



The Christian Reformed Church Classis Alberta North

Vision/Mission Statement (adopted March 2, 2004)

The purpose of Classis Alberta North is:

- To encourage member congregations to faithful and creative ministry;
- To jointly undertake ministries of common interest;
- To participate in denominational ministries and governance;
- To hold member congregations mutually accountable for their work of ministry, and to provide appropriate resources for the same.

AGENDA for 157th Session, March 10 & 11, 2015

Red Deer First CRC
16 Mc Vicar Street,
Red Deer, Alberta

General Information

Please note that much of the information relating to Classis Alberta North can be found at: www.classisalbertanorth.org Here you will find the agenda and minutes of previous meetings, credentials forms, safe church policy information, schedules as well as links to the Classical Rules and the Church Order. Also available is a list of churches and committees, and much more. Check it out!

If there are changes in your committee make up, or changes in the information about your church, **please inform** the Stated Clerk at statedclerk@classisalbertanorth.org

The quarterly denominational ministry reports to classis can be found at:

<http://crcna.org/pages/classisreport.cfm>

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Serving Classis:

- Rev. Gary Bomhof, chair
- Rev. Bill Nieuwenhuis, vice-chair
- Henk Van Anandel, Classis Stated Clerk
- Linda Ryks, Recording Clerk
- Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain
- Balloting Committee: delegates of Rocky Mountain House Covenant CRC
- Classis Credentials Committee: delegates of Edmonton Inglewood and Edmonton Fellowship CRC

Nominations

The Classis Interim Committee requests church councils to submit names of nominees to committees of Classis for positions opening up on June 30, 2015. These positions include any present committee members who are completing their second term on June 30, 2015, and any positions that are vacant. This information can be found on the "Functionaries List" list as posted on the Classis website www.classisalbertmorth.org. Please forward the names of nominees to the Nominations Coordinator, Rick Struik at rastruik@shaw.ca.

At the time of this writing, we have **only one nomination** as elder delegates to Synod to be held in Pella, Iowa June 12-19, 2014. His short biography is included in the Agenda. Church Councils can still nominate additional elder delegates to Synod. Please send your nominations (with a short bio) to Henk Van Anandel at statedclerk@classisalbertanorth.org.

A time of prayer before Classis will be led by Rich deLange from 11 AM to 11:45 AM on March 10. Delegates are encouraged, if at all possible, to attend this opportunity to come together for this time of communal prayer for Classis. Similarly, there will be opportunity for prayer at 8:00 AM on March 11.

Classis Time Schedule

Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter	Agenda Pg.
11:00	Gathering and light lunch		
12:00	Welcome and Introductions	Gary Bomhof, Chair	
12:05	Opening Devotions	Host Church, Gary Bomhof, Pastor	
12:20	Roll Call	Henk Van Anandel, Stated Clerk	
	Signing of the Form of Subscription Seating Deacon Delegates Classis Declared Constituted Review Time Schedule	Gary Bomhof, Chair	
12:30	Stated Clerk Report & CIC Report	Henk Van Anandel, Stated Clerk	5
12:40	Youth Ministry Consultant	Ron De Vries, Youth Ministry Consultant	33
1:00	Diaconal Ministries Consultant/NADC	Loretta Stadt, Diaconal Consultant	29
1:20	Communication re Task Force Elders and Deacons Report	Gary Bomhof, Chair	14
1:30	Nominations Coordinator/elections	Rick Struik, Nominations Coordinator	31
1:45	Campus Minister	Rick Van Manen, Campus Minister	11
2:05	Healthy Church Task Force/Structure Report	John Pasma, HCTF Chair	19
2:40	Coffee Break		
3:00	Ministry Review Committee report- Campus Ministry	Co Vanderlaan, Ministry Review Committee Chair	26
3:30	Annual General Meeting of the Association	John Ooms, Chair of CIC	7
3:50	Fort McMurray request to be "Organised Church"	George Holhof, Pastor Evergreen CRC	17
4:00	Classical Home Missions	Andrew Geisterfer, Chair of CHMC	22
4:20	Church Visitors reports	Various delegates	
4:40	Church Counselors reports	Various delegates	
4:50	Credentials Committee report	Inglewood, Fellowship delegates	
5:00	Cuban Connections	Dan Van Keeken, Chair of Cuba Connection Committee.	
5:15	Nominations Coordinator/elections	Rick Struik, Nominations Coordinator	31
5:30	Devotions for supper	Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain	
7:00	Discussion of Classis Ministries	Led by Darren Roorda, Director of Canadian Ministries	16
9:00	Closing	Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain	

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter	Agenda Pg.
8:00	Time of prayer for Classis	Rich deLange, Prayer Coordinator	
8:30	Gathering and Coffee		
9:00	Welcome	Gary Bomhof, Chair	
9:05	Roll Call	Henk Van Anandel, Stated Clerk	
	Form of Subscription (if needed) Seating Deacon Delegates		
9:10	Devotions	Ken Douma, Pasor of Edson-Peers CRC	
9:30	Classical Ministries discussion	Gary Bomhof, John Ooms, Darren Roorda	16
10:45	Coffee break		
11:00	Examination Josh Friend for Commissioned Pastor	Bill Nieuwenhuis, Bob Barthel, Victor Ko, Art Verboon	
12:15	Lunch devotions	Rick Abma, Classis Chaplain	
1:30	Examination Dayna Vreeken for ordination	Len Batterink, Rick Mast, George Holhof, Martin Mobach	
3:30	Closing	Bill Nieuwenhuis, Vice Chair	

Classis Interim Committee / Stated Clerk's Report

Stated Clerk's report from November 2014 to February 2015

Excerpts from the CIC Minutes of November 3, 2014:

1. CIC **approved the Minutes** of the October 15 and 16, 2014 Classis meeting.
2. CIC approved the transfer of Ministerial Credentials of **Walt Brouwer** from Edmonton Bethel CRC to Fleetwood CRC Classis BC Southeast. to Classis
3. CIC noted that the church visitors Melle Pool and Bert Van Niejenhuis are in continuous dialogue with **Fairview CRC**, currently without a pastor. As reported at Classis in October, Rev. Peet Marx is serving Fairview CRC on a six month contract basis.
4. CIC discussed the possibility of a **Strategic Planning Process** for Classis Alberta North, and decided to contact Canadian Ministry Director **Darren Roorda** for advice in this regard.
5. CIC asked the Clerk to respond to a letter from Rocky Mountain House Covenant CRC included in the Credentials at last Classis regarding lack of notice to the churches re the Classis Alberta North Statement read at the TRC meetings in March 2014.
6. CIC decided to move the March Classis meeting dates to **March 10-11**, in light of requests for examinations for ordination from **Dayna Vreeken** (Lacombe Woodynook), and for Commissioned Pastor from **Josh Friend** (Red Deer First).
7. CIC decided to delegate **Clerk Henk Van Andel**, and **CIC member Michelle Kool** to the National Gathering of Classis Leadership in Burlington January 20-21 2015.
8. CIC appointed **Rich deLange** as **Classis Prayer Coordinator**.

Excerpts from the CIC meeting of November 27, 2014 :

1. CIC held this **special meeting** to discuss the possibility of having Classis discuss the alignment of classical ministries with the stated Mission of Classis, and how we are to carry out and even expand the ministries of Classis in the context of the financial resources to do that. CIC consulted by phone with Darren Roorda, Director of Canadian Ministries. The result of this discussion was a decision to spend a significant portion of the March 2015 Classis meeting discussing this topic with delegates as well as representatives of the various ministries of Classis. The discussion will be led by Darren in the evening of March 10, and the morning of March 11. A memo was subsequently sent on December 5, 2014 to all councils and ministry representatives to explain this initiative.
2. CIC approved the transfer of credentials of **Harold Vandersluys** from Pembroke, ON CRC to **Barrhead** CRC.

Excerpts from the CIC meeting of January 14, 2015:

1. CIC approved a revised job description of the Youth Ministries Coordinator.
2. CIC decided that for good order, the **Credentials Committee** that serves at Classis meetings is to be sent the Guidelines for the Committee as published in the Rules of Procedure in advance of the meeting.
3. CIC received an oral report on a church visit made to **First Edmonton CRC**.
4. CIC received an oral report on a meeting with the **NADC** executive to discuss the way Classis supports **Diaconal Ministries Canada**.
5. CIC endorsed the **secondment by West End CRC of Rick Mast** to serve as **Campus Minister at NAIT** on a part-time basis. This is a one year pilot project, to be reviewed at the end of 2015.
6. CIC reviewed a **draft overture** written last year to deal with possible **abuse of clergy**, and decided to refer it to the **Healthy Church Task Force** and the **Safe Church Committee** for their advice with regard to its disposition.

7. CIC approved the request of **Lacombe Woodynook CRC** to have candidate **Dayna Vreeken** examined at Classis on March 11, and appointed examiners **George Olthof** and **Martin Mobach**, and sermon critics **Len Batterink** and **Rick Mast**.
8. CIC approved the request of **Red Deer First CRC** to have Associate Pastor **Josh Vriend** be examined for **Commissioned Pastor** at Classis on March 11, and appointed **Victor Ko** and **Art Verboon** as examiners, and **Bill Nieuwenhuis** and **Bob Barthel** as sermon critics.
9. CIC recognised and approved the **conditional merger of Edmonton So mang CRC and Edmonton The River CRC** as described in documentation received. The merger is on a one year trial basis, and will be reviewed before being formalised in 2016.
10. CIC agreed, upon receipt of the required documentation, to recommend to Classis that **George Holthof**, Pastor at Ft. McMurray Evergreen CRC, be granted **retirement effective August 1, 2015**.
11. CIC agreed to recommend to Classis that **Ken Vis**, former Commissioned Pastor, be granted a **preaching license** at his request, without the need to re-examine him.
12. CIC made the following appointments: **Tom Oosterhuis** as **alternate Synodical Deputy** until June 30, 2015, replacing **Allan Groen** who has resigned; **Martin Mobach** as **NADC Pastoral Advisor**;
13. CIC also recommends to Classis that **Tom Oosterhuis** be appointed as regular Synodical Deputy beginning July 1, 2015, replacing **Gordon Pols**.

Excerpts of the Minutes of the meeting of February 11, 2015:

1. CIC reviewed the **Healthy Church Task Force's Map of Offices and Resources for Classis Alberta North** and decided to refer it to Classis for action.
2. CIC approved the **transfer of Ministerial Credentials of Karen Norris** from Edmonton West End CRC to Edmonton Fellowship CRC.
3. CIC agreed to recommend to Classis that **Evergreen CRC of Fort McMurray** become an **Organised Church** in Classis.
4. CIC reviewed the **Report of the Ministry Review Committee regarding Campus Ministry**, and recommended its adoption by Classis.
5. CIC discussed the parameters of the **discussion on Classical Ministries** to take place on Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning at the upcoming Classis Meeting.
6. CIC agreed to recommend to Classis that it send a **Communication to Synod** in support of the **Report of the Task Force on Elders and Deacons**.
7. CIC agreed to recommend to Classis that **Tom Oosterhuis** be appointed **Synodical Deputy**, effective July 1, 2015, and that Classis vote on the following nominees for **Alternate Synodical Deputy: Lohn Luth, Neil De Koning, and Gary Bomhof**, also effective July 1, 2015 (one to be elected).
8. CIC appointed **Jonathan Nicolai De Koning** to serve on the **Student Fund Committee**.
9. CIC reviewed the **Ministry Shares at Work** document and agreed to send it to the churches.
10. CIC received and approved the **Auditors Letter on Fraud Risk Factors**.
11. CIC reviewed the **Financial Statements** for the year 2014 (subsequent to the meeting), and recommended their adoption to Classis.

