

**CLASSIS EASTERN CANADA**

Of the Christian Reformed Church

**MINUTES**

March 7, 2008

Meeting at Calvary CRC of OTTAWA, ON.

**OFFICERS of CLASSIS**

Chairman..... Rev. David Vroege  
 Vice-Chairman....Rev. Herb Vanderbeek  
 Stated Clerk.....Mr. James Kooistra

**DELEGATES of CLASSIS**

CONGREGATIONS	Pastors	Elders	Deacons
Athens	Rev. W. Visser	J. Verburg	
Brockville	Rev. N. Cornelisse	M. Geertsema	
Charlottetown	-	J. Annema	
Cornwall	Rev. H. Vanderbeek	N. VanDalen	
Dixons Corners	Rev. C. Witten	F. DeVries	
Fredericton	Eld. K. Boonstoppel	M. VanOord	
Halifax	Rev. D. Vroege	R. Stel	
Kemptville	Rev. B. Ponsen	H. Boersma	
Kentville	Rev. M. Veenema	M. VandenHof	
Milford	Rev. P. Vanderkooy	A. Bokma	
Montreal	Rev. J. Boer	H. Benckhuysen	
Ott.-Barrhaven	Eld. B. Berghout	G. Luimes (a.m.)	
Ott.-Kanata	Rev. M. Miedema	M. Mooibroek	
Ott.-Calvary	Rev. P. Heerema/Eld.S.Cook	R. Kok	
Ott.-Calvin	Rev. K. Gehrels	J. Bosman	
Pembroke	Rev. H. VanderSluis	J. VanStarkenburg	
Renfrew	Rev. D. Tigchelaar (a.m.)	A. VanLindenberg	
Truro	Rev. D. Brown	R. Blaauwendraat	M. Taylor
Williamsburg	Rev. J. Noordhof	J. Menkhorst	P. Venema

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 CLASSIS EASTERN CANADA MINUTES March 7, 2008  
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Art. 1 **OPENING DEVOTIONS:** (10:05 a.m.)

- Rev. P. Heerema, pastor of Ottawa-Calvary CRC, the host-church, calls the meeting to order and he welcomes the delegates; he mentions that Ottawa-Calvary is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year; he introduces Ron Kok, ministry associate of this church, who will lead the singing;
- Ron Kok, a member of Ottawa-Calvary and serving at Living Hope Community in Metcalfe, leads the singing of some songs: "Hosanna", "Lord I Lift Your Name on High", "Amazing Grace"; he leads in prayer;

-Rev. Heerema reads Philippians 1:1-11 and focuses on the phrase 'to all the saints', noting that we are saints, not in ourselves, but through Christ, Who redeemed us, and we must live for Him and serve Him always. As Church and as Classis we gather **with** Christ, **for** Christ, and **in** Christ. This is a business meeting, but it's more than that. We do the business of the church. We may and must do all things to the praise and glory of God's name.  
We sing # 249 "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty".

Art. 2 **Rev. Herb Vanderbeek**, chairman of the Fall Classis Meeting, held on Oct. 26, 2007, welcomes all those present, he thanks Ottawa-Calvary for its willingness to host this meeting, and declares Classis Eastern Canada 'constituted'.

Art. 3 **Rev. David Vroege**, the chairman of this meeting, also extends a warm welcome to the delegates and a number of visitors, he mentions that the bad weather may force us to try and do the work in **one** day, rather than in one and a half day. Hence he will speed things up somewhat. A definite decision will be made at lunchtime;

Art. 4 **ROLL CALL:** The Stated Clerk does the Roll Call. During the day a few delegates either leave or are replaced:  
Rev. D. Tigchelaar is present only during the a.m. session,  
Rev. P. Heerema needs to be away for a few hours and Elder S. Cook takes his place during his absence,  
Eld. G. Luimes is also present for the a.m. session only.

