



# MINUTES

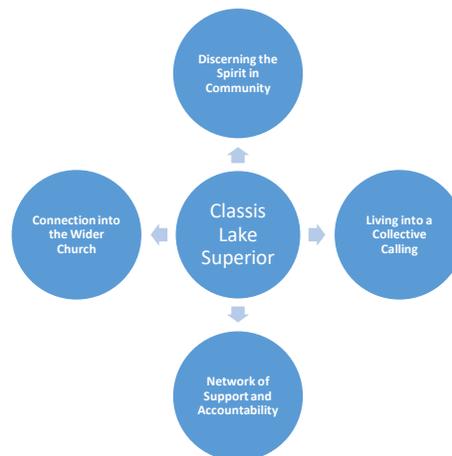


## OF CLASSIS LAKE SUPERIOR OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH Meeting In Person on March 6-7, 2023 At Calvary CRC, Edina, MN

### Who we are:

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.

### The Roles of Classis:



## I. Convening of Classis

### Art. 1 Officers

President: Rev. Dan DeGraff  
Vice-President: Rev. Aaron Greydanus  
Stated Clerk: Rev. Henry Gunnink

## Art. 2 Opening and Organization

2.1 At 2:45 pm chair, Pastor Dan DeGraaf,

- begins with a welcome,
- introduced the officers, then
- opened with devotions.

He read from Revelation 3:1-6 where Jesus gives messages of blunt correction to all the churches. All of our churches need to pay heed to these warnings. “He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” This is a message of grace. Jesus came to save sinners, to justify and sanctify, to call and bring about the putting off of the old nature. He opened with prayer.

- explained logistics of being in the building, and schedule.
- thanked the presenters for the pre-classis workshops/presentations.

2.2 Vice Chair, Aaron Greydanus

.1 calls the roll.

<u>Church/Guest/Deputy/Functionary</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tues</u>
Baldwin, WI	Dan De Graaf	Pastor	✓	✓
	Mike Findlay	Elder	✓	✓
	Thomas Kool (Mon)	Deacon	x	n/a
	Gary Fern (Tues)	Deacon	n/a	✓
Bethel Princeton, MN	Mark Brouwer	Pastor	✓	✓
	Rob Braun	Elder	✓	✓
	Joel Terpstra	Deacon	✓	✓
Bethlehem, Thunder Bay, ONT	Marg Rekman	Pastor	✓	✓
	Archie Hoogsteen	Elder	✓	✓
			✓	✓
Bridgewood, Savage MN	David Huizenga	Pastor	✓	✓
	Gaye Rieger	Elder	✓	✓
	Randy Coffman	Deacon	x	x
Brooten, MN	No Delegates	-	-	-
Bunde, MN	Don Grussing	Elder	✓	✓
	Chris Schwitters	Elder	✓	✓
	Lenny Schwitters	Deacon	✓	✓
Calvary, Edina, MN	Nick Van Beek	Pastor	✓	✓
	Karen De Kam	Elder	✓	✓
	Karen Groen	Deacon	✓	✓

Covenant, Winnipeg, MB	Ben Verkerk	Pastor	✓	✓
	Paul Vlaming	Elder	✓	✓
	Johann Strumpher	Deacon	✓	✓
Emden, Renville, MN	David Zigterman	Pastor	✓	✓
	Tim Link	Elder	✓	✓
		Deacon	-	-
Emo, ON	John Sinninghe	Elder	✓	✓
	Jack Esselink		✓	✓
Faith, New Brighton, MN	Travis Deur	Pastor	✓	✓
	Ruben Hortensius	Elder	✓	✓
	Tony Droogsma	Deacon	✓	✓
First, Brandon, MB	Marina Nederlof	Elder	✓	✓
		Deacon	-	-
First, Thunder Bay, ONT		Pastor	-	-
	Harold Heerema	Elder	✓	✓
Good News Fellowship, Winnipeg MB	No Delegates	-	-	-
Grace, Inver Grove Heights, MN	Dan Crapo (Mon)	Elder	✓	n/a
	Judy Gunnink	Deacon	✓	✓
Hancock, MN	David Dick	Pastor	✓	✓
	Jack Van Eps	Elder	x	x
		Deacon	-	-
Hope, Thunder Bay, ONT	Robert Hoekstra	Pastor	✓	✓
	Jeff Bron	Elder	✓	✓
		Deacon	-	-
Pease, MN	Michael Ten Haken	Pastor	✓	✓
	Doug Brink	Elder	✓	✓
	Dale Stobb	Deacon	✓	✓
Raymond, MN	Aaron Greydanus	Pastor	✓	✓
	Doug Erickson	Elder	✓	✓
	George Parker	Deacon	✓	✓
Rock of Life, Willmar, MN	Les Kuiper*	Interim Pastor	n/a	✓
	Roger Groen	Elder	✓	✓
	Ross Brouwer	Deacon	✓	✓
Transcona, Winnipeg, MB	Brian Bolkema	Pastor	✓	✓
	Allen Kampman	Elder	✓	✓
	Neil Boorsma	Deacon	✓	✓
Unity, Prinsburg, MN	Steven Zwart	Pastor	✓	✓
	Larry Groen	Elder	✓	✓
	Eric Watson (Tues)	Deacon	n/a	x
<b>GUESTS</b>				

