



CLASSIS HURON
of the Christian Reformed Church in North America
www.classishuron.ca

MINUTES

January 9, 2013 – 9:00 a.m.

Bethel Christian Reformed Church

345 Elizabeth Street East

Listowel

The PURPOSE of Classis Huron

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

The VISION of Classis Huron

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 individual churches and the joint ministries of Classis.

1. Delegates to classis

	Minister	Elder
Acton	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Peter Duijesteijn
Blyth	Eric Nonkes	Hans Boonstoppel
Cambridge – Maranatha	Len Bakelaar	Denise Gibson
Cambridge – River City	Rev. Darrell Bierman	
Clinton	Rev. Ron Luchies	Herman Greidanus
Collingwood	Rev. Chris Pool	Len Noordegraaf
Drayton	Rev. Dr. Les Kuiper	Nick DenBoer
Exeter	Rev. Harry Frielink	Rick Branderhorst
Goderich	Rev. Stephen Tamming	Deacon Harry Sjaarda
Guelph – New Life	Lesli Van Milligen	Kevin Huinink
Guelph – First	Rev. David Tigchelaar	Marguerite Ridder
Guelph – Campus	Jamie Vanderberg	
Kitchener – Community	Rev. Carel Geleynse	Andy DeBoer
Kitchener – The Journey	- Absent -	
Listowel	Rev. Ralph Wigboldus	Cor Reinink
Lucknow	Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink	Henry Jurgens
Orangeville	Rev. Andrew Vis	Anthony Vroom
Owen Sound	Rev. Harry Zantingh	Pete Van Zyverden
Palmerston	Rev. Andrew de Gelder	Deacon Marg Mierma
Stratford	Werner deWeerd	Tim Vandekemp
Vanastra	Rev. Siemen Speelman	Henry Boot
Waterloo	Rev. Vicki Cok	Pieter Looyenga
Waterloo – Campus	Rev. Brian Bork	
Wingham	Cathy Ritsema	Deacon Josh Luchies

2. Constituting Classis

Rev. Ralph Wigboldus, pastor of Bethel CRC, welcomed delegates. He provided a meditation on Psalm 133. Credentials Committee reported that three churches sent deacons as delegates. Deacons from Palmerston, Goderich, and Wingham were seated by motion. Classis is declared constituted.

3. Officers of Classis

Chair: Rev. Ralph Wigboldus
Vice chair: Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink
Stated Clerk: Keith Knight

4. Special guests

Ben Vandezande, interim director of Canadian Ministries
Al Karsten, member, Canadian Ministries Review Team
Peter Schuurman, discussion on Christian education
Rev. Vic Vandermolen, retired pastor, who has moved to New Hamburg

5. Classis Ministry Committee – Rev. Ralph Wigboldus

5.1 CMC Report

Rev. Ralph Wigboldus reported that Cindy Tamming announced her resignation as treasurer, effective January 31. AdCom received applications for treasurer and conducted interviews. The name of the new treasurer and alternate treasurer will be approved as part of the Nominating Committee report.

At the May classis meeting there will be a discussion on healthy churches, led by Mark VanderVennen of Shalem Mental Health Network. At the September classis meeting, there will be a discussion on church discipline.

CMC will hold a special meeting next week to work on the 2014-2017 Classis Huron Ministry Plan.

5.2 Administrative Committee (AdCom)

- AdCom clarified the position of Commissioned Pastors (formerly Ministry Associates) in the wake of the approval of Andrew Nunn as Commissioned Pastor at the September classis meeting. The question was asked at classis: “May Andrew preach or oversee the sacraments? Church Order Article 23-e states: *Commissioned pastors who desire to serve beyond their specific field of labor must secure the approval of their consistories and classes.* The job description for Andrew Nunn involves youth ministry and small group leadership. If he desires to become involved in preaching and doing sacraments, he will need the prior approval of his council and classis.
- AdCom clarified the policy for paying for pulpit supply when ministers make classical appointments. Pastors are reimbursed for mileage (@ .50) but the payment for conducting the service (\$125) goes to the pastor’s church.
- It becomes an annual challenge to properly prepare for a January classis meeting because pastors and others are heavily involved in Advent/Christmas preparations during the month of December. Church councils also find it increasingly difficult to hold a meeting to discuss agenda items (including matters going to synod) between the time that the agenda comes out (mid-December) and the date of the classis meeting (mid-January). AdCom recommends that the January classis meeting be moved to the second Wednesday of February.

