



Classis Alberta North of the Christian Reformed Church

Minutes

of the

158TH SESSION OF CLASSIS ALBERTA NORTH OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
October 14-15, 2015
held at Covenant CRC, Edmonton, Alberta

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.

Serving Classis:

- Nicolas Wolmarans, chair
- Gary Bomhof, vice-chair
- Henk Van Andel, Stated Clerk
- Linda Ryks, Recording Clerk
- Karen Wilk, Classis Chaplain
- Balloting Committee (if needed): the delegates of Barrhead CRC
- Classis Credentials Committee: the delegates of Edmonton Fellowship and Edmonton Ottewell

1. Welcome and Introductions: **Nic Wolmarans**, Chair of Classis, called the meeting to order at 12 noon. A number of announcements and prayer concerns were noted. A special and historic welcome was made to our deacon delegates – this being the first Classis where deacons are officially delegated.
2. Devotions: **John Pasma** welcomed the delegates and other visitors, and opened the meeting with devotions.
3. Roll call: Presence of delegates as determined by the roll call is shown below. (*denotes first time delegates).

<u>Church</u>	<u>Pastor or Elder</u>	<u>Other Elder/Deacon Delegates:</u>	
Barrhead	Harold Vandersluis	Albert Wierenga	
Edm Bethel Comm.	Tom Baird	Gary Duthler	Randall Huisman
Edm Centrepoinde	Bill Diepeveen	Bruce Wisselink	
Edm Covenant	John Pasma	Frank Zee	*James Uitvlugt
Edm Fellowship	Stuart Williams	Edith Sinnema	
Edm First	*Peter VanderBeek	*Rebecca VandenBorn	Wilma McLaughlin
Edm Inglewood	John Jager	Geoff VandeKuyt	*Brad Bosker
Edm Maranatha	Art Verboon	*Johanna Niemandsverdriet	
Edm moscaicHouse	Anne Vanderhoek	Aaron Au (late)	
Edm Ottewell	Martin Mobach	*Pat Hoekstra	Peter Jonkman
Edm The River	Bruce Gritter	Luke Seinen	
Edm Trinity	Rich de Lange	Mary Van Rijk	*John Van Essen
Edm West End	Bob DeMoor	Fred Schuld	*Jackie Selles
Edson – Peers	Ken Douma	Arnold De Leeuw	Pete Smit
Fairview - Faith Fellowship	*Ron Weenink		
Ft. McMurray – Evergreen	<i>no delegate</i>		
Lacombe – Bethel	Mike Vandyk	Wayne Bouwman	*Ann Wildeboer
Lacombe - Wolf Creek	Leon Johnston	Ken VanderWekken	Albert Ypma
Lacombe – Woodynook	Neil de Koning	Pete Den Oudsten	*Phil Visscher
LaGlace	Paul Birnbaum		
Leduc – Ebenezer	Dirk DeKlerk	Frank VandeKraats,	
Neerlandia	Arnold Nanninga	Randy Strydhorst	
Ponoka – Sonrise	William Delleman	Meindert Dykstra	*Joziena Meyer, *Brian Wiebe
Red Deer – First	Gary Bomhof	Dick VandenBrink	*Jason Dalstra
Red Deer - New Life	*Sandra Brandsma	*Dave Jonker	
Rimbey	Bill Niewenhuis	*Juire DeBruyn	
Rocky – Covenant	Nic Wolmarans	*Gerald Datema	
Rocky – First	Len Batterink	Gord Van't Bosch	
St. Albert	John Luth	Douwe Vanderwel	Bert Jager
Stony Plain – Hope	Russell Schiedeman	*Dana Dyck	

4. Opening Procedures

- 4.1. The *Covenant for Office-bearers* was signed by first time delegates.
- 4.2. Classis was declared constituted by the Chair, **Nic Wolmarans**; **Gary Bomhof** served as Vice-Chair.
- 4.3. **Motion:** to adopt the time schedule as presented, with minor amendments as needed. **Carried.**

5. Stated Clerk Report and Classical Interim Committee Report: **Stated Clerk Henk Van Anandel** summarized his work and the work of the Classical Interim Committee.

The following motions arising from the work of the CIC were dealt with immediately and several other motions listed in the CIC Report were dealt with later as the associated Agenda items came up.

- 5.1. Motion: that **Michelle Kool** be appointed **Alternate Stated Clerk**. **Carried.**
- 5.2. Motion: that Classis **approve the actions of CIC** since the March 2015 Classis meeting. **Carried.**

6. Oversight Committee Report re: Mike Van Boom - **Allan Groen** reported for the committee. The small oversight group met a number of times, but only at call of the Chair (Allan Groen). The committee felt Mike was not availing himself of the resources put in place through this committee and no progress was being made. The committee met with Mike with regard to this concern and discussed its desire to request Classical release of its duties. Mike agreed with the intended action.

