



# The Christian Reformed Church Classis Alberta North

Vision/Mission Statement (adopted March 2, 2004)

The purpose of Classis Alberta North is:

- To encourage member congregations to faithful and creative ministry;
- To jointly undertake ministries of common interest;
- To participate in denominational ministries and governance;
- To hold member congregations mutually accountable for their work of ministry, and to provide appropriate resources for the same.

## **AGENDA for 150<sup>th</sup> Session, March 7 & 8, 2012**

West End Christian Reformed Church  
10015-149 Street, Edmonton, Alberta

### **General Information**

Please note that much of the information relating to Classis Alberta North can be found at:

[www.classisalbertanorth.org](http://www.classisalbertanorth.org) Here you will find the agenda and minutes of previous meetings, credentials forms, safe church policy information, schedules as well as links to the Classical Rules and the Church Order. Also available is a list of churches and committees, and much more. Check it out!

If there are changes in your committee make up, or changes in the information about your church, **please inform** the Stated Clerk at [statedclerk@classisalbertanorth.org](mailto:statedclerk@classisalbertanorth.org)

The quarterly denominational ministry reports to classis can be found at:

<http://crcna.org/pages/classisreport.cfm>

**If you require lodging, please contact Christine at West End CRC at  
780-454-8151 or [admin@westendcrc.ca](mailto:admin@westendcrc.ca)**

**Deadline: February 22, 2012**

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### Serving Classis:

- Rev. Art Verboon, chair
- Rev. Martin Mobach, vice-chair
- Balloting Committee (if needed): the delegates of West End CRC Edmonton
- Classis Credentials Committee: the delegates of Rimbey CRC and Edmonton First CRC
- Advisory Committee for the Overture from West End CRC: the delegates of Ponoka Sunrise CRC and Lacombe Wolf Creek CRC

## Nominations

The Classis Interim Committee requests church councils to submit names of nominees to committees of Classis for positions opening up on July 1, 2012. These positions include any present committee members who are completing their second term on June 30, 2012, and any positions that are vacant. Please forward the names of nominees to the Nominations Coordinator, Bill Wildeboer at [wilelw@gmail.com](mailto:wilelw@gmail.com) by February 22. This information can be found on the "Classis Alberta North Functionaries, Committees, Representatives" list included with this agenda.

**We also request that the delegates to the March Classis meeting come prepared to nominate elder delegates to Synod 2012 to be held at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario on June 8-15, 2012.**

## Presentation/Discussion

**Wednesday, March 7, 7:00 p.m. at West End CRC**

### **“All Baptized Members ... Are Welcome ... Under the Supervision of the Elders”**

The Wednesday evening session of Classis will include a presentation and discussion on issues related to decisions of last year's Synod, adjusting CRCNA Church Order Article 59 (regulating admission to participation in the Lord's Supper).

See a short outline of the plan for the evening on p. 21 of this agenda.

**Delegates to Classis:** Notice on the outline that you will be asked to share with Classis your answers to two questions (in bold print). If necessary, please review these questions in your Consistory or Council meeting prior to Classis.

The Revision to Article 59 can be found on p. 573 of the [Agenda for Synod 2011](#), which is also available online at [www.crcna.org](http://www.crcna.org) under "Resources". [www.crcna.org/site/uploads/uploads/resources/2011\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.crcna.org/site/uploads/uploads/resources/2011_agenda.pdf)

## Campus Ministry

The excitement of the new semester was overshadowed this week by the tragic death by car accident of Melissa Clarke, the fourteen-year-old daughter of my colleague Bryan Clarke. We are all saddened by this devastating loss and I ask that you keep the Clarke family in your prayers as they come to terms with this new reality.

We were also informed this week of the death of an international student. Such deaths are particularly sad, as often these students are quite isolated, their family being far away. I'm often reminded in these situations of how one can be surrounded by forty thousand people and yet still be alone.

Last fall at the western CRC Campus Ministers' retreat in Kelowna, I and the chaplains from the university of Calgary and British Columbia, Okanagan decided to host a cooperative winter student retreat. The fall Campus Ministers' retreats have been such a blessing to us that we wanted to share the experience with students. So from January 13-15 students from the three universities along with the three campus ministers gathered in Banff. During the retreat we hiked, visited the hot springs, explored scripture through *lectio divina*, ate great food and had great conversations. The retreat was so fruitful that we hope to make it an annual event.

We're now two weeks into the semester and the students have once again settled into their academic routines. Programs have begun. This semester we're studying the book of Hosea at the Tuesday lunch/bible study. As is usual, there is a good turnout to this event with eight to ten students participating. The conversation is good, although one student mentioned that it was quite theological. It's a reminder to me that not all students are interested in in-depth Bible studies and may prefer a more devotional reading. I plan to begin a study on the Psalms as an alternative.

This past fall semester was the first one without Wine Before Breakfast. It was difficult ending a four-year program but the numbers simply weren't there. Instead I have moved the event from the morning to the evening and changed the name to Body & Soul. The service is similar to Wine Before Breakfast in that it includes a meal and Communion. The difference is that I have removed the sermon and made the service more focused on prayer. It was my hope that more students would attend an evening service over an early morning service. The numbers remain small with only three to five students. However, last semester we were blessed by having the Cuban pastors attend. We had a wonderful evening of bilingual worship, the sharing of stories and the building of new relationships. The students who attended that evening were quite pleased to have been a part of such an informative and uplifting event. My only regret is that I didn't have my camera there to take some photos. One of my campus ministry new year's resolutions is to take more pictures of all the exciting things happening on campus.

*The Last Alliance: U of A Tolkien Society* continues to flourish. Last semester we met weekly to read and discuss *The Hobbit*. In November we held *An Evening in Rivendell*. It was a night where members of *The Last Alliance* could bring and present original songs, stories or poems influenced by J.R.R. Tolkien. We also had a Q & A with The Tolkien Professor (a.k.a. Dr. Corey Olsen) over Skype. Our discussion was broadcast live on Middle Earth radio in the United States (yes, there is a radio station dedicated solely to J.R.R. Tolkien), and later uploaded as a podcast on the Tolkien Professor's website. This semester we're reading and discussion *The Silmarillion*. We

normally get between fifteen and twenty people attending each week. My only concern is that the current president of the club who has done so much work to establish it may be leaving at the end of the semester. I would hate to see all her work fall apart because we're unable to find a suitable replacement.