**-1<sup>st</sup> time** Delegates who have signed the Form of Subscription are:

A. Bokma	J. Bosman	S. Cook	M. Geertsema	R. Kok
G. Luimes	M. Taylor	A. VanLindenberg	P. Venema	J. Verburg

Art. 5 **Stated Clerk & C.I.C. Reports:**

-the Stated Clerk leads classis through the Correspondence, Reports, his own actions, and those of the C.I.C., and he singles out a few items;

**Motion:** that Classis approve the work of the S.C..... **Carried**

-the Stated Clerk presents the work done by the C.I.C.;

**Motion:** that Classis approve the work of the C.I.C..... **Carried**

-the chairman thanks the clerk for his work;

Art. 6 **BALLOTING COM.:**

-Rev. Ben Ponsen reports for this com. and asks for additional nominations for a number of vacancies on committees, boards, and agencies;

-delegates to Synod-2008 are needed as well;

-the delegates vote a few times during the day;

-before the voting for Elder Delegates takes place, Classis makes a change in the RULES that nominees for Elder Delegates must have been approved by their council.

**-MOTION:** that Classis amend the rule that elder delegates need council approval, and allow elders to be nominated from the floor..... **Carried**

-after all the voting is done, this motion is made:

**-MOTION:** that the ballots be destroyed.....**Carried**

**-Results of Voting by ballot:**

**Synodical Delegates:** Ministers : Rev. K. Gehrels & Rev. D. Brown  
 Min. Alts: Rev. M. Miedema & Rev. P. Heerema  
 Elders : H. Boersma & S. Cook  
 Eld. Alts : B. Berghout & J. Bosman

<b>C.Y.M.T.</b>	: Rev. J. Boer	2	M11
<b>Stated Clerk</b>	: vacant		
<b>B. of Seaway Min.</b>	: A. Mulder	2	M11
	: M. Bastian	2	M11
	: pastor needed		
	: Alt. needed		

Art. 7 **CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORT:**

- Rev. D. Tigchelaar reports for this committee;
- the delegates have received the printed report;
- Rev. Tigchelaar leads the delegates through the whole report, focusing on the 4 main parts;
- he answers a number of questions;

**MOTION:** that C.E.C. receive this report for **direction.....**

**Carried**

- the chairman thanks Rev. Tigchelaar and the committee for all their work;

Art. 8 **CALVIN COLLEGE:**

- Martin Mudde, boardmember of Calvin College, reports;
- he thanks classis for the opportunity and time he received to report;
- he brings greetings from Dr. G. Byker, the president of the college;
- Martin Mudde uses a printed report to inform the delegates of what is happening at Calvin College, highlighting some important events and matters;
- he stresses that it is of the utmost importance that Calvin College stays closely connected with the CRC and remains to be 'reformed';
- the chairman thanks Martin for his report and his work for us;

Art. 9 **DIACONAL MINISTRIES CANADA:** [see her notes]

- Katie Karsten reports for this ministry and she has set up a display table in the diningroom downstairs;
- D.M.C. is a network of people across Canada who are passionate about showing Christ's love to communities through congregations;
- its focus is to inspire and equip deacons to carry out their calling;
- deacons must give leadership in being Christ's hands and feet to the hurting of the church;
- she stresses the importance that the pastors and elders support the local deacons in their work;
- she also mentions that C.E.C. has not had a diaconal developer for a number of years now;
- the chairman thanks Katie for her report and also encourages the delegates to visit her display downstairs;

Art. 10 **MINISTRY to SEAFARERS in MONTREAL:**

- Michelle DePooter, chaplain of the Seafarers, reports for this ministry;
- she thanks the delegates and churches for 1800 Christmas parcels they received last fall;
- she enjoyed meeting the folks who delivered all those parcels to the Centre and showing them around;
- approx. 40 seafarers enjoyed the Christmas Eve Service;
- Michelle visited ships and saw the joy of the seamen when they opened the parcels;
- she shares with the delegates that she got married in Mumbai, India, on Feb. 12!
- the chairman thanks Michelle for all the good work she and her helpers are doing;

Art. 11 **DEVOTIONS:** the following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Athens, Charlottetown, Brockville; Elder M. Geertsema of Brockville prays for these churches and also for the lunch that has been prepared;

12:30 – 1:20 =====A delicious lunch is served by a group of kind and ambitious members of Calvary CRC =====

Art. 12 **DEVOTIONS:**

-at 1:25 p.m. the chairman **announces** that we will try hard to complete the main tasks of this meeting of CEC in ONE day

- due to the impending snowstorm, and he mentions that a few changes have been made in delegates: Eld. G. Luimes has left, Rev. P. Heerema is being replaced by Eld. S. Cook for a few hours, and Rev. D. Tigchelaar has also left;
- the following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Cornwall, Fredericton, Dixons Cors. Rev. C. Witten leads in prayer for these churches and asks for strength and a blessing on the afternoon session;