6.1. The Oversight Committee requests Classis to dismiss it.

Motion: That Classis dismiss the Oversight Committee with thanks. If Mike Van Boom wishes to consider a future call to serve as Minister he is to ask that this committee be reconstituted. If no request comes from him, that Classis then follow the Church Order regarding his ministerial credentials. **Carried.**

Q: If committee is disbanded who will walk with Mike?

- A: He is part of *New Community Life* group and under Karen Wilk's pastoral care.
- Q: Are the implications of the process now followed clear to Mike?
- A: The Committee believes it is abundantly clear to Mike Van Boom that he will no longer be able to hold his ministerial credentials unless he takes further action.
- Q: Who makes the decision whether he is allowed to preach? Can he preach?
- A: The rules of Church Order allow him to preach but he is not allowed, by this Classis' jurisdiction, to consider a call.

7. World Renew –Jim Joosse reported.

- 7.1. Jim expressed thanks to all the churches in Classis who continue to generously donate to World Renew.
- 7.2. Carol Bremer Bennett acquits herself well as the new US World Renew Director.
- 7.3. Mr. Ken Kim filled the position of Disaster Response Leader at World Renew.
- 7.4. The war zone migration in the Middle East (Syrian issue) continues to be a huge concern. It was noted that every dollar raised by our churches for humanitarian aid to refugees will be matched by Canadian government dollars.

8. Classical Leadership Report – Neil De Koning reported.

- 8.1. Leadership Workshop in June was a success. It demonstrated that the technology works and can be a more timely and efficient way of learning together.
- 8.2. With lots to learn and many resources available, the following options were considered by delegates:
 - 1) Create a Circle of Council Chairs to learn and grow and be better at leading Council (best practices, developing organizational leadership skills and resources).
Response to option: this may be not be the best use of the Chair's time.
 - 2) Work with TKU –for personal in classroom or on-line learning opportunities.
Response to option: if videos were available or on-line seminars, that would be best.
 - 3) Work with Michelle Kool (CIC) – like the elders retreat at St. Albert CRC this past May, or other similar opportunities for leadership formation.
Response to option: supported by several churches, but the timing needs to be sensitive to farmers.

Comment: The best way to show support for leadership development opportunities is to "show up". The Day of Encouragement provides good opportunities, as well there is the next elder's training in St. Albert in November.

9. Campus Ministry Report – Rick Van Manen (U of A Chaplain), Roy Berkenbosch (Campus Ministry Committee) reported.

- 9.1. Rick mentioned a prayer request - over the weekend another suicide happened in the university and the chaplains will be called in to provide counselling.
- 9.2. **Rick Mast** has been successful at making himself known as **NAIT's** chaplain through his 2 hours/week on campus. The Dean of Students at NAIT is lobbying for extra time (possibly a full day). Request for prayers that this would be successful.
- 9.3. **Roy Berkenbosch** introduced the request that Rick Van Manen be granted a sabbatical leave. **Motion:** that Classis approve a **Sabbatical Leave** for Campus Minister **Rick Van Manen** as described in his report to Classis (see Agenda p. 10). **Carried.**

10. Campus Ministry Review Report – Mark Wallace, CRCNA Home Missions Leadership Team reported.

- 10.1. Campus Ministry takes place by invitation, to minister with and for the campus (not "to" the campus). Universities appreciate that campus ministers are there to help students and create faith groups, and also to help navigate difficult situations on campus.
- 10.2. World Missions and Home Missions are joining. This constitutes a recognition that they are no longer distinct entities. Some areas being looked at are governance and legal issues, and others that could easily be combined. This new agency is looking to have Classes give input on how it can serve the churches better.

11. The King's University – Melanie Humphries, President of TKU, reported.

- 11.1. TKU also experienced a (former) student's suicide this past week. Melanie asked for support of churches in dealing with this generation's acceptance of suicide as a way out of a personal crisis.
- 11.2. Enrolment: 80% of students come from within 100 km of TKU. There is an 8% increase in enrolment in 2015-2016, with a total of 770 students enrolled either full-time or part-time.

