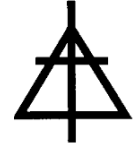




# CLASSIS LAKE SUPERIOR



OF

## THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

**Meeting March 4-5, 2024**

At the Emo CRC, 18 Meadow St Emo, ON, P0W 1E0

**Beginning 10:15 am Monday and to conclude @ 2:00 pm Tuesday.**

Classis Lake Superior is a covenanted fellowship of churches that seek to be faithful Reformed expressions of the body of Christ, honoring the triune God through worship and prayer, making disciples for Jesus Christ, and proclaiming and portraying His love in their communities and the world.

**We help each other fulfill our calling to be Christ’s Church in the following ways:**



## **Classis Lake Superior is to be:**

### **A Place of Discerning the Spirit in Community:**

*When classis delegates gather,  
they are to discern God's will with others  
on behalf of their larger church community.  
Classis, as a deliberative assembly,  
is a community where this discernment happens.*

### **A Network of Support and Accountability:**

*Because disciples are made to live in relationships,  
church leaders need a community of churches  
with which to share joys and struggles,  
to be encouraged and challenged.*

### **Living into a Collective Calling:**

*At some point, churches that are in healthy relationships with one another  
will begin to ask  
how God might be calling them to serve their city or region together. Many  
Ministry opportunities  
go beyond the ability of any one church.  
Some of these will be classis wide,  
while others may be in major urban centers of a large, geographically spread classis.*

### **A Connection into the Wider Church:**

*For many people, their main experience of being part  
of the broader family of the Christian Reformed Church is via classis.  
Churches participate in their denomination  
through classical structure and opportunity.  
Classis also connects the broadness of North American ministry  
into the individual church's own regional and local context,  
providing an avenue for a meaningful relationship  
with the denominational ministries.  
In addition, Classis should encourage churches  
to live outside themselves into the broader Christian community.*

## **PREPARATORY INFORMATION:**

### **I. Registration:**

#### **A. COUNCILS, DELEGATES and GUESTS, PLEASE NOTE:**

Complete on-line forms for registration as delegate or guest by **February 20**.  
Register for Classis, for which meals and for lodging if needed.

**The links for registration** are as follows:

Delegates: <https://forms.gle/4Yn8hX1Acn64CnhM9>

Guests/Visitors: <https://forms.gle/krkmvDqrLWrdjCr87>

Registration Links For Classis Lake Superior, March 4-5, 2024 in Emo, ON  
(Form includes provision for lodging for Sunday night March 3 and Monday March 4)

#### **B. Visitors, invited or coming on their own.**

1. Are welcome to attend.

Meetings are open to the public except when executive sessions are declared.

2. Costs – though visitors are welcome, there are costs needing to be paid either by those who invited you or by yourself.

Take note of the following policy:

##### **A. Classis will cover expenses for**

- 1) required delegates and alternates, representatives of Classis' supported ministries or committee members who need to be present at Classis to expedite their work or reporting\* (often an annual appearance is the standard practice) and
- 2) any others whom Classis has invited to attend.

B. The expenses of those invited to attend by local churches as a learning experience or for any other reason should be covered by the local church.

C. Others who come on their own or beyond an annual committee/ministry appearance should cover their own costs. (e. g. travel, lodging, and meals)

\*(When feasible, committee members who happen to be delegates are also encouraged to report for committees.)

#### **C. CREDENTIALS – Nominations**

**Synod 2024: Please come prepared with nominees on your credentials for Synod 2024.**

Synod meets at Calvin in Grand Rapids, Friday, June 14, through Thursday, June 20.  
Classes are to

- delegate one Minister of the Word, one elder, one deacon, and one other officer.
- make an effort to include women and persons of ethnic background as delegates in order to better reflect at Synod the diversity of believers in the body of Christ.

**Nominations** – It's encouraged that when elder and deacon nominees are put forward for delegation to Synod, that if possible include some biographical information or have the pastor or other council members who know them well introduce them to Classis.

## II. ON ARRIVAL AT CLASSIS

A. **Bring a check** for Classis Meeting Expenses of \$8 per active professing member of your congregation. Place it in the designated box on clerk's/registration table.

B. Tend to the following:

- Turn in or pick up an expense voucher for your personal expenses.
- Put on a name tag.
- Turn in any **late reports to the clerk** for copying and/or distribution.  
Classis will decide whether to let it be on the agenda.

## III. LODGING

A. Lodging

Billets –you'll meet your hosts at the Emo, CRC both on Sunday evening and Monday afternoon.

Hotels

Emo Inn, Emo, Ontario is located at 5916 11/71 Hwy, Emo, ON P0W 1E0 on the east edge of Emo or 20 miles West of Fort Frances Ontario / International Falls Minnesota, and 45 miles East of Rainy River Ontario / Baudette Minnesota. +1 807-482-2272

Super 8 by Wyndham in Fort Frances, 810 Kings Hwy, Fort Frances, ON P9A 2X4,  
1 807-788-0917

**Directions** for Emo Inn:

Just on the east edge of Emo on Highway 11/71,  
About 45 miles east of Baudette, 20 miles west of Fort Frances.

B. Classis Policy:

- a. Lodging for delegates and guests will be provided free of charge for those who
  - 1) must come over 200 miles; or
  - 2) need to make a meeting before 10 am the next morning.
- b. All lodging will be double occupancy unless a single room is specifically requested.

### C. Price for a single room

Hotel Costs are:

\$100 per room per night at the Emo Inn

\$141.51 per room per night with double occupancy at Super 8

If you request a single room, instead of sharing with another delegate, you must reimburse Classis for the cost of the other delegate who would have shared your room, or half the cost of the room, i.e. \$50 per night at the Inn or \$70.50 at Super 8.

(To make payment for your room, deduct your room expense/night x # of nights from the other expenses you are claiming on your Classical Expense form. If you are not claiming expenses or your lodging amount is greater than your other expenses, then contact the Treasurer, Kristi Santema, for payment arrangements. (See Classis web page at bottom, or [lakesuperiortreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:lakesuperiortreasurer@gmail.com), 3698 150th Ave, Princeton, MN 55371, (612)390-7724.

Cancellation agreements:

Should you be booked at a hotel but cannot make it, please inform them 24 hours prior to scheduled arrival time. Emo Inn +1 807-482-2272; Super 8 +1 807-788-0917

## IV. AGENDAS AND MATERIALS

A. All required documents will be

1. emailed to your church office and pastor 4 weeks before Classis.
2. posted on the Classis Web site: [ClassisLakeSuperior.org](http://ClassisLakeSuperior.org).

You can find them under: "Meetings and Committees",  
then under: "Classis Meeting Information",  
then under: "Meeting Documents" March 4-5, 2024.

B. Printed Agendas

Printed copies of this agenda will **ONLY** be available **by specific request**.  
Please consider printing your own copy or using a digital version.

C. On the safe side:

**DOWNLOAD** the agenda and documents to your laptop or computer.

Do NOT expect to access the internet in order to obtain them from the cloud, etc. after you arrive at Classis. Sometimes (as happened at Lake Geneva) internet access may be limited.

## V. OPENING EXERCISES

A. **ALL FIRST TIME DELEGATES** will be asked to affirm their agreement with the Doctrinal Standards of the CRCNA by signing the Covenant for Officebearers as printed below.

### **Covenant for Officebearers in the Christian Reformed Church\***

We, [the undersigned][i.e. delegates of Classis Lake Superior], believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, which proclaims the good news of God's creation and redemption through Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the authority of God's Word, we submit to it in all matters of life and faith.

We affirm three creeds—the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith. In doing so, we confess our faith in unity with followers of Jesus Christ throughout all ages and among all nations.

We also affirm three confessions—the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort—as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God. These confessions continue to define the way we understand Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ.

Grateful for these expressions of faith, we promise to be formed and governed by them. We heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.

Along with these historic creeds and confessions, we also recognize the witness of *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony* as a current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context.

We also promise to present or receive confessional difficulties in a spirit of love and fellowship with our brothers and sisters as together we seek a fuller understanding of the gospel. Should we come to believe that a teaching in the confessional documents is not the teaching of God's Word, we will communicate our views to the church, according to the procedures prescribed by the Church Order and its supplements. If the church asks, we will give a full explanation of our views. Further, we promise to submit to the church's judgment and authority.

We honor this covenant for the well-being of the church to the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

\*To be signed by professors, ministers, commissioned pastors, elders, and deacons when ordained and/or installed in office. Adopted by Synod 2012. This is also signed when delegated to Classis or Synod.

## **VI. SCHEDULE.**

Monday:

08:00 - 10:00 – CIC meeting

10:00 - 10:15 – Registration

10:15 -            - Pre-Classis Seminar introductions

10:30 - 12:00 – Pre-Classis Seminar

12:00 - 1:00 – Lunch

12:15 -            First Time Delegate Orientation

1:00 - 2:30 – Pre-Classis Seminar Cont'd

2:30 - 2:45 – Break

2:45 - 5:30 – Classis Convenes, Roll call, Business

5:30 - 6:45 – Dinner

6:45 -            Worship and EAST region churches/ministry sharing and prayer.

Possibly: Sharing of highlights by the churches of the Eastern

Region. This includes: Baldwin, Pease, Princeton, Grace, Faith,

New Life, North Center Lao, Calvary, Trinity Hill, and Bridgewood.

Tuesday

8:00 - 8:30 – opening exercises

8:30 - 10:00 – Classis Ministry Agenda

10:00 - 10:15 – Break

10:15 - 12:00 – Classis Ministry Agenda

12:00 - 1:00 – Lunch

1:00 - 2:30 – Classis Ministry Agenda

2:30-            Closing Reflections, Evaluation, Prayer, and Adjournment!

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**Agenda for the Meeting of Classis Lake Superior**  
**To convene at Emo CRC,**  
**Emo, ON**  
**March 4-5, 2024**

Art. 1 **Officers**

President: Rev. Brian Bolkema  
Vice-President: Rev. Ben Verkerk  
Stated Clerk: Rev. Henry Gunnink

Art. 2 **Opening and Organization**

Monday -- 2:45 pm

- 2.1 Chair opens with devotions, welcome and remarks
- 2.2 Roll Call and Review of Time Schedule
- 2.3 First time delegates sign the Covenant for Officebearers
- 2.4 Declaration of Classis being constituted
- 2.5 Welcome - all delegates, missionaries, agency representatives, and visitors
- 2.6 Appointment of Committees
  - 2.6.1 Credentials: Bridgewood-Baldwin
  - 2.6.2 Overtures/Deliberative Matters: Calvary-Brandon
  - 2.6.3 Balloting: Princeton - Hope

2.6.4 Classical Expense Committee: First TB – Pease or Bethlehem  
Note: First named chairs the committee, each can choose who reports on the floor.

Art. 3 CIC report and/or Correspondence of the Secretary of Classis

Art. 4 Reports and other agenda items.

**A Place of Discerning the Spirit in Community:** *When classis delegates gather, they are to discern God's will with others on behalf of their larger church community. Classis, as a deliberative assembly, is a community where this discernment happens.*

## PRE - CLASSIS SEMINAR

**Monday, March 4, 2024**

**10:30 - 12:00 – Pre-Classis Seminar Session 1**

**1:00 - 2:30 – Pre-Classis Seminar Session 2**

**Topics: CIC has invited several presenters/facilitators.**

**Delegates will be invited to attend/participate in 2 of 5 offerings.**

## OVERTURES

**See appendix 3 –p. 54**

## **BALLOTING -- (Actual Ballot Included in Appendix -2) p. 52**

### **Elections**

I. Vice-president of Classis, September 2024

a. Rules of Procedure:

At each meeting of Classis, Classis shall elect a vice-president from a list of at least three nominees presented by the Classical Interim Committee. This person shall serve as vice-president at the next meeting of Classis and as president at the subsequent meeting.

b. CIC Nominations:

Vote for one –

e. g. Circle – the one with the highest number of votes will be Vice President.

David Zigterman; Marg Rekman; David Huizenga;

c. Other Nominations from councils. \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Additional nominations for vice-president of next classis meeting are welcome

## II. Nominations for delegates to Synod

Rules of Procedure state:

IV. A. 10. Minister delegates to Synod and their respective alternates shall be chosen by free ballot for the first two ballots. Delegates and alternates must receive majority votes. Prior to the balloting, the Secretary of Classis shall inform Classis as to who were the delegates to Synod the two previous years.

There were no Synods held in 2020 or 2021.

Delegates to Synod 2022 were:

Ministerial Delegate:	Ben Verkerk;	Alternate:	Aaron Greydanus
Elder Delegate:	Rob Braun;	Alternate:	Gaye Rieger
Deacon Delegate:	Marilyn Stulen;	Alternate:	None
Fourth Delegate:	Dan De Graff;	Alternate:	Nick Van Beek.

