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# CLASSIS EASTERN CANADA of the Christian Reformed Church

Webpage: [Classis Eastern Canada](http://www.classis-easterncanada.org)

## Classis Eastern Canada MINUTES March 3-4, 2023 Meeting

**Meeting Place:** Barrhaven Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, Ottawa

### Classis meeting officers

Chairperson: Rev. Gregg Lawson      Vice-chairperson: Rev. Dan Meinema  
Clerk: Rev. Bernie Bakker

**Committees:**

Credentials	Fredericton & Charlottetown
Correspondence	Dixons & Calvin Ottawa
Overture	Brockville & Montreal
Ministerial Credentials	Calvin Ottawa
Transcription of Minutes	Dixons & Cornwall

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**Legend:** CEC – Classis Eastern Canada;      CIC – Classis Interim Committee  
RFI – Received for Information;      COD – Council of Delegates

**Next Meeting:** October 20-21, 2023 [place TBD]  
Chair – Dan Meinema; Vice – Rev. Sid Ypma  
Agenda Deadline – September 5, 2023

## Delegates to Classis Eastern Canada [CEC]

Church	Pastor	Elder	Deacon
Athens CRC	Dan Zylstra	Ron Triemstra	Sid Dijkema
Brockville Bethel	Jack van de Hoef	Trish DeSchiffert	-----
Charlottetown	Brad Bootsma*	Bill Enserink	Siemen Sweers*
Cornwall Immanuel	Vacant	Robert Brodie	Kathleen Dixon
Dixon's Community	Aaron Thompson	R. Schneckenburger*	Lis VandenBerg
Fredericton	Dan Hoogland	----	Renata Trueman*
Halifax All Nations	Dave Vroege	Peter Van Harmelen*	Emily Hutton
Kemptville First	Sid Ypma	Jackie Ritskes	L. De Jong Ellard*
Kentville	Justin Halbersma	John VanderKloet	Benjamin Bentley
Milford Faith Community	Paul Vanderkooy	Andy Bokma	Doug Hankinson
Montreal First	James Kralt	----	Eric Perron
Ottawa Barrhaven Fellowship	Rick Nanninga	Paul Steiginga	Monique Heidinga-Sat
Ottawa Calvary	Vacant	Cathy Vedder Bart Rijke	Harry Rylaarsdam Chris Fekkes
Ottawa Calvin	Craig Hoekema	Joyce Luimes	Scott Bandy
Ottawa Kanata Community	Chris Schievink	Sonya Boersma*	Wined Klein
Pembroke Zion	Vacant	----	D. Van Starckenburg
Renfrew Hebron	Daniel Meinema	Ed Oegema	Anita Smit
Truro	Vacant	Andrew Alkema	Rene Wall
Williamsburg	Gregg Lawson	Derrick Noort	Andrew VanVeen

*\*First time delegate*

### **Friday, March 3, 2023 – 10 am**

#### **1. Constitution of Classis and Opening Devotions**

- 1.1. Delegates gather in Fellowship CRC Ottawa Barrhaven. Several Maritime delegates are joining the meeting via ZOOM.
- 1.2. Host church Fellowship CRC, Ottawa Barrhaven Pastor Rick Nanninga, welcomes all delegates and guests and led in opening devotions along with members of praise team. Rick leads us in reflection on Revelation 1:10-18. We are called to see what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Let us always remember the Jesus holds us and is building His church.
- 1.3. All congregations are represented by their delegates. Pastor Rick notes we have 8 delegates on Zoom.

#### **2. Rev. Gregg Lawson serves as chair and Rev. Dan Meinema is vice chair for the meeting.**

- 2.1. Pastor Gregg thanks Rick for his devotion and welcomes the following guests: Becky Jones, Resonate Eastern Canada Mission Catalyzer; and Candidate Ryan Farrell.

#### **3. Committee Appointments**

- 3.1. Correspondence: Milford & Calvin Ottawa
  - 3.2. Credentials: Fredericton & Charlottetown
  - 3.3. Ministerial Credentials: Calvin Ottawa
  - 3.4. Overtures: Brockville & Montreal
- Transcription of Minutes: Milford & Cornwall

## 4. Reports

### 4.1. Stated Clerk [Bernie Bakker] – Agenda Att. 1

4.1.1. **Motion: that CEC approve the work of Stated Clerk.**

**Adopted**

### 4.2. Classis Interim Committee [Gregg Lawson, chair] – Agenda Att. 2

4.2.1. Winston Visser agreed to be a member of the Ad Hoc Committee for developing the CEC Ministry Plan. They hope to meet in the near future.

4.2.2. The partnership agreement with Ottawa Campus Chaplaincy was approved & signed.

4.2.3. The Memorandum of Understanding with Resonate Global Mission was approved and signed.

4.2.4. CIC developed guidelines for meeting in person or ZOOM.

4.2.4.1. Ordinarily the fall classis meeting will be conducted in person and the winter meeting online.

4.2.4.2. CIC will also investigate the continued feasibility of offering a hybrid solution given that there are limited venues available for these types of meetings.

4.2.4.3. All classis delegates are encouraged wherever possible to attend in person meetings

4.2.5. **Motion: that CEC approve the work of the Classis Interim Committee. Adopted**

### 4.3. Personnel Committee [Dave Vroege] – Agenda Att. 3

4.3.1. A list of various positions and nominees were presented. See Personnel Committee report for complete list.

4.3.2. Credentials committee shares elder and deacon nominees for Synod. Throughout the meeting delegates ballot of Synodical Delegates.