- 11.3. King's is working to increase educational offerings for adult learners.
- 11.4. *Shared Vision 2020* is a blueprint that will guide TKU development over the next five years. Priorities are serving community, strengthening teaching and research, enhancing student success, empowering people, and advancing sustainability.
- 11.5. The King's University was granted a name change (dropping the word "college") by the previous government. The next step is the presentation of a private members bill to the Legislative Assembly at this fall's sitting. The government is new, and therefore TKU asks for support from community members through the sending of a letter of support to their MLA. Draft letters and fact sheets are available at the TKU web-site.
- 11.6. King's dedicated a bench and small garden on campus commemorating the TRC and the residential school history.
12. Classis Chaplain **Karen Wilk** led in a prayer for both U of A and The Kings University campus communities.
13. Cuba Connection – **Dan Van Keeken** reported.
 - 13.1. Biggest issue faced by Cuban churches is food shortages. Every church is supporting seniors. The two that Classis is assisting through Cuba Connection provide crockpots for two meals a day for 50 people. Cuba Connection is also raising funds to help rebuilding parsonages for these churches. \$20,000 of the \$50,000 needed for this project has already been raised.
 - 13.2. The Cuban churches are thankful that we are praying for them. And they continue to pray for us as well. On December 5, 2015, ten members of this Classis will go to Cuba to visit the churches. A container of donated supplies (about 150 bicycles, tires, windows, etc.) destined for Cuba is almost full. This should arrive in Cuba by Christmas.
 - 13.3. Cuba Connection is asking churches of Classis to establish relationships with the churches in Cuba. This is to share stories and possibly visit them.
 - 13.4. Cuba Connection would also like to send two pastors to Cuba to teach and preach in the spring 2016. Rich deLange and Victor Ko have done so in the past. Those interested should contact Dan.
14. John Pasma retirement from active ministry- Motion: that Classis approve the retirement of **Rev. John Pasma** effective February 29, 2016, in accordance with the provisions of Art. 18 of the Church Order. **Carried.**
 - 14.1. John Pasma thanked Covenant CRC, Classis, his colleagues in Edmonton, and his family.
 - 14.2. John Ooms thanked John Pasma for his work in Classis and as a colleague and presented flowers and a card on behalf of Classis.
 - 14.3. Classis Chaplain **Karen Wilk** prayed giving thanks for John's ministry.
15. World Mission Report – **Ko Spyksma** reported.
 - 15.1. World Mission desires a stronger connection in North America with global missions. Ko highlighted a couple of programs which are working toward this goal: *Impact*, a grass roots evangelism program for teens in Central America, and the *Momentum* program in which a young person is mentored by an adult for mission work.
 - 15.2. The **Salaam Project** strives to equip Christian Reformed congregations and individuals to reach out respectfully to those who follow the Islamic faith. Salaam manager, **Greg Sinclair**, comes to Calgary and Edmonton often and is a great resource to churches who are working with Syrian refugees. Also of help to churches in this regard is the book *Bridges*.
 - 15.3. Ko is available to lead youth seminars on missions. She also is available to speak to seniors groups.
16. Home Missions Committee Report - **Tom Baird, Aaron Au, Karen Wilk, and Victor Ko** reported.
 - 16.1. **Tom Baird** is the new Chair of this Committee –he declared himself to be a passionate servant of Classis in this role.
 - 16.2. Statistics show there is no Classis in Canada that has grown in the last 20 years. And there are few churches that are growing – especially growing steadily because they are reaching people for Jesus. Home Missions' goal is to attain a growth curve for Classis Alberta North, trusting this is possible because with God all things are possible. To achieve this goal,
 - 1) The Home Missions Committee wants to be innovative in planting churches. The goal is to plant a new church every three years by creating partnerships among existing congregations. Partnerships will keep the financial implications of this manageable.

- 2) The Committee wants to own this part of its mandate by getting the best expertise in our denomination to create leadership and to obtain the required funding.
- 3) The Committee has asked for \$10,000 in the 2016 budget to get this whole initiative of church planting started – basically to fund a demographic study to identify the best area to initiate a church plant.

16.3. **Avenue Church- Aaron Au** reported. Aaron thanked Classis for its support.

- 1) On Sept 20th the Avenue Church celebrated its 1 year anniversary.
- 2) It is a very up/down and volatile ministry. The Avenue Church recognizes God’s faithfulness in granting growth, to the point where the Carrot Café is no longer large enough to accommodate its services, and this past Sunday the service was celebrated in a new space, a local art gallery.
- 3) The **SERVE** project this past summer included the volunteer work of approximately 45 people (youth and adults). The Avenue partnered with **First CRC** to house them. The SERVE team was able to serve the community of Alberta Avenue by building decks and fences and by working with the **Mustard Seed** community outreach. The SERVE team, both served and helped others, but also was unexpectedly gifted through mutual giving and receiving.
- 4) The Avenue has become a “safe” place for people to begin to seek God’s healing and extend God’s hospitality to others. Aaron is grateful for the stories of redemptive healing and discipleship. He covets your prayers as Avenue Church moves forward.

16.4. **Neighborhood Life – Karen Wilk** reported.

- 1) There are 14 community Neighbourhood life churches in the Edmonton area. These are in the inner city, as well as in rural areas, and some in Seniors’ Homes.
- 2) Karen currently serves as Interim Regional Missionary for Home Missions. She is coaching leaders and coming alongside churches from Thunder Bay to the West Coast. Please contact Karen if you are seeking help in developing mission projects in your area..

16.5. **MosaicHouse- Victor Ko** presented, via a video clip, a partnership plan with **Ottewell CRC**.

- 1) At the initiative of Ottewell CRCs core group, mosaicHouse was approached with a missional and visional proposition, namely that mosaicHouse purchase the Ottewell building for \$750,000. Ottewell CRC would then rent the building for its work, and mosaicHouse would do mission work in the neighbourhood.
- 2) mosaicHouse indicated they would like to do this and is raising funds for the downpayment of \$200,000 – of which \$40,000 has been raised.
- 3) Victor asks for prayers for this undertaking, as well as prayerful consideration of churches to partner financially – possibly a commitment of between \$5,000-\$10,000 per church.