The Graduate Christian Fellowship group continues to meet twice a month. This semester we're doing *The Jesus Questions*. We each choose a question Jesus asked, reflect on it for two weeks and then share our reflections at our next meeting. I first heard about *The Jesus Questions* through my colleague at UBCO. Keep you eye out for an article about it in an upcoming issue of *The Banner*.

Reel Spirituality also meets twice a month. We began our semester with the film *The Mission*. We had a great discussion. Some of the other films we plan to view are *Dogma*, *Never Let Me Go*, *The Blair Witch Project*, and *E.T. The Extraterrestrial*.

The campus ministry continues to grow with between fifty and sixty students involved in the various programs offered. These don't include the students I meet one on one.

In terms of my own continuing education, I will be attending the Calvin Symposium on Worship in Grand Rapids next week. I'm very excited about attending as both Walter Brueggemann and N.T. Wright will be at the conference. They're two of the 'rock stars' of Biblical studies. I will also attend the Christian Reformed Campus Ministers' conference in the spring and the western CRC Campus Ministers' retreat in the fall.

This past fall I had the wonderful opportunity to co-teach a graduate seminar on secularism with the head of the Religious Studies program. For many of the students in the class this was the first time they'd ever had any significant conversations with a pastor, and I'm pleased to say that they were surprised and pleased that I was able to engage with them in ways that kept the conversation open rather than shutting it down. The head of the program was so impressed that he has asked the Jewish chaplain and I to co-teach a graduate seminar on mysticism and negative theology in the fall of 2012.

There's no question that God is at work at the University of Alberta and in the campus ministry and I attribute this to the prayers the classis continually offers for the students, faculty and staff. It's a blessing to be a part of what God is doing here and I would like to again express my gratitude to Classis Alberta North for your faithful support of this ministry.

Peace to you,

Rick VanManen  
CRC Campus Minister  
University of Alberta

## Classis Interim Committee / Stated Clerk's Report

### Stated Clerk's report from November 2011 to February 2012

#### Excerpts from the CIC meeting of November 2, 2011:

1. The CIC approved a motion to appoint **Rev. Mike VanBoom** and **Anna Feddes** to the NADC Board, **Rev. Paul VanStralen** to the Youth Ministry Committee, **Rev. Leon Johnston** to the Home Missions Committee and **Rick Abma** to the Cuba Connection Committee.
2. The CIC approved a motion to approve the minutes of the October 19 & 20, 2011 Classis meeting.
3. The CIC received a written confirmation that the three Synodical Deputies, **Rev. Jelmer Groenewold**, **Rev. Dick Kwantes** and **Rev. Cameron Fraser** concurred with CAN decisions re **Rev. Karen Norris** and **Rev. Ron Klok**.
4. The CIC continued its discussion of Ministry Shares and resolved to keep an eye on giving levels for denominational ministry as a result of increased classical ministry shares. The CIC is also considering preparing a narrative budget and increasing communication with churches.
5. Further discussion regarding the evening session of the March 2012 Classis meeting on the topic Children at the Lord's Supper.

#### Excerpts from the CIC meeting of January 18, 2012:

1. The CIC approved the following motion: On an exceptional basis, a committee under the jurisdiction of CAN may recommend to CIC that a non-CRC candidate be appointed to their committee under the following conditions: (1) that the person brings a unique and desired set of skills to the committee, and (2) that the person shares an ecclesiastical commitment to God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, similar to our denomination.
2. The CIC extended the term of Nominations Coordinator **Bill Wildeboer** by one year, to June, 2013.
3. CIC spent much of the meeting reviewing the 2011 CAN financial statements. The Committee thanked **Ellen Vlieg-Paquette** for the time, energy and expertise she brings to her role as CAN Treasurer.
4. CIC continued preparatory work for the March Classis meeting.
5. **PLEASE NOTE: CIC agreed to a request from the hosts of the October 2012 Classis meeting (Red Deer New Life) to move the dates of the meeting one day forward, to October 16-17 (Tuesday-Wednesday).**

#### Motions requiring Classis approval:

1. CIC recommends to Classis to approve the CAN financial statements for the fiscal year 2011.

Classis Interim Committee members: Gary Bomhof, Fred Bultman, Carolyn Dieleman-Booth, Martin Mobach, Rick Struik, Arlene VandeKamp (ex-officio), Bill Wildeboer

## Cuba Connection Committee

The six members of the Cuba Connection Committee continue to communicate with and support the small but growing Christian Reformed Church in that beleaguered, isolated and poor country, on behalf of Classis Northern Alberta. Over the years this support has included financial sponsorship for some Cuban pastors, several large containers of goods sent, including bicycles, motorcycles, computers and theological software, as well as a number of visits to Cuba, much correspondence and mutual encouragement, in addition to awareness raising and prayer here in Canada.

Created in the early 1990s, the committee's current efforts and relationships were recently greatly enhanced with the visit of three Cuban CRC pastors to Edmonton and Lacombe in early November. Pastors Orland Cabrera Baez, Yordanis Diaz Arteaga and Antonio Rodriguez Alvarez spent two busy weeks learning how we do life and ministry in Canada, and teaching us much about the difficult conditions of their lives and ministries in Cuba. Their full schedule included visits to The King's University College, the Day of Encouragement, the Mustard Seed Church, Edmonton City Hall---including a brief meeting with our Mayor---at least four Edmonton area CRCs as well as Lacombe church, a stirring evening presentation at Trinity CRC, a meeting with several area pastors, trips to the Legislature, Edmonton Christian High and West Edmonton Mall, Remembrance Day service, parade and cenotaph ceremony, as well as a few days agricultural tour in the Lacombe area, which even included a local hockey game.