4.3.3. Synodical Delegates:

Regular

Minister

Elder

Deacons

4<sup>th</sup> Office-bearer

Dan Meinema

Sonya Boersma

Kathleen Dixon

Sid Ypma

Alternate

Gregg Lawson

Colin Conrad

Laura Snippe

Aaron Thompson

### 4.4. Classis Ministry Leadership Team [Craig Hoekema] – Agenda Att. 4

4.4.1. Classis is continuing to provided support to Chris Smid, Chris Zak, Justin Halbersma, and Kyle Ward. See agenda att. 3 for full report.

4.4.2. Chris Tibben previously supported by CEC decided to move his membership outside the CRC and is in the process for reimbursing CEC.

4.4.3. Mike Vlaming decided not to seek renewal of his licensure to exhort. We thank Mike for serving CEC since October 2012.

4.4.4. Jacob Zwiers decided not to seek renewal of his licensure to exhort.

4.4.5. Jonathan Patrick of Calvin CRC is requesting a licensure to exhort. This is supported by Calvin and CMLT. He will be examined on Saturday morning, March 4, 2023.

### 4.5. Youth Ministry [Joe Groeneveld] – Agenda Att. 5

4.5.1. Many youth groups are meeting on a weekly basis again. We are thankful for local leaders in their congregations.

4.5.2. This spring youth from Calvin and Calvary are heading to Plymouth, NC to volunteer on a Disaster Response Site. In addition, several youth groups are going on SERVE this summer through ThereforeGO Ministries.

4.5.3. Thankful for the Young Adult retreat this past fall at Seeley's Bay.

4.5.4. For more information contact Ron Hosmar or Joe Groeneveld.

4.6. Classis Resonate Mission Committee – Agenda Att. 6, 6a, 6b RFI

4.6.1. Mission Catalyzer – Winston Visser

4.6.2. CEC Mission Newsletter is shared by Aaron Thompson

#### 4.7. *Regional Pastors*

4.7.1. Regional Pastors

4.7.1.1. Regional Pastor (West) – Jack Van de Hoef verbal update RFI

4.7.1.1.1. We rejoice as Steven Eckersley accepted call to Hagersville Community CRC, ON.

4.7.1.2. Regional Pastor (East) – Dave Vroege verbal update RFI

4.7.2. Vice chair leads in prayer for Regional Pastors

#### 5. Guest Speaker

5.1. Becky Jones, Resonate Regional Catalyzer – Canada East introduces herself. She will be present throughout the meeting to connect with delegates.

#### Lunch Break

6. Ordination Examination – Candidate Ryan Farrell called by Ottawa Calvary CRC, as Ottawa Campus Chaplain.

6.1. Introduction of Synodical Deputies: Ken DeBoer, Quinte; Richard Griff, Toronto; Michael Bootsma, Hamilton; the latter two joining via ZOOM

6.2. The examination followed the procedure outlined Church Order Article 10 Supplement.

6.3. Bart Rijke of Calvary CRC introduced Candidate Ryan Farrell.

6.4. Ministerial Credentials

6.4.1. Calvin CRC delegate reports that the Letter of Call and Acceptance are in order.

6.5. Practica – Dan Zylstra

6.5.1. Pastor Dan Zylstra proceeds with the practica part of the conversation which is followed by questions from the delegates.

6.5.2. **Motion to proceed** **Adopted**

6.6. Sermon Evaluation – Dave Vroege & All Nations CRC elder

6.6.1. Pastor Dave reads their report on classical sermon and two other sermons submitted followed by questions from delegates and synodical deputies.

6.6.2. **Motion to proceed** **Adopted**

6.6.3. Synodical Deputies give their concurrence

6.7. Biblical and Theological Position – Aaron Thompson

6.7.1. Pastor Aaron leads this part of the conversation followed by questions from delegates and synodical deputies.

6.8. **Motion to admit Ryan Farrell to the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church.**

6.8.1. Executive Session is declared followed by preliminary discussion.

6.8.2. Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit is offered and synodical deputies leave to prepare their recommendation.

6.8.3. Following classis positive vote, the synodical deputies concur with above motion **Adopted.**

6.8.4. In open session - Ryan and his wife, Mickeelie are offered congratulations; Pastor Sid Ypma offers prayer.

6.8.5. The ordination service will be held in Calvary CRC on Friday, May 12 and 7 pm.

## 7. Classis Ministry Reports continued

### 7.1. *Church Counselors*

7.1.1. Charlottetown CRC – Dan Hoogland: Charlottetown just formed a new search team to call a 2<sup>nd</sup> pastor.

7.1.2. Cornwall CRC – James Kralt: A search committee is being formed.

7.1.3. Zion CRC Pembroke – Dan Meinema: At this time not calling.

7.1.4. Ottawa Calvary CRC – Chris Schievink: Calvary just starting calling process.

7.1.5. John Calvin CRC Truro will receive a counselor upon the Oversight Committee recommendation.

### 7.2. *Church Visitors*

7.2.1. Team East #1 [Halifax, Milford, Truro] – Dan Hoogland

7.2.2. Team East #2 [Charlottetown, Fredericton, Kentville] – Craig Hoekema

7.2.3. Team West #1 [Brockville, Ottawa: Kanata & Calvary; Renfrew] – Sid Ypma

7.2.4. Team West #2 [Athens, Ottawa: Barrhaven, Cornwall, Pembroke, Williamsburg] – Aaron Thompson

7.2.4.1. Aaron reports on visit with Immanuel CRC, Cornwall.

7.2.5. Team West #3 [Dixons Corners, Kemptville, Ottawa: Calvin, Montreal] – Joe Groeneveld

## 8. Credentials and Instructions – Fredericton and Charlottetown

8.1. Zion CRC, Pembroke asked for classis to have a discussion on ways to improve/increase communication between sister churches.

