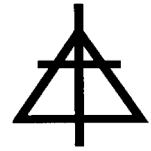


# MINUTES



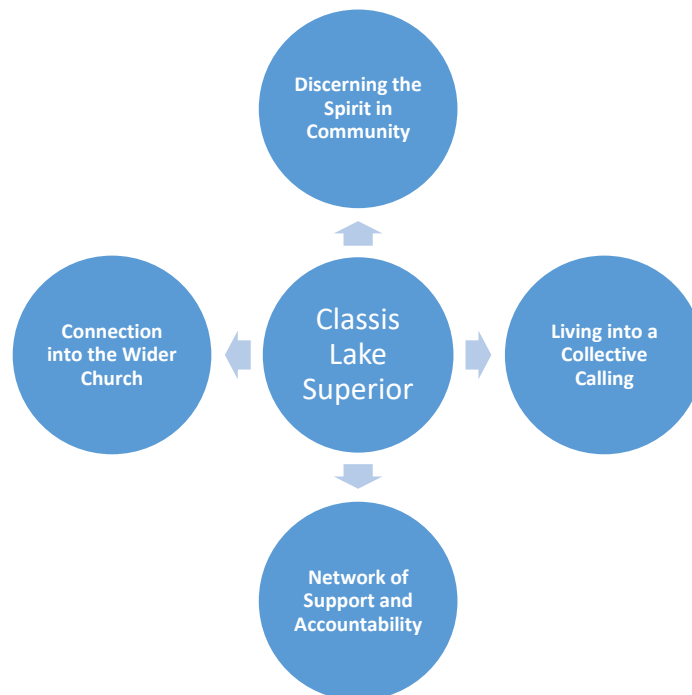
**OF CLASSIS LAKE SUPERIOR  
OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
Meeting In Person on September 18-19, 2023  
At Lake Geneva Christian Center,  
605 Birch Ave, Alexandria, MN 56308**

## Who we are:

Classis Lake Superior is a covenanted fellowship of churches that seek to be faithful Reformed expressions of the body of Christ, honoring the triune God through worship and prayer, making disciples for Jesus Christ, and proclaiming and portraying His love in their communities and the world.

## The Roles of Classis:

We help each other fulfill our calling to be Christ's Church in the following ways:



## I. Convening of Classis

### Art. 1 Officers

President: Rev. Steve Zwart  
 Vice-President: Rev. Brian Bolkema  
 Stated Clerk: Rev. Henry Gunnink

### Art. 2 Opening and Organization

2.1 At 2:50 pm Chair Steve Zwart led in opening devotions. In keeping with the pre-classis teaching on cooperating with the Holy Spirit, and using a lectio Divina approach he read the words of Isaiah 61, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me,” several times, emphasizing successive words and let us catch the different meanings that would stand out. He then opened Classis with prayer to that Sovereign Lord.

2.2 Vice Chair, Brian Bolkema, called the roll

<u>Church/Guest/Deputy/Functionary</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tues</u>
Baldwin, WI	Dan De Graff	Pastor	√	√
	Jim Lokker	Elder	√	√
	Gary Fern	Deacon	√	√
Bethel Princeton, MN	Mark Brouwer	Pastor	√	√
	Rob Braun	Elder	√	√
	Gene Finch	Deacon	√	√
Bethlehem, Thunder Bay, ONT	Marg Rekman	Pastor	√	√
	Jennifer Drost	Elder	√	√
Bridgewood, Savage MN	David Huizenga	Pastor	√	√
	Gaye Rieger	Elder	√	√
	none	Deacon		
Brooten, MN	Rick Krasky	Elder	√	√
	Ken Visser	Elder	√	√
	Tyler Tensen;	Deacon	√	√
Bunde, MN	Joel De Boer	Pastor	√	√
	Brandon Meyer	Elder	√	√
	Tyler Daugherty	Deacon		√
Calvary, Edina, MN	Nick Van Beek	Pastor	√	√
	none	Elder		
	Rosanne Van Marion	Deacon	√	√
Covenant, Winnipeg, MB	Ben Verkerk	Pastor	√	√
	Hank VandeKraats	Elder	√	√
	Greg VanLeeuwen	Deacon	√	√
Emden, Renville, MN	David Zigterman	Pastor	√	√
	David Daugherty	Elder	√	√
	Heather Link	Deacon		√
Emo, ON	Ed Heerema	Elder	√	√

	Gerald Veldhuisen	Elder	√	√
Faith, New Brighton, MN	Travis Deur	Pastor	√	√
	Ruben Hortensius	Elder	√	√
	Dave Breems	Deacon	√	√
First, Brandon, MB	Marina Nederlof	Elder	√	√
	Ben Wolters	Deacon	√	√
First, Thunder Bay, ONT	Peter Gysen	Elder	√	√
	Ron Perrier.	Deacon	√	√
Good News Fellowship, Wnpg MB	No Delegates			
Grace, Inver Grove Heights, MN	None	Elder		
	Judy Gunnink	Deacon	√	√
Hancock, MN	David Dick	Pastor		
	Jack Van Eps	Elder	√	√
Hope, Thunder Bay, ON	NO DELEGATES			
Pease, MN	Duane (Dewey) Droogsma	Elder	√	√
	Julee Moorlag	Elder	√	√
	Jayne Kiel	Deacon	√	√
Raymond, MN	Clyde Slagter	Elder	√	√
	Bennett Bonnema	Elder	√	√
	Doug Zimmer	Deacon	√	√
Rock of Life, Willmar, MN	Les Kuiper	Pastor	√	√
	Larry Stulen	Elder	√	√
Transcona, Winnipeg, MB	Brian Bolkema	Pastor	√	√
	John Boorsma	Elder	√	√
	Andrew Steendam	Deacon	√	√
Trinity Hill, Chanhassen, MN	Kyle Sandison	Pastor		
	Callie Larson	Elder	√	√
Unity, Prinsburg, MN	Steven Zwart	Pastor	√	√
	Evan TeBrake	Elder	√	√
	Wilson Brouwer	Deacon	√	√
<b>Classical Functionaries</b>				
Treasurer	Kristi Santema		√	√
Stated Clerk	Henry Gunnink		√	√
<b>Synodical Deputies</b>				
Iakota	Clifford Hoekstra			√
North Central	Russel Boersma			√
Heartland	Brian Hofman			√
<b>Presenters</b>				
Candidate	Matthew Guichelaar,		√	√
Pre-Classis seminar	Mary Sterenberg		√	
Spouse	Bruce Sterenberg		√	
Thrive	Lesli van Milligen		√	√
Prayer Coordinator/Mobilizer	Sonya Cahais		√	√
Regional Catalyzer, Thrive	Trudy Ash		√	

