

# AGENDA - CLASSIS LAKE SUPERIOR



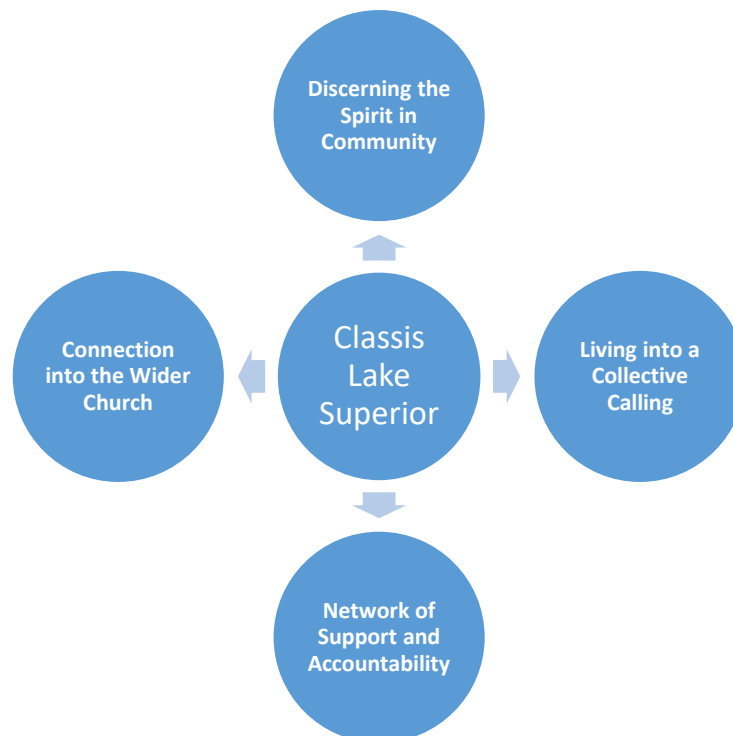
OF

## THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

September 18-19, 2023,  
In person at  
Lake Geneva Christian Center,  
605 Birch Ave,  
Alexandria, MN 56308

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. Credential and Registration Deadlines

#### 1. Links to register:

**Delegate** credentials link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe\\_z3Pfn1rLELFXD5\\_dAdoCSTKYWQGNXSNMhnrUrtOlmVMNQ/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe_z3Pfn1rLELFXD5_dAdoCSTKYWQGNXSNMhnrUrtOlmVMNQ/viewform?usp=pp_url)

**Guests/Visitors** link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdE95NB6H9HLZjOcNqF1WEmzaqULZZ1rX55Dc8r\\_UeQ-iMzNg/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdE95NB6H9HLZjOcNqF1WEmzaqULZZ1rX55Dc8r_UeQ-iMzNg/viewform?usp=pp_url)

#### 2. Deadline:

Lake Geneva needs participant numbers a week in advance.

Please send in registration by noon, September 11<sup>th</sup>. Thank You!

#### 3. CHANGES:

After you submit your registration, you can re-open it if you need to make changes on roommates or days staying, etc. You will receive an email from Google Forms (Maybe in your spam folder) which has an **"EDIT" button** to use for that.

However, if you have difficulty making that work, please resubmit them to our Clerk, Henry Gunnink at [henry.gunnink@gmail.com](mailto:henry.gunnink@gmail.com).

### B. Visitors, invited or coming on their own – Precautions/Provisions/Payments.

#### 1. Are welcome to attend

a. Meetings are open to the public except when executive sessions are declared. Non-delegates, visitors, must/shall exit during those sessions.

b. **Safety** – take whatever precautions that will help you and others stay safe from the Covid variants going around. You may social distance, wear a mask, wash your hands—demonstrate care for your own and other's wellbeing.

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

1. Credentials are to be sent in by September 11 to [henry.gunnink@gmail.com](mailto:henry.gunnink@gmail.com)
2. Credentials were sent out with this agenda or can be downloaded from the Classis website.

## II. ON “ARRIVAL” AT CLASSIS

### A. Tend to the following:

--Come early enough to get all the kinks out of setting up.

--**Classical Expense Checks**—please bring a check for \$5 per active member in your congregation. Give to Kristi Santema, or place in check deposit box on entry table.

-- Put on a name tag

And indicate your office, committee membership, role or guest status.

--email **late reports to the clerk** for distribution at [henry.gunnink@gmail.com](mailto:henry.gunnink@gmail.com).

Classis will decide whether to let it be on the agenda.

-- Your expenses:

hand in your expense forms to the new Classical Treasurer, Kristi Santema at Classis, send them via email to [kksantema@gmail.com](mailto:kksantema@gmail.com) or mail to Kristi Santema, 3698 150th Ave, Princeton, MN, USA 55371.

-- Expense Vouchers\forms are available on the website and were sent out with this agenda.

## III. LODGING

### A. Early Arrival

Sunday arrival – rooms in the Kingsriter Lodge will be available after 5 pm. Sign in book with instructions is on entry table. Room keys are in a box.

### B. COST:

1. Sunday-- \$55 per room on Sunday for those staying for both days of Classis. (No extra cost for single occupancy on Sunday)

2. Monday night only-- \$158 per person single occupancy.  
Classis Lodging assumes double occupancy. Then the cost is \$140 per person  
If you want a room to yourself, you assume the cost difference of \$18.  
Spouses sharing a room are also \$140 per night unless they are a delegate or in some other way required to be present at Classis.

#### **IV. OBTAINING AGENDAS AND MATERIALS**

- A. All required documents will be
1. Emailed to your church office and pastor 5 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, then under September 18-19, 2023
- B. Printed Agendas  
If desired, please consider printing your own copy.

#### **V. PRE-CLASSIS PRESENTATION/CONVERSATION SESSION**

##### **TOPIC:**

**How to cooperate with and grow your church in the Power of the Holy Spirit**

##### **Presenters:**

**David Huizenga, Pastor Bridgewood CRC, Savage, MN.**

**Mary Sterenberg, Pastor of Prayer and Spirituality, Discovery CRC, Grand Rapids, MI.**



**Mary Sterenberg** is an ordained pastor in the Christian Reformed Church. Prior to serving in staff positions in church and denominational ministry, Mary worked as a Registered Occupational Therapist, most recently as a consultant to business and industry. Mary served as the Prayer Mobilizer for the Christian Reformed Home Missions Great Lakes Region for eleven years, and served for ten years as Prayer Coordinator for Classis Grand Rapids South. Mary served seven years on the board of directors for Presbyterian Reformed Ministries International (PRMI).

Mary served as co-chair of the Grand Rapids CityFest Prayer Team for the Luis Palau Association in 2018. She serves as pastor of prayer and spirituality at Discovery Christian Reformed Church. Mary is a certified Leader Breakthru coach, and serves pastors and leaders as coach and mentor. Mary is a member of the faculty of the Dunamis Institute (PRMI) and teaches on prayer and the Holy Spirit throughout North America. Mary resides in Caledonia, MI with her husband Bruce. They have three grown and married children, and nine grandchildren. Mary's passion is for the bride of Christ to be healed, holy, unified, restored, revived, and empowered!

**David Huizenga** – Is currently pastor at Bridgewood CRC in Savage, MN where he's been since 2011.

**TOPIC: How to cooperate with and grow your church in the Power of the Holy Spirit**

Morning session: 10:30-12:00

We have confessed belief in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. However, we are now invited to become more aware of how to cooperate and work together with the Holy Spirit. In these sessions we will explore teachings and practices that will help us to dance with the Spirit as leaders of our churches. We will learn about "Growing the Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit" as a resource and model for empowered ministry. We'll explore what it means to welcome the Gifts and Manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and how to recognize and respond to Kairos Moments from a distinctly Reformed perspective.

Lunch: 12:00 – 1:00

Afternoon session: 1:00 – 2:30

We will focus on Receiving Divine Guidance for Cooperating with the Holy Spirit as well as Spiritual Discernment. We will experience and practice what we have learned with some “lab time” where Pastors Dave and Mary will facilitate us listening to the voice of the Spirit, and stepping out in obedience to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Evening session: 6:45-8:45/9:00

We will enjoy an extended time of worship, and engage in prayer for each church. We will be practicing dancing with the Spirit and cooperating with His guidance and be empowered with His Gifts. Facilitated by Pastors Dave and Mary.

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**VI. AFFIRMATION OF REFORMED CREEDS**

- A. ALL FIRST TIME DELEGATES** will be asked to affirm their agreement with the Doctrinal Standards of the CRCNA by signing/affirming 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.

## **VII. SCHEDULE.**

Monday:

08:00 - 10:00 – CIC meeting

10:00 - 10:30 – Registration

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 - 8:45/9:00 Worship +churches/ministry sharing and prayer, workshop?

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

7:00 - 8:00 – Breakfast

8:00 - 8:30 – Classis Business

8:30 - – Examination: Matthew Guichelaar for Minister of the Word  
Possible additional exam of candidate for Grace CRC

12:00 - 1:00 – Lunch

1:00 - 2:30 – Ministry Agenda

2:45 Closing Reflections, Evaluation, Prayer

3:00 Adjournment!

## VIII. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Document Name	Presenter	Page #
<b>A Place of Discerning the Spirit in</b>	<b>Community</b>	
Examinations of Candidate	Ben Verkerk, Dan	10
Synod report		
Balloting		11
<b>Network of Support and Accountability</b>		
Classical Interim Committee	Brian Bolkema	13
Stated Clerk	Henry Gunnink	
Church Visitors Reports	Dave Huizenga D. DeGraff,	15
Church Counselors Reports	B. Bolkema; Nick Van Beek M Brouwer; S Zwart	16
Regional Pastors Reports	E. Busink, H. Gunnink	18
Credentials Report		
<b>Living into a Collective Calling</b>		
Finance Committee & Treasurer	Kristi Santema	19
Classical Home Missions (US)	David Zigterman	21
Home Missionary Reports	Chris Alle	22
Home Missionary Reports		
Youth Champion	Travis Deur	23
Prayer Coordinator – US	L. Schwitters, R. Braun	24
Classical Home Missions (CAN)	Ben Verkerk	24
The Gathering Place	Yvonne Schenk	29
Hope Ministries, Winnipeg	Shellie Power	31
Prayer Mobilizer – CAN	Sonya Cahais	31



CMLT--Classical Ministerial Leadership Team	Dan De Graff	34
Safe Church Team		
<b>Connection into the Wider Church</b>		
<b>Chaplaincy Reports</b>		
Mayo Hospice Chaplaincy	Dan Crapo	34
Elim Village, Surrey BC	Gerald VanSmeerdyk	
<b>Classical Delegates</b>		
BOT Calvin University Region 1 CAN		
BOT Calvin University Region 5 US		
Board of Trustees: Calvin Seminary	Robert Drenten	36
Calvin Seminary Can. Church Liaison	Shawn Brix	
Resonate Global Missions	Rich Braaksma, Brad Meinders	38
World Renew	Jodi Koeman,	40
Canadian Ministries Director	Transitional Exec. Al Postma	42
Diaconal Ministries Canada	Ron Vanden Brink	45
CRCNA Exec Director	Zachary King	46
<b>Agencies and other Christian Orgs</b>		
Dordt University	Todd Zuidema	48
Redeemer College-University	Zietsma	49
Faith Formation Ministries	Trudy Ash	
<b>Appendices</b>		
A. Licensure to Exhort Renewal Requests	Grace, Covenant	50
B. Other Requests	Emo, CHMC-CA	52

## VIII. Organization and Convening

### A. Officers

President: Rev. Steve Zwart  
Vice-President: Rev. Brian Bolkema  
Stated Clerk: Rev. Henry Gunnink

### B. Opening and Organization

1. Chair opens with Devotions,  
Welcome, Roll Call and Review of Schedule
2. First time delegates sign/affirm the Covenant for Officebearers
3. Declaration of Classis being constituted
4. Appointment of Committees
  - 4.1 Credentials: Trinity Hill, Bunde
  - 4.2 Overtures/Deliberative Matters: Baldwin, Bethlehem
  - 4.3 Balloting: Raymond, Bunde
  - 4.4 Classicals Expense Committee: Renville, Brooten

Note: First named chairs the committee. Each chooses who reports.

**C. Classis takes up its business and deliberations**

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**CLASSIS IS...**

**I. 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.*

**IX. Materials for the Deliberations and business of Classis**

**A. Examination-**

1. Officiants:

a. Examiners

Pastor Ben Verkerk - Practica;

Pastor Dan DeGraff - Biblical Theological

Pastor Marg Rekman - Sermon and Service Evaluators

Elder

b. Synodical Deputies

Pastors: Cliff Hoekstra, Iakota; Wendel Davelaar, North Central IA;  
and Brian Hofman, Heartland.