The visit was a great blessing for all involved, and reminded us how faithful, oppressed and needy our brothers and sisters in Cuba really are. We are now working on a proposal for one pastor to come to Edmonton for several months of shadowing local pastors, and on renewing one-to-one church relationships between our Classis congregations and the 14 or so Cuban CRC churches, as well as other ways to maintain our support and mutual encouragement.

## Diaconal Ministries

### January 2012

Dear Friends:

*Transforming Communities in Christ!* It is this vision that inspires the Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference (NADC) and Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC). We praise God that churches across Canada continue to reach out in their communities in creative ways. We praise God for the leadership that trained deacons give to these efforts. Whether these efforts might be in the form of a community garden, a basketball camp, community dinner, street-level coffee house, support for single parents or lunch programs, transformation begins to take place when members of the local church begin to build relationships with others. Congregational needs also are met when members are inspired to live a life of stewardship of time, talents and treasure. There *is* such a thing as the "servanthood of all believers". We are grateful that together we may join God in His great work.

The highlights below provide a glimpse of some of the things God has been doing through the Diaconal network. This network of staff, Diaconal Conferences, Diaconal Ministry Developers, committee and board members is grateful for the opportunity to motivate and mobilize deacons and churches across the country.

## 1. ENGAGING COMMUNITY

“The question is: are we attracted to our community the same way God loves the people living in it?”

This is an important question for ministry. And it became the primary question for the 58 CRC churches in Canada that have completed a Community Opportunity Scan (COS) this past year, as well as another 9 churches that are currently working with this tool. Some Edmonton churches are discerning the possibility of doing a COS.

The COS is a tool created by DMC. It helps churches to discern where God wants them to get involved with their neighbours. This process of asking questions in the community leads to a unique journey for each church. As churches embark on this process, they begin to learn what other churches, schools and agencies are doing in the community, what assets are in the community, and where the church might join God in new ministry opportunities. Theologian Fredrick Buechner said “where our deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet, we hear a further call.” It is at that intersection we want to encourage and challenge our folk. Please call Henry Bosch or Anna Feddes if you would like more information, or would like to get started.

Operation Manna (OM) is a national program of DMC. Funds collected from the annual May offering provide funding and human coaching support for CRC churches who are involved with or contemplating involvement in community ministry. We praise God for these yearly offerings that total on average around **\$220,000!** Currently, there are 17 *Operation Manna partners* across Canada involved in their communities through innovative and exciting ministries like community gardens, furniture banks, art schools, pregnancy and youth centres, summer camps, auto repairs, supports for single parents, store front drop-in centers, and a community café. Edmonton area ministries supported by Operation Manna are Mosaic Center –with support from Trinity CRC – and Families Living Well Society, supported by West End CRC.

## 2. EQUIPPING DEACONS

NADC has provided opportunities for leadership development and diaconal training for more than 25 years. Besides the 2 trainers and consultant in Northern Alberta, there are 19 other Diaconal Ministry Developers (DMDs) in Canada that are trained to help deacons, through workshops and consultations, to discover their gifts, develop their leadership skills, and focus on the stewardship opportunities. Each year, about 100 Canadian CRCs are visited by DMDs and DMC staff. The goal in 2012 is to visit each of the 30 diaconates in Northern Alberta. NADC and Diaconal Ministry staff are also involved in organizing Days of Encouragement (DOE) across Canada. The DOE in Edmonton this year will be held D.V. Saturday November 3<sup>rd</sup> at Kings. This excellent day of training and encouragement coincides with CRWRC’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Diaconal Ministries Canada also provides many resources for deacons. A visit to the website is always worthwhile – [www.diaconalministries.com](http://www.diaconalministries.com). Resources can be downloaded or hard copies can be obtained from our office in Burlington.

### **3. ENCOURAGING JUSTICE**

DMC has begun to support deacons and churches in their walk with people who are physically or mentally challenged, and other people in your community who are marginalized and vulnerable to injustice. DMC staff has developed materials for 8 such people groups. We try to tell their stories, highlight some issues they face, and then provide suggestions for ministry and how you might advocate for change. In this material, we also link you to websites and organizations which can give you more information and help. Go to the DMC website and let us help you figure out where to start as you walk alongside the marginalized people in your neighbourhood.

Together, let's "let justice roll on like a river" (Amos 5:24) in our communities across Canada!

### **4. NADC PARTNERSHIP WITH CRWRC IN KENYA AND HONDURAS**

NADC has partnered with CRWRC in Kenya since 2001 to assist needy communities in their long-term development, first to improve the lives and cattle and income of Maasai farmers, and since 2005 to work in conjunction with the Reformed Church of East Africa. Support for income generation projects, reconciliation of people groups, enhancement of primary health initiatives, and the building of relationships between Albertans and Kenyans is a blessing to both countries and organizations.

2012 marks the 17<sup>th</sup> year of working together with King's and CRWRC in Honduras to assist rural communities to obtain potable water. A recent evaluation of nine villages by Henry Bosch and CRWRC staff has strongly affirmed the goals and objectives of this program.

### **SUMMARY**

It's your prayers and financial support through Classical Diaconal Ministry Shares, the Operation Manna offering, the Honduras Water Project offering, and the Kenya project offering that makes our work possible. We thank you for your partnership in the gospel. We look forward to a further time of partnering together for the sake of His Kingdom.

Humbly submitted,  
Henry Bosch  
NADC Consultant  
Regional Diaconal Ministry Developer DMC  
Regional Community Ministry Developer DMC

## Edmonton Native Healing Centre

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Visit us on-line at:[www.edmontonnativehealingcentre.com](http://www.edmontonnativehealingcentre.com)

Tan'si, ("Hi, How are you" in Cree)

The staff and board of our ministry are very thankful for the support our ministry receives from the CRC community here in Edmonton and northern Alberta. Through this support our ministry had an extremely busy year providing basic drop-in (average of 39 clients per day) support to the urban aboriginal community in Edmonton. We served 45 weekly meals of soup & bannock (average attendance per meal is 65) and served 5400 sandwiches on Mondays this past year. We enjoyed a Christmas meal where we served 130 folks from our community in one sitting.