<b>Other Guests</b>				
Unity Youth Director	Travis Berry		√	√
Visitor	Willy Krahnke		√	√
Candidate, future pastor for Grace	Joseph Hwang		√	√
Spouse	Angela Gysen		√	√
Spouse	Jack Van Marion		√	√
The Broken	Chris Alle			√
New Life SEA	Phonh S.		√	√
CIC	Carol Rudie		√	√
Dordt University	Wayne Kobes		√	

2.3 Chair declared classis duly constituted.

2.4 Vice Chair welcomes guests

2.5 First time delegates sign the Covenant of Office-bearers. (1 pastor, 5 elders, 8 deacons)

Chair gives a succinct overview and orientation for Classis.

1. Classis is a deliberative body. We gather to discuss, hear, pray, and decide together. He encouraged elders and deacons to enter into the process.
2. We have teams, officers now but once we adjourn, we no longer exist deliberatively. We also have ongoing teams or committees. CIC is the executive team to carry out business between meetings.
3. CHMC – both sides of borders with ministries beneath them, cf. p 8 of Agenda.
4. CMLT – re helping persons toward ordained ministry;
5. Finance – unique set up, includes all CIC plus 3 others. It is to process all financial requests and disbursements.
6. Safe church – inoperative at the moment.
7. Motions—come from teams, and councils, and from delegates to its constituted meetings.
8. Other agencies—denominational, etc. we are partners with these agencies.
9. Other personnel – church visitors, counsellors, RP's, carry out specific tasks.

2.6 The following Committees had been appointed to assist with Classis business:

- 2.6.1 Credentials: Trinity Hill, Bunde
- 2.6.2 Overtures/Deliberative Matters: Baldwin, Bethlehem
- 2.6.3 Balloting: Raymond, Bunde
- 2.6.4 Classical Expense Committee: Renville, Brooten

2.7 Devotions

- a. Monday afternoon Carol Veldman Rudie closed session with prayer.
  - b. Tuesday morning Pastor Nick Van Beek read from Galatians 5 re the Fruit of the Spirit and opened the session with prayer.
  - c. Tuesday morning session was closed with prayer by Vice Chair, Brian Bolkema.
  - d. Tuesday afternoon session was opened with the testimonial video and ministry update from Hope Centre Ministries of Winnipeg.
3. Other Monday activities
- 3.1 Beginning at 10:30 am. Chairman Steve Zwart introduced our pre-Classis Seminar leaders, David Huizenga and Mary Sterenberg. They co-led two sessions on “Cooperating with and growing your church in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

3.2 Evening worship time

a. Pastor Joel De Boer accompanied Pastors David Huizenga and Mary Sterenberg as they presented and led a time of interactive worship. We joined in singing several hymns and songs interspersed with reading from John 11 and various prayers. Congregational delegates were asked to pair or group up with other congregational delegates, listen for the guiding of the Spirit in what to pray for each other and pronounce the blessing of Jesus over each other’s congregations.

4. Schedule

4.1. Followed as presented in the agenda, except for Tuesday when the Chair ruled that the lunch hour would be shortened by 15 minutes.

**In keeping with a decision to be more intentionally aware of how our activities reflect the four roles of Classis, the minutes of Classis actions such as reporting, deliberating, deciding, etc. are here grouped according to which role they best describe.**

**CLASSIS IS...**

**A Place of Discerning the Spirit in Community:** *When classis delegates gather, they are to discern God’s will with others on behalf of their larger church community. Classis, as a deliberative assembly, is a community where this discernment happens.*

**II. Conducting of Classis business and deliberations**

**Art. 3. Discernment Activities**

**A. Examination- for Candidate Matthew Guichelaar**

1. Synodical Deputies Pastor Cliff Hoekstra, Iakota; Russel Boersma, North Central IA; and Brian Hofman, Heartland were welcomed.

2. Examination

Note: As required by ROP, the clerk did receive the required documents, letter of call, letter of acceptance and certificate of church membership, all of which were in order.

2.1 Practica examination was led by Pastor Ben Verkerk

The Candidate is asked to introduce himself.

After extensive questioning, followed by questions from Synodical deputies and the floor, a

**MOTION** to proceed is ..... **CARRIED.**

Synodical Deputies ..... **CONCUR.**

2.2 Sermon and service Evaluation – Pastor Marg Rekman and elder, Jennifer Drost

The message entitled, “Becoming shrewd servants of God,” on the assigned text of Luke 16:1-16, was delivered on September 17<sup>th</sup> in the First CRC of Thunder Bay. They also

evaluated the other required sermons based on an OT and Heidelberg catechism Lord’s Day.

