

Minutes of Classis Huron

Meeting January 14, 2005 in Bethel CRC of Listowel, On

Article I. Opening

Section 1.01 Call to order and Welcome by Rev. Dr. Jack De Vries of Listowel

Section 1.02 Devotions led by Rev. Elzo Tenyenhuis, leading us in song, reading Titus 2:11 – end of chapter, spoken words of sermonic challenge and prayer.

Section 1.03 The Credentials Committee reported all delegates present except Vanastra who gave notice of absence due to a church family celebration.

Section 1.04 Classis was declared Constituted

Section 1.05 Officers were seated: Revs. Chris Schievink as Chair, Bill Hoogland as Vice Chair and Ed Den Haan as Stated Clerk.

Article II. Visitors and New Members were welcomed:

Section 2.01 Rev. Chris Pool of Collingwood new to Huron Classis meetings

Section 2.02 Campus Chaplains Rev. Morbey and Mr. Vander Berg.

Article III. The following committees were appointed

Section 3.01 Credentials Committee Waterloo and Guelph New life delegates

Section 3.02 Balloting Committee Listowel guests

Section 3.03 Protest Committee Cambridge and Goderich delegates

Section 3.04 Exhorter Review Committee Acton and Orangeville

Article IV. Delegates and Attending were:

Congregation	Minister	Elder	Deacon
Acton	Rev. Ray Van der Kooij	None	Rita Leferink
Blyth	Rev. John Kuperus	Henry Exel	Terry Greidanus
Cambridge		Charles van Lingen and Rick de Graaf	
Clinton		Gerald van Wyk and Ralph De Weerd	Fred Pot – late
Collingwood	Rev Chris Pool	Rene Koopmans	
Drayton	Rev Gerrit Bomhof	John Deen	Dave Sheeres
Congregation	Minister	Elder	Deacon
Exeter	Rev. Harry Freilink	Bert Langedyk	Dave Boersma
Goderich	Rev. Stephen Tamming	Steve Burns	Rob Terpstra
Guelph Campus	Jamie Vander Berg		
Guelph First	Rev. Jack Van de Hoef	John Vander Kamp	Bob Van den Broek
Guelph New Life	Rev. Henry Lunshof	Judy Vander Zwaag	Rick Guetter
Kincardine	Rev. Elzo Tenyenhuis	Henry Voskamp	Alland Eisen
Kitchener	Rev. Andy Van Muyen	Eugene Bradley	
Listowel	Rev. Dr. Jack De Vries	John Reinink	Alfred De Vries
Lucknow	Rev. Peter Janssens	Wayne Burgsma	Dirk Rylaarsdam

Orangeville	Rev. Roger Gelwicks	Archie Duiker	Siebe Vander Meer
Owen Sound	Rev. George Holthof	John Vandorp	Jim Jansen
Palmerston	Rev. Chris Schievink	Eric Stam	Pim Roubos
River City	None		
Stratford	Rev. William Hoogland	Stan Pucklicz	Dirk De Lange - late
The Journey	Rev. Adrian Van Giessen - late		
Vanastra	Absent with notice		
Waterloo	Rev. Vicki Cok	Dave deHaan	
Waterloo Campus	Rev. Graham Morbey		

Article V. New Members to Classis who signed the Form of Subscription

Name	Congregation of origin
Bob Van den Broek	Guelph First
Rita Lefrink	Bethel Acton
Siebe Van der Meer	Orangeville
Alland Eisen	Kincardine
Chris Pool	Collingwood
Charles Van Lingen	Cambridge
Rene Koopmans	Collingwood
Richard Guetter	Guelph New Life
Eugene Bradley	Community Kitchener
W.J. Roubos	Palmerston
Dave Sheers	Drayton
Willard Van Der Ploeg	Owen Sound
Terry Greidanus	Blyth

Article VI. Review of Classis' Direction and Ministry

Section 6:01 Fred Van Der Sterre introduced Rev. Thea Leunk. Thea led a discussion of the status of Classis Huron and its development. Thea will be leaving her position of working with Classis, having accepted a call to a congregation. Fred introduced Frank Engelage who is taking over from Thea.

