

CLASSIS EASTERN CANADA

OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

M I N U T E S

March 2, 2007

Meeting at Community CRC of Dixons Corners
OFFICERS of CLASSIS

Chairman.....Rev. N. Cornelisse
Vice-Chairman...Rev. J. Noordhof
Stated Clerk....James Kooistra

DELEGATES of CLASSIS

CONGREGATIONS	MINISTERS	ELDERS	DEACONS
Athens	Rev. W. Visser	J. Lalonde	S. de Kroon
Brockville	Rev. N. Cornelisse	B. Wallace	
Charlottetown	Rev. H. Bierman	W. Masselink	
Cornwall	Rev. H. VanderBeek	M. VanderVeer	
Dixon's Corners	Rev. C. Witten	W. Berghuis	L. DeJong
Fredericton	Eld. T. Drost	R. Brown	
Halifax	Rev. D. Vroege	V. Walker	
Kemptville	Rev. B. Ponsen	J. Beking	
Kentville	Rev. M. Veenema	J. VanderKloet	
Milford	Rev. P. VanderKooy	G. Damsteegt	
Montreal	Absent	Absent	
Ottawa-Barrhaven	Rev. D. Meijer	H. DeSchiffart	
Ottawa-Calvary	Rev. P. Heerema	A. Proper	
Ottawa-Calvin	Rev. K. Gehrels	J. Kralt	
Ottawa-Kanata	Rev. M. Miedema	N. Patterson	
Pembroke	Absent	Absent	
Renfrew	Absent	Absent	
Truro	Rev. D. Brown	R. Blauwendraat	
Williamsburg	Rev. J. Noordhof	J. VanGilst	

[Note: Due to a severe snowstorm 3 churches were unable to be present: Montreal, Pembroke and Renfrew, and Classis started a ½ hour later. It was also decided to try and do most of the work by 6 p.m. on Friday.]

CLASSIS EASTERN CANADA MINUTES March 2, 2007

March 2, 2007 MORNING SESSION 10:30 A.M.

Art. 1 OPENING of MEETING:

a. CALL to ORDER: (10:30 a.m.)

Rev. J. Noordhof, vice-chair, calls the meeting to order, welcomes the delegates and mentions that the schedule for the day has been revised. He also mentions that we will try to do most of the work on this day. He further informs those present that the speaker for the day, Rev. L. VanderZee, is unable to be present since he got stranded in Chicago due to the snowstorm;

b. OPENING DEVOTIONS:

Rev. Clarence Witten of the host-church, Community CRC of Dixon's Corners, asks us to sing 3 songs: O, Praise the Lord, All to Jesus, The Servant Song;
-he reads from Joshua 7:1-18 and mentions that we, too, like Joshua, can be more than

conquerors through Christ Jesus our Lord. The secret is 'to keep in tune with God'.
-he leads in an opening prayer;
-the vice-chairman thanks Dix. Corners for doing the devotions;

Art. 2 ROLL-CALL:

-S.C. leads the delegates through the names listed on the registration form;
-he mentions that some of the FORMS had a few lines missing; this will be corrected in the future;
-not all churches are represented, due to a snowstorm: unable to attend are: Montreal, Pembroke and Renfrew;
-Fredericton will arrive a little later; [see Art. 5]
a. first-time delegates have signed the Form of Subscription;
b. they are:
D. Brown L. DeJong S. de Kroon J. Lalonde
A. Proper V. Walker B. Wallace
-the question is asked why only a few of Group-1 (6 churches) have delegated a deacon. It is noted that the deacons found it hard to leave their daily jobs;
-Rev. J. Noordhof informs classis that the delegates of Williamsburg are present 'under protest'; this is done because the council of Williamsburg wants to indicate to CEC its disagreement with the decision of CEC re: seating women at classis;
however, Williamsburg wants to fully participate in the work of classis;
-Rev. Noordhof declares Classis constituted and hands the gavel to the chairman for this session of CEC, Rev. Nick Cornelisse;

Art. 3 CHAIRMAN of CLASSIS:

-Rev. Cornelisse mentions that because of the weather this is a bit of a different day and he offers prayer for those who are unable to attend or are still on the way;
-he notes that the schedule has been adjusted and that The TRAINING SESSION has been cancelled;
MOTION: that classis adopt the revised schedule for the day... **CARRIED**
-he thanks Rev. C. Witten for doing the devotions, and then reads some verses from 1 Cor. 13 mentioning that there should be no divisions among us;
-he quotes Philippians 2:3 'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit but in humility consider others better than yourselves';
-he also addresses Rev. Harry Bierman who is scheduled to retire from active ministry this year;
-he expresses great joy over the fact that Rev. Winston Visser is present in our midst today as an ordained pastor now;
-Rev. David Vroege thanks the Lord for that and asks for a blessing on Rev. Visser and on the work of classis today;