After reading the evaluation and opportunity for questions from deputies and floor, a **MOTION** to proceed was .....**CARRIED.**  
Synodical Deputies .....**CONCUR.**

- 2.3 Examination in the area of Biblical and Theological Judgement, Competence and Soundness was led by Pastor Dan DeGraff.
- 2.4 Questions from Synodical deputies and the floor are entertained.
- 3. **MOTION** to admit Matthew David Guichelaar to the Ministry of the Word in the CRCNA is moved and supported.
  - 3.1. Chair leads in Prayer for Holy Spirit’s presence and working and thanks for evidence of that working in the life of the candidate.
  - 3.2. The chair declares executive session.  
Non-delegates/non-officer bearers are requested to leave.
  - 3.3. Deliberation takes place re the examination and motion to admit.
  - 3.4. Deputies leave.
  - 3.5. Chair calls for voice vote. All are in favor.  
**MOTION** to admit is .....**CARRIED.**  
Upon return, the **SYNODICAL DEPUTIES** ..... **CONCUR.**
  - 3.6. Chair declares executive session over and guests are invited back in.
- 4. Chair, Steve Zwart, invites Candidate Matthew David Guichelaar to come forward. He informs him of Classis’s decision to admit him into the Ministry of the Word, congratulates him and presents him with a Classical Diploma and offers a prayer of thanks.
  - 4.1. Delegates and guests are invited to offer their personal congratulations.
  - 4.2. The ordination service for Candidate Matthew David Guichelaar is set for Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup> in the First Christian Reformed Church of Thunder Bay, ON.

## **B. Synod Report**

- 1. Verbal reports on Synod:
  - Gaye Rieger, elder from Bridgewood –spoke of the wonderful times of unity and worship during the week but grieved that things seemed to kind of fall apart and delegates were not able to worship together at the end.
  - Willy Krahnke – ethnic advisor on committee 7 with Steve re Human Sexuality which Re-affirmed Synod 22’s definition of unchastity. Spoke of how well Steve reported on behalf the committee on the floor of Synod.
  - Steve – diverse approaches present but a surprising amount of unity in spite of that. A great deal of prayer and worship. Cited Dick Moris that America has a contempt problem, that prejudices others and shuts down communication. No time to listen to each other having set aside our prejudices. Committee did not do that but listened to each other and hear each other, or be ready to say to the other group, “I have your back” on the floor. Minority and Majority Reports took extra time, but there were logistical issues as well brought on by being located in the chapel instead of in the Covenant Fine Arts Center.
  - Trudy Ash alerted Classis to First Steps ... a response to heeding the admonition of Synod to minister well in our communities to those who identify as LGBTQ+. There are

churches interested in forming a cohort to discuss what next steps or first steps look like. Contact Trudy if interested in participating.

### C. Balloting and Nominations

1. Chair has clerk review the ballot prepared by CIC with Classis on Monday afternoon to familiarize delegates with nominees and positions still needing nominees. 2 more names are added to nominees for CIC.
2. Tuesday morning a printed ballot is handed out. Upon tabulation the following persons and terms are approved and take effect as per the regulations:
  - 2.1 Vice Chair for the meeting of Classis on March 4-5, 2024  
Since the tally did not produce one with a majority, a **MOTION** to accept the one with the highest tally, viz. Ben Verkerk is ..... **CARRIED.**
  - 2.2. Functionaries of Classis:
    1. CIC:  
Joel De Boer for 1<sup>st</sup> term from September 2023 through August 2026.
    2. Finance Committee:  
Tim Ribbens for 1st term from January 2024 to December 2026.
    3. COD:  
William Krahnke for 1<sup>st</sup> term July 1, 24 to June 30, 27.  
A. Henry Eygenraam received Canadian votes for 2<sup>nd</sup> term July 1, 24 to June 27 in his role of COD Canadian Delegate at large.
    4. Church Visitors:  
Central: Joel De Boer for 1st term, Sept 23 thru Aug 26.
    5. Regional Pastors were adopted by voice vote for another term, Sept 23 to Sept 26.  
For Canada – Evert Busink,  
For US - Henry Gunnink.

**MOTION** to destroy the ballots is ..... **CARRIED.**

### D. Licensure to Exhort Renewal Requests

1. Endorsements of requests for renewal were received for the following:
  - a. Via credentials
    - 1) Carol Veldman Rudie – Calvary CRC
    - 2) Marlin Breems – Unity CRC
    - 3) Rob Braun – Bethel CRC
    - 4) Jerry Van Someren – Baldwin CRC
  - b. Via letter/email communication
    - 1) Wendy Widder Huisken – Grace CRC
    - 2) Leshia Verkerk – Covenant CRC

2. **MOTION** to approve requests to renew license to exhort for

Rob Braun, Marlin Breems, Wendy Widder Huisken, Carol Veldman Rudie, Jerry Van Someren, and Leshia Verkerk is ..... **CARRIED.**

The clerk reminded the councils to come with “hearty” recommendations and words of affirmation in the licensure process as a means of support and encouragement in this ministry.