Delegates to Synod 2023 were:

Ministerial Delegate:	Aaron Greydanus;	Alt. :	Dave Huizenga
Elder Delegate:	Gaye Rieger;	Alt. :	Rob Braun
Deacon Delegate:	None;	Alt. :	None
Fourth Delegate:	Steve Zwart;	Alt. :	Nick Van Beek.

## Ordained Ministers/Pastors of Classis Lake Superior, Spring 2024

Dan DeGraaf	Baldwin, WI		Raymond, MN
	Brandon, MB	David Zigterman	Renville, MN
	Brooten, MN	David Huizenga	Savage, MN
Joel De Boer	Bunde, MN	Marg Rekman	Thunder Bay, ON
Eli Groenendyk	Edina, MN - Calvary	Matthew Guichelaar	-Bethlehem Thunder Bay, ON
Nick Van Beek	Edina, MN- Calvary		- First Thunder Bay, ON
Marno Retief	Emo ON		- Hope
David Dick	Hancock, MN	Kyle Sandison	Trinity, Hill
Joe Hwang	Inver Grove, MN-Grace	Ben Verkerk	Willmar, MN Winnipeg, MB
	New Brighton, MN -Faith		- Covenant Winnipeg, MB
	Pease, MN		- Good News
Mark Brouwer	Princeton, MN Prinsburg, MN	Brian Bolkema	Winnipeg, MB - Transcona

### **Ministers in Special Ministries**

Dan Crapo	Mayo Hospice Chaplaincy, MN
Michael Miedema	Headingly Correction Centre, Headingly, MB
Gerald Van Smeerdyk	Elim Village, Surrey, BC

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Retired Ministers**

Evert Busink	Winnipeg, MB
Jim Busscher	Mendota Heights, MN
Harold De Jong	Rosslyn, ON
Stan De Vries	Eagan, MN
Henry Gunnink	Inver Grove Heights, MN
John Keizer	White Bear Lake, MN
Les Kuiper	Centerville, MN
Jim Petersen	Tarpon Springs, FL
Norm Prenger	Thunder Bay, ON
Anthony Schweitzer	Winnipeg, MB
Doug VandeKamp	Ottawa, ON
Jack Vanden Heuvel	Victoria, MN
Jack Van Marion	Bloomington, MN
Herm Van Niejenhuis	Willmar, MN

\*\*\*\*\*

### III. Functionaries of Classis

Key: **Yellow needs attention** Green: **Proposed changes**

#### Classical Secretary (3 yr. term, Jan thru Dec)

Henry Gunnink	24	26
Les Kuiper, Alt.	24	26

1. CHMC-CA -shall have 5 members: 2 clergy, 3 lay, with 2 alts, 1 clergy, 1 lay.  
Currently has 1 clergy, 2 lay. Needs 1 more clergy reg. 1 more lay reg member; and 2 more alternates.

#### Existing: Classical Home Missions - CAN (3 yr. term, Sept to Sept)

Ben Verkerk	Chair (1st)	22	25
Henrietta Hielema	(2nd)	21	24
Gloria Richardson	(1st)	22	25
Minister reg.=		24	27
Lay reg. =		24	27
2 alts		24	27

#### Ballot:

Role	Person	term	dates	Yes	No
Min Reg		1st	Sept 23/24 thru Aug 26/27 ?		
Lay Reg		1st	“		
1 Alt		1st	“		
2 Alt		1st	“		

2. Existing: CHMC-US –shall have 3 reg clergy, 2 reg lay, + 1 alt of each

David Zigterman	Chair (3rd)	23	26
Adam Stout	(2nd)	22	25
Dan DeGraff	(1st)	22	25
Travis Berry	Lay (1st)	22	25
David Huizenga	(1st)	22	25
Lowell Schwitters	Lay (1st)	22	25
Mark Brouwer, Clgy-Alt	(1st)	22	25
Lay Alt	(1st)	24	27

#### Ballot:

Role	Person	term	dates	Yes	No
Lay Alt		1st	Sept 24 thru Aug 27		

### 3. Existing: CMLT –Classical Ministerial Leadership Team

There shall be four regular members and at least one clergy and one non-clergy and either a clergy or non-clergy alternate.

Eli Groenendyk	Clergy-Reg	(1st)	23	26
Dan DeGraff , Chair	Clergy- Reg	(1st)	23	26
David Dick	Clergy- Reg	(1st)	22	25
Jason Wright	Non-Clergy-Reg	(1st)	22	25
Alt =			23	26

#### Ballot:

Role	Person	term	dates	Yes	No
Clergy Reg	Eli Groenendyk	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sept 23 thru Aug 26		
Clergy Reg	Dan DeGraff , Chair	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sept 23 thru Aug 26		
1 Alt		1 <sup>st</sup>	Sept 23 thru Aug 26		

### 4. Existing Synodical Deputies Term July 1 to June 30

Harrison Newhouse,	(1st)	20	23
Jack Van Marion, Alt.	(1st)	20	23

#### Ballot:

Person	Term	dates	dates	Yes	No
Harrison Newhouse,	(2 <sup>nd</sup> )	24	27		
Jack Van Marion, Alt.	(2 <sup>nd</sup> )	24	27		

### 5. Existing: Church Visitors

Central			
David Zigterman	(3 <sup>rd</sup> )	23	26
Joel De Boer	(1 <sup>st</sup> )	23	26
Alt.		24	27
East			
Dan DeGraff	(1 <sup>st</sup> )	23	26
Dave Huizenga, Alt	(1 <sup>st</sup> )	23	26
Jim Busscher	1st Alt (1 <sup>st</sup> )	23	26
Les Kuiper	2nd Alt (1 <sup>st</sup> )	23	26
North		Winnipeg/Brandon	
Ben Verkerk	Alt (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	23	26
<del>Brian Bolkema</del>		23	26
Marno Retief	Alt. (1 <sup>st</sup> )	23	26

<b>North Thunder Bay/Emo</b>			
Fred Rekman	(2nd )	22	25
Ben Verkerk Alt.	(2nd )	23	26
Marno Retief Alt.	(1st )	23	26

**Ballot: Church Visitors**

**Central**

Role	Person	term	dates	Yes	No
Alt		1st	Sept 23 thru Aug 26		

**Ballot: East**

Role	Person	term	dates	Yes	No

**Ballot: North—Winnipeg/Brandon**

Role	Person	term	dates	Yes	No
Reg	<del>Brian Bolkema</del>	1st	Sept 24 thru Aug 27		

6. **COD –Canada Corps**, Classis rep. only to balance off Classis having a US COD rep.  
As a bi-national Classis. Only if Canadian councils want representation.

**Existing: None**

Not wanted		
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**Ballot: COD –Canada Corp Classis Rep.**

7. **CRCNA Agencies:**

– Canadian Region 2

**Existing** End date

(Calvin Sem)	27
Calling for Canadian Clergy nominees --	
Resonate Global Missions	n/a
Western Can rep -- Rich Braaksma	
(WR Can ) (1st)	
DMC Regional Ministry Developer Mark Vanderwees	
Diaconal Coach (formerly Diaconal Ministry Developer) - Teda Heerema	
DMC Board Member - Yvonne Schenk	

**Ballot CRCNA CA Agencies**

Role	Person	term	dates	Yes	No

Cal Sem	Rev. John Lee or Rev. Brian Ochsner	1st	Sept 24 thru Aug 27		
Resonate		1st	Sept 24 thru Aug 27		
WR		1st	Sept 24 thru Aug 27		

**A Network of Support and Accountability:**  
*Because disciples are made to live in relationships, church leaders need a community of churches with which to share joys and struggles, to be encouraged and challenged.*

**A. Monday night worship, sharing and prayer**

1. Bethlehem CRC will co-host with Grace CRC.
  - a. Grace worship team members will lead in worship.
  - b. Pastor Marg will bring a message.
2. **North Region Churches** and ministries will relate God’s blessings as well as the challenges they face **to be included in our prayers.**

Brandon, Transcona, Good News Fellowship, Covenant, Hope Centre, Emo, Bethlehem, First, Hope, Gathering Place, and Prayer Ministry.

**B. Report of Classical Interim Committee --  
 To Classis Lake Superior, March 6-7, 2023**

**Classical Interim Committee Report (CIC)**

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**C. Clerk report**

**Secretary/Stated Clerk Report to Classis Lake Superior, March 4-5, 2024**

Delegates of Classis Lake Superior

Twice each year, as clerk, I am privileged to inform you about my work as clerk. Since a lot of my work remains the same, like assembling agendas, producing and distributing minutes, receiving correspondence from denominational agencies, researching information for questions and issues arising, I’m tempted to take a previous report, update and tweak a few things and call it done.



However, I remind myself that every meeting almost 1/3 are first time delegates for whom these things may be new information. So, it may be helpful for all, new attenders as well as frequent attenders, that I note both the usual details and also try to capture or give a snapshot of the status of Classis over the last 6 months.

#### Regular duties

Some may be aware that 10 days after our September classis, I underwent open heart surgery. I was able to complete and distribute minutes in that time, then our alternate Clerk, Rev. Les Kuiper, took over for a month and did a very good job. His work included preparing for and recording minutes on a special classis Contracta for the examination of Candidate Joseph Hwang who had accepted a call to the Grace CRC.

I have recently completed cardiac therapy and am fully engaged again in the work of stated clerk. I thank all who inquired about my health and prayed for me during that time. I am very thankful to be able to be of service again.

Since September 2023 I've:

- drawn up classical appointment schedules for both Hope CRC and Raymond CRC until May of 2024;
- Advised 2 different persons about preparing and submitting overtures to their local councils and what steps to take should a local council not endorse it;
- Advised about who was eligible to be delegated to Classis (i.e. needs to be an ordained office bearer in the local congregation);
- Clarified Synod's CO change about no more than 2 of the same office being delegated at the same time, i.e. applies only to delegates to Synod so that Classes will send 4 delegates and does not change the rule that at a classis level elders cannot be alternates for deacons;
- Answered questions from another Classis that CLS had not placed any restrictions/stipulations on a pastor who retired under Article 18 c;
- Facilitated contact between Yearbook office and Joseph Kim re his intentions about returning to ministry of the Word after completing his studies;
- Supplied Trudy Ash and Thrive ministry with names of all churches in Classis without a full time pastor. Thrive would offer them encouragement and support; (At that time: Brandon, GNF, Hope, Pease, Rock of Life, Brooten, Grace, Faith, and Raymond)
- Helped clarify the job description for the alternate treasurer role in classis;
- Completed 4 surveys from other Canadian Classes: re remuneration of treasurer and clerk; re whether classis used electronic means for voting and what means, re how we handled Article 17 matters, and how much reimbursement was given with Classical Appointments.
- Determined that any pastor seeking counseling with the Full-Strength Counseling ministry can contact Kim Rankins at PCR (Now Thrive in GR) in order to apply for a grant to cover a year of counselling at greatly reduced subsidized cost.
- Searched for and found a copy of a Letter of Call for Chaplain Dan Crapo which was wanted by Tim Reitkerk of Chaplaincy and Care as part of a 5 year Full Endorsement process. (Dan now has that full Endorsement from Chaplaincy and Care in the CRCNA as Chaplain!)
- Helped with preparations for holding Classis in Emo;
- Consulted with Kathy Smith from GR and Calvin Seminary on various CO questions.
- Updated the Functionary list for Classis to ensure it was accurate and up to date;
- As ex officio member of the CIC, constructed their agendas, drafted their minutes;

- Drew up CIC action item charts to try to keep that committee ministry moving forward.
- Encouraged processing of ministerial credentials when Pastors accepted a call elsewhere.
- Passed along:
  - Links from Thrive that would help churches search for a new pastor;
  - Request for nominations for EIRC (Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee);
  - Question from GR re status of Amber church in Classis;
  - Question from Dordt re names of students from Classis attending Dordt;
  - Info and form and links for filling out pledges for 2024 and 2025, Classis Lake Superior form will be found at <https://arsl.at/gGOkAMbG?id=001F000001DIHcD>

Should any have questions about anything included here or perhaps not included, feel free to inquire. I pray these efforts will be of service to help councils, pastors, congregations, committees, and ministries to fulfill their callings and ministries effectively.

Respectfully submitted,  
Henry Gunnink,  
Clerk, CLS

Note: A detailed record of my activities is available upon request.

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#### **D. Church Visitor Reports**

North Region: Thunder Bay/Emo

### **Report of Church Visit to First CRC Thunder Bay**

**Date of Visit: Thursday, January 25, 2024**

**Visitors: Rev. Dr. Marno Retief and Fred Rekman**

**Host: First CRC Thunder Bay**

#### **Introduction**

The Council meeting at First CRC Thunder Bay commenced at 7 pm with Chair Dan Breukelman welcoming all present and inviting one of the elders to lead a short devotion. He expressed gratitude to the church visitors, Rev. Dr. Marno Retief and Fred Rekman, for their presence and noted the significant time since First CRC had last received a visit. After introducing the Council members, he handed over to the church visitors.