Art. 4 STATED CLERK & C.I.C.:

a. the Stated Clerk presents the correspondence, reports & materials and his own report;
b. he singles out a few items;
MOTION: that Classis approve the work of the S.C. **CARRIED**
c. the Stated Clerk presents the work done by the C.I.C.;
MOTION: that Classis will meet for its Fall Meeting on Oct. 26 & 27, 2007, since the Day of Encouragement in Ancaster is scheduled for Oct. 20, 2007;
MOTION: that Classis approve the work of the C.I.C.... **CARRIED**
d. the chairman thanks the clerk, and Rev. P. Heerema offers a prayer for the Stated Clerk;

Art. 5 BALLOTING COMMITTEE-1: [see also Art. 13]

-Rev. J. Noordhof speaks for this committee;
-he has prepared a sheet with some nominations, but is asking for more names;
-he mentions the 2 names of nominees for elder delegates for Synod-2007 and asks about the availability of pastors to be considered for min. delegates to synod;
-a number of pastors are unable to go;
-the chairman welcomes the delegates from Fredericton who arrived a little late due to the snowstorm;

Art. 6 WORLDWIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS:

-the chairman welcomes Rev. John Postuma, Director of Ministry Development of this organization;
-Rev. Postuma explains briefly what Worldwide Christian Schools is all about, and he mentions that we must not only PREACH the Word, but also TEACH the Word;
-he states that the best way to do that is to bring the Word of God through the children;
-Rev. Postuma then shows the delegates a very clear VIDEO about the work of this organization;
-he thanks CEC for its support, both in funds and in prayer;
-delegate Alice Proper offers prayer for Rev. John Postuma and this cause;

Art. 7 STUDENT FUND COMMITTEE:

- Rev. Daryl Meijer reports for the committee eventhough his term on the com. has ended;
- he mentions that our only student David Westra is in his final year and will candidate this spring;
- Karen Norris, a candidate whom our classis supported, is present and briefly addresses the delegates;
- the chairman thanks her for sharing her story and thoughts;
- Rev. Dan Brown offers prayer for David Westra and his wife and the baby they are expecting, and also for Karen Norris;

Art. 8 REV. BRUCE ADEMA, Dir. of Canadian Ministries:

- the chairman welcomes Rev. Adema who feels privileged to be in our midst;
- Rev. Adema states that God is allowing us as Chr. Ref. Church to accomplish great things in Canada;
- he mentions that it's a global ministry, and that it transforms lives and communities;
- the CRC is a denomination that seeks to transform the world in which we are placed;
- he also lists several special ministries and tasks we are involved in: Aboriginal Ministries, showing the Reformed Perspective to our government (Com. Contact with Gov't), Evang. Fellowship of Canada, equip congregations how to present that perspective on issues of the day, and he has noticed that other denominations are very much aware of us, and that we have significant influence in the Christian realm in Canada;
- he tells classis 'I am your servant';
- Rev. Adema answers a number of questions: e.g. Church Plantings, Youth, 100 vs. 150 year Anniv., Classis Renewal;
- Rev. Paul Vanderkooy offers a prayer for Rev. Adema;

Art. 9 SEAFARERS MINISTRY IN MONTREAL:

- the clerk reports that Michelle DePooter is unable to be present due to illness;
- she has sent in a printed report which is made available to the delegates;
- Michelle will be remembered in prayer at our next devotion time;

Art. 10 DEVOTIONS: SHARE & PRAYER TIME - 1:(12:25)

- the following churches share some joys and concerns: Fredericton, Cornwall, Kemptville, and KANATA;
- Rev. Mike Miedema leads in a prayer for these churches and also asks for a blessing upon the food that has been prepared for the delegates and the visitors;

12:30-1:30 p.m. ==== A delicious meal is served by a group of kind ladies of Community CRC of Dix. Cors. =====

Art. 11 DEVOTIONS: SHARE & PRAYER TIME - 2: (1:30 p.m.)