MOTION 1 – That Cindy Tamming be thanked for her six years of service as Treasurer of Classis Huron.

- carried

MOTION 2 – That future winter meetings of Classis Huron be held on the second Wednesday of February rather than the second Wednesday of January, effective February 2014.

- carried

MOTION 3 – That the work of the Classis Ministry Committee, AdCom and Stated Clerk be approved.

- carried

6. Church counselors to vacant churches

Rev. Ron Luchies – Blyth CRC Continues to search for a new pastor.

Rev. Dr. Les Kuiper – Drayton CRC. He began his work as interim pastor on Aug. 1. The church is close to getting ready to appoint a search committee.

Rev. Stephen Tamming – Wingham is looking into having a potential pastor spend an extended period of time within the church to discern whether it would be a good fit.

Rev. Carel Geleynse – Stratford CRC continues to search for a new pastor.

7. Youth Ministry – Hilma Steenbergen and others

Brian Schouten, youth director at Clinton who sits on the Classis Youth Ministry Team, mentioned that more than 1,000 youth attended the All Ontario Youth Convention last May, with 300 from Huron. Registration is open for the May All Ontario Youth Convention. Sponsorships are also available where families can sponsor the cost of someone who can’t afford to go. The annual fall retreat at Muskoka Woods was attended by 275. Leadership Studio at Muskoka Woods, a state of the art facility, was attended by 32 youth and 8 leaders.

Hilma Steenbergen, chair of the Youth Ministry Team, introduced the team: Dina Zomer, Brian Schouten, Lesli Van Milligen, and Jake Hiemstra.

They are examining ‘where we’re at as youth ministry within classis. She said they have been event-driven. Questionnaires were handed out to delegates concerning youth ministry at the congregation level.

Some responses:

- Youth ministry is even more relevant today than ever.
- Do we ask our youth about getting involved in service within the church?
- Intergenerational interaction with youth groups: council/youth bowling.
- An active youth group sets the mood for the entire congregation; an inactive youth group creates a negative mood within the congregation.
- Youth want a deeper relationship with Christ.
- It's not just a youth problem but a problem for all of the church. Are we all involved in discipleship?

Lesli recommended a few books: Sticky Faith (parent and youth versions), and a curriculum for students who transition from Grade 12 to university.

Plans are under way for a young adult leadership training event at the Leadership Studio at Muskoka Woods. Each church is asked to identify four or five young adults to take part in the program. Information was given to each church.

8. CRCNA Board of Trustees – Rev. Dr. Darren Roorda

Rev. Roorda spoke about the discussions that are taking place at the denominational Board of Trustees. To quote Joel Boot, interim executive director, “the ground is shaking”. What are we about as a denomination? What is the role of the denominational structure?

He mentioned that there is a significant change in denominational leadership: the need for a new executive director, deputy executive director, director of Canadian ministries, director of denominational ministries, etc. A number of task forces are gathering information and will present a report to Synod in June. They are looking at structure and culture, and vision and mission. The latter asks what it means to be Christian Reformed and how do we connect denominational ministries with local churches. Darren said “we are fundamentally reframing how we do ministry.”

9. Mission in Context: Imagining CRC Ministry in Canada -- Ben Vandezande

Ben introduced the various task forces and conversations that are taking place with respect to the future structure and ministry within the denomination. He asked classis to look specifically at the role of the Director of Canadian Ministries. What kind of leadership do we really need?

The goal is to prepare a report of advice to the Task Force on Structure and to report to Synod on the bi-national nature of the denomination.

Table discussions focused on imagining the church in 2020. Two questions were considered:

1. *What will be some key characteristics of our denomination's ministry in Canada in the year 2020?*
2. *What kind of leadership do we need in Canada to inspire, guide and structure ministry that reflects these characteristics?*

LUNCH

10. Devotions

Opening devotions were provided by Rev. Andrew Vis of Orangeville. He focused on Judges 2: “The next generation knew not the Lord.” We are a covenant community. He concluded with prayer.

11. Mission in Context (summary)

Ben Vandezande offered a summary of the morning discussion, based on the input provided by delegates.

What kind of leadership do we need in Canada to inspire, guide and structure ministry that reflects these characteristics?

Leadership: rootedness, strong relational qualities, team – work with diversity.

Leadership roles: inspire and implement vision, courageous, prophetic; culture-savvy (teacher, interpreter), broad connection (ecumenical, public square); network.