Our programming consisted of drop-in hours from 10 am through 4pm Monday through Friday, the Kid's cultural camp in August and a pre-employment program from September to December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Referrals and pastoral counseling also help our community grow in a healthy way and begin journeys of reconciliation. We are working on growing an after school program on Thursday with some of our regular kid's. This spring will see the ministry go through a comprehensive review as we get ready to serve the creator for another twenty years. This past year I preached in several Alberta North churches and I continue to enjoy worshipping in the various locations. I was invited to three Christian schools (two in Edmonton, one in Lacombe) to teach about aboriginal culture and social justice issues. Michelle Nieviadomy spent time in Ottawa leading aboriginal youth in an appreciative inquiry to help begin new journeys of reconciliation. Kim Roscher is glue that keeps our ministries community loved and fed and at the age of twenty three makes me proud of all the youth who serve Jesus in many different areas and ways. Sometimes we just need to get out of their way and let them serve as I have witnessed.

All of this ministry gets done in Jesus' name through a full time staff of three (Michelle Nieviadomy, Kim Roscher, Harold Roscher) and two part time staff (Michael Loyer, Darlene Barnaby) and some dedicated volunteers which is quite remarkable. So if you are looking for a cross cultural experience in Ministry please come join us for a soup & bannock meal held on most Wednesdays and hear the stories from the aboriginal community here in Edmonton. Please continue to pray for our ministry staff and the Image Bearers of the Creator we serve on your behalf.

Peace,

Harold Roscher  
Chaplain/Director  
Edmonton Native Healing Centre

## Home Missions Committee

The committee met on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>. The members of CHMC are Rick Abma, Bruce Gritter, Andrew Geisterfer, Leon Johnston, Henry Steenbergen and Anne VanderHoek.

CHMC continues to hear updates from Victor Ko regarding the blessings and challenges of **mosaicHouse**, and supports Victor accordingly, as well as the work Karen Wilk is doing with **Neighbourhood Life**. Classis will hear some of the stories of the work that they are doing.

CHMC is mandated by Classis to encourage the development of new church planting activities within Classis and continues to have discussions regarding future church planting possibilities in Classis AB North as to what this might look like. Martin Contant (Regional Leader for Home Missions in Western Canada) has been meeting with CHMC to help us in these discussions. Classis AB North has been blessed with two church plants which have been used by God to reach people for Christ. If you've heard our planters Bruce Gritter and Victor Ko report to classis over the years you will know that the ministry models of **The River** and **mosaicHouse** differ from each other, but their objectives are the same namely to make disciples. In the last couple of years a newer model of **Neighbourhood Life**, where Christians are reaching out in intentional ways to those who they live among, using their immediate neighbourhoods as the place where God has called them to live out their witness for Christ. Karen Wilk has been a practitioner of this model and has also presented its application to a number of churches in Classis and to classis itself. We encourage those who have not yet engaged Karen and/or who would like continued equipping and support for engaging in their neighbourhoods to participate in "Starfish Community" (as presented at the last Classis meeting) to be in touch with her.

At the last Classis meeting we briefly presented a seminary intern, Aaron Au, to Classis. Aaron is a professional musician, having played with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra for a number of years, but feels God's call on his life to seek ordination and become a church planter. He is currently enrolled in his 2nd year at Taylor Seminary in Edmonton. CHMC, our church planters, together with Home Missions Regional Leader, Martin Contant, have been in continual dialogue with Aaron and his wife April, encouraging him in his sense of call. This includes an internship currently served at **mosaicHouse**. Aaron is also in conversation with Calvin Seminary regarding their program to invite seminarians from other seminaries to take on line courses required for ordination in the CRC. Aaron is also in a process in undergoing a formal assessment through Home Missions regarding his abilities for church planting. We simply report this as an update to you, signalling our desire for continuing to fulfill Classis' mandate to encourage churches to be about God's mission, and also to multiply new congregations. We hope to be able to come to the fall session of Classis with a more formal proposal for a new church plant within Classis, projected to begin in the fall of 2013. Thanks for your encouragement in this work of church planting, and your prayerful and financial support allowing this work to flourish.

CHMC wants to make it known to the churches that CHMC has been authorized by Classis Alberta North to provide financial support for special outreach ministry projects proposed and initiated by congregations within classis. There is a protocol for churches to make applications to CHMC for this funding. Take note that these grants are available for up to \$3000 or one-half of the projected costs of the project, whichever is least. Please contact Leon Johnston, CHMC secretary, for further information [pastorleon@wolfcreekcommunitychurch.org](mailto:pastorleon@wolfcreekcommunitychurch.org).

Respectfully submitted on behalf of CHMC,  
Henry Steenbergen (chair of CHMC)

## Pastor Church Relations Committee

The Pastor Church Committee of Classis Alberta North meets each month from September to June. We are comprised of three regional pastors, two lay members and our classis church consultant. Our regular work involves supervising the work of Walt Brouwer, our consultant, whose report is included in this meeting's agenda, as well as sharing reports from our regional pastors. In November John Luth and John Pasma attended a regional pastors' conference in Grand Rapids on the theme, 'Grief Work as Ministry'.

A key part of our committee's work each year is the annual pastor-spouse conference held in Jasper each spring. These events have been very well received and provide a collegial learning and fellowship opportunity for the pastors of our classis and their spouses. This year's conference is being held April 20-22 with the keynote speaker Dr. Arthur Boers of Tyndale College in Toronto. Dr. Boers will be addressing the topic Living into Focus: Embracing Abundant Life. As your committee we ask that council members encourage and support their pastor and spouse to attend, particularly as this is an event supported by the churches of classis together. Some of our plans for 2012 include a review of our mandate to ensure it meets the needs of our churches, and, due to the sensitive and frequently confidential nature of the work with churches and pastors, we plan to discuss whether a code of ethics would be useful for committee members.

