



of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America

**DRAFT Minutes of the 164TH SESSION
of
Classis Alberta North
held on March 14-15, 2018
at First CRC, Red Deer, Alberta**

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:

- Peter VanderBeek, chair
- Bruce Gritter, vice-chair
- Gary Duthler, Stated Clerk
- Linda Ryks, Recording Clerk
- Hilary Smith, Classis Chaplain
- Balloting Committee: the delegates of Edmonton Bethel Community CRC
- Classis Credentials Committee: the delegates of CentrepoinTE CRC and Edmonton Covenant CRC
- Advisory Committee: the delegates of Stony Plain CRC and Edson-Peers CRC
- Synodical Deputies: Rudy Ouwehand (BC-SE), Henry Jonker (BC-NW) and Charles Kooger (AB-S/Sask.)

Proceedings of Classis: Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Presence of Wednesday`s delegates: (* denotes first time delegates).

<u>Church</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Elder</u>	<u>Deacon</u>
Barrhead	Harold Vandersluis	Ido Helder	—
Edm - Bethel Comm.	Tom Baird	Dan Wildeboer	Richard Vriend
Edm - Centrepointe	Jeremy Vandermeer	—	—
Edm - Covenant	Michelle Kool	Cynthia Krikke*	Willy Olydam
Edm - Fellowship	—	—	—
Edm - First	Brian Dunn	Arend Stolte	—
Edm - Inglewood	John Ooms	Jacob Meliefste*	Theo Emmelkamp
Edm - Maranatha	Pete VanderBeek	Trincy Buwalda	Jo Niemansverdriet
Edm - mosaicHouse	Aaron Au	Frank VandenBrink	—
Edm - The River	Bruce Gritter	—	—
Edm - Trinity	Michael McGowan*	John Strikwerda	Bert Goutbeck
Edm - West End	Henry Kranenburg	Jody Groenendyk*	Irene Vriend*
Edson – Peers	Ken Douma	Winson Elzinga	—
Fairview - Faith Fellowship	—	—	—
Ft. McMurray - Evergreen	—	—	—
LaGlace	Ryan Hoogerbrugge*	—	—
Lacombe - Bethel	—	Peter Prins	Trudy Salomons*
Lacombe - Wolf Creek	Leon Johnston (late)	Bernie Kolkman	—
Lacombe - Woodynook	Neil deKoning	Helen Doef	Jacob Verburg*
Leduc - Ebenezer	Elder Jason Dahlman	Frank vandeKraats	Jan Kriel*
Neerlandia	Art Verboon	Glenn VanderLught	—
Ponoka - Sonrise	—	Siebe Brouwer	Nan Murray*
Red Deer - First	Ken Vis	Cor Pikkert	Dave Bomhof*
Red Deer - New Life	Peter Rockhold	Dan Steenbergen*	—
Rimbey	Bill Niewenhuis	—	James Vanderhoek*
Rocky - Covenant	Nic Wolmarans	William Nicolay*	—
Rocky - First	Brenda Boodt	Anita Middel*	—
St. Albert	Tony Maan	Douwe Spriensma	—
Stony Plain- Hope	Jacob Boer	Natasha Specht	—

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Peter VanderBeek, Chair of Classis, called the meeting to order at 12 noon. He welcomed the delegates and visitors.
2. **Devotions:** Ken Vis, Pastor of First CRC - Red Deer led us in devotions.
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 on the attendance: all but three churches were represented by delegates.
 - 3.2. Classis was declared constituted by the Chair, Peter VanderBeek.
 - 3.3. **Motion Carried:** to adopt the agenda with time-line as guide.
4. **Congregational Health Round-tables:** facilitated by Bruce Gritter
Delegates were invited to join each other’s tables and to share the celebrations and challenges of their congregations with table partners and to pray for one another.
5. **Classical Interim Committee Report:** Stated Clerk Gary Duthler summarized the work of the Classical Interim Committee and highlighted specific items of the CIC Report as it appeared in the Classical agenda.
 - 5.1. **Motion Carried:** to approve the work of the Classis Interim Committee between October 14, 2017 and March 13, 2018.
 - 5.2. **Motion Carried:** to declare Rev. John Luth eligible for call.

- 5.3. **Motion Carried:** to reappoint Tom Oosterhuis as Synodical Deputy and Neil De Koning as Alternate Synodical Deputy.
- 5.4. **Motion Carried:** to approve the hiring procedures, appended to the CIC report, to be included in the Classis Rules of Procedure
- 5.5. **Motion Carried:** to accept the revised task description for commissioned pastor Rick Van Manen, called by Fellowship CRC to serve with Resonate Global Ministries at Kosin University.