Art. 13 **WORLD MISSIONS:**

- Mr. John Rustenburg, our local representative for World Missions, reports;
- he thanks the chairman for the opportunity to speak on behalf of World Missions;
- he regrets that we have no set-up for a D.V.D. that he brought along;
- he notes that the center of Christianity is now in Africa, and missionaries from S. & Central America and Asia are going to e.g. Europe;
- the strength of the CRC is in its Teaching;

- John is promoting the work of World Missions and emphasizes that Christ is working worldwide;
- the delegates and the churches can find lots of information on the webpage of World Missions;
- he answers a number of questions, and is thanked by the chairman;

Art. 14 **C.Y.M.C. (Class. Youth Min. Com. :**

- Rev. B. Barr** leads the delegates through his carefully and neatly prepared report;

-**Rev. J. Boer** refers to the letter sent by Rev. Bruce Adema to the delegates of CEC, and he introduces the recommendations found in the report;

**Motion:** that CEC approve that the new '**Terms of Reference**' presented to C.E.C. replace the previous mandate, including our support and participation in the newly formed Ontario Youth Ministry Team .....**Carried**

-**Tamara DeWaard** reports that there will be a '**Special Needs SERVE (SNS) week**' from July 11-17 at Calvin CRC in Ottawa. This is for youth who have special needs (ages 14-26). The emphasis will be on work and worship. The participants will do work tailored to their ability. For many it will be their first chance to serve others instead of being served! Each night they will come together for worship. Each participant with special needs will be matched with a peer mentor. She asks all of us to keep them in our prayers.

- Rev. J. Boer** stresses to all of us the importance of serving, of ministering, and of being compassionate;
- the chairman thanks them for the work they are doing for the youth of CEC;

Art. 15 **C.R.W.R.C. - IDA KAASTRA MUTOIGO :**

- Ida thanks the churches in C.E.C. for their support, especially the deacons, elders, and volunteers;
- As a relatively small denomination we are doing great things: working with 118 partners, mainly churches and Christian organizations, we have been able to impact the lives of over 500,000 people in 2486 communities. In addition to this, many more people have been helped by our relief program: over 800,000! CRWRC also helps with CFGB (Can.Foodgrains Bank) and CIDA (Can. Intern.'l Dev. Agency), where donations from CRC members can be matched even at a 4 : 1 ratio;
- She encourages the churches to be involved in the HIV/Aids "Embrace Aids" campaign.
- She is requesting names of people that could be suitable for sitting on the board of CRWRC as members-at-large.
- The chairman thanks Ida for the great job she and CRWRC are doing.

Art. 16 **DISABILITY CONCERNS:**

- John Cook of Ottawa-Calvary, our classical advocate, describes a new D.C. initiative: some years ago several Ottawa churches requested training materials for ministry to families dealing with disabilities or chronic health impairments. A new D.C. guidebook with a workshop for such care is now available through **Faith Alive**.
- John urges the churches to use this material and he offers to give the workshop;
- he also notes that 8 churches in CEC do not have a 'congregation disability advocate', as requested by D.C.;
- he urges these churches to appoint such advocates;
- John is thanked for his presentation and work for this cause;

Art. 17 **SAFE CHURCH TEAM:**

- Sarah Cook, chairperson of this TEAM, reports for the S.C.T.;
- she mentions that currently 15 of the 19 churches in CEC are represented on the TEAM;
- they meet 1 or 2 times each year and the agenda lists:
  - introduction of new resources towards: a. prevention, b. education, c. liability issues;
  - training workshops for S.C.T. members;
  - reports/questions/concerns from SCT members;
- on May 2 & 3 Beth Swagman will provide a 2-day Advisory Panel training workshop for CEC, in Ottawa.
- Plans for the fall meeting are focusing on two areas: understanding the screening procedures, and response of church leaders, especially those working with young adults and children, to allegations or suspicions of abuse;
- the chairman thanks Sarah for her report to classis and for the work the TEAM is doing;

Art. 18 **DEVOTIONS:**

- The following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Truro, Kemptville;
- Rev. B. Ponsen leads in prayer for these churches;