We would like to express our appreciation as a committee for the work of Joanne Munro and Mike Van Dyke who are both completing their second term of service. As of this writing their replacements have not yet been found.

In Christ's service

John Luth – secretary

Mike Van Dyke – chair

Alice Joosse

Joanne Munro

John Pasma

Walt Brouwer – Classis Consultant

## Pastor Church Relations Consultant

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the churches of classis in pastor-church relations in this half-time position. Here is an account of my ministry.

I continue to administer the pastoral evaluation that I have had the opportunity to develop in the course of my time serving classis. These pastoral evaluations are conducted with consistent effectiveness along a wide spectrum of pastor-church relations. Coaching pastors and churches through the evaluation keeps on being a very rewarding part of what I do. To date, I have conducted 14 pastoral evaluations in churches of classis. In addition, there are several churches which have used the pastoral evaluation without my direct involvement. I

don't recommend pastors and churches doing this for while the evaluation process is simple, there are details that provide for critical checks-and-balances, some of which have been overlooked.

This pastoral evaluation has received a ringing endorsement by Rev. Louis Tamminga, Director of Pastor Church Relations, CRCNA, 1983-1995. I quote him with permission: *"I read this material with growing interest. You have come up with some splendid advice and material, all laid out very professionally. I could have used it myself in my time in many situations. I could readily see how many pastors and office bearers could benefit tremendously from this pastoral evaluation. Your materials deserved to be used on a broader scale."* The pastoral evaluation is free and freely available on our classis website. It is gaining the attention of churches in of the CRCNA beyond our classis and other denominations, both evangelical and mainline.

An important development in evaluations is that I have expanded the process to include the evaluation of lay leaders. Since last classis, I have done two such leadership evaluations. One was the evaluation of a council, and the other of an executive team. I conduct these lay leader evaluations concurrently with the pastoral evaluation, and use the same three key principles of transparency, honesty and grace. The concurrent evaluation of lay leaders likewise shows promise of effectiveness. If pastors or churches would like to participate in such an evaluation, please let me know.

I continue to intervene in conflict situations and as always am grateful for Joanne Munro for her assistance either by her presence or advice. My position requires me to be part of the Restorative Justice Taskforce which uses my training and experience to intervene in conflict situations not just among church leadership, but lay people also. When pastors and churches request help in a time of need it is a sign of wisdom and maturity. Unfortunately, sometimes churches wait too long to ask for help.

Upon request by pastors and churches, I advise on matters including governance, questions of ethics, designing leadership retreats, small group and ministry development, congregational visiting, preaching, and processing decisions.

I continue to have intentional relationships with a number of pastors in our classis. These relationships can be defined by different roles. To some I am simply an encourager who offers a listening ear and who understands the joys and trials of ministry; to another I function as a coach; to yet another a mentor; I also continue to function as a spiritual director.

Please note that the Pastor-Church Relations Committee of classis is pleased to announce the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Pastors and Spouses Conference for April 20-22, 2012. Delegates and councils, please encourage your pastor to attend. Pastors, set aside this important weekend. This year's conference will feature as keynote speaker Dr. Arthur Boers, professor of leadership at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto. Brochures with further details have already been sent out to pastors and churches.

I want to recommend two great books.

The first is a superb, accessible read by Armand M. Nicholi, Jr., *The Question of God*. From the back cover: "Throughout the ages, many of the world's greatest thinkers have wrestled with the concept of -- and belief in -- God. It may seem unlikely that any new arguments or insights could be raised, but the twentieth century managed to produce two brilliant men with two diametrically opposed views about the question of God: Sigmund Freud and C. S. Lewis. They never had an actual meeting, but in *The Question of God*, their arguments are placed side by side for the very first time. For more than twenty-five years, Armand Nicholi

has taught a course at Harvard that compares the philosophical arguments of both men. In *The Question of God*, Dr. Nicholi presents the writings and letters of Lewis and Freud, allowing them to ‘speak’ for themselves on the subject of belief and disbelief. Both men considered the problem of pain and suffering, the nature of love and sex, and the ultimate meaning of life and death -- and each of them thought carefully about the alternatives to their positions.”

The other book is a devotional resource for pastors: ***A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants***, by Reuben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck. For some 20 years I have been reading the one-year Bible first thing in the morning. During the course of these years I have tried other resources, but always felt they come up short in providing steady nourishment for the soul. That is until someone recommended this devotional guide. This is a simple, predictable structure for prayer and Bible reading. Each week new area or faith is explored. Following the Christian liturgical year, every day offers a simple invocation, followed by a reading from the Psalms, a Scripture reading, and spiritual readings on the week’s theme. These spiritual readings are well chosen selections from a wide variety of Christian traditions. Next is a time of reflection, where the reader is encouraged to journal. This is followed by a time of prayer, a hymn, and a closing benediction. It works well for me and for growing numbers of pastors who have begun to use this resource. If you are not a pastor, Sawchuck has also written a similar book for lay leaders called, ***A Guide to Prayer for All Who Seek God***.

I continue the ministry of prayer. I bring before Christ all the pastors of classis and their spouses by name. I thank God for you, and pray that you might bear fruit with joy, enduring the Lord’s battles and sharing in His sufferings.

**Rev. Walt Brouwer, D.Min.**

Pastor-Church Relations

Classis Alberta North

## Restorative Justice Task Force

1) As we enter the second year of a three-year mandate, the Restorative Justice Task Force has identified three areas to focus on in 2012: informing and educating pastors, churches, church visitors and ministries of Classis Alberta North about restorative justice and practice; establishing a restorative justice facilitation team that can provide services, advice and resources to congregations and families within congregations that are experiencing conflict and its resulting harm; and providing training in the field of dispute resolution and restorative practices.

2) The task force would like to thank Classis for the opportunity to present a two-hour workshop on restorative justice/practice at the October 2011 classis meeting. Evaluations were positive with many reflecting the desire of church leaders – both pastors and council members – to be equipped with tools to deal productively and restoratively with congregational conflict. The task force will create opportunities for those who desire it to take conflict resolution training this year.