Section 6.02 Thea introduced the following material asking ,” What is Classis’ Mandate?

- (a) *To help congregations face ministry challenges*
- (b) To work proactively with denominational agencies
- (c) To interpret the Church Order
- (d) To provide ministry between congregations where needed and desired
- (e) To respond supportively to current needs and challenges of congregational life.

Section 6:03 Thea mentioned George Buller’s description of Classis.

- (a) George compares Classis to a car with four people in it working together to reach a chosen destination.
- (b) The four are:
- (c) Vision to ask God what we may do in serving God in our classis as driver.
- (d) Relationships to connect all parts in harmony and effective work
- (e) Management to support all in their work to carry out the vision
- (f) Programs to back up relationships and implement the vision

Section 6.03 Classis Huron’s history and current status was then discussed. We have a vision, are we clear on where we are going? What brought us here?

- (a) Started in 1967 with 14 churches; today there are 24.
- (b) Church planting became an important step.

- (c) Campus Ministry started in 1976.
- (d) All Ontario Youth Conventions started in 73.
- (e) Neo-Pentecostalism hit us in 1970.
- (f) The Diaconal Conference was organized in 67 and became a standing committee of Classis in 1994.
- (g) Women entered office of deacons and elders in 1998.
- (h) Wiebo Ludwig and Goderich difficulties of the 1982.
- (i) The United Reformed Church split off in 1995.
- (j) In 1995 we sent four delegates to a conference to renew Classis.
- (k) Synod of 1989 started Abuse response team.
- (l) 1999 Classical Ministry Committee began.
- (m) Changing Classis is difficult.
- (n) We have more unity in this Classis now than before.

Section 6:04 Our current status was discussed in small groups, facilitated by these questions:

- (a) What hinders us from being effective in helping our congregations?
- (b) What visionary leadership do we have?
- (c) Where do you see God working in our Classis?
- (d) How can our deacons contribute more significantly to Classis?

Section 6.05 Reporters from the Groups listed the following improvement suggestions in response to the question: What changes would you recommend to Classis?

- (a) Our Emerging Congregations and Campus Ministries should be present at Classis and officially represented as ministry.
- (b) Keep this kind of discussion as a regular part of each meeting
- (c) drop the credentials
- (d) Refresh and improve our structure – we have too much duplication and disconnect
- (e) Diaconal involvement in Classis meetings needs to be enhanced and continued – this was mentioned several times.
- (f) Improve communication by and about Classis.
- (g) Classis materials and process ought to be user-friendly, identify things in the Classis more fully.
- (h) Help congregations discuss the agenda in preparation for the meetings of Classis.
- (i) Build on our training sessions, implement, develop the new ideas that are presented, follow up with support for those initiatives.
- (j) The turn-over of delegates causes lack of continuity in understanding of Classis. We need more continuity. Delegates should be here at least twice in a row.
- (k) Deacons should report on ministry successes.
- (l) Increased celebration of ministry in established churches is needed.
- (m) Identify more non-clergy leaders and involve them in the work of Classis. Provide training and support for them to do so.
- (n) Encourage our families of churches to work together and develop mutual supportive relationships and connections.
- (o) Start another church plant.
- (p) Encourage natural church development in our established churches.
- (q) Encourage the three person delegations, let's make it regular.
- (r) Obtain a staff person to co-ordinate the work of Classis.
- (s) Communications need to be improved, possibly by a newsletter.

Section 6.05 Thea closed the program with prayer.

Section 6.06 Fred Vander Sterre thanked Thea for her work well done and wished her safe journey to Grand Rapids.

Section 6.07 Our Chairman, Chris Schievink, led us in prayer for Thea and her travels.

Article vii Stated Clerk Report

Section 7.01 A written report as well as a communication record was presented by the Stated Clerk.

Section 7.02 Invitations to host the meeting of Classis are needed.

Section 7.03 The following mandate for the Credentials Committee was proposed to be acted on by Classis at our May 2006 meeting.