2. Examination

1. Practica – Pastor Ben Verkerk (No time limit)

a. Introduction of Matthew Guichelaar

b. Conversation re relationship to God, elements and practices of a holy life, knowledge and appreciation of Christian Reformed practice and usage, commitment to the ministry and its relevance in our times, loyalty to the church, and related matters.

c. Questions from delegates and deputies.

d. Motion to proceed.

e. Deputies concurrence requested.

2. Sermon Evaluation

a. The written sermon shall be evaluated, and attention shall be given to the candidate's manner of conducting a worship service.

b. Additional questions with reference to the sermon and its delivery.

c. A motion to proceed shall carry with concurrence of the synodical deputies.

3. Biblical-Theological Position - Pastor Dan DeGraff (Minimum 30 minutes)

- a. Inquiry into Biblical and theological judgment, competence, and soundness.
  - b. Additional questions from delegates and deputies. (No time limit)
3. Consideration for admittance into the Ministry of the Word within the CRCNA.
    1. A motion to admit shall be received.
    2. Chair declares executive session for preliminary consideration of motion.
    3. Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit shall be offered.
    4. The Synodical Deputies leave the floor to prepare their recommendation.
    5. Classis votes by ballot.
    6. The Synodical Deputies shall offer their decision in a written statement.
  4. Official Actions as appropriate

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**B. Synod Report**  
**Classis Lake Superior Synod 2023 Report**  
**Rev. Steve Zwart; Elder Gaye Rieger**

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**C. BALLOTING and NOMINATIONS**

**BALLOT          Classis Lake Superior September 18-19, 2023**

- I. Officers for the Meeting of Classis on March 6-7, 2023
  - 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.** \_\_\_\_\_

- II. Functionaries of Classis
  1. CIC-Shall consist of five members plus the Secretary of Classis (ex officio).  
 There shall be one alternate.

Person	term	date	Yes	No
Alt.	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sept 23 thru Aug 26		


2. Finance Committee = CIC + Treasurer, Alt and 1 other member. Calendar Yr Term  
Need to replace Tim Huber

	term	date	Yes	No
	1st	Jan 1, 24 to Dec 31, 27		

3. CHMC-CA -shall have 5 members: 2 clergy, 3 lay, with 2 alts, 1 clergy, 1 lay.  
Need 1 clergy

Person	term	dates	Yes	No

4. CHMC-US –none needed

5. CMLT –Classical Ministerial Leadership Team

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

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

6. BOT Calvin University Former Region 8, now Region 5-- US only

7. COD

8. Church Visitors

Central

Person	term	dates	Yes	No
Clergy needed		Sept 23 thru Aug 26		
		Sept 23 thru Aug 26		

## CLASSIS IS...

### II. 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 -- Workshop?

## B. Report of Classical Interim Committee -- Brian Bolkema, chair

CIC does the work of Classis in the interim, between meetings.

### Classical Interim Committee Report (CIC)

### To: Classis Lake Superior, meeting September 18-19, 2023

The members of the CIC are: Brian Bolkema (chair), Jim Lipscomb, Harrison Newhouse, Marg Rekman, Carol Veldman Rudie, and Henry Gunnink (ex officio, stated clerk of classis). Aaron Greydanus has stepped down from the CIC since he has taken a call to a different classis.

Your CIC has met via Zoom on April 18 and in person on August 7. Here is a summary of what we have been doing on your behalf.

#### 1. A Place of Discerning God's Will

- a. CIC has made arrangements for the September 18-19, 2023 meeting of Classis Lake Superior at Lake Geneva Christian Center.
- b. CIC has planned for a pre-classis seminar led by speakers from Dunamis (Dunamis is a ministry of Presbyterian Reformed Ministries International—PRMI).
- c. CIC made arrangements for an examination for Candidate Matthew Guichelaar, called to First CRC in Thunder Bay.

#### 2. A Place of Support and Accountability

- a. CIC approved the **transfer of Ecclesiastical Credentials** for
  1. Rev. Robert Hoekstra from Hope CRC in Thunder Bay to Vanastra CRC in Vanastra, ON (Classis Huron).
  2. Rev. Michael Ten Haken from Pease CRC in Pease, MN to Ridgewood CRC in Jenison, MI (Classis Georgetown).
- b. CIC assigned **Church Counselors** to the following vacant churches:
  1. Rev. Nick Van Beek to Grace CRC in Inver Grove Heights, MN.
  2. Rev. Mark Brouwer to Pease CRC in Pease, MN.
  3. Rev. Marg Rekman to First CRC in Thunder Bay (to replace Rev. Robert Hoekstra) and Hope CRC in Thunder Bay, ON (pending confirmation from those involved).

- c. **Safe Church.** In March 2020, classis approved a proposal to divide the classis into four safe church teams according to region. So far, CIC contacted all congregations and compiled a list of safe church coordinators. The CIC also encouraged each congregation to have a safe church policy in place. The CIC is currently exploring the possibility of providing a stipend to someone who can assist safe church coordinators in their ministry and direct them to appropriate resources.
- d. CIC **interviewed regional pastors** Henry Gunnink and Evert Busink for accountability and encouragement. The CIC is grateful for their work and has asked them to continue serving in this role.

### 3. A Place of Living into Our Collective Calling

- a. The members of the CIC in Canada (Rev. Brian Bolkema and Rev. Marg Rekman) continue to work toward fleshing out what it looks like for Classis Lake Superior to function as a bi-national classis in light of regulations for charities in Canada. This includes the creation of bylaws for the legal entity known as *Classis Lake Superior (Canada), Inc.* and applying for charitable status in Canada for this corporation.
- b. CIC has been reviewing the Rules of Procedure for Classis Lake Superior to keep them up to date.

### 4. A Place of Connection to the Wider Church

Respectfully submitted on August 16, 2023 by Brian Bolkema, CIC chair

## C. Stated Clerk

### Report for September 18-19, 2023 Meeting of Classis Lake Superior

If anything stands out for my work since our last meeting in March it is dealing with transition. There have been many transitions within Classis as well as the denomination and these have required orientation and familiarization for new comers, research for how to integrate new groups or approaches into our polity or structures, or how to revise our Rules of Procedure to reflect new practices.

At one point it caused me to remember Jesus words in Luke 5:33-39 where one does not take cloth from a new garment to patch an old garment, or pour new wine into old wineskins but puts new wine into new wine skins. Not easy sometimes to transition from the older/familiar and let the Spirit move us into adapting and/or adopting forms appropriate to the need/circumstances/persons that have come our way.

Specifically, we've said farewell to 3 pastors: Robert Hoekstra, Michael Ten

Haken and Aaron Greydanus. That means we now have 8 churches without a pastor, (Brandon, GNF, Hope, Raymond, Willmar, Pease, Faith and Grace). At the same we have new pastors/candidates coming in and needing to find their way here.

Denominationally, there's been transition as well. Our new executive director, Zachary King and secretary Chris De Vries have been reaching out to stated clerks to get to know us and we them. There's been some transition from paper to more electronic means. But some of the resources require permission to access which I have not figured out yet because of our Classis Lake Superior email address.

Some of the new folks are seeking permission to come see us as a Classis. "Thrive," overseen by Leslie Van Milligen, is a new umbrella agency for several smaller ministries. We may be oriented to that in March 2024 instead of now. Resonate has a new regional representative, Brad Meinders, also seeking to get acquainted.

Locally, re personnel, our new treasurer, Kristi Santema, is gradually getting a grasp on things. I've been around long enough, so that I'm becoming part of the woodwork along with former treasurer, Wayne Tobak, so we both have been able to help answer her questions and fill in some gaps on how things are done.

Re, ministries/congregations, there've been intriguing questions raised like:

1. How can you mentor someone toward ministry in the CRCNA?
2. At some point could a local congregation be a house church instead of an organized church within the CRCNA?
3. What's required to call a pastor, is a mid-summer classis exam do-able?
4. How can a group like Amber and pastor Marcelo Viana best connect and partner with Classis and the CRCNA, should it be via affiliation, as emerging, or a church plant? Should it involve examination for commissioned pastor or an Article 8 route with a colloquium doctum, and what kind of learning plan would be involved? Many good questions to engage as clerk in a living church.

Researching these kinds of transition inspired questions has occupied and freshened up my time alongside the more mundane dutiful matters of organizing Classis meetings, agendas, registration etc. I'm thankful that amidst the swirl of changes, I could provide a point of continuity and

institutional memory for Classis as together we navigate toward a tomorrow planned and provisioned by our Lord's gracious hands.

Respectfully submitted,  
Henry Gunnink, clerk.

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## D. Church Visitor Reports

### North Region: Thunder Bay/Emo

Fred Rekman, Marno Retief, and Ben Verkerk, Alt. no report

### North Region: Winnipeg, Brandon

Ben Verkerk, Brian Bolema, and Marno Retief, Alt. no report

### Central Region--Minnesota

David Zigterman, Aaron Greydanus, and Don Grussing, Alt. no report

### East Region

Dan DeGraff, Dave Huizenga, Jim Busscher 1st Alt and  
Les Kuiper 2nd Alt no report

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## E. Church Counselor Reports

### 1. Brandon CRC - Brian Bolkema

**Church Counselor Report from Rev. Brian Bolkema, Counselor to First CRC of Brandon, MB**

**August 15, 2023**

Although First CRC extended a call in June, they were disappointed that the call was declined. I noticed that I have been serving as counselor for about three years, meaning the congregation has been vacant for all that time, including through the challenges of Covid. They have endured and persevered. But they wonder what the future may hold for them. Pray for guidance and direction as they continue to search and explore their options.

Brian Bolkema

### 2. Brooten - Steve Zwart Church

**Counselor Report for Brooten CRC, Brooten MN.**

Pastor Richard Krasky and congregation continue the good work of ministry in and around the Brooten area. It is once again noted here that officially the church is listed as "vacant" but continues to be served by Pastor Richard, in and through his role officially as an ordained elder at Brooten, with the administration of sacraments under Church



Order Article 55 and its supplement. This ongoing relationship serves the congregation and community well.

Pastor Steve Zwart, Church Counselor

**3. Bunde - Steve Zwart**

**Church Counselor Report for Bunde CRC, Bunde, MN.**

We rejoice with the Bunde CRC congregation with the installation of their new pastor, Joel DeBoer! Pastor Joel served as their interim pastor, guiding them through a season of reflection and renewal. Upon his departure, the Lord spoke both to the church and to Pastor Joel to once again link up to continue in the good work that began during the vacancy.

We celebrate God's good provision for the Bunde congregation, marking His faithfulness in their journey!

This concludes my work as counselor for the Bunde CRC congregation, with thanks for the opportunity to be a part of this process. Be it noted that this counselor role was shared with Pastor Aaron Greydanus while I was on sabbatical.

Pastor Steve Zwart, Church Counselor

**4. Faith CRC, New Brighton – David Huizenga, Dan DeGraff**

**5. First CRC, Thunder Bay –**

**6. Grace CRC, Inver Grove Heights – Nick Van Beek**

**Church Counselor Report – Grace CRC, Inver Grove Heights, MN.**

Grace Church began the interview process for their pastor in mid-July, they completed 4 Zoom interviews. On August 4-6, they hosted candidate Joseph Hwang and his family for an interview weekend. I attended a meeting of the Search Team on Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup> to review the weekend with them. There was much unity and consensus of thought in the conversation. At the writing of this report, the Grace congregation will vote on whether to extend a call to Joseph on Sunday, August 20<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Pease CRC, Pease, MN – Mark Brouwer**

I have reached out to Pease CRC and offered my assistance as their appointed Classis counselor, but have not heard back from them.

**8. Trinity Hill – Mark Brouwer**

They have called and installed Kyle Sandison, and are doing well.  
That can suffice as my report.

**9. Willmar, Rock of Life CRC – Steve Zwart.**

## **Church Counselor Report – Rock of Life CRC, Willmar, MN.**

The congregation of Rock of Life CRC in Willmar began the work of searching for their next pastor this past spring, following the departure of Pastor Jeff Vanderhooft to Michigan.

The search team has been doing an extensive amount of work in compiling a church profile and making several contacts with prospective candidates. While the process is, at times, a bit of challenge, they continue to press on in their process and in weekly worship and programming.