- the following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Williamsburg, Milford, BARRHAVEN;
- Rev. Daryl Meijer leads in prayer for these churches and also for the afternoon session of classis;

Art. 12 OUTREACH MINISTRY DEVELOPER: Sheila Murphy

- Sheila Murphy is welcomed by the chairman and she informs the delegates that there will be a conference called 'IMAGINE' in Ottawa-Gatineau on Nov. 14-16, 2007. It is traditionally a church planters conference, but this time there is a track designed for Church Pastors and Leaders;
- Sheila will be contacting and encouraging the pastors and leaders of CEC to attend;
- Rev. Ben Ponsen offers prayer for Sheila and her work in CEC;

Art. 13 BALLOTING COMMITTEE-2 [see also Art. 5 of these MINUTES]

- Rev. J. Noordhof mentions that there are several single nominations and it is agreed that all of those are 'acclaimed';
- the delegates vote for min. del. for Synod-2007 and classis decides by **MOTION** that it will vote later among the 4 pastors who received the highest number of votes;

-RESULTS of VOTING & ACCLAMATION:

Rev. P. Heerema	1st Min. Del.
Rev. D. Brown	2nd Min. Del.
Rev. N. Cornelisse	1st Min. Del. Alt.
Rev. P. Vanderkooy	2nd Min. Del. Alt.
Elder Bernie Berghout	1st Elder Del.
Elder Mike VanDyke	2nd Elder Del.
Note: no names available for ALT. Eld. Del.	
Voting for ALT. member of BOT for CTS:	
Rev. P. Slofstra	8 ballots
Rev. D. Vroege	22 ballots
C.H.M.C.-W.: Louvaine Duncan	[M10]
(C.H.M.C.-E.: Harry Bierman needs to be replaced)	
E.C.D.C. :	Benjamin Ponsen [M09]
Seaway Min.:	*Peter Macaskil [M10]
F.A.C. :	*B.Gerrits [M09]
Church Vis.Team II	M.Veenema [M10]
CRWRC-E. :	Delegate needed

- Art. 14 C.H.M.C.-West: Rev. H. Vanderbeek reports;
-he reports on East City's situation which is explained in the printed report which the delegates received just prior to the meeting;
-East City Community Church is at crossroads and C.H.M.C.-W. has discussed the possibility of closure or possibly a transition to a new leadership team;
-Classis will be kept informed about what transpires there;
-several questions are asked;
-Rev. P. Heerema offers prayer for East City Com. Church;
- Art. 15 C.H.M.C.-East: Rev. D. Vroege reports;
-the newly formed com. has met with Sheila Murphy;
-the members are trying to get the com. organized and they are planning to write up a 'mission statement';
- Art. 16 CORRESPONDENCE COM.: Rev. H. Bierman reports;
a. Requests from Athens and Montreal: reduction of membership numbers ...
MOTION: that classis approve the requests of the Athens CRC and First CRC of Montreal to reduce their membership numbers for purposes of calculating their ministry shares allocation...
Grounds: a. their request meets the criteria for ministry share reductions [see Acts of Synod 1993, p. 567]
b. it is the opinion of the committee that C.O. (2001 revision), Art. 62: Offerings, section c: Implementation of Ministry Share system, p.339, authorizes these requests;
Motion:.... **CARRIED**
- b. Dixons Corners: request for clarification of CEC decision "that for future....." [Minutes CEC.006, p.441-442]
MOTION: that CEC interprets this to mean that once a congregation's request for a reduction of the number of active members (for Ministry Share purposes) has been approved by Classis, that particular congregation need not re-apply for that reduction in succeeding years. However, each additional congregation finding itself in a situation where they need to reduce their numbers for ministry share purposes, must request CEC;
Ground: In the interest of mutual congregational accountability and of maintaining consistency of what constitute acceptable reasons for reducing the number of active members for Ministry Share calculations, CEC should assess the request of each congregation.
Motion: **CARRIED**
- c. Request from Trudy Rook, GEMS Coordinator for Area 31, for financial support re: seminar;
MOTION: that CEC support Trudy Rook in the amount of \$ 1,000.00 to cover registration and travel costs to attend the 2007 GEMS Convention..... **CARRIED**
- d. Request from James Kooistra to renew the Lic. to Exhort for another 2 years;
MOTION: that CEC extend the License to Exhort for Mr. James Kooistra for another 2 years.... **CARRIED**
- Art. 17 CLASSICAL CREDENTIALS: Rev. M. Miedema reports
-he reads the notes and instructions the churches have placed on the credentials;
-discussion follows and the CIC is instructed to review those concerns & needs of the churches and find a way how the top three concerns can be dealt with at future meetings of CEC;
-Williamsburg's struggle with the decision of CEC re: seating women delegates at classis: some elders are no longer able to be delegated because of this decision;
-several suggestions are made and the council of Williamsburg could ask the Church Visitors for advice;
-the chairman concludes the discussion this way: "Williamsburg, your pain has been noted, we feel for it, but Classis has spoken".