Motions requiring Classis approval:

There are a number of recommendations in the Agenda for the AGM of the Association (see below) which are proposed by CIC and which will not be repeated here. The following motions are to be considered during Classis whenever the time is appropriate.

1. **Motion:** That Classis accept the **Report of the Ministry and Staff Review Committee regarding the University of Alberta Campus Ministry**.

2. **Motion:** That Classis dismiss the Ministry Review Committee with thanks for a job well done over the last three years.
3. **Motion:** That Classis appoint **Rich deLange** to the position of **Prayer Coordinator** effective immediately.
4. **Motion:** That Classis grant a **preaching license** to **Ken Vis**
5. **Motion:** That Classis approve the request of **Fort McMurray Evergreen CRC** to become an **Organised Congregation** in the CRCNA.
6. **Motion:** that **George Holthof** be granted early retirement from the Ministry, effective August 1, 2015.
7. **Motion:** That Classis send a **Communication supporting the Report of the Task Force on Elders and Deacons** (see Agenda) to Synod on behalf of Classis Alberta North.
8. **Motion:** That Classis approve the (conditional) merger of **So Mang CRC** and **The River CRC**.
9. **Motion:** That the work of the Classis Interim Committee during the period October 16, 2014- March 9, 2015 be approved.

Classis Interim Committee members and Directors of the Association: Michelle Kool, Bill Nieuwenhuis (Vice Chair), John Ooms (Chair), Rick Struik (Alternate Clerk), Henk Van Andel(Clerk), Art Verboon, Mike Vos (Treasurer).

Annual General Meeting of the Association

1. Agenda for the Annual General Meeting of the Association to be held March 10, 2015

- 1.1. Opening and welcome by the Chair of the Association, John Ooms
- 1.2. **Motion** to approve the **Agenda**
- 1.3. **Motion** to approve the **Minutes** of the AGM held on March 6, 2014 (see below).
- 1.4. **Motion** to approve the **Financial Statements** of The Association Classis Alberta North of the Christian Reformed Church in North America for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2014, as presented by Treasurer Mike Vos.
- 1.5. **Motion** to accept the signed **Auditor's Report** from Halpert Monsma, Chartered Accountants, which accompanied the Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2014, as presented by Treasurer Mike Vos.
- 1.6. **Motion** to appoint **Halpert Monsma, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors** for the fiscal year 2015.
- 1.7. **Motion** to reappoint **John Ooms** and **Henk Van Andel** as directors of the Association, for a second three-year term, effective July 1, 2015.
- 1.8. Question period
- 1.9. Closing

2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Association held March 6, 2014

- 2.1. **Martin Mobach**, Chair of the Board of Directors opened the meeting. We sang "*He is Lord*".
- 2.2. **Motion** to approve the Agenda. **Carried**
- 2.3. **Motion** to approve the Minutes of the AGM held on March 7, 2013. **Carried**
- 2.4. **Motion** to approve the Financial Statements of the Association Classis Alberta North of the Christian Reformed Church in North America for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013, as presented by Treasurer **Ellen Vlieg-Paquette**. **Carried**
 Martin mentioned we are thankful that we received 93% of the required ministry shares for 2013 (budget is traditionally based on 90% of ministry shares).

- 2.5. **Motion** to accept the signed Auditor's Report from Halpert Monsma, Chartered Accountants, which accompanied the Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2013, as presented by Treasurer **Ellen Vlieg-Paquette**. **Carried**
- 2.6. **Motion** to appoint Halpert Monsma, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors for the fiscal year 2014, presented by Treasurer **Ellen Vlieg-Paquette**. **Carried**
- 2.7. **Motion** to amend Article 13 of the Bylaws as noted below. **Carried**. The change relates to the Treasurer being a member of the Board of Directors.

Changed Article 13:

MEETINGS

The society shall hold an Annual Meeting or before April 1st in each year, of which notice in writing to the last known address of each member shall be delivered in the mail at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting. At this meeting there shall be elected as needed when their terms of service are completed, a Stated Clerk, Alternate Stated Clerk, Treasurer, Alternate Treasurer, and five (5) directors. The Stated Clerk, Treasurer, and the five directors so elected shall form a Board and shall serve until their successors are elected. The terms of the directors and officers shall be as follows: The Stated Clerk, Alternate Stated Clerk, Treasurer, and Alternate Treasurer, shall serve three-year terms of office, renewable any number of times. All other directors shall have three-year terms and any director may be re-elected once. All terms of office and directorships commence on the 1st day of July in any given year and end on the 30th day of June in the corresponding end of term year. Any vacancy in the offices of Stated Clerk or Treasurer shall be filled by the Alternate Stated Clerk or Alternate Treasurer as the case may be. Any other vacancy of directorships shall be filled at the next meeting, provided it is so stated in the notice calling such meeting.

- 2.8. **Motion** to retro-actively approve the appointment of **Bill Nieuwenhuis** as Director of the Association to replace **Gary Bomhof**, effective July 1, 2013. **Carried**
- 2.9. **Motion** to appoint **Art Verboon** and **Michelle Kool** as Directors to replace **Martin Mobach** and **Carolyn Dieleman-Booth** effective July 1, 2014. **Carried**
- 2.10. **Motion** to appoint **Mike Vos** as the new **Treasurer**, and **Director of the Association**, effective July 1, 2014. **Carried**
- 2.11. **Motion** to appoint **Ellen Vlieg-Paquette** as Alternate Treasurer. **Carried**
- 2.12. **Motion** to confirm the signing authority for the Association's financial transactions, effective July 1, 2014, by any two of **John Ooms, Mike Vos, Henk Van Andel, and Rick Struik**, and to remove the names of **Martin Mobach** and **Ellen Vlieg Paquette** as signing authority, also effective July 1, 2014. **Carried**.
Question: What is the rationale for choosing these Directors as signing authority?
Answer: We have specified that the Treasurer, Stated Clerk and two members of CIC be given signing authority and require two directors to sign each cheque.
- 2.13. **Ellen Vlieg-Paquette** was thanked by the Chair for serving as Classis Treasurer for the past 6 years
- 2.14. **Carolyn Dieleman-Booth** was thanked by the Chair for her years of service on the CIC.
- 2.15. CIC Chair **Martin Mobach** was thanked by the Stated Clerk for serving this Classis as Chair of CIC and the Association for the past 6 years.
- 2.16. There being no further business there was a **Motion** to adjourn the Annual General Meeting. **Carried**

Calvin Seminary

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At their meeting in mid-October, 2014:

- Approved revisions to the Seminary's MA degree programs that included granting permission for the faculty to offer the MA programs in distance format as soon as feasible with regard to staffing, financing and enrollment.
- Received reports on the scholarship offerings currently available at Calvin Seminary and encouraged the Development Office to work with donors on ensuring robust funding in three broad categories that correlate to programs of study or student populations: Ordained Ministry; Leadership; International students (outside of North America). For some currently endowed scholarships, the donors may want to broaden the parameters of their protocols. The development office was also encouraged to have scholarship protocols for full-time study at the seminary be inclusive to distance learners in a full-time program in addition to students in residence.
- At the conclusion of the meeting, trustees and faculty members enjoyed a working lunch and engaged a structured conversation around 3 strategic planning questions: What are the challenges facing Calvin Seminary today? What are its opportunities? What values or criteria should we keep in mind in setting priorities for Calvin Seminary?
- The Board of Trustees approved a continuation of the 4.5% spending rule for Fiscal Year 2016. The Board has been bringing this rate down with a stated desire to land at 4%, but the Board also recognizes that moving to 4% would impact the amount of dollars available for scholarships.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

- President Medenblik is finishing up his fourth and final year serving as the Reporter for the CRC Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture (TFRSC); this task force hopes to present its report at Synod 2015.
- President Medenblik traveled to Egypt from November 11 to 18 with Joel Boot, Christian Reformed Director of Ministries and Administration, and Gary Bekker, Director of Christian Reformed World Missions. While there, he participated in the 150th Anniversary of Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo (ETSC) as well as the church denomination in which Calvin Seminary graduates Naji Umran and Anne Zaki are serving. A link to the story on this trip can be found here: <http://www.crcna.org/news-and-views/crc-signs-fellowship-agreement-church-egypt>.
- Since August, President Medenblik has preached at numerous Sunday services in Michigan, South Dakota, Iowa, and British Columbia; he has also attended various church services on behalf of students getting ordained or installed in West Michigan. He also convened a seminary "delegation" to worship with and visit the Chinese Church in the Lansing community.

ACADEMICS

- Professor Sarah Schreiber was ordained as Minister of the Word at Grace Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids in November. Rev. Schreiber began teaching Old Testament at the Seminary this past fall, 2014.
- Faculty search committees have been formed for two positions at Calvin Seminary: Moral Theology or Moral and Philosophical Theology and Missiology and Missional Ministry. All churches are encouraged to submit referrals and nominations for these positions to Calvin Seminary; the postings can be found on the seminary website: <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/about/jobopenings/>
- Calvin Seminary faculty is recommending to the Board of Trustees that Dr. Lyle Bierma be appointed as P.J. Zondervan Professor of the History of Christianity, with primary duties in our PhD program. The faculty believes that he will help our PhD program continue its strengths in Reformation and Post-Reformation thought. Like retiring Professor Richard Muller, Professor Bierma studied at Duke University with Dr. David Steinmetz. His research has focused on early Reformed covenant theology and the Heidelberg Catechism. He is now researching John Calvin's understanding of baptism as a means of grace. He also recently took up the role of Director of Doctoral Studies.
- Calvin Seminary, in conjunction with the Hispanic Pastor Ministry certificate program (*now in its second year*) led by Old Testament Professor Mariano Avila, welcomed Dr. Justo L. Gonzalez and Dr. Catherine Gonzalez in

late September. During their visit to Calvin Seminary on September 25 and 26, Dr. Justo Gonzalez facilitated a public lecture, was the guest of honor at an evening dinner event, and led a Spanish-speaking community worship service on Calvin's campus. His wife Catherine was the guest speaker in a small group gathering of women students, faculty and staff from the Seminary as well as women from the community. News stories on these presentations can be found in the Fall FORUM.

- Calvin Seminary co-sponsored with Calvin College the 2014 Stob Lectures, held in the Calvin College Chapel in November. This year the featured lecturer was Dr. Jeremy Begbie who is the Thomas A. Langford Research Professor in Theology at Duke Divinity School; Senior Member at Wolfson College, Cambridge; and Affiliated Director in the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge. Dr. Begbie presented on "What's Transcendent About the Arts?" [*Please note, Dr. Begbie does not allow his presentations to be recorded due to copyright restrictions.*]

SERVING THE CHURCH

Center for excellence in Preaching (CEP)

- The Center for Excellence in Preaching, directed by Rev. Scott Hoezee, is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year! Praise God for his faithfulness through this useful tool. View a special video created in celebration of the anniversary: <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/2015/01/06/cep-celebrates-10-years/> or <http://vimeo.com/116012764>
- Rev. Scott Hoezee also had a new book published, which debuted in early December, titled *Actuality: Real Life Stories for Sermons that Matter*. This book debut was highlighted with a special gathering of Seminary friends on Tuesday, December 2 in the Seminary Chapel, including a question and answer period facilitated by Rev. Peter Jonker, Pastor of Preaching at LaGrave Christian Reformed Church and friend and former Seminary classmate of Rev. Hoezee. The link can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/114145931>. Also accessible from: <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/2014/12/02/actuality-real-life-stories-for-sermons-that-matter/>.