## 9. Oversight Committee Updates

9.1. The two reports were read in executive session and then CEC moves into open session.

9.2. John Calvin CRC – Dan Hoogland

9.2.1. Motion that Classis entrust the CIC with receiving and responding to the final report and recommendations received from the Oversight Committee, and reporting their decision(s) to the subsequent meeting of classis. **Adopted**

9.3. Pastor Nick Baas – Dave Vroege

9.3.1. Motion that CEC declare Pastor Nick Baas eligible for call in the CRC. **Adopted**

## 10. Overture Committee – Brockville and Montreal; Agenda Att. 10 & 11

10.1. Overture Committee reads their recommendation that CEC not accede to the overture from All Nations CRC (Halifax, NS), Calvary CRC (Ottawa, ON), Fredericton CRC (Fredericton, NB) and John Calvin CRC (Truro, NS). i.e., Att. 10.

10.2. Pastor Dan Hoogland responds for Overture 10 churches and moves that CEC adopt the overture. Delegates discuss the overture.

10.3. Overture to Classis Eastern Canada

Introduction:

For nearly 50 years congregations in the Christian Reformed Church have struggled to create safe and welcoming spaces for those who identify as LGBTQ+. The 2022 Synodical

Report on Human Sexuality counters those efforts as follows: 1. While seeking to be inclusive and empathetic, Synod 2022's endorsement of the HSR report (Acts of Synod 2022, p.919) and adoption of section D of the report to confessional status (Acts of Synod 2022, p.922), results in the opposite. 2. The binding nature of the report hinders efforts of local congregations. 3. The report places heavy burdens on Office Bearers. This overture seeks to address these three concerns.

Background:

In 1973, the Acts of Synod stated (using the language of that time) that, "The homosexual may not on the sole grounds of his sexual disorder be denied community acceptance and if he is a Christian he is to be whole heartedly received by the church as a person for whom Christ died." (Acts of Synod 1973, p. 632).

In 1999, Synod reiterated this pledge when it "[called] the churches to repentance for their failures to minister to those who experience same sex attractions." (Acts of Synod 1999, p. 603).

The Human Sexuality Report expands on this commitment by acknowledging that: "The church's response to homosexuality must begin with confession and lament. Despite repeated and strong exhortations of past study committee reports to love and care for brothers and sisters who are attracted to the same sex as equal members of the body of Christ, the church has all-too-often ostracized, shunned, or ignored such Jesus-followers. Congregations need to honestly examine their attitudes and actions toward people who are attracted to the same sex and need to repent when such attitudes and actions are sinful: treating homosexuals as if they are worse sinners than those who are caught up in pornography, premarital, or extramarital sex; overlooking them for positions of leadership, including those of pastor, elder, and deacon instead of considering whether they are, like all office bearers need to be, living holy and godly lives; keeping them physically and emotionally at a distance because they make some feel uncomfortable; failing to stand in solidarity with them as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ" (Agenda for Synod 2022, p.426).

1. While Synod 2022 acknowledges this deficit, it fails to realize that its decision to clarify the word "unchastity" (Acts of Synod 2022, p. 922) to include "homosexual sex" will continue to make members of the LGBTQ+ community feel less than welcome. Further, elevating an interpretation of a confession regarding what constitutes "unchastity" to confessional status itself is not only contentious but becomes even more unwelcoming to members of this community.

2. The report places a heavy burden on local congregations to accept Synod's decision to include "homosexual sex" in the Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 108 understanding of "unchastity". (Acts of Synod 2022, p. 922). Though some congregations are united in their agreement with the decision, many others are divided in their biblical understanding of God's design for human sexuality. This has resulted in high levels of fear, anxiety, confusion, suspicion and division throughout the denomination. It has also kept the local church from being a welcoming place for the LGBTQ+ community.

3. The primary burden of Synod 2022's decision has fallen on office bearers who serve on the front lines of local church ministries. Like the congregations they serve, office bearers are also divided on the issue of human sexuality, particularly regarding "homosexual sex". Some are contemplating stepping down because of their disagreement with the Synodical Report. Others have written gravamina to their local councils to acknowledge their struggle to accept the decision of Synod 2022. Still others are seeking to bring their congregations into alignment with this decision. As such, this decision of Synod has not only created division and discord within the denomination, it has also made it difficult for office bearers in local congregations to welcome members of the LGBTQ+ community.

#### Overture:

The councils of All Nations CRC (Halifax, NS), Calvary CRC (Ottawa, ON), Fredericton CRC (Fredericton, NB) and John Calvin CRC (Truro, NS), in the interest of denominational healing and unity, and for the sake of welcoming members of the LGBTQ+ community into our congregations, overture Classis Eastern Canada to overture Synod 2023 to declare that a Classis of the CRCNA, in response to local needs and circumstances, may declare that Article 65, Item 2 of the Acts of Synod 2022 (p.922) be considered inoperative, thereby allowing office bearers from local congregations who disagree with the decision to continue serving and ministering within their local contexts without being subject to discipline.

#### Grounds:

The decision of Synod 2022 harms the unity of local congregations, classis, and the denomination. Requiring office bearers to accept Synod 2022's decision will cause deepening rifts within congregations and the denomination. Looking back, Synod 1995, in addressing the division surrounding women in ecclesiastical office, allowed each Classis unique authority for a time to deal with matters of ordination of women largely as an act of maintaining unity (Acts of Synod 1995, p. 727). Granting classical authority in this matter helped to guard against congregationalism while allowing individual congregations to consider what was best for local realities where theological differences exist.