3:10-3:25 p.m. **COFFEE/TEA BREAK**

Art. 19 **DEVOTIONS:**

The following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Renfrew and Williamsburg;  
-Rev. J. Noordhof leads in prayer for these churches;

Art. 20 **CLASSICAL HOME MISSIONS COM.-West:**

-**Rev. H. Vanderbeek:** he mentions that the committee does not recommend Pierre Simard for Church Planting. The assessment was carried out in French using a reliable and recognized test for Church Planters; He further notes the Home Missions is interested in planting a church in Quebec, and they will explore ministry possibilities in Quebec by working with First CRC of Montreal;

-**Sheila Murphy:** Sheila lists activities, such as: many meetings, making contacts, production of a mandate, helping in organizing a Youth Evangelism Day in Williamsburg, promoting and participating in the Evangelism for Normal Churches conference in Georgetown, and participating in the task-force to establish Ottawa Calvary's emerging Living Hope Church in Metcalfe;

-**Ron Kok:** Ron is a Ministry Associate at Calvary CRC who works with and for the Living Hope Community Church in Metcalfe near Ottawa. About half of the attendants are CRC, and the other half comes from a variety of backgrounds. Ron shares some of his experiences in and with this emerging group;

-**Rev. J. Boer:** Jake mentions that Montreal CRC has been working closely with CHMC-West for a possible church plant in Quebec City with Pierre Simard as church planter, but that venture has been put on hold. They are now considering the possibility of an outreach ministry for disadvantaged and street youth in Quebec City, with Pierre Simard as leader of that outreach ministry.

Art. 21 **CLASSICAL HOME MISSIONS COM.-East:**

-Rev. P. Vanderkooy reports for this committee;  
-he notes that the committee has been re-established and they are planning to educate and equip the Maritime congregations in the area of outreach and evangelism;  
-he also mentions that Sheila Murphy has helped a few of their churches to establish goals for future direction in the area of outreach;  
-a meeting in May, 2008, with Ron Nydam in the area of People Care, had to be cancelled due to Ron's illness;

Art. 22 **TREASURER:**

-Eva Reitsma, treasurer of CEC, reports for the F.A.C. of Classis;  
-she presents the financial statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2007, which have been reviewed by the firm of Craig Keen Despatie Markell LLP of Cornwall;  
-she also has made available to the churches a summary of the funds the churches submitted to CEC and CRCNA;  
-she notes that funds sent directly to CRCNA by the churches are only included if she has been informed of that;  
-the chairman thanks her for her diligent work;

Art. 23 **CLASSICAL MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM (C.M.L.T.):**

- Rev. John Noordhof, chairman of this committee, reports for this committee;  
- at present our classis has no students at Calvin Theological Seminary;  
- the committee is looking for students to support;  
- the committee keeps in touch with students CEC supported and who are now serving as pastors;  
- at present we are assisting Karen Norris in her search for an ordained position;  
- the committee is working on a new mandate in accordance with the decision of Synod;

Art. 24 **REGIONAL PASTORS:**

-Rev. Ken Gehrels has no report for the western part of CEC at this time;  
-Rev. David Vroege, Regional Pastor for the eastern section of CEC, mentions that the pastors of the Maritimes meet every other month for lunch and he thanks Rev. Paul Vanderkooy for organizing these meetings;  
-They still hope to meet in May even though their speaker Rev. Ron Nydam is unable to be present due to illness;

Art. 25 **CHURCH COUNSELORS:**

-Rev. David Vroege reports for Fredericton CRC which is vacant;  
-the calling committee is looking into profiles of a number of pastors;  
-Sheila Murphy's help and work has been much appreciated by that congregation;  
-the congregation continues the work of ministry;

Art. 26 **CLASSICAL CREDENTIALS:**

- Rev. Paul Vanderkooy reports for this committee and he lists the following areas of concern as shown on the credentials:
  - a. church education – how to teach the world and life view we cherish;
  - b. elder training – include pointers on how to communicate effectively between council and congregation;
  - c. church discipline – how to love the sinner but hate the sin and what to do about inactive members;
  - d. promoting evangelism – how to enfold seekers and encourage the congregation to get involved;
  - e. ministering to and retaining the young adults;
  - f. continued concern over marriage wellness;
  - g. what to do with the evening service;
  - h. Fredericton is asking for prayer support as they seek a new pastor;