Institute for global churchplanting and renewal.

- The second biennial missional conference in the planning stages, to be held November 18 & 19, 2015 at Calvin Seminary and Calvin College. This year's theme is Missional Living of Scripture and will feature keynote presentations by Christopher Wright, Richard Hayes, and Ruth Padilla DeBorst among others.
- A 2nd cohort for the Church Renewal Learning Lab, led by Rev. Keith Doornbos, started their 2-year journey in June, 2014, as part of the pilot phase of this initiative. Future plans are also in the making for one regional Learning Lab cohort within this pilot timeframe in an area to be determined.

STUDENTS

- At a fall chapel kick-off, each student, faculty and staff member was offered a free copy of the book "The Story" by Max Lucado and Randy Frazee; this book highlights the Bible as one continuing story of God and His people. The contents of the book are being used as a guide for our chapel services, as well as to shape other community conversations and events.
- Spouse & Family Ministry: The spouse and family ministry program sponsored a Family Zoo Day on Saturday, September 13 at Boulder Ridge Wild Animal Park where 150 parents and children attended. A dinner attended by Calvin Seminary and Western Theological Seminary spouses was held on October 2nd at the Alpen Rose restaurant in downtown Holland, Michigan. Approximately 40 women from each Seminary were in attendance to fellowship and hear speaker and author, Lynn Austin. Later in October, approximately 50 women from the Seminary attended a Women's Night Out event that featured speaker Carol Kent.
- Several student leaders worked with Dean Jeff Sajdak to plan and convene a special Town Hall to have a time of lament about Ferguson and racial injustice and divisions. This was the theme...

God, our help in ages past, we come to you in mourning.

We confess, when faced with the pain and grief we have witnessed in Ferguson, that we don't know what to say.

By your Spirit, in our mourning, help us know how to pray...

- Then later in December, we gathered once again to lament in a special chapel service, this time surrounding Pakistani student Eric Sarwar to share his tears and sorrow for the “slaughter of the innocents” in a Pakistani school that took more than 140 lives.

Admissions

- Calvin Seminary welcomed a diverse class of incoming students for 2014-2015. We continue our global reach with 31% of our students hailing from outside North America. We find ourselves at the crossroads of rising global Christianity, with growing numbers of students coming from places where the Church is experiencing exciting growth. Our students continue to represent denominational diversity, with about half of our incoming students coming from denominations outside the Christian Reformed Church.
- The Admissions office is accepting applications and nominations for Facing Your Future (FYF) 2015! FYF is a life-changing summer program for high school students who are trying to discern where God is calling them next. The program includes mentorship, engaging vocational and theological exploration, making new friends while staying in college dorms, and traveling to an *Excursion Site* throughout North America. Check out www.calvinseminary.edu/fyf for more info. Applications are due January 20, 2015.

Development

- This year Calvin Seminary celebrates its 139th anniversary and to mark this special time students, faculty, staff, Board members, donors, and other friends gathered at the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park on October 23rd. The group enjoyed a delicious meal, heard updates from President Medenblik and Board Chairman, Sidney Jansma, Jr., and were inspired by the personal stories of three current seminarians. We also recognized the 14 new scholarships established in 2014.
- Calendar year end giving is an important source of funding encouragement to the seminary. The Development staff worked faithfully and well to present this need to our many stewardship partners who responded with generosity that greatly encourages us.

Administration

- A simpler, smarter (separating internal from external), and much-needed upgraded website design has been implemented. The purpose for this upgrade was in part to better target our key audiences – prospective students, donor partners, and ministry practitioners. For all the latest events and other Seminary activities, please feel free to check it out at www.calvinseminary.edu

Campus Ministry

Report submitted by Rick Van Manen

By the grace of God campus ministry continues to flourish. This past fall was the most active semester of campus ministry since my arrival and the winter semester is shaping up to be the same. I'm very excited about the campus ministry pilot project that has started at NAIT. There's no doubt that God is present there and that God will be providing Rick Mast with countless opportunities to proclaim the gospel in the NAIT community. Rick will also be

exploring what shape campus ministry might take at NAIT. I am very grateful for the support of Classis Alberta North for this project.

The campus ministry committee has received the report of the Classical Evaluation team and we are overall encouraged by it. In light of this report, as well as the performance review done in the spring by the campus ministry committee and in consultation with denominational Home Missions the committee will begin a process of evaluating and reformulating the mission and vision of campus ministry and the campus ministry committee that will include both the U of A and NAIT. The committee is very excited about this process and we covet the prayers of Classis Alberta North for wisdom and grace from God as we look ahead to the future of campus ministry in the Classis.

The committee has agreed in principle to my taking of a sabbatical in the winter of 2016. Over the next few months we'll be putting together a sabbatical policy for the campus ministry and I will be preparing a sabbatical proposal for the approval of the committee and of Classis. I'm looking forward to a time of rest, personal renewal, reflection and refocus in preparation for the new directions campus ministry may take over the next few years.

Below is a description of my current programs and activities. As you can see, God is at work at the U of A and I feel blessed to be a part of it.

Programs

Graduate Christian Fellowship (Mondays from 6:00 pm-8:00 pm, 8-10 people)—Although our numbers have dropped a bit this semester we continue to have meaningful fellowship over dinner and conversation. Eight students attended the winter retreat in Banff. The theme was seeking Jesus. We had three sessions around the topic on the Saturday. Lectio in the morning around a quote about Jesus and hospitality from Henri Nouwen, a conversation café style discussion on seeking Jesus and an evening conversation around three Bible texts. Bryan and Lisa Clarke and I decided that seeking Jesus would be our theme for the rest of the semester. We're using Willimon's book, *Why Jesus?* as our launch pad for our conversations.

Undergraduate Christian Fellowship (Tuesdays from 4:00 pm-6:00 pm, 10-12 people)—UCF is flourishing with ten to twelve students gathering for our discussions. This semester we're going through N.T. Wright's *Simply Christian*. We have our discussion first and then have supper together. Not everyone can be at both parts of the event so some leave after the discussion and others come just for the supper. There are now four Last Alliance members who stay for the UCF discussion after the Last Alliance book study. The Last Alliance has become a door way into the campus ministry which is one of the reasons I helped start it in the first place.

The Last Alliance (Mondays from 12:00 pm-2:00 pm and Tuesdays from 2:00 pm-4:00 pm, 20-30 people)—TLA is also flourishing with fifteen to twenty people coming each week to the main Monday book study on the Silmarillion and six to eight people coming to the Tuesday study where we are reading selections from *The History of Middle Earth*. On January 23 we had our first ever TLA Murder Mystery that I helped plan and organize with one of our executive members. I've built a good relationship with her and have been a sounding board for her as she left the Mormon Church in which she grew up. We continue to have conversations around faith although she now identifies herself as an atheist. She will likely be the president of TLA next year. Two members of TLA, including the president, are attending the Revelation Bible study. TLA will also be having its annual lecture series this month. Three guest lecturers have been invited. Dr. Jefferson Smith, a fantasy writer and Hollywood special effects software expert, will speak on world building in fantasy fiction; Dr. Gerard McLarney, Professor of Theology at St. Joseph's College, will speak on freedom, good and evil in the *Ainulindale*; and Dr. Natalie Van Deusen, Professor of Scandinavian Studies at the U of A, will speak on the relationship between Gandalf and Odin.

Coming Soon—A Study of the Book of Revelation (Wednesdays from 3:00 pm-4:30 pm, 4-6 people)—This study is going quite well. There's lots of lively conversation among the five or six people who attend. So much conversation, in fact, that we're way behind and likely won't be able to finish the book by the end of the semester. One small

frustration that isn't uncommon in campus ministry is that the one student who was most excited about the study and for whom I really decided to host it is the one student who doesn't attend.

Grace Interlude (Wednesdays from 12:30 pm-1:00 pm, 3-5 people)—This is the weekly contemplative worship service I do with my colleagues Bryan and Lisa Clarke and Richard Reimer. There's been little growth. Sometimes we get leaders of other Christian organizations on campus such as the Navigators or Athletes in Action and there's one student who comes pretty regularly. But it's mostly Richard, Bryan, Lisa and I who attend. So this is one of those things that will need to be evaluated over the summer to see if we will continue it.

Other Activities

Student Leader Retreat—The annual student leader retreat took place in Banff January 9-11. UBCO wasn't able to make it over the mountains due to weather for the first time in four years and we really felt their absence. There were twelve students at the retreat, seven from the U of A and the rest from Calgary. Our theme was community and the schedule was very similar to the GCF retreat.

Dr. Loren Haarsma—On January 15 the campus ministry, in partnership with King's and Inglewood CRC hosted Dr. Loren Haarsma. Haarsma spoke to the questions around the relationship between current scientific theories on evolution and human origins and the Bible and the doctrines of original sin and an historical Adam and Eve. There were around 250 people in attendance. Haarsma also had dinner beforehand with some local CRC pastors and leaders.

International Week—January 26-30 was International Week at the U of A. Each year the Interfaith Chaplains Association put on a session and for the last few years I've been the chair of the committee that organizes our session. This year our theme was faith in a culture of fear. We have five panelists, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Unitarian, and Wiccan. There were about fifty people in attendance and it was a good discussion. Although a Christian voice was, in my opinion, conspicuously absent.

NAIT Chaplain Orientation—Richard Reimer and I were asked to participate in the orientation for new chaplains at NAIT. The orientation took place on January 28. Richard and I led a session on what to expect in your first year of campus ministry and building a campus ministry team. Kristen Flath and I led a session on the role of appointing bodies. NAIT now has ten chaplains, one Buddhist, two Muslim, one Sikh, and six Christians. All of them are men so it will be interesting to see how NAIT works that out.

Suicide Prevention Task Force—I've been invited to participate in the suicide prevention task force. The first meeting was January 5. The purpose of the task force is to set the goals and components of the proposed strategy; to raise key considerations from university areas of service; and to identify who needs to be consulted and informed for university wide adoption and implementation of the strategy.

Pastoral Care—I continue to meet with students one on one. Topics of conversation included pop culture, prayer, academic anxiety, faith and atheism, texts of terror and more.

I would like to express my gratitude for Classis support of campus ministry at the U of A and now at NAIT.

Canadian Aboriginal Ministries Committee

Submitted by Yvonne Schenk, CAMC chairperson

The Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee (CAMC) has the specific role of educating and mobilizing CRC members and congregations to live in reconciled relationships as covenant (treaty) people before our Creator. CAMC works toward three goals:

- ☐ **Awareness and Education** of CRC members and communities of the shared history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada, of the present lived reality of Aboriginal people in Canada, and of the need for reconciliation and renewed relationships;
- ☐ **Engaging and Building Relationships** with our Aboriginal neighbours to better understand each other and journey down the path of justice and right relationships; and
- ☐ **Advocacy and Seeking Justice** for Aboriginal peoples, who remain among the most marginalized and oppressed people groups in Canada.