## CLASSIS IS...

### **A Network of Support and Accountability:**

*Because disciples are made to live in relationships,  
church leaders need a community of churches  
with which to share joys and struggles, to be encouraged and challenged.*

## **Art. 4 Reports of Committees and Functionaries**

### 1. Classical Interim Committee – Brian Bolkema, chair

- a. Written report received;
- b. A verbal update included that CIC:
  - 1) Appointed Pastor Marg Rekman as church counselor for Hope CRC;
  - 2) Recommends Classis accepted Emo’s request to host the March 4-5, 2024 meeting of Classis, providing reasonable accommodations can be made;

**MOTION** to hold March 4-5, 2024 Classis meeting in Emo if possible is **CARRIED.**

- 3) Recommends Classis set Monday October 23, 6:30 pm for a hybrid Classis meeting, at either Bridgewood or Unity, with same officers and credentials as for this current meeting, for the examination of Candidate Joe Hwang in answer to request of Grace CRC. **MOTION** so to meet is ..... **CARRIED.**

**MOTION** to approve the work of the CIC is ..... **CARRIED.**

### 2. Stated Clerk

- a. Written report received;
- b. A verbal update included:
  - 1. Appreciation for the privilege of assisting churches and ministries to serve;
  - 2. Reminder notice to direct all communication to Alternate Clerk, Les Kuiper and/or CIC chair, Brian Bolkema during the next month while he recuperates from heart surgery.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the clerk is ..... **CARRIED.**

### 3. Church Visitor Reports:

North Region: Thunder Bay/Emo  
Fred Rekman, Marno Retief, and Ben Verkerk, Alt. no report

North Region: Winnipeg, Brandon  
Ben Verkerk, Brian Bolkema, and Marno Retief, Alt. no report



Central Region--Minnesota

David Zigterman, Aaron Greydanus, and Don Grussing, Alt. no report

East Region

Dan DeGraff, Dave Huizenga, Jim Busscher 1st Alt and Les Kuiper 2nd Alt no report

3.1 Oversight Committees

a. Faith Oversight Committee

Dave Huizenga, Dan DeGraff and Nick Van Beek .....written report.  
If you know of any pastor who is specially gifted and trained to work with Faith let the committee or Faith know.

b. Adam and Erin Stout oversight committee

Stan De Vries, Lisa DeKam, Matt DeKam, and Gaye Rieger .....written report.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the church visitors is .....**CARRIED.**

4. Church Counselor Reports

- 1. Brandon CRC - Brian Bolkema .....written report received.
- 2. Brooten CRC - Steve Zwart .....written report received.
- 3. Bunde CRC - Steve Zwart .....written report received.
- 4. First CRC, Thunder Bay, ON – Marg Rekman .....written report received.
- 5. GNF CRC - Ben VerKerk ..... no report.
- 6. Grace CRC – Nick Van Beek .....written report received.
- 7. Pease CRC - Mark Brouwer .....written report received.
- 8. Rock of Life CRC - Steve Zwart .....written report received.

Chair, Pastor Steve led in prayer for the vacant churches.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the church counselors is .....**CARRIED.**

At the request of Raymond delegates, **MOTION** to appoint Pastor Joel De Boer as counselor for Raymond CRC is ..... **CARRIED.**

At the request of Pease delegates, a **MOTION** to grant Classical appointments to the Pease CRC beginning in November is ..... **CARRIED.**

5. Credentials Committee Report - Trinity Hills CRC, Bunde CRC

Report indicated that all credentials received were properly filled out, being signed and dated as completed in council meetings.

Several items were included under the Article 41 Questions. The committee contacted the Baldwin pastor re their communication for clarity re intent and desired outcomes for discussion in Classis, etc. They sought to help organize this communication for them in order to utilize the discussion time of Classis better and deal with the actual requests appropriately.

Question 1: In what aspect of your ministry would you like the assistance of Classis?

**1. Pastoral Vacancy Requests and Thanks:**

- First CRC, Thunder Bay - Regarding their vacancy, would Classis please offer any recommendations for a Pastor.
- Grace CRC, Inver Grove Heights - Seeking Classis assistance for the process to examine recently called minister to the office of minister of the Word.
- Faith CRC, New Brighton - Thanks Classis for guidance during time with transition by Pastor Nick, Dan, and Dave. They welcome continued support.

**2. Other Assistance by Classis:**

- Covenant CRC - Requests of Classis to give assistance involved with the ministry aspects of Church Planting / Church Plant Parenting.
- (Will discuss along with CHMC-CA reporting time)
- Grace CRC Inver Grove Heights requests classis to offer prayers for new pastor, church staff, and spiritual vitality.

At this point Pastor Joel De Boer led in prayer for these churches and needs expressed.

Question 2: What aspect of ministry would you like to discuss in Classis?

**1. Pastoral Care:**

- Covenant CRC requests classis to discuss Best Practices for Loving your LGBTQ+ neighbor(s) in light of the findings of the HSR and Synod 2022's statement regarding same-sex sex in HC 108,109.

Responses:

- Leslie Van Milligin informed Classis that at the end of October special materials will be coming out that will facilitate productive conversations on this topic.
- Joel suggested discussions during break times.
- Chair entertained up to 3 concise, productive, tangible things

Pastor Nick Van Beek told how, prior to covid, the Calvary Edina council spent over a year reviewing the content of the Human Sexuality Report while also having extensive conversations about how to apply the ideas and content in their context. The times of discussions went beyond the biblical and theological to the pastoral and the personal, giving the leaders, including youth leaders, confidence to minister to those struggling with their sexual identity. It was helpful and well received.

## **2. Church Renewal / Revitalization:**

- Classis should ask Bridgewood to give a brief statement on what they were thinking about regarding a desire for Classis to discuss Ministry / Church Revitalization. Classis leadership could then decide whether it should be considered for discussion at this Classis.

## **3. Response to Synod 2022-23 on Human Sexuality for Confessional Unity:**

Baldwin CRC – their large paragraph is summarized here for presenting to Classis.

