



CLASSIS ALBERTA NORTH
of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America

**Minutes of the 166TH SESSION
March 8-9, 2019
held at WoodyNook CRC, Lacombe, Alberta**

CLASSIS MISSION AND VISION

The **Mission** of Classis Alberta North as a regional gathering of Christian Reformed churches is:

- To assist, support, and encourage faithful and creative local ministry, promoting healthy churches;
- To assist, support, and encourage local churches to unite in shared ministries of evangelism and diaconal involvement through denominational and common initiatives.

The **Vision** is that Classis Alberta North will be a gathering of mutually supportive, healthy churches expressing the good news of God's Kingdom that transforms lives and communities.

Serving Classis:

- Rich deLange, chair
- Henry Kranenburg, vice-chair
- Gary Duthler, Stated Clerk
- Linda Ryks, Recording Clerk
- Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain
- Balloting Committee: the delegates of Hope CRC Stony Plain
- Classis Credentials Committee: the delegates of St Albert and Edmonton West End CRCs
- Advisory Committee on Overtures: the delegates of Edmonton First and Edmonton Bethel CRCs
- Synodical Deputies: Rudy Ouwehand, BCSE, Henry Jonker, BCNW, and Louis Korf, Columbia

Proceedings of Classis: Friday, March 8, 2019

Presence of Friday's delegates: (*denotes first time delegates).

Church	Pastor	Elder	Deacon
Barrhead	—	—	—
Edm - Bethel	Tom Baird	Derk Opdendries	Selikke Duthler*
Edm - Centrepointe	Jeremy Vandermeer	—	Jesse Edgington
Edm - Covenant	Michelle Kool	Mike Slomp*	Anna Feddes
Edm - Fellowship	—	Darcy Visscher	—
Edm - First	Brian Dunn	Shawn Bakker*	Wilma McLaughlin
Edm - Inglewood	John Ooms	Joel Nydam*	Rose VanDenBoogaard*
Edm - Maranatha	—	Jacques Barzilay	Gerald Velthuizen
Edm - mosaicHouse	Aaron Au	Derrick Lee	—
Edm - The River	—	—	—
Edm - Trinity	Rich deLange	Mary Van Ryk	—
Edm - West End	Henry Kranenburg	Jody Groenendyk	Nathan Vos*
Edson - Peers	Ken Douma	Winson Elzinga	Dean Christie
Fairview - Faith Fellowship	—	Jaap Hiemstra	—
Ft. McMurray - Evergreen	—	—	—
LaGlace	Ryan Hoogerbrugge	—	—
Lacombe - Bethel	—	Terry Vandenborn	Trudy Salomans
Lacombe - Wolf Creek	Clarence Verveda (E)	Johnathon Nagel*	—
Lacombe - Woodynook	Neil De Koning	Sid Doornbos	Tyler Guppy*
Leduc - Ebenezer	Jason Dahlman	Henry Siderius	Brendan Bulten
Neerlandia	Leon Johnston	Anita Veldhuisen*	Bryan Strydhorst*
Ponoka - Sonrise	Brian Schouten*	Jan Star / Jan Haan*	Nic Haayema*
Red Deer - First	Ken Vis	Rob Wagenaar	—
Red Deer - New Life	Peter Rockhold	Joanne Vandergrift	Brad Van Niejenhuis*
Rimbey	—	Rob Dolman	Tim Buist
Rocky - Covenant	Nic Wolmarans	John Piers	Neil Van Waas*
Rocky - First	Dave Simmelink (E)	Tony Blaak	Bill Smid*
St. Albert	Tony Maan	Joanne Munro	—
Stony Plain- Hope	Jacob Boer	Jake DeHeer	—