Art. 27 **BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

- Rev. Paul Vanderkooy reports as Boardmember of the B.O.T. of the CRCNA;
- the board meets 3 times each year;
- Paul uses the BOT Highlights to focus on some matters;

Art. 28 **CORRESPONDENCE COM.:**

- Rev. M. Veenema reports for this committee;
- the committee dealt with a submission from Mr. & Mrs. S. VanderZwaag, members of Haliac's ANCRC, dealing with its Overture re: Baptized Members and the Lord's Supper;
- it is noted that this submission was also given to the Advisory Com. dealing with this Overture;
- the committee mentions that Classis does not have a provision for dealing with correspondence from individuals unless it is by way of an appeal vs. a decision made by a local church council;
- the committee, however, did not ignore the letter, and will write a letter to the couple informing them of the decision of classis re: this overture;
- the S.C. will send the letter to Mr. & Mrs. VanderZwaag;

Art. 29 **OVERTURES Pre-Adv. Com.:**

- the vice-chairman leads this part of the meeting since the chairman, Rev. D. Vroege, is the pastor of one of the churches which overtured classis;
- Rev. J. Noordhof reports for the Adv. Com. dealing with the 2 Overtures from Halifax and Kentville; the Adv. Com. recommends that CEC NOT accede to the 2 overtures;
- since the Overtures take precedence, Rev. M. Veenema proceeds to present the overture from Kentville;
- Classis agrees that the vote on the Kentville Overture will also be the answer of Classis to the Halifax Overture as its request is in essence the same as Kentville's;
- a lengthy discussion follows and classis votes on a motion to accede to the overture of Kentville, but the **motion is**..... **Defeated;**
- it is suggested that the matter of Baptized Members Partaking of the Lord's Supper be discussed in a seminar at a future meeting of CEC..... **So Ruled**
- the chairman thanks the committee members for their work;

Art. 30 **WORDS OF APPRECIATION to Stated Clerk:**

- Rev. C. Witten, chairman of C.I.C. addresses the Stated Clerk, James Kooistra who is retiring as S.C. after 15 ½ years as S.C. of CEC;
- Rev. Witten mentions "that CEC has been blessed to have James Kooistra serve us for such a long term. The meetings and work of classis have been run exceptionally well during his tenure as S.C".
- On behalf of Classis Rev. Witten expresses deep appreciation and gratitude to James Kooistra for all his hard work, wishing him well as he continues to serve the Lord;
- and he hands the parting brother a token of appreciation, a gift certificate, and the delegates show their appreciation with a standing applause;
- Jim then expresses his thanks to classis for what it has given him and how the delegates over the years have enriched his life, and for the joys he received while doing this Kingdom work;

Art. 31 **NEXT MEETING:**

- Date: Oct. 24 & 25, 2008;
- Location: Bethel CRC in Brockville;
- Chairman: Rev. B. Ponsen

**Art. 32 DEVOTIONS:**

- the following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Barrhaven, Ottawa-Calvary, Ottawa-Calvin;
- Rev. K. Gehrels leads in prayer for these churches;

**Art. 33 DEVOTIONS:**

- the following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Milford, Halifax, Montreal;
- Rev. J. Boer leads in prayer for these churches;

**Art. 34 TRANSCRIPTION of MINUTES:**

- Rev. J. Boer reports for the com. that they checked the minutes of the Oct. 26/07 meeting of CEC in Truro, and that they have found them to be 'in good order';
- The chairman thanks the Com. and the Stated Clerk;

**Art. 35 CLOSING DEVOTIONS:**

- the following churches share some joys and concerns with the delegates: Kentville, Pembroke, Kanata;
- Rev. Mike Miedema of Kanata leads in prayer for these churches;

**Art. 35 CLOSING REMARKS (6:05 p.m.):**

- Chairman Rev. David Vroege thanks everybody for their help and cooperation, especially the Vice-Chairman and the Stated Clerk;
- Rev. H. Vanderbeek thanks the chairman for his able leadership;
- Rev. Vroege leads in a closing prayer.

**NEXT MEETING**

- Date: Oct. 24 & 25, 2008
- Location: Brockville
- Chairman: Rev. Ben Ponsen
- Due-date for Agenda Materials: Sept.12, 2008

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