<b>CLS Functionaries/Committee Reps</b>				
Treasurer	Kristi Santema		✓	✓
Former Treasurer	Wayne Tobak			only
Stated Clerk	Henry Gunnink		✓	✓
Classis Youth Champion	Travis Deur	(also delegate)	✓	✓
Prayer Coordinator	Lowell Schwitters		only	
Trinity Hill Chanhassen, pastor	Kyle Sandison		✓	✓
The Broken. pastor	Chris Alle		✓	✓
New Life SEA	Phonh Sinbondit			only
CIC, Classis Host	Carol Rudy		✓	✓
<b>Representatives</b>				
World Renew	Peter Bulthuis		✓	✓
Transitional Exec Dir Canadian Mins	Al Postma		only	
Faith Formation, Regional Catalyzer	Trudy Ash		only	
<b>Other Guests</b>				
Trinity Hill	Susan Koppendrayer			only
Spouse of treasurer	Joanne Tobak			only
Workshop presenter,	Wendy Widder Huisken		only	
Spouse of presenter	Rick Huisken		only	
Calvary guest, retired pastor	Don Klompeen		only	

\*See item .2 b. below

2.2 Reads the Covenant of Office bearers

- a. All delegates stand to signify their agreement.
- b. On both days, first time delegates come forward to affix their signatures indicating agreement.
  - \*present on Monday as a guest. On Tuesday Rock of Life delegates requested Interim Pastor Les Kuiper be seated as their pastor delegate. **MOTION** that Les Kuiper be seated as pastor delegate by way of exception to the Church Order is ..... **CARRIED.** He then signed the covenant of office bearers as a first-time pastor delegate to Classis Lake Superior.

2.3 Chair

- 1. declares classis constituted.
- 2. welcomes above guests as noted.

2.4 The following Committees had been appointed to assist with Classis business:

2.4.1 Credentials: Transcona and Hancock

2.4.2 Overtures/Deliberative Matters: Unity and Peace

2.4.3 Balloting: Calvary and Brooten

2.4.4 Classis Expenses: Hope and Faith

## 2.10 Devotions

- a. Trudy Ash, Faith Formation Ministries, Regional Catalyzer – USA Midwest CRCNA, closed the afternoon session reading from one of her written meditations entitled, Leadership Lessons From My Dad: Jumping Off A Silo. In answer to her teenage question, “Well my friend is doing it, why can’t I?” he would respond, “If so-and-so jumped off a silo, would you follow them?” 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 states, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. And concludes with “... I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” This helps us see that “The crux of our leadership then is figuring out what we should do and say so those following us are led toward gospel goodness,” Enabling them to draw closer to Christ. She led in prayer.

Her meditations are found at: [Vibrant Congregations Devotionals for Leaders](#)

- b. Tuesday morning, Aaron Greydanus opens our session reading from I Cor 9:24-27. There Paul references the Pan Hellenic games, a well-known part of their culture. Every athlete exercises self-control in their training for a perishable crown but we agonize/go into strict training for an imperishable crown. We are called to flex our spiritual muscles with a similar degree of effort as those heroic athletes. We hear this as a word of encouragement. He led in prayer for the day ahead.
- c. Pastor Phonh Sinbondit offered a prayer at the close of the morning session with special thanks and request for blessing upon God’s gift of food provided for us.

## 3. Other Monday activities

### a. Pre-Classis Workshops/Presentations

1. Provision had been made for 10 90 minute-workshops/presentations to be offered at 10:30 am and 1 pm. Delegates had received descriptive information ahead of time and encouraged to sign up via an online form.
2. Topics and presenters were as follows:
  1. Travis Deur, Classis Youth Champion;

- The Open Generation; and  
Making Space for Spiritual Growth;
- 2. Peter Bulthuis, World Renew representative, leader of the Canadian  
Constituency Relations (CORE) team;  
—And the Greatest of These is...; and  
Relief Amplified.
- 3. Mark Brouwer, Pastor of Bethel, CRC, Princeton, author,  
writer, director of Renew Resources, etc.;  
—How Churches Can Help--Rather than Hinder –  
Members Who Struggle With Sexual Integrity...  
and Why So Few Do; and  
The Fight of Your Life: Facing the Internal Battles  
that People are Facing in Today's World.
- 4. Al Postma, Transitional Executive Director Canadian Ministries;  
—Sharing the Win. (offered twice)
- 5. Wendy Widder Huisken, author, educator, and freelance editor for  
Publishers Baker, Zondervan, Kregel, authored 2  
commentaries on Daniel, etc.;  
—Making Sense of (and Sermons from) the Book of  
Daniel. (offered twice).

b. Monday Evening Worship, Sharing, Prayer

1. Worship was led by Pastor Marg Rekman from Bethlehem, CRC  
accompanied on the piano by Jim Lipscomb of Grace CRC. Pastor  
Marg interspersed our singing with 2 meditations/messages helping us  
be aware of “slow miracles.”
2. North Region churches were invited to share their stories. This was  
done with the use of pictures of various Canadian churches and  
ministries making all aware not only of where they were located  
geographically but also showing something of who they were, what  
ministries they were doing and the challenges they were facing.
3. Delegates then gathered in 3 circles and joined in prayers for their  
assigned churches and ministries.

4. Schedule

- a. Followed as presented in the agenda.
- b. Chair ruled two changes for Tuesday
  1. 8:30 am start time instead of 8:00 am.
  2. Shortened lunch break, 12:15 – 12:45.

In keeping with a decision to be more intentionally aware of how our activities reflect the four roles of Classis, the minutes of Classis actions such as reporting, deliberating, deciding, etc. are here grouped according to which role they best describe.