Fred and Marno thanked the Council for the opportunity to conduct the visit. Fred led the discussion, with Marno taking notes and occasionally asking additional questions.

#### **Discussion Points**

1. Church Records: The Council confirmed that all church records, including membership and financial statements, were up-to-date.
2. Ministry Highlights: The Council cited the appointment of Matthew Guichelaar as lead pastor and Angela Gysen's service planning during Covid-19 as key achievements. Pastor Matthew expressed his appreciation for the support of the Council in his role.
3. God's Work in Difficult Times: When asked where they see God most at work in the church, the Council responded that they especially see God at work in their congregation pulling together in difficult times, such as times of personal loss and grief.
4. Educational Courses: The Council discussed the recent "Purpose Driven Life" course, which was very well attended. However, a subsequent course did not garner much interest. Currently, a new course on the Heidelberg Catechism is in progress. It was noted that there is a realization within the church to focus on courses that will speak to the heart, aiming to draw back people and engage the congregation more deeply.
5. Serve Ministry and Kids Camp: These were identified as strengths of the congregation, demonstrating effective engagement and service within the church community.
6. Community Outreach: The Pancake Breakfast and Friendship ministry were highlighted for their significant impact in community outreach efforts.
7. Sunday School Programme: The Council mentioned that there is one Sunday School class with an attendance of 3 to 10 children. The Sunday School programme is well-appreciated and valued within the church community.
8. Deacon Training and Community Involvement: The deacons expressed gratitude for the recent training they received from Mark Vanderwees. They are also actively involved in community service at the Shelter House and The Gathering Place in Thunder Bay.
9. Senior Member Support: The deacons pick up one of the senior ladies for church every Sunday, a gesture deeply appreciated by her, demonstrating the church's commitment to inclusivity and care for its members.
10. Pastor Church Relations Committee: The Council acknowledged the absence of a dedicated committee, with the Human Resources committee partially fulfilling this role.
11. Impact of COVID-19 Measures: The elders shared their sadness and frustration about members who stopped attending due to COVID-19 measures and have not returned. They also mentioned the difficulty in engaging these individuals through phone calls.

12. Volunteering Challenges: Elders expressed frustration over the lack of volunteering, highlighting the need for more active participation from the congregation.

13. Friendship Ministry: The deacons discussed the success of this ministry.

14. Men's Breakfast: The bi-weekly event, attended by about ten people, was noted as a valuable ministry. The breakfast is followed by a Bible study.

### **Observations and Recommendations**

- The Council's diligence in maintaining up-to-date records is commendable.
- The appointment of a lead pastor and adaptability during the pandemic are significant achievements.
- The congregation's unity and support in times of personal loss and grief demonstrate a strong sense of community and God's presence in difficult times.
- The focus on courses that speak to the heart is a positive step towards re-engaging the congregation and addressing the varying interests of church members.
- The Serve ministry and Kids Camp are key strengths, demonstrating effective engagement within the church community.
- The Pancake Breakfast and Friendship ministry are impactful in community outreach and should be continued and supported.
- The Sunday School programme, with its appreciable attendance, is a valuable aspect of the church's ministry to children.
- The deacons' recent training and their involvement in local community services like the Shelter House and The Gathering Place highlight their commitment to community engagement.
- The support provided to senior members, such as picking up a senior lady for church, exemplifies the church's dedication to inclusivity and care for all members.
- The lack of a dedicated Pastor Church Relations committee is a possible concern; establishing one could better address pastoral and congregational needs.
- The elders' concern about members who have not returned post-COVID-19 is notable. Continued outreach and engagement strategies are recommended.
- Addressing the issue of reduced volunteering and finding ways to encourage more active participation is crucial.

### **Conclusion**

The visit to First CRC Thunder Bay was insightful, revealing both strengths and areas for improvement. The Council's commitment is evident, and their efforts in various ministries are inspiring and noteworthy. Focusing on pastoral relations, community re-engagement, volunteer participation, and responsive educational programming will further enhance the church's impact.

Thank you, Rev. Dr. Marno Retief and Fred Rekman

Central Region--Minnesota

## Church Visitor Report

### E. Church Counselor Reports

1. Brandon, First  
Brian Bolkema,
2. Brooten Community,  
Steve Zwart
3. Faith,  
Nick Van Beek
4. GNF  
Ben Verkerk
5. Grace CRC, Inver Grove  
Michael Ten Haken
6. Hope
7. Raymond  
Joel De Boer
8. Rock of Life  
Steve Zwart
9. Unity  
Joel De Boer

### F. Regional Pastors reports

CAN Regional Pastor Report, to Classis Lake Superior, -- March 2024, Evert Busink

US Regional Pastor Report, to Classis Lake Superior, -- March 2024, Henry Gunnink

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#### **Living into a Collective Calling:**

*At some point, churches that are in healthy relationships with one another will begin to ask how God might be calling them to serve their city or region together. Many ministry opportunities go beyond the ability of any one church. Some of these will be classis wide, while others may be in major urban centers of a large, geographically spread classis.*

### Ministry Reports

Treasurer's report

## Home Missions Committees

CHCM-US report

February 2, 2024

Members: David Zigterman (3rd) 23-26; Dan DeGraff (1st) 22-25; Travis Berry Lay (1st) 22-25; David Huizenga (1st) 22-25; Lowell Schwitters Lay (1st) 22-25

Since the last classis meeting, the CHMC-US has met twice. We met last year in December and again in January. Here are the highlights divided between information and motions.

### Information for classis:

- We discussed at length how we can encourage revitalization within churches. We want to encourage churches to consider taking the Thriving Essentials course offered by the CRCNA. This course helps churches reflect on mission, discipleship, discernment, and leadership..
  - To find out more: <https://www.crcna.org/thrive/course-overview>
- Mark Brouwer, who has been an alternate, has resigned from this role on CHMC-US. If anyone would like to be an alternate, let us know.
- We received an update on The Broken and we are receiving regular financial updates. Here is a **letter from Chris Alle**, the pastor of The Broken, to the classis (received Feb. 2, 2024) (Note: Is included as a separate report Missionary Report below—HG)

### Motions for classis:

1. The CHMC-US motions granting permission for North Central Lao to withdraw from the CRC. We wish to express our gratitude for the partnership that occurred between us and we wish God's blessing upon their ongoing ministry.
2. Proposed new mandate for Church Revitalization Fund to allow for coaching (**bold** is new)
  - Proposed new mandate: The Church Revitalization Fund is to be distributed either as a grant **for revitalization projects** following the **approved** guidelines and application questions, **or a grant for coaching/continuing education following the approved guidelines and application questions for coaching/continuing education**, or distributed as an interest-free loan for specific projects or exploration thereof, directed at encouraging revitalization within established church in classis. Both grant and loan applications shall be facilitated and brought to the floor of classis by the respective Home Missions Committees (US or Canada). **Members of the CHMC may not receive these funds, though churches of which they are members may receive these funds.**
  - Proposed guidelines and application questions coaching/continuing education:

Coaching/Continuing Education Grant Application

Proposed new: The Church Revitalization Fund is to be distributed either as a grant **for revitalization projects** following the **approved** guidelines and application questions, or a grant for coaching/**continuing education following the approved guidelines and application questions for coaching/continuing education**, or distributed as an interest-free loan for specific projects or exploration thereof, directed at encouraging revitalization within established church in classis. Both grant and loan applications shall be facilitated and brought to the floor of classis by the respective Home Missions Committees (US or Canada). **Members of the CHMC may not receive these funds, though churches of which they are members may receive these funds.**

**Guidelines** for those wanting to apply for the Church Revitalization Fund for continuing education

1. Who is eligible?  
Professing members of churches in Classis Lake Superior - ordinarily those in leadership positions.
2. What coaching/continuing education do we support?  
The goal of this grant is to help members of this classis in leadership positions to grow in their ability to lead a church through revitalization. This could include seeking help from a coach or licensed counselor. A list of coaches endorsed by the CRCNA can be found here: <https://www.crcna.org/pcr/pastors/coaches>. Other opportunities will also be considered such as conferences or seminars.
3. What is not eligible?  
Grant money may not be used to offset a leader's salary or tuition expenses that are part of a degree program (auditing a class would be allowed).
4. What is the grant amount?  
Up to \$1,000 for an individual or \$3,000 for a group according to need, and dependent on funds available.
5. What are the expectations for those who complete a grant?  
A follow-up report describing your experience in the sessions or events covered by the grant and how this experience has benefited or impacted your local church or region of churches.
6. How often can this grant be sought?  
Members may apply for this grant twice every five years.

#### **Application questions**

1. What are you seeking a grant for?
2. How much money are you requesting?
3. How do you hope this continuing education/coaching experience will benefit you?
4. How do you think it will benefit the church?

5. What is the approximate schedule for the use of this grant?
6. Contact information
  - a. Name
  - b. Position/role
  - c. Church you belong to
  - d. Email
  - e. Phone

The answers to these questions will be used by CHMC-US or CHMC-Can to determine if your request meets the guidelines and determine how much money to award each applicant. **If your request meets these guidelines, CHMC-US or CHMC-Can will then propose at the next classis that you receive the requested funding money.**

3. CHMC-US proposes the following updates for the Rules of Procedure:

#### IV. CLASSICAL COMMITTEES AND DELEGATES TO DENOMINATIONAL BOARDS/AGENCIES AND SYNOD

##### A. Nomination, Election, and General Regulations

1. Delegates to denominational boards and agencies shall be elected and serve terms according to Synodical regulations.
2. The standing committees of classis are encouraged to make recommendations for filling any vacancies based on the gifts and interests of suitable clergy and laity.
3. The Classical Interim Committee (CIC) shall compile and make any necessary additional nominations for all Classical standing committee elections. Prior to classis meetings, the CIC shall request nominations from the standing committees in writing. Nominations may also be added from the floor.
4. Members of standing committees shall be chosen for three years and in such a way that at least one member is chosen every year.
5. For committees with four members or less, Classis shall ordinarily elect clergy and laity alternates by ballot, to serve in the event of a vacancy.

##### B. Committees

1. The CIC
  - I. The CIC shall be responsible for the supervision for the classical youth champion. Reason: Youth ministry, while important, falls beyond the scope of the mandate given to the CHMC.
2. The Classical Home Missions Committees
  - a. The task of the CHMC is to unite the classes behind the mission of God. As Our World Belongs to God, stanza 41, states, “Joining the mission of God, the church is sent with the gospel of the kingdom to call everyone to know and follow Christ and to proclaim to all the assurance that in the name of Jesus there



is forgiveness of sin and new life for all who repent and believe. The Spirit calls all members to embrace God’s mission in their neighborhoods and in the world: to feed the hungry, bring water to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and free the prisoner. We repent of leaving this work to a few, for this mission is central to our being.” The CHMC shall encourage the churches of classis to not leave this work to a few.

- b. To this end, the CHMC shall collaborate (ie. seek input from and guidance when appropriate) with Resonate Global Missions to establish new church plants and encourage revitalization of existing churches.
- c. CHMC shall encourage churches in revitalization through the use of the Church Revitalization Fund and shall advise classis on how this fund shall be used.
- d. CHMC shall encourage church planting through the use of the Church Planting Fund and shall advise classes on how this fund shall be used.
- e. Recognizing the different contexts of and regulations applying to the United States and Canada as well as geographic vastness of the Classis, there shall be two Classical Home Missions Committees: Classical Home Missions–US (CHMC-US) and Classical Home Missions–Canada (CHMC-CA). While separate, these committees shall seek to communicate and cooperate with one another in their work.
- f. The CHMC-US shall consist of 4 members, at least 1 of which shall (ordinarily) be a non-minister.
- g. The CHMC-CA shall consist of 4 members, at least 1 of which shall (ordinarily) be a non-minister.
- h. CHMC, US and Can, shall recommend new members for their committees to the CIC. New members for these committees will be elected by classis.
- i. One member from each CHMC shall be a member of the CIC and Finance Committees.

## **HOME MISSIONARY/CHURCH PLANTERS**

**The Broken**

**Pastor Chris Alle**

To Classis Lake Superior,

Greetings, brothers and sisters, in Christ. I hope this finds you well. It seems to be about that time again that we get together and speak of the goodness God is doing in our ministries and churches. I have a couple of things that I would like to address.

