

**Highlights of October 6, 2011 Classis Toronto Meeting
held at the Community CRC, Richmond Hill
(These are NOT official minutes.)**

Officers of Classis:

Rev. Kobie du Plessis chaired the meeting of Classis. Classis Stated Clerk, **John Meiboom**, took minutes. **Rev. Richard Bodini** was Vice-Chair. The meeting was also supported by the work of past-chair **Rika VanderLaan**. Delegates from 19 of the 22 Classis Toronto congregations were present.

Prayer:

Opening worship was led by Richmond Hill pastor, **Rev. Doug Nieuwstraten** who read two Psalms leading to a time of focused prayer. Throughout the day, churches were asked to bring requests for prayer, which then formed part of the basis of Classis prayer times.

Ministry Equipping Session:

Rev. John Vanderstoep (Maranatha CRC, Cambridge) and **Elder Ken Tigchelaar (Meadowlands Fellowship CRC, Ancaster)** led delegates in a discussion on the role of an elder in the church, with some emphases on that relationship between the roles of elder and pastor.

Appointments:

- **Rev. Ted Bootsma** was appointed Regional Pastor for Classis.

Classis Committee Reports:

- **Classis Safe Church Committee** chair, **Terry VanderHorst**, updated Classis on what is happening. A number of churches have not yet developed Safe Church policies. She urged churches to review the resources available to them and to appoint persons in their churches who could then also join the Classis team meetings occasionally as well for mutual encouragement.
- **Rev. John Bouwers, Milton Church Planter** thanked Classis for the many expressions of love that have come during the difficult days since the death of their son Joshua. After a three months bereavement leave over the summer, John has begun again to dream about the development of a church plant in Milton, the fastest growing community in Canada. Keep Rev. Bouwers and his family in your prayers.
- Classis heard reports from the **Classis Ministry Committee (CMC), Classis Executive Committee (CEC), Stated Clerk and Interim Ministry Coordinator, John Meiboom, and Treasurer, Cor Buikema**. The main discussion for Classis was around the **2012 Classis budget**. The budget, if brought without amendment to Classis would have meant an almost 20% increase in requested funds per member (Ministry Shares) from \$77.70/member this year to over \$91/ next year. Classis discussed proposals from the CMC and CEC about how to handle this issue including a general proposal for bringing the budget this year down to the level of requiring only \$80/member Ministry Share. CMC and CEC also had brought forward a proposal to review ministries and Classis functioning with a goal to developing a new long term plan for ministry that is sustainably supported by Classis. However Classis was not satisfied with the proposals. A motion was passed to call a special meeting of Classis for Thursday evening, December 8 to address the 2012 budget only. They requested that the CMC and CEC come back with new proposals that deal with 2012's budget showing a detailed plan for how the budget will be brought down.

Guest Reports received:

- **Rev. Steve Friesick**, AIM Urban Missionary to immigrants in the west of Toronto, reported on progress in his work helping support these newcomers in many ways; leading a volunteer crew who offer help to dozens of children with their homework; fixing bicycles for their use; developing coffee shop friendships which lead to opportunities for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. He thanked Classis for its financial support, as well as for the growing number of volunteers that help in his ministry.
- **Barb Ferrier**, Executive Director of **Canadian Christian Education Foundation** (see www.canadianchristianeducation.org) is a cause recommended by synod. They strengthen Christian education by funding the development of Christian learning materials for the benefit of Christian schools in Canada. They have done so for over 35 years, directing over \$2,000,000 to this work over those years.
- **Hank Kuntz** updated delegates on the work of **Disabilities Concerns**. There are Disability Advocates in each church. Stories were shared of work being done but the needs do continue. Churches are urged to pass disability policies in their churches, to remember DC in the offering schedule, and seek other ways to support the disabled.
- **Tammy Heidbuurt**, of **Diaconal Ministries Canada** reported briefly on the ongoing support they give to deacons. She got various delegates to give a short account of how DMC has helped their churches to engage community, equip their deacons, and encourage Justice.

Other Items of Note:

- Classis approved examining **Jason Postma**, Bethel Newmarket Youth Pastor, for a license to exhort in January. By so doing they agreed there was a need for this, as required by Church Order Article 43.
- **Springdale Bradford** brought a request to Classis to reduce their Ministry Share requirement in line with significant membership changes that they have experienced in the recent past, which was not reflected in the reporting of numbers. Classis approved this change.
- **Rev. Rob Datema** gave a brief account to Classis of being a delegate to Synod for Classis Toronto. He also attended the MultiEthnic Conference that ran just prior to Synod (overlapping one day).
- Classis also heard Church Counselor reports on churches searching for pastors. **Brampton Heritage Fellowship** has installed a new pastor, **Rev. Brent VanderHeide**. **Friendship Community** will install **Rev. Ruth Hofman** and **Rev. Steven Venhuizen** as new pastors on October 30 (11:30 am).

Next Meeting:

Classis meets for its next regular meeting on **January 19, 2012** at **Immanuel CRC in Caledon**.

Notes by John Meiboom, Clerk. Questions/comments? Email clerk@classistoronto.org or call 416-587-7998.