

Press Release Classis Manitoba held 2023 09 22 in Carman East CanRC

On behalf of the Carman East CanRC, Rev. Carl VanDam welcomed all gathered for Classis. He led the gathering in opening devotions. For memorabilia, he remembered the passing of Dr. N.H. Gootjes and his grieving family. He remembered the ongoing vacancies in Elm Creek CanRC and Niverville mission congregation. Since the last Classis, Elm Creek extended a call to Candidate Mattias Schat, and Redeemer extended a call to Candidate Caleb Kos for the Niverville mission. Both those calls were declined. Since then, both churches have extended a call to candidate Dathan Pleiter. He also called to mind the retired pastors in our classis: Rev. & sr. John & Agnes VanRietschoten, Dr. & sr. Andrew & Inge Pol, and Rev. Klaas Jonker.

All the churches were properly represented. Classis was therefore constituted. Rev. Joe Poppe was appointed President, Pastor James Slaa was appointed Vice-president, and Rev. Carl VanDam was appointed Clerk. The agenda was adopted.

Fraternal letters were received from the Reformed Church of the United States (RCUS) Northern Plains Classis and from the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA) Classis Central.

With thankfulness Classis received a report from the Deputies for Contact with Neighbouring Classes/Presbyteries. Following the extensive report, Elder Rick Mostert led in intercessory and thanksgiving prayer. Classis also received reports from the Committee for Aid to Needy Churches, the Church for Auditing the Books of the Committee for Aid to Needy Churches (Carman East), and Committee for Students of Theology as per Article 20, C.O. Classis was heartened that there continue to be young men in the Manitoba region who are preparing to attend seminary, and reminded the churches to keep the matter of identifying and encouraging young men to consider the ministry. We received an update from Denver that a small group remains there, worshipping together, and are currently receiving help from Rev. George Horner, a retired pastor from the RCUS.

A proposal was received from the Committee for Aid to Needy Churches (CANC). Upon the committee's recommendations, Classis decided to make the CANC an advisory committee only, with the financial responsibilities of receiving and distributing of any financial support from classis being handled by the classis treasurer. Classis also decided that the present balance of funds under the care of the CANC be transferred to the care of the Classis treasurer. Classis requested Carman East to review the mandate of the CANC in the classical regulations, and if necessary, propose a revision of the mandate to a future classis.

Classis Manitoba, March 24, 2023, mandated the Carman West church to present a proposal to a future Classis that funds for needy churches be solicited via the deacons, and to propose changes necessary to the Classical regulations with respect to the Committee for Aid to Needy Churches mandate (Art.8.2). Previously, Carman West had been instructed 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. In its research it was determined that a qualified donee did not have to be a Canadian charity, but simply a registered charity. Also, it was discovered that even if donations, such as to the deacons, are not receipted for tax purposes, those funds must still be used to support a registered charity. Therefore, Carman West proposed not to make any changes but that the churches continue to operate as has been done for the last decade or more, with Classis possibly making some improvements to the documentation between the local churches, Classis, the Committee for Aid to Needy Churches, and the Needy Church itself, if deemed insufficient. It is important to show that we as local churches have control over and know how our money is being spent, that we would have a good case before the CRA, should they question it.

Carman East proposed that Classis appoint executive officers in rotation for the next Classis at the previous one. Before this, only the president was suggested, and the convening church was appointed to supply a clerk. Accepting the proposal would enable those suggested to their executive officer task to come prepared to Classis. It would prevent unnecessary wasting of time at Classis trying to determine who the vice-president will be. It would help vacant churches as it will often be difficult for them to supply a clerk on their own. It would ensure that the various executive officer tasks are shared equally among those who usually fill them.

Question Period was held as per Article 44 of the Church Order. One church requested advice regarding admission of visitors to the Lord's Supper. Advice was given.

Representatives of the Aldergrove Brazil Mission Society, Pastor Jim Witteveen and Kevin VanDelden were welcomed and presented their work to Classis. They informed Classis of the Society's mission statement and the structure of the Society. The missionaries are assisting the federation of the Brazilian churches (IRB), both current and future institutions, primarily through the theological college there (IJC). The missionaries preach and teach in the Brazilian churches. They participate in reaching out to and fellowshiping with contacts who express interest the Reformed faith and churches desiring to join the IRB. The mission team also deals with Reformed and Christian education of the children. The relationship within the mission team is good. Classis was also informed that Mission Board and Mission Aid have now merged into one Mission Society. Following the presentation, opportunity was given for questions. Pastor James Slaa led in intercessory and thanksgiving prayer.

The convening church for the next classis will be Carman West. The proposed date is December 8, 2023, DV, at 9:00am. Alternate date is March 22, 2024. Classis also made suggestions for officers for the next classis.

Appointments were made for Treasurer, Church for Auditing the Books of the Treasurer, Church for Care of the Archives, Church for Inspection of the Archives, Committee for Examinations, Committee for Aid to Needy Churches, Committee for Students of Theology, Deputies for Contact with Neighbouring Churches/Presbyteries, Deputy for Contact with the Provincial Government, and Church Visitors. Classis appointed the following as delegates to Regional Synod

West, to be held, DV, November 21, 2023: Elder delegates: Lawrence Toet and Norm Veenendaal; alternate delegates are Earl VanAssen and Rick Mostert (in that order). Primary minister delegates: James Slaa and Rick Vanderhorst; alternate delegates are Carl VanDam and Joe Poppe (in that order).

Personal Question Period was held. With thankfulness the president declared that censure according to Article 34 of the Church Order was not needed. The ACTS of Classis were adopted and the Press Release was approved. Rev. Poppe led in closing devotions, praying for the ministry of the office bearers and the churches of Classis. Following prayer, song was sung. Classis was closed.

For classis, Pastor James Slaa