

Minutes

149TH SESSION OF CLASSIS ALBERTA NORTH OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

October 19-20, 2011

St. Albert Christian Reformed Church, St. Albert, Alberta

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.

1. Welcome and Introductions: **Rev. John Ooms**, Chair of Classis, welcomed the delegates, and made a few announcements.
2. Opening devotions were led by **Rev. John Luth**, pastor of St. Albert CRC. We sang a song and participated in a responsive reading. Rev. Luth brought a short message about stewardship and opened the Classis meeting in prayer, followed by another song.
3. The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. The roll was called by the Stated Clerk.

Church	Pastor	Elder/Deacon
Barrhead	Rev. Dan Meinema	Emily Vanderwekken
Edm Bethel Comm.	Rev. Bill Tuininga	Trudy Snaterse
Edm Centrepointe	----	Carla Stolte
Edm Covenant	----	*Ken Saik, *Rod Czuroski
Edm Fellowship	----	*Keith Ward, *Janet Kuperus (Wed) Wayne Groot, Wendy Steenstra (Thu)
Edm First	Rev. Mike Van Boom	Arend Stolte
Edm Inglewood	Rev. John Ooms	*Albert Den Otter, John Jager
Edm Maranatha	Rev. Art Verboon	Chris Toornstra (Thu)
Edm Ottewell	Rev. Martin Mobach	Andrew Geisterfer (Wed)
Edm So Mang	Rev. David Joo	
Edm The River	Rev. Bruce Gritter	
Edm Trinity	Rev. Rich DeLange	*Peter Oudijn
Edm West End	Rev. Gordon Pols	Jack Vanden Born
Edson-Peers	----	Don DeLeeuw (Wed)
Fairview – Faith Fell.	----	Gosse de Jong
Ft. McMurray-Evergreen	Rev. George Holthof	----

Lacombe – Bethel	Rev. Mike Vandyk	Henry Eisses (Wed)
Lacombe - Wolf Creek	Rev. Leon Johnston	----
Lacombe - Woodynook	Rev. Neil DeKoning	*Eric Doef
La Glace	Rev. Paul Birnbaum	Dave Nyland (Thu)
Leduc – Ebenezer	Rev. Peter Tuininga	----
Neerlandia	Rev. Randy Blacketer	Richard DeVries
Ponoka – Sunrise	Rev. William Delleman	Otto Nieuwland
Red Deer – First	Rev. Gary Bomhof (Thu)	Art Van Zanten
Red Deer - New Life	Rev. Henry Steenbergen	Evert Gritter (Wed)
Rimbey	Rev. Bill Niewenhuis (Wed)	Rob Dolman
Rocky – Covenant	Rev. Nic Wolmarans	Wes Dejong (Wed)
Rocky – First	Rev. Len Batterink	Gord Van't Bosch
St. Albert	Rev. John Luth	Glen Merkus
Stony Plain – Hope	Rev. Fred Bultman	Jake DeHeer

*denotes first-time delegates

4. Opening Procedures

- 4.1. The Form of Subscription was signed by a number of first time delegates.
- 4.2. Classis was declared constituted by the Chair, **Rev. John Ooms**. **Rev. Art Verboon** will serve as Vice-Chair. (Note: although **Rev. John Pasma** was originally going to be the Chair, he was unable to fulfil this responsibility due to recent surgery).
- 4.3. **Motion to seat deacon delegates**. Carried. First time deacon delegates signed the Form of Subscription.
- 4.4. **Motion to seat the delegate from So Mang CRC, since the credentials were not signed**. Carried.
- 4.5. **Motion to adopt the time schedule as presented**. Carried.

5. Stated Clerk Report and Classical Interim Committee Report: The Stated Clerk made the following motions on behalf of CIC:

- 5.1. **That Classis endorse Rev. Gary Bomhof's request for a pre-retirement in-service pension distribution effective June 30, 2011**. Carried.
- 5.2. **That Classis release Rev. Karen Norris from active ministerial service in West End CRC according to article 17 of the Church order, effective August 15, 2011**. This was mutually agreed upon between West End CRC and Rev. Karen Norris so that she can embark on a year's chaplaincy residency after which time she will not return to her present duties at West End CRC. **Motion to table**. Carried.
- 5.3. **That the two year declaration of eligibility stipulated by article 17c of the Church Order not begin until Rev. Karen Norris has completed her residency by August 15, 2012**. The Stated Clerk has received confirmation from three Synodical Deputies that they would concur with this recommendation should it be approved. **Motion to table**. Carried.
- 5.4. **That Classis approve Bethel CRC's (Edmonton) request to grant Rev. William (Bill) Tuininga emeritus status effective June 30, 2011 due to age**. Carried.