- Art. 18 MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS: Rev. P. Heerema reports;
-he mentions that Rev. Harry Bierman plans to retire in July, 2007 from active ministry;
MOTION: that CEC grant honourable emeritation to Rev. H. Bierman, effective July 15, 2007, because he has reached retirement age **CARRIED**
-Rev. D. Vroege, the Regional Pastor of the Maritime churches, speaks kind words of appreciation to Rev. Bierman on behalf of CEC;
-he thanks him for faithfully preaching the Gospel for 35 years;
-he wishes him God's choicest blessings in his retirement;
-Rev. Bierman responds to these words spoken by Rev. Vroege;
-he feels touched by those words and by the realization of his retirement, and mentions that he has seen both 'good' and 'not so good' times in the denomination during those 35 years;
-he is hopeful for the denomination for the future;
-several delegates stand around Rev. Bierman when prayer is offered by Rev. Vroege;
-the prayer is concluded with the singing of 'Our God Reigns';

- Art. 19 REGIONAL PASTORS:
-Rev. David Vroege reports for the Maritime churches;
-the pastors have bi-monthly lunches;
-the pastors are facing tensions within their own congregations;
-there is quite a wide range of ministers in the Maritimes, from newly-ordained to retiring;
-a spring retreat is being planned: they will have a guest facilitator who will deal with 'youth leaving the church';

-Rev. Ken Gehrels reports for the western churches of CEC;
-these pastors will meet as a group on March 6-8 for a retreat in Morrisburg, Ontario;

-the chairman thanks both pastors for their work;
-Prayer is offered by Rev. H. Vanderbeek;

- Art. 20 E.C.D.C.-West:
-Ron Triemstra, chairman of the Diac. Conf.-West, presents and reads a written report about the work and plans of the conference;
-they are trying to revitalize the conference;
-the chairman thanks Ron for the report and the work that's being done;

===== 3:15-3:30 p.m. Break with refreshments =====

- Art. 21 DEVOTIONS: SHARE & PRAYER TIME - 3:
-the following churches share some joys and concerns: Ottawa-Calvary, Kentville, ATHENS;
-Rev. Winston Visser thanks CEC for all the support he has received over the years from this classis in many different ways;
-he leads in prayer for the churches;

- Art. 22 APPEAL from Gayla Postma and the RESPONSE from Dix. Corners Com. CRC; [Both documents and the RECOMMENDATIONS of the ADV. COM. have been attached to the Official MINUTES of CEC]
-chairman Rev. N. Cornelisse explains the procedure we will follow and leads in a prayer for guidance;
-Rev. B. Ponsen reports for the ADV. COM. and reads the RECOMMENDATIONS of the committee;
-Gayla Postma and the delegates from Dix. Cors. receive opportunities to speak to the issue;
-several delegates also ask questions;
-point 4 of the RECOMMENDATIONS of the ADV. COM. is being amended as follows:
[into positions of leadership or of teaching] is removed and replaced by **[into council]**
(reference is made to C.O. page 315);
MOTION: to amend point 4 by deleting 'into positions of leadership or of teaching' and replacing it with 'into council' **CARRIED**
MOTION: that Classis Eastern Canada sustain the APPEAL and....
1. **Declare** that the practice of dedicating infants, by that name or any other, for families that do not believe in infant baptism, is contrary to the confessions and creeds of the Christian Reformed Church, and that participation in or endorsement of such a practice by office-bearers constitutes a serious violation of the Form of Subscription;
2. **Admonish** the Council of Community CRC (Dixon's Corners) for endorsing and supporting the "baby blessing" service.
3. **Instruct** the Council of Community CRC (Dixon's Corners) to not proceed with any further actions that could be construed, in any way, as being an ordinance of infant dedication replacing the sacrament of baptism and any context endorsed by the Council.

4. **Instruct** the Council of Community CRC to not place ~~into positions of leadership or of teaching into council~~, members of its congregation who cannot support or teach the doctrine of infant baptism.

GROUNDS: see the complete RECOMMENDATIONS of the ADV. COM.