Our committee is currently made up of:

Tal James – regional member, British Columbia and Alberta

Jean deBeer – regional member, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern Ontario

Yvonne Schenk – member-at-large; chairperson

Christina deVries – regional member, Southern and Eastern Ontario, Quebec and Maritimes

Lori Ransom –member at-large

Bert Adema – Indian Metis Christian Fellowship, director

Harold Roscher – Edmonton Native Healing Centre, director

Michele Visser-Wikkerink – Indigenous Family Centre, director

Shannon Perez – Justice and Reconciliation Mobilizer, CRC denomination staff

Danielle Rowann – Justice Communications and Education Coordinator, CRC denomination staff

We are very happy and excited to announce that the small group curriculum “Living the 8th Fire” is ready for use. One of the questions the Centre for Public Dialogue and CAMC has faced following the reForming Relationships tour and the Blanket Exercise is “What’s next?” This curriculum is one of the answers to that question. It is made up of 7 small group sessions, based on the CBC’s 8th Fire series and encourages all of us to walk the road of reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours. You can find this curriculum at:

<https://aboriginalministry.wordpress.com/workshops> .

The reForming Relationships art tour and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) are coming to an end. The final TRC will take place in Ottawa May 31-June 3, 2015. The reForming Relationships tour will be there as well, for the final tour showing of Ovide Bighetty’s artwork at a downtown Ottawa location (to be determined). The Canadian Aboriginal Committee will be in Ottawa to meet together and to mark the end of both the TRC and the art tour. From Ottawa, the art work will make its way back to Regina, to the Indian Metis Christian Fellowship, where the art tour began. We are so thankful to God for this art tour and for the conversations, relationships and the opening of hearts and minds toward each other that continue from this experience.

CAMC will continue to connect with the contacts that developed through the reForming Relationships tour. We hope these contacts will become champions for Aboriginal Ministry. These champions would keep their congregations aware of the Justice and Reconciliation work being done in the denomination and would be a way for congregations to connect directly with CAMC if they would like further resources and/or would like to find new ways to do justice.

This is our vision: to continue to find ways to connect with churches and communities and through these connections to develop ways to actively live out reconciliation with our First Nations brothers and sisters. We encourage you to visit our toolkit webpage: <https://aboriginalministry.wordpress.com> and our Facebook page. We welcome your feedback.

Thank you and may God bless you in your ministries where you have been planted.

Communication to Synod (Proposed)

To Classis Alberta North,

We, the council of New Life Fellowship, have reviewed the Report of the Task Force for Deacon and Elders (2014)

and commend the task force on its work. In 2013, Classis Alberta North supported the Diakonia Remixed report and communicated that to Synod. The recommendations made by the Task Force for Deacon and Elders are in keeping with those made in the Diakonia Report of 2012; therefore we ask that Classis Alberta North send a communication to Synod encouraging them to move forward with the recommendations made in the Report of the Task Force for Deacon and Elders as it encourages holistic ministry of word and deed.

Bob Barthel
Chairperson

Edmonton Native Healing Center

Report submitted by Harold Roscher, Chaplain/Director

A few highlights from 2014 to our supporters and supporting churches

- Pancake breakfasts were held and supported by St. Albert CRC every third Saturday of the month.
- ENHC Participated in truth and reconciliation commission, through educating moments at King's University and resolution health support work during the actual conference weekend.
- Provided space for Butterfly moon project, which teaches components of Cree culture.
- Held our March madness move-a-thon which raised \$5000 by 20 participants for kid's camp.
- Fitness studio became a reality and is used 3 nights per week for the community. Every thing from zumba, yoga, Buns&guns to kick boxing is run by Michelle Nieviadomy a certified fitness trainer.
- Met with Boyle-McCauley health centre in regards to partnering around a Family care clinic at ENHC.
- Kid's camp saw 54 kids from central Alberta spend 5 days sleeping in tipis and learning traditional knowledge and games on the land. They were also presented with the gospel through various story-tellers around the camp fire at night.
- After 10 years of just two frontline workers we were able to find and hire 11/2 positions in the fall. It is a blessing to have this new staff, Beverly Cardinal is our community navigator and Colleen Cardinal is Administrative/drop-in support.
- One big accomplishment was the board and staff developing a new mission statement: ENHC empowers individuals to grow stronger and creates vibrant community relationships while honouring our culture through spiritual development centred in the heart of the Creator.

In 2015 the ministry is looking forward to:

- Continue providing soup&bannock on Wednesdays
- Arrowhead Rider's Biking program
- Kamamak (butterfly in Cree) young women's leadership and mentoring program
- Having a fully functioning family care clinic upstairs in our building
- Host a walk/run fund raiser in to raise awareness of Missing and murdered women and youth programming.
- Renovating our kitchen

All activities of 2014 and the anticipated activities for 2015 are possible because of your faithful gifts of time, prayer and financial donations. Our staff and board look forward to serving in this New Year and continue to look forward to strengthening the relationships we have already established.

Discussion of Classis Ministries

Message from Bill Nieuwenhuis, Vice Chair of Classis Interim Committee

On behalf of the Classical Interim Committee (CIC) I would like to introduce the matter of our Classical Ministries discussion. If we consider our own lives, quite often we tend to move along a certain path unquestioned for a fairly long period of time. This is natural. Unless something disrupts or interrupts our normal pattern, we mostly bump along. However, most of us have gone through moments that demand we pay more attention to our circumstances and re-examine our priorities and direction. In a similar way, the CIC has wondered whether such an examination might greatly benefit Classis. In such a moment Classis could take the needed time to reflect on its past, present and future interests for ministry.

This consideration led us to ask Rev. Darren Roorda, the new Director of Canadian Ministries, to assist us in such a process of reflection for the CIC. The CIC had a conference phone discussion with him towards this end. Once done, the CIC believed this approach would have good merit for the Classis as a whole. As in our own lives, a time of reflection does not necessarily mean that everything changes. But it's through such times of reflection that we can better understand and take ownership of the conclusions we have come to in regards to our future. Then, if we believe any changes are necessary, those changes can be viewed in the larger context of our whole lives. With this in mind, and being led by the Holy Spirit, we invite Classis to consider the ministries of Classis Alberta North, and to dream together about our future.

In having this discussion, the CIC encourages every church, Council, Classis delegate and Classical ministry representative to enter this time of reflection and consideration with anticipation and joy. In doing so, we believe that this time of reflection can truly be a moment from God. God has richly blessed us and our efforts in the past, as well as in the present, and we trust also for the future. In this good work, as the author to the Hebrews has already said, we can "... consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)."

Sincerely,

Pastor Bill Nieuwenhuis
Vice-chair of CIC

CIC and Rev. Roorda suggest that the discussion take place around the following questions:

Part 1: On Tuesday evening (6:30-9 PM) we discuss:

How do the current supported ministries fit/align with the mission and vision of Classis Alberta North as outlined in our approved Mission and Vision Statement?

For your information, here is the Vision/Mission Statement of Classis Alberta North as approved in 2004:

The purpose of Classis Alberta North is:

- *To encourage member congregations to faithful and creative ministry;*
- *To jointly undertake ministries of common interest;*
- *To participate in denominational ministries and governance;*
- *To hold member congregations mutually accountable for their work of ministry, and to provide appropriate resources for the same.*

The evening meeting will be open to the public, and representatives of all Ministry Committees of Classis will be invited to join in the discussion. Each table will include at least one member of a Classical Ministry Committee. A brochure outlining our ministries and their budgets has been made available to delegates.

Part 2: On Wednesday morning (8:30-11 AM) some reporting from the previous evening discussions will take place and we discuss:

How does Classis Alberta North modify/change/streamline/promote/ finance/ add or adapt what we are doing to fit into the vision?

This morning meeting will be in Executive Session, open only to delegates and Classis officials. No final decisions regarding ministries will be made at this meeting. Churches and ministry committees will receive a report on the discussions in April or May 2015. On the basis of this report and its conclusions, CIC will work with the Classical Ministry Committees to prepare proposals for any decisions to be made at the October 2015 Classis meeting.

Fort McMurray Evergreen CRC request to be Organised Church

Dear Fellow Congregations,

After nearly forty years of having a presence in Fort McMurray we believe we are ready for Evergreen Community CRC to become a fully constituted 'organized church' congregation of the Christian Reformed Churches of North America. **Thus we request that Classis grant that desire.**

Evergreen began back in 1975 as an 'emerging church' plant of Classis Alberta North, with Trinity CRC being designated as the sponsoring church congregation. Rev. W. Smit arrived in Fort McMurray to begin the ministry of Evergreen in 1976, and the congregation, although remaining smaller in numbers, has thrived and grown, having an impact in blessing the community as well as being instrumental in the faith growth and walk of a diverse 'congregation' numbering hundreds of people over the years. Some of these people were present in Evergreen's early days and are still present, whereas many others have come for a time and, due to the highly transient nature of life and work in Fort McMurray, have left for other communities. Many who have left have transferred memberships to other CRC's across the country! Others have joined other church congregations in Fort McMurray; and there are others who have come from other local congregations. The point is, Evergreen Church is and has been the spiritual 'home' for many, many people over the past years, for which we praise God!

Evergreen Community CRC is, as already mentioned, a smaller congregation consisting presently of approximately 33 households; but although smaller in numerical size Evergreen is a stable congregation blessed with a convicted core group of people who love following Jesus.

One interesting dynamic constantly affecting Evergreen is the statistically young average age of the Fort McMurray / Wood Buffalo community – averaging in the low 30's. This means there are lots of young adults and families. Evergreen reflects that dynamic, consisting largely of a younger cohort of membership and attendees. We simply do not have a significant number of more senior people! That has and continues to create an issue for church

leadership; sometimes it has been challenging to have enough people who have felt spiritually mature enough to serve as the Board leadership of the congregation. Nevertheless, God has provided good pastoral and laity leadership over the years, with very few gaps between serving pastors. And there have always been members who have willingly served on the church Board. Over the past few years Evergreen has worked on creating a stable, functional Board; striving to have a minimum of 5 Board members. One of these members serves as chairperson, another as vice-all, another as church treasurer, and another as clerk. Based on spiritual gifts, maturity, and aptitude the Board annually appoints 2 Board members to serve in a more 'elder' type of role and 2 serve with a more diaconal function. However, we have found that there needs to be flexibility in these roles, as well as in length of terms of office; sometimes a Board member suddenly receives a work transfer and has had to leave! Thus Evergreen sometimes needs to seek a replacement person to serve. Board members are selected by affirmation ballot and the drawing of lots if needed. Perhaps the day will come when Board / Council members can be selected for serving in a particular church office. Until then Evergreen needs to be flexible and adaptive in providing appropriate leadership for the congregation. We are confident that our Lord will continue to provide people to serve as capable leadership for Evergreen Church.

Currently Evergreen Church has 33 attending households [families and single adults] consisting of 105 people. However, not all are professing and / or baptized members of the CRCNA. Evergreen's history and current composition includes people from many Christian faith traditions, as well as some who are 'new' to the Christian faith. Currently there are several individuals attending that we do not know their status as baptized or professing (in any church), and some who attend do hold membership in another church [some Reformed, some not]. At present there are 34 professing members of the CRCNA and 28 baptized members. We have enjoyed celebrating many baptisms – infant, child, youth, and adult, as well as many professions of faith. We look forward to more!