Grounds:

- 1) *The revised task description is in essence similar to his role as campus minister at the University of Alberta and is consistent with the guidelines adopted by Synod.*
- 2) *The partnership position ensures that Rick's work at Kosin University will be supervised by Resonate Global Ministries, and Fellowship CRC will continue to function as calling church.*

Synodical Deputies concurred with the decision of Classis that this revised job description is in keeping with the synodical guidelines for a commissioned pastor.

6. **CRCNA – Canadian Ministries:** Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministries Director, spoke to Classis about his vision and work for the CRC and addressed the following two items:
 - 6.1. The Bridge App - a wonderful resource for the churches; webinars and educational resources are now available. Dorothy Vandersteen is available to assist churches with any questions and/or struggles.
 - 6.2. Ongoing relationship with the Classis and Denominational Staff – Strengthening Ministry Relationships. Based on the theory that our relationship with other churches, our classis, and even with the extended ministries of the denomination should be beneficial to everyone's ability to do ministry.
 - 1) The denomination is tailoring the work of internal structures to be more cost effective and applicable to local churches. Examples of this are:
 - The Council of Delegates, which has 52 members, with a representative from each of the Classes and 4 members at large. This replaced the previous Board of Trustees. Communication is improved as these delegates listen to the people in their Classis and then communicate to the leadership/staff of the denomination. It gives each Classis more influence on decisions and how funds are spent denominationally.
 - The ongoing work to strengthen ministry relationships in Canada as a way of supporting the Classes. Regional leaders support one another and then support the individual Classes when needed.
 - 2) New initiatives and positive restructuring of the denomination to serve local churches:
 - One Click – One Call:
 - One CLICK: on an internal CRCNA.org web portal gives access to multiple resources. All agencies/ministries are placing resources into that one location.
 - One CALL: Two employees in US and one in Canada will be available to help local churches get connected to the right people at the right time.
 - Short videos are being developed for Canadian churches to assist people entering the CRC. These videos will focus on what defines the CRC and its mission and what makes it unique.
 - Equipping the local church:
 - a. "New Pastors to Canada" orientation in January
 - b. Continued fostering of relationships with and support of stated clerks.
 - c. Strategic thinking moving forward -- 2019 Canadian National Gathering to be held in Edmonton at The King's University (a spiritual discernment/journey). This will be a weekend guided by spiritual practices, not led by keynote speakers.

7. **Mission and Ministries** – written reports included in the Agenda were received for information. Ministry representative who were present were given the opportunity to answer questions or highlight their reports. Ray Prins spoke for World Renew, Dan Van Keeken for The King’s University, and Lucinda Klapwyk for Diaconal Ministries Canada.
The chair invited Ministry to Seafarers Chaplain Rev. Gary Roosma to introduce himself and his ministry.
8. **Ministry Presentation: Classis Home Missions** – Committee Chair Tom Baird reported on behalf of the Classis Home Missions Committee.
- 8.1. Church Renewal Lab – Tom Baird encouraged churches who are considering joining or who want to learn more about the Renewal process to join a meeting on May 11-12 at Ebenezer Leduc. The Friday is specifically for Pastors and the Saturday is for Pastors and as many council members as possible.
- 8.2. Prayer –The committee encourages churches to be vibrant in prayer and would like to see a prayer group in each church, and to see those groups making an effort to be in touch with one another.
- 8.3. Church Planting: Tom outlined Bethel Community CRC’s hopes and plans to support a Ft. Saskatchewan church plant. The Committee asks for the release of the funds (\$53,000/yr for 3 yrs) that Classis designated for church plants. Ryan Pedde spoke of his excitement to be involved in leading this church plant process.
- Motion Carried:** that Classis Alberta North approve the release of the designated funds for the church plant in Ft. Saskatchewan and affirm our commitment to pray for the new church plant.
- Chaplain Hilary Smith prayed over this new church plant opportunity.

Vice Chair Bruce Gritter assumed the chair for the following discussion.

9. **Implementing Effective Church Visitors – Clusters** – discussion led by Pete VanderBeek on behalf of the Healthy Church Task Force (HCTF)
- 9.1. Pete VanderBeek read a written report provided by Melle Pool: The HCTF is
- Grateful for the experimental cluster begun by Trinity/Maranatha/First Edm.
 - Grateful for churches who have appointed visitors:
 - Thankful for services that others are willing to perform.
 - Looking forward to the day that all churches will have a church visitor appointee – either traditional or in new clusters.
 - Trusts that churches are thinking of conveners or a convening council – so that visiting happens.
- 9.2. Pete VanderBeek presented some highlights from the Trinity/Maranatha/First Edm experimental cluster meetings:
- Use of circle discussions – found this to be beneficial as a discipline in listening.
 - Found value in telling stories of struggles and rejoicing as office bearers.
- 9.3. Healthy Church Task Force is available to mentor any new cluster groups that wish to start.
- 9.4. Question: Clarification required on the roles of classically appointed church visitors, the church clusters, church conveners, and the process of who to call and how visitors are assigned, etc.
Answer: The Healthy Church Task Force will send clarification to all church councils.