Pastor Steve Zwart, Church Counselor

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## **F. Regional Pastors reports**

### **Regional Pastor report for Sept. 18-19, 2023 Classis Lake Superior**

For those of you who are new delegates, Classis Lake Superior has two Regional Pastors, one for the Canadian pastors, Evert Busink, and one for the US Pastors, Henry Gunnink. Last March Evert and I submitted a combined report that gave a more generic over view of the role and job description of the regional pastor. This time I'll note again more my personal activity.

For this report, I have recorded at least 22 engagements with active and retired pastors and spouses, some email, some phone, some face to face, some group settings. This adds up to 6-7 hours of active time.

In the past couple years with social distancing in place, there was less face to face or couple with couple opportunities. Further, weather and health hindered some of my plans to come out to Central Minnesota this spring, including being able to attend Joel De Boer's installation service in Bunde, but we eventually made a 2-day trip to see pastors there this summer. I am again, along with my wife, Judy, trying more often to arrange meetings with pastor couples. That gives a broader range of topics to touch upon and acknowledges and supports the spouse as the often unseen or underappreciated partner in ministry.

I've had opportunity and been privileged to hear about transitions both professionally and personally. These things need a listening ear, sometimes as part of processing and sorting out what's happening and discerning what's best, what God may be doing in their lives and the impact it might have. Sometimes I hear of grief, of disappointments, sometimes of wonderful provisions, of protection and disaster averted, of hope and expectations for ministry and the church. There's a broad spectrum of life and experience present among our pastors that can be shared together.

I'm humbled to be able to walk alongside and be available for support and encouragement as needed. I appreciate pastors being willing to receive me/us and spend some time being vulnerable about themselves, their families, ministries and

churches. I pray that the Lord will bless that abundantly as together we seek to watch over and faithfully shepherd those entrusted to our care.

Respectfully submitted,  
Henry Gunnink, CLS, RP--US

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## CLASSIS IS...

### III. 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.*

## Finance Committee Classis Lake Superior August 7, 2023

1. CIC Charman Rev. Brian Bolkema called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at Faith CRC and opened with prayer. Those attending in addition to Brian were Rev. Henry Gunnink, Rev. Harrison Newhouse, Carol Veldman Rudie, Jim Lipscomb, Kristi Santema, Hendrik Stel and Tim Hubers. Rev. Margaret Rekman was not able to attend. Brian welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to Kristi as Classical Treasurer.
2. There was discussion about the appropriate mileage reimbursement. Some members thought there should be more ride sharing for meetings whenever possible or maybe use car rentals, although car rentals have been very expensive recently. With gas prices increasing the last several months, motion was made, seconded and approved that we continue the current reimbursement of 60 cents per mile or kilometer. This will be reviewed again next year.
3. Kristi reviewed receipts for Classical Ministry Shares and only 32% have been collected YTD. This excludes prior year surpluses. Tim will draft a letter for Kristi to send to churches asking them to submit their half year Ministry Share payments soon and consider making quarterly payments if possible.

4. Classical member headcount was discussed. Motion was made, seconded and approved to use 2,800 members for calculation of 2024 Classical Ministry Shares. This is the same headcount used for 2023.
5. The cash balance of all funds as of December 31, 2023 totaled \$574,821.57, which includes some prior year surpluses.
6. Classical expenses were reviewed from prior years. It was noted that Classis Contracta meeting expenses should be broken out separately from regular scheduled meetings in the spring and fall. Motion was made, seconded and approved for Classical expense fund of \$16 per member. This includes \$5 for the fall of 2023 meeting and \$11 for spring and fall of 2024.
7. Motion was made, seconded and approved that support for Dordt University be recommended for Classis Lake Superior churches in the requested amount of \$69.20 per member for 2024.
8. Kristi then took the committee members through the financial statements of each ministry that was requesting funds for 2024. The committee looked at submitted financial statements, cash on hand, specific needs of the Ministries and the financial request for 2024. Total requests for 2024 were \$137,800 compared to \$106,800 for 2023 or 29% more, a sizable increase. All requests were approved by the committee with the exception of The Broken Church. New financial information for The Broken was received shortly before the meeting. This new information showed estimated net income for 2023 approximately \$29,000 more than previously thought. This new information also showed a cash balance on hand at the end of 2022 of \$46,000. Hendrik is going to discuss this new information with The Broken to make sure that the committee is understanding everything correctly and report back to the committee. Given the information we had at the meeting, the requested funding was reduced from \$34,800 to \$20,000. Based on Hendrik's discussions with The Broken, this request can be adjusted at the September Classis meeting. Motion was made, seconded and approved to set the 2024 Classical Ministry Shares as follows:

The Gathering Place	\$25,000	\$8.93	per member
Hope Centre	25,000	8.93	
Seminary Scholarship	10,000	3.58	
Prayer Mobilization, Canada	2,000	.71	
New Life Church	20,000	7.14	
The Broken Church	20,000	7.14	Subject to confirmation of new info
Youth Champion	19,000	6.79	
<u>Ministry Partnership</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>.71</u>	
Total	\$123,000	\$43.93	

9. Tim's term is up at the end of this year. Henry will contact 3 people in specified order and they will be asked to join the Finance Committee next year. Jim closed in prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hubers

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## B. Home Missions Committees

### 1. Classis Home Missions Committee – US

David Zigterman - Chair

#### 1.1 Report to Classis, September 18-19, 2023

#### CHMC report to fall classis, 2023

July 27, 2023

Members: David Zigterman (2nd) 20-23; Dan DeGraff (1st) 22-25; Travis Berry Lay (1st) 22-25; David Huizenga (1st) 22-25; Mark Brouwer Alt (1st) 22-25; Lowell Schwitters Lay (1st) 22-25

Classical Home Mission Committee US (CHMC-US) has met 3 times since the spring Classis meeting.

#### In May

We began the budget request proposal for the fall classical meeting. During that meeting we discussed the Church Planting Fund, which is nearly depleted. We also heard updates from Travis Deur, our classical Youth Champion.

#### In June

CHMC-US joined a CHMC-Can meeting to discuss the Church Planting Fund and Church Revitalization Fund as well as learn more about The Amber Church. As a result of that meeting, CHMC-US supports the two motions made by CHMC-Can:

- that classis move \$40,000 from the Church Revitalization Fund to the Church Planting Fund.
- that classis financially support Amber Church in Winnipeg through the Church Planting Fund with a commitment of \$60,000 over three years at a rate of \$20,000 per year.

We rejoice in the work God is doing through The Amber Church and pray for God's wisdom for Covenant CRC as it takes on the responsibility to support this emerging congregation as a parent church.

Also, with the CHMC-Can we have revised and updated that Church Revitalization Grant Application. We encourage churches to consider this fund for future renewal projects.

#### In July

CHMC-US met again to finalize budget requests for the various ministries we oversee. Our requests are as follows:

- New Life SEA budget request for 2024 \$20,000

- Update on New Life SEA: Earlier this year, New Life SEA experienced the departure of some leaders and members. Please pray for Pastor Phonh Sinbondit as he navigates this challenge. Also, please pray for God to provide a new leader who may faithfully shepherd the church into the future.
- The Broken budget request for 2024 \$34,800
- Update on The Broken: God is using this ministry to reach young and old, those recovering from addiction and those who probably would never feel comfortable attending a traditional CRC service. Please pray for Pastor Chris and his leadership team as they proclaim the gospel to the broken.
- Youth Champion budget request for 2024 \$19,000
- Travis Deur is our classical Youth Champion position. He reports to CHMC. Travis helps resource youth ministries by building connections between various youth leaders. If you have any questions regarding youth ministry, we strongly encourage you to reach out to Travis.
- Leadership Development and US Prayer Mobilizer \$0
- In our July meeting, David Huizinga presented his idea for a Revitalization Cohort. The committee will review this on August 17 and we hope to present it at classis. We plan to use the existing funds in Leadership Development for these revitalization cohorts.

In addition to these highlights, we have also been seeking God’s guidance with regard to future church plant opportunities.

Also, CHMC-US requests that David Zigterman be allowed to serve another 3 year term on this committee.

Submitted on behalf of the CHMC-US,  
David Zigterman, Chair

## 1.2 Home Missionary/Church Planters

### The Broken

- Chris Alle

Classis,

7/28/2023

Greetings, brothers, and sisters in Christ. It is already that time of year again. I hope this letter finds you in good health and cheer. I am writing to give a brief update on The Broken.

This past year has been a growing year for us. We have grown spiritually as well as numerically. However, our excitement is with the spiritual growth of our church. I started to teach a class on teaching and preaching every other Thursday, and we have 12 men currently a part of it. I picked these men and asked them to be a part of this. They have either preached from the pulpit already, not necessarily at The Broken, or they teach a class that we offer at The Broken or teach at the church they attend in the morning. Building leaders has been a calling of our church, and it has come to pass now with the seeds that were sowed a few years ago.

Speaking of leadership. I want to offer my apologies for not getting our budget done on time. I take full accountability for our tardiness with it. We have been juggling our leadership to get the right people in the right places, and I believe we have done that. That is why we were having some trouble in the first place getting a budget together. That is not at all in my wheelhouse. We have much more qualified individuals who have stepped to the plate to ensure this doesn't happen again.

We have recently switched to using the NASB 95' translation at our church instead of the ESV. We take much pride in the Word of God and want to represent it as faithfully as possible. The NASB & the KJV are the most accurate translations, so we chose the NASB 95'. Which has gone over well after answering a few questions and worries. With that, we have also grown our Bible study to the point that we can no longer fit in one of the rooms that we have been having it in. One of the men that attends our Thursday night classes has been teaching that Bible study.

We are still very blessed to be at The Rock of Life. They have been, and continue to be, very welcoming and patient with us. We have many children at our services, and they can get messy sometimes. However, we have never been scolded by anyone or yelled at, so we are ok, I think. We are very grateful that they continue to partner with us. Also, we are grateful to you for being patient as we navigate our leadership while we continue to grow. Thank you for your time and blessings. Peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Chris Alle

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**1.3 New Life SEA (South East Asian) at Faith, New Brighton, - Phonh Sinbondit**

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**1.5 Youth Champion's Report**

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**Travis Deur**

August 2023

Summer is a fun season for youth ministry and I've enjoyed chatting with church leaders about their service events and seeing all the photos and videos online.

Our church's participation in SERVE as a travelling team reminded me of the significance of these events in one significant way...time. If a youth group meets for two hours weekly, year-round, with no breaks for summer or holidays they'll spend about 100 hours together during "regular" connections. In the course of a Saturday-to-Saturday trip in July, our crew spent 135 waking hours together over the course of eight days. Several of our students then participated in Twin Cities SERVE as members of our host team logging more than 100 hours in service to our visiting teams. I know many of our churches are participating in events like these at home and by travelling to other places. Don't underestimate the power of spending big segments of time with your youth! Connections

like these strengthen relationships and provide good momentum for the months ahead. Serving and worshipping together in big doses are particularly formative. Our local SERVE event has also been a great collaboration between two churches and two youth groups, something I would like to continue to encourage in regional pockets throughout our classis. Mutual support and shared participation between churches means more opportunities and a bigger vision for our church members and students. Many share that meeting more likeminded teens outside of their regular groups and home churches helps encourage them in their faith. The voices of other adults who participate in these events is also influential. My son currently ranks me third among classis youth leaders and I'm thrilled he's had the opportunity to make these connections with multiple churches. As the new school ministry season begins, I continue to work with Generation Spark, the network of Youth Ministry Champions, and am always happy to provide resources and talk ministry with the churches in Classis Lake Superior. Through one recent conversation it was evident that expanding our [list of youth ministry contacts](#) to include Cadet, GEMS, and Sunday School leaders would be of value to our churches' leaders. Please update that list and use it as a resource for your church. Continue to reach out with questions about resources for your church's programs and to share your wins and best ideas! This crowdsourcing of best practices is helpful for others as they consider how to best serve the youth of their churches in their local context.

Travis Deur, Youth Ministries Champion  
 Classis Lake Superior  
 612-381-7705 / tdeur7@gmail.com

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### 1.6 Prayer Coordinators

#### US Central Coordinator

Lowell Schwitters, US Prayer Coordinator, Central Region	No report
Rob Braun, East Region	

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## C. Classis Home Missions Committee – Canada

### 1. Report to Classis Lake Superior Fall Meeting, September 18-19, 2023

With the support of CHMC-US, CHMC-CA motions that classis move \$40,000 from the Church Revitalization Fund to the Church Planting Fund.

With the support of CHMC-US, CHMC-CA motions that classis financially support Amber Church in Winnipeg through the Church Planting Fund



with a commitment of \$60,000 over three years at a rate of \$20,000 per year.

CHMC-CA has approved, and thus motions that Classis approve the Church Revitalization Grant application received from Covenant CRC's Garden of Hope Project for \$5,000.

