

Press Release for Classis Manitoba held March 24, 2023, Winnipeg Grace, Manitoba

On behalf of the Winnipeg Grace CanRC, Rev. Rick Vanderhorst welcomed all gathered for Classis. He led the gathering in opening devotions. Matters of joy and concern taking place in our classical region were remembered in prayer. Included in our prayer were the retired pastors and their life circumstances and continuing service (Rev. & sr. John & Agnus VanRietschoten, Dr. & sr. Andrew & Inge Pol, and Rev. Klaas Jonker). The Lord willing, CRTS student Reese Gaillard will be undergoing an internship this summer with Pastor James Slaa for seven weeks, and Mitchell Bosveld will be doing an internship with Rev. Carl Van Dam for four weeks. Rev. Steve Vandevelde has received and accepted a call to the Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church. Rev. Rick Vanderhorst has received a call from the Dunnville East Canadian Reformed Church. Rev. James Zekveld has received a call from the Trinity Covenant Church (Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches) in Fort St. John, BC. Finally, the vacancy in Elm Creek was remembered. Special welcome was given to Rev. Hank Bowen of First Reformed Church of Aberdeen, SD of the Northern Plains Classis of the Reformed Church of the United States (RCUS), who was in attendance as a fraternal delegate. His wife Patty was also in attendance. All the primary delegates were in attendance. One of the delegates from Denver Emmanuel was not present in person but via Zoom. Classis was therefore constituted. Rev. Rick Vanderhorst was appointed president, Pastor James Slaa appointed vice-president, and Rev. Joe Poppe was appointed clerk. Rev. Hank Bowen was seated as a fraternal delegate, and Rev. James Zekveld, missionary of Winnipeg Redeemer was also present and was seated as an advisor.

The classis treasurer submitted a report. 2023 mileage rates for travel for classical purposes was set. 2023 assessment of \$5.00 was decided on. Carman West church reported on the inspection of the books of the treasurer. With thankfulness it was noted that the books were in good order. The Redeemer church reported that the classical archives in the Grace church are in good order. Classis received with thankfulness a report of the Deputies for Contact with the Manitoba Provincial Government.

In closed session, reports of church visits to Carman East, Carman West, Elm Creek, Winnipeg Grace, Winnipeg Redeemer were read. Supplication and thanksgiving prayer was offered after each report. After the reports were read, it was a blessing to have a general discussion on classical church visitation with our fraternal delegate Rev. Hank Bowen.

Classis dealt with and decided on a proposal from the Winnipeg Grace church to add guidelines for preparatory examinations and update peremptory examinations to the classical regulations.

Classis considered a report from the Carman West church. Carman West had been instructed by a previous classis to advise on supporting needy churches outside of Canada. This had to do with the rules of Canada Revenue Agency, which requires that all funds donated to organizations outside the country must be registered Canadian charities. The Carman West church was thanked for their report and Classis considered their task completed. Classis mandated Carman West to present a proposal to the next classis on how funds be solicited to support Needy Churches Fund. In addition, Carman West should propose changes necessary to the classical regulations with regard to the Needy Churches mandate.

Question Period was held as per Article 44 of the Church Order. One church requested advice in a matter of discipline with a view to proceeding to the second public announcement.

Our fraternal delegate Rev. Hank Bowen was given the opportunity to address Classis. He encouraged the brothers through the reading of Scripture (2 Timothy 3), expressed thankfulness for the relationship with Classis Manitoba, and then informed us of numerous happenings and activities amongst the churches in the Northern Plains Classis of the RCUS. It was a great blessing to hear of the joys and successes of our brothers and sisters south of our Manitoba border, but also to learn of and share in their struggles and disappointments. A letter of encouragement was read from Rev. Archibald Allison, stated clerk of the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The church of Denver requested that their pastor Rev. Steve Vandavelde receive honourable release from Classis, with a view to his recent acceptance of the call he received from Owen Sound CanRC. When it was determined that all the documents were in good order the request was granted. On behalf of Classis, Rev. Rick Vanderhorst spoke words of gratitude for all of Rev. Vandavelde's work and activities in this classical region. It was noted that Rev. Vandavelde has served in this classis for the past 11 years, first in Carman East and then Denver, CO. Rev. Vandavelde expressed appreciation and thanks in response.

The convening church for the next classis will be Winnipeg-Redeemer. The date will be May 26, 2023, DV, at 9:00am. Alternate date is September 22, 2023. Some standing committee appointments were made. Classis also suggested officers for the next classis. With thankfulness the president ruled that brotherly censure was not deemed necessary (CO Article 34).

The ACTS of Classis were adopted and the Press Release was approved. Rev. Vandavelde led in closing devotions and Classis was closed.

*For classis, Pastor James Slaa*