



Agenda
CLASSIS HAMILTON
of the CRCNA

February 28, 2023, 9:00 AM to no later than 4:30 PM

Hosted by Bethel CRC, Waterdown
(616 Dundas Street E, Waterdown, ON)

Officers of Classis: Chair: Michael Bootsma Vice Chair: Hayden Regeling Stated Clerk: Ed W. Visser	Synodical Deputies: None Required
Reporter: Hagersville Community CRC	Ballot Advisory Team: Host Church
Credentials Advisory Team: Faith CRC, Burlington First CRC, Hamilton	Overture Advisory Team: Calvin CRC, Dundas Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis

CREDENTIALS:

1. Each church is asked to fill in their [credentials here](#), ASAP. The credential form has three sections.
 - a. The **first** is for entering the **names** of those **delegated to Classis**.
 - b. The **second** is for your answers and observations to the *“Questions Under Church Order Article 41”*.
 - c. The **third** section is for entering your **Elder and Deacon Nominees** for possible delegation to Synod 2023.

A copy of your submission will be emailed to you.

2. The Stated Clerk will forward the Article 41 questions and observations from the second section to the **Credentials Advisory Team** so that they will be able to advise Classis as needed.
3. The **Advisory Team will email their report to the Stated Clerk** by *February 7, 2023*. Their report will be emailed by the Stated Clerk to all the delegates as early as with the Addendum (*deadline February 14, 2023*).

OVERTURES:

An **Overture** was Received from **First CRC, Hamilton**, regarding [adopting the Belhar Confession](#) & (attached)

The **Overture Advisory Team** will email their report to the Stated Clerk (clerk@classishamilton.ca) by *February 7, 2023*, for distribution to the delegates of Classis as early as with the Classis Addendum.

ORIENTATION: [FOR NEW DELEGATES](#) (Includes link to the Rules of Procedure)

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer Doug Nieuwstraten, Chair of the CMT (Classis Ministry Team)
2. Devotions & Sharing of Ministry Bethel CRC
3. Prayer for the Host Church Vice Chair: Hayden Regeling

ADMINISTRATIVE SESSION**10:00 a.m.**

4. **Call to Order & Instructions for the Day** Chair: Michael Bootsma
a. Attendance Stated Clerk
b. [Covenant of Office Bearers](#)
c. Classis Declared Constituted
d. Approval of the Agenda

5. Consent Agenda

A consent agenda allows Classis to approve the items below together without discussion or individual motions. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of the delegates. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.

- a. Classis Meeting Minutes [Oct 25, 2022](#)
- b. Classis Interim Committee and Stated Clerk's Report (attached to addendum)
- c. Denominational Correspondence Received for Information
 - i. World Renew [Winter Classis Report](#)
 - ii. Redeemer University – [Winter Classis Report](#)
 - iii. Winter Classis Letter from Terry Veldboom [CRCNA Ministry Shares Pledge Guide](#)
 - iv. Acting Executive Director (Canada) (report in Spring and Fall)
 - v. Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC – [Winter Classis Report](#))
 - vi. Calvin Theological Seminary – [Winter Update](#)

6. CIC and Stated Clerk Reports (as needed and submitted with the addendum)

- a. Classis Interim Committee (CIC) CIC Chair: Ken Benjamins
 - i. **Approve** Doug Nieuwstraten as Alternate Synodical Deputy
 - ii. **Approve** Anthony Ellenbaas as Church Counselor for Bethel CRC
 - iii. **For Information, Canadian National Gathering** in May in Ottawa.
 - (1) The delegates affirmed by CIC are Syd Hielema, Cara DeHaan, Marcia Hosmar, & Michael Bootsma.
 - iv. Volunteers to be **the next chair of Classis?**

- b. Stated Clerk (report as needed) Ed W. Visser

7. Nominations for Synod delegates

- a. [What to Expect as a Delegate to Synod](#)
- b. Elder and Deacon Nominations received from the Credentials form
- c. Minister Nominations
- d. Ballots (voting may continue throughout the day over several ballots) Counted by Host church

8. **Classical Counselor Reports:**
 - a. Hagersville Community CRC – Ben Ponsen
 - b. Bethel CRC – Anthony Ellenbaas
 - c. First CRC, Hamilton - Anthony Ellenbaas
 - d. New Street CRC - Cara DeHaan
 - e. Ebenezer CRC, Jarvis - Jack Kerkof

9. **Church Visitor Reports & Discussion**

REFRESHMENT BREAK

10:45 a.m.

