

CLASSIS HURON
of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

MINUTES

September 16, 2009 – 9:00 a.m.

**Community Christian Reformed Church
1275 Bleams Road
Kitchener, Ont.**

The PURPOSE of Classis Huron is to

Support, equip and encourage our churches in the ministries as God has called us.

The VISION of Classis Huron is

The churches of Classis Huron will foster deeper relationships with the Lord and each other through community and accountability as we support, encourage and equip one another to reach the lost, gather those made alive in Jesus Christ and disciple all his people, through the ministries of our individual churches and the joint ministries of Classis.

1. Constituting Classis

Rev. Darren Roorda, minister of Community CRC in Kitchener, the host church, welcomed delegates, offered opening devotions, and reported on behalf of the credentials committee that there are 11 first-time delegates who signed the Form of Subscription. Classis is declared constituted.

2. Officers of Classis

The officers of Classis take their positions:

Chair: Rev. John Vanderstoep

Vice-chair: Rev. Bill Hoogland

Stated Clerk: Keith Knight

3. Delegates

Congregation	Pastor's Name/ Elder Delegate	Elder Delegate
Acton	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Henry Larsen
Blyth	Rev. John Kuperus	Gerry Exel
Cambridge (Maranatha)	Wes DeGeer	Maynard Wiersma
Cambridge (River City)	Rev. Darrell Bierman	
Clinton	Rev. John Kuperus	Ralph De Weerd
Collingwood	Rev. Chris Pool	Taeke Strampel
Drayton	Rev. John Vanderburgh	John Zwart (am) Jake Vandenberg (pm)
Exeter	Rev. Harry Frielink	Henry Post
Goderich	Rev. Stephen Tamming	John Matthews
Guelph (Campus)	Jamie Vanderberg	
Guelph (First)	Ed Kuipery	John Ridder
Guelph (New Life)	Jamie Vandenberg	Janet Ryzebol
Kincardine	Rick Luymes	Stuart Vandervaart
Kitchener	Rev. Darren Roorda	Art Timmerman
Listowel	Bill Los	Wilmar Bakker
Lucknow	Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink	Bob Damsma
Orangeville	Jan Scheurwater	Fran Oussoren
Owen Sound	Bruce De boer	Marinus Noordermeer
Palmerston	Albert Hovingh	John Vander kooy
Stratford	Rev. Bill Hoogland	Martin Benjamins
Vanastra	Rev. Siemen Speelman	Jake de Koning
Waterloo	Rev. Vicki Cok	Carolyn Kleefman
Waterloo (Campus)	Rev. Brian Bork	
Waterloo (Journey)	Rev. Adrian Van Giessen	Toyosi Awesu
Wingham	Rev. Peter Janssens	Jack Wilkins

4. Committees for the Day

Credentials Committee – Kitchener and Cambridge

Balloting Committee – Waterloo and Guests

Overtures Committee – Guelph New Life and Kincardine

5. Classis Ministry Committee – John Vanderburgh reporting

MOTION: That classis sends the draft Rules of Classis Huron to the churches and to classis committees, giving them the opportunity to receive the document over the next few months, with final approval in January 2010. – carried

One hard copy of the draft rules was distributed for each church, and it is available to be downloaded on the website, www.classishuron.ca.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of CMC was offered by John Kuperus.

MOTION 1: To approve the work of the Admin Committee. – carried

MOTION 2: To approve the work of the Classis Ministry Committee. – carried

MOTION 3: To approve the work of the Stated Clerk. – carried

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of the stated clerk was offered by Rev. John Vanderstoep.

6. Quad-classis retreat

A letter was received from the organizers of the pastors' retreat (and spouses) from Classes Toronto, Hamilton, and Niagara who gather together for an annual retreat at Muskoka Baptist Conference Centre near Huntsville. Classis Huron is invited to join this annual retreat.

MOTION 1: That the annual Classis Huron Ministers' Retreat be discontinued, with an annual budget of \$1,000.