17. Release of **Rev. Ferry Yang** from Ministry- **Executive Session** was **declared** to discuss the release of Rev. Ferry Yang from ministry in Neerlandia CRC and in the denomination via Article 14b of the CO. (Confidential background information was distributed and later collected. This material is on file with the Stated Clerk).

Motion: that **Rev. Ferry Yang** be released from ministry in the CRC under the provisions of Art. 14b. of the Church Order. **Supported.**

17.1. Church visitors **John Luth and Tom Baird** distributed a written report of circumstances surrounding the resignation of Rev. Yang, which was read and questions were answered.

17.2. Ballots were distributed for voting on the motion. The **Motion was Carried.**

17.3. **Synodical Deputies Jelmer Groenewold, Bert Slofstra, and Cameron Fraser** concurred with the decision of Classis and with the terminology used in this matter.

17.4. Classis Chaplain **Karen Wilk** offered prayer for everyone involved.

17.5. **Motion** to destroy ballots. **Carried.**

17.6. **Executive session** was declared **lifted.**

18. Examination of **Brian Dunn** for Commissioned Pastor

The **CIC** and the **Synodical Deputies** have determined that Brian Dunn’s job description at Rocky Mountain House First CRC satisfies the requirements for Commissioned Pastor. **Motion:** that **Brian Dunn** be examined for the designation of **Commissioned Pastor. Carried.** **Gary Bomhof** and **Jack Van Vliet** served as sermon critics; **William Delleman** and **Ron DeVries** served as examiners.

- 18.1. **Ron deVries** introduced **Brian Dunn** and led in the practica exam. There was a question from the floor.
- 18.2. **Motion** to proceed with the exam. **Carried.**
- 18.3. **Gary Bomhof** presented the sermon critics report which he and **Jack Van Vliet** had prepared. Brian preached in the evening of October 4, 2015 at First CRC in Rocky Mountain House based on the assigned texts, Acts 17:16-34, entitled: *Ignorance is Bliss?*
- 18.4. **Motion** to proceed. **Carried.**
- 18.5. **William Delleman** led the exam for Biblical and Theological Knowledge. There were several questions from the floor.
- 18.6. **Motion** to proceed. **Carried.**
- 18.7. **Executive Session** was **declared** for further discussion regarding the examination and subsequent vote by ballot.
 - 1) **Motion** to admit **Brian Dunn** into the office of **Commissioned Pastor** as Pastor of Congregational Life at Rocky Mountain House First CRC. **Carried**
 - 2) **Motion** to destroy ballots. **Carried****Executive Session** was declared **lifted**.
- 18.8. Brian was invited back into the room and congratulations were given. Pastor **Len Batterink** offered a prayer for Brian and a blessing over our meal and fellowship time.
19. The **evening session** focussed on the **Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Revisited – Moment of Grace: Learning our Common Story**. Members gathered in the sanctuary, where the 17 prints of the series of paintings by Cree artist **Ovide Bighetty**, entitled *Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin: The Creator's Sacrifice*, were on display. These prints were purchased by Classis commemorating the TRC. The meeting was led by **Melle Huizinga**, Chair of the Classical TRC follow-up Committee. Classis heard speeches by **Elsie Paul, native elder**, and **Brenda Reynolds, Northern Alberta TRC coordinator**, remembering the residential schools experience, and also by **Harold Roscher** interpreting the series of painting prints. **Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning** offered a prayer, while **Loretta Stadt** explained the Committee's intention to distribute the paintings to the churches of Classis.
20. The first day of Classis was **adjourned** with prayer shortly before 9 PM.

(Continued on next page)

21. **DAY TWO** – members met at 8:30 am. **Rich de Lange**, Classis Prayer Coordinator, and **Leon Johnston** led Classis in a time of prayer for Classis and its ministries. Official session was opened by Chairman **Nic Wolmarans** who welcomed the day’s delegates.
22. Roll call: Presence of delegates as determined by the roll call is shown below. (*denotes first time delegates)
The Covenant for Office-bearers was signed by first time delegates