**Role 1: 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.*

**II. Conducting of Classis business and deliberations**

**Art. 3. Discernment Activities**

A. Overtures

1. Bridgewood Overture re Code of Conduct coming before Synod 2023.
  - a. Since this overture and a revision of the overture came in well after the required deadline for inclusion in the agenda, the chair entertained a motion that the overture be brought to the floor of Classis on Tuesday morning. **MOTION** to place on the agenda is ...**CARRIED.**
  - b. Chair calls for the recommendation of the pre-advice committee. Committee indicates it has nothing to report as its recommendation was to not place it on the agenda, so they had not dealt with the content.
  - c. Motion was made to amend the format of the overture to have an introduction, overture, 2 grounds and the remainder be included as an appendix. **MOTION** to reformat the overture is..... **CARRIED.**
  - d. Overture now reads as follows:

**Overture concerning Code of Conduct  
Bridgewood Church, Savage, MN  
February, 2023**

**Introduction:**

We do not feel the Code of Conduct is the right kind of document to help church leadership deal with the issue of “abuse of power.” We would much rather see those in positions of authority in the CRC sign a positive statement of leadership such as a “Leadership Covenant.” Therefore, the Grounds of this overture fluctuate between rejecting the actual text and intent of the Code of Conduct as well as offering healthier ways to write something like this. Basically, we believe this particular Code of Conduct needs to be rejected and another one written from a healthier, Biblical perspective of God’s design for leadership and influence in His church.

**Overture:**

**Bridgewood CRC overtures Classis Lake Superior to overture Synod 2023 not accept and/or use as a binding document the Code of Conduct presented to churches for review and input by the Synod 2022.**

**Grounds:**

**Ground 1: The Preamble insufficiently sets up the Code of Conduct.**

**Ground 2: The Code of Conduct uses phrases, inferences, and opinions that are not sufficiently laid out to get an understanding of the motives and intentions of the authors.**

**Appendix:**

**Below is a walk through each of the Code Statements pointing out the phrases, inferences, opinions which seem to bring hidden motives and intentions.**

**Preamble:**

1. In an attempt to possibly drive its agenda, the Preamble presents an interpretation of Philippians 2 which is not the intent of the passage and pulls from this misunderstood emphasis a “calling” for “all of us who are united to Christ” which confuses salvation in Christ with a humble use of power.

- a. Even if one insists on using the Philippians hymn as an opening, it would be better to focus instead on ‘putting on the mind of Christ’ (Phil 2:5). Christ consistently challenged the spiritual leaders in not so kind words, especially when he spoke as one with authority. However, would it be better to start with Jesus’ direct statements about leadership in response to the apostle's mother seeking positions of leadership for her sons in the coming kingdom? He explicitly speaks against such selfish leadership starting with the statement “Not so with you...” then gives them instruction towards humble service to others (Matthew 20:20-27).
- b. The hymn of Philippians 2 is not intended to show us how Christ in use of his power was “humbling himself toward a life-sacrificing kind of obedience” so that we, in turn, will accept our calling and use our power for “others to thrive.” Rather, the hymn of Philippians 2 is a beautiful statement of the eternal plan of God for His Son to pay the debt for our sins by this death on the cross.
- c. To read that this hymn is about the “use of power,” and then to inerrantly say through this passage, we are “called in this passage and others, to this way of

being,” is to elevate “use of power” as the primary message of salvation by God. As if, a Christian is saved if he accepts the call to use his power in “humbling himself toward a life-sacrificing kind of obedience.”

2. The Code of Conduct also quotes the Confession of Belhar in the second footnote elevating this confession erroneously to be on the same level of authority within our denomination as the Heidelberg Confession, the Canons of Dort, and the Belgic Confession (and even Our World Belongs to God).

a. Therefore, quoting the Confession of Belhar within the same level of authority is inferring that we need to accept this Confession as carrying the weight of a Form of Unity within our denomination. But, this is indeed not the case.

**Code Statement One:**

**As a ministry leader, I commit to the following:**

**Confidentiality**

I will use confidentiality appropriately, which means I will hold in confidence whatever information is not mine to share.

I will not use information shared with me in confidence in order to elevate my position or to depreciate that of others.

My use of confidentiality will also be guided by mandatory reporting as required by law.

**Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

**As a ministry leader I commit to the following:**

**Confidentiality**

I will use a biblical concept of confidentiality which honors a trustworthy holding of a person’s information responsibly and respectfully.

Because my ministry leadership is to elevate Christ, I will not use for my own gain any information of others which I may hold.

My use of confidentiality will respect the laws of any 501(c)3 to report situations of obvious neglect, physical or sexual abuse to the proper authorities.

- Scripture References:

o Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered. Proverbs 11:13

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

**In Reference to Code Statement One as written:**

- The Code Statement is referring to an unknown source when it says, “I will use confidentiality appropriately...” Where is this source? Who determines the church leader’s use of confidentiality? The local Classis Constitution?

- The one reference stated is “required by law.” Although this is true, it does raise questions of the author’s intent. The Code Statement comes off as disrespectful and coercive of the very people who are to sign this code.

**Code Statement Two:**

**Relational**

I will speak and act, in all my personal and professional relations, in ways that follow the pattern of Christ, who used his power to serve (1 Pet. 5; Mark 10; Phil. 2; 2 Tim. 4:2).