The first thing is my gratitude to you as a Classis. God has used your support in mighty ways in our town. We cannot begin to explain what your support has done, but I will try. One of the big questions we get as a church is, “When are you going to get your church building?” As you all know, we currently share a space in the Rock of Life church. We love being there, but we would also like our own space. The thing about that, though, is that I’m convicted of using that money for a building instead of the continual support to our community and the people in it. To get a building now would put a stop to many of the lives we currently reach. That is another reason I am so grateful for your partnering with us to care for those around us. I’m not as concerned about having a beautiful place when people don’t eat at night or have proper housing themselves. We have never been about just ourselves. The Broken is the tool used to care for the people of God; it is not the end game to make us big or famous. So, I’m grateful for your support so we can continue doing so. You are making a difference in Willmar without even being here.

Secondly, I was asked what we need prayer for. We need prayer for our leadership as they continue to grow spiritually and take on more roles in the church. They are being stretched, and though they seem to wiggle under pressure, they are learning to live uncomfortably. We could use prayer for the strength of our congregation members to boldly proclaim Jesus in places that can be hostile towards CRC doctrine and our understanding of the Word. We live in an area where people love the sovereignty of God until they truly understand what that means. But what it is teaching them is to wrestle with God’s Word. We could use prayer for the leadership due to the growth of our church. It seems that people aren’t going to stop coming and bringing friends; we need to learn how to deal with that type of church. The people aren’t leaving anymore after visiting us; they are starting to stick around. I/we have never done this before, so we are trying to do all we can to make it a pleasing atmosphere, not a chaotic one. The last thing I need prayer for is personal. I want to continue to lead those in The Broken faithfully and continue to grow as I do. I do not want to become comfortable or stagnant. I know if I stop growing spiritually, so will the church. Please pray for strength and understanding from God.

Thank you for your time while you read this. I know this one was a little longer than usual, but I want to express my gratitude to you all and let you see how important your help has been. I also wanted to let you know a few things we could use prayer for. Thank you again—grace and peace to your home from mine.

-Pastor Chris Alle

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# YOUTH CHAMPION

## January 2024 Youth Champion's Report

I have been invited into a few conversations recently with classis representatives from around the denomination seeking to establish Youth Champion roles where they do not yet exist. This has prompted reflection on the original conversations our classis had about the role. Classis Lake Superior remains diverse with youth ministries large and small, urban and rural, staff and volunteer led. This is evident in conversations with churches who have varied questions and needs. This is why I've continued to facilitate crowdsourcing ideas on topics and have worked to expand the directory of those involved in various aspects of ministries to youth.

Facilitating collaboration was one of the original mandates of the role and remains very valuable.

Some of that works well electronically, but there is also great value in face-to-face time. In April I'll be co-hosting two in-person regional connections (tentatively Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup>). As a pre-workshop conversation, I invite each church to send a representative to a Zoom connection on Thursday, March 21 at 7:00 p.m. Central Time. We will also have a debrief on Thursday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m. Central Time where I will share some summaries of our workshop conversations.

Resources and research continue to be produced and shared throughout the wider Church as we seek to understand the best ways to minister to our youth in the contexts they are navigating. My ongoing relationships within the network of Youth Champions remain a central place for introduction to these resources and programs. I'll provide some updates on these materials as part of our spring conversations.

A final note of excitement on the product of collaboration. Faith CRC and Calvary CRC will be hosting SERVE for the third consecutive summer in July. We will be welcoming participants from within the classis (Thunder Bay and Emo) as part of our 85 guests for the event. During the past two summers Pease CRC, Bethel CRC, and Trinity Hill have also had an engagement in these events. This all began as an introductory Youth Champion call, followed by efforts to find connections for our two ministries. It continues to grow. The number of involved members from our two churches is increasing and the door for engagement from other churches within the classis is open.

As you consider the ministries of your churches to youth and in other spheres of your community, consider how joint efforts in your geographical area might bear fruit.

Travis Deur (tdeur7@gmail.com, 612-381-7705)

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# PRAYER COORDINATORS

## US Central Coordinator

Submitted by Lowell Schwitters

January 27, 2024

### The Prayer Coordinator Report, US

The prayer coordinator's purpose is to remind and encourage prayer in our churches. Praying to our Lord requesting His guidance and council as we enter each new day is the foremost method of effectiveness. With prayer comes the gift of the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit comes assurance of purpose. Jesus came to us saying, when you pray not if you pray.

Let's hear God's call and pray about all the questions and details of our lives each day making God our best friend and partner.

Submitted by  
Lowell Schwitters  
US Prayer Coordinator, Central Region

## March 2024 Report of Canadian Prayer Mobilizer

Canadian Prayer Mobilizers Report - Jan. 1, 2024 Sonya Cahais

**Mission Statement:** To teach and model the centrality of Christ and an intimate love relationship with God through encouraging individual and corporate prayer.

Six of the eight churches in Classis Lake Superior - Canada have prayer coordinators. They are:

Brandon First CRC ~ Dianne van den Ham and Paulette Kelly  
Winnipeg Covenant ~ Alyce Baardman  
Emo CRC ~ Carolyn Stang  
Thunder Bay Bethlehem ~ Dini Makkinga  
Thunder Bay Hope ~ Isabel Van Ramshorst and Sonya Cahais

**Past 6 months:**

We continue to meet via Zoom to pray for each other as Prayer Coordinators and the needs of each congregation in our Classis area and beyond. These times of prayer together always prove to be uplifting and encouraging.

4 of us from Thunder Bay attended the Dunamis training on Intermediate Healing and Deliverance in Edmonton.

**Looking Ahead:**

Plans are in the process to start up a Prayer ministry in Thunder Bay using the training we received in Edmonton.

A host team has been established to offer a Growing the Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit event in Thunder Bay. Date to be determined.

A Face-to-Face meeting with all the Prayer Coordinators is planned for later this year in Emo.

**Prayer and Praise:**

Please join us in praying:

That the Lord will place it on the hearts of those He calls to come forward as Prayer Coordinators at Transcona CRC, Good News Fellowship, and First CRC.

Submitted with praise and thanksgiving to God for this opportunity to serve.

Sonya Cahais, Prayer Mobilizer Classis Lake Superior - Canada

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**The Gathering Place**

-----Yvonne Schenk



**The Gathering Place**  
239 Amelia Street W.  
Thunder Bay, ON



**What is The Gathering Place?** In 1985, the three Christian Reformed Churches founded The Gathering Place in Thunder Bay. Our mission is to be a safe place for people to meet Jesus and just as Jesus fed and taught the crowds that followed Him, we seek to offer support for both the body and the soul. We nourish the body by handing out food hampers and clothing items to those who are in need. We nourish the soul through relationship building, a women’s group, a crafting group and coffee/water drop-in times.

**Funding:** We receive funding from the three CRCs in Thunder Bay, Classis Lake Superior and private donors. We continue to be very blessed!

**Our Programs:**

**1. Nourishment for the body and soul:**

- a. Open Hands:** In 2023, we handed out a record number of food hampers – 2499. As food prices and living expenses in Canada continue to rise, the need for food hampers is increasing. We are grateful to God that we can meet this need with food. We are also grateful for the feeling of community that prevails during our Open Hands food security program. It starts with staff and volunteers, then continues with the community members who come for food. There is laughter, there are tears sometimes, there are prayers offered on the spot, there are prayer requests passed on for staff to pray for during the week. God is at work here!
  - b. Clothing:** Every second week, we have our Clothing Depot, called “Hopefully Yours” open for people to get clothing or small household items at no cost. Since this program isn’t as busy as our food day, staff and volunteers have opportunities for longer, quieter conversations and prayer times. We are blessed with an abundance of clothing and household items donated to us.
  - c. Drop-In:** It’s fascinating to me how programs develop. Our drop-in time was slow to grow. But our indoor drop-in (September through June), with the offer of hot dogs, coffee, tea or cold drinks, a craft to do together or just a place to sit, has really taken off. The craft table is always bubbling with laughter. People are staying after crafts just a little bit longer to be able to share with staff more of their stories. It is a wonderful time at The Gathering Place. We are hoping to build on the momentum of this with other opportunities to offer community here.
  - d. Mosaic Women’s Bible Study:** The group of women meeting weekly is small, but dedicated. They want to study the word of God! It is a joy to lead this group.
- 2. Community Connection:** Our building continues to offer space to Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. We hosted a Christmas evening here on Dec. 19 – with hot chocolate, cookies, a craft to make and a children’s Christian Christmas story, a reading of Luke 2 and a Christmas carol sing-a-long. It was a wonderful time.
- 3. Church Connection:** We are always looking for stronger and more meaningful connections with the deacons at our Thunder Bay CRCs. The local CRCs receive monthly updates from The Gathering Place. The churches are also represented through the three board members they each send to our board of directors. We are very grateful for the hard work these board members do for The Gathering Place.
- 4. Prayer Concerns:** Both Sonya Cahais and Yvonne Schenk will be retiring from The Gathering Place at the end of June 2024. They decided to leave at the same time to give the board of

directors an opportunity to explore different ways of shaping staff positions going forward. Please pray for wisdom as we consider increasing staff hours to perhaps a full-time and two part-time positions. Please also pray that those to whom God is calling to this work, will hear Him calling and respond obediently. Pray that there will not be anxiety about finding new staff, but instead a steady trust in God's faithfulness as He has always provided what we have needed at The Gathering Place

Submitted by Yvonne Schenk, Executive Director for **The Gathering Place**

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**HOPE CENTER**

hopecentreministries.org 204-479-4893

Shellie Power

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**CMLT--Classical Ministerial Leadership Team -- Dan DeGraff, Chair.**

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**SAFE CHURCH TEAM**

**A Connection into the Wider Church:**

*For many people, their main experience of being part of the broader family of the Christian Reformed Church is via classis. Churches participate in their denomination through classical structure and opportunity. Classis also connects the broadness of North American ministry into the individual church's own regional and local context, providing an avenue for a meaningful relationship with the denominational ministries.*

*In addition, Classis should encourage churches to live outside themselves into the broader Christian community.*

**CHAPLAINS REPORTS**

Dan Crapo, Mayo Hospice, MN

Michael Miedema, Headingly Correction Centre, Headingly, MB

Gerald Van Smeerdyk, Elim Village, Surrey, BC

**COD (Council of Delegates)**



To: **CRC Councils and Stated Clerks of Classes**  
From: Zachary J. King, General Secretary of the  
CRCNA Date: October 26, 2023

## ***Highlights from meeting of Oct. 11-13, 2023***

The Council of Delegates (COD) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met in the denominational offices in Grand Rapids, Michigan on October 11-13, 2023.



During this meeting, the COD spent time in prayer, received reports, held discussions, and made decisions as follows:

- Welcomed new members. Received an orientation to the Council of Delegates as well as the CRCNA Canada and U.S. ministry boards. Reviewed the new committee structure.
- Heard from Zachary King, general secretary, about his recent work including the Global Vision team, and assignments from Synod 2023 related to human sexuality and membership decline.
- Heard from Shirley DeVries, chief administrative officer, noting several assignments from Synod 2023, the establishment of an Administrative Leadership Council to coordinate across agencies, and the work of the Finance department.
- Received reports from the director of ReFrame Ministries, the director of Resonate Global Mission, the directors of Thrive, the *Banner* Advisory committee, the directors of World Renew, and the president of Calvin University.
- Recommended to Synod 2024 that the *Our Journey 2025* ministry plan be extended to 2030 with appropriate evaluation and an updated communications strategy.
- Spent time in executive session hearing an update on the charges against Rev. David Zandstra and the response from the CRCNA. Spent time in a prayer about this matter.
- Heard that a report from the Church Order Review Task Force will be posted for churches to review in December or January.
- Approved that ReFrame Ministry's language ministries (including ministry leader and staff) should be located in a country or region where that language is significantly spoken and be done in partnership with a local denomination or other Christian organization.
- In the interim of synod, appointed people to serve with the COD, and to terms as synodical deputies and alternate

**For more information, please contact:** Rev. Zachary King, Ph. D [general-secretary@crcna.org](mailto:general-secretary@crcna.org)



### **Upcoming meeting dates:**

- February 14-16, 2024, *virtual* meeting
- May 1-3, 2024, in Grand Rapids, Mich.
- October 16-18, 2024, in Grand Rapids, Mich.

## **Ministry Board Meetings - U.S. and Canada**

In addition to the meeting of the COD, the boards of several CRC corporate entities met separately on October 12 and reported the following:

### **CRCNA Canada Board**

- Welcomed and approved new members.
- Made plans for a Canada-wide conversation to take place in January 2024 on the theme of church planting and renewal.
- Discussed a letter from 56 Canadian CRC members and pastors promoting a separate Canadian CRC. The board will follow up with the signatories to listen to their concerns.
- Approved the audited financial statements and appointed BDO to be the auditor next year.
- Received reports from the joint management committee and approved the joint ministry approval documents between the CRCNA Canada Ministry Board and the CRCNA US Ministry Board.
- Received reports from the transitional executive director, the Canadian Chief Administrative Officer, Human Resources, Advancement, and Finance.