Evergreen Church is financially stable. We own the facilities the Lord has blessed us with [facilities built in 1988-1989]. We are able to consistently meet our financial obligations as well as regularly contributing to local community ministries and Classis and denominational ministries. Having said that, though, we have not met our proposed budget for the past 2 years, mainly due to having aggressively budgeted for facilities improvements for which funds did not come in for; although in 2013 we did accomplish a significant, complete renovation of our worship space / sanctuary [funded entirely by donations], and we plan to continue to improve facilities as funds permit. [2014 statements attached].

Evergreen Church's history reveals that there is always potential for growth in Fort McMurray / Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. For example, in 2008 there were 23 professing members at Evergreen, by 2012 there were 37, now 34. Between October 2008 and present there have been 16 baptisms of infants of Evergreen families, 3 of children and youth, and 3 adult baptisms. In the same time frame we have rejoiced as 19 people have affirmed or professed faith in Jesus. There are others whom we know of who have been brought to the Lord while at Evergreen and have professed their faith after leaving Fort McMurray – some in other CRC congregations. This 'hard' data assures us that we can expect to 'grow' and bless others who are not at Evergreen yet. Some of that growth will be by transfer of memberships to Evergreen, some of it will be 'organic', some will be through our outreach / evangelistic efforts – as blessed by God, and some of it will be through having people from other faith traditions joining Evergreen Church in their search for a church 'home' in Fort McMurray. We trust that God will continue to bless Evergreen as Evergreen seeks to be a blessing in this community.

Note: it must be understood that Fort McMurray is a 'mining town', thus, as already stated; there is a highly mobile, transient dynamic to the population living and working here. There will be expected growth – it is anticipated that Fort McMurray will continue to grow larger and larger (currently 87,000 resident population, projected to more than double in the next 2 decades). But there is a lot of movement and turnover within that growth. Some people are transferred to Fort McMurray for a short term, others for a longer term. Some, due to work and career, are moved unexpectedly! At the same time there are people for whom Fort McMurray is and has been home for a long time.

Example: over the past 2 years Evergreen has bid farewell to 10 households / families as people have moved away! But in the past several months we've enjoyed welcoming 6 new households / families – some of whom have already made Evergreen their church 'home'! This mobility and turnover is nothing new in Fort McMurray; as one long-term member has said, "Here at Evergreen Church we say a lot of goodbyes, but we also say a lot of hellos!" That creates challenges, but at the same time it is an exciting reality – because we never know who will come in, be blessed and bless us through affiliation with Evergreen Community CRC!

Signed: Ronald Vanden Pol (Board Chairman); Nathan Koops (Board Clerk)

Healthy Church Task Force

Report submitted by John Pasma (chair)

Committee members are: William Delleman (regional pastor), Sylvia Dening (lay member), John Luth (regional pastor), Joanne Munro (restorative justice), Anita Slomp (restorative justice), John Pasma (regional pastor). Since the Fall Classis meeting in October, the HCTF has met three times.

Significant items on our agenda were:

- Reviewed and made minor changes to the Map of Offices and Resources For Classis Alberta North. We submit this document to Classis for approval.
- Cecil Van Niejenhuis of the denominational Pastor-Church Relations office joined us for a meeting. He has a standing invitation to attend anytime.
- Preparation of a roster of qualified psychologists for use by the congregations of Classis Alberta North.
- Reviewed a Pastoral Evaluation document used by Sonrise CRC. This template will be made available on the classis website for use and adaptation by the churches.
- Discussed the matter of compensation for HCTF members who are asked to facilitate meetings at churches. A sub-committee will prepare a draft "fee for service" schedule for further discussion.
- Heard reports from members and regional pastors regarding their contacts and work with the churches.
- The three regional pastors will attend a "best practices" meeting sponsored by the denominational Pastor-Church Relations Committee in Vancouver on Feb 18, 2015.

Healthy Church Task Force Map of Offices and Resources

This pdf document is quite long and did not copy well into this Word document and has therefore been **sent separately** to the delegates.

Home Missions Report (Regional)

Report submitted by Martin Contant, Regional Leader for Western Canada

TRANSITIONS

This classical report will represent my final communique with Classis as your Regional Leader for Western Canada—from western ON to Vancouver Island. I will be retiring from this role on June 30, 2015. I have had the wonderful privilege of serving many of the 103 churches, all 7 campus ministries and 5 specialized ministries within this region

over the past 21 years. Twenty new congregations which were started as church plants continue to take their place among the roster of congregations in the various classes. Three new missional communities have begun in the past year representing a new way of establishing Christ's presence in localized communities for people who are wary of more formalized institutional expressions of church.

The numbers only give one side of the picture, but embedded in those numbers are hundreds of relationships with many church leaders and members across Western Canada.

Whether in discerning together about:

- a new future for a congregation
- a new chapter in a local church
- envisioning the planting of a daughter congregation

- promoting and reviewing campus ministries
- talking with several congregations about closure as they discern that they have come to the end of their life cycle as a church
- leading council and congregational retreats
- coaching and consulting with congregations and pastors re mission
- acting as a bridge between the denomination and the Classis or the local church . . .

These are just a few of the things that I've been involved with over the years in my role. Home Missions has not always been a welcome partner in every church, perhaps because we didn't always get it right, with some of our new challenges and initiatives. The encouragement and invitation to embrace change for the sake of greater participation in God's mission right here in North America has been uncomfortable for some congregations and leaders. And yet all would agree that the gospel is not just for ourselves but also for the those outside the kingdom of God. Over my time in Home Missions, I have seen incremental and large changes sweeping our denomination and also the local church. We are no longer the dominant religious culture in Canada, and we often find ourselves as strangers in our own communities. Yet despite plateaued and declining numbers in our churches, the opportunities to share the gospel and live as Jesus' presence, in our own communities and neighborhoods have never been more available and varied than they are today. So I leave this work with great hope and confidence that God will continue grow his church, if we will make ourselves available and willing to be his 'sent' people.

Home Missions is currently in conversations about my replacement. This conversation includes wider denominational conversations about how the denomination as a whole can be better represented in the various regions of both Canada and the US. Thank you very much for the privilege you have given me to serve among you.

STARTING & STRENGTHENING CHURCHES

Home Missions is about starting, and strengthening local churches, which God uses to transform our communities. New starts in our region include:

Avenue Church is our newest CRC church plant to start in Western Canada, located on 118th Ave in Edmonton, led by Aaron and April Au. Regularly 50-60 people crowd *The Carrot*, a local coffee shop which serves as worship center on Sunday morning, and gathering space during the week. A strong ministry to serve the poor and the least is a key part of this church's vision for living among its community.

Home Missions has begun a mission multiplication network for the Greater Vancouver area. We hope it serves as a collaborative place to offer missional resources to local churches. We are inviting area churches to submit proposals for missional engagement. Available coaching, and some financial resources intended as seed money can help local congregations engage in pilot projects that have a missional focus.

Currently we are also in conversation with the Reformed Church of America regarding a church renewal process called Ridder Church Renewal. Seven congregations represented by 30 people attended a recent 2 day event to learn more about this opportunity. More churches in the greater Vancouver area, or from outlying areas are invited to learn more and still consider participation in a journey of renewal that focuses on the pastor and a leadership team who implement learning in the local church. This journey begins in October 2015. You may contact Martin for more information or any of the following BC churches who participated: Ladner CRC, Nelson Ave CRC, New Westminster CRC, The Tapestry, Cornerstone CRC (Chilliwack), Willoughby CRC and Langley Immanuel.

ENGAGE WITH CLUSTERS, CLASSES AND COMMUNITIES

Home Missions works with groups of pastors (clusters), with classes, and other denominational agencies and services to help local congregations engage in mission in their particular community contexts.

Home Missions has always been about helping local churches become more missional in their own community contexts. Programs seem less effective these days, but relationships *with* people who we live and work among are what God often uses to draw people to himself. Several individuals are leading the way in inhabiting neighborhoods with the presence of Jesus. by specifically loving our neighbor, including those next door. Karen Wilk in Edmonton, Rick Abma in Lacombe and Andrew Turkstra in Nanaimo have given their hearts and energies to connecting and living among neighbors, serving with them and loving them to Christ. Contact Karen Wilk if you'd like more information, training, or consultation. Home Missions employs her (through a contract with Forge Canada) to also be a resource to local churches who would find her teaching helpful, practical and applicable to their local settings.

DEVELOP DISCIPLES, LEADERS AND CAMPUS MINISTRIES

There soon will be seven campus ministries in the region continue to present a gospel witness through personal contact with students, faculty, and staff. The University of Alberta (Edmonton), Northern Alberta Institute of Technology-NAIT (Edmonton), U of Calgary, UNBC (Prince George), UBC - Okanagan (Kelowna), and Kwantlen (Richmond and Surrey). We are grateful that Rick Mast, youth pastor at West End CRC, is piloting a campus ministry project at NAIT. And, we are in the final stages of an appointment of a half time campus pastor for Kwantlen's Surrey Campus, with Fleetwood CRC taking a lead role in this new ministry. We are excited to see where God is at work as he has gone ahead of us.

Home Missions Committee Report (Classis)

Report submitted by Andrew Geisterfer, Classical Home Missions Committee Chair

CHMC Five Year Plan

Introduction

In the spring of 2014, the Classical Interim Committee of Classis Alberta North (CAN) asked its Classical Home Missions' Committee (CHMC) to draft a 5 year plan in relation to church planting in the Classis. The purpose of this request was twofold: first, to challenge CHMC to cast a compelling vision for the missional movement in Classis Alberta North (CAN); and second, to provide some clarity as to the financial requirements that such a vision would require. What follows is CHMC's 5 year plan.

Vision for Church Planting/the Missional Movement in CAN

Big picture, any vision for mission begins with who God is, the *Missio Dei*, the Sent and Sending One. God's very nature is missional: Creator is always about the other, and our God invites His people to participate with Him in His mission. As David Bosch explains, it is not that the church has a mission, but rather that God's mission has a church. The Father sends the Son, and the Father and Son send the Spirit who equips and sends us! As His Sent Ones, we are instructed to love our neighbours and *in our going*, make disciples of all nations. The church then, wherever she exists, is made and called to creatively embody, bear witness to and share the good news of the Gospel, inviting people to receive and participate in God's Kingdom and people.

As CRC congregations in Northern Alberta then, we are called to discern what the Spirit is up to in our time and context such that we participate in God's mission both personally and communally. One such way is through

supporting and empowering the seeding of new communities such as church plants and neighbourhood groups/congregations. In this regard CAN has been on the forefront of responding to unique missional opportunities in creative and fresh ways. In so doing, certain parameters have continued to guide the movement and frame the initiatives. These include ensuring that every missional community/church plant has as its intention being/becoming self-governing, self-sustaining and self-reproducing (3S).

With regard to these parameters, CHMC expects emerging churches to diligently work toward becoming self-governing, self-sustaining and self-reproducing entities (“3S”). Classis will not be expected to resource new church initiatives indefinitely. Moreover, in conjunction with funding, emerging churches will be expected to provide a reasonable plan and timeline for achieving a “3S” status. In all of this, our goal is to be faithful and to equip and empower all of God’s people to participate in God’s mission, as “the Presence of God in the world by the Spirit” (Craig VanGelder).