<u>Church</u>	<u>Pastor or Elder</u>	<u>Other Elder/ Deacon Delegates:</u>	
Barrhead	Harold Vandersluis	Albert Wierenga (arriving late)	
Edm Bethel Comm.	Tom Baird	Gary Duthler	Randall Huisman (arriving late)
Edm Centrepointe	Bill Diepeveen	Bruce Wisselink	
Edm Covenant	John Pasma	Frank Zee	James Uitvlugt
Edm Fellowship	Jonathan Nicolai deKoning	Stuart Williams	
Edm First	Peter VanderBeek	Rebecca VandenBorn	Wilma McLaughlin
Edm Inglewood	John Jager	Geoff VandeKuyt	Sim VanderVinne
Edm Maranatha	Art Verboon	Johanna Niemandsverdriet	
Edm mosaicHouse	Anne Vanderhoek	Frank Vandenbrink (arriving late)	
Edm Ottewell	Martin Mobach	Pat Hoekstra	Peter Jonkman, *Elly Zeggelaar
Edm The River	Bruce Gritter		
Edm Trinity	Rich de Lange	Mary Van Rijk	John Van Essen
Edm West End	Bob DeMoor	Fred Schuld	Jackie Selles
Edson – Peers	Ken Douma	Arnold De Leeuw	Pete Smit
Fairview - Faith Fellowship	Ron Weenink		
Ft. McMurray – Evergreen	<i>no delegate</i>		
Lacombe – Bethel	Mike Vandyk	Wayne Bouwman	Ann Wildeboer
Lacombe - Wolf Creek	Leon Johnston	Ken VanderWekken	
Lacombe – Woodynook	Neil de Koning	Pete Den Oudsten	*Dayna Vreeken, Phil Visscher
LaGlace	Paul Birnbaum		
Leduc – Ebenezer	Dirk DeKlerk	Frank VandeKraats	
Neerlandia	Arnold Nanninga	Randy Strydhorst	*Ken Strydhorst
Ponoka – Sunrise	William Delleman	Otto Meyer	
Red Deer – First	Gary Bomhof	Dick VandenBrink	Jason Dalstra
Red Deer - New Life	Dave Jonker		
Rimbey	Bill Niewenhuis	Juire DeBruyn	
Rocky – Covenant	Nic Wolmarans	Gerald Datema	
Rocky – First	Len Batterink	Gord Van t Bosch	
St. Albert	John Luth	Douwe Vanderwel	Bert Jager
Stony Plain – Hope	Russell Schiedeman	Dana Dyck	

23. Healthy Church Task Force Report (HCTF) – **John Pasma** reported.
- 23.1. The Task Force would like to continue with “as needed hiring” for churches requiring assistance, for which \$5000 has been budgeted to cover such costs. This means there is no recommendation to hire a half-time Pastor-Church Relations Consultant.
- 23.2. John gave a reminder to provide Church Visitor Reports to Bill Nieuwenhuis so that HCTF can provide support and encourage local churches.
24. Student Fund Committee Report – **Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning** reported.
- 24.1. Mandate: to supply assistance and support for people pursuing seminary studies. Churches are encouraged to identify people who might benefit from this fund and connect them with this committee. Current members being supported are:
- 1) **Ryan Pedde** (\$3600), Bethel Edmonton CRC, **Hillary Smith** (\$3150), Trinity Edmonton CRC, and **Josh Friend** (\$3600), First Red Deer CRC.
 - 2) Four new student applicants seeking Classis approval of funding: **Brian Dunn** (\$4050), First Rocky Mountain House CRC, **Paul Van Dyk** (\$4500), Bethel Lacombe CRC, **Derrick Lee** (\$4500), mosaicHouse CRC, and **Edmund Lee** (\$2700), Trinity Edmonton CRC.

- 24.2. **Motion:** That Classis Alberta North approve the levels of financial assistance for the 2015/16 year which were proposed for the above applicants. **Carried.**
25. The Neighbour Center – Open Door Ministry – **Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning** serves as a chaplain in this agency to support those who are on margins – in prison and leaving prison, both victims and/or perpetrators of injustice.
- 25.1. Jonathan is thankful to churches for both financial support and involvement. He still requires additional support from members and churches.
- 25.2. He is also thankful for other financial opportunities opening up, such as the possibility of becoming an Operation Manna project.
26. Youth Ministries – **Consultant Ron deVries** reported.
At the request of the CRC Board of Trustees, **Syd Hielema** and **Ron DeVries** were asked to serve as co-leaders to develop a strategic youth ministries in Canada pilot project. Classis Interim Committee has graciously given Ron time to work on this pilot project. Work began April 1/15 and seven goals were highlighted:
- 1) Develop an infrastructure to support youth ministry at the national level
 - a) Youth Champions in different classes across Canada have stepped forward and were asked to be supported by their Classis. Ron DeVries represents this Classis.
 - b) A comprehensive data base is being developed which includes all involved in youth ministries in Canada.
 - 2) Articulate and develop a coherent vision for youth ministry.
 - 3) Provide tools for healthy congregational youth ministry.
 - 4) Encourage leadership development and networking.
 - 5) Enhance and expand regional youth events.
 - 6) Encourage collaboration across agencies in the CRC.
 - 7) Explore ecumenical partnerships with the RCA and PCC.
- Q: How is your time spent – are you lent or rented out?
A: CIC has asked Ron to keep track of hours. He’s been rented out and the funding for this portion of his work comes from outside of Classis.
27. Native Healing Centre – **Harold Roscher** reported.
- 27.1. Michelle, the Center’s longest employee, continues to blossom. She fills a void by being an aboriginal spiritual leader to inner city people. As a fitness trainer and using the fitness center in the upper rooms of the Healing Center, she opens further doors to opportunities for spiritual leadership. She has also been able to participate in global ministry opportunities.
- 27.2. The *Kamamak* Project has just begun its program to mentor and teach young women to become leaders.
- 27.3. The Native Healing Centre continues rebuilding positive relationships between the Edmonton Police Service and the aboriginal community.
- 27.4. Harold hopes that within weeks the Center will have a Nurse Practitioner on site.
28. **Karen Wilk** offered prayer for the ministries we’ve heard about so far.
29. Gordon Pols Retirement- Thanks were expressed to **Gordon Pols** as he has retired from active ministry in our Classis. The retirement was effective August 31, 2015. In 2007, Gordon retired from Ministry of the Word in Ontario, but when he returned to Alberta in 2007, he began work once again at West End CRC as Associate Pastor. Gordon spoke to Classis about his work in Classis over more than 27 years, and encouraged members to maintain a strong vision for ministry.
30. Seafarer Ministry Report was received as noted in Agenda.
31. **Anne Vanderhoek** shared a mosaicHouse story about being open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and being inclusive and accepting of the Spirit’s work.
32. English Language Institute (ELI)– **Gordon Van t’Bosch** spoke to Classis about ELI’s association with the CRC. He encouraged people think about signing on to teach English in Asia and elsewhere in the world. This allows students their first contact with Christian teachers. There are also 7-10 day assessment trips for pastors to visit teachers in action and see results of this work. Contact Gordon for more information.
33. Specialized Transitional Minister (STM) - **Peter Vander Beek**, who currently serves First CRC Edmonton in this capacity, spoke to Classis about the special purpose of an STM. STM’s are independent contractors that work