I will conduct myself with respect, love, integrity, and truthfulness toward all—regardless of position, status, race, gender, age, or ability.

To the best of my ability, I will contribute to an environment of hospitality.

**Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

**As a ministry leader I commit to the following:**

**Relational**

Through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, I seek to speak and act, in all my personal and professional relations, in ways that follow the pattern of Christ, who used his power to serve (1 Pet. 5; Mark 10; Phil. 2; 2 Tim. 4:2).

I will conduct myself with respect, love, integrity, and truthfulness toward all – no matter one’s human status or condition.

To the best of my ability, I will contribute to an environment of hospitality.

**In Reference to Code Statement Two as written:**

- On first reading, this Code Statement is admirable. But, without a source to reveal the motivations and intentions of the author concerning “position, status, race, gender, age, or ability,” this Code Statement is subject to judgements and manipulation.
- o It is impossible for anyone to truly follow this Code Statement. No one is able to “speak and act, in all my personal and professional relationship in ways that follow the pattern of Christ...,” unless they have the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit within them. Yet, this Code does not refer to the powerful work of the Holy Spirit within people of church leadership. So, the Code Statement presents itself as an unachievable ideal.
- o Again, the motives of the authors of this Code Statement are in question. The list of “position, status, race, gender, age, or ability” in this Code Statement, seems to be a human construct based on a list of people who have been hurt in the church. If a church leader signs this document, is that leader not allowed to disagree with someone on this list without the disagreement taken as an “abuse of power?”

**Code Statement Three:**

**As a ministry leader I commit to the following:**

**Financial**

I will ensure that funds are used for their intended ministry purposes.

In all financial matters, including the acceptance of gifts, I will act with scrupulous honesty, transparency, and appropriate accountability.

I will appropriately use accepted accounting practices and regular reviews and/or audits.

**Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

**Financial**

I will seek to match designated funds to their intended purposes.

In all financial matters, including the acceptance of gifts, I will act with scrupulous honesty, transparency, and appropriate accountability.

I will appropriately use accounting practices agreed upon by my authorities, and submit to agreed upon reviews and/or audits.

**In Reference to Code Statement Three as written:**

- The extreme presentation of this Code Statement causes the signer to wonder: Does “I will ensure that funds are used for their intended ministry purposes” mean that if the funds are accidentally misused because of a flawed system of accounting, the people in authority are now labelled as abusers?
- To sign this document with the final current sentence written in the Code Statement, a leader would be agreeing to the “accepted accounting practices” of people he doesn’t know or trust and this is disrespectful of hard-working and diligent ministry leaders.

**Code Statement Four:**

**Intimate Relationships**

I will maintain standards and appropriate boundaries in all relationships, which are informed by the Scriptures.

I will keep all of my professional relationships free from inappropriate emotional and sexual behaviors. This includes not engaging in inappropriate intimate contact or a sexual relationship, unwanted physical contact, sexual comments, gestures, or jokes.

**Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

**Intimate Relationships**

I will maintain standards and appropriate boundaries in all relationships, which are informed by the Scriptures.

Because of biblical standards and appropriate boundaries, I will professionally represent my ministry influence by keeping all ministry relationships free from inappropriate emotional and sexual behaviors. I will be especially careful concerning inappropriate intimate contact or a sexual relationship, unwanted physical contacts, sexual comments, gestures, or sexually based humor.

**In Reference to Code Statement Four as written:**

- This is the first time the Code says, “which are informed by the Scriptures.” And therefore, it can be trusted and understood what is meant by the “boundaries in all relationships.”

- However, the Code Statement is again misleading as to the motives and intentions of the author. If there is an accusation against a person in authority from someone who feels that a comment made or a gesture was inappropriate, does that accusation now determine the person in authority to be an abuser? If a leader signs this Code of Conduct, and someone makes an accusation against him, is he an abuser even if the accusation is either made up or a mistaken response to something completely innocent?

**Code Statement Five:**

**Safety**

I will actively promote a safe environment where all persons are respected and valued, where any form of abuse, bullying, or harassment is neither tolerated nor allowed to take place.

I will report known or suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of minors to the proper government authorities.

I will support adults who disclose physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in a way that appropriately empowers the person who has been victimized.

**Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

**Safety**

I will actively promote a safe environment where the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit is welcomed and the power of evil is driven out in Christ’s authority. This environment will be a place of a balance of the love and truth of Christ. There will be no tolerance of an evil mode of operation including flattery, intimidation, slander, threats, and rage for these promote abuse, bullying, and harassment.

I will follow professional and legal requirements to report known or suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of minors to the proper government authorities.

I will be a support to all adults who are accused of abuse as well as those who disclose physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in a way that appropriately seeks the truth and I will seek to apply godly strategies of healing and discipline.

**In Reference to Code Statement Five as written:**

- Because we do not know the motives or intentions of the author, this Code Statement sets up a potentially dangerous atmosphere with differing opinions of what a “safe environment” is. Our world and our church have too many opinions as to the definition of a “safe environment,” and without Biblical support, this Code Statement is dangerous.
- There is an assumption that all who sign this Code of Conduct will know the definitions of “any form of abuse, bullying, or harassment.” However, what happens if a preacher humbly and perhaps even quietly teaches from the Word of God about a sin issue in our world today and it offends someone. Would that preacher now be an abuser or a bully? Who is in charge of determining these definitions?
- Also, the last sentence does not have a source of definition of what it means to be a “victim.” This raises red flags to any leader who is trying hard to understand

parameters of being a strong yet compassionate leader. Is a victim someone who disagrees with a sermon? Just what is a victim?