CHMC-CA has approved and thus motions that classis approve the funding requests from Prayer Mobilizers Canada (\$2000), from The Gathering Place (\$25,000), and from Hope Centre Ministries (\$25,000) as written

on behalf of the CHMC - Canada,  
Rev. Ben Verkerk – Chair

### **CRCNA Church Revitalization Grant and Loan Fund Application**

**Project Title:** Garden of Hope  
**Submitted by:** Covenant Christian Reformed Church  
653 Knowles Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
R2G 2K3

#### **Application Questions**

##### **1. Describe your project and how this will help your church revitalize?**

Over 17% of Manitobans are food insecure, meaning they have inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints (Tarasuk et al., 2022). In recent years, inflation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in steadily increasing prices at grocery stores. In 2022, Manitoba food prices rose 8.9% compared to 1.8% in 2021 (Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, 2023). As a result, many Manitobans have had to resort to charitable food to feed their families. Food bank usage in 2022 at Harvest Manitoba, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest food distributor of its kind in Canada, has doubled since 2019 (Harvest Manitoba, 2022).

Roland Reenders, a member of the Garden of Hope Committee who also operates a U-pick vegetable farm, has been approached in recent years for food donations by the following not-for-profit organizations: Harvest Manitoba, Riverton & District Friendship Centre, Riverwood Food Bank and Finding Freedom Inc. Unfortunately, he has often run out of produce to donate. The purpose of the Garden of Hope is to utilize the vacant land behind Covenant CRC to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables that can be donated to not-for-profit organizations, such as those listed above, who are dedicated to feeding

hungry Manitobans. As such, Covenant CRC would play a vital role in helping to alleviate food insecurity within our community.

A half-acre garden plot will be established in the vacant land to the north of Covenant Christian Reformed Church's parking lot (see picture below). A shelter belt will be established to the north of the garden to protect the garden from strong winds coming from the hydro corridor. Apple trees and different fruit bearing shrubs will be planted south of the shelter belt, and vegetable rows south of the fruit bearing trees and shrubs. An outdoor shelter and picnic tables will provide seating and shade to those working in the garden, and will also provide an area for fellowship.

Much of the work to establish the Garden of Hope will be done by the Garden of Hope Committee members. Most of the members are experienced farmers and have both equipment and labour to donate to the project. Some activities (see #2) will be contracted out.

The hope is that not-for-profit organizations will come to the Garden of Hope to pick their own produce. This would foster relationship between these organizations and the church, reduce the amount of labour required from busy committee members also working on their own farms, and provide educational opportunities in fruit and vegetable production. This would also lead to opportunities to share the love of Jesus! Networking with not-for-profit organizations will take place in 2024.



## 2. Provide a timeline for your project

List of Activities	2022	2023	2024	Responsibility
1. Conduct drainage and soil composition analyses				Garden of Hope Committee

2. Till soil				Garden of Hope Committee
3. Drill well				Contractor
4. Purchase and install garden shed				Garden of Hope Committee
5. Prepare soil and plant pumpkin/squash for church use				Garden of Hope Committee
6. Hook up well and hydro				Contractor
7. Purchase and install irrigation equipment				Garden of Hope Committee
8. Establish windbreak with deciduous and coniferous trees				Contractor
9. Purchase and plant fruit bearing trees and shrubs				Garden of Hope Committee
10. Purchase and install deer/rabbit proof fence				Garden of Hope Committee
11. Build outdoor shelter				Church member
12. Plant the full garden and maintain for the growing season				Garden of Hope Committee/church members and staff
13. Harvest produce and donate 100% to not-for-profit organizations				Garden of Hope Committee/not-for-profit organizations
14. Presentation to congregation about Garden of Hope				Garden of Hope Committee

**3. How do you envision your church in two years and how would receiving the grant affect that vision?**

We hope to be a lifeline for local people who do not have access to an affordable supply of fruits and vegetables that would support healthy eating habits and lifestyles. Additionally, the Garden of Hope is a more stewardly use of our property and acts as a clear and tangible way in which the church is serving the world, for those who pass by. Its simple existence is like a billboard communicating the work that is being done in the name of Jesus.

**4. How do you envision your church in five years and how would receiving the grant affect that vision?**

As we consider other aspects of our facility and property to increase our creation stewardship, the garden will remain as an anchor and beacon of what is possible. This project has been a significant amount of work to date and its continued success is contingent upon funds received from this grant. Receiving this grant would not only contribute to the successful completion of this project, but would also demonstrate the

incredible things that are possible when we work together as the body of Christ to care for our neighbor.

**5. How much money are you requesting?**

We are requesting \$5,000 to help fund the following budget line items:

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Well hookup	\$4200
Hydro hookup	\$1500
Plant material (10 apple trees; 20 fruit bearing shrubs)	\$1700
Deer/rabbit proof fence	\$2500
Outdoor shelter	\$3500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13400</b>

**6. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your plan?**

We will evaluate the effectiveness of our project through the following outcomes:

1. Garden of Hope fully established by the beginning of the 2024 growing season
2. Increased connection to community, i.e., awareness by church members of food insecurity in our community and of organizations working to feed hungry Manitobans
3. 100% of fruits and vegetables grown in 2024 are donated to not-for-profit organizations

**7. Who will report to CHMC when this project is complete?**

The Garden of Hope Committee consists of the following church members: Roland Reenders, Rodney Harris, Casey Siepman, Jeffrey Veenstra, Joanna Wassenaar and Rev. Ben Verkerk.

Joanna Wassenaar will be the point of contact for this project.

E-mail: [jomogils@hotmail.com](mailto:jomogils@hotmail.com); Phone: 1-204-990-3376

**References**

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## 2. The Gathering Place

---Yvonne Schenk,  
schenkyvonne1@gmail.com



**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 (formerly The Thunder Bay Christian Community Centre) 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 have been very blessed!

### **Our Programs:**

#### **1. Nourishment for the body:**

- a. **Open Hands:** At the end of June, we have handed out 1288 food hampers. We continue to connect with people as they come through for food. We make sure we learn their names, hear their stories, and offer our support and our prayers whenever possible. This autumn, we are hoping to offer coffee/tea again while people are coming for food. This is possible because we have been blessed with great volunteers – volunteers who are willing and able to connect with those coming through our doors. And that’s not always easy. This spring, during Open Hands, we heard gunfire from across the road and witnessed a gunman running. We immediately locked down and waited for the police to take care of things. All of our volunteers were willing to come back the next time we offered food –

even though that would have been a pretty good excuse to quit. We cannot say enough just how grateful we are for our wonderful volunteers.

- b. Clothing:** Every second week, we have our Clothing Depot open for people to get clothing or small household items at no cost. Again, we take the time to learn names and chat with everyone who comes through. We have a steady stream of donations coming in from the community as well as the churches – especially as word gets around that we do not charge anyone for the clothing or household items.
- c. Drop-In:** Since September, we have been offering Drop-In once a week. We offer hot dogs, coffee/tea, soft drinks and water. We have board games out for people to play. And we have a craft set up for people to do. This has become a beloved time here. Lots of laughter and chatting. Lots of friendships growing. Pastor Rob Hoekstra was a wonderful part of this group. His ability to connect with people was such a blessing. He will be dearly missed. During July and August, our drop-in will be moving outside. The city planted a beautiful oak tree in front of our building which we will appreciate for its shade (eventually) and we will offer cold drinks and freezies to people as they walk down the sidewalk. This also gives us opportunity to connect and listen to people in our community.
- d. Women's group:** We are still trying to figure out how to engage a group of women here at The Gathering Place. Sonya has continued to offer Bible study to two women who are adamant that they want to continue doing just that, so she will. We are also planning to try something new in September but we're not yet sure of what that will be.

## **2. Nourishment for the soul:**

- a. Community Connection:** We are so happy to report that our building is being used by community groups. NA and AA are meeting here weekly. Our local public Health Unit "borrowed" our building for a medical testing event. After the shooting incident, we have hosted two prayer walks for this community and our churches have been supportive in coming out to those walks with us. The spiritual battle lines have been drawn – we are standing firm and fighting back against the addictions and violence of this neighbourhood.
- b. Church Connection:** Our church connections are great. Each of the three Thunder Bay CRCs have three members on our board of directors. We are always blessed with the work of the summer interns from First CRC each summer. And this year we will be welcoming SERVE participants to work here with us as well. As staff, we have participated in and facilitated Hearts Exchanged – a growing journey to equip Reformed Christians to engage with Indigenous people as neighbours and fellow image-bearers. This year, our Thunder Bay cohort from two years ago got together to offer some suggestions to celebrate Indigenous Sunday in June. This was a fun collaboration with the worship committees of each of the 3 CRCs and a great witness to what we've learned and how God has shaped us and changed us.

**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 in order

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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### 3. HOPE CENTRE

hopecentreministries.org 204-479-4893  
Shellie Power



Shellie's report will be in visual form to be viewed at Classis meeting.

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### 4. Canadian Prayer Mobilizers – September 18-19, 2023 - Sonya Cahais

Report of Canadian Prayer Mobilizers - August 4, 2023 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
- Thunder Bay First ~ Harry Prenger

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.
- As Prayer Coordinators we were blessed to attend Dunamis Project #6 (DP6) on Listening Evangelism. (See a few pictures following the report)
- In Thunder Bay the Embers to Flames bible study which encourages prayer was held from January to the end of March with all 3 CRC's invited to attend. A total of 11 attended either in person or online. Brandon and Winnipeg Prayer Coordinators went through the Bible Study on their own. One of the participants shared: "I think the teachings are invaluable and yes this should be offered again and again at our church with encouragement for young parents to come also. Learn to pray for your children. What you learn is great and much needed."

#### Looking Ahead:

- With all the 6 Dunamis Projects completed we as Prayer Coordinators hope to meet in person in Emo next Fall to pray, encourage and learn together at our Annual Face to Face meeting
- Also, some of those who participated in the Dunamis Projects are hoping to attend the Intermediate Course on Healing & Deliverance this November.

#### Prayer and Praise:

Please join us in praying:

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

Submitted with praise and thanksgiving to God for this opportunity serve,  
 Sonya Cahais, Prayer Mobilizer Classis Lake Superior - Canada  
 DP6 early morning prayer participants:





Prayer Coordinators who attended the DP6:



Submitted with praise and thanksgiving to God for this opportunity serve,  
 Sonya Cahais, Prayer Mobilizer Classis Lake Superior - Canada

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**D. CMLT--Classical Ministerial Leadership Team -- Dan De Graff--chair**

**CMLT Report--Fall 2023 Classis Meeting**

Greetings Classis Lake Superior,

Since becoming chair of the CMLT, one of my goals was to bring us into the 2020s by digitizing beneficial historical material and creating a Google Drive folder for the committee to easily access all necessary materials. That has been completed! The folder contains agendas, minutes, reports, “crowdsourcing” practices from CMLTs in neighboring classes, etc. It also gives a single location for committee members to access denominational materials, including the “Journey to

Ordination,” “Road[s] to Candidacy,” “EPMC Handbook,” and “Commissioned Pastor Handbook” documents. One encouraging part of the process was seeing the legacy of ordained ministers that have come through Classis Lake Superior/Minnesota North over the last 35 years. 17 ministers who have been or continue to be ordained in the CRC have had a connection with this committee, and there are a few more who entered non-CRC ministry roles.

Regarding our current students:

Garrett Hovland has decided to discontinue the candidacy process as he does not feel called to vocational ordained ministry at this time. Our formal relationship with him is discontinued.

We are grateful to have received two new applications for financial aid.

First, from Commissioned Pastor Travis Deur, for whom we **recommend \$6450.00 for tuition expenses as he begins Calvin Theological Seminary’s distance-program**. \$2150.00 will be for the 2023 fall semester and \$4300 for 2024 spring and fall semesters will be in the 2024 budget. He is planning on a three and a half to four-year route to being ordained.

Second, from Travis Berry, for whom we **recommend \$8250.00 for tuition and book expenses as he begins Knox Theological Seminary’s online-program**. \$7500.00 is for tuition and up to \$750.00 is for books. He begins in January on a five-year route to ordination, and Knox operates on a trimester schedule.

We also reviewed an additional request to provide funding for two seminary courses for an individual and did not approve that for recommendation.

We want to continue to faithfully aid and support the preparation, equipping, and shaping of ministers, especially given the great need in our denomination seen in congregational vacancies. Our committee has proposed a variety of changes to the Classis’ Rules of Procedure and our Scholarship application to better fit current practices in the denomination and serve our students.