- a. To collect the credentials of all delegates to the meeting of Classis, review their content and report these findings to the meeting of Classis, advising Classis on to how to respond to the raised concerns.
- b. The report shall be made in two stages:
 - i. At the institution of Classis report on the presence or absence of credentialed delegates and the appropriateness of their credentials. That is, are all delegates credentialed appropriately?
 - ii. Later, during the meeting a report shall be given to Classis on matters raised by the congregation's credentials. This report is to be accompanied by advice on how Classis might process these concerns. Advice is to be presented in motion form to be discussed and voted on by Classis as needed.
 - iii. All records, credentials and recommendations shall be handed in to the Stated Clerk after the Committee's work has been completed and before leaving the meeting of Classis.
 - iv. The Credential Committee should be in place one half hour prior to the start of the meeting of Classis to register the delegates and process the material. The Clerk's work and report were adopted and approved.

Section 7.04 The Stated Clerk's work was approved.

Article viii Treasurer's report

Section 8.01 Our Treasurer informed us he will be away for the months of February and March.

Section 8.02 Communication, authorization for expenditures, and budget alignment work is needed to keep our treasurer well informed and able to act in disbursement of funds. More co-ordination with the treasurer is needed. Programs need to work with the overall budget.

Section 8.03 Our treasurer endorsed the proposed risk assessment.

Section 8.04 Expenses refund forms were made available to the delegates and members of Classis.

Section 8.05 Prayer was offered for our clerk and treasurer and their work.

Article ix Classical Interim Committee Report, Rev. Jack Van de Hoef reporting

Section 9.01 New Life's request for support on their application to the Government of Ontario for license to officiate at weddings

a. Clarifications and corrections re agenda items were made as follows:

i. **Re marriage officiating:**

1. Rev. Dr. De Moor's words as on p. 17 of the agenda were corrected.

The agenda incorrectly states on page 17: “. ” Dr. De Moor's opinion is reported to hold that the privilege of solemnizing marriage is not limited to Ministers of the Word, but also includes others who are recognized in full time ministry positions such as Ministry Associates”. Dr. De Moor's opinion rather is reported to be: “that the privilege of solemnizing marriage is not limited to Ministers of the Word, but also *may be granted to* others who are recognized in full time ministry positions such as Ministry Associate.”

ii. **Seminary requirements**

1. The agenda's material on page 18. was corrected

The wrong statement was “that Judy must spend two years at Calvin Seminary to become a Ministry Associate”. The correction was made as follows: the two year attendance requirement is for Minister of the Word, not for Ministry Associate. There is no attendance requirement for Ministry Associate.

iii. Motion was moved and seconded as follows:

Section 9.02 We recommend that Classis Huron support New Life CRC in applying for a license to permit Judy Vander Zwaag to officiate at weddings. This support is provisional on the condition of New Life's continued supervision of Judy as member and servant of New Life CRC in Guelph.

Grounds

- i. Judy serves in hospital ministry in Guelph with strong spiritual benefit to recipients and under New Life CRC supervision.
- ii. Judy has theological training that enables her to understand and discern as needed in officiating at weddings.
- iii. Certification is appropriate through a congregation in our denomination.
- iv. Governmental certification requirements can be satisfied under this arrangement.
- v. The motion was voted on by ballot and defeated.

Section 9:03 Rev. Chris Schievink offered prayer for the ministry and for the people involved asking for God's blessing on all.

Section 9.04 New Life CRC protest of Synod's action in Toronto Committee of Pre-advice Rev. Stephen Tamming reporting

(a) New Life CRC asks Classis Huron

- a. To support its protest to Synod 2006.
- b. To discuss this matter both in congregations and at Classis, to develop broad understanding of the matter.

(b) *New Life delegates stated the following:*

- a. They would proceed directly to Synod with this protest.
 - b. They would act with Classis on the advice of the committee in this meeting of Classis.
- (c) *The committee of pre-advise recommends that the protest be recognized as foundational and worthy of more discussion.*
- a. The Pre-advise committee will develop a motion and grounds for Classis to act on in May.
 - b. That the protest be distributed and discussed, and that we revisit this protest at the May 2006 meeting of Classis.
 - c. *Grounds:*
 - i. This important and basic matter needs more discussion in our churches and Classis for more complete understanding before we decide.
 - ii. Diverse understanding of the matter requires that Councils have more time to work with this for clarity on the matter.
 - d. This motion was adopted.