**Code Statement Six:**

**Spiritual**

I will acknowledge the use of Scripture and the Spirit's work in the community of the church and, therefore, refrain from presuming to be the sole "voice of God."

I will teach, admonish, or discipline in ways that are biblical and Christlike, and I will seek other people's well-being (Matthew 18; Colossians 1:28; 3:16).

I will use my position as a way to serve the body of believers, rather than myself, for the common good and the cultivation of the gifts of the Spirit.

**Response:**

Well, there you go. Well written Code Statement.

**Code of Conduct Additional Commitments:**

**First Commitment:**

I will work within my professional competence, especially in counseling situations, and I will refer individuals to other professionals as appropriate.

**Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

**First Commitment:**

I will commit to a strategy of evaluation of my professional competence and make references to other professionals as appropriate.

**In Reference to First Commitment as written:**

- At first read this "commitment" seems agreeable, but again, it borders on disrespect for people in places of church authority and reveals a motivation or intention that is unhealthy.

**Second, Third and Fourth Commitments:**

I will promote truthfulness, transparency, and honesty in all of my work.

I will disclose any perceived or actual conflict of interest.

In all that I do, I will seek to use my position, power, and authority prudently and humbly and in nonexploitive ways.

**Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

**Second, Third and Fourth Commitments:**

In the presence of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ, and the present Holy Spirit, I will promote working in "truth and love" which means I will be transparent and honest.

I will speak and act directly to situations and people without seeking to use agendas to manipulate.

In all that I do, I will seek to use my position, power and authority which reflects God's call to humility, meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity in heart, and peace.

(Matthew 5:3-9)

**In Reference to the Second, Third and Fourth Commitment as written:**

- Again, what is the source of definition of “nonexploitive ways” and who is going to be the jury to determine whether a leader is following this commitment?
- There is a weak understanding of commitment presented here based perhaps upon “psychological” rather than “Biblical” parameters. First, commitment needs to be a surrender to operate according to the will of the Father, through the grace of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, “In the presence of the Ascended Lord and the present Holy Spirit, I will promote...”

**Fifth Commitment:**

In the event that I misuse my power, either intentionally or unintentionally, as a ministry leader, I will acknowledge the harm that has been caused and the trust that has been broken, and I will actively seek restoration with justice, compassion, truth, and grace. I will humbly submit to the insight and accountability of others to ensure that I use any power entrusted to me fully in service to Christ.

**My Response – Our Recommended Rewrite:**

In the event that I, by the conviction of the Holy Spirit and by submission to clear evidence, come to the conclusion that I engaged in a misuse of power either intentionally or unintentionally, I will listen to and be compassionate toward those harmed. I will work toward rebuilding the trust that has been broken and turn toward the Lord in surrender, submission, obedience and cooperation with the Holy Spirit. I will prayerfully seek restoration with God’s justice, Christ’s compassion, truth and grace. I will humbly submit to the insight and accountability of those in God-given authority over me to ensure that I engage in humble and accountable ministry in service to Christ. I firmly resolve with the help of God’s grace to commit to the humble and competent use of authority as a leader.

**In Reference to the Fifth Commitment as written:**

- Again, this Commitment is disrespectful of pastors who operate with a genuine call to represent the Lord Jesus Christ in all they do. In order for many pastors to sign a commitment like this, it would need to include: surrender, submission, obedience, cooperation with the Holy Spirit and most certainly prayer.

After discussion in which a desire to have greater Scriptural support evidenced in the proposed Code of Conduct coming before Synod and dissatisfaction with the ambiguity of terms and definitions used in that report, a **MOTION** to adopt and send this overture to Synod is .....

..... **CARRIED.**

## **B. BALLOTING**

Classis exercised discernment of the Spirit through submitting nominations and then selecting persons for positions of service within Classis.

The following were selected for:

1. Vice chair September, 18-19, 2023 Classis meeting: Brian Bolkema.

2. Functionaries:

a. CHMC-CA-no nominees for 4 positions.

b. CHMC-US-no nominee for 1 position.

c. CMLT

– Eli Groenendyk and Dan De Graff, 2<sup>nd</sup> term, 9/23 thru 8/26.

– No alternate chosen.

d. Synodical Deputies

– Harrison Newhouse, Jack Van Marion, 2<sup>nd</sup> term, 7/23 thru 6/26.

e. Church visitors

### Central

Reg David Zigterman 3rd Sept 23 thru Aug 26

Alt Don Grussing 1st Sept 23 thru Aug 26

### East

Reg Dan De Graff 2nd Sept 23 thru Aug 26

Reg Dave Huizenga 1st Sept 23 thru Aug 26

Alt 1st Jim Busscher 1st Sept 23 thru Aug 26

Alt 2<sup>nd</sup> Les Kuiper 1st Sept 23 thru Aug 26

### North-Winnipeg/Brandon

Alt Ben Verkerk 2nd Sept 23 thru Aug 26

Reg Marno Retief 1st Sept 23 thru Aug 26

### North-Thunder Bay/Emo

Alt Ben Verkerk 2nd Sept 23 thru Aug 26

Reg Marno Retief 1st Sept 23 thru Aug 26

f. COD-Canada Corps, rep.

No nomination was presented.

It was not felt to be necessary to balance off a US COD rep in a bi-national classis nor warrant the time required as it appeared to be largely a symbolic non-voting position, even though it now would function as a delegate at large position.