Our committee is watching a couple other regional members for future consideration. Prior to receiving applications, we did reach out to CTS’ Financial Aid office about potentially supporting students from nearby classes. That message was received, but no leads were passed along. Continue to be in prayer for those who are attending seminary as well as discerning God’s call in their life. We pray that he will continue to raise up laborers for the harvest!

Rev. Dan De Graff, on behalf of the Classis Lake Superior CMLT

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## E. SAFE CHURCH TEAM

**No acting team, report.**

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## CLASSIS IS...

### **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.*

## A. CHAPLAINCY REPORTS

### 1. Mayo Hospice Chaplaincy

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**Dan Crapo**

Classis Lake Superior

8/8/2023

Chaplain Dan Crapo

Service: Mayo Clinic Hospice

### Ministry Report

Greetings classical members! Please accept this annual report of clinical ministry service. By the time the September 2023 Classis meets I will have completed five years as Chaplain with service at Mayo Clinic Hospice. I recognize God's faithfulness and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit's empowerment to continue service to patients and their families during Hospice Care. It is truly a privilege to serve. Please find a handful of the joys and challenges of the work over the past year.

**Joys** – One of the joys of hospice work is listening. It is a usual occurrence to be listening to a patient talk about their life and spiritual journey with family present and a family member chimes in "I didn't know that." Another joy is to take time to recognize the spiritual significance of a person's life well lived. It is also special joy to listen to confessions and witness a person realize God's forgiveness. This past year has seen an uptick of praying for patients during their last breath in this present life. Also, this past year saw an uptick in the numbered married couples who are both Hospice patients at the same time.

**Challenges**- The main challenge I've experience for Hospice ministry is remote work. It occurs to me that many of the adaptations of the pandemic have been made permanent. The challenge here is the loss of in-person coworkers and more personal contact. Another challenge has been sustaining a dog bite. The incident occurred by a patient's pet dog while visiting a patient's

home. While the immediate effects of the dog bit have subsided, the lingering effects persist. I have received mental health support but found it challenging to get mental health care, some five weeks passed before seeing a therapist. The stigma here has also been real.

I appreciate your continue prayer support and encouragement. May God be with you and may you know His love today.

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**2. Elim Village, Surrey BC -- Gerald VanSmeerdyk**

**B. CLASSICAL DELEGATES**

**1. Board of Trustees: Calvin University ----- , Region 1 rep.**

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**2. Board of Trustees: Calvin University ----- , Region 8 rep.**

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**3. Board of Trustees: Calvin Seminary -- Robert Drenten**

**Calvin Theological Seminary Highlights  
Fall 2023 Classis Report  
Rev. Bob Drenten – Region 8 Trustee  
(Classes: Central Plains, Heartland, Iakota, Lake Superior, Minnkota,  
Northcentral Iowa)**

**Faculty**

CTS welcomes two instructors to its faculty this Fall.

- Dr. Gabriela Tijerina-Pike will serve as Director of Latino Ministries and Associate Professor of New Testament. Her scholarship and ministry leadership experience in the United States, Mexico, and Central America will be an asset to CTS.
- Dr. Daniel Daley will join the faculty as Assistant Professor of New Testament. He earned his Ph.D. at Trinity College Dublin. He has served in ministry in Edinburgh, Dublin, and Reno, NV. CTS is grateful to welcome him to the faculty.

The Board reappointed Dr. Matt Tuininga as Associate Professor of Christian Ethics and History of Christianity, with tenure. CTS gratefully congratulates Dr. Tuininga on this milestone.

**Program Updates**

- CTS launches a new M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program this fall. Graduates will be equipped to offer mental health care within a rich theological and pastoral framework. There is great need for and interest in this new program.
- CTS continues to develop its Competency Based Theological Education Program. At Grand Valley State University’s Campus Ministry Program (Michigan) and at Sunlight Community Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida, students are mentored in ministry, drawing upon resources from CTS. CTS is exploring additional partnerships in this program.

**Students**

- CTS anticipated an increase in enrollment this year, including gains in the M.Div. program.
- In May 2023, CTS granted 8 certificate-level degrees, 30 master-level degrees, and one Ph.D. degree. This included 11 Master of Divinity degrees.

**Facilities**

- CTS is constructing new housing for international students at 3300 Burton Ave SE. This will provide better proximity to campus and higher quality residential space. The current international student housing property in SE Grand Rapids has been sold.
- Remodeling at CTS has been completed. Class space is now easily adapted to a blend of in-person and virtual student participation. Workspace for faculty, staff, and students received a needed, significant upgrade. We are blessed with a great campus!

**Funding**

- Revenue from donor giving remains strong. CTS is grateful for this vital support.
- Revenue from CRCNA ministry shares continues to decrease, a trend that we’re told we should expect to continue.

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**Calvin Theological Seminary** --  
**Pastor Shawn Brix**, Canadian Church Relations Liaison  
 Calvin Theological Seminary  
[srb08@calvinseminary.edu](mailto:srb08@calvinseminary.edu)  
 705-875-3566

**Pastor Shawn Brix**

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## 4. Resonate Global Missions -- Fall 2023, Central Region Classes Report



**Resonate**  
GLOBAL MISSION

### What can Resonate do for your church?

Resonate has six regional teams throughout the US and Canada with Local Mission Leaders embedded in ministry work in each region. Resonate can support your church through:

- Congregational coaching for pastors, ministry leaders, etc.
- Connecting you with missionaries overseas
- Connecting you with church planters in your own back yard
- Providing opportunities to volunteer around the world
- Engaging younger generations in the church and mission
- Living out the gospel in your own community

### Resonate is focused on 3 areas of ministry



Mobilizing Your Congregation    Sending Missionaries    Church Planting

### The Future is Bright—a Message from Our New Director

Visit [www.resonateglobalmission.org/newdirector](http://www.resonateglobalmission.org/newdirector) for a special video message from Kevin DeRaaf, and find out why the future is bright!



Less than one third of Resonate's revenue comes from ministry shares—gifts, offerings, and support from your classis and your church are vital to continuing this work!

**Thank You!**

 A Ministry of the Christian Reformed Church

*Engaging People. Embracing Christ.*

*Connect with the Central US Team!*

Please reach out to any member of the Central US Regional team and let us know how we can serve you!

Brad Meinders Resonate Regional Mission Leader bmeinders@crcna.org	David Katsma Resonate Local Mission Leader dkatsma@crcna.org	Mike Moore Resonate Local Mission Leader mmoore@crcna.org
Jeff Heerspink Resonate Local Mission Leader jheerspink@crcna.org	Mark LaChonce Resonate Local Mission Leader mlachonce@crcna.org	Elaine Lee Central US Representative Global Coffee Break/Local Mission Leader elee@crcna.org
Marianne Giebel Administrative Specialist mgiebel@crcna.org		

*Connect with the Central US Team!*

Please reach out to any member of the Central US Regional team and let us know how we can serve you!



We want to hear from you! What's happening in your church, ministry, and Classis? Is there a story or upcoming event you would like to share?

We would LOVE to include stories and events from around our region in upcoming newsletters. Please reach out to Brad Meinders ([bmeinders@crcna.org](mailto:bmeinders@crcna.org)) or Marianne Giebel ([mgiebel@crcna.org](mailto:mgiebel@crcna.org)). Thank you!

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## 5. World Renew -- Fall 2022 Classis Update -- Canadian and US report



### Classis Report - Fall 2023

Climate and Conflict affect our work! July saw the hottest days recorded globally, and it followed the hottest June ever recorded. UN experts predict further temperature records to be broken over the course of the year. This severe weather will likely lead to increased displacement and needs around the world – including more weather-related disasters in the United States. The work of World Renew is essential! Despite these challenges, we continue to have hope and make a profound impact as we work with partners to respond. Thank you for your continued support!!

#### UKRAINE



World Renew has been continuing to support the work of partners by providing emergency relief to the numerous displaced people in Ukraine and the surrounding countries. This includes shelter reconstruction, emergency food and medical relief, cash transfers, and winterization support. Two staff members visited Ukraine this summer.

Thanks to our amazing constituents World Renew has been able to raise nearly \$3.4 million which has already reached over 585,000 participants in response to the crisis in Ukraine. Over 8,000 participants received cash transfers across multiple projects to promote the local economy amidst the conflict through purchasing from local vendors.

With the destruction of hundreds of thousands of homes across Ukraine, many people require rebuilt or repaired homes. World Renew is collaborating with partners, Integra and ZOA, to provide the most vulnerable households with access to safe housing. This includes winterizing homes, repairing 390 homes, and protecting 1,000 returnees from the destruction of homes and city infrastructures of Chernihiv Oblast with safe emergency shelter interventions helping to reduce the risk of disease and death.



**Prayer Request:** Russia has recently back out of the Black Sea Grain Deal, a deal that the UN and Türkiye approved allowing safe passage of food transportation to be exported from Ukraine. Many more will go hungry, and prices of food will rise. Please pray for guidance and grace for the leaders involved in the Black Sea Grain Deal.



## BANGLADESH

Through our partner SATHI, we are responding to the needs of 175 households affected by Cyclone Mocha with shelter and latrine reconstruction. We are in the third year of a food security program that addresses the needs of 9,331 host community members who have been affected by the influx of Rohingya refugees. We are in the process of extending this project and starting another food security and livelihoods project with partner Faith in Action.

## SYRIA



Despite the long-term presence and response, the needs of Syrians have only grown – with the recent earthquake and economic crisis only further magnifying the conflict-related needs. Through local church partners we continue to address the needs of displaced people, providing food, hygiene, and winterization support to over 43,200 highly vulnerable, crisis-affected individuals. The partners reported, “Their voices overflowed with gratitude for the support they received.” With the incredible generosity of World Renew’s supporters, we have

been able to commit over \$1.5 million USD to the response.

## WEST AFRICA

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has voted to conclude its peacekeeping mission in **Mali** following a request from the military government to withdraw the troops. Despite the political and diplomatic tension between the current military transitional authorities and the UNSC, the Malian government and humanitarian organizations are urging for heightened international support to address the escalating crisis.

**Prayer Request:** We are closely monitoring and praying for the instability and recent coup in **Niger**. All staff are safe. We pray for peaceful resolution that is best for the people of Niger.

## NORTH AMERICA: Disaster Response

Over the summer DRS has worked on Needs Assessments in multiple Florida counties and hosted groups in Florida, Kentucky, West Virginia, Detroit, Michigan, and North Carolina. Fall Volunteer Opportunities: Managed Reconstruction Sites: Contact Diana, 616-224-0701.

- Whatcom County, Washington, Boutte, Louisiana, Sarasota, FL

Group Trips: Contact Chris at [cgibson@worldrenew.net](mailto:cgibson@worldrenew.net).

- Southwest Florida & Daytona, Florida, Rolling Fork, Mississippi, Detroit, Michigan, Madisonville, Kentucky, Paradise, California, New Bern, North Carolina, Whatcom County, Washington

**Refugee Sponsorship and Resettlement Program (RSRP) reports** summer 2023 saw 42 refugees sponsored; 63 refugees who have arrived. The RSRP team is currently working with 69 CRCs and 52 churches from other denominations (waiting for refugees to arrive, currently resettling newcomers, currently working on refugee sponsorship applications to be submitted in 2023; these activities may extend over several years); 375 refugees who have applications submitted with the RSRP and who are waiting to arrive.

**Global Engagement Learning Opportunities**

Join a Look, Listen and Learn Trip: [globalvolunteers@worldrenew.net](mailto:globalvolunteers@worldrenew.net)  
October 28 – November 6 – Malawi and Zambia – Look, Listen and Learn  
April 22-27 – Lebanon. – Look, Listen and Learn  
November 2024 – Cambodia – Look, Listen and Learn  
July 2024 – Guatemala “Equipped to Educate” Educators Learning Tour

**Fall Offerings:** November 5 – World Hunger Sunday

For general information contact - Iona Buisman ([ibuisman@worldrenew.ca](mailto:ibuisman@worldrenew.ca))  
Church and Community Engagement Canada

Jodi Koeman, Church and Community Engagement United States  
[Jkoeman@worldrenew.net](mailto:Jkoeman@worldrenew.net); c. 774-545-6707

**6. COD (Council of Delegates)** -----, US

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**7. Canadian Ministries Director -- Rev. Al Postma**



Rev. Albert Postma  
Transitional Executive Director (Canada)

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**CANADIAN NATIONAL GATHERING**

Held May 25- 28, 2023 at Algonquin College in Ottawa, ON,

five representatives went from Classis Lake Superior:

Shannon Perez, Mark Verwees, Fred Rekman, Paul Unger, Paulette Kelly.