- 5.5. That Classis approve the following motions received from Centrepointe Community CRC.
- 5.5.1. **Motion: The Council of Centrepointe Community CRC and Ron Klok jointly request CAN to approve the amicable release, under Article 17, of Rev. Ron Klok from active ministerial service at Centrepointe effective October 19, 2011 in order to pursue a program of active study.** Carried.
- The delegate from Centrepointe CRC, **Carla Stolte**, briefly addressed Classis to emphasize that this is an amicable release.
- The Synodical Deputies, **Rev. Cameron Fraser, Rev. Jelmer Groenewold** and **Rev. Dick Kwantes**, concurred via email with Classis approval and their report is attached.
- 5.5.2. **Motion: Centrepointe Community CRC also requests that Rev. Ron Klok's eligibility for call be extended for four years effective October 19, 2011 which would incorporate two years of study and two years normally allowed for the reception of a call.** During this time of study Centrepointe CRC intends to hold Ron's ministerial credentials. Carried.
- The Synodical Deputies, **Rev. Cameron Fraser, Rev. Jelmer Groenewold** and **Rev. Dick Kwantes**, concurred via email with Classis approval and their report is attached.
- 5.6. **That the position of Pastor Church Relations Consultant for CAN be made a 0.5 permanent position. Motion to table.** Carried.
- 5.7. **That Rev. Walt Brouwer be affirmed to continue as Pastor Church Consultant for CAN. Motion to table.** Carried.
- 5.8. **That CAN fund the Neighbourhood Life Proposal for 3 more years (at which time funding would be reviewed) at a rate of \$25,000/year. Motion to table.** Carried.
- 5.9. **That Classis approves the 2012 Budget proposal as presented. Motion to table.** Carried.
- 5.10. **That Classis approves the work of the CIC from March 11, 2011 to October 19, 2011.** Carried.

6. Home Missions:

- 6.1. **Rev. Victor Ko** presented some slides and stories to illustrate what has been happening at mosaicHouse.
- 6.2. **Rev. Henry Steenbergen** noted that **Karen Wilk** is available to work with local churches in their outreach efforts.

7. Mission Leadership Team of Western Canada: **Rev. Martin Contant**

- 7.1. 60% of Denominational Home Missions funds come in through Denominational Ministry Shares.
- 7.2. New Director of Home Missions is **Moses Chung**, a graduate of Calvin Seminary, who came to us from Korea where he served as executive pastor in a large 30,000 member congregation.
- 7.3. Church planting has slowed down somewhat, partially due to lack of funds. Home Missions is praying and looking for alternate ways of fundraising and there have been some promising developments with a major donor.

8. Calvin Seminary: **Rev. Victor Ko**

- 8.1. Victor, who is on the Board of Trustees, attended a board meeting at Grand Rapids last week.
- 8.2. The seventh president of Calvin Seminary, **Rev. Julius Medenblik**, was inaugurated in a service attended by about 750 people. The highlight for many was the image of the President on his knees

washing the feet of a faculty member, a board member, a staff person, and a student. The theme was "Called to Serve."

- 8.3. On October 31, 2011 there will be a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. at The King's University College with the new president from Calvin Seminary.
- 8.4. More than one third of the students currently enrolled at Calvin Seminary are international students. More than half of the M.Div. students come from outside the CRC.

9. Ministry Shares Discussion: **Rev. Martin Mobach**

- 9.1. Rev. Mobach reviewed the procedure thus far: churches were previously given documents and information, and asked to discuss the Ministry Shares Budget at their council meetings and to provide the results of their discussion to their delegates.
- 9.2. Classis delegates were asked to consider the questions on the handout provided around each table, and to record the ideas and suggestions for further discussion in the larger group. A 2-hour discussion resulted in a number of good suggestions.
- 9.3. The CIC will compile these suggestions and distribute them to the churches in due time.

10. **Rev. Bill Tuininga** clarified that he is not actually retired but is taking his pension and continues to serve as pastor at Bethel CRC Edmonton.