1. Call to align and maintain our Biblical & Confessional understanding on Human Sexuality  
*The Council of Baldwin CRC urges Classis Lake Superior and its congregations to align and maintain our biblical and confessional understanding of human sexuality.*

Grounds:

- a) It is vital to our witness for Christ since the gospel calls us to repentance and holiness.
  - b) In signing the Covenant of Office bearers, we covenant that the doctrines and confessions:
    - fully agree with God's Word;
    - define the way we understand Scripture;
    - direct the way we live in response to the Gospel of Jesus;
    - distinguish us as Reformed in the larger body of Christ;
    - declares a grateful expression of faith whereby we promise to be formed and governed by them; and
    - defend and promote these doctrines faithfully conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.
  - c) Benefits the trust in Classis because it is grounded in a Covenant before God and to each other to be united in these beliefs.
2. Thus, we urge this to be considered regarding:
    - a) Those who are nominated for and serving on local Councils, Delegates to Classis meetings, Office-bearers and & lay-members nominated for and serving as functionaries of Classis or Classical & Denominational committees, boards, and agencies.
    - b) Individuals recommended or currently licensed to exhort, Commissioned Pastors positions, and Ordained Ministers of the Word & Sacraments.

Grounds:

- a) Synod 1976 stated:  
*No one is free to decide for oneself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards. In the event that such a question should arise, the decision of the assemblies of the church shall be sought and acquiesced in”*  
(Supplement Art. 5.A.3).

- b) Synod, as the highest assembly, has considered opposing views, have questioned through overtures and floor discussions, and it is time for protests and resistance to end.
- c) Synod 2023 has instructed, *All classes to guide into compliance the office-bearers of their constituent churches who publicly reject the biblical guidelines affirmed by Synod 2022 regarding same-sex relationships.*

**Call to Classis:** For individuals currently serving who oppose the decisions, repentance and compliance or voluntary resignation is required. We encourage the Classical Interim Committee to inquire about such things when it comes to future nominations. Congregations and Councils who continue to oppose our denominational confessional position on human sexuality, failing to repent and comply, are urged to begin the process of disaffiliation from the denomination.

**Response:**

**Chair** entertained comments but mentioned that it cannot be taken up as a motion as it would then be out of order because it did not come in early enough for the Agenda. But should Baldwin want clarity and direction about this, it can be taken up again in the March classis meeting. Otherwise, it shall be **Received for information** at this time. A question to keep in mind in dealing with this is “How can we do this with a unified voice?”

Question 3: Items of Information and Requests for Advice or Help of Classis:

**1. Renewal of License to Exhort:**

- Calvary CRC requests that Classis Lake Superior renew the License to Exhort for Carol Rudie
  - Bethel Princeton CRC requests that Classis renew the License to Exhort for Rob Braun
  - Unity CRC requests that Classis renew the License to Exhort for Marlin Breems
- [Note: see minutes above for approvals—HG]

Submitted to Classis, Sept. 19, 2023

Pastor Joel A. De Boer  
Pastor Kyle Sandison

**MOTION** to approve the work of the credentials committee is ..... **CARRIED.**

- 6. Regional Pastors reports – Evert Busink in Canada and Henry Gunnink in US.  
Henry Gunnink ..... written report received.  
Verbal update: Expressed thanks that he and his wife were able to meet with pastoral couples again, and that classis provides funds for being able to share hospitality with pastoral couples.

**MOTION** to approve the work of both regional pastors is..... **CARRIED.**

# CLASSIS IS...

## Living into a Collective Calling:

*At some point, churches that are in healthy relationships with one another will begin to ask how God might be calling them to serve their city or region together. Many ministry opportunities go beyond the ability of any one church. Some of these will be classis wide, while others may be in major urban centers of a large, geographically spread classis.*

### 1. Classis Home Missions Committee – US

1.1 Written report received.

1.2 Verbal update:

Chair, Dave Zigterman, reminded delegates of the importance of mission by reading paragraph 44 from Our World Belongs to God:

Following the apostles, the church is sent—  
sent with the gospel of the kingdom to make disciples of all nations, to feed the hungry, and to proclaim the assurance that in the name of Christ there is forgiveness of sin and new life for all who repent and believe—  
to tell the news that our world belongs to God.

In a world estranged from God, where millions face confusing choices, this mission is central to our being, for we announce the one name that saves.  
We repent of leaving this work to a few,  
we pray for brothers and sisters who suffer for the faith,  
and we rejoice that the Spirit is waking us to see our mission in God's world.

In his comments he also:

- encouraged churches to take advantage of the church revitalization funds available;
- acknowledged the struggles and blessings present in New Life SEA;
- indicated that we are getting a better grasp now of what oversight means with the Broken;
- noted that the efforts for revitalization of churches are developing; and
- expressed concern that CHMC seemed to have been left out of the communication loop when the Broken's finances were being figured out.

He presented the following:

**MOTION** to accept the updated language for Revitalization Funds Application Form is ..... **CARRIED.**

### **Application form will now read as follows:**

Church Revitalization Grant and Loan Fund

**Mandate:** The Church Revitalization Fund is to be distributed either as a grant following the below guidelines and application questions or distributed as an interest-free loan for specific projects or exploration thereof, directed at encouraging revitalization within established church in classis. Both grant and loan applications shall be facilitated and

brought to the floor of classis by the respective Home Missions Committees (US or Canada).