4. CA Delegates cast votes for BOT representatives for Region 2 for:
  - a. Calvin University – Cecil Van Niejenhuis (13);
  - b. Jack Beeksma (7) or Edward Gerber (5).

These numbers were sent in to Scott De Vries, Director of Synodical Services to be tallied with votes from other Canadian Classes.

5. CHMC-CA needs 3 members, no nominees for:
 

Clergy-Alternate; Lay-regular and Lay-Alternate members.

6. World Renew
 

CA – Ron Van Heyst

US – Paul Vliem

7. Synodical Delegates

- 1) Since the first ballot produced a majority vote for pastor delegates, A motion is made to designate the next 2 highest vote recipients as alternates. **MOTION** is.....**CARRIED.**
- 2) Delegates to Synod are:

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

**ROLE 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.*

**Art. 4 Reports of Committees and Functionaries**

1. Classical Interim Committee – Brian Bolkema, chair...written report rec'd;  
 Verbal update

- a. Appointed Steve Zwart as counselor for Rock of Life and Nick Van Beek for Faith CRC;
- b. Oversight committees have been set up for
  - 1) Pastor Adam Stout, with 4 members from Calvary and Bridgewood, viz. Stan De Vries, Matt and Lisa DeKam, and Gaye Rieger;
  - 2) Faith, CRC, with the 2 church visitors, Dan DeGraff and David Huizenga, and counselor, Nick Van Beek.
- c. Approved the transfer of ministerial credentials of Rev. Joel De Boer held by the Britt CRC, in Britt, Iowa to the Bunde, CRC. Installation is set for Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>.

**MOTION** to approve work of the CIC is .....**CARRIED.**

2. Stated Clerk -- Henry Gunnink

..... written report rec'd;  
 Verbal update – thanked all the delegates for using the online forms for registration and being patient while improvements were made. Online registration really does help organize for Classis meetings.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the Stated Clerk is .....**CARRIED.**

3. Church Visitor Reports

North - Thunder Bay/Emo

Hope CRC - written report of phone contact with Council chair.

Ben Verkerk & Fred Rekman.

North – Winnipeg/Brandon

no visits, no reports

Hoekstra, Rekman

East Region

no visits, no reports

DeGraff, Adam Stout

Central Region -

no visits, no reports

Zigterman, Greydanus

**MOTION** to approve the work of the church visitors is ...**CARRIED.**

4. Church Counselor Reports

Bunde CRC, Steve Zwart

Verbal update – Bunde rejoices in having received an acceptance of a call from Pastor Joel De Boer. The installation service is set for Sunday, March 19, 2023.

Brooten Community CRC, Steve Zwart -presents the request that in keeping with CO Art 55 the elders, Richard Krasky, Ken Visser, Doris Tensen, and Jan Philipsen, be granted permission to administer the sacraments. **MOTION** to grant permission is ..... **CARRIED**.

Emo CRC, Harold De Jong, .....written report, rec'd.  
Pastor Marno Retief was installed October 4, 2022 and via a Zoom service Gerald VanSmeerdyk was installed as Chaplain at Elim Village in Surrey, B.C.

First CRC, Brandon, Brian Bolkema ..... written report, rec'd.

Elder delegate, Marina Nederlof, was granted the floor to report on status of Pastor Doug Vandekamp who has been on disability retirement. After 4 years of struggle with treatments and medication, thankfully he now appears to be on the road to recovery. He thanks Classis for enabling him to be on disability support and asks for our prayers for his ongoing recovery.

First CRC, TB, Robert Hoekstra ..... written report, rec'd.

Verbal update – experienced a 4<sup>th</sup> decline, nearing 4 years without a Pastor. Keep them in prayer as they continue conversations with pastors.

Pastor Hoekstra informed Classis that plans are that Easter Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, will be his final service as pastor at Hope CRC. This means First CRC will also need a new counselor.

Good News Fellowship, Ben Verkerk

Verbal update, encouraged Classis to uphold them in prayer.

Grace CRC, Michael Ten Haken ..... written report, rec'd.

Rock of Life, Steve Zwart

Verbal update - convey thanks that Les Kuiper will be serving a 4

month interim with them.

Trinity Hill, Mark Brouwer .....no additional report re organization.

**MOTION** to approve work of church counselors, with special gratitude to those who have completed their work is ..... **CARRIED.**

Chair, Dan DeGraff, prays for the work of the counselors and the churches mentioned in these reports.

5. Regional Pastor Reports

a. US Regional Pastor, Henry Gunnink ..... written report rec'd. Verbal update noting the need for regional pastors especially in times of separations between pastors and churches as recently happened with Faith CRC, but expressed appreciation for the mutual care and concern exercised in the process.

b. Canadian Regional Pastor, Evert Busink written report given to CIC.

**MOTION** to approve work of church counselors is ... **CARRIED.**

c. Aaron Greydanus reports on mentor relationship with David Dick in Hancock. They meet monthly on average covering various ministry topics and find it mutually beneficial. Are aware of the resource "Toward Effective Pastoral Mentoring" from PCR.

**MOTION** to approve mentor report is ..... **CARRIED.**

6. Credentials committee – Transcona and Hancock delegates, Brian Bolkema reporting.

The Credentials Committee Report noted the following re:

I. Credentials:

A. The following churches did not send credentials or delegates:

Brooten CRC

Good News Fellowship

B. Faith CRC did not check the form indicating that they authorize delegates to take part in all matters coming before Classis. They also did not sign the credentials.