Pete VanderBeek re-assumed the chair.

10. Retirement of Martin Mobach

- 10.1. John Ooms shared highlights of Martin’s ministry work. He served as a pastor both in Ontario and Alberta, as well as a missionary in the Philippines. He is currently involved in chaplain duties in crisis situations in the City of Edmonton. He has served on the CIC for this Classis and will again continue in that role.

- 10.2. **Motion Carried:** that Classis approves Rev. Martin Mobach's early retirement from the Ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, effective June 30, 2018.
- 10.3. Martin Mobach thanked the members of Classis Alberta North for the opportunity to work within this Classis. He encouraged members to pray for and encourage the leaders in their local churches.
- 10.4. Hilary Smith, Classis Chaplain, and other delegates laid hands on Martin and surrounded him in prayer.
11. **Safe Church** – Committee chair Carmen Voogd made a presentation on behalf of the committee.
- 11.1. Local churches are encouraged to utilize the Safe Church link on the Classis website for resources (e.g. there is a great template for a safe church policy located there), and to contact Classis Safe Church Committee when more support or information is needed.
- 11.2. The Safe Church team desperately needs volunteers (ideally would like a team of five volunteers). Carmen is the only member at present and her term is up in June 2018.
- 11.3. Classis no longer covers the membership for our churches to the Plan to Protect program. The program is still available for churches but at their own cost.
- 11.4. The committee is looking for volunteers to assist in creating and setting up online training for Safe Church for our classis.
- 11.5. Carmen would like to hear from churches with contacts for their church's Safe Church teams.
12. **Nominations Coordinator** – John Ooms presented the nominees to serve as delegates to Synod.
- 12.1. **Synod 2018 Delegates:** The delegates voted on the names presented with the following results:
- | | Delegate | Alternate delegate |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| - Pastors: | Dayna Vreeken
Art Verboon | Rich deLange (1 st alternate)
Jacob Boer (2 nd alternate) |
| - Elders: | Gary Duthler | Helen Doef |
| - Deacons: | Jennifer Snaterse | (no alternate available) |
- 12.2. **Motion Carried** to destroy the ballots.
13. **Council of Delegates (COD)** – Michelle Kool, our Classis delegate to COD, reported.
- The COD functions similar to a Classis with representatives from around Canada & the United States gathering at meetings, delegates praying and listening to reports. Each church council recently received highlights on the many ways our denomination is working on all levels: the restructuring and stewardship as was directed by Synod; the support for Classes and together supporting our sister churches; as well as community nurturing, growing and making disciples. It is exciting to see the work of God in all these levels in the church. Churches in Classis are invited to contact Michelle with any questions/concerns.

The meeting of classis was suspended

Annual Meeting of the Association:

- 1) John Ooms, Chair of the Association, opened the meeting.
- 2) **Motion Carried** to approve the agenda.
- 3) **Motion Carried** to approve the minutes of the AGM held on March 2, 2017.
- 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, 2017, 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, 2017, as presented by Treasurer Mike Vos.

- 6) Mike Vos was thanked for his work as treasurer for Classis AB North.
- 7) **Motion TABLED:** to appoint Halpert Monsma, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors for the fiscal year 2018.
The motion is referred back to CIC for recommendations regarding the use of an accounting firm. Recommendations to be presented at a General Meeting during the Classis meeting in October 2018.
- 8) **Board of Directors**
 - a) **Motion Carried:** To ratify the appointment of Anita Veldhuisen Slomp as Director of the Association, effective Oct. 2017.
 - b) **Motion Carried:** To appoint Martin Mobach, Neil deKoning and Anna Feddes as Directors of the Association, effective July 1, 2018.
- 9) **Motion Carried:** to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting of Classis resumed.

14. **Cuba Connection** – John Strikwerda spoke about the ministry of the Cuba Connection team and the opportunity to invite Cuban Pastor Juan Waldo Herrera to visit Classis Alberta North. Pastor Juan spoke about his work as a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church in Cuba. Cuba has nine official CRC churches, eleven house churches and two church plants. The Christian Reformed Churches in Cuba thank everyone for our support.