3) Since October the task force has worked with four churches, providing assistance in the way of advice and discussion about possible processes for dealing with conflict, brokenness within families, and other situations.

4) We were thrilled to learn in November that the task force was a recipient of the 2011 Restorative Justice Awards "For Exemplary Work in Restorative Justice." The award is given annually by the Edmonton Restorative Justice Network, which includes the Mediation and Restorative Justice Centre, King's University College, the Youth Justice Committees, the Alberta Conflict Transformation Society, REACH Edmonton (the Council for Safe Communities) as well as restorative justice practitioners. The task force won in the category of "Inspiring Program", and was chosen by a panel of three from REACH Edmonton, the Solicitor General's Office and King's University College.

The introduction of our award by Paul Jensen of King's University College included the following: "The Christian Reformed Church RJ Task Force is charting new territory in Canada as it carries out its mandate to inform, educate, train and implement Restorative Justice principles and processes...the Task Force has set goals and attained remarkable benchmarks which benefit people and organizations far beyond the Christian Reformed Church in Canada alone. The Task Force has sought collaboration with other organizations in order to pursue results, and this effort has borne a great deal of fruit. For truly inspiring others working in the field of RJ and beyond, thank you..."

5) Realizing the demand for restorative justice services will continue to grow as the word spreads, the task force has decided to establish a RJ Facilitator Team consisting of trained, qualified and Christian restorative justice practitioners. At the time of writing the team consists of three women and two men. We are hoping to add one more male practitioner.

6) The task force provided a restorative justice workshop attended by about 25 individuals during the Day of Encouragement in November. "Love in Action When Things are Tough" was lead by task force members Harvey Voogd, Walt Brouwer and Joanne Vriend. Similar to the format of the workshop at the October Classis meeting, it focused on how restorative practices could allow congregations to deal with conflict more productively and restoratively.

Evaluations of the October Classis workshop and Day of Encouragement workshop contained the following observations from some of the participants:

*"Key for me was the difference between a blaming/punishing style and restorative justice practices. I can really see the value of giving everyone affected a voice, and the process is invitation, voluntary and safe. I like the compassionate, listening approach of restorative justice."*

*"The things I learned from the workshop were certainly enlightening. The experience that I had personally with the CRC was the direct opposite of what was talked about at the workshop. That the goal is now one of restoring rather than blaming and accusing is a long way to being Christ-like. Restoration of course is not possible until the offender recognizes that what he/she did hurt not just the victim but also friends/family of both the offender and victims. This recognition does not always come easily and may require many months of therapy before any restoration of a relationship can take place. That the CRC is willing to see the wisdom in this is wonderful."*

*"I can see this would be a valuable exercise to do in regional/church settings within classis."*

7) Task Force Chair Joanne Munro was asked to present a workshop at the Alberta Restorative Justice Association conference in November on how the CAN RJ Task Force was established. It was attended by close to 40 participants from a wide variety of backgrounds – from police, to corrections officers, to social services personnel to people who work in non-profits – all interested in ways of bringing restorative justice to their communities.

Submitted by:

Gary Bomhof, Walt Brouwer, Bill Diepeveen, Ron Knol, Joanne Munro  
Harvey Voogd (resource), Rita Veldkamp-Nyman, Joanne Vriend

## The King's University College

Greetings from The King's University College! We're pleased to have this opportunity to share the blessings we've enjoyed since our last report, and to look ahead to the exciting opportunities of 2012.



This fall King's welcomed 678 students to study and be a part of our community, an increase of ten over last year. We are encouraged by modest increases in enrolment over the last few years and we pray that prospective students and their parents will continue to see the extraordinary education offered at King's.

This fall the Environmental Studies program at King's received professional accreditation from Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) Canada, the certifying body of the Canadian Environmental Accreditation Commission. The accreditation is in addition to the academic accreditation already bestowed by the Campus Alberta Quality Council. The King's University College is the only post-secondary school in Canada to earn such professional recognition for an environmental studies program that includes both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees.

In the past few years King's has given serious consideration to the issues of environmental sustainability on campus. Last year King's participated in the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) conducted by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE, of which King's is a member). The STARS reporting process was completed this fall, and we are pleased to report that King's received a Bronze Rating. This provides King's with a good baseline so that we can further align institutional policies and practices with our commitment to creation care and sustainability.

In the last few months some significant accomplishments by faculty were also recognized. Dr. Peter Mahaffy, Professor of Chemistry, garnered international recognition by receiving the 2011 James Flack Norris Award for outstanding achievement in the teaching of Chemistry. Peter is the 60<sup>th</sup> recipient of this prestigious award and only the second Canadian to be so recognized. In addition to this, Dr. Mahaffy was one of eleven North American scholars (and the only Canadian) appointed to the American Chemical Society's Presidential Working Group on Climate Science.

In January 2012 King's welcomed Dr. John Orkar as a Visiting Scholar in Residence in the Micah Centre program. Dr. Orkar is a community development veteran having served with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee in his native Nigeria as team leader for the past 28 years. For one semester Dr. Orkar will teach a course on selected topics in African History from pre-colonial times to the present. Special arrangements were made to open this course up to the public at no cost.

While King's continues to face financial pressure, the university has implemented new strategies for marketing, fund raising and recruitment. This fall we welcomed our new Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Dan VanKeeken, who will spearhead efforts to ensure a bright future for King's. Our partnership with our supporting community has played a significant role in the life of King's to date and we have been blessed by these relationships. Our plans to continue to move forward in providing students with a high quality, Christian university education will continue to rely on the faithful support and prayer from the community of people who support the vision and mission of The King's University College.

On behalf of the entire King's community, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the CRC churches in Classis Alberta North for their faithful and generous support. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Christian higher education at King's. May God bless your work on behalf of His Church in your Classis meetings.