### **ReFrame Ministries Canada Board**

- Welcomed and approved new members.
- Approved the audited financial statements and appointed BDO to be the auditor next year.

### **CRCNA U.S. Board**

- Heard a report from Dan DeKam, the U.S. director of ministry operations, about his first three months in the position.
- Endorsed that US Ministry Board officers may accept an offer to purchase the Grand Rapids CRCNA building if one is made, and approved Dan DeKam to be a signatory on necessary paperwork.
- Endorsed that US Ministry Board officers may make an offer towards the purchase of a new property, and approved Dan DeKam to be a signatory on necessary paperwork.
- Designated \$2 million of expected revenue from the Employee Retention Credit be set aside for capital expenses and bridge financing related to the sale of the existing building and the purchase of a new one.
- Approved annual housing declarations for ordained CRCNA employees.
- Approved new joint ministry agreement document for Thrive.
- Received an update on the CRC Loan Fund.

### **ReFrame Ministries U.S. Board**

- Received the joint management committee convener report and joint management approval documents for information.
- Received the twelve-month financial statements

**For more information, please contact:**

Rev. Al Postma (CRCNA Canada and ReFrame Canada) [apostma@crcna.org](mailto:apostma@crcna.org)

Dan DeKam (CRCNA U.S.) [ddekam@crcna.org](mailto:ddekam@crcna.org)

Kurt Selles (ReFrame U.S.) [kselles@crcna.org](mailto:kselles@crcna.org)

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**Diaconal Ministries Canada**

January, 2024

**Winter Classis Report**

***Greetings to our partners in ministry!***

On November 14, 2023, Regional Ministry Developer for Eastern Canada, Mark Vanderwees, opened up his inbox and read the following email:

*“Hey Mark; Just wanted to let you know that I had my first “cold call” from a person requesting assistance. The deacon training that you provided was very helpful. Based on the training, I compiled a list of questions, points, and resources to prepare for the call. Because of the training, the call went well and I was able to help. Thanks, Alan” (Classis Toronto Deacon)*

The training that Alan is referring to is the **“Helping Without Harming in Church Benevolence”** workshop that was newly developed this past fall, based on the book with a similar name written by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert. Last year, Mark led this training in over 9 churches with approximately 139 attendees; mostly deacons, a few pastors, and even some congregation members!

Another workshop participant shared that she liked being able to identify if a situation was *relief* or *recovery* and she found comfort in being able to ask professionals for help during the initial crisis response. "While we looked at the section called 'Building on Assets', I loved looking at it from the 'glass is half full' perspective rather than our current habit of only focusing on the individual needs. The scenarios were very helpful and I liked collaborating with other deacons in the area to learn about the supports and resources available to us as churches. We would love to have Diaconal Ministries back to lead us in some other workshops, like the Deacon 101 and Developing Benevolence Guidelines."



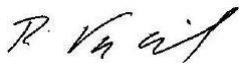
This is why we continue our work with deacons across Canada in the areas of [community engagement](#), service & [justice](#), [benevolence](#), and [stewardship](#). We offer deacons practical and relevant training so they can love their churches and communities better. It is our sincere hope and desire that your church has been impacted by the work that we do. If you are unfamiliar with who we are, you can read our [full history on our website](#). Believe it or not, our roots go back to the 1950s! In the early years, deacons formed local and regional "conferences" which met to share experiences and resources, develop workshops and training events, and find ways to assist each other and their congregations. In these early years, World Renew (CRWRC at this time) worked closely with diaconates on both sides of the border. Over the years, these conferences expanded and contracted. In 1998, some Canadian deacons along with representatives from Home Missions (now Resonate Global Mission) and CRWRC began dreaming about pooling their diaconal experiences, resources, and training materials into an "umbrella" organization which would oversee the training of deacons right across Canada. It was an exciting time and, after a few more years of discussions, the boards of the existing conferences jointly approved the formation of a new national in 2001: **Diaconal Ministries Canada was officially constituted!** Diaconal Ministries Canada is funded by a ministry share model that was agreed to by Canadian deacons in the 1960s and recommitted to in 2001. (**Note:** These are different from Denominational Ministry Shares and Classis Ministry Shares. Read more on our website about this [HERE](#).)

Another vital program of Diaconal Ministries Canada is our [NewGround program](#) (formerly called Operation Manna). **NewGround Sunday** is designated as the first Sunday in May each year: in 2024 it falls on **May 5th**. NewGround helps deacons and churches love their community through financial grants, coaching, and resourcing. **We hope you'll reserve this date and support this ministry as it has impacted numerous communities across Canada over the past 35+ years.** Check out our past and present Partner list [HERE](#).

If your church or deacons ever have any questions or concerns or need assistance in any way, they are encouraged to reach out to us - see our staff listing on the next page. Deacons are also encouraged to visit our [website](#) and start browsing our resources and tools there.

May God bless each one of you in your ongoing ministry!

Respectfully submitted,



**ron vanden brink**

National Director, Diaconal Ministries Canada

[rvandenbrink@crcna.org](mailto:rvandenbrink@crcna.org)

Encl (1)

### **Diaconal Ministries' current Staff, Board, and Diaconal Coaches**

#### **Staff:**

Ron Vanden Brink, *National Director*; [rvandenbrink@crcna.org](mailto:rvandenbrink@crcna.org)

Chris Tollins, *Office Assistant*; [ctollins@crcna.org](mailto:ctollins@crcna.org)

Bea Vlieg, *Financial Assistant*; [bvlieg@crcna.org](mailto:bvlieg@crcna.org)

Rachel Vroege\*, *Regional Ministry Developer (Western Canada)*; [rvroege@crcna.org](mailto:rvroege@crcna.org)

Mark Vanderwees, *Regional Ministry Developer (Eastern Canada)*; [mvanderwees@crcna.org](mailto:mvanderwees@crcna.org)

Karla Winham, *NewGround Coordinator*; [kwinham@crcna.org](mailto:kwinham@crcna.org)

Kathrin Veenstra, *Fundraising Coordinator*; [kveenstra@crcna.org](mailto:kveenstra@crcna.org)

Erin Knight, *Communications Coordinator*; [eknight@crcna.org](mailto:eknight@crcna.org)

\*On sabbatical until April 1, 2024; please reach out to Ron Vandenbrink or your Classis Diaconal Coach

#### **Diaconal Coache and Board Member for Classis**

Classis	Diaconal Coach	Board Member
Lake Superior	Teda Heerema; <a href="mailto:tedaheerema@gmail.com">tedaheerema@gmail.com</a>	Yvonne Schenk

\*\*\*\*\*

**Board of Trustees: Calvin University ----- Jack Beeksma, Region 2 rep.**

## News from Calvin University

November 2023

Greetings Classis Lake Superior,

As this is my first letter to you, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jack Beeksma (address below), and I am your delegate to the Calvin University Board of Trustees. I am a graduate of Calvin (BA in 1982, Masters in 1994), and am delighted to represent my alma mater.

I recently attended my first Board meeting, and I'd like to share a few highlights with you:

1. We celebrated the fact that enrolment has increased by 5% since last year, and there has been significant growth in these areas:
  - A. Students from Michigan
  - B. International students
  - c. Students from the CRCNA
2. Financial aid available to international students (eg. Tuition dollars in Canadian dollars, scholarships available to international students, including Canadian students). This financial aid is possible because of generous donors who give specifically to the financial aid fund.
3. In addition to other sports offered at Calvin, a new one is offered this year: football. There is much excitement around this new development, as new student athletes have been attracted. That excitement is shared by the community, as a crowd of 3500 fans came to watch an intrasquad Calvin football game this fall.
4. Attendance at and participation in the movie "Behind Our Walls", which recounts the prison ministry Calvin University is spearheading.
5. New construction plans and budgets for the campus were approved.
6. University leadership renewed its commitment to working with the CRC and the community.
7. New trustees (including me) were onboarded.

If you have further questions, please contact me at [jackbeek2@gmail.com](mailto:jackbeek2@gmail.com)

Blessings, Jack Beeksma

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**Calvin Theological Seminary Highlights**  
**Spring 2024 Classis Report**

**Rev. Bob Drenten – Region 8 Trustee**

(Classes: Central Plains, Heartland, Iakota, Lake Superior, Minnkota, Northcentral Iowa)

These CTS Board highlights are from the October 26-27, 2023, meeting. Future meetings are February 29 and May 16-17, 2024.

**Academic Program**

- CTS has begun a search for a professor of systematic theology. Dr. Mary Vandenberg has announced her intent to retire in June 2025.
- CTS has formalized a partnership with the Missional Training Center (MTC) in Phoenix, AZ. MTC formerly partnered with Covenant Seminary of St. Louis. This partnership will include sharing faculty, resources, and opportunities for students. CTS will grant Master of Arts in Missional Theology for MTC graduates. CTS is excited to enter this partnership, seeing opportunities to equip students to understand better both God’s mission set forth in Scripture and the cultural contexts where Christ calls us to advance His mission.
- This fall, CTS launched its new degree program in Christian counseling.

**Student Life**

- Enrollment is recovering from the impact of the pandemic 2-3 years ago. This fall CTS enrolled a total of 305 students for all programs, a 27% increase from 2022-2023. This year a total of 27 M.Div. students entered the program (10 residential and 17 hybrid). Generous scholarships help make study at CTS very affordable. CTS is investing fresh energy developing closer ties with Dordt University and other feeder schools and is making encouraging inroads in Canada through the work of Rev. Shawn Brix. This fall the admissions team reported that applications have doubled over the past year.
- CTS is building 48 new units for student housing at 3300 Burton Ave SE, primarily for international students. The apartments that have housed these students in southeast Grand Rapids have been sold.

**Vision and Service**

- CTS and Calvin University have partnered for several years offering courses at the Handlon Correctional Facility in Ionia, MI. The Calvin Prison Initiative was featured in a documentary produced by Second Mile Studio. Nathan Roels, the studio’s owner and producer of this film is a CTS student. The film, “Behind Our Walls,” was released in October 2023.
- The CTS community has entered a strategic planning process, as directed by the board. Mr. Chris Bosch of Chisel Consulting is leading CTS through a process to help focus and clarify the work of CTS.
- CTS is intentional about its relationship with the Christian Reformed Church. The board and administration take seriously the support CTS receives from the CRCNA, the service CTS gives to

the CRCNA, and the guidance of the synods of the CRCNA. As a trustee, I have seen and experienced this first-hand.

**Gratitude**

This is my last report to your classis as your representative trustee to Calvin Theological Seminary’s board. My work will conclude with the May 2024 meeting, and my term will conclude following Synod 2024. Thank you for affording me the privilege of representing our region of classes, a trust I kept in mind through my six years of service. We must keep encouraging gifted students and members among us to consider the Lord’s call to full-time ministry, and to encourage them to consider CTS as the place to prepare for that work.

Gratefully submitted,

**Rev. Robert Drenten**

CTS Board of Trustees, Region 8 [robert.drenten@gmail.com](mailto:robert.drenten@gmail.com)  
**(712) 395-0552 (Voice and Text)**

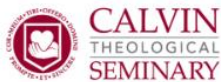
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**Calvin Theological Seminary  
Canadian Church Relations Liaison Report  
Winter 2024 Classis Meeting**



<i>Calvin Theological Seminary</i>	<i>Winter/Spring 2024 Classis Meeting</i>

**Canadian  
Church  
Relations  
Liaison Report**







## A New Degree in Mental Health Counseling

The World Health Organization noted that approximately 450 million people around the globe struggle with mental health issues. In fact, it is now the leading cause of disability worldwide. Calvin Theological Seminary’s new Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MCMHC) is a direct response to this growing need. Launched in September 2023, the professional and theologically grounded degree offers coursework in religious and theological foundations, clinical counseling, and clinical practice. Graduates from the program might consider using their knowledge and gifts serving as a clinical mental health therapist, a clinical mental health counselor, an addiction counselor, a behavior counselor, or in other mental health roles.

Students who enroll in the MCMHC program will be able to complete the 60 credit hours required for the degree by studying on-campus, online, or a combination of the two. The clinical practice portion of the program includes three formative contextual learning opportunities to gain insights, mentoring, and experience in the field.

Dr. Danjuma Gibson, professor of pastoral theology and director of the new program notes, “This degree program is committed to preparing students who feel called to aid and assist the millions of people around the world who suffer from a variety of mental



Canadian Tuition Parity



Hearts Exchanged



### **Canadian Tuition Parity**

Where can your Canadian loonie stretch to become \$1.34 or more? At Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS)! Through a strategic collaboration with supporters, CTS is now able to accept tuition dollars paid in Canadian funds (CAD) “on par” with the American dollar (USD)!

