

Minutes of the 154th meeting of
Classis Lake Erie
of the Christian Reformed Church

In session March 7, 2020, at Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church,
 Ann Arbor, Michigan

Representatives of Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church lead a time of opening worship.

I. Constituting Classis

A. Roll call indicates the presence of the following delegations from the churches and ministries of Classis Lake Erie.

Church	Minister	Elder	Deacon
All Nations (Toledo)	John Park		
Akron CRC	Harry Winters	Jeremy Garver-Hughes	Martha Blackford
Ann Arbor CRC	Ryan Boes	Chris Van Ee	Leslie Doorlag
Ann Arbor Hope CRC	Samuel Lee		
Cascades Fellowship CRC (Jackson)	Chris Lanham	Roger Rowlison	Beka Manson
Cleveland Zion	Daniel Kim		
Community CRC (Saginaw)	Nathan Gritter	Mary Smith	Julie Stuelpnagel
Dearborn Christian Fellowship CRC	Brad Stolman	Dan Westra	Stephanie Sukaria
Detroit First CRC	Ben Van Arragon	Skip Starr	Tim Malefyt
Eastside CRC		Vivian Louis	Alicia Durett
Han-Bit CRC	Christian Oh	Young Ki Ham	Brian Yoo
Hmong Christian Ministries	Zongseng Vang	David Vang	Kou Vue
Imlay City CRC	Alex Snider	Bob Ettema	Brian Penzien
North Hills CRC (Troy)	Randall Engle	Margie Bolt	Deborah Bonthuis
Olentangy CRC (Columbus)		Larry Fisher	
River Terrace CRC (East Lansing)	Brent Wassink	Karen Bollman	Jenny Sullivan
Willard CRC		Kevin Holthouse	Rob Semer

- B. President Harry Winters welcomes delegates and guests.
- C. First-time delegates sign the *Covenant for Officebearers*.
- D. The president declares Classis to be constituted.

II. Ministry Priority: Leadership Development

A. Position approval: Nathan Groenewold.

Motion: That Classis approve Nathan Groenewold's call to serve the church as director of Cohort Detroit as being consistent with the calling of a Minister of the Word and Sacraments.

Motion is
Synodical Deputies

Adopted.
Concur.

B. Examination, Candidate Nathan Groenewold.

Practica:

Mark Van Andel interviews candidate Nathan Groenewold on matters of faith, life and ministry practice. Classis delegates and synodical deputies present further questions.

Motion: That Classis proceed to the sermon evaluation portion of the examination.

Motion is

Adopted.

Preaching:

Matt Ackerman presents an evaluation based on his observation and that of fellow evaluator, Misha Ejakov. Rev. Ackerman recommends a motion to accept their evaluation, approve candidate Groenewold on the basis of preaching ability, and proceed with the examination.

Motion: To approve the candidates' preaching and proceed with the examination.

Motion is

Adopted.

Biblical-Theological Position:

Gerald VanderHoek interviews candidate Groenewold regarding Bible knowledge and Reformed doctrine. Classis delegates and synodical deputies present further questions.

Motion: To admit Nathan Groenewold to the office of Minister of the Word and Sacraments.

Prayer is offered by Harry Winters.

Deliberation is made in executive session.

Motion is
Synodical deputies

Adopted.
Concur.

Nathan Groenewold is congratulated and welcomed by Classis; delegates lay on hands and prayer is offered.

C. Retirement announcement: Rev. Christian Oh.

The Council at Han Bit CRC in Rochester Hills, Michigan, announces Rev. Christian Oh's intention to retire by **December 31, 2020**. Han Bit's Council formally accepted Rev. Oh's retirement at a meeting of **March 3, 2019**. Classis accepts Rev. Oh's retirement, on the basis of age, per *Church Order* Article 18a.

D. Student Funding. Matt Ackerman presents updated guidelines for Student Funding.

These are received for information. Classis requests that the Leadership Development Committee integrate existing student fund policy with new guidelines for formal adoption in October, 2020.

III. Ministry Priority: Denominational Involvement

A. Council of Delegates. Delegate Laurie Harkema provides updates regarding: changes to

denominational structure pertinent to divergent guidelines for charitable organizations in Canada and the United States; and changes in executive leadership at the denomination. Updates are received for information.

Motion: To appoint Laurie Harkema to a second term as Classis Lake Erie's delegate to the Council of Delegates.

Motion is: *Adopted.*

- B. Ministry Shares Reimagined. John Bolt presents updates to the CRCNA's Ministry Shares process, as proposed by Synod 2019, scheduled to be ratified at Synod 2020. Report is received for information.
- C. Resonate Global Mission. Amy Schenkel engages delegates in an exercise regarding practices that increase church members' contact with and involvement in their communities. Carla Bieber speaks briefly about her new role as "Regional Network Connector" for Resonate.
- D. World Renew. Gerald Van Wyke is presented as Classis Lake Erie's delegate to World Renew Board.

Motion: To delegate Gerald Van Wyke to the board of World Renew.

Motion is: *Adopted.*

- E. Ballot 11: Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin University boards. Ballots are distributed; the following results collected:

Calvin Theological Seminary

R. Scott Greenway: 17 votes

Shannon Jamal-Holleman: 18 votes

Calvin University

Nate DeJong McCarron: 34 votes

- F. Synodical Deputies. The terms of Randall Engle (Deputy) and Chris Lanham (Alternate) end in 2020. Both express willingness to serve second terms.

Motion: To appoint Randall Engle to a second term as synodical deputy; and Chris Lanham to a second term as synodical deputy (alternate).