Hilary Smith, Classis chaplain, invited delegates to lay hands on Pastor Juan and prayed for him and for the Cuban churches. She also offered prayer for the safe church ministries within Classis.

Pastor Juan led Classis in prayer for our evening meal.
15. **Worship:** The evening session was opened with worship led by the First CRC Red Deer Praise Group.
16. **Healthy Church Task Force Presentation on Mental Health for Pastors**
Mel Slomp, on behalf of the Healthy Church Task Force, led a discussion on depression and anxiety in general and then focussed on the struggles pastors face, noting that 23% of pastors surveyed acknowledged struggles with mental health, but that only about ½ of them sought help with these struggles. Churches were encouraged to have conversations in their councils about how to have common goals and supports in place if a pastor should require a time of leave and to be proactive in minimizing occurrences. A reminder was given that pastor's spouses are also in need of support.
A resource document was handed out (one per church). The Healthy Church Task Force will make this document available on our Classis website.
17. **Adjournment:** Chaplain Hilary Smith closed the evening session with prayer and Classis was adjourned for the day.

Proceedings of Classis: Thursday, March 15, 2018

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

<u>Church</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Elder</u>	<u>Deacon</u>
Barrhead	Harold Vandersluis	Ido Helder	—
Edm - Bethel Comm	Tom Baird	Dan Wildeboer	Richard Vriend
Edm - CentrepoinTE	Jeremy Vandermeer	—	—
Edm - Covenant	Michelle Kool	Cynthia Krikke*	Willy Olydam
Edm - Fellowship	—	—	—
Edm - First	Brian Dunn	Arend Stolte	—
Edm - Inglewood	John Ooms	—	Theo Emmelkamp
Edm - Maranatha	Pete VanderBeek	Trincy Buwalda	Jo Niemansverdriet
Edm - mosaicHouse	Victor Ko	Derrick Lee	—
Edm - The River	Bruce Gritter	—	—
Edm - Trinity	—	John Strikwerda	Bert Goutbeck
Edm - West End	Henry Kranenburg	Jody Groenendyk*	Irene Vriend*
Edson – Peers	Ken Douma	Winson Elzinga	—
Fairview - Faith Fellowship	—	—	—
Ft. McMurray - Evergreen	—	—	—
LaGlance	Ryan Hoogerbrugge*	—	—
Lacombe - Bethel	—	Peter Prins	Trudy Salomons*
Lacombe - Wolf Creek	Leon Johnston (late)	Bernie Kolkman	—
Lacombe - Woodynook	Neil deKoning/Dayna Vreeken	Helen Doef	Jacob Verburg*
Leduc - Ebenezer	Elder Jason Dahlman	Frank vandeKraats	Jan Kriel*
Neerlandia	Art Verboon	Glenn VanderLught	—
Ponoka - Sonrise	—	Siebe Brouwer	Nan Murray*
Red Deer - First	Ken Vis	Cor Pikkert	Dave Bomhof*
Red Deer - New Life	Peter Rockhold	Dan Steenbergen*	—
Rimbey	Bill Niewenhuis	—	James Vanderhoek*
Rocky - Covenant	Nic Wolmarans	William Nicolay*	—
Rocky - First	Brenda Boodt	Anita Middel*	—
St. Albert	Tony Maan	Douwe Spriensma	—
Stony Plain- Hope	Jacob Boer	Natasha Specht	—

18. **Call to Order:** The session was opened by the chairman, Peter VanderBeek.
19. **Devotions:** Hilary Smith, Classis Chaplain led our devotions
20. **Roll Call:** The Stated Clerk reported on the attendance: all but three churches sent delegates.
21. **LGBTQ Conversation:** Classis was led through a facilitated LGBTQ conversation by Anita Veldhuisen Slomp. Delegates spent time listening to one another using a listening circle model. Participants expressed various concerns and anxieties for all who are and who may be affected –those who struggle to find a place in the church, the church’s struggle to be inclusive vs exclusive and for the denomination, that it not find itself divided as a result. Peter Rockhold closed this session with prayer.
22. **Campus Ministry**
 - 22.1. John Ooms engaged Rick Mast in a conversation about his vision for the position of Campus Minister and how God has prepared and led him to this position.

Executive Session Declared.

- 22.2. **Motion Carried:** that Classis ratifies the decision to hire Rick Mast as Campus Minister
Motion Carried to destroy the ballots.

- 22.3. **Motion Carried:** to waive the requirement for an examination of Rick Mast prior to his reinstatement as a commissioned pastor

Grounds:

- 1) *Rick has been previously examined by Classis.*
- 2) *There is enough congruence between his former position as Youth Pastor and his new position as Campus Minister to consider that a re-examination of theological and practica is not necessary.*

- 25.4 **Motion Carried:** to confirm Rick Mast as a Commissioned Pastor as called by WECRC to serve in the position of Campus Minister for Classis Alberta North.