Specific Aspects of The Vision

As we seek to be faithful, we believe that the following four pillars are necessary to undergird, catalyse and sustain the missional movement in Alberta North over the next 5 years. They are:

1. Opportunity/Presence
2. Leadership
3. Resourcing
4. Prayer

Opportunity/Presence

“Opportunity is the mother of invention” ...or so the old quote goes. The region of Alberta North is certainly a land of opportunity. In Edmonton, for example, only 8% of the population attend church on Sunday mornings. At the same time, development is expanding exponentially. Edmonton’s population is expected to grow from one million to 1.7 million inhabitants by the year 2025. In Central Alberta, Red Deer, Blackfalds, Lacombe and other communities are all growing dramatically. The same could be said for other regions represented by Alberta North such as Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie. Given the “Alberta advantage”, the opportunity for church growth is unprecedented. While this population growth has shown continued increases in population, the church attendance and membership in the Christian Reformed Churches comprising Classis Alberta North have shown a steady and continual decline. Please see handouts.

In this context, it is certain that the demographic realities represented in the region of Alberta North will provide some compelling church planting prospects over the next 5 years. It is incumbent on Classis Alberta North to discern what God might have us do in response to such opportunities, allocating significant resources to equip, empower and participate in God’s mission in this place. This will include helping every member become more aware of their identity as missionaries as well as calling out those gifted to initiate and lead others into new engagements. In this way, existing Christian Reformed churches in the region will be encouraged and equipped to identify, support and participate in a variety of church planting opportunities. Furthermore, those congregations wondering about what’s next for them are invited to re-imagine themselves in light of God’s mission and to, as the Spirit leads, consider making a fresh start (as per CRCNA’s Home Missions program).

Furthermore, we believe that God has placed all of His people where they are and has already made and called them to be His Light, Salt, Kingdom come near in these places/neighbourhoods. For this reason, though our Neighbourhood Life initiatives, we want to encourage and bless every member to seek out other Christians in their neighbourhoods and together discern and participate in what God is up to through missional, incarnational postures and practices. (For more information on the latter, please contact Karen Wilk, wilkonline@shaw.ca.)

Leadership

We believe that God has given us all that we need to do His work in this world and this includes the provision of Ephesians 4 leadership. Therefore identifying and recruiting new leaders is an essential aspect of this (and any) movement of the Spirit. This will also require a Spirit led openness to those whom God might be raising up and using in these ways already in our congregations. Neighbourhood Life for example, has been and continues to seek at least one household from each congregation to participate in, be trained and supported in this initiative.

Thankfully, God equips and calls out leaders with a variety of qualifications (some of which may be different from what we have been sought out in the past) and thus, CAN has the wonderful privilege of embracing and learning from a diversity of servants of our great God. Imagine for example, a Somali pastor from a more Pentecostal tradition that is a gifted leader able to plant a church among the growing number of Somali refugees in Edmonton. What a blessing it would be for us to create a “larger tent” under which this person could plant a Christian community among a distinctive people group as part of our Classis. Or, as we are already seeing, imagine a diverse group of Christians all living in the same few blocks coming together to embody Christ as a testimony to God’s grace and Kingdom. In so doing, we invite all to honour certain theological commitments, to be supported and coached alongside us and to join us in labouring in God’s fields for the sake of the good news. All of these emerging leaders whether from our pews or elsewhere will benefit greatly from our resourcing, training and encouragement. One such opportunity is the 2 year Ethos missional equipping journey provided by Western Canada’s Home Mission’s partnership with Forge Canada. CHMC is eager to and committed to advocating for on-going funding of leaders and leadership development.

Resourcing

In the past 5 years, less than 10% of Classis’ overall budget has been allocated toward the development of new churches. We believe that increasing participation in God’s mission through this movement must be a significant priority for CAN as she looks to the future and seeks to challenge current trends towards church decline. Such engagement is about being faithful to what we believe God is calling us to, as His people in this post-Christendom, post-modern world. Will this guarantee the growth and continual witness of the Christian Reformed Church in Alberta North? No. But, it will give us a way to continue to deepen, empower and multiply our discipleship and engagement in God’s mission. God calls to be faithful not successful! (Mother Teresa). Accordingly, CHMC is asking for a substantial increase in the allocation of funds toward new church/missional endeavours. This is not something we ask for wistfully. We recognize that this will require prayerful discernment and courageous decision-making on the part of Classis. Furthermore, we recognize that it may mean that Classis will have to re-evaluate how it is currently funding other ministries. The figures presented in the latter part of this document reflect our commitment to this movement which we believe will help us all renew our vision of what it means to be the church on God’s mission.

CHMC recognizes that there are several exciting opportunities for growth and expansion throughout CAN. However, CHMC also recognizes that all of these opportunities for expanding the various ministries including that of CHMC ask for funds from the same membership base. It is with this in mind, that much of the long term financial burden can be eased by increasing membership. Maintaining and increasing membership has become the primary goal of the CHMC but to that end, CHMC believes that the primary mechanism of membership growth will come through church plants as illustrated above and historically. “Instead of the various ministries each making claim to a larger piece of the pie, it is CHMC’s position that CAN needs to make the pie larger.”

Prayer

Often the most neglected aspect of church planting is prayer. Yet, as Scripture teaches without prayer the church will not be who she is made to be as a sign, servant and foretaste of God’s Kingdom come near (Lesslie

Newbigin). As the CHMC, we confess to neglecting this aspect of our charge. We commit to making this a higher priority and a regular practice and to urging and encouraging all of Classis to join us in this commitment. We are encouraged by the renewed vigor for prayer in our denomination, championed in particular by CRCNA Home Missions. The recent Prayer Summit at Trinity CRC was inspirational. As a part of our 5 year plan, we envision allocating some of our resources to prayer. As a committee, this would begin by inviting the CHMC prayer coordinator to sit on our committee and to advocate for prayer for new churches and neighborhood life across the Classis. As a committee, we will also commit to a once a year prayer retreat in support of church planting/ the missional movement in our region.

Abraham Lincoln once wrote, “I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.” As a committee, we confess our deepest dependence on God’s power moving forward. Without prayer, any church planting movement in Alberta North is ill equipped.

CHMC further notes that it is asking for financial resources for conferences and education. These are anticipated expenses for unique church planting opportunities which we encounter from time to time. These opportunities generally present themselves in a unique and unforeseen manner. They will require the ability to react quickly to seize upon the opportunities as they arise.

Financials – for discussion purposes

Below are our financial projections for the next five years, as requested. We confess to being a great deal more confident in our 3-year projections given our current understanding, than 5 years, but we present them none the less. Please note the years listed below need to be amended to begin with the 2016 year, not 2015.

**Ministry Plan Request
Five Year Ministry Plan**

Ministry Plan		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Church Planting	Avenue Church	20,000	25,000	18,000	10,000	5,000
	Leadership Development	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
	New Church Plant Development (seed)	5,000	10,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
	New Church Plant (development stage)			15,000	15,000	15,000
	New Church Plant (planting stage - yr.1)				25,000	25,000
	New Church Plant (planting stage - yr.2)					20,000
	New Church Plant					20,000
Missional Communities	Neighborhood Life Central Alberta	18,000	16,000	14,000	10,000	5,000
	New Community	8,000	6,000	4,000	0	0
Education and Resources	Missional Training	10,000	10,000	12,000	12,000	10,000
Prayer		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Administration		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
		\$ 69,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 76,000	\$ 85,000	\$ 113,000

Ministry Plan	Breakdown of Items	Operational Expenses	Rationale
Church Plants	Avenue Church	20,000	remuneration for Aaron Au, further support raised through various church support, self employment
	Leadership Development	5,000	mentoring, resourcing potential church planters, education, real time opportunities (i.e. conferences)
	New Church Development	5,000	seed money
Missional Communities	Neighborhood Life Central Alberta	18,000	remuneration for Rick Abma, further financial support through raised through various churches, Classical commitment in support for next three years (2018)
	New Community	8,000	remuneration for Karen Wilk, on declining scale to self supporting by 2017
Education and Resources	Missional Training	10,000	Ethos equips leaders and churches for neighborhood transformation, to participate in God's mission in the neighborhood. Over the course of two years through quarterly teaching days, monthly cluster gathers and regular on line resources we discover the church's missional identity engage in discipleship and mission so that we will multiply Christian community. This training is offered to all churches in Classis,
Prayer		2,000	yearly prayer retreat in support of church plant and missional communities, support annual Prayer Summit
Administration		1,000	general supplies, stationary etc. promotional material, miscellaneous, for the above initiatives of Prayer, Missional Communities and Church Planting
Total		69,000	

Ministry Review Committee Report: Campus Ministry at the U. of A.

Introduction

Through the Classical Interim Committee, Classis Alberta North appointed the Ministry and Staff Review Committee in the spring of 2012. Its first three assignments were to review the Diaconal Ministry, the Pastoral Church Relations Ministry and the Youth Ministry. The fourth was to review the Campus Ministry.

In the early 1960's, in the heyday of North America's cultural revising, some University of Alberta students with a Christian Reformed church background began meeting in the Agricultural Building as a discussion club, styled the "Calvin Club." Discussion frequently featured materials from Hendrik Van Riessen or Herman Dooyeweerd, materials incomprehensible to many, but also references to Abraham Kuyper, a magnet.

Strangely, students kept coming, the attraction, maybe, the prospect of helping Christianize Canadian culture, a little. Rev. B. Nederlof frequently attended as a "mentor," and his comments helped take the conversations onto a plane of reality and normal concepts in English. The Calvin Club continued at least until 1969 with Fred Cupido the mentor in the later 60's. A transformation over the next five years produced a Campus Ministry under the direction of Tom Oosterhuis. This ministry celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2014.

Process

A questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was emailed to each church in June 2014. Reminders were sent in late July to non-responding churches, and, by mid-August fourteen responses from 14 (of 31) churches had been received. The **Staff Review Committee** met with the current **Campus Ministry Committee** on November 3, 2014. (Jo Romyn, Leo Mos, Roy Berkenbosch, Gerda Kits. Two student members and two new members were absent.)

The committee is energetic, committed and wants the campus ministry to remain effective and powerful. The committee continues to think a CRC Christian presence on campus is highly desirable. The Christian Reformed Church ought to influence powerful culture-making institutions.

The committee explained that Rick Van Manen presents the university a Christian presence through his pastoral-counseling availability (for some 75 students last year), with a Tolkien group, with an undergraduate group, with a graduate student group and with his administrative presence on some dozen committees.

Christian university students choose whatever Christian activities or discussions may intrigue them. The committee indicates that Rick Van Manen uses a “therapeutic” approach in acquiring connections to students, i.e., via counseling. And, he keeps various doorways open in order to catch their interest, e.g., discussions on the Tolkien novel *Lord of the Rings* or other Tolkien works.

The Campus Ministry Committee is pleased with the growth of Rick Van Manen in making this overall approach viable—he’s been here seven years. Rick is more naturally a scholar, they say, not first of all an event facilitator. But the committee helps him with suggestions, although they have not become involved in the actual activities.