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## 8. Diaconal Ministries Canada

ron vandenbrink

National Director, Diaconal Ministries Canada



*Relying on the Holy Spirit, Diaconal Ministries Canada exists to Inspire, Empower and Equip Deacons, as they animate congregations to join in God's transforming work in communities across Canada.*

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August, 2023

### Fall Classis Report

*Greetings to our partners in ministry!*

#### **Who is Diaconal Ministries Canada?**

Believe it or not, **our roots** go back to the 1950s! From the Maritimes to British Columbia, deacons formed local and regional “conferences” and 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, the number of Diaconal Conferences expanded and contracted as new ones formed, some merged and others folded.

Then in 1998, at a Classis Renewal Gathering in Chicago, Canadian folks representing the various Diaconal Conferences, along with representatives from Home Missions (now Resonate Global Mission)

and CRWRC, met over lunch and 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. Soon the napkins on that table (the only paper they had available) were filled with circles, triangles, and arrows pointing from east to west and north to south.

It was an exciting time and, after a few more years of discussions (and maybe some more napkin drawings), the boards of the existing Conferences jointly approved the formation of a new organization and **in 2001, Diaconal Ministries Canada was officially constituted!** Diaconal Ministries adopted the ministry share model that was part of an agreement that Canadian deacons made with each other 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:

<https://diaconalministries.com/how-were-funded/>).

### ***What do we do?***

It is our sincere hope and desire that your church has been impacted by the work that we do to equip and encourage deacons in the areas of [community engagement](#), service & [justice](#), [benevolence](#), and [stewardship](#). Our staff includes two Regional Ministry Developers (one in Western Canada, one in Eastern) which oversee our team of Diaconal Coaches, approximately one per classis.



### ***A few highlights from this past year...***

**Our online Stewardship Course** has launched on the [CRCNA Learning Portal](#).

Deacons have been asking for ways they can help their churches live more stewardly - so here it is! Modules cover the four “T’s” of Stewardship: time, talents, treasures, and trees (God’s creation) and offer a variety of practical tools and tips to implement their learning.



**A new workshop called "Everyday Justice"** will soon be offered on the CRCNA learning portal as a self-directed study for churches and deacons. This workshop can be facilitated in-person or online for deacon teams and groups. Contact our Justice Mobilizer, Cindy Stover, at [cstover@crcna.org](mailto:cstover@crcna.org) or Regional Ministry Developer, Rachel Vroege, at [rvroege@crcna.org](mailto:rvroege@crcna.org) with your questions.

Our newly revamped **“Helping without Harming in Church Benevolence” workshop** has been run several times and deacons are loving it! Our Regional

Ministry Developers and Diaconal Coaches are trained and ready to lead this and other workshops, both in-person and online!

**Did your church hold an offering for NewGround yet?** NewGround Sunday was designated as **May 7, 2023**, this year! NewGround (*formerly called Operation Manna*) helps deacons and churches love their community by offering grants, coaching, and resourcing. What could YOUR church do with a NewGround partnership?

***Are your deacons looking for help and support?***

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)

**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)

**Board Members & Diaconal Coache:**

**Diaconal Coach(es)**

**Board Member**

Lake Superior    Teda Heerema; [tedaheerema@gmail.com](mailto:tedaheerema@gmail.com)

Yvonne Schenk

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## 9. Executive Communication

Dear Classis Leaders of the Christian Reformed Church:

Greetings in the name of Christ.

Jesus loved seeds. He wove them into his teaching, and especially, into his parables. During this new ministry year, God has laid on our hearts Jesus' parable of the wheat kernel (John 12:24): "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

Jesus was talking about his death and resurrection. but he was also talking about discipleship – that God calls his followers to die to themselves, and rise with Christ to a life of abundant fruitfulness. These are challenging words for us as disciples and leaders. We suspect they also challenge you. And yet, we want you to consider what God may be calling you to "surrender and bury," as classes and church leaders, so that your ministries may grow and bear more fruit for the Lord. And, as you think about that for the coming ministry year, we also want to provide you with a few quick updates.

### **Synod 2023**

Last June, Synod 2023 met in the chapel at Calvin University. We are thankful for the fruitful prayer and worship that characterized the advisory committees and the plenary sessions. Synod 2023 had a heavy agenda that resulted in the delegation of many ministry tasks to the classes, the Council of Delegates, and the general secretary. Like Synod 2022, there were also challenging discussions around human sexuality. In order to serve the classes and congregations with the best information, the Office of General Secretary has carefully crafted a Frequently Asked Questions document about Synod 2023 and posted it [here](#). Our aim is to post the *Acts of Synod 2023* electronically on or around September 1 and share summaries with the classes and congregations soon thereafter. Hardcopies of the Acts will take some more time to get to you! Please encourage churches and leaders in your classes to use these resources in their conversations and reflections about synod.

### **Celebrating Our Growing "One Family"**

One important soil that God is calling the classes and congregations to sow into is the engagement of our ethnic minority leaders and churches. Did you know fully one-fifth (and growing) of the CRC's churches are predominantly non-White? Unfortunately, these leaders are greatly underrepresented in most of our classis meetings. The Council of Delegates has instructed the Office of General Secretary to assist classes during the 2023-24 ministry year in holding structured conversations (called "One Family Conversations") during their classis meeting to learn to better celebrate and support their entire family. The conversation plan can be accessed [here](#). If you need assistance in planning and implementing these conversations, please reach out to your [regional catalyzers](#) who would be happy to assist you. We know your classis agendas are very full, but these conversations could be the most important way your classes join the Spirit in "planting for kingdom growth" in the coming years.

### **Thank You for Your Generous Planting**

Christian Reformed members, churches, and classes sow generously in giving of their time and treasure to serve congregations, neighborhoods, and the world through ministry shares. In 2022-23 you gave \$10,030,000 USD and \$5,609,000 CAN to the agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church. In addition to supporting the governance of CRCNA, we used these funds to form future ministry leaders, share the gospel through media and the work of our international and domestic

missionaries, and to support your CRC congregations in their discipleship, education, worship, and mission. This fall we will be sharing more about changes and updates to the ministry shares program with classis treasurers that were approved by Synod 2023. We give thanks to and to God for this generous sowing and the harvest it has produced for the Kingdom!

**Thrive Pastors Conference**

We are excited to draw your attention to our newest agency, [Thrive](#), which drew together 9 former congregational ministries under one new name. Thrive was officially recognized by Synod 2023 and charged with providing expertise, wisdom, and compassionate support to CRC congregations while remaining attentive to a wide range of opportunities and challenges facing the church today. Thrive is offering a conference for parish pastors, Regional Pastors, and chaplains to rest and grow in Albuquerque, NM on November 14 through 16. This event’s goal is to offer active CRC parish pastors and regional pastors a safe place in which to gather for support, encouragement, learning, worship and fellowship. Please sign up as soon as possible as registration is limited.

We do not make the seeds nor do we make them grow. Through the Spirit’s power, our calling is to plant and nourish the seeds (1 Cor 3:6). Planting is difficult as it involves the dying of the old and the coming to life of the new. But most of all, planting is an act of faith. May the God of the harvest give you the strength to plant well in this new ministry year.

Your partners in ministry



Rev. Dr. Zachary King  
General Secretary



Dan DeKam  
Director, US ministry operations



Rev. Al Postma  
Transitional Executive Director

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**C. AGENCIES AND OTHER CHRISTIAN ORGS**

**1. DORDT UNIVERSITY  OFFICE OF CHURCH RELATIONS**

August 7, 2023

Greetings from Dordt University!

We are thankful to partner with you as we keep our covenant promises to provide an education where a “biblical, Reformed vision of Christ’s lordship over all creation is clearly taught.” (c.f. Art 71, Church Order of the CRCNA)

This past year we welcomed 1,858 students, marking over 15 years of steady growth and representing the largest total enrollment in the institution’s history.

This figure includes a record of 1,483 full-time undergraduate students, with the remainder enrolled in our graduate or dual-credit programs. This fall, we expect to welcome

another large freshman class. Enrollment has grown to a point where 4 new residential apartments are currently in construction and expect to be completed by the beginning of the academic year. These buildings will house 96 of our upperclassmen. Plans are also in motion to hopefully break ground this fall on a new dining facility as well as added space to the B.J. Haan Auditorium. We praise God for this growth and the opportunity to impact more lives for Christ's kingdom purposes. 93% of our students graduate in four years or less, with 98% of those graduates finding employment or pursuing advanced degrees in their program of study within 6 months of graduation.

At Dordt, we reaffirm our thankfulness, but also our need for your continued classical support. We believe that Dordt University is an important piece of regional and local ministry for our churches and communities. Many of our alumni attend your churches on Sundays, serve and lead in the programs in your congregations, and some serve as council members or even your pastors. Dordt is invested in the local church and we are grateful for your investment in us.

Matching the Dordt University fiscal year of 2023-2024, **the ministry share request is \$69.20** (per professing member).

This figure was determined by looking at a combination of factors: student enrollment, professing members in historically supporting classes, and carefully evaluating the costs related to Christian higher education.

Thank you again for your faithful support both in prayer and gifts. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Serving with you,

Todd Zuidema

***Director of Church Relations***

***todd.zuidema@dordt.edu***

***712-722-6081***

Dordt University / 700 Seventh Street NE / Sioux Center, Iowa 51250 / 712-722-6081

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## 2. Redeemer University College

### Fall Classis Report 2023: Redeemer University

August 4, 2023

Greetings from Redeemer University!

We are ramping up for the 2023-2024 academic year, and are so excited to once again welcome more than 300 new students to campus. This year's theme is "Learning in Christ," based on Colossians 2:6,7. We pray God will work powerfully in the lives of students through every class, chapel, conversation and experience so that they grow in Him!

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Peter Neumann as vice president, academic. Dr. Neumann brings a wealth of experience to the position with over 14 years in academic leadership. He has a track record of building collaborative teams, empowering people and engaging in visionary and relational leadership. I am thankful that God has guided him to us during a time when we must strengthen, innovate and further develop the university's programs and degrees, and I am confident he will successfully lead Redeemer's Reformed educational vision for learning and scholarship into its next chapter.

Like many organizations in the post-pandemic context, Redeemer has experienced higher than usual employee turnover. We continually praise God for the amazing and committed faculty and staff he continues to provide to serve Redeemer's mission! I specifically want to highlight the new role of the Faculty Chaplain. Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong '93 will be joining Redeemer on August 21 in this position. We are thankful that God has led him to this role, created to foster spiritual formation among faculty and staff as we desire to live more fully into the fruits of the Spirit, enhancing a culture of care and respectful engagement with one another. Rev. Dr. DeJong is currently a local pastor at Blessings Christian Church in Hamilton, and has been teaching part-time at Redeemer for several years.

As part of the *Learn. Forward.* strategic plan, many campus renewal projects are underway. This summer, we are renovating the Dining Halls and opening them up onto the Commons in Founder's Hall. This will allow for a more communal and relational space for eating meals and for spending non-class hours. The main reception area and student engagement spaces behind reception, are also undergoing renovations, with the goal of better serving guests, prospective students and current students. The Career Centre and Innovation Centre also moved into their new office spaces in the Charis Live and Learn Centre.

We are also excited about the numerous events that will be taking place on campus this fall. In addition to regularly cheering on the Redeemer Royals varsity teams, we will be hosting a variety of student-centered, academic, and institutional events. The Career Centre is hosting the first annual Community Engagement and Volunteer Fair on September 8,

where local organizations will be able to talk to students about volunteer, paid or future internship opportunities during the academic year and beyond. Alumni Week is happening the last week of September, where we will be celebrating the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award winner, Brian Dijkema '04 on September 26, and hosting a number of Royals vs. Alumni Homecoming Games, to name a few. The Wolters Centre is hosting a Social Sciences lecture on November 1, featuring Dr. Jordan Ballor, Director of Research at the Center for Religion, Culture & Democracy. Lastly, we are very excited to announce the Rend Collective Concert on November 3, and we hope your church members can join us that evening.

Redeemer University is thankful for the ongoing prayers, support and financial generosity. Students from the CRC churches represent the largest denominational group on campus and we remain committed to university education from a Reformed Christian perspective. Why? So that the next generation of Christian leaders are prepared to share the hope and love of Jesus wherever he calls them to live and serve! Thank you for your critical support of this Kingdom mission!