12. Canadian Catalytic Conversation

Classis Toronto has called all Canadian classes together for a Canada-wide ministry forum called Canadian Catalytic Conversation on January 11 and 12 at Community CRC in Richmond Hill. It will look at the current denominational discussion on structure and the bi-national nature of the denomination. Since the conference takes place just two days after classis meets, AdCom decided it was important to identify the four representatives from Classis Huron so that time and travel arrangements could be made. AdCom has delegated: Rev. Ralph Wigboldus, Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink, Keith Oosthoek and Lesli Van Milligen. Lesli indicated that she is unable to attend. Classis reaffirmed that the representatives from classis are not ‘delegates’ and that they will not be making any decisions on behalf of classis at this meeting. The meeting is open to any member from any congregation across Canada. About 100 persons are expected to attend.

13. How Does The Church Engage Christian Schools? – Peter Schuurman

Peter provided a 30-minute backgrounder on the history of Christian schools in Canada and quoted extensively from the Synodical Committee to Study Day School Education (2005). He referred to biblical foundations, cultural mandate, covenant, kingdom, mission. He mentioned that there are 70 schools in Ontario and 11,000 students.

Church Order Article 71: *“The consistory shall diligently encourage the members of the congregation to establish and maintain good Christian schools, and shall urge parents to have their children instructed in these schools according to the demands of the covenant.”*

Through a phone survey with pastors across Classis Huron, Peter discovered that 8 send their children to Christian school only; 11 switched to public/Catholic; and 1 is home-schooling; 17 had their children in Christian school at some point. Rationale for their choices: Pragmatic (distance, finances), perceived needs of child, irreconcilable differences with the Christian school, missional hopes – integrating with community, or a mix of all of these.

Many pastors have experienced pain and hurt by choosing not to send their children to Christian school.

He cited a few issues and ambivalences:

- Cost: Money that is going to Christian school is not going to the church.
- Loss of Reformed vision. Piety and morality teaching overshadow application of faith to every aspect of life.
- Grief and Conflict: Feel betrayed by those who do not support the school.
- Promotional paralysis: The CRC seems shy and uncomfortable with its gift while other Christian praise it.
- Sectarianism.

Peter mentioned that a family of three children sending children to K-12 is spending/investing about \$200,000.

Table groups, including visitors, discussed these five questions, followed by an open, general discussion:

Given that the denomination is committed to supporting Christian schooling and that congregations must honor a new diversity of parental choice, how do we deal with ...

1. *Healthy conflict*
2. *Informed consumers*
3. *Renewed Reformed identity*
4. *Justice in educational choice*
5. *Community mission*

Stratford CRC provided a handout on how they are responding to the financial needs of those within the congregation who want to send their children to a Christian school but can’t afford it.

Some delegates indicated that they will place this issue on their council agendas for future discussion and action.

14. Nominations Committee – Atie Ott

Delegates to Synod (June 7-14)

Minister delegates: Rev. David Tigchelaar, Rev. Andrew Vis.

Minister alternates Rev. Darren Roorda, Rev. Vicki Cok.

Elders delegates: Len Bakelaar

Since we need three more elders, churches were asked to send in nominations to the stated clerk. CMC will approve the names next week.

The following appointments to various committees and boards were approved by delegates.

TREASURER	Term
John Bell	1 st
ALTERNATE TREASURER	
Michelle Vanderwal	1 st
ALTERNATE STATED CLERK	
John Hofstee	2 nd
CHURCH VISITORS	
Carel Geleynse	1 st
Siemen Speelman	2 nd
Fred Vande Sterre	2 nd
Chris Pool	2 nd
NOMINATING COMMITTEE	
Atie Ott	2 nd
John Hofstee	2 nd
HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE	
John Vanderstoep	2 nd
Andrew de Gelder	1 st
John Zwart	1 st
CMLT	
Rita Klein-Geltink	2 nd
Brian Bork	1 st
FINANCIAL RESOURCES TEAM	
Clarence Louter	2 nd
Michelle Vanderwal	1 st
GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY	
Joe Upfield	1 st
David Tigchelaar	1 st
Henry Wichers	1 st

New Treasurer effective February 1.

John Bell
11 Smart Street
Guelph ON N1G 4I4
519 822-8144

clhuron.treasurer@gmail.com

15. Campus Ministry – Guelph

Jamie Vandenberg and Jenn McIntyre presented the latest DVD on the campus ministry.

Delegates prayed in table groups for the students, leadership and programs of Guelph Campus Ministry.