11. The following motions were taken off the table:

- 11.1. **That the position of Pastor Church Relations Consultant for CAN be made a 0.5 permanent position.** There were questions from the floor regarding time commitment of the position, expectations of the position, procedure for evaluating the position. There was a suggestion to vote by ballot which was defeated. The question was called. Carried.
- 11.2. **That Rev. Walt Brouwer be affirmed to continue as Pastor Church Consultant for CAN.** Carried.
- 11.3. The chair welcomed **Rev. Karen Norris** who wanted to address Classis before the following motions were addressed.
- 11.4. **That Classis release Rev. Karen Norris from active ministerial service in West End CRC according to article 17 of the Church order, effective August 15, 2011.** Carried.
The Synodical Deputies, **Rev. Cameron Fraser, Rev. Jelmer Groenwold** and **Rev. Dick Kwantes**, concurred via email with Classis approval and their report is attached.
- 11.5. **That the two year declaration of eligibility stipulated by article 17c of the Church Order not begin until Rev. Karen Norris has completed her residency by August 15, 2012.** Carried.
The Synodical Deputies, **Rev. Cameron Fraser, Rev. Jelmer Groenwold** and **Rev. Dick Kwantes**, concurred via email with Classis approval and their report is attached.
- 11.6. **That CAN fund the Neighbourhood Life Proposal for 3 more years (at which time funding would be reviewed) at a rate of \$25,000/year.** Carried.

12. Classis Financial Report and Budget: **Ellen Vlieg-Paquette**, Classis Treasurer

- 12.1. Ellen reviewed the percentages of Classis Ministry Shares and Area College Ministry Shares received to September 30, which are a bit behind where they should be.
- 12.2. Ellen presented the 2012 budget.

12.3. A question was raised about the proposal to separate the DMC ministry share from Classis Ministry Shares. Henry Bosch was given the floor to respond and several further questions were asked and answered. **Motion: That the DMC ministry share be included in the budget as it always has been.** Carried.

12.4. **Motion: That Classis approve the proposed 2012 CAN Budget.** Carried. Revised ministry share per professing member for 2012 is \$77.16.

13. Youth Ministries Consultant: **Ron DeVries** enthusiastically shared a couple of stories about youth ministry. Today's youth are looking for ways to reach out, seeking truth, and hungering for spiritual family. Ron encouraged the delegates to be involved in youth ministry and to pray for our youth.

14. Supper Break: Devotions were led by **Rev. Art Verboon**, after which we enjoyed a delicious roast beef dinner.

15. Restorative Justice Task Force: **Joanne Munro**

The year-old Restorative Justice Task Force was given the opportunity to present a two-hour workshop on Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices at the evening session of Classis.

Led by Task Force Chair Joanne Munro, and with the assistance of task force members who facilitated small circle discussion, the delegates learned about the theory and principles of restorative justice in the criminal justice context. They also learned how the application of restorative practices can positively influence our churches' experiences of harmful and destructive conflict.

The workshop provided delegates with the opportunity to consider how restorative practices might be used within their congregations in a variety of settings to achieve outcomes that better reflect Jesus' call for us to live in right relationships with God and each other.

16. On Thursday we gathered at 9:00 a.m. and the chair welcomed the delegates.

17. The Stated Clerk asked if there were any delegates present today that were not present yesterday. The following delegates were present:

Church	Delegate
Edm Fellowship	Wendy Steenstra
Edm Maranatha	Chris Toornstra
La Glace	Dave Nyland
Red Deer First	Rev. Gary Bomhof

18. **Motion to seat deacon delegates.** Carried.

19. Opening devotions and a prayer exercise were led by **Rev. Walt Brouwer**. Walt will compile the responses into a prayer guide to be distributed to the churches for December.

20. Synodical Delegates: **Rev. Fred Bultman** and **Rev. John Luth**, CAN Minister Delegates to the 2011 Synod of the CRCNA, shared their perspectives on their Synod 2011 experiences.

