



Minutes of the Meeting of

Classis Alberta South & Saskatchewan

of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

March 8, 2024

Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church

Calgary, Alberta



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VISION STATEMENT

Classis Alberta South & Saskatchewan is a regional group of Christian Reformed Churches dependant on the Holy Spirit, striving to function together as one body in Christ, share in worship, promote evangelism, diaconal ministries, and nurture through mutual accountability.

Chair: Rev. Henry Veldboom, Granum CRC
Vice Chair: Rev. David Swinney, High River CRC
Clerk: Nelly Eyk (Stated Clerk)

Classis was held in Emmanuel CRC in Calgary, Alberta, starting at 9:00 AM

1. **1.1 Rev. Dan Roukema:** Welcomed all and read Colossians 1: 15-20 ‘God Created all things, Jesus is image of God, Jesus redeems all things and makes peace through his blood.’ The Devotion was ended with a responsive reading by members of the Calgary Campus Ministry and the Audience.
- 1.2 **The worship team of Emmanuel CRC lead us in Worship.**
2. **Welcome to delegates and visitors by the Chair.**
3. **Classis was called to Order:**
 - 3.1. Credentials & Roll Call –
 Quorum was determined, 44 delegates were present.
 The Road CRC of Calgary did not file credential and was not present.

Church	Minister	Elder	Deacon
Bethel		Kevin Vanzessen	Holden Groeneveld
Brooks	Dirk Meidema	Harry Borkent	Grace Miedema
Burdett	Rick Roeda	Tony Varekamp	Marinus Keijzer
Covenant	Matt VandenHeuvel	Lee Himbeault	Luke Brandhorst
Emmanuel	Dan Roukema	Brian Mol	Jesse Bydevaate
Granum	Henry Veldboom	Adam Ovinge	
High River	David Swinney	Ed Weening	Glen Dykstra
Iron Springs	Rodney Nieboer	Tony Kok	Rylan Ekkel
Lantern Community	Ed Top	Layne Kilbreath	
Maranatha Calgary	Heather Nutma	Len Houweling	Peter de Jonge
Maranatha Lethbridge	Arie Bomhof	Ann Vossebelt	George Vanderberg
Medicine Hat		Randy Valk	Jeremy Williamson

Nobleford	Gary van Leeuwen	Justin Den Toom	Jason Hoetmer
River Park	Adrian de Lange	Debbie Karambowich	Darin Karambowich
Sonlight	Gerhardt Venter	Irene Cruson	Aleisha Walker
Taber, (First)	Brian Kuyper	Henk Devlieger	Brent Bydevaarte
The Road Church			

3.2. The Chair read the Covenant of Officebearers

3.3. Seven first time delegates signed the Covenant for Office bearers in the CRC.

3.4. The Chair welcomed Peter VandenDool , **Treasurer**; Nelly Eyk, **State Clerk**, Martin Boardman, **Regional Pastor**, Paul Verhoef, **U of C, Chaplain As advisors**.

3.5. Classis is Declared Constituted.

3.6. A motion was brought to the floor as follows:

3.6.1. We move that in keeping with the practice of Synod and other Classis in the Christian Reformed Church in North America, that all persons delegated to this meeting of Classis signify their complete agreement with the covenant for officebearers which clearly states:

We also affirm three confessions – the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort- as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God. These confessions continue to define the way we understand Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ.

Grateful for these expressions of faith, we promise to be formed and governed by them. We heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.

We request that this reaffirmation of the covenant for officebearers be done by signature, and with the understanding articulated by Synod 2022 and 2023 regarding the confessional nature of the CRCNA position regarding human sexuality.

Seconded and DEFEATED.

3.6.2. Protest: Read by a member of the High River Council.

In keeping with the decision of Synod 2023 ‘That synod instruct all classis to guide into compliance the officebearers of their constituent churches who publicly reject the biblical guidelines affirmed by synod 2022 regarding same sex relationships, “the council of High River CRC protests the seating of any delegate to this meeting who has publicly rejected the biblical guidelines affirmed by the synods of 2022 and 2023 regarding same-sex relationships, together with anyone who has been delegated after registering a Confessional Difficulty Gravamen with a local council.

