

Press Release of Classis Ontario West, March 11, 2009 in Kerwood, ON.

On behalf of the convening church of Grand Rapids, Rev. John Ludwig called the meeting to order by welcoming guests and led in opening devotions by inviting the assembly to sing Psalm 81:1,13,14, reading Joshua 5:1-12 and leading in prayer.

Having examined the credentials, the delegates from the church of Grand Rapids reported that all the churches were lawfully represented. Classis was declared constituted, and the following officers were appointed: Chair: Rev. Henry Versteeg; Vice-chair: Rev. Bill DeJong; Clerk: Rev. Doug Vandeburgt.

The chair thanked the church of Grand Rapids for convening classis and preparing the agenda and the church of Kerwood for hosting classis. Under memorabilia it was noted that Ancaster's call to Rev. Peter Holtvluwer and Providence's call to Rev. David De Boer were both declined. These vacant congregations were wished God's blessings as they continue their search for a pastor. It was noted that Rev. Richard Pot has accepted the call from the church of West Albany, Australia (FRCA) and that the church of London, like the church of Chatham in view of Rev. Versteeg's imminent departure, is preparing for pastoral vacancy. Transitions at the Theological College were observed in terms of Rev. Jason Van Vliet's acceptance of the call to serve as professor, as the replacement of Dr. Niek Gootjes. It was noted with sadness that this replacement was necessitated by Dr. Gootjes' failing health. Similarly, mention was made of the declining health of Dr. Jack DeJong, who was recently relocated from his home to Shalom manor, and of Rev. Clarence Stam, emeritus minister of the church of Hamilton. Each of these individuals and their families were committed to the Lord's care. Lastly, the chair remembered the work of missionaries, noting in particular Rev. Bram De Graaf's service in Brazil on behalf of the calling church of Cornerstone-Hamilton.

The agenda was adopted with necessary amendments.

Upon receiving the necessary documents Classis proceeded to examine the following men for consent to speak an edifying word: Tony Roukema, Tim Sikkema, Jason Vandeburgt, Sean Wagenaar and Arend Witten. After each of them presented satisfactory sermon proposals---Roukema on Joshua 5:13-15; Sikkema on Matthew 22:1-14; Vandeburgt on Luke 15:1-17; Wagenaar on 1 Timothy 4:6-8; Witten on Matthew 2:17-18, each was examined in the area of Doctrine and Creeds---Roukema on the doctrines of the Canons of Dort; Sikkema on the confessions and the sacraments; Vandeburgt in the area of the person and work of Christ; Wagenaar in the area of regeneration and conversion; Witten in the area of the doctrine of God. Jason Vandeburgt did not sustain his exam.

Having sustained their examinations, Roukema, Sikkema, Wagenaar and Witten were granted by classis consent to speak an edifying Word. After they were congratulated by the chair, they each promised not to preach anything contrary to the word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. In each instance, a song was sung and a prayer of gratitude was offered.

Question period according to Article 44 of the Church Order was observed. The churches affirmed that the ministry of the office-bearers is being fulfilled, and that the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured.

A request from the church of Chatham to ask Synod to appoint a committee to operate the fund for needy students was denied. The church of Chatham was directed by Classis to revise the request, taking into consideration points raised in discussion.

A proposal from the church of Glanbrook regarding a classical policy for remuneration for classical pulpit supply and reimbursement for related travel was adopted.

Classis extended its permission to Rodney Vermeulen to speak an edifying Word until June, 2009.

An appeal was dealt with in closed session.

In response to a request from the church of Chatham, classis granted Rev. Henry Versteeg, in view of his acceptance of the call from the church of Toronto for missionary service in Papua New Guinea, classical release, as per articles 5 and 9 of the Church Order. Rev. Versteeg was thanked for his service within our classis. Classis granted the church of Chatham's request for monthly pulpit supply.

In response to a request from the church of London, classis granted Rev. Richard Pot, in view of his acceptance of the call from the church of West Albany, Australia (FRCA), classical release, as per articles 5 and 9 of the Church Order. Rev. Pot was thanked for his service within our classis. Classis granted the church of London's request for monthly pulpit supply and appointed, as requested, Dr. Gerhard Visscher as Counsellor.

Rev. John Ludwig reported on his visit to Covenant East Classis of the RCUS on March 3, 2009.

The Auditor's report regarding the Fund for Needy Churches was received from the church of Ancaster with gratitude.

The convening church for the next classis meeting will be Cornerstone – Hamilton. The suggested officers are: Chair: Rev. John Ludwig; Clerk: Rev. Cornelis Kleyn; Vice-chair: Rev. Doug Vandeburgt. The suggested date is June 17, 2009. The church of Kerwood was appointed to represent classis at Rev. Versteeg's farewell service in Chatham on May 31PM; The church of Ancaster was appointed to represent classis at Rev. Pot's farewell service in London on June 7PM. The chair noted that censure, per article 34, was unnecessary and expressed appreciation for the fraternal cooperation which characterized the meeting.

The Acts were read and adopted. The Press Release was read and approved. The chairman invited the assembly to sing Hymn 64:1-2 and then led in closing prayer.

For Classis,

Rev. Bill DeJong, vice-chair