The decision of Synod 2022 mistakenly declares an interpretation of a confession to be confessional in nature. Synod 1975 states that "No synodical decision involving doctrinal or ethical pronouncements is to be considered on a par with the confessions." (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 598). This same report goes on to recommend that "When a synodical decision involves pronouncements that are related to the confessions or go beyond the confessions, the use and function of such decisions is to further express the faith of the church without such statements thereby becoming additions to the confessions." (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 603-604). Synod 2022's decision sets a troubling precedent by side-stepping the 1975 decision of synod and requiring all office bearers in the Christian Reformed Church to agree with what is recognizably an interpretation of a confession.

The decision of Synod 2022 to clarify the meaning of the word "unchastity" in Heidelberg Catechism Q. and A. 108 makes CRC congregations inhospitable places for members of the LGBTQ+ community. God calls all people to live in holiness as sexual beings. But Synod 2022 unfairly targets the LGBTQ+ community by declaring "homosexual sex" a sin even within a committed and loving relationship. This clarification reinforces the message that our

faith communities are not welcoming places for those from the LGBTQ+ community. It harms the witness of the gospel message of grace and hinders office bearers from ministering in a way that is welcoming to all people.

10.3.1. Motion that CEC forward the above Overture to Synod 2023.

**Adopted**

10.4. Overture Committee reads their recommendation that CEC adopt a revised version of the Kanata Community CRC to send to Synod 2023. Kanata CCRC considers the revision as “friendly amendments.”

Introduction

This overture emerges from deep grief about what has happened within the Christian Reformed Church since the 2020 release of the Human Sexuality Report (HSR). It is a plea for:

- greater attention to on-going harm within our midst;
- more respect for the moral agency and consciences of individuals; and
- a pause in the implementation of some Synod 2022 decisions out of love and concern for the CRC as a whole.

Below are three significant matters that have not received enough attention to date. They are the rationale for an overture that proposes a way forward, with grounds for taking this direction.

i) Apology and Follow-up

The HSR report repeatedly named the harms done to members of the LGBTQ+ community and openly acknowledged that the CRC has failed them. As part of apologizing for wrongs done, the report spells out some helpful components for a wholesale change in the way CRC churches relate to persons struggling with their sexual identities or identifying as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Synod 2022 repeated apologies made in 1973 and 2016, acknowledging that CRC churches have contributed to harm done in the past. Those harms continue to happen in our communities, and in many situations efforts to interpret and apply the decisions of Synod 2022 may and will serve to increase rather than decrease the harm and alienation of those to whom apologies were made.

Sincere apology requires listening with respect and compassion to those who are harmed; understanding and owning the impact of our own behaviors; and then making the required changes in the practices that harm them. Refusing to consider any possible harmful implications of decisions being made undermines Synod’s apology. There is a need to clarify the implications of the “confessional status” decision in order to address the valid concerns that have been raised.

ii) Preventing Harm is a Biblical Imperative

Preventing harm to others is a central focus of the Bible, beginning in Genesis, through the Old Testament, in the Jesus way, in early church life, and continuing into the shalom of the New Creation. The Bible does not justify doing harm in this life in order to save a soul for eternity. It does not bifurcate ‘life on earth’ and ‘life in the world to come’ in a way that might justify harm in order to point towards salvation.

Jesus led with full acceptance, love and compassion; moreover, his harshest judgements were for those who put obstacles in the way of the vulnerable in this life, not primarily for



eternity but always. In practice, using fear of eternal damnation to save souls turns people away from Jesus more than to him.

The harmful impacts of some decisions made at Synod 2022 have become evident in one year, including the following bitter fruits: hurt and rejection experienced by LGBTQ+ members of the CRC, as stated in their own voices, with many are choosing to walk away despite their deep love for the CRC because it is too painful to stay; there is more conflict within churches because many members recognize the harm being done and do not accept that this is the only path for the CRC to follow.

Research on preventing harm for LGBTQ+ persons provides clear direction about necessary conditions for mental health and well-being. In addition, there is a growing body of research on what churches can do to create safe, supportive, and loving spaces for struggling members or members who have identified themselves as LGBTQ+. i We may know what is necessary for the mental health of LGBTQ+ members, but Synod 2022 added obstacles to doing it. Within the CRC, numerous pastors have testified that the ‘hate-the-sin, love-the-sinner’ approach, endorsed by Synod 2022, is often applied in ways that are too simplistic and that do harm instead of good for someone who is born gay and wonders why God made them that way. Even for those who believe that the biblical teaching on homosexuality also prohibits committed, intimate same-sex relationships, there is a need to acknowledge and recognize the very real hurt and distress this prohibition causes. And using terms such as “unchaste” and “adulterous” to label committed same-sex relationships is not necessarily accurate or fair, even if one thinks such relationships are not biblical. Additionally, the means and manner of making decisions at Synod 2022 were inconsistent with the imperative to treat every person with respect and dignity, created in the image of God.

The fall-out of Synod 2022 in many cases is that it has become more difficult to create safe spaces for young people who are forming their spiritual and sexual identities. Preventing emotional and spiritual harm to our young people is a covenant obligation under the baptismal vows we make. Those vows don’t expire when young people disclose that they have a different sexual orientation or gender-identity than expected at birth. It is not the case that ‘we don’t know what to do.’ A decade of research informs good practice. ii Without further discussion and clearer guidance, the reality is that in many situations efforts to apply Synod 2022 will do the opposite by creating obstacles to good practice.

