

Press Release for the Classis Central Ontario meeting held on September 6-7, 2018, in Burlington, Ontario

Evening Session, Thursday September 6, 2018 at 7:30pm

It was a warm summer evening in September as eager delegates representing the various Classis Central Ontario churches gathered together in the Ebenezer, Burlington church building. Rev. Jake Torenvliet, on behalf of the convening church of Redemption Canadian Reformed Church, cordially welcomed all delegates, and visitors in the gallery. He opened the meeting by way of requesting the singing of Hymn 84:1-4; the reading of Galatians 2:1-10; and prayer. In addition to requests for God's continued grace and blessing on the proceedings, a number of additional matters were remembered in prayer: the birthday of Rev. John VanPopta, his ongoing health concerns, and his impending retirement. It was also noted with praise and thanksgiving that Rev. Ian Wildeboer had recently accepted the call extended to him by the Blessings Christian Church of Hamilton to serve as pastor in a second location in East Hamilton. Finally, petitions were laid at God's throne of grace with respect to the upcoming pastoral vacancy in the Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church.

The executive consisting of Rev. John VanPopta as chairman, Rev. Jake Torenvliet as vice-chairman, and Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong as official clerk, took their respective seats. Classis proceeded to the first exciting matter on the agenda: the requested *colloquium doctum* for Rev. Ian Wildeboer in connection with the transfer of his ministerial credentials from the Free Reformed Church of Australia in Armadale to the Blessings Christian Church of Hamilton, member church of the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.

Judging his *colloquium doctum* to be satisfactory, Classis approbated the call to Rev. Ian Wildeboer. Classis sang a song of blessing: Psalm 134:3; Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong led the body in a prayer of thanksgiving.

Rev. Jake Torenvliet of the neighbouring congregation of Redemption Canadian Reformed Church was appointed to represent Classis at the installation of Rev. Ian Wildeboer on September 16, 2018 during the 10:30 am worship service.

In the time remaining Classis reviewed with thanksgiving the various annual reports: Report on Archives; Report on the Audit of the Books of the Treasurer; Report on Needy Churches; Report on the Books for the Fund for Needy Churches.

At 9:30pm Classis adjourned for the day by singing Hymn 78:1, 3. Rev. John VanPopta closed in prayer.

Session Two: Friday September 7, 2018 at 9:00am

Rev. John VanPopta called the meeting to order. He led a meditation on Psalm 90; invited the body to sing from Hymn 54: 1, 3, 8; and opened with prayer.

Classis received with thanksgiving the Financial Report of the Treasurer for Classis Central Ontario. The classical assessment fee for each communicant member has been set at \$3.00 per communicant member (\$2.00 for Regional Synod assessment; \$1.00 for Classical assessment).

Regarding a request from the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church concerning Redemption Canadian Reformed Church's interpretation of the Church Order, Articles 53 & 55, Classis unanimously decided "that only songs approved in Article 55 be sung in public worship service," and "that consistory has the freedom to observe days of commemoration in alternate ways that would not be regarded as public worship services, for which Article 55 would not apply." Delegates from Redemption and Rehoboth abstained from the vote.

Regarding a proposal from Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church to modify Classis Central Ontario regulations, Classis adopted amendments (a) to reflect the names of all member churches in alphabetical order, (b) to include prayer as an agenda item after each church visitation report is tabled at the June Classis meeting, and (c) to give opportunity at the September classis for each church to report on their mission activities, both locally and abroad.

Regarding a proposal from Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church to modify Classis Central Ontario Regulations, Classis adopted amendments concerning (a) clarity of language in connection with articles pertaining to the cancellation of a Classis meeting, (b) voting procedures, (c) the circulation of church visitation reports to appointed delegates prior to the meeting of Classis, and (d) the approbation of calls in relation to a *Classis Contracta*.

Classis adopted an amended overture from Bethel Canadian Reformed Church to overture General Synod Edmonton 2019 via Regional Synod East "to revise the forms for celebration of Lord's Supper by replacing gender specific pronouns intended to include both genders with gender inclusive pronouns."

Classis adopted an amended overture from Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church for submission to Regional Synod East to be sent as an overture to General Synod Edmonton 2019 to amend Article 55 of the Church Order to read: "The 150 Psalms shall have the principal place in public worship. The metrical Psalms and hymns adopted by General Synod, as well as songs approved by consistory that faithfully reflect the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity, shall be sung in public worship."

According to the questions stated in Church Order, Article 44, each church was able to answer that the ministry of the gospel is being maintained, that the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured, and that the judgment of Classis on matters related to the governance of their church was not needed.

Blessings Church was appointed to convene the next Classis meeting to be held on December 14, 2018 (alternate date March 22, 2019). Suggested officers for the next

Classis meeting: Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong as chairman; an elder of Jubilee church as vice-chairman; and Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes as clerk.

According the Classis Central Ontario Regulation, Article 7, new appointments were made to the following positions: Rev. Clarence Vandervelde and Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong were appointed to the Committee of Examiners; Rev. Clarence Vandervelde (convener), Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong, Rev. Anthony Roukema and Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes (as alternate) were appointed as church visitors; Ebenezer Church was appointed to take of the archives; Fellowship Church was appointed to inspect the archives; Rehoboth Church was appointed to audit the books of the treasurer, and to audit the books of the Fund for the Needy Churches; Jack Spithoff was appointed as treasurer (Harry Sloots as alternate); Leo Kampen, Kent Baartman and Ed Jans were appointed to the Committee for Needy Churches; Rev. John VanPopta was appointed church counselor for Fellowship Church.

For the upcoming Regional Synod East to be held on November 14, 2018 at the Ebenezer-Burlington church building the following were appointed as delegates: As primary minister delegates Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong and Rev. Clarence Vandervelde; as first alternate minister Rev. Anthony Roukema, as second alternate Rev. Winston Bosch; as primary elder delegates John Jager and Gerald Boot; as first alternate elder delegate Chris VanPopta, and second alternate Cornelius Broersema.

Personal question period was held.

Censure according to Church Order, Article 34 was not made use of.

After adoption of the Acts and Press Release Rev. Jake Torenvliet closed the meeting with thanksgiving prayer.

Jake Torenvliet
Vice-chairman