The **Staff Review Committee** also consulted with two Christian Reformed U. of A. students, one familiar with the Campus Ministry and one not. Rick Van Manen was seen to be approachable, very available and that he aims to get students together. And, he pushes students toward growth in leadership positions. The other student was aware of the campus ministry, but had living arrangements and a schedule that made participation in any of the ministry’s activities impossible.

The **Staff Review Committee** met with Rick Van Manen on November 28, 2014. He reports that things are going very well in this his seventh year...compared to his first year...when five students showed up to a large-scale welcoming event—plates of food, varieties of drinks, lots of chairs. But this year, “It’s my busiest semester ever.” He reviewed his undergrad group, his more stable grad group, and his “Last Alliance” Tolkien club—voted the best club on campus a couple of years ago. This group dresses-up for some events; they read to elementary school students; they collect items for the food bank; and they read and talk about Tolkien’s books.

Rick says his counselling availability is for those experiencing anxiety, depression, mental health issues or the urgencies of faith. He also gets involved with intense emergencies through the Dean of Students, e.g., the HUB shooting or student suicides. The Dean asked the chaplains to perform a “Restoration of the Space” service in the room where the death occurred, a service Rick organized and performed with a colleague. He subsequently also prepared a memorial service for the student with a colleague, a service attended by some 100 students.

Rick is the administrator of the Interfaith Chaplains Association, ensuring they have phone numbers, office space and so on. The university recognizes chaplains to be serving “the university from the understanding that life, including academic life, is a spiritual journey. Chaplains are professionally trained and appointed by recognized communities of faith to minister to the unique needs of the university community.”

He does other things for the university:

- serves on the Student Services Council, made up of members from the Sexual Assault Centre, Mental Health Services, Aboriginal Student Services and others. They report on, discuss, and consider ways to improve the health of students on campus.
- serves as a non-voting member of the Religious Studies Council. The council is responsible for the vision, direction, and curriculum development of the Religious Studies Program.
- helped do interviews for the Senior Director of the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies.
- invited to participate in a Student Wellness project about cyber bullying at the university by University Student Services.

Rick senses two gaps or weaknesses in the overall ministry: little inroad with faculty and staff and his lack of formal training in counselling.

Our **Classical Review Committee** finds that of the four ministries it has evaluated, the Campus Ministry is the least well-known by the churches. It's as if there is a disconnect between the ministry and the members of Classis. Rick himself feels that as well. While he regularly gives reports to Classis, those reports fall amongst an onslaught of reporting. He is seldom asked to present something of his work to individual churches or councils. He does preach in various churches, but almost always to fill in as a supply preacher, not for an account of his ministry.

As well, it's our sense that the structure of the Campus Ministry Committee ought to be reviewed. Should its membership consist of two faculty members, two students, one community member and one ordained CRC pastor? How are the members of the committee to be selected? How should the committee report to Classis?

Results from Questionnaires

A fuller report of the responses from the questionnaires is available in **Appendix 2** below. Overall, the ministry works very well for those who participate in it.

Conclusions

1. That the campus minister very capably articulates a Reformed worldview to the audiences with whom he is involved.
2. That the campus minister is a sensitive counsellor for any students or others seeking his counsel.
3. That the campus minister is a powerful personality with a winsome way of providing a Reformed view—thoughtful, knowledgeable, approachable.
4. That the campus minister is powerfully connected in University of Alberta Chaplain's Association and in the university's structure through the Dean of Students.
(See the Interfaith Chaplains Association website.)
www.deanofstudents.ualberta.ca/StudentMentalHealth.aspx
5. That the campus ministry is not well connected to the members of Classis Alberta North, not effectively "owned" by Classis. It is a ministry to a community quite outside our Christian Reformed circle, and, in that way, unlike the other main ministries of Classis.
6. That the first objective of the campus ministry purpose, viz., to gather the Christian Reformed students on campus into a community of believers, has not been relevant to the ministry for some years. While most CRC students attend Kings University, Rick does attempt to locate and make contact with any CRC students at U. of A.

Recommendations

1. That the vision and mandate of the Campus Ministry be revised by the Campus Ministry Committee and recommended to Classis. It should be made to fit current circumstances of university life and university structure. The overall intent should be to continue providing a **significant Christian presence** to the **University of Alberta**—a community of perhaps 50,000. Any university is an important contributor to the shaping of current culture, and the word of the Lord should continue to be richly present there.
2. That the **Campus Ministry Committee** be **restructured** by Classis so that its membership have two Christian Reformed congregational pastors appointed by Classis, and that two students, two faculty members and two members from the larger Christian Reformed community be recommended for appointment to Classis by the Campus Ministry Committee.

3. That Classis Alberta North **revise** the **Chaplaincy Purpose** (2006) to reflect the current realities of university culture and the campus ministry within that culture. And, that the “purpose statement” be changed into a “**mandate**,” a mandate which includes a statement such as the following: “To supervise the work of the campus minister in a timely fashion.” The word “all” should be dropped from item 3 since it is impossible to address all 50,000 students, faculty and staff.
4. That the Campus Ministry Committee **revise** the “**Task of the U. of A. Chaplain**” to a more practical set of tasks reflecting the current ministry and to then recommend the changed **job description** to Classis Alberta North.
5. That the Campus Ministry Committee assist the campus minister to explore more ways in which the **Christian presence** might be **expressed** in the **university community**.
6. That the **churches** of Classis Alberta North be urged to invite Rick Van Manen to come to their churches to **preach** and explain the work of the Campus Ministry in order that our congregations may be better informed about the campus ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Co Vanderlaan—convener; Johanna Buisman; Jack Vanden Born—secretary

The Appendices that are part of this report containing the results of the questionnaires and the mandate of the Campus Chaplaincy Committee are available from the Clerk upon request.

Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference

Report submitted by Loretta Stadt, NADC consultant.

Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference (NADC): A Classis ministry of which all Classis Alberta North Christian Reformed churches are members. The full board consists of a representative of each church. This representative is usually, though not always, a deacon. We exist to encourage and challenge congregations and communities to grow in living lives of stewardship, justice, mercy, and compassion.

This is accomplished by collaborating, communicating and sharing expertise and experience.

Therefore, over the past six months, we have:

1. **Organized and implemented the Day of Encouragement (DOE)** on November 8, 2014. The DOE focuses on many topics beyond NADC’s purpose and is therefore of benefit to all areas of ministry within Classis Alberta North. This year, 154 registrants and 23 presenters participated in the event. Some comments were: “it encouraged me to look for God’s work around me and just look to partner with what he’s already doing”; “it gave me ideas on how to think through my thoughts and acceptance of the LGTB community”; “enjoyed hearing about how others are dealing with challenges of being single in the church and on dealing with grief”; and “it helped me learn and look at things with different eyes”.
2. **Gathered together** in January as church representatives to listen to each other and learn. We specifically discussed the Report on the role of Elders and Deacons which will be dealt with at the 2015 Synod. We discussed how this report focuses on the holistic ministry of word and deed and what this might look like in the daily ministry of deacons, elders, pastors and other leaders.
3. **Created and distributed monthly newsletters which aid in the communication and support of the churches and our partners.** Excerpts of newsletter information:
 - a. **Refugee Sponsorship Webinar:** It will provide you with an overview of private refugee sponsorship, including the current state of the program, refugee eligibility criteria, and sponsoring group criteria.

- b. **World Renew Baby Shower Campaign**—swung into high gear and is going well. It increases learning about maternal health, increases funding for various programs, and increases World Renew’s visibility in churches.
- c. **Operation Manna**—is it on your offering schedule? If you don’t support it through offerings, potential ministries such as the proposed Kamamak Program (dedicated to strengthening the lives of young indigenous women) may not receive the funds necessary to be successful.
- d. **Annual Neighbourhood Life Family Weekend** at Camp Nakamun is March 6-8th. This year, along with community time, worship, discussion, and recreational activities, we plan to have 2 learning tracks; one for those just starting out and one for those more seasoned.
- e. **Public Discussion of Classis Ministries**—at Classis March 10 from 6:30-9 pm. How do the current ministries, including NADC, align with the mission and vision of Classis Alberta North?

4. **Continued to sponsor the Kenya project**

The Ng’enda project continues to instigate positive change in Kenya. The project, through World Renew, is focussed on the Ng’enda region. In many cases, targets that were set out are being exceeded. In the last quarter alone, we have seen another 420 people trained in Stepping Stones which focuses on recognizing behaviours which may be harmful and de-stigmatizing HIV and other sexual issues. Also in the last quarter, we saw 256 people tested for HIV which is significantly higher than the target of 90.

Stepping Stones has been rolled out in secondary schools in Kiganjo Location. The participants are sharing stories of change they realized since starting stepping stones. One of them is 17 year old James Mwangi (not his real name), a form three student from Ndundu secondary school. In his testimony, he says he started having sex at the age of 13 years. His first sexual experience was with their house help who was 4 years his senior. He shared of his addiction to sex since then and the dangers he has found himself in since he started having sex. After his testimony, the young man agreed to be linked to a counsellor by his guidance and counselling teacher who is now helping him overcome his addiction to sex.

We are also excited about the number of people receiving entrepreneurship training. This is largely done through NJAGU ACK Trust Group. The Trust has conducted entrepreneurship training to 156 people last quarter. The group has gone from 30 members with less than 15,000 Ksh in savings to 200 members with savings of 350,000 Ksh. The trust group offers a vehicle for solving the financial needs of the locals through low interest rates on loans and a place for members to share in dividends from the income of the trust. This is important as most people do not have access to traditional banking services, making it difficult to start and grow businesses as well as receive any type of interest from capital for those that are saving.

Farming God’s Way is a program that teaches best practices in farming and is a new concept in the community. The program continues to experience growth. 217 farmers have been mobilized to receive training. Farmers who are practicing what they have learned are experiencing an increase in yields and are encouraging neighbours to utilize these practices.

5. **Continued to support The King’s University/NADC Honduras Water Project**

The 2015 team has been assembled and is made up of 12 students and a leader. Thanks to your generous offerings, each team member will receive a grant of \$1,000 to aid in their fundraising efforts. The cost per team member is \$3,500 which includes the cost of the project itself—pipes, pumps, taps, etc.

The project’s memorandum of understanding has been updated to better reflect the realities of how the project functions.

6. **Connected regularly with Diaconal Ministries Canada, World Renew, and Home Missions** to share ideas, concerns, and work together to promote and encourage churches to show the love of Christ through word and deed.

7. **Communicated with** – Cuba Connection, Classis Safe Church, Classis Youth ministry, Disability Concerns, Edmonton Native Healing Centre, Families Living Well Society, Mosaic Centre

Nominations and Elections

Elder delegate to Synod: (Two to be elected, the others will be alternates): Matt Schoonderwoerd,

Matt Schoonderwoerd retired earlier this year from veterinary medicine. Although, at present, he is working part time as a consultant to the Human Resources Department of a company with about 1200 employees. He has been an elder in three different CRC churches on more than one occasion. He has a passion for people and their life circumstances; especially the elderly. Matt is a student at the Christian Leaders Institute working towards a “Christian Leaders Diploma”. He is married to Margaret and they have 5 married children.