### iii) Justice and Compassion

Justice and compassion were not given adequate consideration in the final decisions of Synod 2022 and the way those decisions were made. Justice and compassion are central to Biblical teachings and the way Jesus taught us to live - more central than any specific verses about sexual morality. The failure to give adequate consideration and weight to other relevant Biblical teachings was named in many of the overtures to Synod 2021 and 2022 which called for more time and dialogue. Those calls were ignored by Synod 2022 without adequate response to the substantive issues raised in them. For reason of length, this overture cannot go into details about what justice and compassion mean with regard to this topic, so it calls for time to do so before we inflict more harm on more people.

### Overture

For these reasons, Classis Eastern Canada overtures Synod 2023 to:

1. Put on hold implementation of the confessional status decision by Synod 2022 until Synod 2028, when the decision of Synod 2022 will be revisited.
2. Use this five-year time period to develop a strategy for intentional, on-going listening to Christ-serving members of the LGBTQ+ community, families, and allies, to inform the way we express belonging, provide pastoral care, and create safe spaces in CRC churches, in keeping with the apology for past wrongs and failures.
3. Use this five-year time period to develop an action plan for serious implementation of the Synod 2022 decision that calls for more research, theological study and reflection, and open dialogue on human sexuality, including consideration that there may be other Reformed approaches to interpreting Scripture.

Grounds:

1. Time is needed to give intentional effort to enable every CRC church to become a space where members of the LGBTQ+ community will feel they are accepted, loved, and belong in the family of God, in keeping with our calling to act out of compassion and justice.
  
2. Preventing harm to other people in this life is a central teaching throughout the Bible, as part of the commandment to love others as ourselves. “The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” Romans 13: 9-10. (emphasis added)
  
3. The Bible does not justify doing harm in this life in order to save a soul for eternity. The good news of the Kingdom of God, based on dignity and respect for every person as created in the image of God, applies now and in the renewed creation.
  
4. The Heidelberg Catechism, in Question and Answer (Q/A) 107, teaches that the sixth commandment includes protecting others from harm as much as possible. This was not considered when Synod 2022 based its ‘confessional status’ decision on one, specific interpretation of the term “unchastity” in Q/A 108 of the Heidelberg Catechism. Q/A 107 is just as important as Q/A 108.  
 Both need to be considered in the larger context of how the Heidelberg Catechism understands the second table of the Commandments as a guide for Christian living.  
 107 Q Is it enough then that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?  
 A. No. By condemning envy, hatred, and anger God wants us  
 to love our neighbours as ourselves  
 to be patient, peace-loving, gentle, merciful, and friendly toward them  
 to protect them from harm as much as we can,  
 and to do good even to our enemies. (emphasis added)
  
5. Compassion and justice, two central teachings of Jesus and the good news we proclaim for our world, were not given enough consideration in the final decisions and the way those decisions were made at Synod 2022. Calling for a pause and taking time to ensure those core teachings are given the weight they deserve is warranted by the bitter fruits evident in the first year. There are other possible Reformed interpretations of Scripture that do not lead to the injustice, harm, and conflict caused by the one particular approach to interpreting Scripture used to justify labelling all homosexual sex as ‘unchastity.’

6. The failure to treat with respect members of the CRC community who are also members of the LGBTQ+ community has caused harm and reaped negative fruits in many churches during the first year. We know the harm done and how to prevent further harm. The growing, specific research on outcomes of different approaches by churches provides a clear, evidence-based consensus on what constitutes safe spaces within churches. Furthermore, members of the LGBTQ+ community who follow Jesus have gifts to contribute to our mission, fellowship, and worship.

7. Synod 2022 called for more research, study of the Bible and theology, and dialogue on the matters covered in the HSR report. It is logical to implement that decision (for more research, study and dialogue) before moving to aggressive implementation of a later, very specific decision that has already been seen in many cases to have destructive consequences due to a lack of more specific guidance and heartfelt reflection.

i Eric M. Rodriguez PhD (2009). At the Intersection of Church and Gay: A Review of the Psychological Research on Gay and Lesbian Christians, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 57:1, 5-38. Foster, Kirk A, and Bowland, Sharon. All the Pain Along with All the Joy: Spiritual Resilience in Lesbian and Gay Christians, *American Journal of Community Psychology* (2015) 55:191-201. Barnes, David M, Meyer, Ilan H. Religious Affiliation, Internalized Homophobia, and Mental Health in Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (2012) 82:4, 505-515. Lease, Suzanne, Horne, Sharon, and Noffsinger-Frazier, Nicole. Affirming Faith Experiences and Psychological Health for Caucasian Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Individuals, *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (2005) 52:3, 378-388. Edward F. Lomash, Tabria D. Brown & M. Paz Galupo (2018): "A Whole Bunch of Love the Sinner Hate the Sin": LGBTQ Microaggressions Experienced in Religious and Spiritual Context, *Journal of Homosexuality*. ii Page, Matthew J.L., Lindall, Kristin, and Malik, Neena. The Role of Religion and Stress in Sexual Identity and Mental Health Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-sexual Youth." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* (2013) 23(4), 665-677. Dahl, Angie, and Galliher, Renee V. LGBTQ Adolescents and Young Adults Raised with a Christian Religious Context," *Journal of Adolescence* 35(2012), 1611-1618. Dahl, Angie, and Galliher, Renee PhD. Sexual Minority Young Adult Religiosity, Sexual Orientation Conflict, Self-Esteem and Depressive Symptoms, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health* (2010), 14:4, 271-290. Edward F. Lomash, Tabria D. Brown & M. Paz Galupo (2018): Shelley L. Craig, Ashley Austin, Mariam Rashidi & Marc Adams. Fighting for survival: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students in religious colleges and universities, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* (2017), 29:1, 1-24.