Grounds: Attendance has seriously declined in recent years. – carried

MOTION 2: That Classis Huron support joining the quad-classis retreat, at an annual cost of \$750.

Grounds:

1. It is good for ministers to get together with colleagues from neighbouring classes.
2. The retreat setting is a significant drawing card.
3. This is a stewardly use of our financial resources. – carried

7. Safe Church Committee – Atie Ott

Atie reported on recent members who have been added to the committee. Each church within classis has a representative on this committee. Some churches have, however, been delinquent in appointing someone to this committee.

Safe Church Conference, a training event, will take place on March 16, 2010.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of the Safe Church Committee was offered by Rev. Ron Luchies.

8. Classis Ministerial Leadership Team (formerly Student Fund Committee) – Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink

MOTION 1: That the mandate and guidelines, tabled at the May meeting, be taken from the table for discussion and decision. - carried

MOTION 2: That the revised mandate and guidelines for the Classis Ministerial Leadership Team as amended be approved. –carried
These guidelines will appear on the website, www.classishuron.ca .

Comments:

The committee was encouraged to spell out acronyms.

The contract does not deal with seminary graduates who do not receive a call. Should they be required to repay their loan? At what point should a student begin to repay their loan, if they are required to.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of CMLT was offered by Rev. Darren Roorda.

9. Treasurer's report - Cindy Tamming

MOTION 1: That the proposed budget for 2010 be adopted as presented. –carried

MOTION 2:

1. That the rates for a church service be held at \$80 per service, no change.
2. That the driving expense reimbursement be kept at the rate of \$0.50, no change.
3. That the host church for a classis meeting be reimbursed \$500, no change.
4. That the remuneration for loss of wages while conducting business on behalf of classis remain at \$150 per day for up to five (5) per week, no change.
5. That the honorarium for the stated clerk to be increased to \$3,000 (from \$2,500) and for the treasurer to \$3,000 (from \$2,500).

-carried

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of the treasurer was offered by Rev. Ray Vander Kooij

10. Belhar Confession

Michael Wagenman reported on the Belhar Confession, inviting classis to a conference. The Belhar Confession will go to synod in 2012 for final decision. Office of Race Relations is planning a regional one-day conference on a Saturday in early May, 2010 in London for classes Chatham, Huron and Hamilton. Peter Borgdorff will be guest speaker, small groups will be offered by various ministries, and a plenary session will be held. More specific information will come to the January meeting of classis.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of the denominational office was offered by Rev. Adrian Van Giessen.

11. Christian Stewardship Services

Maynard Wiersma, elder delegate from Cambridge, is employed by Christian Stewardship Services. He spoke about the services that CSS provides with respect to wills, bequests and churches.

12. Home Missions Committee – Marguerite Ridder

Rev. Jack Quartel spoke about prayer and spiritual renewal. He has been a part of Classis Huron for about 35 years, making him the resident patriarch.

He commented on the planned 40 Days of Prayer, a program of prayer intended to involve all 19,000 families in Ontario and Eastern Canada. The 40 Days booklet covers pre-advent through Christmas and was distributed via the delegates to every church within classis.

13. Redeemer University College – Dr. Justin Cooper

Dr. Cooper provided his final report to classis before he leaves Redeemer at the end of the academic year to become executive director of Christian Higher Education – Canada, a group of 34 Christian colleges.

Enrolment is more than 900, up more than 40, coming from 17 countries around the world. There is a record number of students transferring from other universities. About 3,200 alumni have graduated from Redeemer. A new continuing education program offers evening courses and weekend conferences.

Redeemer was featured in a university 'report card' of *The Globe and Mail*. Redeemer was among top three in the nation.

Redeemer placed first in the country in the Student Satisfaction category in a *McLean's* magazine survey.

Federal infrastructure funding provided \$3 million to Redeemer to upgrade facilities, the single largest gift Redeemer has ever received. It needs to be matched through local donations.