While local councils may agree to work together with officebearers who do not agree to be “formed and governed” by our confessional statements and do not “heartily believe... promote

and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them,” such people cannot be delegated to the broader assemblies of the church where no such exception or gravamen can be received and agreed upon.
It is also our belief that this standard must apply to those delegated to synod by this classis.

The following delegates registered their support to the above protest. David Swinney, Ed Weening, Glenn Dykstra, Matt VandenHeuvel, Adam Ovinge, Henry Veldboom, Gerhardt Venter, Lee Himbeault, Luke Brandhorst, Jason Hoetmer, Justin Den Toom.

4. Approve the Agenda.

4.1 Motion to approve AGENDA, with the addition of the CMC Motion recorded in the CMC minutes of January 11, 2024

That classis encourage church visitors to make church visits of their respective churches to bring their office bearers into compliance according to guidance from synod. And that they report at the next classis meeting.

Seconded and CARRIED.

5. Committee Reports:

5.1 Credentials Committee: Emmanuel CRC, Bethel CRC, Saskatoon.

5.1.1. High River:

Motion: related to the compliance of all officebearers, already recorded in the minutes.

We request that Classis be informed of the reason(s) why The Road Church, Calgary, who, according to their own website has voted twice to disaffiliate from the Christian Reformed Church in North America as of fall 2023, seems to have stalled. We find this particularly disturbing given that they have stated that they “lament...the ways that the CRCNA has continued to uphold policies that promote harm towards the 2SLGBTQ+ community.” If they believe that those of us who are not affirming are actually causing harm, it seems like this process should be brought to a speedy conclusion. Why has this not happened?

It was reported that The Road Church, Calgary, has informed CMC that they are in Legal and CRA process to disaffiliate and asked for patience to work through the process.

5.1.2. Covenant:

Shared support for Rev. Matt VandenHeuvel as he was instructed by Covenant Council to step down as Chair for the March 8, 2024 Spring Classis meeting.

Their second submission include information that was used at the meeting during the discussion of the communication from Aaliyah VerHoef.

5.1.3. Emmanuel:

Emmanuel CRC Council would like to initiate a conversation with any churches within our Classis that are eager to consider partnering with one another around a particular cause; perhaps a cause that some of us are already doing at a local level but through partnership could grow into something bigger and/or more efficient (i.e. Refugees or Youth) or a new cause that has been on people's minds but could benefit from putting more heads and hearts together in order to get off the ground. Judy Heim, an elder from Emmanuel who also has a regular presence at Classis in her role as Safe Church representative, is happy to be a contact person to gather those interested. Please reach out to her at the Classis meeting or by emailing her at council@emmanuelcrc.org

5.2 Nomination Committee: River Park. Taber (First). Rev. Adrian deLange reporting.

5.2.1 Election of Chair of CIC. Nominated: Gary Van Leeuwen

No other nominations were made. Vote by paper ballot This nomination received a positive result and therefore we welcome Gary as the CIC Chair.

5.2.2 Motion to Destroy Ballots **Seconded and CARRIED**

5.3 Overtures Committee

5.3.1 River Park overture 'Task Force to Shape a Gentle Pathway'

The committee spoke mainly to the overture.

It is the understanding of the Advisory Committee that the largest part of defining a pathway for those departing the CRCNA has already been done and thus what the overture is asking synod to do is either redundant or could easily be absorbed into the work of existing agencies and committees. The part that remains, thus, is the word, "gentle," but that cannot be mandated by an overture to synod. That remains solely the responsibility of those involved. While mechanisms can be put into place (and are already in place) to facilitate disassociation from the denomination, mechanisms will not create an environment of gentleness or kindness. Good polity and practices can reduce the rancour that often accompanies separation, and the Advisory Committee believes that what the overture is asking are, for the main part, already in existence.

It is the recommendation and moved by the Overture committee: That Classis ABSS not adopt the Overture 'Task Force to Shape a Gentle Pathway' as its own.

Seconded and CARRIED.

5.3.2 River Park CRC communication 'Espressing Our Concerns'

Motion by the Overture Advisory committee: That Classis ABSS not adopt the communication "Espressing Our Concerns" as its own.