Parity is a potential game changer for Canadian students, and is a clear indication of the seminary’s commitment to the church in Canada. Referring to the new parity initiative, Canadian student David Vandokkumburg said, “For my wife and I, this feels like a significant burden lifted. Each of our careers require masters-level studies, and so to create a solution that will reduce the total amount of debt we face is a huge relief.”

The Canadian tuition parity initiative, coupled with the \$1.5 million in scholarships that CTS provides to students each year, means that over 90% of CTS students now graduate without having to take on any additional debt while in seminary.

### **Hearts Exchanged**

With the Truth and Reconciliation commission's report, and with the confirmation of hundreds of unmarked graves on the grounds of former residential schools in Canada, we've all been reminded of our calling to be ambassadors of reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the rest of us who call Canada home.

To that end, Calvin Seminary has been working with Mike Hogeterp (former Director, Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue), Adrian Jacobs (Senior Leader for Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation in the CRC in Canada), and Cindy Stover (Justice Mobilizer for the CRC in Canada) to offer a lifelong learning course at Calvin Seminary! The mini three-week course, *Truth, Reconciliation, and Exchanging Hearts: A Canadian Model*, will be offered in the summer of 2024 as a continuing education opportunity for pastors and other interested leaders.

Watch for more details to follow soon!

### **Empower: An Apprenticeship Model for Ministry Preparation**

The best way to become equipped for vocational ministry is through taking courses at a seminary, right? Sometimes. But in other cases, an apprenticeship model fits an individual’s life situation and ministry goals better.

Empower is a new path that Calvin Seminary has developed as an option for those pursuing a Master of Arts in Christian Leadership (MACL). Rather than taking courses to earn their degree, students work with a team of three mentors -- faculty, vocational, and personal -- to develop competencies for ministry. The team coaches the student through a designed learning path, taking into account the student’s prior experience, individual strengths and growth areas, ministry context, vocational goals, and more.

Check out more at

[www.calvinseminary.edu/empower!](http://www.calvinseminary.edu/empower!)

### **I Want to Serve You!**

From my home office just east of Peterborough, ON, it’s my privilege to continue strengthening partnerships between CTS and local churches, pastors, and ministries across Canada. Let me know how I can serve you!

Pastor Shawn Brix  
 Canadian Church Relations Liaison,  
 Calvin Theological Seminary  
 srb08@calvinseminary.edu  
 705-875-3566

\*\*\*\*\*

**Resonate Global Missions**

**Brad Meinders –US  
 Rich Braaksma--CA**

# Resonate Global Mission









## US Central Region



Resonate Global Mission is the mission agency of the Christian Reformed Church. Resonate can help deepen your passion for mission, strengthen your capacity to follow God on mission, and amplify the impact you and your church have in your neighborhood and around the world. Here are ways we do that:

 <b>Congregational Gospel Witness</b> <b>1</b> This initiative is about mobilizing churches to engage their local neighborhood with the gospel. One way we do this is through Setting the Table, which is when our team spends time in your ministry context to understand how we can partner with you to reach your neighborhood.	 <b>Intercultural Gospel Witness</b> <b>2</b> This initiative is about churches being equipped and empowered to witness to Christ interculturally. One way we do this is through a Witness Vision Trip, where your church can learn from believers about evangelism in a context that is different from your own.	 <b>Church Planting</b> <b>3</b> This initiative is about forming new Christian communities where no such community currently exists. One way we do this is through a Church Planting Residence, individuals are immersed into the local church to experience the life and work of a church planter.
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Here is your regional Resonate team. Please reach out if you have any questions or if you would like to know how we can partner together missionally for the sake of the gospel.

							
Marianne Giebel Admin. Assistant mgiebel@crcna.org	Jeff Heerspink Local Mission Leader jheerspink@crcna.org	Dave Katsma Local Mission Leader dkatsma@crcna.org	Mark Lachonce Local Mission Leader mlachonce@crcna.org	Elaine Lee Local Mission Leader elainelee@crcna.org	Brad Meinders Regional Mission Leader bmeinders@crcna.org	Mike Moore Local Mission Leader mmoore@crcna.org	McLowly Sore Local Mission Leader msore@crcna.org

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# Winter 2024 Classis Report | Lake Superior (Can.)

## Giving from Classis Lake Superior (Can.)

- In 2023 Church giving from Classis Lake Superior was strong with the total equaling \$38,639.82. Thank you for your generous support of World Renew's work! The top areas of giving were toward the program fund and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. See the chart below for a summary of giving:

## World Renew News

- We started 2024 with some very difficult news for the World Renew Family. Iona Stewart Buisman passed away on January 2, 2024 after a brief but difficult illness. Iona served with World Renew Canada for 18 years, most recently as the Director for Church and Community Engagement. We pray for peace and grace for Iona's family and all who mourn this loss. [Learn more about Iona here.](#)
- The Church and Community Engagement team is excited for the upcoming Christian Leaders Tour to Guatemala. Join a tour to Guatemala from April 13-21, 2024 where you will expand your understanding of poverty and justice, giving you a new perspective to lead your church particularly on global issues. You'll visit programs in education, preventative health, agriculture, diaconal training, community planning, and livelihoods training while witnessing the varied geography of Guatemala. For more information, [view this flyer](#) or contact Maria Oliveira at [moliveira@worldrenew.ca](mailto:moliveira@worldrenew.ca)
- Refugee Program updates: As of December 6, 2023, 115 churches are currently engaged with World Renew's Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Program (RSRP), of which 67 are CRCs and 48 are beyond the CRC. "Currently engaged" refers to churches waiting for an arrival, currently settling a newcomer family, or preparing to submit a sponsorship application.
- For more information and up to date stories visit [worldrenew.ca/our-stories](https://worldrenew.ca/our-stories)

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## Upcoming Church Offerings

- **February 25: Canadian Foodgrains Bank Sunday.** As one of the founding members of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, World Renew multiplies your impact up to 4X through food security programs like our early response project in Madagascar. Around the world, floods have washed away crops and droughts have left farmlands barren. But together we can end global hunger!
- **May 12: Women of Hope – Mother's Day.** This Mother's Day, join World Renew to discover how you can help women in vulnerable communities learn about

proper food and nutrition, the importance of sanitation for disease prevention, and more, so their families have a better chance to flourish.

- **June 16: Refugee Sunday.** Globally, there are a staggering 232.5 million refugees—people who have fled human conflict, persecution, or natural disaster in search of safety. World Renew supports churches across Canada through the process of sponsorship and we invite your church to join us in welcoming refugees seeking to rebuild their lives in Canada.

World Renew encourages your church to participate in these upcoming offerings—to access resources, visit [worldrenew.ca/yourchurch](https://worldrenew.ca/yourchurch).

### How Can Your Church Be Involved?

- **Give.** Participate in World Renew offerings and disaster appeals.
- **Volunteer.** Experience World Renew on the field! Visit [worldrenew.ca/volunteer](https://worldrenew.ca/volunteer) for current volunteer opportunities such as the Cambodia Discovery Tour, Guatemala Christian Leaders Tour, All Ontario Nicaragua Youth Trip and more.
- **Advocate & Pray.** Use your voice! Opportunities include sponsoring a refugee (a uniquely Canadian program), creation care, and more. Visit [worldrenew.ca/advocate-and-pray](https://worldrenew.ca/advocate-and-pray) for more information.
- **Learn.** Listen to our DoJustice podcast, hosted by World Renew, the Office of Social Justice and the Centre for Public Dialogue of the Christian Reformed Church of North America. Get connected at [worldrenew.ca/podcast](https://worldrenew.ca/podcast)

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## Story of Transformation—From Despair to Hope in Bangladesh



Halima, 27, her husband, Najrul, and their two sons, aged 9 and 3, live in West Sohilati, a densely populated village in Bangladesh, where most people earn a living as farmers and daily wage earners. The couple have a small plot of land where they grow rice and vegetables, but they did not produce enough to meet their family's basic needs.

In September 2021, Halima joined the Rupali Village and Savings Loan group facilitated by World Renew's local partner, SATHI. The all-female group has 20 members who meet regularly to save money. The group's savings pool has grown enough that members can take out low-

interest loans which they use to address various needs, including investing in their farms, paying off debt, paying for school fees for their children, and making necessary improvements to their homes. In December 2022, as a group member, Halima also had the opportunity to participate in poultry rearing training organized by SATHI. In the training, Halima learned about various poultry diseases, causes of diseases, prevention, and treatment. Halima shared all that she learned at the training with her husband, and they decided to start rearing ducks.

With a loan from her savings group, Halima purchased 300 ducks. She now sells eggs from the ducks and is earning additional income to help support her family. Through SATHI she also learned about bookkeeping – knowledge that she once again shared with Najrul and together they are wisely stewarding the profits from the duck rearing business. In fact, Halima has already repaid her loan.

The duck rearing business not only helps the couple generate extra income, but duck eggs are also a good source of nutrition for their growing children. Where they once felt hopeless to improve their family's situation, Halima and Najrul now look to the future with hope. "I will increase my duck farm in the near future and hire someone to help me in this business," Halima says. "I am earning a lot from this duck rearing, and this is possible because of the initiative of [SATHI and World Renew] I thank [them] and I appreciate their activities as well as their contribution to my family and life."

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Thank you for joining World Renew to show the love of Jesus and help restore hope for those living in poverty!

Serving Together,



Chris Orme  
World Renew Canada, Interim Director for Church & Community  
Engagement [corme@worldrenew.ca](mailto:corme@worldrenew.ca) • 905-572-0350

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**Diaconal Ministries Canada**

**Director of Canadian Ministries**



# Faith Formation Ministries

## USA Midwest Classis Playlist Spring 2024

### Playlist FAQs

1. **WHAT'S A PLAYLIST?** - A curated list of resources, one (or two) for each [Our Journey 2025 Milestone](#).
2. **WHY AM I RECEIVING THIS?** - You are a classis delegate and we want you to get a glimpse of what kinds of resources are available to your congregation.
3. **WHO IS THIS FROM?** - Your regional team, Brad and Trudy.



Trudy Ash  
Regional Catalyzer  
tash@crcna.org



Pastor Brad Meinders  
Resonate Regional Mission Leader  
bmeinders@crcna.org

### Our Journey 2025 Milestone #1:

#### **Cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline, transforming our lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- **Faith Practices Project:** Take yourself or your church on a journey into 12 different spiritual practices with the help of these curated resources. [www.crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject](http://www.crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject)
- FYI: There are new resources on this website for [Intergenerational Worship and Gatherings](#). Some of these resources were developed by a congregation in our region: Covenant CRC in Sioux Center, IA!

### Our Journey 2025 Milestone #2:

#### **Listen to the voices of every generation, shaping us for ministry together.**

- **Thriving Essentials** is a new course for congregations and individuals. Four, one-hour sessions offer key ideas about mission, discipleship, discernment, and leadership. This is a great way to get all the generations of your congregation talking together about these important ideas. [www.crcna.org/thrive](http://www.crcna.org/thrive)
- **FYI:** Congregations in Classis Lake Superior, Classis Chicago South and some individuals from Classis Heartland and Lakota have been through this course already. If you'd like to hear a first-hand account of what it's all about, let us know, we'll connect you.

**Our Journey 2025 Milestone #3:**

**Grow in diversity and unity by seeking justice, reconciliation, and welcome, sharing our faith as we build relationships with and honor the cultures of our neighbors and newcomers.**

- **Witness** is a curriculum designed to equip us to share Christ’s love wherever you are located. Here’s the website: [www.resonateglobalmission.org/witness](http://www.resonateglobalmission.org/witness).
- **FYI:** Brad will be traveling to El Salvador in a few weeks with a pilot group for using the Witness curriculum on Vision Trips with our global missionary partners. More to come on that!

**Our Journey 2025 Milestone #4:**

**Share the gospel, live it missionally, and plant new churches in our neighborhoods as we discover how to connect with our local and global ministry contexts.**

- **Go Local** is a process that helps congregations meet and engage with neighbors so that they can grow together as a community. **Resonate provides the framework for this change, coaches to help think through God’s work in our lives, and a network that will help everyone learn and grow together.** For more information, reach out to us and/or check out the website: <https://www.resonateglobalmission.org/go-local>
- **FYI:** Brad is being trained as a coach for this process!

**We look forward to walking alongside you as you do ministry in our region. As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to either one of us. If you’re looking for a different resource, let us know... we’d love the opportunity to serve you!**

**Blessings, Trudy & Brad**

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## US Midwest Playlist

Trudy Ash, Regional Connector

Winter/Spring 2024

### ● Hey Thrive, Who are you again?

With the recent restructuring at the denominational level, are you still confused as to who does what for your local congregation? Here's a helpful article from The Banner that explains the different ministries and how they can support you and your ministry.