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Rich deLange, Chair of Classis, called the meeting to order at 12 noon. He welcomed the delegates and other visitors.
2. **Devotions:** WoodyNook CRC pastor Neil De Koning led us in a worship service which included a confessional responsive reading incorporating an acknowledgement that we are meeting on treaty lands and lamenting the injustices suffered by the indigenous peoples. Those in attendance were invited to participate in communion.
3. **Opening Procedures**
 - 3.1. Roll Call: Attendance was taken as delegates arrived and first-time delegates signed the Covenant for Office-bearers at that time. The Stated Clerk reported that all congregations, except Barrhead, Edmonton-The River and Ft. McMurray-Evergreen were in attendance.
 - 3.2. Classis was declared constituted by the Chair, Rich deLange.
 - 3.3. **Motion Carried:** to adopt the agenda with time-line as guide.
4. **Round Table Sharing,** facilitated by Rich deLange as Classis Prayer Coordinator. Delegates shared both blessings and challenges faced by their congregations with table partners and prayed for one another.

5. **Classical Interim Committee Report:** Stated Clerk Gary Duthler summarized and highlighted items of the Classical Interim Committee's work as it appeared in the report attached to the Agenda.
- 5.1. **Motion Carried:** to approve the work of the Classis Interim Committee between October 14, 2018, and March 7, 2019.
 - 5.2. **Motion Carried:** to appoint Henry Kranenburg as Regional Pastor.
6. **Mission and Ministries Reports**
- 6.1. The written reports attached to the agenda were received for information.
 - 6.2. Questions and Comments:

Concern was expressed about the possible duplication of work between **NADC and Diaconal Ministries Canada** (DMC) since the churches of Classis are paying for both ministries. Jesse Edgington, NADC Consultant, clarified that he works closely with DMC and our local Diaconal Ministry Developer Lucinda Klapwyk. Both areas are conscious to not duplicate the roles that they fill, and Jesse has been in discussions with Ron Vanden Brink, DMC's National Director. Lucinda visits and has face to face conversations with local deacons in their meetings. Jesse connects with deacons on a broader scale and provides them with resources. He hosts meetings for deacon representatives from all our churches three times per year where they connect and communally discuss diaconal work. Jesse invited everyone to provide feedback. Ray Prins, World Renew board president, noted that NADC has been a huge support in spreading the word about World Renew, and NADC's support is greatly valued. World Renew's entire board will hold their annual meeting in Edmonton this fall, and they look forward to seeing the work of NADC firsthand.
7. **Safe Church Committee, Classis Ministry Presentation**
- 7.1. Ken Vis, chair of the committee, provided an overview of the committee's work and emphasized the importance of integrating safe-church policies and practices in the life of the congregations, especially in children's ministries.
 - 7.2. The committee is seeking one additional member, preferably a female to give the committee diverse representation.
 - 7.3. Ken described the Circle of Grace Program which is designed to educate children/youth in age-appropriate discussions about boundaries. This program is designed to complement current church curricula. More details are available from Ken Vis or John Feddes.
 - 7.4. Delegates completed a survey regarding their knowledge of their church's safe church practices.
8. **Classis Home Missions:**
- 8.1. Tom Baird commended Classis Alberta North churches for their church-planting culture and for raising church planting leaders. He noted that many of the churches have been or are currently involved with the Church Renewal Lab process.
 - 8.2. Tom invited everyone to an upcoming seminar, "Growing the church in the power of the Holy Spirit," offered by Dunamis Canada on May 7-10 in Edmonton at the Providence Renewal Centre.
9. **Discussion on seating emerging Churches:**
- Motion Carried:** That Classis invite emerging churches to send three delegates from their leadership team to Classis meetings with the understanding that the right to vote is reserved for ordained delegates.
10. **Healthy Church Task Force (HCTF), Classis Ministry Presentation**
- John Pasma made a presentation about HCTF's work.
- 10.1. John presented a brief history of this ministry within Classis. HCTF initially focussed on assistance between pastor and local churches in difficulty, then expanded to oversee a part-time paid Pastor Church Consultant, and finally, following a Classical review, became the advisory group as is reflected in the HCTF's current mandate.
 - 10.2. Anita Veldhuisen-Slomp and Joanne Munroe utilize their professional skills to conduct mediations, lead Classis-wide discussions, support churches through challenging conversations

or difficult discussions by providing a neutral presence. Anita and Joanne encourage the churches to connect with them if they recognize emerging problems or if they would like help with discussions or conflict resolution training.