21. Board of Trustees: **Mike Wevers** presented BOT Highlights from the meeting held Sept. 29 to Oct. 1, 2011 in Grand Rapids, Michigan
- 21.1. New Executive Director is **Rev. Joel Boot**.
 - 21.2. Synod appointed a Task Force on Structure and Culture to look at realignment of CRWRC within the denominational structure and several other “structure and culture” issues in CRC administration.
 - 21.3. Ministry Share Promotion Materials: A new resource is now being released called, *You Add, God Multiplies*. Copies of the video and additional promotion material should be coming to each church.
 - 21.4. Financial Report Our denominational financial situation ended the last fiscal year in relatively good shape.
 - 21.5. Young Adult Summit: The Leadership Exchange still plans to hold a Young Adult Summit in conjunction with Synod 2012. The purpose of this summit would be to engage the young adults of the CRC in the issues facing the church today and participate in discussion regarding the ministry direction of the denomination.
 - 21.6. The Network: The CRCNA electronic presence on the internet includes the “original” but still very relevant web page: <http://www.crcna.org> The Network continues to gain more frequent use and is a place where online conversations can happen and ministry discussion can take place. You can sign up to receive weekly email updates from any number of CRC ministries in which you are interested.
22. Student Fund Committee: **Andrew Geisterfer** brought the following two motions for consideration:
- 22.1. **That Classis approve the levels of financial assistance proposed in their report in the supplement.** Carried.
 - 22.2. **That Classis forgive the loans given to George Den Oudsten.** Carried.
23. Campus Minister: **Rick VanManen**
- 23.1. Rick explained why it is important to maintain a variety of doorways into the university culture, since these doorways may lead to openings for questions about faith and life. He shared a story about a student he met through a University club; she is struggling to determine where God wants her to be in the world.
 - 23.2. Rick thanked Classis for their support for his work
24. Campus Ministry Committee: **Rev. Roy Berkenbosch**
- 24.1. Since the campus ministry seeks to connect itself with CRC students at the University, churches are encouraged to advise the campus minister, Rick VanManen, of where their students are.
 - 24.2. In the next year, there will be a major evaluation of Campus Ministry in conjunction with Home Missions in order to refine the position description and evaluate Rick VanManen’s work.
 - 24.3. Purchase of a student house is being explored.
 - 24.4. The committee is also looking at ways to expand the ministry to other campuses such as NAIT, Grant McEwen.

25. Seafarer's Ministry: **Ernst DeVries**

- 25.1. Showed a video clip about Christmas at Sea. This year the churches are being asked to provide only funds rather than gifts.
- 25.2. Ernst visits the ships by water taxi to bring them bread and also a gospel message.
- 25.3. Seafarers now make a better wage than in previous years and are eager to sign on regularly.

26. Leadership Team: **Rev. Neil DeKoning**

- 26.1. Reviewed a few points from his report which is in the Supplemental Agenda.
- 26.2. Clarified the responsibilities of mentors.

27. The King's University College: **Shannon Tuininga**

- 27.1. The college handed out 147 degrees in 2011 which is the largest graduating class to date.
- 27.2. 678 students are currently enrolled, a modest increase over last year.
- 27.3. Prairie Centre for Christian Education is now a tenant on the campus.
- 27.4. Presidential Search Committee has been struck, since **Dr. Harry Fernhout** will have completed his term as president by the summer of 2013, and will be retiring.
- 27.5. Funding challenges exist due to government funding stuck at 2009 levels, and student enrolment is not at targets.
- 27.6. Shannon expressed sincere thanks to Classis for Ministry Shares support.
- 27.7. Pastors will be receiving invitations to a Library Open House on Nov. 21.

28. Edmonton Native Healing Centre: **Harold Roscher**

- 28.1. Delegates are invited to come to a 'Blanket exercise' on Nov. 3 at First CRC, Edmonton, to increase awareness of aboriginal history in Canada.
- 28.2. Harold thanked Classis for their support over the years, and more recently for support for the summer kid's camp.

29. Chaplaincy: **Harold Roscher** reported that many of the chaplains have retired but the committee still functions as a support group for Harold and a few others.