10.4.1. Motion that CEC send the revised KCCRC to Synod 2023. **Adopted**

11. Correspondence Committee – Milford and Calvin

- 11.1. Pastor Rick Nanninga, Pastor at Fellowship CRC, Barrhaven with support of his council, requests a retirement date of September 3, 2023.
- 11.2. Motion that CEC grant Pastor Rick Nanninga's request to retire on September 3, 2023 in accordance with Church Order Art. 18a. **Adopted**
- 11.3. Prayer is offered and Pastor Rick shares some thoughts with the delegates

Classis breaks for supper.

**Friday Evening:**

**"Indigenous Land Acknowledgement and Reconciliation" – presentation and discussion led by Mike Hogeterp: "I'm a Christ follower, husband, father, percussionist and outdoor (ski,**

canoe) enthusiast. On work days I have the blessed opportunity to be staff of the Centre for Public Dialogue - a justice and reconciliation ministry of the CRC and RCA in Canada.”

### Why Land Acknowledgement?

Mike reviewed the 2016 decision of CRC Synod regarding the “Doctrine of Discovery” declared a heresy. Several points raised:

- Matthew 5:23-24 says reconciliation matters.
- We are guests so to speak need to remember that history matters.
- Research information re Land Acknowledgment is found in the CRC Canada webpage under “The Land We Stand On – A Territory Acknowledgement Guide. Go to <https://network.crcna.org/sites/default/files/Territory%20acknowledgement%20guide.pdf>?

We thank Mike for coming sharing this info. All local congregations are encouraged to discuss these matters in council and with the congregation.

### Saturday, March 4, 2023 – 8:30 am

12. CEC chair, Gregg Lawson calls delegates together; reads 1 Cor 12:27; leads in devotions on the uniqueness of the body of Christ; and opens in prayer. Due to weather conditions over 20 delegates on ZOOM.

13. Correspondence Committee – Calvin, Milford; Agenda Att. 18

- 13.1. Motion that CEC grant All Nations Halifax request; that during Pastor Dave Vroege sabbatical, elders be permitted to administer the Lord’s Supper, in line with CO Art. 53 & 55. **Adopted**

14. **Licensure to Exhort Examination:** Jonathan Patrick, Calvin CRC Ottawa

- 1) Introduction: CMLT report and recommendation: Craig Hoekema
- 2) Sermon evaluation based on 1 Cor 3:1-9; Sid Ypma and Kemptville Elder
- 3) Examination: Rick Nanninga
- 4) Motion that CEC grant Jonathan Patrick a licensure to exhort for one year. **Adopted**
- 5) Congratulations is extended to Jonathan and Craig Hoekema offers pray of thanks.
- 6) Jonathan Patrick signs the Covenant for Office-bearers.

15. **Annual General Meeting of the Membership of Classis Eastern Canada**

- 15.1. Motion to approve the following as Directors of Corporation: Gregg Lawson, chair; Jack Van der Hoef; Brian Vanden Berg; Michelle DePooter; William DeHaan; and Ron Hosmar **Adopted**
- 15.2. 2022 Financial Statements – Eva Reitsma, treasurer; Agenda Att. 13
- 15.2.1. Motion to receive the 2022 CEC Financial Statements as presented **Adopted**
- 15.3. Motion to appoint MNP Cornwall for 2023 CEC Financial Review **Adopted**

16. **Financial Update** – Eva Reitsma, treasurer

- 16.1. FAC Updated recommendations to CEC; Agenda Att. 13a
- 16.1.1. Motion that as ECDC [Eastern Canada Diaconal Conference] ceased to operate in January 2023 and returned their remaining \$5,822.27 to Classis; and If ECDC is not reactivated and use the funds by December 31, 2023, these funds will be transferred to Diaconal Ministries Canada. **Adopted**

16.1.2. Motions that Classis has a \$3,000 balance in the Struggling Churches Support Fund, a fund no longer offered to churches. The FAC recommends that the \$3,000 in this fund be rolled back into the General Fund in 2023. **Adopted**

16.1.3. Motion - FAC recommends that assistance in the form of wage replacement be made available to people who want to attend classis but are unable to due to financial hardship. Maximum compensation would be based on missing one day of work. FAC recommends that a flat rate of \$150 / person / classis meeting be made available as follows:

- 16.1.3.1. Person must be earning an hourly wage or a salary. Pastors and retired persons do not qualify.
  - a. A person needing daycare for children may request support.
  - b. FAC will budget for 20 persons per classis meeting at \$150 per meeting or \$3,000 per meeting. An annual budget of \$6,000 is recommended.
  - c. If more than 20 people request funding, the pool of \$3,000 per meeting will be divided among all applicants, with a potential payout of less than \$150 per person.
  - d. Requests for support must be received by 1 month prior to the classis meeting to allow time to determine and inform all who requested funding what the maximum payout will be for support for the meeting.
  - e. This request will be on an honour system. FAC will not request proof of need and the hope is that all requests are needed requests.
  - f. This will not be an accumulating fund. Grounds: This allows the budget to stay consistent over the years. FAC will review its usage annually and recommend adjustments as needed.
  - g. The FAC is recommending funding for Synod not be added to the budget due to the added strain this will put on the budget. Synod is a 7–10 day expense.
  - h. If approved this will begin in 2024 as a new line item in the Classis Eastern Canada Budget.