Section 9.04 Security

- (a) Motion:
- The Classis Interim Committee recommends that Classis undertake a risk assessment and appoint a three person committee to do so. This committee is to report to Classis at the May 2006 meeting. The committee is to assess our risks and advise Classis on how to manage them.
- (b) Grounds
- a. Classis employs people but lacks liability insurance
 - b. Though congregations have insurance to cover abuse liabilities, Classis does not. In our covenant structure, Classis is co-responsible for the life of its member congregations. We have uncovered liability in this area.
 - c. There may well be other areas where we are at risk, such as travel on behalf of Classis.
- (c) This motion was adopted.

Section 9.05 Exhorter training

- (a) Motion
- That Classis sponsor an annual training event to develop preaching by our exhorters. Our ministers will produce this with accountability to CIC and Classis.
- (b) Grounds
- a. Last September's Exhorter Review Committee recommended that we so develop the potential in our exhorters.
 - b. Shared equipping of our members will benefit all of Classis**
- (c) This motion was adopted.

Section 9.06 Motion of approval

Motion

- a. A motion was made and seconded to approve the work of the Classical Interim Committee, receive the remainder of their report as information and to encourage them in their work.
- b. This motion was adopted.

Article X Reports

Section 10.01 Youth Ministry Committee, Rev. George Holthof reporting

- (a) Aly Vanderlei and Marianne Dykstra reported on behalf of the Trillium League Lead Team. The Trillium League and Youth Ministry Committee are active in ministry. There is a vacancy on the committee.
- (b) A written report by the Youth Ministry Committee was presented.

Section 10.02 Ministry Committee

Rev. Peter Janssens reported on behalf of the Committee, highlighting items from its written report. A change in membership of the eastern church family was also presented.

Section 10.03 Nominating Committee

- (a) Elder Eric Stam reported on the committee's work and offered Classis a list of nominees for various functions. The nominees were elected as follows:

Nominee	Function
Rev. Dr. Jack De Vries	Calvin Seminary Board
Committee for Contact with the Government	Henry De Jong
CRC Home Missions	Rev. Elzo Tenyenhuis
CRC Publications	Nanda Zwart
Church Visitor West	Elzo Tenyenhuis
Church Visitor North	Menno Eelkema
Classical Interim Committee	Rev. Pete Janssens
Classical Nominations Committee	Rick De Graaf
Classis Huron Home Missions Committee	Marguerite Ridder
Classis Home Mission Committee	Rev. Elzo Tenyenhuis
Youth Ministry Committee	Hilma Steenbergen
Guelph Campus Ministry Committee	Keith Knight
Student Fund Committee	Rev. Bill Hoogland
Student Fund Committee	Rev. Chris Schievink
Diaconal Ministries Canada Board rep	Lawrence Drost
Auditor	Mark Cranbury

- (b) Synodical Delegates were elected as follows:

- a. *Ministerial primary – Rev. Peter Janssens*
- b. *Ministerial second - Rev. George Holthof*
- c. *Ministerial primary alternate - Rev. Dr. Jack De Vries*
- d. *Ministerial secondary alternate – Rev. Elzo Tenyenhuis*
- e. *Elder Primary – Rick De Graaf*

- f. *Elder Secondary- Langendyk*
- g. *Elder Alternate – Dr. John Van Dorp*
- h. *Elder Alternate - Henry Exel*

Section 10.04 Home Missions Committee Rev. Gerrit Bomhof reporting

(a) The Committee recommended

- a. *That Classis raise the amount which a church plant may draw from the Ministry Fund to \$125,000 (from \$90,000).*
- b. *Note: This involves no increase in Classical Quotas from those already approved - see accompanying spread sheet.*
- c. *Grounds:*
 - i. *a. the \$90,000 was an arbitrary figure; Experience indicates that \$125,000 would be more appropriate.*
 - ii. *b. This is in line with other Classes*
 - iii. *c. It is vital that a church have a solid beginning in order to become self-sustaining*
- d. *This recommendation was adopted*