J. Harry Fernhout  
President



Shannon Tuininga  
Associate Director of Development

### Youth Ministry Committee

Youth Ministry in Classis Alberta North continues to be active in many different areas. We regularly meet with Youth Consultant Ron DeVries giving him support, encouragement and prayer. We are pleased with the work that he has done and continues to do. Presently the committee is processing a simple evaluation of Ron DeVries and hope to have this completed in the spring of 2012. This evaluation includes input from fifty percent of the churches in the Classis Alberta North. These churches were chosen by random selection.

Peer-learning is always a great way to learn. This past September eight youth workers/pastors from CAN went to Dallas to attend a D-6 conference. The conference's main theme is Faith at Home. From this conference, the peer learning group gathered together several times, reading and discussing a book titled *Almost Christian* written by Kenda Creasy Dean. The peer group hopes to share the discussion with the churches. The purpose of this discussion is not to give answers but to stimulate dialogue among the members of the churches about Faith at Home. If you would like to have this peer group come to your church, please contact Ron DeVries for details.

Young Adult continues to have activities which included in the past number of months a ski night, square dance/car rally, Christmas gift exchange, and a progressive dinner. It is awesome to see a number of young adults take initiative and organize these events.

Many of the youth leaders attended a Canadian Youth Workers conference this past November. The youth workers realize the need for continued ministry enhancement and CYMC supports these endeavours.

CYMC thanks Classis for the grant money that we have received. The CYMC gave out seven thousand dollars each year. An example of how the grant money was used: At First CRC, Red Deer the monies were used to support summer programming offered by the church for children in the Red Deer community. The summer ministries volunteer force is primarily comprised of youth who are given the opportunity to gain leadership skills as well as serve the Lord in the kingdom, sharing His love to those children who participate of the soccer camp, Thursday Theme Nights, and Bible camp offered by the church. Well over 200 community children were blessed by the youth and their heartfelt desire to engage in meaningful relationships with those God called them to serve.

There are ongoing discussions on the relationship between the Christian Schools and churches. The discussions are in the relationships between the two. How can we help each other? How can we work together? How closely should they really work together? What would a healthy relationship between the Christian school and church look like? In light of all this, the church must not forget their relationship with the other schools that are in the local area.

CYMC is planning a Youth Workers Retreat that will be held in Canmore on March 16-18. This is a time away in which youth leader can connect, listen, learn and encourage one another to create energy so that they can end the season well. Our hope is that many youth workers can take advantage of this.

CYMC thanks Classis for their continued support and prayers as we celebrate the goodness of God which is shown through our young people.

## **Youth Ministry Consultant**

For this report, I thought I would take this opportunity to share a little about what I do as Classis Youth ministry Consultant.

When I had originally written this, I had just come back from a weekend in Fairview where together with LaGlance CRC we spent time exploring what it means to be a servant, to reflect the servant heart of Christ in our homes, church, in our communities and beyond. It was so good to take time and listen to the hearts of Gods children in those areas and find ways in which we can be a blessing to one another, as part of this Classis and more importantly, as part of Gods world and Kingdom. On the Sunday morning I led a service where the youth and young adults took an active role in most elements of the service.

In my role I am sometimes asked to speak and/or be part of youth retreats like that particular weekend. I have also spoken at summer youth camps like ones that happen in Rocky Mountain House (Sonrise Camp) and lately have been asked to preach in churches. I am always honoured to be of service to classis all these ways.

As you may know, most of the churches in this classis do not have a paid person who over sees or runs the youth ministry programs in their church. Most are run but very dedicated volunteers. Sometimes a church, whether they have paid staff or volunteers, may encounter struggles with elements of youth ministry and often I will get called or emailed with questions which I then will help churches walk through. One of the tools I have in my belt is this thing called **Compass 21** developed by Youth Unlimited (YU) of Grand Rapids. Using this tool, I will facilitate the process with a leadership team from a church, analyzing their current youth ministry programming and then help them figure out what or if changes need to be made. Vision casting is often part of the process along with structure design or redesign. We would create action plans and steps where I would hold the leadership accountable in completing the assigned tasks as part of the goals set out by the team. It is a holistic approach to seeing where youth ministry fits into the large picture of the local church. It is a very good tool. I have used it with churches that have paid staff and those who do not and each time, it helps to set a course for leadership.

Some of my time is spent visiting with the youth pastor/director and youth workers from across this Classis. The purpose is to share their joys, struggles, to pray with them and to encourage them as they do Gods work. I try to find ways in which the youth workers can network together so that shared events might be planned, and that we together can find ways to support and encourage each other. My being part of and hearing the needs of organizations in this classis, helps me in finding ways to connect churches to places like the Mosaic Center, Edmonton Native healing center, Jasper Place, Mission trips and Serve experiences.

Quite often in these connections with your youth workers, our conversations have led to great questions; about where we can work together for the kingdom ministry. One such area we have been recently looking into is with the Christian schools, where as youth workers we ask, should our presence be felt, or is it even needed there? Is this a relationship that has changed over the last number of years?

One area I have found that is very important to the life of the youth worker is **soul care**. Working with Youth Unlimited (YU) of Grand Rapids, we have developed youth worker retreats designed to give youth workers and their spouses a weekend away to be re-energized, refreshed and reconnected to God and His purpose in their lives. In North America, the average lifespan of a youth pastor in a church is about 2 years and these soul care weekends can be a blessing to those who take some time, to have their cup refilled. Our next one is happening the week of March 16-18 in Canmore, Alberta. **I encourage all the churches to send their Youth leaders and their spouses.**

When invited, I speak to church councils about youth and Young adult culture. I have also been invited in to help churches in their hiring or calling process for Youth Pastors/Directors. This has led me to begin the development of a document for churches in this classis to assist them, as a set of guidelines, for just this hiring process. For a church as well as the person being hired this can be a stressful time and my prayer is that this document can help them walk through the journey. I have also developed a salary grid as part of the document to help churches establish fair and equitable pay based on education and experience.

I have created and maintain a website for youth workers that contain resources, contact information, links and calendar items for shared events CRC related but also tied to school functions. This is a work in progress and I am currently in the process of rethinking or rebuilding this site based on the needs of the youth worker.