MOTION: that Classis

CARRIED

- Classis expresses its concern how this decision of Classis will impact the congregation of Dixon's Corners;
- the churches are instructed to take up contact with Dixon's Corners CRC to help them and walk with them through this difficult situation;
- pastor Harry Bierman offers prayer on behalf of Community CRC in Dixon's Corners;

Art. 23 LIVING HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

- the chairman welcomes the delegation (Matthew & Judy Bastian and Benjamin Stapper) from Living Hope Community Church;
- Matthew Bastian explains how the group started, and then goes on to share how it has grown to its present size;
- he shows the delegates a brief power-point presentation about the beginning, its growth and the present situation of Living Hope;
- he answers a number of questions after which the chairman thanks them for presenting it to classis;
- Rev. Herb Vanderbeek offers a prayer for them;

Art. 24 INCORPORATION:

- Kees Rystenbil, C.A., chairman of the F.A.C. of C.E.C., is welcomed by the chairman;
- he mentions that the denominational office advises the churches to incorporate;
- Kees refers to the report that was sent to all the churches earlier for study;
- he states that the overall reasons for incorporation are sound;
- Kees answers a number of questions, e.g. who owns it? role of pastors? may they vote? CIC would be the board of directors;
- MOTION:** that the Classical Interim Committee of Classis Eastern Canada be authorized to take all necessary steps to incorporate Classis Eastern Canada and to obtain charitable status...**CARRIED**
- there will be funds available to cover the costs involved;
- the chairman thanks Kees Rystenbil and FAC for all their work for Classis;

Art. 25 TREASURER: Eva Reitsma, C.G.A.

- the chairman welcomes our treasurer, Eva Reitsma;
- she presents the Financial Statements for 2006;
- the delegates ask some questions which are answered by the treasurer;
- MOTION:** that CEC approve the FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended Dec. 31, 2006 **CARRIED**
- the chairman thanks Eva for her diligent work for Classis;

Art. 26 CLASSICAL ABUSE PREVENTION & RESPONSE TEAM:

- Rev. Daryl Meijer, the Pastoral Advisor for the TEAM, reports for this TEAM;
- he mentions that Sarah Cook has been found willing to serve as 'interim' chairperson of the TEAM;
- the group likes to meet soon and also receive some training;
- the present name will be changed to 'Safe Church Team';
- MOTION:** that Classis put aside \$ 5,000.00 for future training expenses..... **CARRIED**
- the chairman thanks Rev. Meijer for the report;
- Rev. J. Noordhof offers a prayer for the TEAM;

Art. 27 YOUTH COORDINATOR: Rev. Brian Barr

- he receives a warm welcome from the chairman;
- Rev. Barr reads a detailed report about all that has been done for the youth of CEC for the past 1½ years;
- he mentions that he has tried to impact Youth Ministries in 2 ways:
 - a. a computer lending library has been set up;
 - b. Youth leadership;
- he also lists: visiting many churches, youth ministry webpages will appear on CEC's website, focus on certain churches, youth events being planned;
- Rev. P. Vanderkooy offers prayer for Rev. Barr and for the youth of CEC;

Art. 28 TRANSCRIPTION of MINUTES:

- Rev. Winston Visser reports for the committee that checked the minutes of CEC of the Oct., 2006, meeting of CEC, and he mentions that they have been found 'in good order';
- the stated clerk is thanked for his work;

Art. 29 CLOSING DEVOTIONS: SHARE & PRAYER TIME -4: [5:50 p.m.]

- the following churches share some joys and concerns: Brockville, Charlottetown, Halifax, Ottawa-Calvin, Truro, Dix. Corners;
- the chairman reads Rev. 21:3-5, mentions that he believes the Holy Spirit led us today, he thanks the council of Dix. Cors for their hospitality, and then prays for the churches that shared a joy and a concern, and he also includes Montreal, Pembroke and Renfrew in that prayer;
- we sing the doxology and after that Rev. J. Noordhof, the vice-chairman, thanks pastor Nick Cornelisse for so ably leading us through the agenda;

==== At 6:00 p.m. the delegates are treated to a very delicious supper prepared by some ladies of Community CRC of Dix. Cors. Rev. J. Noordhof thanks the ladies for their excellent service of love. =====

NEXT MEETING of C.E.C.:

- Location : Truro, N.S. (probably/possibly);
- Dates : October 26 & 27, 2007;
- Chairman : Rev. Herb Vanderbeek of Cornwall;
- Vice-Chair: Rev. Nick Cornelisse of Brockville;
- the final date for AGENDA-MATERIALS is Sept. 15, 2007;

NOTE: After Supper, the Stated Clerk checked the Concept Minutes of March 2, 2007, with the following delegates: Pastor Winston Visser, Elder John Lalonde, and Deacon Stephen de Kroon who approved these Concept Minutes.

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(James Kooistra, Stated Clerk)
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