- C. The following churches sent less than 3 delegates:
  - Bethlehem CRC: 2 delegates (no deacon)
  - Emden CRC: 2 delegates (no deacon)
  - Emo CRC: 2 delegates (2 elders, no pastor or deacon)
  - First CRC, Thunder Bay: 1 delegate (1 elder, no pastor or deacon)
  - First CRC, Brandon: 1 delegate (1 elder, no pastor or deacon)
  - Hancock CRC: 2 delegates (no deacon)
  - Hope CRC: 2 delegates (no deacon)
  - Rock of Life CRC: 2 delegates (no pastor)

II. Requests:

- A. Covenant CRC in Winnipeg is seeking to partner with a Brazilian, Reformed, church plant, and have no current experience planting churches. They would like to hear from the pastor/leaders of current or recent Sponsor/Parent churches to receive advice and wisdom.
  - 1. Recommendations from the Credentials Committee:
    - a. Ask if there are churches in Classis that have been parent churches to a church plant.
    - b. Contact Rich Braaksma, the Regional Mission Leader for Resonate Canada West.
- B. Rock of Life CRC in Willmar requests the assistance of Classis in terms of pulpit supply while they are without a pastor. [Note: Delegates indicated not currently needed with Interim pastor Les Kuiper taking an assignment with them.]
- C. Grace CRC notes that the assistance of Classis in Grace CRC's pastoral transition and search for new pastor is ongoing with classical counselor Michael Ten Haken. This matter is noted for information.
- D. Bridgewood Church would like to present their petition for Trinity Hill Church to become an organized church. Recommend that since this item is on the agenda, we receive this for information.

III. Nominations to Synod

- A. The Council of Raymond CRC wants to nominate Pastor Aaron Greydanus as minister delegate to Synod 2023.
- B. The Council of Hancock CRC wants to nominate Pastor David Dick as minister delegate to Synod 2023.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the credentials committee is

..... CARRIED.

**Role 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.*

**Art. 5 Actions supporting common ministry**

**A. Treasurer’s Financial Report - Wayne Tobak, his final report.**

..... written report received, posted on web site.  
additional hard copies distributed at meeting.

Verbal update.

1. Our treasurer reported a very good year for Classis in 2022  
Many substantial donations came in after the New Year with a result that for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year Classis had a small surplus, this year about \$6,000.
2. Wayne took the opportunity to give a brief history of the church development/land fund, which initially was used to purchase property in Plymouth for a church plant. This was sold after the church planter died and the project closed down. The profits were banked/invested and used to subsequently help fund 5 more projects, Red River Center and Good News Fellowship both in Winnipeg, then Bridgewood and now Trinity Hill in the Twin Cities area, and the Broken in Willmar. It’s been a great gift and blessing.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the Treasurer is ..... **CARRIED.**

**B. Appreciation of Treasurer**

As this was Wayne’s final appearance and report as treasurer, in recognition of 43 years of outstanding service as Treasurer of Classis Lake Superior, the clerk, as someone who has also known and worked with Wayne for some time, was asked to express appreciation

to Wayne on behalf of Classis. He presented Wayne and his wife, Joanne, with a coffee table book of photographs of Lake Superior in which were included names of all the churches and delegates present, and a gift of cash to be used for a family celebration. He helped put his years of service in perspective by noting that 43 years of service was even longer than it took Moses to lead Israel to the promised land! We benefited from his organization, meticulousness, diligence in book keeping, working with churches, etc. etc. (He estimates he handled about 25 million dollars over the years!) as well as the manner and positive heart for ministry which he displayed while doing so. In summary, as treasurer, he was a treasure! He then offered a prayer of thanks for all this work and asked a blessing upon all that was put in place to continue to bear fruit into the years ahead. Classis then gave a standing ovation and celebrated with cake at coffee time. "Thank you, Wayne!"



## **Art. 6 Classis Ministry Reports**

1. Classis Home Missions Committee -US, David Zigterman, Chair  
.... written report rec'd.

Verbal update

- a. reminded delegates that \$5k revitalization grants are available;
- b. planned educational seminars were dropped and instead revitalization

coaching cohorts are in progress.

2. The Broken, Pastor Chris Alle .....written report rec'd.

3. New Life-SEA (South East Asian) - Phonh Sinbondit

Verbal update

Phonh explained the tensions between older generation and younger generation affecting the congregation. He has a vision of new leadership containing members of both generations and a second vision of both languages working together going forward. However, this is resisted by the older generation and the younger generation out of respect for their elders does not dare to outvote them to make this necessary change. So, he has to preach in 2 sometimes 3 languages on Sundays, making for long services. He thanked Classis for their prayers and support.

Pastor Steve Zwart prayed for Pastor Phonh and New Life SEA ministry.

4. Youth Champion, Travis Deur .....written report rec'd.

Verbal update

- a. Serve project for this coming summer has 68 kids coming from 5 States. Project will be held here in Calvary.
- b. Materials for his two presentations at Classis (The Open Generation, and Making Space for Spiritual Growth) will be attached with the Classis

5. Prayer Coordinators

US East - Rob Braun,

US Central - Lowell Schwitters ..... written report rec'd.