Above Motion

**Adopted**

16.2. Remittance per church – 2022; Agenda Att. 13b **FYI**

## 17. Mission Montreal Report

17.1. CEC signed the updated agreement with Mission Montreal in which CEC provides encouragement, prayer support and fosters a good communication between Mission Montreal and the churches of CEC, etc. The agreement is in the CEC March 2023 file.

17.2. Motion to sign agreement **Adopted**

## 18. Ottawa Campus Chaplaincy – Ryan Farrell

18.1. Ryan gives classis an update about the work of ministry with students. Thankful for donations from area churches; e.g., one congregation provided over 100 gift boxes for Valentine’s Day. We are encouraged to prayer for this vital ministry.

## 19. Denominational and Other Ministry Reports

19.1. Canadian Ministry – Agenda Att. 14, 14a

19.1.1. Transitional Executive Director, Canada – Al Postma via video

19.1.2. Council of Delegates – Dan Meinema

- 19.2. CRCNA General Secretary – Pastoral Letter; Agenda Att. 14
- 19.3. World Renew - Echo McLeod, Marg Van Noord; Agenda Att. 17a & b
  - 19.3.1. Echo gives us an update report thanking the churches for their prayers and financial giving plus encouraging the delegates to remember the relieve response in Turkey following the earthquakes.
- 19.4. Disability Concerns – vacancy
- 19.5. Calvin Theological Seminary, Louise Boutin, Shawn Brix; Agenda Att. 18
- 19.6. Calvin University – Roseanne Lopers Sweetman; Agenda Att. 16
- 19.7. Redeemer University – Bart Mooibroek; Agenda Att. 15
20. Throughout the meeting Joys and Concerns from all the congregations which were shared and brought before our God. We are thankful for the Lord's care and presence in the work of ministry.
21. We thank the chair for his leadership in taking us through this meeting of CEC.
22. Organizational Matters – Next Classis Meeting
  - October 20-21, 2023
  - Location: TBD
  - Agenda deadline – September 5, 2023
  - Officers: Chair – Rev. Dan Meinema; Vice – Rev. Sid Ypma
  
  - Spring Date: March 1-2, 2024
  - Location: TBD

**CLASSIS EASTERN CANADA – Personnel [March 3 - 4, 2023]**

*In compliance with privacy legislation, contact information is not published. Please contact clerk.*

<b>POSITION</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Term end</b>
<b>Stated Clerk</b> ( <a href="mailto:cecstatedclerk@gmail.com">cecstatedclerk@gmail.com</a> )	Bernie Bakker	2	2024 Oct
Alternate Clerk	John Venema	1	2023 Oct
<b>Treasurer</b> ( <a href="mailto:cectreas@gmail.com">cectreas@gmail.com</a> )	Eva Reitsma	3	
Alternate Treasurer	Katie Bosman	1	2026 Mar
<b>Regional Pastor (E)</b>	David Vroege	2	2025 Oct
<b>Regional Pastor (W)</b>	Jack Van de Hoef	1	2023 Oct
<b>Licensure to Exhort</b>	Michael Vlaming		2023 Mar
	Jacob Zwiers		2023 Mar
<b>Chaplains</b> <i>Ministry to Seafarers</i>	Michelle DePooter		
<i>Ottawa Campus</i>	Ryan Farrell		
<b>Commissioned Pastors</b>	Michelle DePooter		
	Ron Hosmar		
	Justin Halbersma		
<b>Classis Interim Committee</b>	Michelle DePooter	3	2026 Mar
	Bernie Bakker, <i>clerk; ex officio</i>		
	Gregg Lawson, Chair	2	2026 Mar
	Jack Van de Hoef	2	2023 Oct
	Brian Vandenberg	2	2025 Mar
	William DeHaan	2	2025 Oct
	Ron Hosmar	1	2023 Oct
<b>Personnel Committee</b>	Dan Hoogland, chair	2	2025 Oct
	Bernie Bakker, <i>clerk; ex officio</i>		
	Dave Vroege	3	2023 Oct
	Vacancy		
<b>Classis Resonate Mission Team</b>	Sid Ypma chair	1	2026 Mar
<i>Outreach Ministry Developer</i>	Winston Visser	2	2025 Mar
<i>Member-at-Large - Deacon</i>	Karla Winham	1	2024 Mar

<i>Pastor</i>	Chris Schievink	2	2023 Oct
<i>Member-at-Large - Maritime</i>	vacant		
	John Scholman	2	2026 Mar
	Aaron Thompson	1	2023 Oct
<i>Classis Prayer Coordinator</i>	Vacancy		
<b>Diaconal Ministry</b>			
<i>Diaconal Ministry Canada</i>			
<i>DMC Board Representative</i>	Peter Van Harmelen	1	2023
<i>Diaconal Coach (Classis EC-Maritimes)</i>	Rene Wall		
<i>Diaconal Coach (Classis EC-Quebec/Ontario)</i>	Chris Smid		
<i>Eastern Canada Diaconal Conference (Ontario)</i>	Ian White, chair		2021 Oct
<i>Chair</i>	Ian White	2	2025
<i>Pastoral Adviser</i>	Dan Meinema	1	2022
<b>Classis Ministry Leadership Team</b>	Craig Hoekema, chair	3	2025 Oct
	Eva Reitsma, <i>ex-officio</i>		
	Dan Zylstra	3	2025 Oct
	Aaron Thompson	2	2025 Oct
<b>Financial Administration Committee</b>	Eva Reitsma, <i>treasurer</i>		
	Dale Poel	5	2022 Oct
	Ron Hosmar, <i>chair</i>	3	2026 Mar
	Jackie Lauziere	3	2026 Mar
	Gerry Pot	2	2024 Mar
	Vacancy		
<b>Youth Ministry Team (W)</b>	Ron Hosmar <i>secretary; pastor rep</i>	6	2024 Oct
	Joe Groeneveld <i>chair</i>	4	2023 Oct
	John Verburg <i>vice</i>	6	2023 Oct
	Holly Byker	1	2023 Mar
	Don Savio	?	???????
	Adrian Brobbel	2	2024 Oct