- 10.3. Melle Pool works to facilitate church visiting as part of the process of holding the churches accountable.
- 10.4. First Edm/Maranatha /Trinity have formed a church visiting cluster as part of the new approach to church visiting. Rich deLange shared his experience as part of this trial cluster. He found it to be a good process, building good relationships with the leaders of each church. Pete VanderBeek provided a short visual presentation which will available as a link on the Classis website under the Healthy Church Task Force tab. Churches wishing assistance with clusters are encouraged to connect with Pete or Melle.
- 10.5. An evaluation of the HCTF's work and its mandate was included with the Agenda.
Motion Carried: that Classis confirms that the ministry of the Healthy Church Task Force continues to meet the criteria for Classis engagement.

11. Advisory Committee Report on overtures from Covenant, Inglewood and West End CRCs

Brian Dunn reported for the committee which offered the following recommendation:

1. That Classis not accede to the overture in its present form.
2. That HCTF as a team, or through representatives, meet with the church cluster that has submitted the overture to hear their concerns and answer their questions.
3. That they gather information from other church clusters as well about questions they are facing, and that they create, by the next meeting of Classis, a written document outlining the specifics of the new approach and answering the questions that have been raised.

Motion Carried: That Classis adopt the advisory committee report and recommendations.

12. Classis Meeting Dates

The chair invited delegates to engage in round-table discussions on the question of holding Classis meetings on weekends vs weekdays. Delegates were presented with attendance figures that showed a significant increase in the participation of elders and deacons on Fridays and Saturdays over Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Motion Carried: to continue holding Classis meetings on Friday and Saturday.

13. Resonate Global Mission, Denominational Ministry Presentation –Rich Braaksma spoke about Resonate Global Mission’s international work. He noted that many churches in Classis are supporting missionaries. Rich will connect churches with missionaries as well as connect individuals or groups interested in global mission to a variety of short-term or longer-term opportunities. More information is on the Global Resonate website and Rich can be reached at rbraacksma@crcna.org

14. Retirement of Neil De Koning

- 14.1. On behalf of WoodyNook Council, Ray Prins shared memories of Neil’s work in ministry and his 18 years at WoodyNook CRC where he served well as a teacher, preacher and leader.
- 14.2. Martin Mobach expressed the appreciation of Classis and presented Neil with a plant on behalf of Classis.
- 14.3. Neil de Koning expressed his gratitude to all members of Classis for his opportunity to serve. He plans to continue in the mission of the church, serving where he can.
- 14.4. **Motion Carried:** that Classis approves the retirement of Rev. Neil De Koning from the Ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church effective July 31, 2019.
- 14.5. Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain, and other delegates laid hands on Neil and his wife Klaske and surrounded him in prayer.

15. Youth Ministry Committee, Classis Ministry Presentation

- 15.1. Youth Ministry Consultant Bill Nieuwenhuis led delegates through a discussion on the psyche of Millennials (born 1980-2000) – the largest age group today, whose faith has been steadily declining in North America as indicated in reports that only 13-15% of young adults are

- interested in church. Mentoring, encouraging them in the faith and walking with them through their challenges is the best way to begin engaging them.
- 15.2. Information packages were distributed to the delegates to take back to their churches. The package includes information about an upcoming Youth Retreat at the end of April. It also includes a four-page executive summary on the ***Renegotiating Faith*** report dealing with identity issues of young people in transition between home and work or university: it is often difficult for them to find a church community.
 - 15.3. Bill spoke on behalf Tim Wood, campus minister at The King's University, who could not attend. Tim, in his role as a campus pastor, sees students experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety which is often played out in suicide. Delegates were strongly encouraged to engage and encourage our young people.
 16. Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain, led Classis in prayer for our youth, safe church and Global Resonate Ministries and gave thanks for our evening meal.