**Guidelines** for those wanting to apply for the Church Revitalization Fund

1. Who is eligible?  
Churches and church plants that are part of Classis Lake Superior in the **United States or Canada**.
2. What projects do we support?  
The goal of this grant is to enable churches to imagine how they can be more vital in the neighborhoods God has placed them in. To the degree that a project enables this revitalization, it will be considered.
3. What is not eligible?  
Maintenance cost and salaries that would ordinarily be paid by the church budget.
4. What is the grant amount?  
**Ordinarily**, 75% of the total cost to a maximum of \$5,000 per grant.
5. What are the expectations for those who complete a grant?  
Give an oral report to the CHMC committee explaining what was learned through the project. Also, a short video or slideshow documenting the project will be strongly encouraged.
6. How often can this grant be sought?  
Every three years a church may apply for grants totaling **ordinarily** \$5,000. Once a church has hit this limit, they must wait till the three-year cycle is completed to apply for a new grant. A church may apply for multiple grants during the three-year period, but the total should not ordinarily exceed \$5,000.

**Application questions**

1. Describe your project and how this will help your church revitalize?
2. Provide a timeline for your project
3. How do you envision your church in two years and how would receiving the grant affect that vision?
4. How do you envision your church in five years and how would receiving the grant affect that vision?
5. How much money are you requesting?
6. How will you evaluate the [effectiveness](#) of your plan?
7. Who will report to CHMC when this project is complete? (please provide contact information)

**Additional documents requested:**

1. If project requires bids, bids received
2. Proposed budget explaining how the funds will be used

The answers to these questions will be used by CHMC-US/CA to determine if your project meets the guidelines and determine how much money to award each church.

**If your project meets these guidelines, CHMC-US/CA will then propose at the next Classis that your church receive the asked for money.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Due to his ability to guide the committee as chair, a **MOTION** to add a third term to David Zigterman's tenure on CHMC-US is made and ..... **CARRIED.**

2. CHMC-US Supervised Ministries

a. The Broken -- Chris Alle

- 1) Written Report received
- 2) Verbal update:

This has been his worst year in ministry, but also has been one with the most personal growth and strengthening since he has experienced the losses of personal friends through suicide. When advice is given as to how ministry ought to be done, his prayers are that he may continue to be as innocent as a dove but wise as a serpent and to keep focused on Christ and not let distractions pull him off course. If anyone from Classis wants to see where Classis' money is going, he invites us to come hang out and see what's happening.

**MOTION** to approve the work of Chris with the Broken is ..... **CARRIED.**

- b. Prayer Coordinators – Central Region - Lowell Schwitters; East Region - Rob Braun  
Lowell expressed appreciation for David Huizenga and Mary Sterenberg's presentations on the Holy Spirit and Prayer. He urged pastors to teach congregations the necessary aspects of prayer so that in daily life it doesn't become merely a last resource we turn to for help. Prayer is the beginning of blessing from God. See Jeremiah 29:12

c. New Life SEA – Phonh Sinbondit

Since last Classis when things were so discouraging and he almost lost hope, God has answered prayers. He is now encouraging and teaching a new group of leaders. He believes the Lord will provide a new leadership team in the next few months. He does plan to step back slowly from ministry and take time off in January of the new year. He thanks us for our prayers.

**MOTION** to approve the work of Phonh with New Life is ..... **CARRIED.**

d. Youth Champion

- Travis Deur

Written report received.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the Youth Champion is ..... **CARRIED.**

Chair invites delegates to come forward to lay hands on Chris and Phonh and pray over and for them. Vice Chair Brian Bolkema offers this prayer including prayer for the noon meal.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the CHMC-US is ..... **CARRIED.**

**B. Home Missions Committee -- Canada**

Chair, Ben Verkerk

1. Ministries Supervised by CHMC-CA

a. The Gathering Place, Thunder Bay

- Yvonne Schenk, director

- 1) Written report received.
- 2) Verbal update.

As Yvonne could not attend, Sonya Cahais,- Canadian Prayer Mobilizer and board member for the Gathering Place, spoke for her and the Gathering Place. She shared stories of a woman who came and grew into faith, beginning to pray openly when she became a follower of Christ; of a young man wrestling with drug addiction whom they welcomed and served; and of a woman who came to a place in her walk where she now is singing her prayers. She thanks Classis for its support and encouragement and reminded us that the best is yet to come.

b. Hope Centre Ministries, Winnipeg - Shellie Power

1) Video report well received

Classis viewed a video from Hope Centre narrated by Shellie Power. We delighted seeing the joy in the recipients of Hope Centre ministry, in hearing how the staff have developed materials during the Covid restrictions that enabled even more persons to participate than before. The facility is filled to capacity and staff is exploring how to create more room for a midweek drop in and plan to develop employment programs for those with disabilities.

c. Prayer Mobilizer – CAN - Sonya Cahais

1) Written report received

Ben Verkerk offered prayer in the name of Jesus for these ministries and their staff.

2. CHMC-CA

a. Covenant CRC partnership with Amber church.

Ben eloquently updated Classis about the developing relationship between Covenant CRC and the Portuguese speaking immigrant church called Amber. They have outgrown their pastor Marcelo Viana’s home as a meeting place and are currently renting space from a Christian school for about \$375 per weekend, which -along with added expenses of hosting services- comes to about \$20,000 per year. We could help them cover that cost. Other assistance can come via their partnership with Resonate. To do so, CHMC-CA with the support of the CHMC-US presents the following motions:

1) **MOTION** to move \$40,000 from Church Revitalization Fund to the Church Planting Fund is ..... **CARRIED.**

2) **MOTION** that classis financially support Amber Church in Winnipeg through the Church Planting Fund with a commitment of \$60,000 over three years at a rate of \$20,000 Canadian per year is ..... **CARRIED.**

b. Covenant Revitalization grant application

Since CHMC-CA has reviewed and approved the application from Covenant, it presents the **MOTION** that Classis approve the Church Revitalization Grant for Covenant CRC's Garden of Hope Project for \$5,000. **MOTION** is ..... **CARRIED.**

Ben encouraged churches to apply to the revitalization fund for projects they also could do.



