

Press Release of Classis Niagara, September 13, 2023

On behalf of the convening church of Lincoln-Vineyard, Rev. Dick Wynia opened the meeting in a Christian manner. In prayer he remembered several items, including the call that Dunnville East has extended to Candidate Dathan Pleiter, the declined calls from Toronto-Bethel to Rev. Cody Swaving and from Dunnville West to Candidate Caleb Kos, the ongoing vacancies in Dunnville, Grassie, and Smithville, the passing away of Dr. Nicolaas Gootjes, the retirement of Dr. Arjan de Visser from active teaching at CRTS, the installation of his successor, Dr. Reuben Bredenhof, and the start of the academic year for CRTS.

Upon the constitution of Classis, the delegates appointed Rev. Daniel Shin as chairman, Rev. Ryan Kampen as vice-chairman, and Rev. Ruurd Offringa as clerk.

After the agenda was adopted, the chairman welcomed as fraternal delegate Rev. Bryce De Zwarte, of the Adoration URC in Vineland, present on behalf of Classis Ontario East of the URCNA.

The chairman then asked each of the churches the questions set out in Article 44 of the Church Order. In closed session, one church asked for and received advice regarding the proper government of its church.

The church of Smithville submitted a proposal to adopt an article in the Church Order regarding pulpit access for worship services or days of commemoration. The proposal was taken back for reworking.

Classis received a letter from the Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER), asking the classis to share with CER any decisions or activities within that classis that pertain to inter-church relations. There was nothing to report at this time.

Classis received the report of the classical treasurer, br. Jason Tenhage. The treasurer was thanked for his work, and discharged from his responsibility for the period September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023.

Reports were also received with gratitude from the church appointed to audit the books of the treasurer (Grassie), the church appointed to inspect the classical archives (Dunnville East), and the Deputies for Contact with Neighbouring Classes/Presbyteries. Classis expressed gratitude for the work especially of br. Frank Ludwig, whose service as deputy has now concluded.

Opportunity was given for Rev. De Zwarte to address the body on behalf of Classis Ontario East of the URCNA. The chairman responded with appropriate remarks.

Classis appointed the church of Niagara South to convene the next classis, to be held on December 13, 2023, with March 13, 2024, as alternate, and suggested officers for that classis.

Reappointed were the classical treasurer, the church of Grassie to audit the classical treasurer's books, the church of Attercliffe to maintain the classis archives, and the church of Dunnville East to inspect the archives.

All the experienced ministers serving in the classis were authorized to serve as church visitors, with Rev. Shin as alternate, and Rev. Bouwman appointed as convenor. Rev. Vermeulen and Rev. Wynia

were appointed to serve on the committee for arranging examinations; Rev. den Hollander was appointed to serve as alternate.

The church of Smithville was appointed as church to administer the fund for needy churches. Appointed to the Appeals Committee were br. Cornell Feenstra (convener), Rev. Kampen, and br. Harold Olij, with one alternate, Rev. Wynia.

Classis delegated to Regional Synod East, November 8, 2023, the following elders and ministers:
elders (in this order): Ken Jager; John Witten; alternates (in this order): James Kingma; Harold Olij
ministers (in this order): Rev. Vermeulen; Rev. den Hollander; alternates (in this order): Rev. Kampen; Rev. Shin

Br. John Witten was appointed to serve as deputy for contact with neighbouring Classes/Presbyteries.

After the acts were adopted, and the press release was approved, Rev. Shin led in closing devotions and then closed classis.

Rev. R.J. Kampen
vice-chairman at that time