30. CRWRC: **Sarah Nicolai-DeKoning**

- 30.1. CRWRC is thankful for CAN's ongoing support.
- 30.2. CAN is the highest contributing classis in the denomination, averaging \$80 per member.
- 30.3. The recent CFGB harvest in Fort Saskatchewan raised \$1.2 million.
- 30.4. Harvest of Hope campaign not only met but exceeded their fundraising goal of \$825,000.
- 30.5. East Africa is experiencing its worst drought in 60 years, plus an ongoing famine in East Africa is affecting more than 12 million people. CRWRC is partnering with local agencies to deliver \$7 million in emergency aid to 145,000 people.
- 30.6. **Nema Aluku** (HIV/AIDS Response Coordinator for Eastern & Southern Africa) will be in Edmonton Dec. 1-6. She is available to speak to your congregation or small group.
- 30.7. World Hunger campaign going on until November 6.
- 30.8. 50th Anniversary of CRWRC in 2012.

- 30.9. A name change being explored; see CRWRC website for information.
31. Lunch devotions were led by **Rick VanManen**, Classis Chaplain, and we enjoyed lunch together.
32. Safe Church: **Ron Knol**
- 32.1. Ron told an allegorical story which illustrates a safe church 'incident', comparing it to having a fire in your church, and then discovering that you had no fire insurance and no precautionary measures were taken.
 - 32.2. Several churches in Classis do not have Safe Church Policies, and others have not taken advantage of recent training. Delegates are encouraged to ensure that their churches are prepared to prevent abuse.
33. Pastor Church Relations Consultant: **Rev. Walt Brouwer** related a couple of stories about his work, respecting confidentiality, and answered a few questions.
34. Pastor Church Relations Committee: **Rev. Mike Vandyk** handed out brochures for the 5th annual Pastors and Spouses Conference, to be held April 20-22, 2012 in Jasper, Alberta. Mike expressed thanks for Rev. Walt Brouwer's work as consultant.
35. Diaconal Ministries Consultant and NADC: **Henry Bosch**
- 35.1. Henry had a recent sabbatical in Honduras and Kenya, visiting and evaluating ministries there.
 - 35.2. Day of Encouragement is on November 5 at The King's University College, and there is still plenty of room for registrations.
 - 35.3. Henry expressed thanks for Classis support for the work of deacons, DMC, and NADC.
 - 35.4. A power point slide show was shown about the work of NADC, especially the Honduras Water Project.
 - 35.5. Henry shared some wonderful stories of thanksgiving from the persons and villages receiving not only a clean water supply, but opportunities to grow and share in faith.
36. Neighbourhood Life Report: **Karen Wilk**
- 36.1. 'Pancakes and Ponderings' was held on Thanksgiving weekend in the Wilk's neighbourhood, sharing food and expressions of thanks. Karen was able to share a Bible story about the 10 lepers with her neighbours.
 - 36.2. Starfish Community: Karen presented a power point slide show and short video, and told a few stories of individuals relating to others in small group situations.
37. Classis Credentials Committee: **Rev. Fred Bultman** reported for the delegates of Rimbey CRC and Hope CRC, Stony Plain.
- 37.1. Bethel Edmonton requested a Counselor which has already been handled during the Stated Clerk's report.
 - 37.2. Centrepointe Edmonton's report on the release of Rev. Ron Klok was also handled during the Stated Clerk's report.

- 37.3. Three churches (Maranatha Edmonton, Ottewell Edmonton, First Rocky Mountain House) all suggested that a discussion on Children at the Lord's Supper would be helpful. The Clerk responded that this is already being planned for the next Classis meeting.
 - 37.4. Covenant Rocky Mountain House requests a Classis discussion on "youth involvement in attendance and activities". The Committee suggested that they get together with Ron DeVries, Youth Consultant, to clarify what such a discussion might include.
 - 37.5. Edson CRC requested a unified mileage reimbursement format for all Classis ministries and churches. The Committee suggested that the Classis treasurer could report at each fall meeting what rate Classis is using for its budget, and let the churches react accordingly.
 - 37.6. First Edmonton suggested developing a Classis "Network". The Committee responded that churches can use the CRCNA Network rather than trying to reinvent this at the Classis level.
 - 37.7. Neerlandia CRC and Ponoka CRC requested church visits; the church visitors were informed.
 - 37.8. Inglewood Edmonton reported that they have discontinued evening worship services.
 - 37.9. Evergreen CRC in Ft. McMurray expressed appreciation for occasional pulpit supply.
38. The Vice Chair, **Rev. Art Verboon**, thanked the Chair for his good work in leading us through this Classis meeting. He led us in a closing prayer and song.
39. The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

The next Classis meeting is scheduled for March 7-8, 2012
at West End Christian Reformed Church, Edmonton.