

Church Visiting: Frequently Asked Questions

To the Churches of Classis Alberta North

From the Healthy Church Task Force, June 14, 2018

The HCTF believes Church Visiting needs to be re-imagined and become a ministry owned by the congregations of Classis as part of their reformed identity. Classis is a group of neighboring churches. Being neighbors provides rich images for our relationship to our neighboring CR congregation.

We have changed the number of church visiting clusters from 7 to 9. The intent is to have small geographically based clusters served by church visitors who live within the cluster.

Frequently asked questions about church visiting:

1: What is church visiting? Church visiting is a CR congregation/council intentionally and officially visiting its neighboring CR congregation to show interest in its ministry and life, to learn and pray together, and to hold the congregation accountable as per Article 42 of the Church Order.

2: Why should we do church visiting? Synod 2009 said: Classes need to emphasize “the importance of church visiting, thereby acknowledging its value for maintaining spiritual health and vitality in the member congregations of Classis.”

3: Who should do the visiting? Either, teams of two office bearers can visit a church, e.g. a pastor and an elder, or, church councils can visit together as Trinity, Maranatha and First Church have done.

4: How do we do Church Visiting? Church Visitors invite themselves to talk with the office bearers about the ministry of the congregation. They come to learn, to offer help, and to pray. They construct a visit in keeping with article 42 of the Church Order and thus inquire and converse with the deacons, elders, and pastors about matters such as faithful and effective preaching, visiting, giving, offering hospitality, counseling, supporting and encouraging each other, teaching the doctrines of the church, governing the congregation in accordance with the Church Order of the CRC, building up the congregation, and promoting the rule of God within and outside of the congregation? They draw everyone into a mutually respectful and edifying conversation.

5: Whom do we call when we want or need a church visit? Contact the church visitors of your cluster. When you face special challenges, first contact your church visitors and then, if more help is needed, call the Coordinator of Church Visiting, who is a member of the HCTF, or call another member of the HCTF. Written reports of visits need to be made to Classis, with a copy sent to the coordinator.

6: How often should we do church visiting? Preferably once a year, as the Church Order states! Frequency is important to maintain continuity and to express genuine interest in each other.

7: What can you do for the HCTF? Read our communications. Appoint a wise and experienced person as church visitor to represent you in your church visiting cluster. Experiment with new ways of visiting. And appoint a contact person in each cluster who convenes and plans visits.

Greetings and blessings, Melle Pool, Coordinator of Church Visiting, mellepool@gmail.com