In Christ,

David Zietsma, PhD  
President

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**3. Faith Formation Ministries**

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Trudy Ash  
Regional Catalyzer with Faith Formation Ministries and  
Regional Network Connector, Region 5 [tash@crcna.org](mailto:tash@crcna.org)

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**APPENDICES**

**A. License to Exhort Renewal Requests**

**1. Grace CRC, Inver Grove Heights— Wendy Widder Huisken**

To: Classis Lake Superior via Henry Gunnink (clerk),  
From: The Council of Grace Christian Reformed Church of Inver Grove Heights,  
Minnesota  
Re: Endorsement of Wendy Widder Huisken in request for renewal of license to exhort  
July 7, 2023

Dear Delegates of Classis,  
I am writing on behalf of Grace CRC council to whole-heartedly endorse Wendy Widder Huisken as one who faithfully serves God as she exhorts His word. Currently, we are without a pastor as our former pastor, Pastor Perrin Werner, is serving with Resonate Global Ministries.

Wendy has shouldered a large portion of the preaching duties in the absence of a full-time pastor. She provided a 12-week sermon series on Daniel, the subject of her extensive research for two commentaries, and a 5-week Lenten series on the feasts of Israel. She is currently leading us through a 15-week series on the Psalms of Ascent. Wendy also served Classis within this past year as she led a 2-part workshop at Classis on how to preach the book of Daniel. Wendy speaks from her perspective of a Hebrew and Semitic scholar, bringing insights into the culture and history of the Old Testament, especially the period of exile. Wendy, who has also served our congregation as an elder, is a highly respected and valued member of our congregation, and we ask for the renewal of her license to exhort so she may continue to use the gifts that God has given to her in His service and for His glory.

Sincerely,  
Kelly Aukema

## 2. Covenant CRC – re Leshia Verkerk

### Renewal of license to exhort

**Rodney Harris**

August 18,  
2023

Good morning Henry. We are making a request to classis that the license to exhort for Leshia Verkerk be renewed. Our church has been blessed by her preaching as well as by the other ways that she serves our community.

Thank you for your time.  
Rod Harris  
Clerk, Covenant CRC, Winnipeg

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## B. Other Requests

### 1. Emo, CRC Invite to host Classis March 2024



Emo Christian Reformed Church  
18 Meadow Street, PO Box 209

Emo, ON P0W1E0 email: clerk.emocrc@gmail.com August 2, 2023

Classis Lake Superior

Dear Members of Classis Lake Superior

Warm greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Council of Emo Christian Reformed Church is excited to extend an invitation to you to host the Spring 2024 Classis meeting at Emo CRC in the beautiful surroundings of Emo, Ontario, Canada.

Our church facilities are fully equipped and adaptable to suit your meeting needs, with spaces for large gatherings, smaller breakout sessions, and space for prayer and reflection. We are also able to make arrangements for your lodging and meals during your stay, ensuring a comfortable and reinvigorating experience for all.

Emo CRC eagerly awaits the opportunity to welcome our brothers and sisters from Classis Lake Superior, to learn from you, and to strengthen our collective bonds of faith. We trust that you will consider our invitation and look forward to hearing from you.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information or wish to discuss this invitation. We remain at your disposal for any further clarification.

May God continue to guide us in all our endeavors as we strive to serve his people and his kingdom.

Blessings in Christ

Zachary  
Koomans  
Clerk of  
Council  
Emo Christian Reformed Church

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## 2. CHMC - CA +US

### to Revise wording of Revitalization Fund Grant Application Form

#### Church Revitalization Grant and Loan Fund

**Mandate:** The Church Revitalization Fund is to be distributed either as a grant following the below guidelines and application questions 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).

[Church Revitalization Fund Application for CHMC – US](#)

And

[Church Revitalization Fund Application for CHMC – Canada](#)

[NOTE: These two are identical forms—Revisions apply to both Can and US forms—Clerk]

#### **Guidelines** for those wanting to apply for the Church Revitalization Fund

1. Who is eligible?

Churches and church plants that are part of Classis Lake Superior in the **United States**.

2. What projects do we support?

The goal of this grant is to enable churches to imagine how they can be more vital in the neighborhoods God has placed them in. To the degree that a project enables this revitalization, it will be considered.

3. What is not eligible?

Maintenance cost and salaries that would ordinarily be paid by the church budget.

4. What is the grant amount?

**Ordinarily**, 75% of the total cost to a maximum of \$5,000 per grant.

5. What are the expectations for those who complete a grant?

Give an oral report to the CHMC committee explaining what was learned through the project.

**Also, a short video or slideshow documenting the project will be strongly encouraged.**

6. How often can this grant be sought?

~~Once every 3 years. The oral report to CHMC committee must be completed before another grant will be considered.~~

**Every three years, a church may apply for grants totaling **ordinarily** \$5,000. Once a church has hit this limit, they must wait till the three year cycle is completed to apply for a new grant. A church may apply for multiple grants during the three year period, but the total should not ordinarily exceed \$5,000.**

#### **Application questions**

1. Describe your project and how this will help your church revitalize?

2. Provide a timeline for your project
3. How do you envision your church in two years and how would receiving the grant affect that vision?
4. How do you envision your church in five years and how would receiving the grant affect that vision?
5. How much money are you requesting?
6. How will you evaluate the [effectiveness](#) of your plan?
7. Who will report to CHMC when this project is complete? (please provide contact information)

**Additional documents requested needed:**

1. If project requires bids, bids received
2. Proposed budget explaining how the funds will be used

The answers to these questions will be used by CHMC-US to determine if your project meets the guidelines and determine how much money to award each church. **If your project meets these guidelines, CHMC-US will then propose at the next classis that your church receive the asked for money.**

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### 3. CMLT

#### To Revise wording of Classis Lake Superior Scholarship Policy

##### **The Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry**

##### ~~Classis Lake Superior~~

#### I. Name

The awards are to be known as the Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry.

##### Ground:

Including “Classis” adds clarity for where the funds are coming from.

#### II. Purpose

To sustain faithful, committed and Reformed ministry, Classis Lake Superior establishes these awards to assist annually students whose home church is ordinarily one of the congregations belonging to Classis Lake Superior to prepare for ~~ordination and preaching~~ ordained congregational ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North America as a Minister of the Word or Commissioned Pastor.

##### Grounds:

1. If an applicant came from a church looking to join Classis Lake Superior and met all requirements below, even though their membership may not initially be in the CRC, consideration for funding may be appropriate.
2. As the landscape of those leading CRC congregations changes and Church Order allows for Commissioned Pastors to serve as solo pastors in special circumstances, it would be wise to encourage and support the studies of those seeking either ordained office to serve in congregational ministry.

### III. Funding

- A. The Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry will be funded by Classis Lake Superior.
- B. The Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry will be awarded ~~on an annual basis~~ annually based on the approval of Classis Lake Superior.
- C. ~~The awards can be distributed in three programs: Applicants shall fit into one of the following categories for consideration:~~
  - 1. ~~Full-time Calvin Theological Seminary students who are qualified for and intend to become ordained pastors in the Christian Reformed Church.~~
  - 2. ~~Students completing requirements required for ordination in the Christian Reformed Church of North America, who have received seminary training elsewhere.~~
  - 3. ~~On line or distance courses given by Calvin Theological Seminary for completion of requirements for ordination in the Christian Reformed Church of North America.~~
- D. C. The annual awards will not exceed the combined cost of the tuition and related educational expenses as set annually by the relevant seminary for the program in which the student is enrolled. The awards are based on cost of studies, financial need, and funding available.
- E. D. The Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry will be managed according to the policies of Classis Lake Superior with oversight by the Classical Ministries Leadership Team and the classical treasurer.

#### Ground:

The stipulations of who may receive funding in regard to academic tracks is better suited for and described in the eligibility section.

### IV. Eligibility

- A. ~~Recipients~~ Applicants are must be members in good standing in a Christian Reformed Church in Classis Lake Superior or a congregation overseen by a congregation in Classis.

#### Grounds:

- 1. Those completing this application are applicants, and not yet recipients. This follows in the rest of the section.
- 2. See Ground 1 under Section II. This amended allowance can also be understood in the Rules of Procedure Application Requirements.

- B. ~~Recipients are those who are admitted or enrolled either full-time or part-time to a master of divinity degree seminary program for the academic year in which the award is given.~~

Applicants shall fit into one of the following categories for consideration:

- 1. Master of Divinity (M.Div.) student enrolled at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools with the intent of completing the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) requirements (Article 6).
- 2. Student enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary to complete the Modified Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (MEPMC) (Article 7).

3. Student enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools as part of a learning plan endorsed by the Candidacy Committee, including those seeking ordination in the CRC via colloquium doctum (Article 8).
4. Student, who is presently ordained as a commissioned pastor and is enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools and completing requirements for ordination as Minister of the Word (Article 24).
5. Consideration will be given to a student enrolled in courses at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools pursuing ordination as a commissioned pastor.

**Ground:**

As acknowledged in Ground 2 under Section II, the landscape of ordination tracks has changed over the years. This captures the current options available in the Church Order and with respect to the denominational Candidacy office.

- C. ~~Recipients~~ Applicants ~~will~~ must be citizens of the United States or Canada whose professed intent ~~is~~ is to immediately seek and begin ordained congregational ministry in the Christian Reformed Church of North America upon completion of their program to seek ordination and begin parish.

**Grounds:**

1. While the work involved in our churches is understood commonly as parish ministry, congregational is more appropriate in our vocabulary.
  2. While there are students who seek ordination with full-intent to serve in a non-congregational ministry, the intent of these funds through church order has been to help raise up local pastors.
- D. Applicants are to request a reference be submitted from their Council to the CMLT testifying to the applicant's character, reputation, godliness, and ability.

**Ground:**

While this is required on the candidacy checklist heading into a student's final two years, it is appropriate for CMLT to have this at the start of our relationship with the student.

- E. ~~D:~~ ~~Applicants or nominees~~ will be assessed on the basis of their character, internal and external call to ministry, commitment to the Reformed faith, and the promise they exhibit for effective parish ministry—particularly for calling upon their congregants and for excellence in preaching—, and for the strength of their intention to become ordained in the Christian Reformed Church of North America.

**Ground:**

The current description of what can or should be assessed is extremely narrow. This offers a more robust assessment and opportunity for continuing development in the candidacy journey for the student/candidate and CMLT mentors.

- F. ~~E:~~ ~~Recipients~~ Applicants are eligible to receive the Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry for the duration of their seminary career ~~except during their internship year~~ while enrolled in classes, whether in-residence, distance, or on-line.

**Ground:**

The "internship year" is no longer a typical part of the M.Div. program at CTS or other similar seminaries.



G. ~~F.~~ If funds are limited, priority will be given to applicants ~~or nominees otherwise are equal~~, preference will be given to student attending Calvin Theological Seminary as Synod has officially declared it as the preferred seminary.

## V. Administration

A. The award will be ~~administered~~ recommended by the Classical Ministries Leadership Team and administered by the classical treasurer according to the policies established by Classis Lake Superior.

### Ground:

It is the CMLT's responsibility to assess and discern the need and appropriateness of students who apply for these funds, and give recommendations to Classis Lake Superior. It is the classical treasurer's responsibility to follow-through on the recommendations of Classis.

B. The award will be deposited to the recipient's financial account at the attended seminary early in each of the regular academic terms. Upon notification of award, students shall provide the Classical Treasurer with necessary information about the Business/Financial Aid office of seminary.

~~C. Each year Classis Lake Superior or its designated representative(s) will be informed about the recipient of the award, will be provided a summary statement of the award's financial account, and will approve the Classical Ministry Leadership Team's recommendations on its use.~~

~~D. Classis Lake Superior at any time may initiate the process for revision of this protocol.~~

### Ground:

This information is not necessary to be included in the application, and has been recommended for inclusion in the CMLT section of Classis' Rules of Procedure.

E. C. As a scholarship, recipients understand that if they decide to discontinue their studies, pursuit of ordination, or are released from ordained status in the CRCNA, they will not be expected to reimburse or return spent funds.

### Ground:

This fits with the current practice that was instituted around 2018-19, which came about recognizing that multiple previous recipients who did not complete or fulfill application requirements were not pursued for repayment.

## Agreement

The foregoing description and guidelines are acknowledged by the undersigned to be the controlling provisions of the Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry.