under the auspices of Pastor-Church Relations. They have taken specialized training in leading congregations through transitional processes – sometimes because of difficulties, or during a time to reset between pastors – especially when one pastor has served a long term. They are approved by denominational officials. The role of an STM is more like an OT prophet; He or she holds up a mirror to the congregation to assist it in seeing its blind spots. There are 15 STM's in the denomination (10 in the US and 5 in Canada).

34. Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference Report – **Loretta Stadt** reported.
 - 34.1. Loretta reminded Classis of the upcoming Day of Encouragement November 7, 2015 and that this is a training opportunity for all church members. It is a place to network and fellowship and provides learning opportunities for all levels of leadership. Highlights given on the various workshops are available. Members were encouraged to register early.
 - 34.2. **Martin Mobach**, NADC Pastoral Consultant thanked Loretta Stadt for her work as NADC Consultant as she retires at the end of this year.
 - 34.3. **Martin Mobach** introduced and interviewed **Jesse Edgington** as the recommended replacement as NADC Consultant (the new role would incorporate both Consultant and Administration aspects of NADC). A short interview with Jesse followed.
 - 34.4. **Motion** to approve hiring of **Jesse Edgington as NADC Consultant** on a half-time basis. **Carried**
 - 34.5. Classis Chaplain **Karen Wilk** offered a prayer for Jesse and the work of NADC
35. Diaconal Ministries Canada Report – **Rachel Vroege** reported.
 - 35.1. DMC is working to encourage and challenge deacons to go beyond the status quo, by connecting office-bearers (deacons in particular) to the reason of their calling. If God has called, then the Holy Spirit has equipped.
 - 35.2. Rachel mentioned DMC's *Operation Manna* – local partners are the Edmonton Native Healing Center's *Kamamak* Project and *Open Doors*. A new partner is **Trina Medema** from MosaicHouse CRC. Trina has been hired by Vault Youth Centre to start a youth ministry in North Edmonton. She is an urban missionary and will need to raise her own support and is hoping that churches will support her. Her Youth Centre will be housed in Emmanuel Reformed Church (140 Ave and 66 St).
 - 35.3. Rachel encouraged churches to open doors to the LGBT community and its issues.
 - 35.4. *Helping Without Hurting and Church Benevolence* is a book that will be coming out in October. It is a wonderful resource for deacon groups.
 - 35.5. There will be notable changes to **funding for DMC**: in 2016, each church will be billed separately its diaconal ministry share which is \$8/person for the year. Previously this was incorporated in the Classis budget.
36. Classis Budget 2016 and Financial Report – **Mike Vos, Classis Treasurer**
 - 36.1. 2016 budget is proposed at \$379,410 to be financed with ministry shares from 4270 members (down a small amount from previous years).
 - 36.2. **Motion** To approve the **2016 Classis Alberta North Budget** as presented. **Carried**.
37. Refugee Task Force Report – **Angela Tuininga** outlined the work and options available at assist churches seeking to work with refugees. A 90 minute workshop is available for use in churches and can be downloaded at www.tinyurl.com/JourneyWithMe
38. Thanks were given to the **members of Covenant CRC** who provided our food for the last two days. Lunch devotions were led by Karen Wilk, Classis Chaplain.
39. Synod 2015 Delegates report – Elder **Frank Zee** spoke on the privilege of having been able to attend and represent Classis at Synod 2015. It was good to see the changing ethnic diversity of the CRC. All churches have received the highlights of Synod's decisions. Synod was full of praise and prayer.
40. Feedback received re: Classis Ministries – **John Ooms, CIC Chair**

Because the shape of Classis is ever changing it's hard to have an ongoing conversation through multiple meetings about Classis and its ministries. So Councils and church members were encouraged by way of a questionnaire to provide feedback on what drives our decisions to start, continue, expand, reduce, or end ministries.