**MOTION** to approve work of CHMC-CA is ..... **CARRIED.**

**C. CMLT- (Classical Ministerial Leadership Team)**

- Pastor Dan DeGraff

1. Written report received.

2. Verbal update.

Reiterated that Garrett Hovland has decided to discontinue his studies toward ministry and that CMLT’s relationship with him is now formally ended.

3. Presented the following motions for support of new students:

**MOTION** that Classis grant Travis Deur \$6450.00 for tuition expenses as he begins Calvin Theological Seminary’s distance-program is ..... **CARRIED.**

**MOTION** that Classis grant Travis Berry, youth pastor in Unity and Willmar, \$8250.00 for tuition and book expenses as he begins Knox Theological Seminary’s online-program is ..... **CARRIED.**

4. He presented extensive rewording of the Classis scholarship policy to bring it in line with current Seminary program practices, adjust calendar dates for student applications, drop references to no longer existing programs, give greater clarity that the funds are coming from Classis Lake Superior, among other things.

**MOTION** that Classis adopt the revisions in the wording of Classis Lake Superior Scholarship Policy is ..... **CARRIED.**

The revised Classis Lake Superior Scholarship policy will now read as follows:

**Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry**

**I. Name**

The awards are to be known as the *Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry*.

**II. Purpose**

To sustain faithful, committed and Reformed ministry, Classis Lake Superior establishes these awards to assist annually students whose home church is ordinarily one of the congregations belonging to Classis Lake Superior to prepare for ordained congregational ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North America as a Minister of the Word or Commissioned Pastor.

**III. Funding**

- A. *Classis Lake Superior Scholarships for Ministry* will be funded by Classis Lake Superior.
- B. *Classis Lake Superior Scholarships for Ministry* will be awarded on an annual basis based on the approval of Classis Lake Superior.
- C. The awards will not exceed the combined cost of the tuition and related educational expenses as set annually by the relevant seminary for the program in which the student is enrolled. The awards are based on cost of studies, financial need, and funding available.

- D. The *Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry* will be managed according to the policies of Classis Lake Superior with oversight by the Classical Ministries Leadership Team and the classical treasurer.

#### **IV. Eligibility**

- A. Applicants are members in good standing in a Christian Reformed Church in Classis Lake Superior or a congregation overseen by a Classis congregation.
- B. Applicants shall fit into one of the following categories for consideration:
1. Master of Divinity (M.Div.) student enrolled at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools with the expectation of completing the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EMPC) requirements (Article 6).
  2. Student enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary to complete the Modified Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (MEPMC) (Article 7).
  3. Student enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools as part of a learning plan endorsed by the Candidacy Committee, including those seeking ordination in the CRC via colloquium doctum (Article 8).
  4. Student, who is presently ordained as a commissioned pastor and is enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools and completing requirements for ordination as Minister of the Word (Article 24).
  5. Special consideration will be given to a student enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools pursuing ordination as a commissioned pastor
- C. Applicants will be citizens of the United States or Canada whose professed intent it is to immediately upon completion of the program to seek and begin ordained congregational ministry in the Christian Reformed Church of North America.
- D. Applicants will be assessed on the basis of their internal and external call to ministry, commitment to the Reformed faith, the promise they exhibit for effective ministry, and for the strength of their intention to become ordained in the Christian Reformed Church of North America.
- E. Applicants are eligible to receive the *Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry* for the duration of their seminary career while enrolled in classes, whether in-residence, distance, or on-line.
- F. If funds are limited, priority will be given to applicants attending Calvin Theological Seminary.

#### **V. Administration**

- A. The award will be administered by the Classical Ministries Leadership Team and the classical treasurer according to the policies established by Classis Lake Superior.
- B. The award will be deposited to the recipient's financial account at the seminary early in each of the regular academic terms.
- C. As a scholarship, recipients understand that if they decide to discontinue their studies, pursuit of ordination, or are released from ordained status in the CRCNA, they will not be expected to reimburse or return spent funds.

**Agreement**

The foregoing description and guidelines are acknowledged by the undersigned to be the controlling provisions of the *Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry*.

Signature of \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Completed application to be sent to the Chairperson of the CMLT)

\* \* \* \* \*

**MOTION** that in the event that Classis funds fall short of what is needed to fully support all those students approved for support by Classis, preference would go to Calvin Seminary students is ..... **CARRIED.**

**MOTION** is made that Classis declare a year of jubilee for all existing forgivable-loan arrangements made with former students is ..... **CARRIED.**

**MOTION** that the year of jubilee is retroactive to January 1, 2023 is ..... **CARRIED.**

**Chair will instruct** Finance to communicate this news to students affected.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the CMLT is ..... **CARRIED.**

**D. Safe Church Team** - No chair, temporarily under CIC

- 1. No written or verbal reports

**Art. 6 Actions Supporting Common Ministry**

**A. Treasurer’s Financial Report**

- 1. Kristi Santema presented the financial report.  
Delegates could also find this on the classis website.
- 2. Verbal update.  
New treasurer, Kristi Santema, informs us that though we are still in process of changing all Classis accounts into her name, that will be done soon and from this point forward all checks can now to be mailed to her and treasurers should indicate on the check what the checks are being designated for, e.g. classis expenses, ministry shares, etc.