There is a lot of transition taking place at Redeemer. The board of governors wove discerning prayer through the strategic plan process. There is a direct connection between that direct obedience and community response and involvement.

Classis Huron currently has 55 students attending Redeemer, with Owen Sound providing the most with 13 students.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the contribution made by Dr. Justin Cooper and for Redeemer University College was offered by Rev. John Veenstra.

14. Devotions

Maynard Wiersma, elder delegate from Cambridge, offered pre-lunch devotions based on 1 Peter 5.

GOURMET LUNCH

15. Devotions

Opening devotions were led by Rev. Ray Vander kooij of Acton, based on Psalm 145.

16. Faith Formation Committee

The chair welcomed Irene Bakker, member of the denomination's Faith Formation Committee, who led a discussion, together with her husband, Rev. Bernie Bakker. She posed six questions which were discussed in small groups.

- a. *What do you believe are the key issues facing faith formation in the CRC today?*
- b. *Given the culture that shapes your context, what strengths and opportunities do you discern in your congregation with respect to the faith formation of children and young people, especially related to profession of faith and participation in the Lord's Supper?*
- c. *Given the culture that shapes your context, what weaknesses, threats or temptations do you discern in your congregation with respect to the faith formation of children and young people, especially related to profession of faith and participation in the Lord's Supper?*
- d. *What has your home congregation done to implement the decision of Synod 1995 about younger children making profession of faith?*
- e. *What does your home congregation do to affirm and celebrate each member's baptismal identity?*
- f. *In one sentence, how can the Faith Formation Committee best serve the life of your congregation in its contemporary cultural context?*

Four principles:

- ✓ The church proclaims grace.
- ✓ Faith is formed in community.
- ✓ Faith formation is a community.
- ✓ Learning is lifelong and holistic.

For related resources, look at www.crcna.org/faithformation.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the ongoing work of the Faith Formation Committee was offered by Rev. Bernie Bakker.

17. Home Mission Committee – Marguerite Ridder

Fred Vander Sterre reported on the meeting of the Blyth cluster of churches. Clusters are groups of people who meet together informally where they watch a DVD, followed by a discussion, and prayer. Last week's session focused on generational cultures. The next meeting's focus will be on church growth and kingdom growth.

Marguerite reported on the proposed church plant in Milton, supported jointly by classes Toronto and Huron. Georgetown, Acton and Meadowvale will partner to get the church

plant off the ground. Rev. John Vanderstoep will represent the Classis Huron Home Missions Committee on that planning committee. There is a prayer walk every week in Milton, asking the Lord to open their eyes on where the church should be located. Dunamis Ministry. John Kuperus spoke about the upcoming Ignite II conference in Blyth, bringing renewal to the churches. He encouraged other churches within classis to host Dunamis conferences.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of the Home Missions Committee was offered by Rev. Darrell Bierman.

18. Credentials Committee – Rev. Darren Roorda

Blyth – Reported that the Cadet study material is very poor and that it is time to review the program. It was pointed out that Cadets is not a CRC-owned ministry; they are part of Youth Unlimited. Some churches (eg Cambridge) have created their own curriculum Churches which have complaints about the program should send their comments to Youth Unlimited.

Orangeville requests that Rev. John Vanderburgh be appointed as counselor. CMC is asked to take care of that.

Drayton expressed concern about a growing list of inactive members. This, it was discovered, is an issue for many churches. There are different approaches. In Cambridge, three elders have a special focus on their list of inactive members.

Owen Sound asked how many churches in classes invite children to Lord's supper. Seven churches raised their hands. How many churches currently offer a parsonage? Four. Guelph First asked what role classis should play in discussing the Belhar Confession. It was pointed out that the planned multi-classis conference in the spring of 2010 is one place to become engaged in that discussion.

Listowel asked if classis is still creating a centralized DVD library to host sermons. The stated clerk indicated that he will gladly host such a library if dvd's are sent to him. They also asked what churches are doing about the second service on Sunday. Many have stopped having them because of lack of attendance.