Verbal update

Referred to Daniel's consistent daily prayer habits which changed in chapter 9 when fervently seeking relief from the 70 years of punishment. The angel told him, "As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given...." The Lord is that close for us in our prayers as well, hearing them all. So, we should be encouraged to bring prayers on behalf of the churches. God is waiting for our prayer. No prayer, no blessing. Let us do our part.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the CHMC-US is ..... **CARRIED.**

6. Chaplains,

Gerald VanSmeerdijk, Elim Village, Surrey BC .....written report rec'd.

Dan Crapo, Mayo Hospice Chaplaincy ..... reports in September.

7. Classis Home Missions Committee - CA, Ben Verkerk, chair  
..... no report rec'd.

Verbal update – Committee recruited delegates to CNG in May in Ottawa and are working on some grants to help with expenses.

a. The Gathering Place, Yvonne Schenk ..... written report rec'd.

b. Hope Centre Ministries, Shellie Power ..... written report rec'd.  
From the floor, attention was drawn to the amazing work Hope Centre has done to produce materials which their clientele can use at home and in online groups during and after Covid.

c. Canadian Prayer Mobilizer - Sonya Cahais ..... written report rec'd.

**MOTION** to approve the work of the CHMC-CA is ..... **CARRIED.**  
Ben Verkerk led in prayer for the CHMC's.

8. Classical Ministerial Leadership Team – Dan DeGraff, Chair  
..... no report rec'd.

9. Safe Church Team - ..... no report rec'd.

**Role IV: 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.*

**Art. 7 Denominational Ministries or Christian Institution Reports**

- 1. Board of Trustees: Calvin University,  
Rick Mast, Region 2 rep. CA. .... written report rec'd.  
Region 8 rep. US ..... no report rec'd.

2. Board of Trustees: Calvin Seminary,  
Robert Drenten ..... no report rec'd.
3. Resonate Global Missions,  
Brad Meinders ..... written report rec'd.
4. World Renew, Canadian report,  
Peter Bulhuis ..... written report rec'd.  
Verbal presentation made showing with power point pictures  
the impact our support is making around the world and how  
WR keeps learning about how to best provide help.  
World Renew US  
..... no report rec'd.
5. Council of Delegates:
  - a. COD- CRCNA Michael Ten Haken  
Verbal update
    - referred to Highlights of COD that have gone out.
    - Kevin DeRaaf newly appointed as head of Resonate Global Mission.
    - Big merger going on of ministries in GR office in order to be more efficient and reduce staff.
    - Faith Formation Ministries will now have new directors,  
Chris Schoon for the US and Leslie Van Milligen for Canada.
    - The large annual Inspire events will be discontinued.
    - Code of Conduct - Feedback received before December 31, 2022 was incorporated into a Revised Code of Conduct being presented to Synod 2023.
    - COD - This is its 7th year. As a result, many delegates have concluded their 2nd 3-year term so there are now 7-12 new delegates each year, all needing to be oriented and brought up to speed. He asked that we make this a matter of prayer.
    - Thanked Classis for being allowed to serve.

**MOTION** to approve work of COD representative is ..... **CARRIED.**
  - b. COD - Canada Corp, Ben Verkerk ..... no report rec'd.
6. Diaconal Ministries Canada, Ron Vanden Brink ..... no report rec'd.

Agencies and other Christian Organizations

7. Redeemer University College, David Zietsma, Pres .... written report rec'd.
8. Dordt University ..... no report rec'd.

## 9. Transitional Executive Director of Canadian Ministries, Al Postma

Al started this position in May 2022. He pointed out that the CRC is not only churches but also ministries. His job for the CRCNA is to help make governance boring again, that ministries work so well together, there's no conflict and people don't need to pay attention to them.

He reminded us of the 4 components of Our Journey 2025

1. Cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline, transforming our lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Listen to the voices of every generation, shaping us for ministry together.
3. Grow in diversity and unity by seeking justice, reconciliation, and welcome, sharing our faith as we build relationships with and honor the cultures of our neighbors and newcomers.
4. Share the gospel, live it missionally, and plant new churches in our neighborhoods as we discover how to connect with our local and global ministry contexts.

He spoke of being thankful for the CRCNA.

## 10. Renewed Man

Pastor Mark Brouwer was granted the floor to make delegates aware of two ministries he has developed and heads up:

Renewed Man --This is a coaching and mentoring community to help men gain self-mastery, deeper intimacy, and spiritual renewal.; and Renewed Man Community – finding real intimacy, vitality, and sexual integrity in an artificial world.

More information/resources are available at [renewedman.me](http://renewedman.me) and [renewedman.me/community](http://renewedman.me/community)

### **Art. 8 Minutes:**

These Minutes were approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman before distribution.

### **Art. 9 Closing Exercises:**

- 9.1 Chair, Pastor Dan DeGraff expressed thanks and appreciation to:
- a. fellow officers, Vice Chair, Pastor Aaron Greydanus, and Clerk, Pastor emeritus, Henry Gunnink, for their work and assistance with

b. Each in turn thanked the Chair for his effective chairing of the meeting, noting especially his gift for use of color-coded Xcel spreadsheets to organize the times for items to be handled.

9.2 Chair leads the delegates in a closing prayer of thanks and petition for the many matters, ministries, and persons which appeared on the agenda.

9.3 At about 1:40 pm a **MOTION** to adjourn is ..... **CARRIED.**

9.4 The Chair led delegates in singing the doxology.

9.5 Fall meeting, the Lord willing:  
September, 18-9, 2023,  
In person at Lake Geneva Christian Center, Alexandria, MN.  
Agenda deadline, August 7, 5 pm. CDT.