MINISTRY SESSION

11:00 a.m.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 10. Classis Ministry Team (CMT) | Doug Nieuwstraten |
| a. Candidacy Committee | Hayden Regeling |
| b. Campus Ministry Committee | Anthony Elenbaas |
| c. Classical Home Missions Committee | Michael Bootsma |
| 11. 10 Minute Update on the SoCo (South Coast Beach) | Willemina Zwart |
| 12. Credentials Advisory Team | Reporting: First & Faith |

LUNCH BREAK

12:15 p.m.

DENOMINATIONAL MATTERS SESSION

1:00 p.m.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 13. Dr. Zachary King , General Secretary of the CRCNA | 30 minutes with Q&A |
| 14. Overture Advisory Team’s Report re adopting Belhar | Calvin & Ebenezer |
| 15. On going voting for delegates to Synod 2023 | |
| 16. Adjournment | |
| a. Upcoming Classis Meetings | |
| i. May 30, 2023, Classis Hosted by Calvary CRC, Flamborough | |
| (1) Agenda Due April 8, 2023 | |
| (2) Addendum Due May 16, 2023 | |
| b. Closing Prayer | Chair |
| c. Adjournment Declared | |

Overture to Adopt Belhar Confession as a Confession of the CRC

From biblical times to the present, Christians have united the church, fought heresy, testified to outsiders, defied persecution, taught newcomers, and worshiped God...by the use of creeds and confessions. So it is with the Belhar Confession. Forged in the fires of racial injustice in South Africa in 1986, the Belhar speaks eloquently to the need for reconciliation, unity, and justice in the church. The church should witness to these great motivations of the church and model them to the world and become the agent for spreading them. All because of the costly work of Jesus Christ—the one through whom God was and is reconciling the world to himself. *Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.* We find in the Belhar a compelling call to North American Christians to embody the gospel message—which like that of the prophets, does make God "in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged."

The current cultural moment that we are living in demands that we make a statement against the injustices born out of racial prejudices and discrimination. One cannot think that this a unique moment that will have its day in the sun, only to be replaced by another cultural movement in a few years' time. The need for the Church to have a confessional statement against racism is long overdue and will be needed until Christ's return. This charge to be active participants in the reconciliation of all things must be seen as fundamental aspect of being a member of the church, particularly for those call to one of the offices.

The only way is forward, forward into God's freshly storied world, forward with the symbols that speak of death and resurrection, forward with the humble praxis of the gospel—and forward in that multilayered context with fresh thoughts, fresh arguments, fresh intellectual understanding. N.T. Wright

Overture: That Classis Hamilton overture the 2023 Synod of the CRC to adopt the Belhar Confession as a fourth confessional standard of the CRC.

Grounds:

1. The Belhar Confession fully comports to Scripture. The only authority for such a confession and the only grounds on which it may be made are the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. God has revealed himself as the One who wishes to bring about justice and reconciliation, true peace among people. God calls the church to follow him in this. And if God calls us to be agents of justice, he will empower us to do the job. Ps. 112:5; 106:3; John 17:20-23; Phi 2:1-5; I Cor 12:4-31; Eph 4:15-16; Acts 5:29-33; I Peter 2:18-25; 3:15-19, Eph 2:11- 22.

2. The Belhar brings a unique expression of embodied faith that augments the other confessional standards. It is a call to justice and mercy that is more experiential, and less doctrinal. It makes more explicit what is implicit in the three forms of unity. We are called afresh to consider the marginalized and the wronged, of which there are many, and whom we too easily overlook in everyday life. And as such the Belhar is not redundant with the other confessional standards of the CRC. Eph 2:11-22; 4:1-16; Ps 133; James 5:1-6.

3. The themes of the Belhar are biblical, universal, and timeless; of which the North American experience is no exception in the functional racial divisions deeply embedded in our culture whether it be First Nation residential schools, reservations, slavery, refugees, the containment of Japanese citizens, et al. Isa 1:10-22; 3:16-24; Hosea 8:14; 12; Amos 3:16-24.

4. The Belhar calls on churches to be witnesses against injustice. God uses his people to work toward greater biblical faithfulness. The church-in-mission must then take sides: for life and against death; for justice and against oppression. (David Bosch) God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ. And he will equip it for this task.

Heb 12:2; Deut 32:4; Luke 2:14; Ps 146, James.

Additionally, it should also be stated that the Belhar confession's intent is to speak to race as stated in Note 2 of the Belhar Confession.

2 It is clear, given the original context of the Belhar Confession, that race is the intent here. Because the ambiguity of the term social factor could lead to misinterpretation or misapplication, Synod 2009 noted that "the Belhar Confession does not negate the biblically derived statements of synod" with regard to human sexuality (e.g., Synod 1973, 1996; Acts of Synod 2009, p. 606)