- [Who We Are and What We Do](#)
- Visit our website ([www.crcna.org/thrive](http://www.crcna.org/thrive))

### ● Looking For A New Pastor?

There are a number of resources available for churches in search of a pastor and Thrive is here to assist your church as you navigate the process. This article, [Looking for a New Pastor? How the CRCNA Can Help Your Search Committee](#), offers perspective on the journey and resources as you travel it.

### ● Worship Planning Resource

Over time, what we sing and what we say in worship forms us. Formation doesn't happen in a single song or on a single Sunday, but gradually over time songs take root in our souls and become part of our faith language. In this document, [CCLI Vetting Project: A Reformed Voice](#), you will find the work of a team of Reformed worship leaders, pastors, and theologians who vetted the Top 100 CCLI song list through a reformed lens. This is a great resource for pastors and worship leaders!

### ● Thriving Essentials in your area!

Whether your church is in a time of transition or stability, Thriving Essentials is a great way to get all the ministry leaders in your church aligned on core concepts of mission, discipleship, discernment, and leadership. This four-hour course is a springboard to deeper conversations about ministry in your local context. New elder and deacon training will be available [soon](#), however, the Thriving Essentials course will be a prerequisite. Sign up now for your church to get on the list. We already have three congregations from our region signed up in January and March! Reach out to Trudy if you'd like to discuss if Thriving Essentials can benefit your congregation. [Learn more about the course.](#)

### ● Your Regional Team

My work as your Thrive Regional Connector means I also work closely with your Resonate Regional Team. We are both here to support you and your congregation. We are your champions and are always just an email or phone call away. Reach out with your questions and we'll connect you to the resources or supports best suited to help you live out your ministry [callings](#).

#### Contact Trudy...



[tash@crcna.org](mailto:tash@crcna.org)



816-241-1691 ext. 5118 (call or text)



## REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

# Winter Classis Report 2024

January 8, 2024

### Greetings from Redeemer University!

As the first semester of the 2023-24 academic year is now complete, there is so much to be thankful for. God has continued to be faithful! Campus visits, concerts and external events have strengthened our community presence and allowed many the opportunity to visit us and see first-hand the wonderful things God is doing in and through Redeemer University.

### Enrollment

Redeemer currently has 1052 students enrolled, including 553 students living on campus—a record number. Redeemer campus continues to be a place of spiritual discipleship and formation for so many students.

### Appointment of VP Strategic Initiatives

Redeemer recently welcomed Heidi de Vries '05 on staff as legal counsel and vice president of strategic initiatives. Heidi was recognized for her accomplishments in 2022 as the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award. She brings over a decade of legal and strategic leadership experience from her time in municipal government administration and will play a key role in the development of Redeemer's next strategic plan.

### Emerging Public Intellectual Award

The Albert M. Wolters Centre for Christian Scholarship recently selected Dr. Fellipe do Vale to receive the 2023 Emerging Public Intellectual Award. The award is sponsored by several major Christian institutions, including Redeemer, and is intended to promote and encourage excellence in Christian scholarship by supporting emerging academics working at Christian colleges and universities who speak out of their Christian perspective to make substantive, credible contributions for big public questions. Currently, do Vale's work explores what it means to be human and ordering our lives around our love for God. The centre will

present the 2023 award to do Vale at the World and Our Calling lecture on January 24, 2024.

**Youth Conference Partnership**

Looking ahead, Redeemer is excited to host the Gospel Coalition Canada’s first-ever youth Conference, The Light Has Come, taking place June 7-8, 2024. It is our prayer that hundreds of youth will re-encounter Jesus, experience his unconditional love and be reminded of who they are in Christ.

The student experience at Redeemer is enhanced by the support of the Christian Reformed Church. You play a critical role in strengthening and increasing Redeemer’s ability to prepare the next generation of Christian leaders through higher education that is rooted in the Reformed Christian tradition. Each and every day, your financial and prayerful support is felt by all those who come onto campus. For this, we are exceedingly grateful. I pray that God continues to bless the CRC as it seeks to diligently participate in Christ’s redeeming work.

In Christ,



David Zietsma, PhD  
President, Redeemer University

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# APPENDICES

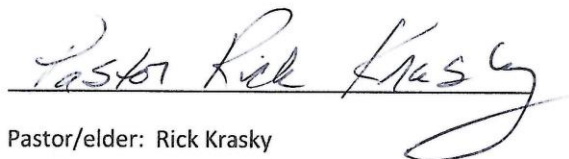
## APPENDIX 1 -- Brooten Request re CO Article 55

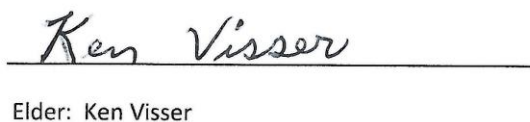
Classical interim Committee

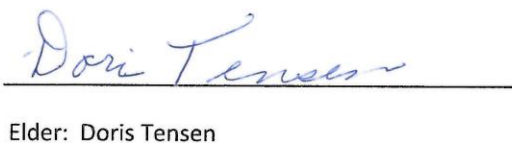
Classis Lake Superior

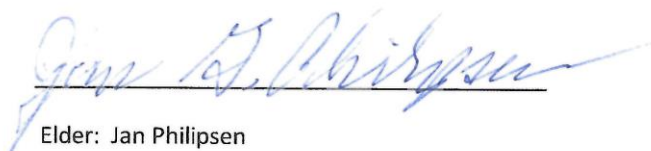
1-13-23

Requesting permission for elders of Brooten Community Church to administer the sacraments for the year 2023. Under article 55 of church order.

  
Pastor/elder: Rick Krasky

  
Elder: Ken Visser

  
Elder: Doris Tensen

  
Elder: Jan Philipsen

Received January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## APPENDIX 2 – BALLOT

### Elections

#### I. Vice-president of Classis, September 2024

##### 1. CIC Nominations:

Vote for one –

e. g. Circle – the one with the highest number of votes will be Vice President.

David Zigterman; Brian Bolkema; Marg Rekman

2. Other Nominations from councils. \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Nominations for delegates to Synod

Rules of Procedure state:

IV. A. 10. Minister delegates to Synod and their respective alternates shall be chosen by free ballot for the first two ballots. Delegates and alternates must receive majority votes. Prior to the balloting, the Secretary of Classis shall inform Classis as to who were the delegates to Synod the two previous years. (See agenda page 11 for listings)

#### III. Functionaries of Classis

A. Classical Secretary 3 yr. term, Jan 24 through Dec 26

Henry Gunnink

Les Kuiper, Alt.

B. CHMC-CA 3 yr. term, Sept 24 to Aug 27

Minister reg. \_\_\_\_\_

Lay reg. \_\_\_\_\_

2 alts \_\_\_\_\_

CHMC-US – (3 yr. term) Sept 24 to Aug 27

Lay Alt. \_\_\_\_\_

C. CMLT –Classical Ministerial Leadership Team\*

Clergy-Reg Eli Groenendyk (2nd) Sept 23 to Aug 26

Clergy- Reg Dan DeGraff, Chair (2nd) Sept 23 to Aug 26

Alt (1st) Sept 23 to Aug 26

\* Missed in September 2023 classis ballot.

D. Synodical Deputies 3 year term July 1, 2024 to June 30 2027  
Harrison Newhouse, Reg.  
Jack Van Marion, Alt.

E. Church Visitors 3 year term Sept 24 to Aug 27

1. Central

Alternate \_\_\_\_\_

2. North

-- Winnipeg/Brandon

Alt \_\_\_\_\_ \*

\* To replace Brian Bolkema

F. CRCNA Agencies:

– Canadian Region 2 3 year terms July 1, 24 to June 30, 27

(Calvin Univ.) \_\_\_\_\_ (Canadian Pastors wanted)

--US Region 8

(Calvin Sem) Rev. John Lee or Rev. Brian Ochsner, US delegates only

### **BOT Calvin Seminary**

#### ***Calvin Theological Seminary***

(Vote for one of the following nominees.)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Rev. John Lee** has served as senior pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa, since 2009. Between college and seminary, he served with Resonate/World Renew in Nicaragua (2001-2004) at the Nehemiah Center, including working with the Nicaraguan CRC to develop a theological education program for pastors. Rev. Lee has served on the Dordt University Board of Trustees (2010-2020), Classis Iakota Interim Committee (2017-2023), Classis Iakota Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (2009-2016) and on the CRCNA Council of Delegates (2018-2024).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Rev. Brian Ochsner** currently serves as lead pastor of Faith Christian Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa since 2021. Previously, he served as pastor in Brookside CRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Sully, Iowa following his graduation from Calvin Seminary in 2006. Rev. Ochsner has served in various capacities including CRCNA Council of Delegates (5yrs), chair of the Congregational Ministries Subcommittee (3 years), Classical Interim Committee Chair (6 years), Classical Finance Team Chair (6 years) as well as currently serving as a Regional Pastor for Classis Central Plains.

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## **APPENDIX 3: OVERTURES**

### **1. Letter re proper procedure.**

December 1, 2023

RE: Overtures for March 4-5, 2024 Classis Lake Superior meeting

Attachment: Overture: Requesting the Appointment of a Committee to explore and research the need for a CRCNA licensing board for licensed and commissioned CRCNA Pastors  
Overture: When a synod receives overtures or appeals related to abuse, its advisory committee(s) shall review and present all pertinent information to synod so that delegates may make informed decisions.  
Explanation Statement

CC'd: Rev. David Dick

Dear Stated Clerk Henry Gunnink and Leadership of Classis Lake Superior:

The Council of Hancock Christian Reformed Church met to review my two overtures that speak to the issues of abuse in the church on November 14, 2023. They declined to support either one.

I submit my overtures to Classis Lake Superior.

Thank you.

Judy De Wit  
6401 Santa Rosa Cir Unit B  
Sioux Falls, SD 57108  
605-359-0034  
educator.84@hotmail.com

### **2. Background Information:**

#### **To the Delegates of Classis Lake Superior**

We as a denomination continue to strive to understand, address, and respond to abuse of power issues that exist in our churches. However, loopholes that protect wrongdoers or processes that do not give adequate voice to alleged victims coming forward are apparent.

The two overtures presented are efforts to continue (1) to provide greater accountability to those who have abused their power (the implementation of a licensing board for CRC pastors) and (2) give more voice to those who have used the appeal process (council, classis, synod) by ensuring abuse of power appeals are heard by all the delegates of the synod.

### **Licensing Board for CRCNA Pastors**

Licensing boards in the medical and mental health field are used to protect the public. Their responsibilities include addressing complaints by anyone (patients and public), establishing requirements and determining completion of ongoing education (CEUs) for license renewal, and discipline licensees when violations are determined. Licensing boards have the authority to issue sanctions, discipline licensed professionals under their jurisdiction, withdraw or suspend licenses pending investigations, and renew licenses on a yearly basis.

Licensed and commissioned pastors of the CRCNA do not have a board they are accountable to. Although they are master level persons, they are not held to a trained and qualified board that is knowledgeable about roles, ethics, conduct, and investigations in their work for our churches.

Instead, the CRCNA uses church order. In church order, pastors and church leaders are accountable to their own council, to their classis if allegations are appealed to the next level, and to synod if the alleged person (s) are not satisfied with classis' outcome. There are times that a pastor is accountable to those within a classis, such as to another pastor. However, a pastor has no power over a wrongdoer and does not have authority to invoke discipline. The power remains in the council.

The loophole in accountability for pastors who have complaints against them about wrongdoing is that often councils and classis do not have objectivity to determine a pastor's wrongdoing. They are quick to side with the pastor because of friendship relationships, do not want to be inconvenienced about such things, lack the insight to knowing what to do, or believe pastors can do as they want. A licensing board for CRCNA pastors brings more objectivity to abuse situations, releases council members from having to deal with abuse issues (some of which do not have training or knowledge of what to do) and a licensing board would strengthen the requirements that pastors are to complete required CEU training hours.

### **Opening Abuse of Power Appeals on Synod Floor**

This overture speaks to hearing allegations of abuse at the synod level focuses on the assurance that issues of abuse that come to synod shall be heard by all synod delegates so that delegates can make determinations about what to do. Currently Advisory Committees of synod who review appealed abuse allegations have the power to determine whether the victim's case will be opened on the floor of synod. This gives the Advisory Committees too much power in their work. The alleged victim has already gone through council and classis in an effort to be heard. Now the victim spends time away from work, spends hundreds of dollars to attend synod, and then sometimes comes to find out their case is not going to be heard because the Advisory Committee said no to opening it up to all synod delegates.

This abuse of power by the Advisory Committee, a committee who often lacks the knowledge and ability to understand abuse of power issues, makes the determination if all delegates of synod will hear the appeal and allegations of abuse. This is what needs to change. If we as a denomination are serious about addressing abuse of power within our system, allowing all synod delegates to hear cases of abuse of power would ensure better outcomes.

