

Classis Niagara - Press Release of Classis Smithville, June 12, 2013

On behalf of the convening church of Smithville, Rev. Clarence Bouwman called the meeting to order, and led in opening devotions. He requested that the delegates sing Psalm 36:2,3, read from Deuteronomy 1:6-18 and led in prayer. All of the delegates were welcomed. A special welcome was extended to br. Gerrit Bruintjes, a student at the Canadian Reformed Seminary who is serving an internship at the Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church in Lincoln.

A review of the credentials revealed that delegates from all six congregations in the classis were present, and that their credentials were all in good order. Once the the classis was declared constituted, the officers suggested by the previous classis took their places: Rev. John VanWoudenberg, chairman; Rev. Clarence Bouwman, clerk; and Rev. Dick Wynia, vice-chairman.

Rev. VanWoudenberg thanked the church of Smithville for their work in convening and hosting the classis. He remembered with thankfulness to the Lord that General Synod Carman 2013 could carry out its task. He mentioned that three third year students had received permission to speak an edifying word. He also drew classis' attention to the vacancy in Grassie, whose call to Rev. K. Wieske was declined, and that Rev. Wynia had declined the call he had received to the church at Fergus North. Classis noted that Blue Bell was not present among us for the first time, since the brothers and sisters have been placed under the care of the church at Dunnville.

After the chairman asked the questions under Article 44 of the Church Order, the assembly dealt in closed session with a verbal report from the church at Dunnville on the situation in Blue Bell. Dunnville asked that the churches of classis provide the brothers and sisters there with pulpit supply for the summer months, and the classis agreed to do so. Classis also gave advice to the church at Smithville in a matter of church discipline.

In view of the vacancy there, the church at Grassie requested, and was granted regular monthly pulpit supply, beginning in September.

The church at Smithville presented a proposal intended to provide financial assistance for the "Timothy Project", based in Pretoria, South Africa, through which Rev. Jopie vanderLinden, minister emeritus of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa provides English language Reformed theological materials to assist ministers throughout Africa. In the discussion, delegates expressed support for the work of the Timothy Project, but concluded that some further work will need to be done in Smithville to find the best way forward.

Classis agreed with the request of the church at Dunnville that the practice of listing the names of the delegates in the acts of classis be resumed.

Classis dealt with five appeals from members of the Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church of Lincoln, claiming that they had been wronged by a decision of the council of that congregation to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the pews.

Classis received a church visitation report on a visit made to the Vineyard Church of Lincoln.

According to the schedule, the Spring Creek Church in Tintern is the convening church for the next classis, scheduled for September 11, 2013, or alternatively, December 11, 2013; the suggested officers are Rev. Peter Holtvluwer, chairman; Rev. Clarence Bouwman, vice chairman; and Rev. John VanWoudenberg, clerk. Rev. VanWoudenberg was appointed to be our delegate at the next Classis

Niagara of the URCNA.

Question period was made use of.

The chairman concluded, with thanks, that censure according to Article 34 CO was unnecessary. The Acts were read and approved. The Press Release was read and approved. After we sang Psalm 84:3,4, the chairman led the body in prayer, giving thanks for the meeting, and bringing before the Lord the needs of the churches, particularly the brothers and sisters in Blue Bell and the congregation of Grassie, and the churches of South Africa.

Vice chairman at that time

Rev. Dick Wynia