 - 1) Written feedback was received and summarized.
 - 2) Time was given to delegates to talk amongst themselves about the questions and feedback was provided in a plenary session.

3) **A summary of both 1) and 2) will be made available to the churches under separate cover.**

Delegates were encouraged to send any further comments on this topic to the CIC by way of the Stated Clerk.

41. **CRC Board of Trustees Report – Mike Wevers** reported.
- 41.1. An (emerging) **Ministry Plan for the CRC** can be found on CRCNA website- <http://www.crcna.org/welcome/mission-vision/ministry-plan>
- 41.2. The Board of Trustees will now become the **Council of Delegates**, with 60 members.
Q: How can a Board of 60 members function?
A: The Council would only meet face to face two times per year. It might function more like Classis or Synod. The Executive will function more like a Classis CIC. There will be more discussion on what the Executive will do, and what its powers will be.
- 41.3. The **Doctrine of Discovery Task Force Report** was passed on to Synod and is to be available to churches by November 1, 2015
- 41.4. Mike serves on the **Ministry Shares Task Force**. Churches generally give 60% of the amounts requested, but that appears to have caused many churches to only budget for 60%. Mike would appreciate any feedback on this topic.
- 41.5. There is a plan to have more frequent **national church gatherings** where all churches are invited to send representatives in order to discuss and worship. Canadian Ministries is looking at the weekend of May 6 2016, possibly at Redeemer University College in Ontario. Cost sharing is not yet determined. There is a possibility of a bi-national gathering for all churches in North America in the summer of 2016.
42. John Pasma announced that there will be a **pastor and spouse retreat** April 8-10, 2016. More details to follow.
43. **Church Visitor and Counsellor** Reports
- 43.1. **Melle Pool** reported on several Church Visitors visits made with **Bert Van Niejenhuis** to **Fairview Faith Fellowship CRC**.
- 1) Visits began in 2013 because the church was unable to resolve differences. Roots of the problem were what it means to be Reformed and what the role of office bearers is.
 - 2) Spring 2014 – dealt with an impasse between congregation and council.
 - 3) Church lost members due to theological and educational differences. Hope and commitment remained even after over 30 members left and an action plan for moving forward was created.
 - 4) In spring 2015 the action plan was being implemented. There were reports of good relationships with other protestant churches in the community. Members could see the Holy Spirit at work in church and in the community. Council was grateful for Classical preaching appointments. Pastor Peet Marx , ordained in the South African Reformed Church, led services several times per month and retired pastor Bill Weenink also led services. Classis had two concerns, as outlined in the Credentials report of the March 2015 Classis: What is the **viability of the congregation**, given its small numbers, and how can Classis regularize Pastor **Peet Marx's credentials**.
 - 5) In September 2015, the Church Visitors found:
 - a) that Peet Marx has removed himself from the church due to health concerns.
 - b) That there is a measure of viability – Fairview has a high rate of participation of younger people. There is a strong sense that growth is possible.
- Fairview Church has questions for Classis:
- What is the value of smaller congregations? Classis spends money on projects that are likely important, but are they more important than spending funds on the smaller churches? Are we still of value? Or are we a burden? Can Classis support in any other way than with money? LaGlace CRC tries to come alongside Faith Fairview – but as a very small church brings similar questions to Classis.
- 1) Classis should consider spending some money to enable smaller churches in their work of ministry, which might allow them when vacant to hire an interim pastor or ministry worker to work in the community.

- 2) Classis representatives should visit these small churches, through Classical preaching appointments, and regular Church Visits.
- 3) Small isolated churches feel the great distance between them and larger centers in the CRC. Because there are few to do the work, burnout is high. We need interested and compassionate people to come to work alongside them.

Q: Do you have statistics on how many people were part of Fairview CRC when it first received classis support? Did it lose a lot of members? Is the congregation at a point now where we have reason to believe it will grow again?

A: Exact numbers aren't available. About 3 years ago membership was stable— then the congregation unfortunately lost quite a few. There were three identifiable reformed streams in the congregation, and in some ways breaks were an inevitability for Faith Fellowship. The congregation says there seems to be evidence for growth at this time, especially if someone can come alongside. Maybe it's time for us to begin thinking differently as a denomination. How can we as churches help and support each other?

CIC has received a **letter from Fairview** regarding this situation and this matter will be dealt with by **CIC** in the near future.

43.2. **Bill Nieuwenhuis & Roy Schouten** Ottewell CRC – Sept 1/15 This Church Visit was requested by the church Council.