Supper Break

17. The evening session was opened with singing and prayer for the evening's proceedings.
18. Examination of Derrick Lee and Christopher Lee, candidates for Ministry of the Word.
 - 18.1. Michelle Kool conducted the practica examination of Derrick and Christopher
 - 18.2. Questions were taken from the floor.
 - 18.3. **Motion carried:** to proceed with the exam.
 - 18.4. Bill Nieuwenhuis provided the sermon critic report for Derrick that he and Henk Van Andel submitted.
 - 18.5. Questions were taken from the floor.
 - 18.6. **Motion carried:** to proceed with Derrick Lee's exam. The synodical deputies concurred.
 - 18.7. Ron Klok provided the sermon critic report for Christopher that he and Arnie Steenbergen submitted.
 - 18.8. Questions were taken from the floor.
 - 18.9. **Motion carried:** to proceed with Christopher Lee's exam. The synodical deputies concurred.
 - 18.10. Harry Zantingh conducted the Biblical and Theological Knowledge examination.
 - 18.11. Questions were taken from the floor.

Executive Session was declared

Motion Carried with concurrence of the Synodical Deputies: to admit Christopher Lee into the office of Minister of the Word in the CRC.

Motion Carried with concurrence of the Synodical Deputies: to admit Derrick Lee into the office of Minister of the Word in the CRC.

The Executive Session was ended.

- 18.12. The chair announced the result of the votes and congratulated Derrick Lee and Christopher Lee on their admission into the office of Ministry of the Word.
- 18.13. Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain, led in prayer as delegates laid hands on Christopher and Derrick.
19. Classis was adjourned for the day.

Proceedings of Classis: Saturday, March 9, 2019

Presence of Thursday's delegates: (*denotes first time delegates).

<u>Church</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Elder</u>	<u>Deacon</u>
Barrhead	—	—	—
Edm - Bethel	—	—	Selikke Duthler*
Edm - Centrepointe	Jeremy Vandermeer	—	Jesse Edgington
Edm - Covenant	Michelle Kool	Ed Doornenbal*	Anna Feddes
Edm - Fellowship	—	Darcy Visscher	—
Edm - First	Brian Dunn	Shawn Bakker*	Wilma McLaughlin
Edm - Inglewood	John Ooms	Joel Nydam	Rose VanDenBoogaard*
Edm - Maranatha	—	Jacques Barzilay	Gerald Velthuizen
Edm - mosaicHouse	Anne Vander Hoek	Frank Vanden Brink	—
Edm - The River	—	Joanne Ogle*	—
Edm - Trinity	Rich deLange	Mary Van Ryk	—
Edm - West End	Henry Kranenburg	—	Nathan Vos*
Edson – Peers	Ken Douma	Winson Elzinga	—
Fairview - Faith Fellowship	—	Jaap Hiemstra	—
Ft. McMurray - Evergreen	—	—	—
LaGlace	Ryan Hoogerbrugge	—	—
Lacombe - Bethel	—	Terry Vandenborn	Trudy Salomans
Lacombe - Wolf Creek	Clarence Verveeda (E)	Johnathon Nagel	Gord Gray*
Lacombe - Woodynook	Neil De Koning	Sid Doornbos	—
Leduc - Ebenezer	Jason Dahlman	Henry Siderius	Brendan Bulten
Neerlandia	Leon Johnston	Anita Veldhuisen*	Bryan Strydhorst
Ponoka - Sonrise	Brian Schouten	Jan Star	Nic Haayema
Red Deer - First	Ken Vis	Rob Wagenaar	Jaron Wagenaar*
Red Deer - New Life	Peter Rockhold	Barbara Bartel*	—
Rimbey	—	Rob Dolman	Tim Buist
Rocky - Covenant	Nic Wolmarans	John Piers	—
Rocky - First	Dave Simmelink (E)	Tony Blaak	Bill Smid
St. Albert	—	—	—
Stony Plain- Hope	Jacob Boer	Jake DeHeer	—