Procedure to vote for pastors/elders/deacons for Synod delegates:

1. December: the Nominations Coordinator prepares the pastors rotation schedule for delegates to synod and calls the pastor at the top of the list if he/she is able to attend synod as a delegate.
2. December: the Nominations Coordinator prepares a ballot of all eligible pastors in Classis who might serve as a delegate to Synod. The ballot deletes the pastor who is first on the rotation schedule to go as a delegate
3. December: the Nominations Coordinator via the Stated Clerk requests each church in Classis for elder nominations to Synod. All nominees should be given to the Stated Clerk no later than Feb 01.
4. January: the Nominations Coordinator via the Stated Clerk will send an email to all pastors on the ballot if they wish to have their name removed because they are unable to go to Synod.
5. February: the Nominations Coordinator will delete those pastors from the ballot who have indicated they are not able to serve as a delegate to Synod.
6. February: the Nominations Coordinator will add to the ballot any elder nominated by their respective councils.
7. March Classis meeting: the Nominations Coordinator will hand out a one page ballot for delegates to vote.
 - 7.1 Pastors: One pastor is automatically declared a delegate based on rotation schedule and will not appear on the ballot. A final request if any pastor wants their name deleted from the ballot.
 - 7.2 Each elder nominee will have their respective church’s delegates say a few words why they were chosen.
 - 7.3 Final request for additional elder nominees can still be penciled in on the ballot.
 - 7.4 Delegates are requested to vote on the ballot with possible changes made at the meeting.
 - 7.5 A pastor must receive 50% of the delegate votes to go as delegate # 2 to Synod. If this is not achieved on the first ballot, a second vote will take place from the 4 pastors receiving the highest number of votes from the first ballot. Once a pastor has received 50% of the votes, the 2nd and 3rd highest vote getters are declared 1st and 2nd alternate.
 - 7.6 The two elders receiving the most votes are the elder delegates to synod, the 3rd and 4th are declared alternates.

June 2013

The King's University College

Report submitted by Melanie Humphreys, President.

Greetings from The King's University! We're pleased to have this opportunity to share the blessings we've enjoyed since our last report, and to look ahead to the exciting opportunities of 2015.

This fall, King's enrolled 715 students to study and be a part of our community for the 2014/15 academic year, which is up 21 students from last year and an all-time record high! It has been encouraging to see two consecutive years of positive enrolment growth. Increased investment in programs, such as the Leder School of Business and Community Engaged Research, enhanced student recruitment efforts and continually developing student care programs have helped recruit and retain more students than ever before in King's history. Thanks to all of our supporting community for helping to make this a reality.

During the summer of 2014 we received permission to change our name to The King's University – finally being able to drop “college” from the end. We were thrilled with this decision as being labelled as a “university” better reflects what King's truly is – a full-fledged university. We had our trade name legalized shortly after the announcement but are now in the midst of the process of officially having our government Act changed in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Having this Act changed requires the submission and approval of a private bill. This process was started in fall 2014 with Dr. Richard Starke, MLA Vermillion-Lloydminster, agreeing to sponsor our bill and submitting all required paperwork.. The private bill was not able to be introduced this past fall so we are continuing to pursue this and hope to have the bill introduced this spring. Please commit to pray for this process and for Dr. Starke and the Hon. David Dorward (the MLA for King's riding) who are working hard on our behalf. Pray for political will and favour with the Hon. Don Scott, Alberta Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education and other parliamentary staff members involved.

Over 500 people descended upon The King's University to celebrate Homecoming September 26-28, 2014. The festive weekend celebrated the 35th anniversary of the university and featured everything from alumni athletic games to a music alumni concert and an enormous carnival. On the Saturday night more than 300 people filled the gym for the annual Community Banquet and Silent Auction. Many Homecoming guests ended the weekend by joining in worship at Fellowship Christian Reformed Church the next morning.

King's welcomed over 280 guests at our fall open house in October. This was an increase of over 100 from last year and we received 74 applications for admission in one day! For the majority of guests it was their first visit to King's and 15% of these attendees made the decision to apply after they arrived on campus. If you know someone who may be interested in visiting King's, mark your calendars for the spring Open House on March 14, 2015. This is a wonderful opportunity for prospective students and interested community members to see what King's has to offer.

The King's community has been engaged in an extensive strategic planning exercise over the last year to create a document that will guide the university's next steps. We are working to clearly define our vision for the next five years and are prioritizing our goals for the future. There is a lot of excitement around what the future holds for this institution and we look forward to sharing our plans with our supporting community. We expect to complete this task with Board approval of the plan in March 2015. Please pray for this process and that God will guide the decisions that are being made.

As we enter a time of financial instability for the province of Alberta, we are budgeting very cautiously for the institution. We continue to use the resources that we have been blessed with in the most efficient and effective manner possible. As we anticipate provincial government funding cuts to post-secondary institutions we reflect on the magnitude and significance of the generous funding that we continue to receive from our

supporting community. Thank you to all of the churches in Classis Alberta North for confirming the value of the work that is being done at King's by giving generously through Ministry Shares and other offerings. These gifts represent a significant part of our budget each year. Your commitment to our students and King's mission to provide "**university education that inspires and equips learners to bring renewal and reconciliation to every walk of life as followers of Jesus Christ, the Servant-King**" is deeply appreciated. On behalf of the entire King's community, we would like to express our sincere gratitude.

Youth Ministry Consultant

Report submitted by Ron De Vries, Youth Ministry Consultant.

Greetings, to all the churches of Classis Alberta North. Thank you for this opportunity to share with you about youth ministry related items.

The Board of Trustees has recently adopted these challenges for the CRCNA:

1. Congregations are continuing to discover that they need to learn/relearn how to connect/reconnect with the local contexts in which they minister. *Desired outcome: **Congregations will connect with their local contexts providing the message of Christ.***
2. There is an increased awareness in the church that something is missing with regard to discipleship, spirituality, and being spirit-led. *Desired outcome: **Congregations will focus on holistic lifelong faith formation.***
3. Lay leadership is under-emphasized and clergy formation processes are inadequate for engaging the challenges before the denomination. *Desired outcome: **Congregations will develop leaders, both clergy and lay that will lead effectively in today's challenging and diverse contexts.***
4. Lay leadership is under-emphasized and clergy formation processes are inadequate for engaging the challenges before the denomination. *Desired outcome: **Congregations will develop leaders, both clergy and lay that will lead effectively in today's challenging and diverse contexts.***
5. The direction and overall focus of the CRCNA are no longer clear, and our sense of shared identity is no longer self-evident. *Desired outcome: **Congregations will understand and express our shared identity in Christ.***

After much listening over the last number of years, a vision for youth ministry on the Canadian side of the denomination might be summed up in this very long statement.

We long for a shift from ministry that is ad hoc, reactive, age-segregated and anxiety-driven to a ministry that is rooted in grace, part of a larger, comprehensive vision of inter-generational discipleship, and built on solid foundations of leadership development.

This statement very much aligns with the challenges leadership in the CRCNA is adopting.

On a local front in Classis Alberta North, I see us as churches and the leaders within them seeking out ways to express and live out a youth ministry culture that reflects both of these perspectives. Why? Because an isolated and disconnected model that separates us and creates environments of "not belonging" is not what God has envisioned for his children.

A recent article written and shared on the **Network youth ministry blog** (which is a very helpful place to go for resources and talking points) <http://network.crcna.org/faith-formation/whos-your-faith-web> shared a very insightful experiment about our faith connections. Here is what was written.

It's one thing to know that you belong to the body of Christ, that people want to see you grow in your faith, as you want to see them grow too. It's quite another to name those who are journeying with you. Here's a great, thought provoking activity for your youth group, small group, family devotions, or even for yourself. Take some time to write down about all those - young and old - who are currently pouring into your faith. Next, write down those - young and old - who you are currently investing into. It's a simple exercise, but has the potential to be a powerful moment for your teens. A few months back, teens in our youth group participated in this exercise. It was fascinating to hear stories about people they have named who they recognize are investing into their faith life.

And to see them begin to recognize that they have a role to play in other's faith growth.

Probably what was most surprising for them is the simple fact that passing on the faith does not just happen "down," as typically occur in our church programs. Children and young people also impact the faith development of the older generations as well. It was empowering for them to recognize that, not only do they have a host of people in their "faith web", but that they played an active role in encouraging others in their faith.

The diagram at the end of this report helps illustrate our web of connection. I encourage you to try this with your youth groups in your local churches.

When I speak with churches, leaders, parents and even youth, it is with the understanding of the importance of an intergenerational youth ministry foundation. I pray that the story of God's power, grace and love, like a snapshot of Zion (which I believe is rooted in *intergenerationalness*) is evident in all our conversations. That, when we plan events for our classis, when we discern programmatic structures for local church settings and when I walk with leaders who just need to vent, that all these things are rooted in His love and glory.

As I wrap up this report, here are some very important opportunities and dates to bring back to your congregations:

March 20-22, 2015 is our annual **Soul Care retreat** happening in Canmore, Alberta. This weekend is for youth leaders (lets include Pastors in this along with anyone who invests in the life of youth ie Gems, Cadets), and their spouses (if they have one) for a weekend of refreshing. This year we will be looking at what it means to "care" for our souls and we will be using the book called "Soul Keeping" written by John Ortberg for our session points. The cost for this event is \$120.00 person and to register for this event, please follow this link. <http://canym.weebly.com/soul-care-retreat-registration.html>

This summer, Edmonton will be hosting a YU SERVE week from June 27th to July 4th and the host church will be the Avenue church plant. Here is the promo we are using for this event.

"SERVE is a one week intensive gathering of inter-generational servants who come alongside a community for the purpose of being Christ-like. The objective is to reflect Christ while mutually encouraging each other in the context of a particular community to further the Kingdom of God. SERVE participates in the organic concept of missions at home, adhering to the fact that we join God in the ministry He is already doing."

*Alberta Avenue is a mature, inner city neighbourhood in Edmonton, Alberta. Much of the area's development occurred during the **First World War** era and it was once home to the Great Western Garment Company and the Norwood Foundry. During the 1970's, the Avenue had fallen on hard times had become home to many drug dealers, prostitutes and many homeless residents. Recently the Avenue embarked on an Initiative and is now Edmonton's pioneer neighborhood revitalization project. The Alberta Avenue revitalization is celebrating its*

sixth year. In this time, this community-led, City-supported revitalization has transformed this historic area, improving both its social and physical aspects.

Watch this video for more details. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiFPmrHfkVc#t=150>

*The Avenue Initiative is re-energizing 118th Avenue from NAIT to Northlands. The City and the community are working together to improve streets, businesses, and green spaces to foster a vibrant community life on the Avenue. The Carrot (where the Avenue Church gathers for worship) sprung up amidst the arts revolution, which is taking place on Alberta Avenue (118th Ave in Edmonton, Alberta). The arts community was a catalyst for social change and has continued to be a vital part of the ongoing transformation that Alberta Avenue is experiencing. The **Arts On The Ave** is a group of artists living and working on and around the Avenue, working for a revolution. They believe change is possible, that the community has something to say, and that arts are its voice. **Arts on the Ave** sees 118 Ave, between NAIT to Northlands, as a place whose “personality” is vividly expressed through the arts. This place has a dynamic momentum, “an arts pulse” where the artist and community continually engage.*

As a SERVE trip, we hope to come alongside those who live, work and play in the community, responding to the call for help from those in need and in the process, shine Christ’s light in a community that longs for revitalization and fellowship.

To register for this event, please follow the link below.

<https://www.youthunlimited.org/serve/site-locations/serve-avenue/>

Thank you again for this opportunity to share.