Rev. Ralph Wigboldus of Sarnia has accepted a call to Listowel. Installation service will take place on Oct. 9. Rev. John Vanderburgh will represent classis at that service.

Kitchener asked if any churches are using the Pre Authorized Remittance (PAR) program. Several churches indicated that they are using it and that it does not adversely affect giving.

Cambridge indicated that Gerrit Parker would like to apply for licensure to exhort. This was passed on to CMC and his examination will take place in January. He is currently an MDiv student at Tyndale.

Kincardine informed classis that they intend to close the church and disband, effective by the end of October or early November, 2009. Rev. John Vanderburgh and Rev Rita Klein-Geltink, who have dealt with closing churches, will offer advice

A congregational meeting on a council's recommendation to close the church will be held Sept. 24.

The counselor, Rev. Pete Janssens, will attend that congregational meeting. Rev's. John Vanderburgh, Rita Klein-Geltink and Siemen Speelman have experienced the closures of churches and will be invited to attend that congregational meeting.

MOTION: That if there is a need for a special meeting of classis to deal with the Kincardine decision to close the church, that classis meet in contracta on Wednesday, Sept. 30 at 7:30 p.m. in Listowel - carried

19. Nominations Committee

The following were voted in by ballot as members of various committees:

Home Missions Committee:

Marguerite Ridder (second term)
John Kuperus (second term)
John Vanderstoep (first term)

Safe Church Committee:

Maitland River – Yolanda Ritsema
Orangeville – Gredina Merkens
Collingwood – Gerry Grootendorst

Calvin College Board of Trustees – Regional Representative:

John Kuperus, Darren Roorda

Both names will be forwarded to the denominational office as part of the final list of regional representative to be presented to Synod 2010.

20. Church visitors

- Guelph New Life is on the verge of extending a call.
- Owen Sound is receiving the services of an interim minister, Rev. John Veenstra.
- Guelph First is receiving the services of an interim minister, Rev. Bernard De Jonge.
- Palmerston issued a call to a candidate but he declined. Rev. Tim Raakman continues to fill in as interim minister.

21. Synod delegates

John Vanderburgh spoke about his experience as a delegate to synod.

22. Diaconal Conference – Fred Vander Sterre

Classis considered a report from the Diaconal Conference dealing with the role of deacons at classis meetings.

MOTION 1: That classis invites the deacons to serve as voting delegates to the January 2010 classis meeting (meaning: three delegates per church, one of which is a serving deacon). -defeated

MOTION 2: That classis at the January 2010 meeting spends one hour talking about the relationship of the conference and classis (preferably in small groups). Some suggested questions could be:

- a. As the ministry of mercy lies at the heart of what it means to be a church, what is the current status of the ministry of mercy within our classis?
- b. What big picture of a preferred future can we develop, of how the ministry of mercy is expressed within our classis?
- c. What relational structure would help the conference and classis to move harmoniously towards that preferred future?

Deacons be invited to attend as non-voting delegates. -carried

MOTION 3: That, based on the outcome of the conversations, the CMC and the conference board collaboratively will develop recommendations to be submitted to the May 2010 session of classis. -carried.

Prayer: A prayer of thankfulness for the work of the diaconal conference was offered by Bill Los of Listowel.

23. Closing devotions

Rev. Bill Hoogland, the vice-chair of classis, offered closing devotions and thanked the chair, Rev. John Vanderstoep, for his leadership. Delegates arose for the doxology.

24. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn. Carried.

25. Future Classis Meetings

Invitations are requested to host the September 2010 and January 2011 meetings of classis.

Date	Place	Reports due	Chair	Vice-chair
Jan. 13, 2010	Listowel	Dec. 9, 2009	Bill Hoogland	John Vanderburgh
May 12, 2010	Guelph – New Life	April 7, 2010	John Vanderburgh	
Sept. 15, 2010		Aug. 11, 2010		
Jan. 12, 2011		Dec. 8, 2010		