Judy De Wit

6401 S Santa Rosa Cir Unit B

Sioux Falls, SD 57108

[educator.84@hotmail.com](mailto:educator.84@hotmail.com)

605-359-0034

### **3. Overtures Submitted**

#### **a. Overture #1: Requesting the Appointment of a Committee to explore and research the need for a CRCNA licensing board for licensed and commissioned CRCNA Pastors**

##### **Background on licensing boards**

Licensing boards serve to protect the public from misconduct, maltreatment, and abuse by being an access of those harmed to file a complaint or grievance against a licensed professional who they believe has violated them. Medical and mental health professionals answer to their particular licensing boards (social worker licensing board, marriage and family licensing board, medical board) and attorneys answer to a bar board. Some of the services that a licensing board provides are licensure renewal, reporting of CEU hours for renewal, and forms to file complaints and grievances. Licensing boards meet throughout the year to review complaints and other concerns. When wrongs are determined, licensing boards have the power to implement disciplinary action, such as requiring the licensee to take a class, withdraw or withhold license from him/her, or suspend the license. Disciplinary action is reported to the contracted insurance companies of those charged.

##### **Recommendation:**

**I** **overture** Synod 2024 to appoint a committee to explore and research the need to develop and implement a CRCNA licensing board for pastors of the CRCNA (licensed and commissioned pastors) who have allegations regarding misconduct, maltreatment, any form of abuse including abuse of power, and / or job performance. This would not include a pastor's theological commitments or position.

Additionally, this committee's exploration and research

- 1) would determine how a licensing board would fit into the current structure of church order and / or what changes would need to be made to make it possible, especially regarding the council, classis, and licensing board relationship
- 2) would determine how a licensing board would work with
  - a. a victim presenting allegations of abuse of power, abuse of authority or misconduct to licensing board



- b. Safe Church Team (if available), church councils, classis, and church order protocols
  - c. Safe Church Team and/or Council when either or both of them present allegations of abuse to licensing board
- 3) would explore what other churches and denominations are currently doing in regards to using a licensing board structure,
- 4) would provide explanations of the amount of power the licensing board would or could have in connection to the authority of councils (and sometimes classis) over a pastor (church order)
- 5) would provide an explanation of what a licensing board could do for councils and classes, such as granting licenses, ensure completion of required training prior to renewal of license, authority to discipline (such as license suspension, a pastor is required to take a class or attend a workshop, or go under supervision)
- 6) would determine what jurisdiction would the licensing board have, such as certain classes, regions, or the entire denomination.
- 7) would determine what kind of background of licensing board members could have, such as social workers, therapists, psychologists, or doctors (M.D.), or other licensed Master level professionals
- 8) would compare and contrast how other professional licensing boards (marriage and family, social workers) execute their duties and responsibilities to understand how a CRCNA licensing board could do theirs
- 9) would address other issues or concerns that may arise from their exploration and research

**Grounds:**

1. The CRCNA denomination, since the opening of Safe Church Ministry door in 1994, has assured members and victims of the Christian Reformed Church that we as a denomination would do all we can to provide a safe church environment. This was promised again in the passing of Abuse Victim’s Task Force Report of 2010, Abuse of Power Overture in 2018, the passing of Code of Conduct in 2022, and others. A licensing board, where pastors answer to a board, would increase safety for all.
2. A licensing board for pastors would increase accountability which would create a safer church for all.
3. A licensing board (consisting of social works, therapists, psychologist, doctors) assures better outcomes because of a board’s greater objectivity and greater expertise when reviewing complaints and situations that involve abuse issues by church leaders.
4. It has been shown that councils lack the ability to know how to do investigations of pastor/church leader wrongdoing, how to ask questions to the accused, how to write reports about their investigations, and lack ability in knowing how to conduct interviews.
5. A licensing board relieves some of the burden of councils and consistories when they are faced with what to do with a pastor’s/church leader’s misconduct, allegations of abuse and other difficult situations, and how to respond to it.
6. There has been a consistent lack of objectivity of councils and consistories when investigating abuse of power situations and cases because of the councils’ and consistories’ friendship with the pastor/church leader, their need for the pastor/church

leader’s approval, and their fear of retaliation and rebuttal should a council member stand up against the pastor/ church leader.

\*\*\*\*\*

**b. Overture #2:**

**Overture:** When a synod receives overtures or appeals related to abuse, its advisory committee(s) shall review and present all pertinent information to synod so that delegates may make informed decisions.

**Background:** The CRCNA, since 1994 (the opening of Abuse Prevention Office), has vowed that abuse by church leaders of the denomination will be addressed and dealt with. However, this assurance that abuse will be addressed has failed many times. Whether it is via church process (council, classis, synod) or by presenting, discussing, and approving needed overtures that bring change to our church system to ensure a better response to allegations, our church system has not done what they vowed to do.

**Recommendations:**

**I overture** that when a synod receives overtures or appeals related to abuse, its advisory committee(s) shall review and present all pertinent information to synod so that delegates may make informed decisions.

**Grounds:**

When every overture or appeal is opened on synod floor:

1. We follow the vows that we as a denomination have made to address abuse, abuse of power, and abuse in our churches, on all levels.
2. The council, classis, synod (appeal process) of church order is being followed and ensures that victims’ voices will be heard at synod; when an advisory committee declines to present an appeal or overture to synod more victimization occurs.
3. We are hearing a possible better way to respond to abuse. Usually overtures mean a loophole in the appeal process has been found, meaning pastors have manipulated the appeal system to dodge and avoid charges or wrongs they have done. Overtures need to be heard because then we are strengthening our response to abuse.
4. The protection of pastors is reduced and the voice of the victim is increased. Lying, deceit, gaslighting, and “that didn’t really happen” are typical messages victims hear as responses from church leaders in their situations.
5. The victim is validated. Refusing to open and discuss overtures and appeals increases the pain and harm already done to victims. Messages of “we don’t want to hear about it” or “let’s call a technicality on this then we don’t have to deal with it” or “he’s such a great man, we don’t want to upset him” are reduced when every overture and appeal are put on the floor of synod.

\*\*\*\*\*

## APPENDIX 4: EXPENSE VOUCHER

### Classis Lake Superior | Expense Voucher 2024

Expenses Incurred by: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City: _____ Prov/State ____ Postal/Zip _____

#### Expenses incurred to attend:

#	Meeting/Event	Date	Distance Driven (for mileage)	Meals (attach rcpts)	Other (attach rcpts)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
<b>TOTALS</b>			_____ m/km	\$	\$

<b>Mileage Reimbursement Calculation</b> (use total from above)		
<i>According to 2005 decision of Classis, mileage is reimbursed at 80% of current US-IRS rate.</i>		
<b>MILEAGE:</b> <i>For meetings of Classis, normally only one full mileage reimbursement is given per church. If delegates are claiming more, please indicate this and explain to Expense Committee</i>	Miles/km:	
	Mileage rate:	x \$0.6*
	Mileage Total:	\$
<b>Additional Delegates Benefit:</b> <i>To encourage carpooling, you may claim an additional 50% mileage when transporting all delegates from another church to Classis mtg. (Note: This may be considered income since is it above mileage).</i>	Miles/km:	
	Benefit rate:	X \$0.3*
	Additional Benefit:	\$
<b>TOTAL:</b> (Mileage Total + Additional Benefit)		\$

\* decided at Classis 09-2022

#### Totaling all expenses:

1	Mileage Expense Total	\$
2	Additional Delegates Benefit Total	\$
3	Meals Total	\$
4	Other Total (specify and attach receipts)	\$
5	Minus \$50.00 for a single room/night, also if your spouse stayed with you. (Or minus \$70.50 at Super 8)**	\$
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$</b>

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Approved by Classical Expense Committee:      \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature of Committee member: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*\*If you stayed in a room by yourself, cf. # 5 above, subtract \$50 or \$70.50 from your expense reimbursements*

## **APPENDIX 5: PRE-CLASSIS WORKSHOPS**

**(Note can also be downloaded as separate file)**

### **Pre-Classis Workshops, March 4, 2024**

#### **1. *Enhancing Your Pastoral Care***

In this collaborative session, you will explore and hear from each other on what Pastoral Care looks like for the 21st Century? What are some timeless tools and skills that will help you enhance your pastoral ministry as an office-bearer in your church and in your community.

Come discover how to open up individuals and groups who do not seem to want to talk or engage in a conversation, how to listen at different levels and develop this skill, and how to make sure that the person or people you are spending time with sense it as a “pastoral care moment” rather than just “my friend care one”. There will probably be more good things from you who attend to draw out and lean into for enhancing your Pastoral Care.

**Facilitator – Pastor Joel De Boer:** will facilitate/ coach our time together. He comes with 33 years of ministry experience, has specialized training from Interim Ministry Network, is a certified Ministry and Executive Coach for the last 6 years, and has helped many churches with training and interim work. He has just published *Expressing Your Faith: A mentor’s and new believer’s guidebooks*.

#### **2. *Workshop: Helping without Harming in Church Benevolence***

**A single workshop in 2 parts. Participants Need to Sign up for both am and pm.**

**Facilitator:** Mark Vanderwees: Diaconal trainer.  
Regional Ministry Developer, Eastern Canada, with Diaconal Ministries Canada

Description: Many churches struggle when faced with requests for financial help. Often the church does not have a clear understanding of how to appropriately respond and react by addressing the 'immediate' need. In some cases, this could be the correct response, but in other situations this same response might only superficially address the real underlying root causes. The latter could contribute to greater dependency, where in effect, the church might be playing an enabling role rather than an empowering role.

This workshop will help the church be better prepared to walk alongside individuals or households, bringing positive and long-lasting changes to their lives and ultimately contributing to them being restored to all that God intends them as image bearers. This workshop may not give you specific solutions but will definitely help you to ask good questions which will lead you to a better pathway in dealing with requests.

Note: Mark has led this training in over 9 churches with approximately 139 attendees.

### **3. Workshop: The Future of Pastoral Leadership in the CRC**

This workshop will explore the present leadership landscape in the CRCNA, including some of the possible reasons for the current level of vacancy in the denomination. Some classis-led efforts in both Canada and the US have been helpful at identifying, nurturing, and equipping new pastoral leadership.

Calvin Seminary is also offering some new, creative approaches to raising up new ministry leaders. “Empower,” for instance, is a creative, mentor-based (rather than course based) method for obtaining a ministry degree.

How can congregations, Classis Lake Superior, and the seminary work together to equip the next generation of pastors?

**Facilitator: Shawn Brix**, Canadian Church Relations Liaison, Calvin Theological Seminary

#### 4. Indigenous Family Centre –Facilitator: Shanon Perez

## MEET THE INDIGENOUS FAMILY CENTRE



During this workshop you'll explore the building of the Indigenous Family Centre located on Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg. As Shannon shares with you the various spaces and rooms that make up the building of the Indigenous Family Centre she will share the stories of ministry that happen in every square inch of the building.

The Indigenous Family Centre was established by CRC churches in 1974 and serves Winnipeg's vulnerable north end. The centre provides families with opportunities to build communities, learn about Indigenous culture, develop positive life skills, and experience healing.



Shannon Perez will be the leader of this workshop. Shannon is the director of the Indigenous Family Centre (a CRC ministry with Indigenous people in Winnipeg). Shannon is a member of the Sayisi Dene First Nation, and lives in Winnipeg with her husband and children. Previously, Shannon was the CRC's Mobilizer for Indigenous Justice & Reconciliation, where she was a key developer of Hearts Exchanged, along with many other Indigenous Ministry resources.





## 5. Workshop: CRCNA MINISTRY SHARES --Roshani Morton, Facilitator.



### Emo Ministry Shares Workshop

Get ready for a workshop like no other, where imagination is your passport! Escape the humdrum of your classis meeting to board the "CRCNA Airlines", where your Chief Flight Attendant, Roshani Morton (Director of Advancement, Canada), will lead you on a wild adventure chasing our ministry share dollars across the globe. We'll jet off to Cambodia, Uganda, traverse across Canada and the USA, explore our Urban Indigenous Ministries, and so much more.

Before each participant boards CRCNA Airlines, you'll receive a special carry-on to collect essential ministry share travel gear at each stop. By the end, you'll leave with carry-on bags bursting with delights from around the world that will keep you praying for Ministry Shares for months to come.

Prepare yourself for an immersive, hands-on, sensory experience that will tantalize your taste buds, fill your heart with encouragement, and take you on a whirlwind tour of the CRCNA world. You'll leave feeling inspired and empowered, knowing that your ministry share dollars are hard at work, making a significant impact on countless lives.

Are you ready for a fun adventure? Join us for this epic Ministry Shares workshop and be part of something truly extraordinary!