One thing I try to do is stay on top of the latest youth ministry resources and trends. I do that by trying to be connected to all the youth ministry centres and through them pass on to the youth workers these articles, culture data and continuing education opportunities such as the opportunity Rick Mast, Rick VanManen, Sandy Blacketer, Geoff VandeKuyt had when they had gone on to attend the Princeton Seminary lectures on Young Adult culture a couple of years ago. It is through these kind of places that I was able to get connected with a conference in Dallas called D6, focussing on Duet 6 where we look at what we are called to as parents, grandparents, leaders as the spiritual caregivers, the nurturers of our children. How does Baptism fit into this picture? How do we partner with all the ministries of the church to educate, nurture and love children? Is the phenomenon of YA leaving the church part of this story as well? I had contacted the CRCNA and applied for a grant so that a team from Classis Alberta North could attend the D6 event and study this for a year through the Sustaining Pastoral excellence program. We have 8 churches from CAN (Bethel CRC Edmonton, Covenant CRC Edmonton, Barrhead CRC, Ebenezer CRC, Bethel Lacombe CRC, Woodynook CRC, Newlife CRC, First CRC Red Deer), involved in this study and hope to share our findings, thoughts at an upcoming classis meeting.

Over the last few years, I have brought together a few YA from across the classis to invite them to leadership. I have been walking along side them as they plan events, share stories and find ways to be connected to the CRC. Rick Mast (West End), Ryan Pedde (Bethel Edmonton) and Rick Abma (Woodynook) were speakers at past Young Adults retreats and it was wonderful that they could make the time to spend with a bunch of YA from across this Classis.

Working with our Young Adults has been a very difficult and yet wonderful journey. Your children, Gods children are hungry for spiritual connectivity. As I listen to them, as I sit with them, I am encouraged by their desire to try things. It may not always work out, and we have failed at times, and yet they continue to say, let's try again. I love these people. Please continue to pray for them and the CANYA events you will see posted from time to time. (By the way, there are a few of them who LOVE to play hockey so if your church has a team, let's see if we can put a game together).

From a few of the churches in this Classis who have just recently hired Youth workers, I have been asked to mentor them, to help them through the often tumultuous first couple of years in ministry. To do this is such a blessing for me as I hear the passion these people have for ministry and their desire to it well. God is so good.

I spend time daily in prayer for each church and their youth workers. This youth culture is constantly changing and so are the ways in which we try to and need to stay connected to our youth. Time is often a barrier. Social media, school pressures and peer pressures play a big role in how we spend time with your children. And through it all, burn out, although it is getting better, is still the biggest problem affecting youth workers today. They need our prayer and support. Each day of the month I pray for a church.

I am an advocate for youth ministry on the floor of classis. This classis has done a tremendous job in addressing the need for a position like mine and is certainly the envy of other classis in North America. I have spoken with a few of them and each time I hear, "how do we get one of you?"

Thank you for letting me share and I ask that you join me in supporting and lifting up our youth workers in prayer and in any other way you can as they diligently do the work of the kingdom.

Ron deVries

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## Outline for Wednesday Evening Discussion

**“ALL BAPTIZED MEMBERS ... ARE WELCOME ... UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE ELDERS”**

PRESENTATION/SHARING/DISCUSSION ON SYNOD 2011’S  
REVISION OF CHURCH ORDER ARTICLE 59

Introductory Presentation (Fred Bultman)

- “The Way It Was”
- “The Way It Is” (Revised Article 59)

Among Local Options for Implementing New Article 59A

- Require Profession (typically in late-teen years or later) before admittance to Lord’s Supper.
- Encourage existing Profession, but at a younger age than in the past.
- Admit to the Lord’s Supper those baptized children who go through a “younger version of Profession”.
- Allow each set of parents to decide on the Lord’s Supper participation of each of their baptized not-yet-professing children.
- Openly invite all baptized members to participate in the Lord’s Supper.

A Time for Sharing – **Delegates for each Congregation reporting**

(moderated by Len Batterink)

- **What is the practice in your church regarding admission of members (baptized, “professing”) to the Lord’s Supper?**
- **If you’ve modified your practice since Synod 2011, share how that process has been going.**

Presentation: Is Profession of Faith still relevant?

(Fred Bultman)

- The disconnect from the Lord’s Supper.
- Why do a Profession? The new definition of “privileges” (Article 59C).
- The dependence of our CRCNA funding model on “The Way It Was”.

## Open Discussion on Inter-Congregational Complications

(facilitated by Len Batterink)

- Visitors (from other CRC congregations): How will your Elders handle Sunday foyer inquiries about Lord's Supper participation if the visitors come from CRC congregations that have admission practices different than your own?
- Membership Transfers Complications: How might your church elders pastorally handle a family transferring to your congregation from a CRC congregation that has chosen to implement Article 59 differently than your church has?
- Is there a need (or would it be helpful) for Classis to develop a policy on Article 59 issues?

## Overture

The council of West End Christian Reformed Church overtures Classis Alberta North to overture Synod 2012 to adopt the Creation Stewardship Task Force Report.

### *Grounds:*

1. The Task Force Report offers sound biblical insight and a much-needed call to action with respect to our vocation as God's image bearers to care for and properly steward the creation and its resources.
2. The report accurately summarizes the current scientific evidence and warns us about the danger of climate change and of its consequences to the environment, to humankind, and especially to the poor and disadvantaged.
3. The report carefully states that the human use of non-renewable energy sources is most likely a significant contributor to climate change and warns of the unacceptable risks of continuing our over-consumption of these resources.
4. Adoption of this report will encourage and assist CRC members, congregations, and denominational agencies and representatives to witness in word and deed to our confession that our world belongs to God and that we, as God's image bearers, are to husband its resources for God's glory, for the creation's well-being, and for the benefit of humanity in this generation and the generations to come.

## Attachments

Functionaries List

Time Schedule (Draft)

2011 Financial Reports: will be sent when ready