(b) The Committee recommended

- a. *That Rev. G. Bomhof and M. Ridder be sent as Classical delegates to the Regional Gathering of Partners to be held (February 1 and 2) at the cost of \$300.00 to Classis.*
- b. *This recommendation was adopted.*

(c) First Guelph CRC Chinese Ministry Rev. Jack Van de Hoef reporting

- a. *Classis financially supports this ministry with Chinese Immigrants in Guelph. The objectives of the ministry are to evangelize among Chinese immigrants in Guelph, develop depth of faith and share their freshness and passion with First CRC.*
- b. *The ministry was blessed with two more adult baptisms recently.*

(d) Journey presentation Rev. Adrian Van Giessen reporting

- a. *Adrian Van Giessen reported on the multi-cultural aspect of this ministry and its challenges. The congregation is learning a great deal in following the Lord Jesus in the relational ministry.*
- b. *(e) The work of the home Missions Committee was approved.*
- c. *(f) Rev. Dr. Jack De Vries prayed for the mission work of this committee and God's blessing upon it...*

Section 10.05 Regional Pastors

Rev. Ron Fisher reported

- (a) *He sponsors a breakfast a Crossroads Restaurant once a month for the clergy on the east side of Classis Huron...*
- (b) *Ron and his wife Gerry attended the denominational regional pastor conference which was very helpful.*
- (c) *The CRCNA will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2007. Ron will head up a committee of 5 non-clergy people who reflect diversity of age, gender, & profession in Classis Huron to help us celebrate this event. The Committee is to be known as our "Sesquicentennial Committee" but the committee needs to be in place by the end of January 2006. Nominees for membership on this committee are needed.*

Section 10.06 Mentors and Mentees

- (a) Rev. Roger Gelwicks is mentor to Rev. Chris Pool.
- (b) Rev. Jack Quartel is mentor to Rev. Harry Freilink.
- (c) Rev. Gerrit Bomhof is mentor to Rev. Chris Schievink.

Section 10.07 Church Counselors

- (a) Rev. Bill Hoogland reported as church counselor with Clinton. The congregation is actively seeking a minister.
- (b) Rev. George Holthof reported as counselor to Collingwood. He reported that Chris was installed in a wonderful service. Chris' father delivering the sermon for the occasion.
- (c) Kitchener is actively calling and will soon vote on a specific nominee.

Section 10.08 The reports were received with appreciation

Section 10.09 Prayer was offered for our servants in these ministries

Section 10.10 Huron Campus Ministry

- (a) Rev. Ray Vander Kooij reported on the ministry. He highlighted items mentioned in the written report. The committee is very excited about the new developments in the ministry. They are working on third source funding for the ministry and promotion of the ministry in our churches. They are also developing a preaching protocol for James Vander Berg.
- (b) Mr. James van der Berg reported on its mission life and action that on the Guelph Campus. James expressed his joy in the ministry and mentioned a few examples of its challenges and blessings. Working on campus with the coalition "Making Poverty History" has led to many contacts and care for the poor.
- (c) James closed in prayer for the ministry.
- (d) Mr. Trevor Patton offered prayer in support of Jamie's person and ministry.

Section 10.11 Calvin Seminary Board Rev. Dr. Jack De Vries reporting

- a. The reporter highlighted some items from the written report.
- b. The seminary is thriving under the leadership of its new president Conelius Plantinga
- c. The report was received as information

Section 10.12 Abuse Response Team Rev. Stephen Tamming Reporting

- (a) Please note March 4, 2006 is the date of a training session at the Community CRC in Kitchener. Pastors and elders are especially invited. Ms. Beth Swagman will be the main speaker for the event.
- (b) Ms. Atie Ott has been appointed part-time trainer in our region to enable effective our abuse response.
- (c) Please continue to pray and encourage your congregation's members involved in this work. There is still a lack of support and understanding of this ministry.
- (d) Steve encouraged us to appoint members to Classis Abuse Response Team from our congregations.