Motion is: *Adopted.*

- G. Synod 2020. The following delegates are appointed to Synod 2020:

Alex Snider (Imlay City) – Pastor

Mary Smith (Saginaw) – Elder

Ben Van Arragon (Detroit) – Other officebearer

IV. Ministry Priority: Nurturing Communities

- A. Classis Mission Fund. Committee member Carla Bieber reports on newly-funded seed bank project developed as a community outreach of Hmong Christian Ministries.
- B. Pastors' Continuing Education Fund. Chris Lanham presents a grant proposal for Classis pastors to apply for financial assistance in the pursuit of continuing education (see **Appendix** below). Proposal is received for information. A motion to adopt as policy will be presented at Classis in October 2020.
- C. Olentangy CRC Update. Elder Larry Fisher informs Classis that Olentangy CRC is moving toward dissolution. In the process, Olentangy has elected to invest assets in a charitable foundation to support a mix of local (Columbus, OH region) and denominational (CRCNA) initiatives. Included are perpetual funds that will support repayment of Classis loans to Han Bit and All Nations as well as Classis campus ministries. Classis expresses appreciation for the faithfulness and generosity of the Olentangy congregation.

V. Ministry Priority: Specialized Ministries

- A. Nathan Gritter reports briefly on Specialized Ministries and directs delegates to the application process for new ministries.
- B. Campus Edge Fellowship. Brenda Kronemeijer-Heyink reports on ongoing ministry at MSU, including: observations regarding God's hand at work in students seeking community; and the value in creating space in which faith, questions, reflection and reason comfortably intersect.
- C. Campus Chapel. Bailey Sarver reports on ministry at Campus Chapel, including: development of pastoral partnership between Revs. Sarver and Ackerman; collaboration between Campus Chapel and various on-campus ministry organizations; upcoming events including a one-actor play depicting the life of C.S. Lewis. Rev. Sarver also presents 2020 board members for Classis approval.

Motion: That Classis approve the 2019-2020 Board of Campus Chapel.

Motion is:

Adopted.

VI. Ministry Priority: New Church Development

- A. Committee report. Mark Van Anandel reports on several New Church Development activities, including: the expansion of Hesed Community Church in Detroit and the introduction of Pastor Steve Perry, Detroit church planter. Rev. Van Anandel also urges all delegates to encourage prospective church planters *and* church plant supporters to contact the New Church Development Committee for future partnership.

VII. Administrative Matters

A. Classis Meeting Schedule. Delegates are asked to report their Councils' responses to the proposal to move *at least* one Classis meeting per year from Saturday to a weekday. Delegates report overwhelmingly that congregational lay leaders both: a. Are committed to attending and supporting Classis meetings and initiatives; and b. Would be far less able to do so should Classis meetings be held on a weekday. Classis decides by consensus not to proceed with a motion to change the current meeting schedule (i.e., meetings held on the first Saturday of every March and the first Saturday of every October).

B. Treasurer's Report. Classis receives treasurer Joe Creech's 2019 budget report for information.

Motion: That Classis Lake Erie approve of the work of the treasurer.

Motion is *Adopted.*

C. Stated Clerk. Ben Van Arragon directs Classis' attention to report on p. 3 of the *Agenda*, and encourages delegates to visit the Classis website (classislakeerie.org).

Motion: That Classis approve the work of stated clerk.

Motion is *Adopted.*

D. Executive Committee. President Harry Winters reports work of the Executive Committee. Alex Snider is recognized as incoming Classis president for October 2020 and March 2021.

Motion: That Classis approve the work of the Executive Committee.

Motion is *Adopted.*

VIII. Concluding Matters

A. Next classis meetings:

1. October 3, 2020, location TBA.
2. March 6, 2021, location TBA.

B. President Harry Winters acknowledges and thanks delegates, guests, special presenters and members of Ann Arbor CRC who helped host Classis.

C. Motion: To adjourn the 154th meeting of Classis Lake Erie.

Motion is *Adopted.*

Rev. Snider closes with prayer.

Appendix: Continuing Education Grant Policy for Classis Lake Erie

In an age of information, continuing education is necessary for almost every vocation. On average, a master's program costs about \$610.00 per credit hour. A post-graduate program costs on average \$500.00 per credit hour. The typical class load for a master's program is 10-12 classes (3 credit hours per class). A post-graduate program requires 2 to 3 times that. Along with aspirations of degree programs there are a host of certificate, recertification, seminars, and specific skills training available today. With the continuing demands of ministry for retraining and growth of members of the ministry staff, the need for education grants becomes evident.

The Congregational Life Committee proposes that Classis Lake Erie create a grant for continuing education to help the professional ministry personnel within CLE to engage in life-long learning within their vocational field.

Who would qualify for a grant?

Any member of Classis Lake Erie engaged in professional ministry is eligible. This includes chaplains; paid, non-ordained church-staff members; classical ministry appointees.

What educational opportunities qualify?

This list is not exhaustive, but all requests must include justification for the grant.

- Clinical Pastoral Education
- Master's and Post-graduate programs relating directly to the ministry carried out by the applicant.
- Symposiums, conferences, webinars, seminars, and workshops related to the ministry or support role of the applicant.
- Certificate and recertification programs related to the ministry or support role of the applicant.

How does the grant work?

- Eligible applicants would be able to receive the grant over two consecutive academic years, with a limit of three applications over all. For example, an applicant may receive a grant for two years in a row and after a year break receive one additional grant.
- The money is to be spent on tuition and registration fees only. Only 50% of tuition for a given year may be covered, unless the cost is \$1500.00 or less. In cases of costs less than \$1500, the full cost may be granted.
- All applications must include a description of the program and how it applies to/further the ministry of the applicant.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chris Lanham
Congregational Life Committee