- 1) Church Visitors met with Council members in late August and then again with staff and Council on Sept 1 2015. Leadership was suffering from tiredness and disappointment with the departure of a significant number of members who had given up on Ottewell's future. Church attendance is reduced to 45-50 on a given Sunday. Only two younger families remain. Various reasons for departure exist, but tiredness is high on the list.
- 2) Presently Council is moving to selling the building to mosaicHouse for \$750,000 (see item 16.5 in these Minutes) and using the building on a rental basis. Pastor Martin would serve the church at a reduced position and pay. This is still to be ratified.
- 3) The future for Ottewell will be different from its past. The remaining congregation has been divided into geographical groups to help each other. The church will focus on one ministry which will promote growth.
- 4) Classis has excused Martin Mobach from classical appointments due to these changes.
- 5) The congregation requests prayers for the church.

Q: Where is the \$750,000 of the potential building sale going? Is that raised money for mosaicHouse as a ministry centre, or is this allowing Ottewell to continue for the next number of years? Or both?

A: Ottewell Pastor **Martin Mobach** responded: The idea is to sell the property at one half the appraised value, partly to leave the legacy of creating a church plant movement. The idea is that Ottewell would hold the mortgage, allowing the church to have income and use of the building at no cost based on a low valuation of purchase. If Ottewell should decide to fold in the future, then the remaining funds might go to a fund designated for future church plants in Classis.

4.6.3 **John Pasma** gave his Counsellor report on Hope, Stony Plain –Rev. **Jacob Boer** has accepted a call and will be installed on November 8, 2015.

44. **Credentials report – Fellowship / Ottewell**

44.1. Ottewell CRC - What kind of support is there for struggling congregations? **Referred to CIC.**

Ottewell also asks for best practices to minister to predominately senior members. **Referred to CIC.**

44.2. Neerlandia CRC – asks for a regular church visit, one that doesn't focus on crisis. **Referred to Church Visitors for the region.**

44.3. LaGlance CRC - Inviting church visitors to come. **Referred to Church Visitors for the region.**

44.4. Red Deer First CRC -- That Classis talk about an elders support and training agency, like the NADC is for deacons. **Recommendation:** that the church contact the **Leadership Team** already looking at this. The Day of Encouragement provides help as well.

44.5. Covenant Rocky – driving from central AB to classical appointments in the North can be treacherous in winter – **Referred to the Classical Appointments Coordinator.**

- 44.6. Centrepointe CRC Requests that during the vacancy elders be allowed to serve communion once per month. **Motion from the Committee:** that Classis allow elders at Centrepointe to lead the communion service once per month. **Supported.** It was noted that the CO Supplement to Art 56.5 Synod 2002 states that Classis approval is required for an ordained person (usually a named person, such as an elder) to serve communion. Thus the above motion was **amended** to read: That Classis allow a named elder to serve communion at CentrePointe CRC. **The Motion as amended was carried.** Centrepointe is asked to submit the name of the elder to CIC.
- 44.7. Ft Mc Murray CRC – Letter received that no delegate was available to attend Classis.
- 44.8. Ft. Mc Murray CRC – Letter received from retired pastor George Holthoff requesting prayer in connection with surgery for cancer.
- 44.9. Fairview Faith fellowship included a letter to CIC, relating their difficulties with declining membership, and requesting that in place of Classis Appointment, Classis consider **financial help to allow it to hire a part-time pastor**, and generally to have Classis consider how it can assist small, isolated rural churches to stay viable. See also item 43.1. The matter is **referred to CIC.**
45. Classical Appointments report – **John Ooms, CIC Chair** asks receiving churches if the scheduled Classical Appointments are being met.
- 45.1.
- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Neerlandia: | Yes. Neerlandia has hired Ron Klok as interim pastor on a 75% basis. |
| Fairview: | Yes, mostly. If the assigned pastor is unable to come, they ask pastor Bill Weenink to fill in. |
| New Life Red Deer: | Yes, with thanks. |
| Hope Stony Plain: | Yes, and will no longer need them with the arrival of a new pastor. |
| Centrepointe: | Yes, and much appreciated. |
| Ebenezer, Leduc: | Yes, and appreciated and continues to be needed. |
| Ft McMurray | No delegate present. It was noted that appointments are filled via flights into Ft. McMurray. Those costs are covered by Classis. |
- 45.2. John sought advice regarding classical appointment assignments, especially given the large number of vacancies, and the large distances for some. Comments received:
- 1) Smaller and isolated places like LaGlace feel the pinch of being asked to send their pastor to fill classical appointments.
 - 2) There should be a formula to reduce the number of Classical Appointments, details to be determined.
 - 3) We are all in this together, and must help one another. The churches providing the appointments will be able to manage missing their pastor for a Sunday.
 - 4) Just because you are the sending church doesn't mean you need to send your pastor – you simply need to cover the pulpit supply for the receiving church.
 - 5) We have moved into a technology age and simulcasting is out there. It is a cheaper way to get a message every Sunday. Classis should look at the potentials of this technology.
46. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm after vice chair, **Gary Bomhof** closed with prayer.