At September 1<sup>st</sup>, we have received 45% of current need, but would like to be at 65%.

**MOTION** to approve work of Classical treasurers is ..... **CARRIED.**

**B. Finance Committee Budget**

Treasurer, Kristi Santema presented the budget on behalf of the Finance Committee.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, she presented the following motions:

- 1. For mileage reimbursement: **MOTION** to accept the same rate of 60 cents per

mile/kilometer for 2024 is ..... **CARRIED.**

2. For Membership Count: **MOTION** to accept using 2,800 professing members to calculate the Classical Ministry Shares Budget is ..... **CARRIED.**

3. For Classical Expense: **MOTION** to accept \$16 per professing member for 2024 is ..... **CARRIED.**

4. For Area College Support: **MOTION** to accept that the U.S. congregations support Dordt University at \$69.20 per professing member for 2024 is ..... **CARRIED.**

5. For Ministry Shares: **MOTION** to accept the presented Ministry Shares request of \$137,800.00 or \$49.20 per professing member for 2024 is ..... **CARRIED.**

This breaks down into the following amounts per cause:

The Gathering Place	\$25,000	\$8.93 per member
Hope Centre	25,000	8.93
Seminary Scholarship	10,000	3.58
Prayer Mobilization, Canada	2,000	.71
New Life Church	20,000	7.14
The Broken Church	34,800	13.86
Youth Champion	19,000	6.79
Ministry Partnership	2,000	.71
 Total	 \$137,800	 \$49.21

**MOTION** to approve work of the Finance Committee is ..... **CARRIED.**

## **CLASSIS IS...**

### **A Connection into the Wider Church:**

*For many people, their main experience of being part of the broader family of the Christian Reformed Church is via classis. Churches participate in their denomination through classical structure and opportunity. Classis also connects the broadness of North American ministry into the individual church's own regional and local context, providing an avenue for a meaningful relationship with the denominational ministries.*

*In addition, Classis should encourage churches to live outside themselves into the broader Christian community.*

## **Art. 7 Connecting Into The Wider Church**

### **A. Chaplains**

1. Gerald VanSmeerdyk, Elim Village, Surrey BC No report.
2. Dan Crapo, Mayo Hospice Chaplaincy, Red Wing MN written report received.
3. Mike Miedema, Headingly Corr. Inst., Winnipeg, MB No report.

## **B. Classical Delegates**

1. Board of Trustees: Calvin University - Region 1 rep. No report.
  - a. No report.
2. Board of Trustees: Calvin University - Region 5 rep. No report.
  - a. No report.
3. Calvin Seminary
  - 3.1 Board of Trustees - Robert Drenten  
Received CTS – Fall 2023 Ministry Highlights
  - 3.2 Canadian Church Relations Liaison - Pastor Shawn Brix  
Written report received.
4. Resonate Global Missions – US Central Region - Brad Meinders  
Central Region Report  
- Western Canada - Rich Braaksma  
No report
5. World Renew - Jodi Koeman  
Written report received
6. COD - (Council of Delegates) No report
7. Canadian Ministries Director -- Transitional - Rev. Al Postma  
Written report received
8. Diaconal Ministries Canada - ron vandenbrink  
Written report received
9. CRCNA Exec Director - Zachary King  
Written report received
10. THRIVE - Rev Lesli Van Milligin

Lesli Van Milligin on behalf of THRIVE presented a report on the amalgamation of 9 smaller ministries into the one larger ministry of THRIVE. She pointed out various benefits of so doing, like not having to compete with each other for the attention and support of members, better budgeting and more effective use of staff time, etc. Though now under one new heading, congregations can still take offerings for any of the 9 smaller ministries.

## **C. Agencies and Other Christian Organizations**

1. Dordt University, Office of Church Relations - Todd Zuidema  
Written report received  
Rev. Wayne Kobes, verbal update

Dordt University enrollment is now over 1900 and unlike other higher educational institutions expects to keep on growing. This means that facilities are maxed up and Dordt needs to expand. The Planting for The Future Capital Campaign to end December 31st likely to reach over \$100 million.

Art 71 CO speaks of supporting Christian education. Few churches have that commitment or requirement. Few have a history of Christian education but they are discovering it now. Part of Dordt's mission is to equip students to be active members of their churches.

He challenged us that when we hear good things about Dordt, let them know. They need to hear that too. He thanked Classis for financial support and asked for our continued prayer support.

2. Redeemer University College

- David Zietsma, president  
Written report received

**Art. 8 Minutes:**

These Minutes were approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman before distribution.

**Art. 9 Closing Exercises:**

1. Chairman, Pastor Steve Zwart, expressed thanks to the clerk, pastor emeritus, Henry Gunnink, and vice chair, Pastor Brian Bolkema for their assistance in organizing and conducting the meeting. The Vice Chair and delegates expressed appreciation to the chair for his gracious, courteous, competent and expeditious handling of the agenda.
2. Chair closed with prayer after which all joined in singing the Doxology.
3. **MOTION** to adjourn was made and **CARRIED** at 1:58 pm

Delegates were reminded that due to the clerk's pending open-heart surgery set for September 29<sup>th</sup>, from this point until the end of October, all official business should be directed to either of:

1. Alternate Stated Clerk,  
Pastor Les Kuiper  
cell: (920) 547-0552  
email: [leskuiper@gmail.com](mailto:leskuiper@gmail.com)

or

2. Chair of CIC,  
Pastor Brian Bolkema  
Church: +1 204-222-4336  
Email: [brianbolkema@gmail.com](mailto:brianbolkema@gmail.com)