Section 10.13 Auditing report by Mark Cranbury was accepted

Section 10.14 Diaconate Conference Report, Mary Blydorp reporting

- (e) The deacons left the meeting of Classis to meet as conference for two hours from 1:30- 3:30
- (f) Ms. Mary Blydorp, outgoing chairperson of the deacons reported
- (g) Christian Stewardship services was recommended for its help in financial stewardship among our congregational members.
- (h) Mary highlights diaconate community work, offering God's love to people.

- (i) Operation Manna is working with marginalized people.
- (j) Mary's term as deaconate leader is up. A new person, Mr. Willard Vander Ploeg has been elected chairperson will be taking over from Mary. John Hofstee has been elected secretary.
- (k) Chris Schievink offered prayer for and on behalf of this ministry.

Section 10.15 Credential Committee reported, Mr. Dave De Haan reporting

- (a) Waterloo CRC answered "no" to question 5b; they had not informed other churches of people moving into their area. It was noted that privacy legislation prohibits the sharing of personal information by institutions. Though the matter does not apply specifically to not-for-profit institutions we need to be very careful about sharing personal information.
- (b) Exeter asks for realignment of the pulpit supply assignments on dates near religious festivities. They would like their minister at home during those times. This was referred to the Stated Clerk.
- (c) Drayton CRC informs us that Classical quotas have grown out of proportion to other ministry shares.
- (d) The credentials Committee's work was accepted and approved.

Section 10.16 Exhorter Committee Rev. Ray Vander Kooij reporting

- (a) Motion to renew Hank Den Hollander's license to exhort for a 5-year period.

Grounds:

- a. Reviewers from the Clinton congregation, where the service was led and sermon preached were very favourable, most ratings being "excellent" or "very good."
- b. While the thorough ministerial reviews of the sermon manuscript were more critical of lacking clarity and application, evaluations from the congregation suggest that the presentation of the message seems to have overcome some of these noted weaknesses in the printed manuscript. Also good points were noted by the ministerial reviewers, and no criticism related to being unbiblical was suggested.
- c. *Suggestions:* We believe that Hank Den Hollander will be assisted by the service and sermon evaluations shared with him. Indications from the evaluations also suggest that Hank would be encouraged and benefit from development especially of his sermon formation by reading in the area of preaching and participating in workshops, such as the annual training day being recommended by the Classical Interim Committee.
- (b) This motion was adopted.

- (c) Motion to renew Dr. John Van Dorp's license to exhort for a 5-year period.

Grounds:

- a. Reviewers from the Palmerston congregation, where the service was led and sermon preached were favourable, most ratings being "very good" or "average."
- b. Ministerial reviews of the sermon manuscript, though constructively critical of some content choices and length, were also appreciative of the biblical message and especially the introduction and conclusion.
- c. *Suggestions:* We believe that Dr. John Van Dorp will glean helpful insights from the service and sermon evaluations shared with him. Indications from the evaluations also suggest that John would be encouraged and benefit from development, both in sermon formation and delivery, by reading in the area of preaching and participation in workshops, such as the annual training day being recommended by the Classical Interim Committee.
- (d) This motion was adopted.

- (e) Motion that John Den Bok's license be extended pending his intention to meet the needed requirements for evaluation and renewal for the May 2006 meeting of Classis. This is a final renewal process extension for exceptional reasons at this time.

Grounds:

- a. This is the second subsequent missing of the deadline for renewal application, and so a step more significant that a simple extension is fitting.
 - b. John is apologetic for his tardiness in completing the application for renewal, but indicates a sincere intention to fulfill renewal application requirements for May 2006 consideration by Classis.
 - c. Nothing would be gained by requiring a reexamination for licensure, which would be the result from an outright cancellation of licensure to exhort.
- (f) The motion was adopted

Article XII Adjournment

- (a) Chairman Rev. Chris Schievink declared the meeting to be closed.
- (b) Appreciation
 - Rev. Bill Hoogland expressed appreciation to Chris Schievink for chairing our meeting effectively and with humour.
- (c) Closing prayer
 - Rev. Adrian Van Giessen led in closing devotions.