	Chris Smid	1	2026 Mar
	Iena Van't Foort	1	2024 Mar
<b>Ministry to Seafarers Montreal</b> Chair	George Zekveld	2	2024 Oct
<i>Treasurer</i>	John Luimes ( <i>Quinte</i> )	2	2022 Mar
<i>Secretary</i>	Bert Wissink (Eastern Canada)	2	2024 Oct
	Sandra Penner ( <i>Eastern Canada</i> )	2	2024 Mar
<i>Member at Large</i>	Gerard Bondt	2	2022 Oct
<b>Church Visiting Teams</b>			
East Team I (Truro, Milford, Halifax)	Dan Hoogland	2	2025 Oct
East Team II (Charlottetown, Kentville, Fredericton)	Craig Hoekema	2	2023 Oct
West Team I (Brockville, Ottawa Kanata, Ottawa Calvary, Renfrew)	Sid Ypma	2	2024 Oct
West Team II (Ottawa Barrhaven, Athens, Cornwall, Pembroke, Williamsburg)	Aaron Thompson	1	2023 Oct
West Team III (Kemptonville, Dixon's Corners, Montreal, Ottawa Calvin)	Joe Groeneveld	2	2025 Oct
<b>Church Counselors</b> (vacant congregations)			
<i>Ottawa Calvary</i>	Chris Schievink		
<i>Cornwall</i>	James Kralt		
<i>Pembroke</i>	Dan Meinema		
<i>John Calvin Truro</i>	tbd		
<b>Synodical Deputy</b> <i>alternate</i>	Dave Vroege Gregg Lawson	1 1	2024 June 2024 June
Council of Delegates	Dan Meinema	1	2024 June
Calvin College (Region 3 - CEC/Quinte/Toronto)	Alicia Sinclair	1	2022
Calvin Theological Seminary (Region 3)	Dan Brown	2	2022
World Renew	Echo MacLeod	1	2024 June
Redeemer University	Bart Mooibroek	1	2024 Oct
Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue	Colin Conrad	2	2022 (Mar)
Historical Committee	Jean Lauziere		

Banner Correspondent	Krista Dam-Vandekuyt		
<b>Safe Church Executive</b>	Gayla Postma, <i>past chair</i>		
<i>Ottawa Calvary</i>	John Vedder, member <i>at large</i> , <i>chair</i>	2	2024 (Mar)
	Vacancy		
<i>Pastoral Adviser</i>	Paul Vanderkooy	2	2025 (Oct)
	Wilma Mulder <i>treas.</i> , <i>counselling fund</i>		ongoing
<b>Safe Church Team</b>			
<i>Athens</i>	Raven Lyons		
<i>Brockville</i>	Mike Van Dyke		
<i>Charlottetown</i>	Geesje Niehuis		
<i>Cornwall</i>	Sandra Eckersley		
<i>Dixon's Corners</i>	Keith Rook		
<i>Fredericton</i>	Tammi Boonstoppel		
<i>Halifax</i>	Rachel Boehm		
<i>Kemptville</i>	Ed Norman		
<i>Kentville</i>	Gerrit Carree		
<i>Metcalf, Living Hope</i>	Benjamin Sapper		
<i>Milford</i>	Cheryl Woodworth		
<i>Montreal</i>	Natalie Klein		
<i>Ottawa Barrhaven</i>	Monique Heidinga		
<i>Ottawa Calvary</i>	John Vedder		
<i>Ottawa Calvin</i>	Jake Brunsting		
<i>Pembroke</i>	Jane Wouda		
<i>Ottawa Kanata</i>	Megan Mooibroek		
<i>Renfrew</i>	Ed Oegema		
<i>Truro</i>	Nicole Boertjes		
<i>Williamsburg</i>	Nicole Van't Foort		
<b>Disability Concerns</b>	vacant		
<b>Synodical Delegates to CRCNA Synod</b>	<i>Minister, Elder, Deacon, &amp; Office-bearer</i>		

<p>2019 Aaron Thompson (Alt. Ken Gehrels); Ron Hosmar (Tony Verheul); Mike Fekkus (Alt. Joyce Luimes); Dan Meinema</p>			
<p>2020 Andrea Baas (Alt. Dan Zylstra); Ron Hosmar (Alt. Dick VanVeldhuizen); Cor Dykstra; John Vedder (Alt. Aaron Thompson)</p>			
<p>2022 Pastor Dan Hoogland, Elder Ron Hosmar, Deacon Scott Bandy, and as 4th delegate Pastor Craig Hoekema. Alternates are Pastor Jack Van de Hoef, Deacon Anjo Norg and Pastor Dan Zylstra.</p>			
<p>2023 Pastor Dan Meinema (Gregg Lawson); Elder Sonya Boersma (Elder Colin Conrad); Deacon Kathleen Dixons (Laura Snippe); Pastor Sid Ypma (Aaron Thompson)</p>			