Executive Session ended.

- 25.5 The Chair announced the results of the motions and invited delegates to join him in congratulating Rick Mast on this confirmation of his calling as the new campus minister at the University of Alberta. Hilary Smith, Classis Chaplain, led in prayer as delegates laid hands on Rick.

23. Credentials Committee report

- 23.1. Faith Fellowship – expresses deep appreciation for Classical appointments.
- 23.2. Bethel Lacombe – requests clarification regarding Healthy Church Task Force. Credentials Committee recommends that the church consult the HCTF resources available on the Classis AB North website, and direct specific questions to the members of the HCTF.
- 23.3. The River – Request that consideration be given for a task force to look at the organizational changes in the CRC denomination and whether Classis should consider changing its own organization to better align to the denomination's structure. Specifically, should we consider a five standing committee structure? The Credentials Committee recommended that this question be referred to CIC to provide guidance.

Motion Carried: to send this request to the CIC to provide guidance to Classis on this topic.

24. Church Visitor and Church Counsellors reports:

- 24.1. St Albert CRC – Gary Duthler read Bob DeMoor's report on his work with the St Albert CRC and their Council's desire to renew their call to Rev. Tony Maan; the letter of call was duly filled out and in order. Tony Maan has accepted the call from St. Albert CRC.
- 24.2. Edmonton Covenant CRC – John Ooms reported that Covenant CRC was led to extend a call to Michelle Kool which was endorsed by the congregation. The call was extended and accepted by Michelle.
- 24.3. Rocky Mountain House First CRC – Bill Nieuwenhuis reported on his work as Church Counsellor. The church's calling committee has been diligent and had narrowed the search to one pastor. However, the Council did not endorse that recommendation and so the search team is resuming its work. Pastor Bill has officiated at three funerals and has had occasion to lead church services for First Rocky.

25. Youth Ministry Consultant:

- 25.1. John Ooms engaged Bill Nieuwenhuis in a conversation about his vision for the position of Youth Ministry Consultant and how God has prepared and led him to this position.

Executive Session Declared.

- 25.2. **Motion Carried** that Classis ratifies the decision to hire Rev. Bill Nieuwenhuis as Youth Ministry Consultant

Motion Carried to destroy the ballots.

Executive Session Ended.

25.3. The Chair announced the result of the motion and invited delegates to join him in congratulating Bill Nieuwenhuis on this confirmation of his calling as the new Youth Ministry Consultant. Classis Chaplain Hilary Smith led in prayer as delegates laid hands on Bill.

25.4. Rimbeiy CRC has called Rev. Bill Nieuwenhuis to serve Classis Alberta North in the position as Youth Ministry Consultant.

Motion Carried: that Classis affirms that the task description of the Youth Ministry Consultant is consistent with the calling of a minister of the Word in accordance with Church Order Supplement Art. 12-c.

The **Synodical Deputies concurred** with the decision of Classis.

26. **Overture from Woodynook CRC** re Classis meeting dates

The Advisory Committee reported and recommended that Classis accept the overture from Woody Nook CRC to change its meeting dates from Wednesday and Thursday to Friday and Saturday, based on the following grounds:

Grounds:

1. *This will accommodate a greater number of elders and deacons who have work obligations during the week.*
2. *It is in the interest of the churches to ensure that a greater cross-section of elders and deacons can attend Classis meetings.*

Motion Carried: That Classis implement the recommended change in meeting days for the next two meetings of Classis, after which it will be reviewed.

27. **Opportunity for Feedback** on the meeting of Classis. Comments made by delegates:

27.1. Would like to have more input from elders and deacons at the meetings, and less from pastors. Would like to see opportunity for every church to make a 5-minute report on their church to the delegates, broadening what begins in small table discussions.

27.2. Stuart Williams expresses the appreciation from Fellowship CRC regarding the LGBTQ discussion that Classis held.

27.3. Clarification was requested whether an elder can serve as deacon delegate if no deacon is available to serve in that role.

Answer: No, the only exception to the designation is that an elder may serve in place of the pastor if there is no pastor available to serve as delegate.

27.4. Regret was expressed that delegates didn't have opportunity to ask questions of those who were hired.

28. **Adjournment:** Bruce Gritter thanked the chair and stated clerk for their work, and expressed appreciation to Red Deer First CRC for their hospitality. He closed the meeting with prayer, and Classis was adjourned at 2:15 pm.