Signature of \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Completed application to be sent to the Chairperson of the CMLT)

## Application for the Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry *Classical Ministries Leadership Team (CMLT)*

Application Date:

Academic Year for the Scholarship:

Name:

Home Church:

Present Telephone:

Permanent Telephone:

Present Address:

Permanent Address:

Age:

Spouse's Name:

# of Children:

Current Occupation:

Place of Employment/Study:

Current Status (Full-Time/Part-Time Employment/Study):

Highest Completed Year of Study:

Total indebtedness at the end of this year:

Classical scholarship you received last year:

Classical scholarship you hope to receive this year:

*Note: Attach a separate sheet if you wish to provide additional information for CMLT to consider in dealing equitably with your request.*

In applying for this scholarship you must assume the following responsibilities:

1. Maintain a minimum scholastic standing as set by seminary for entrance and graduation.
2. See that transcripts of your grades are sent to the chair or secretary of the ~~Classical Ministries Leadership Team~~ CMLT at the end of each academic year.
3. Inform the chair or secretary of the ~~Classical Ministries Leadership Team~~ CMLT and the Classical Treasurer immediately of changes in academic program and changes of address. If wishing to attend another school, discontinue studies, and/or the candidacy process temporarily or permanently, first seek the guidance of the CMLT.

**Grounds:**

1. Maintaining strong relationships are crucial with the current arrangement set by the Candidacy office.
2. It is unlikely that such a surprise would come without CMLT being informed; however, we should have input.

4. Please ~~return~~ submit your application to the ~~Classical Ministries Leadership Team~~ CMLT no later than March 15 by June 1 for the fall semester/trimester or July 7 for the winter trimester/spring semester that funding is requested for. Make and keep one copy for your records.

**Grounds:**

1. March 15 may be too early for financial aid packages and decisions about the fall semester.
2. Not all eligible schools operate on the traditional fall/spring semesters calendar, and students do not always begin their academic year on the typical fall schedule.

*Note: For an updated list of contacts ~~in~~ on the CMLT, please see the list of Classis Functionaries on the Classis Lake Superior website: ~~http://~~ (classislakesuperior.org).*

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## 4. CMLT

### To make changes to the section of the ROP that mention CMLT

#### III.B.2. (Re The treasurer)

g. Shall, regarding the Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT):

~~1) Issue receipts for all monies received as repayments, the original to go to the payer and copy to be filed by the Treasurer.~~

~~1) 2) In coordination with the CMLT chair, prepare and keep a current a listing of all the beneficiaries of the CMLT, with totals each has received, since the organization of Classis Lake Superior, and supply a copy of this list to the CMLT annually.~~

2) Disburse funds to the seminaries of students who have received scholarships.

3) Send a statement of all disbursements from the Student Fund to the CMLT each time disbursements are made.

#### Grounds:

1. Over the course of the last 20 years, there have been multiple students whose academic or vocational pursuits away from ordained ministry in the CRCNA should have triggered repayment to the Student Fund based on signed agreements. However, these were not always pursued. In one case, as recent as 2018, terms were drawn up for partial repayment; however, since then, Classis or the CMLT decided to change from offering funds as a forgivable loan to a scholarship/grant. With this change also came no expectation of repayment if one did not go into or remain in ordained ministry for a set number of years. Because of that practice, which began around 2019, repayment agreements involving past, current, and future students were nullified. It does not seem appropriate to continue switching back and forth in so short a time, particularly when there are students who have been recommended for funding under the scholarship model.
2. The CMLT now has a Google (cloud) folder with historical and current material that can be updated by its chair and/or members. This can be shared with the Treasurer for updates to be made in real time. There is no need to re-send a whole list annually.
3. It is the CMLT's responsibility to assess and discern the need and appropriateness of students who apply for these funds, and give recommendations to Classis Lake Superior. It is the classical treasurer's responsibility to follow-through on the recommendations of Classis.

#### IV.C.3. The Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT)

- a. Introduction: The Classical Ministerial Leadership Team seeks to identify ~~encourage and support men and women who feel God's call to ministry and provide support and encouragement for individuals preparing for ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, in accordance with Church Order Article 21 and 43a.~~

#### Ground:

Language here is taken directly from the church order

- b. Organization

- i. There shall be four regular members, ~~including and~~ at least one clergy and one non-clergy member.
- ii. There shall be at least one alternate who can be either clergy or non-clergy.
- c. Responsibilities
  - i. Consults with the denominational Candidacy office and ~~advises and informs~~ Classis and its congregations, and its leadership-related ministries (e.g. LDNs) regarding matters related to ministerial candidacy in the CRC.

**Grounds:**

1. In recent years, the Candidacy office has been an invaluable partner and the authority in providing expectations on the various routes to ordained ministry.
2. As far as we know, no LDNs are continuing to operate.
  - ii. Proactively encourages individuals, Classis, and its congregations in identifying and encouraging possible candidates for ministry in the CRC. The secretary or chair of the CMLT, in coordination with the Stated Clerk, shall request each Council within the Classis to invite applicants, as well as annually publish this information in the church publications.
  - iii. Coordinates with Classis and its congregations in helping potential ministerial candidates complete their specific candidacy process checklist Ministry Readiness Profile (see attached Addendum for what is included in MRP), which documents the progress of a candidate in the journey toward ordination and testifies to ~~the candidate's development and growth in character, knowledge, and skill~~ their qualifications for ministry and fulfillment of denominational requirements.

**Grounds:**

1. The term Ministry Readiness Profile is still in use in some places, but Candidacy Readiness is an updated term and checklists posted online include what was previously included in the Profile.
2. Due to the lengthy nature and variety of the materials which must be filled out and their public availability on the denominational website, it is unnecessary to be included in the Classis' Rules of Procedure. The most current "Process Guide for CMLTs" and links to the various tracks to ordination should be available in the CMLT Google Drive folder for their members. If not, they are available through the denominational Candidacy office.
3. The language changes about "progress" and "qualifications" are taken directly from the description of the Ministry Readiness Profile in the CRCNA's "Journey Toward Ordination."
- iv. Makes recommendations to Classis ~~through the Classical Finance Team~~ to distribute financial resources from the Student Fund to assist those preparing for ministry ~~in accordance with Church Order Article 21.~~ May also at times advise Classis concerning requests for assisting students from other Classes whose funds are insufficient to cover all the requests.
- v. Forwards the endorsement of each student being supported to the Candidacy Director on behalf of the denominational Candidacy Committee. ~~SMCC (Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee)~~

- vi. Requests licensure on behalf of those entering the candidacy or affiliation process through Article 7 or 8.
  - vii. Celebrates students' successful completion of the academic requirements for entering the ministry with the student, church, and Classis.
- d. Application Requirements for Ministerial Candidates to be Received under Care of CMLT and Optional Financial Assistance
- i. Parts ii-iv are all included in "Section IV. Eligibility" of the Classis Lake Superior Scholarship for Ministry application required for financial assistance from Classis Lake Superior (eligible at beginning of studies). If a student were not seeking aid, a signed acknowledgement of and commitment to the following would be required at least two academic years before planned candidacy.
  - ii. ~~ii.~~ Certificate of Membership in a church in Classis Lake Superior (or a written statement from the parental church home in Classis Lake Superior for a student whose church membership is currently elsewhere).
  - iii. ~~iii.~~ Explanation of course of study at Calvin Theological Seminary or another institution accredited by the Association for Theological Schools with the intent of completing the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) requirements (Article 6); the Modified Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (MEPMC) (Article 7); a learning plan endorsed by the Candidacy Committee (Article 8); or another approved learning plan in pursuit of ordination as a minister of the Word or commissioned pastor. Study Plan (Article 6) which indicates where the individual intends to study and how long they intend to take to complete their degree OR Learning Covenant (Article 7) which indicates the areas of study (Biblical, Theological, Practical) the individual will be pursuing, how these objectives will be met (e.g. seminary, on line learning, mentoring, and/or independent study, enrollment in EPMC\* at Calvin), and any additional ministry opportunities to be sought. \* (Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidates)
  - iv. ~~iii.~~ Initial interview with applicant conducted by at least 3 2 members of CMLT to discuss motives for seeking the ministry and intellectual and spiritual qualifications, by March 1, if possible assess their character, internal and external call to ministry, commitment to the Reformed faith, the promise they exhibit for effective ministry, and for the strength of their intention to become ordained and serve pursue congregational ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. This will be a general and broad conversation with the student, since he/she may not know many specifics about their course of study by this time of year.
  - v. ~~iv.~~ Those seeking financial assistance are to complete an assessment with income, expenses, and expected financial need for each school year. These are to be submitted by June 1 for the fall semester/trimester or July 7 for the winter trimester/spring semester that funding is requested for. Completed

financial statement indicating income, expenses, and financial need to be completed each school year.

- ~~previously supported students must re-apply for funding by March 1~~
- ~~new students must apply for funding by March 15~~

**Grounds:**

1. March 1 and 15 may be too early for financial aid packages and decisions about the fall semester.

2. Not all eligible schools operate on the traditional fall/spring semesters calendar, and students do not always begin their academic year on the typical fall schedule.

- vi. ~~Grade reports~~ Transcripts of grades are to be sent to the chair or secretary of the CMLT at the conclusion of each semester, demonstrating progress and academic standing in harmony with the seminary entrance requirements.
- vii. ~~ii. Recommendation from the church Council testifying to character, reputation, godliness, and ability.~~

**Ground:** This is included and required in the denominational checklists for ordination. It has also been recommended for inclusion on the scholarship application.

- viii. ~~vi. Completed and signed Student Fund Agreement which includes written commitment to enter ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.~~

**Ground:** This is already handled in parts i, iii, and iv.

e. Financial Procedures

- i. The Student Fund is administered ~~handled~~ by the Classical Treasurer.
- ii. The Student Fund is maintained and replenished by Classical Ministry Shares paid from the churches, special gifts, and any optional repayment of scholarship funds ~~loans~~ by recipients ~~students~~ who do not complete the candidacy process, discontinue seeking ordination, or leave ordained ministry in the CRC ~~-serve at least ten years in the CRC ministry.~~
- iii. Approved student scholarship amounts will be given to the students and to the Classical Treasurer ~~Finance Team~~ by July 15 prior to their pre-Classis meeting to present the budget for September.
- iv. The Classical Treasurer ~~CMLT~~ will have authorization to make a partial disbursement prior to the beginning of the school year with final approval for the full amounts to be determined at Classis in September.
- v. The members ~~secretary~~ of CMLT will correspond with students being supported to ensure that the agreements are being properly executed, grade reports are being received, and funds are being adequately disbursed.
- vi. Each year Classis Lake Superior will be informed about the recipient(s) of the award, provided a summary statement of the award's financial account, and approve the Classical Ministry Leadership Team's recommendations on its use.
- vii. Classis Lake Superior at any time may initiate the process for revision of this protocol.

**Grounds:**

1. See III.B.2.g.Ground 1 for change in procedure.
2. Parts vi and vii have been moved here from the application for financial aid as they are not pertinent to the applicant but to classis.
  - f. Accountability
    - i. CMLT shall submit a written report to Classis at each session.
    - ii. At least one of the reports should include the academic standing, the financial need for the supported students.

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**Addendum: Ministry Readiness Profile Components**

- ~~1. Application to Council (including an Autobiography and Personal Statement of Faith)~~
- ~~2. Initial Council Endorsement~~
- ~~3. CMLT Endorsement to SMCC (Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee) via Classis Recommendation Form~~
  - ~~a. Article 6 includes Study Plan and Financial Plan~~
  - ~~b. Article 7 includes Learning Covenant, Financial Plan, and Testimony to Exceptional Giftedness~~
- ~~4. Assessment of Readiness for Ministry (Article 6 only)~~
- ~~5. Copy of Official Seminary Transcript (Article 6 or 8 only)~~
- ~~6. Statement of Psychological Fitness for Ministry~~
- ~~7. Positive Health Certificate~~
- ~~8. Criminal Background Check~~
- ~~9. Full Disclosure of Any Acts of Official Discipline, Criminal Charges, or Ecclesiastical Complaint~~
- ~~10. Hebrew and Greek Requirements Satisfied (for Article 6 only)~~
- ~~11. Biblical Knowledge Requirements Satisfied~~
- ~~12. M. Div Degree (for Article 6), Educational History (Official Transcripts or Equivalent for Article 7) and/or completion of EPMC (for Article 6 students earning their M.Div at a Seminary other than CTS and Article 7)~~
- ~~13. SMCC Endorsement to Begin Ministry Preparation Phase~~
- ~~14. Ministry Evaluation(s)~~
- ~~15. Affirmation of Readiness for Ministry (Letter from Mentor and, if applicable, Faculty Advisor)~~
- ~~16. Commitment to Three Forms of Unity~~
- ~~17. Willingness to Sign the Covenant of Officebearers~~
- ~~18. Final Council Endorsement (for Article 7 only)~~
- ~~19. Final SMCC Endorsement~~
- ~~20. Classical Exam with the concurrence of Synodical Deputies~~