Seconded and CARRIED

Communication 'Unity without Uniformity' was presented to the Council of River Park CRC but was not adopted by the council as its own, giving Aaliyah Verhoef the opportunity to forward it to classis as per the rules of classis and Church Order.

Motion by the Overture Advisory committee: That Classis ABSS not adopt the communication "Unity without Uniformity as its own.

During the discussion there was a communication from the credentials of Covenant brought to the floor that relating to the Staff at Calgary Christian Schools. This communication was read. The Credential committee chair expressed concern that this communication was read as the committee had recommended that this was not appropriate to be brought to the floor of classis.

Motion seconded **and CARRIED**

6. Classical Administrative Reports:

6.1 Classical Interim Committee/ Classical Ministries Committee.

All meetings were Via Zoom , minutes are posted on the website.

The motion out of the January 11 minutes was brought to the floor.

That classis encourage church visitors to make church visits of their respective churches to bring their office bearers into compliance according to guidance from synod. And that they report at the next classis meeting.

Seconded CARRIED.

Motion to approve the work of the Classical Ministries Committee

Seconded CARRIED

6.2 Classis Stated Clerk Report: as per report in agenda with the following addition:

That Gary Van Leeuwen has been appointed by the Stated Clerk to serve as Church visitor to Emmanuel council.

Motion: to approve the work of the Classical Stated Clerk

Seconded CARRIED

6.3 Classical Treasurer's Report - Peter VandenDool

6.3.1 Presentation of the 2023 Financial Statement. The Auditors report and Financial statements were approved.

6.3.2 Motion: That only churches who are giving over 80% of their classical ministry shares for the Prior year are eligible to request expense vouchers for delegates to classis meetings.

Seconded CARRIED

6.4 Calgary Campus Ministry Team: Paul Verhoef, Jacqui Mignault, Pearl Nieuwenhuis, Layne Kilbreath

6.4.1 Celebration of 20 years of Campus ministry

Calgary Campus Ministry - The Calgary Campus Ministry has hit 20 years as a ministry of Classis ABSS, spending most of its time with the University of Calgary. In order to remember and celebrate, the campus ministry invited people from those last 20 years. Rev. Kelly Johnson was one of the first persons Paul met when visiting UCalgary in February 2004, and spoke about appreciating Paul as a chaplaincy colleague ever since - and more recently also Pearl, Jacqui and Layne. Dustin Pearson met Paul as student in 2005. He shared how he became a Christian through being in Christian community with Paul, and even met Karla his wife - a wedding Paul officiated. Deb Bruckner spent 17 years as the Director of Wellness Services. She spoke of the moment when the external review of the campus ministry came, and she asked, "Could Pearl come for a second day; and could Paul help us articulate a principled religious pluralism and help us live that out well?" And Classis ABSS said, "Yes" to both of those requests. Jordan, a former student, shared an image from Chaucer and thanked the classis for Pearl and Paul's support during his challenging university years. Rev. Margaret Propp started a Women's Circle with Pearl, a community that still continues, and spoke about the good ecumenical partnerships on campus. Former graduate student Kellie Cornforth shared her experience in those Women's Circles, and in Spiritual Direction, and also joining the regular retreats at King's Fold and how formative all of those experiences have been for her. Dr. Craig Ginn shared his appreciation for Paul's presence, both at MRU and UCalgary, especially in coming to speak in classrooms, sharing that Paul has spoken to over 1700 students just in Craig's classes alone. Anneke Korver shared about her enjoyment of her current student leadership role. And finally Nanako Furuyama and Madi Cullen, current university staff that oversee the Faith & Spirituality Centre, expressed gratitude for all the ways all four chaplains have been supportive of the university, of the Centre, and of students. Finally, each of the four chaplains (Paul, Jacqui, Layne and Pearl) shared briefly words of gratitude and appreciation for being entrusted with this mission as well as shaped by it. Finally, the campus ministry had brought cake to share while a PowerPoint with 20 years of pictures was shared on the screen.