20. The session was opened by chair Rich deLange who welcomed delegates and guests.
21. Classis Chaplain Rick Abma led in devotions.
22. **Roll Call:** The Stated Clerk reported that all congregations except Barrhead, Ft. McMurray-Evergreen and St. Albert were in attendance.

The meeting of Classis was suspended to allow for the Annual Meeting of the Association

Annual Meeting of the Association of Classis Alberta North:

- 1) Martin Mobach, Chair of the Association, opened and welcomed everyone and led in prayer.
- 2) **Motion Carried** to approve the agenda
- 3) **Motion Carried** to approve the minutes of the AGM held on March 15, 2018
- 4) **Motion Carried** to approve the Financial Statements of the Association Classis Alberta North of the Christian Reformed Church in North America for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, as presented by Treasurer Mike Vos.
- 5) **Motion Carried** to accept the signed Auditor's Report from Halpert Monsma, Chartered Accountants, which accompanied the Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, as presented by Treasurer Mike Vos.

- 6) **Motion Carried** to appoint Halpert Monsma, Chartered Accountants, auditors for the fiscal year 2019.
- 7) Board of Directors:
 - a) **Motion Carried:** To reappoint Gary Duthler as Stated Clerk and Director of the Association for a 3-year term effective July 1, 2019.
- 8) Question Period:

Question: Is it stewardly to have such a large amount of funds in the accumulated operating surplus when churches are struggling to meet their classical shares contributions, and shouldn't we consider lower ministry requirements based on this surplus?

Answer: Classical Interim Committee will look at this matter in their next meeting.

Comment: It is great that we have a large amount of funds waiting for church plants which is a positive thing for our Classis.

Question: What can Classis do about the unfortunate situation of churches who give \$0.00 to classical shares (this is outside of smaller churches who cannot contribute due to circumstances).

Answer: Might be fruitful discussion in a future meeting and is left with CIC to consider.
- 9) **Motion Carried** to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting of Classis resumed.

23. **Nominations Coordinator:** Anita Veldhuisen-Slomp provided delegates with information on nominees for **delegates** to represent Classis AB North at the June meeting of the CRC Synod:

- 23.1. **Synod 2018 Delegates:** The delegates voted on the names presented with the following results:

	Delegate	Alternate delegate
- Pastors:	Jacob Boer	Michelle Kool (1 st alternate)
	Neil deKoning	Rich deLange (2 nd alternate)
- Elders:	Helen Doef	Gary Duthler (alternate)
- Deacons:	Nathan Vos	Jesse Edgington (alternate)

- 23.2. **Motion Carried** to destroy the ballots.

24. **Church Visitor and Church Counsellors reports:**

- 24.1. mosaicHouse – John Ooms. Some matters of concerns were noted and guidance was given to the church regarding the process for Letters of Call to Christopher Lee and Derrick Lee. Corrected Letters of Call were created which were subsequently signed, allowing the candidates to be examined at this Classis meeting
- 24.2. La Glace and Fairview CRCs – Ryan Hoogerbrugge. These two councils met in November following a Sunday service. Discussion involved matters regarding church visiting, safe church policies and liability insurance. Fairview is encouraged by a profession of faith and new members. There is a continual struggle with the transient nature of people in the northern communities.
- 24.3. Red Deer and Rocky Churches – Nic Wolmarans. These churches are in discussion of creating a cluster. Nic commented that a more effective model for these churches may be visits being between officials from Classis and the church Councils.
- 24.4. Maranatha CRC Edm. Martin Mobach. Maranatha is engaged in ongoing work to find a pastor.
- 24.5. Bethel CRC - Lacombe – Gary Bomhof's report was read by the Stated Clerk. Rev. Jacob Boer has accepted Bethel's call as pastor and will be installed April 14.
- 24.6. Rocky Mountain House - First CRC – Pastor Bill Niewenhuis is serving them well. They have extended a call to Pastor Ken Douma in Edson.

25. Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC), Denominational Ministry Presentation

Rachel Vroege, Diaconal Ministries' Regional Ministries Developer for Western Canada, and Lucinda Klapwyk, Diaconal Ministry Developer, made a presentation about the scope and work of DMC.

Lucinda described her work as an encourager of deacons in their work. The presentation included a description of the transformation of Operation Manna into NewGround which is comprised of 4 key activities:

- Community Opportunity Scans to determine the strength and assets of a church and see where the church can best use its assets in community;
- Community Ministry Support which provides coaching, networking, and resources (including grant money) to equip churches to partner with people in their community in sustainable ministries and programs;
- Annual Youth Justice Initiative which connects young people with the deacons in their church to expose an injustice in their community and find innovative ways to address it, with the help of grant money and coaching;
- Deacon Scholarships through which deacons can apply for funding for church diaconate development.

26. Race Relations, Denominational Ministry Presentation

Bernadette Arthur, Race Relations Coordinator for Canada, presented to Classis about the work of the Office of Race Relations which seeks to equip, train and support churches in their effort to eliminate racial barriers.

The Office of Race Relations offers a variety of workshops such as the indigenous blanket exercise and "Journey with Me" for those dealing with forced migration (refugees). They assist with facilitated cross-cultural learning field trips and with coaching churches. They help churches establish Kenosis Community Groups which are led by white people for white people to study how culture shapes their life in fellowship to initiate open and honest discussion about positions of power and privilege that can go unnoticed and unspoken by white Christians.

Bernadette led the delegates in a table exercise on the impact of identity.

27. Credentials Committee report from West End delegate:

Nathan Vos presented the report on behalf of the committee. The credentials were all in order. The following items were brought forward with the credentials:

- 27.1. Centerpointe CRC reported that they have been blessed with the support of a Portuguese congregation for which they thank God. They ask for continued prayers of support from the churches of Classis.
- 27.2. Edmonton – Covenant CRC requested that Classis considers providing short-term and long-term Disability for non-ordained church staff such as commissioned pastors.

Recommendation: The committee recommended that CIC consider how to respond to this.

- 27.3. Faith Fellowship CRC communicated that the church is happy with classical appointments.
- 27.4. St Albert CRC questioned what resources are available when a member of the congregation is in mental health crisis and whether there is an existing plan or approach that can help church deal with those situations.

Recommendation: The committee recommended St. Albert be given 5-10 minutes at the fall Classis meeting to better articulate how Classis can be in support.

- 27.5. Hope CRC asked for, and was granted, an opportunity to update Classis on their plans. Elder Jake DeHeer informed Classis that Hope is in transition with their pastor Rev. Jacob Boer leaving for Bethel Lacombe. The church has decided to go with a part-time position, hiring Natasha Specht, who has enrolled at Taylor Seminary and who will initially take on some administrative matters and then work into the pastoral roles as she works on her MDiv. Hope feels it has lots to offer, even though they struggle with finances, and there are lots of ongoing dreams such as working alongside a potential church plant in Parkland County. Hope thanks the churches of Classis for reaching out and for their prayers.

28. **Opportunity for Feedback** – Delegates completed a Classis meeting feedback survey.
29. **Closing:**
Classis Chair Rich deLange thanked the volunteers and staff of WoodyNook for their hospitality, great food, and all the logistical support for the meeting.
Vice-chair Henry Kranenburg in turn thanked Rich for his leadership and closed the meeting with prayer
30. **Classis adjourned** at 11:30 a.m. and the delegates enjoyed the lunch provided by WoodyNook.