.

10.1 Credentials Committee:

- Bethel--support for pastoral candidate, Rafik Kamel.
- Iron Springs --a) Request for more effective and relevant junior/senior high catechism materials. What catechism materials are working in other churches? b) Sponsoring of refugees: would other churches in our Classis be interested in partnering together to sponsor a refugee family? c) Our church hasn't had visitors from Classis in a while. How do we get this organized? **Recommendation:** Refer to CMC.
- Maranatha Calgary--Rev. Dale Melenberg's name submitted as the Synodical Deputy for our Classis.
- Nobleford a) Supports the overture from Taber CRC; b) Opposes the overture from Regina CRC; c) Offers to host Classis in the fall of 2016.

Recommendation: Hold Fall 2017 Classis in Iron Springs. (Fall 2016 is already scheduled for Medicine Hat.)

10.2 Nominations Committee: Synod delegates elected: Minister, Rev. C. Kooger; first alternate, Rev. M. Gritter; second alternate, Rev. K. Vanderploeg. Elder: Michelle Slomp. Other: Rev. P. Verhoef. (CMC subsequently appointed Sharon Zwart as deacon delegate and Bert Tanis as deacon alternate, with Ed Oosterhof as elder alternate.)

Home Missions Committee: Rev. Brian Kuyper elected for two more years.

Faith Formation Committee: Rev. David Swinney elected for a second term.

Campus Ministry Committee: Rev. Rich Braaksma elected for a second term.

Classis Treasurer: Jerry Borst elected for a second term.

Stated Clerk of Classis: Rev. Cameron Fraser elected for a second term.

Alternate Stated Clerk of Classis: Rev. David Swinney elected for a second term.

Synodical Deputy: Rev. Dale Melenberg elected.

Alternate Synodical Deputy: Rev. Charles Kooger elected for a second term.

Rev. Dale Melenberg expressed thanks to Cameron Fraser for his six years as a synodical deputy.

M/S/C to destroy all ballots.

10.3 Expense Vouchers: The treasurer will reimburse delegates for expenses handed in.

10.4 Overtures Committee: Committee recommended that Classis accede to Taber overture with some wording change in the grounds.

M/S The First Christian Reformed Church of Taber overtures Classis Southern

Alberta and Saskatchewan to overture Synod 2016 to endorse the Minority Report from the Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same Sex Marriage. **CARRIED.**

Committee recommended that Classis not accede to Regina overture. Rev. C. Kooger spoke on behalf of the council of Sonlight CRC, Regina.

M/S The Council of Sonlight Christian Reformed Church, Regina, Saskatchewan, overtures Classis Alberta South and Saskatchewan to overture Synod:

a. That Synod adopt the practice of yearly appointing as advisors to Synod up to 7 confessing members of the CRCNA who are same sex oriented, in the same manner that ethnic, women, and deacon advisors and young adult representatives have been, or are, appointed to serve, and in accordance with the Rules for Synodical Procedure 7, Regulations for Advisors to Synod. (see http://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/rules_2015.pdf)

b. That Synod advise the Classes and congregations to seek, as much as possible, the presence and involvement of LGBT+ members and participants when dealing with matters that affect the lives of LGBT+ members of the CRCNA. **CARRIED.**

11. Heather Cowie spoke about an **InterMission School for Spiritual Direction** with plans to launch October 2016. An informational evening to be held March 29 at New Hope Hillside Church. Spiritual formation is the cultivation of one's attentiveness and responsiveness to the love and leading of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). The part-time program will be offered in partnership with King's University as part of a vision to provide more adult learning opportunities.

12. Rev. Dale Melenberg made two suggestions for the CIC/CMC: 1) to follow up on the church visitation meeting the previous night in terms of how church visitation can build community (as stated by Cecil Van Niejenhuis); 2) to have roll call as delegates arrive rather than as part of the meeting.

13. The concept minutes were reviewed by River Park delegates and the Classis executive.

14. Next Classis meeting to be held on October 28, 2016 at Medicine Hat CRC.

15. Closing. The chair thanked the executive of Classis and River Park for hosting the meeting. Rev. Ed Jager thanked the chair, gave a brief devotional and prayed. The chair led in the singing of the doxology.