6.5 Church Visitor Reports: Church Visitor Teams

Team # 1: Medicine Hat, Regina and Saskatoon Rev. Brian Kuyper (No report)

Team # 2: Covenant, The Road, River Park and The Lantern Rev. Dan Roukema (No report)

Team # 3: Emmanuel, Maranatha (Calgary), and High River Rev. Paul Droogers (No report)

Team # 4: Burdett, Iron Springs, Brooks, and Taber Rev. Matt VandenHeuvel (No report)

Team # 5: Granum, Maranatha (Lethbridge) and Nobleford Rev. David Swinney (No report)

6.6 Oversight committee for Allan Kirkpatrick (Brian Kuyper reporting)

There are three members on the committee, Brian Kuypers, Mike Brennan and Paul Droogers. Allan has started and continues counselling with Zach Olsen of the denomination. He is also seeking some career counselling. Many churches have reached out to Allan to invite him to preach. Allan also supports Bible study at Shalem Manor. We are thankful that Allan is able to utilize his gifts in these ways during this time of transition.

6.7 Oversight committee for Maranatha (Calgary) CRC (Paul Verhoef reporting)

The committee consists of Gys Vandenpol, Judy Heim and Paul Verhoef. Council is working together to prepare for the calling of a new Pastor. Elaine May from Thrive is walking down the path with them. They understand more fully how they created a challenging situation for Pastor Allan and they want to make sure they have a strong sense of what they would be calling a pastor to do and be. Even in this time, God is joining them in grace and blessing. They are thankful for the support they are receiving by pastors and lay leaders.

7. Denominational Agencies / visitors Reports.

7.1 Council of Delegates: Debbie Karambowich reporting:

Celebrate with Al Postma as he has been hired as the Executive Director Canada – CRCNA. Shared the time of Sharing stories with the Canadian churches and looking forward to having more opportunity to do this together.

7.2 ReFrame: Nate Wright reporting and presenting: Nate is our new regional representative for Reframe. Nate walked us through some of the history of Back to God Hour now Reframe. Their reach is wide in 10 languages and all is FREE thanks to the churches support through Denominational Ministries.

7.3 CRCNA General Secretary Zach King and Roshani Morton Director of Advancement (Canada)

Roshani shared with us the Spiritual Investment and the return on that investment. Ministry shares is a team sport. Ninety – one percent of our churches give, most of those that don't are emerging churches. We are working on sharing the stories as we had the opportunity recently with the Canadian churches.

Zach King shared John 12 20-26. "Very Truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

Our Journey 2025

Cultivating: practices of prayer and spiritual discipline by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Listening: to the voices of every generation shaping us for ministry together.

Growing: in diversity and unity by seeking justice, reconciliation and welcome, sharing our faith as we build relationships with and honor the cultures of our neighbors and newcomers.

There are plans to **GATHER** together with groups of Classis. Calgary will be that meeting place for Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan, BC Northwest, North Cascades, KoAm and Central California. Who will attend: 10 appointed by classis, 5 selected by the CRCNA staff. People who are interested in listening and learning from others, then willing to share their learning when they return.

CRC Annual day of prayer: March 13, 2024.

Thank you for your support of the denominations Agencies.

7.4 Calvin Seminary : Shawn Brix reporting Calvin seminary will be celebrating 150 year in 2026. Most Canadian students are in the registered in the online program. One of our own from Granum, Ryan Poelman was installed at the pastor of Faith Community Church in Zillah this past week. New is the MA in Clinical Mental Health counseling, preparing students Professionally and theologically to serve as a clinical Therapist or Counselor. Tuition dollars are now received at Par which saves our students 30%.

8. Motion from the Floor: That ABSS review their decision to have Paul Verhoef and any other officebearer who has an exception or gravamina, or cannot in good conscience agree wholeheartedly to the Covenant of officebearers not be allowed to represent our classis at synod 2024.

Seconded

The chair was challenged for allowing the motion to come to the floor. The Chair was not sustained and therefore the motion was removed from discussion and never voted on.

It is regretful that this motion and discussion was not immediately moved to Executive Session.

9. Closing

9.1 Closing remarks by the Chair, Henry, who thanked all the presenters, David, thanked Henry for his willingness to serve as chair for this meeting.

9.2 Motion to adjourn.

9.3 Closing prayer and doxology

Fall Classis meeting to be held at Granum CRC October 25, 2024.