Rev. David Tigchelaar, a board member, closed in prayer.

16. Classis Home Missions Committee – Rev. Andrew de Gelder

John Bouwers of Crosstowne church plant in Milton addressed classis. He said that “if it wasn’t for Classis Huron, this church plant wouldn’t have started.” Milton is the fastest growing community in the country. It’s a multicultural community with considerable opportunities and challenges.

MOTION 1 – That Classis Huron approve a three-year funding agreement of \$25,000 per year with River City Church to support them in their plan to hire a discipleship pastor.

Grounds:

- 1) This is consistent with the overall plan for these funds to grow the church through church-planting.
- 2) This position will help determine the long-term health of River City and will significantly boost their effectiveness in developing followers of Jesus.
- 3) Denominational Home Missions supports this effort and are planning to add some funds to this project.
- 4) CHHMC’s engagement in the hiring process allows the committee to not only carefully shepherd the

stewardship of Classis' funds, but also to learn something strategic about the dynamics of church planting as the committee works closely with River City on this effort.

5) This is consistent with the most recent imploring of Classis at the September 2012 meeting to consider using existing funds to support existing church plants.

- carried.

MOTION 2 – That Classis Huron approve a three-year inclining funding agreement of \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$15,000 for 2014, 2015, 2016 entitled “Catalyze GTA.”

Grounds:

1) Classis Huron has been uniquely blessed in its capacity to raise funds for church planting and in its success with church plants. Classis Toronto struggles in both of these areas and yet includes the largest city in Canada, ripe for church plants. Classis Toronto's current financial struggles are such that they have included no funds in their operating budget for church planting and are paying their commitment to CrossTowne out of their reserve funds. This infusion of capital, given on the condition that they match the funds, could be an effective tool of “positive peer pressure” or “church planting capacity building mentoring.” Classis Huron, by approving this motion, could initiate the very church planting movement which Classis Toronto and the denomination in Canada so desperately needs.

- ruled out of order.

MOTION 3 -- That a three-year, declining funding agreement of \$20,000, \$10,000, and \$0 for CrossTowne of Milton for 2014, 2015, 2016 be approved.

Grounds:

1) There is a funding agreement in place for CrossTowne which ends in 2013, but their needs will extend beyond that. This funding extension takes seriously the slow growth start which CrossTowne had as a result of the death of the pastor's son yet builds on the realistic optimism about CrossTowne growing into a healthy congregation.

—carried.

17. Church Visitors

Rev. Paul Stadt reported on two visits which he and Rev. Darren Roorda made: Maranatha CRC in Cambridge and New Life CRC in Guelph.

18. Safe Church Report – Atie Ott and Carel Geleynse

Rev. Geleynse talked about safe church issues and brokenness. He said that churches are increasingly vulnerable to potential for abuse. “This is the most important ministry of the denomination. If we as church aren't safe, people won't be coming into church.”

MOTION 1 – That the church visitors include Safe Church issue questions in their visit to their respective councils and churches. These questions could include: *Are your policies up-to-date? Do you have a member on the Safe Church Team? Is there an awareness of safe church issues among the members of council and or the congregation? Are you fulfilling synod's mandate concerning Safe Church issues?*

—carried.

MOTION 2 – That Classis Huron encourage each congregation to have a representative on the Safe Church Team as soon as possible, and certainly by 2014. This will allow the team to truly fulfill the mandate given it by Classis Huron.

—carried.

MOTION 3 – That Classis approve the work of the Safe Church Team.

—carried.

19. Credentials Committee – Harry Frielink

Orangeville – Recommends that the winter meeting of classis be moved to February. (Classis has just made that decision)

Waterloo – Asked for a show of hands on how many churches serve wine and juice (7), just grape juice (22), just wine (0).

Cambridge – Asked that Gareth Harker be interviewed by classis by way of encouragement. (Referred to CMLT)

Exeter – Asked if classis will consider a Saturday meeting to accommodate those who work during the week. (Referred to CMC.)

Drayton – Suggested a topic for discussion at a future classis meeting: Young Adults/ youth ministry. (Referred to CMC)

20. Growing the Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit Conference

The conference, sponsored by Home Missions, will be held March 11-14 at Camp Geneva, Holland, Mi. Lodging and meals from \$185.

For further information and to register online, go to www.dunamisinstitute.org/events/growing-the-church

21. Future Classis Meetings

Date	Place	Reports due	Chair	Vice-chair
May 8, 2013	Acton	April 3, 2013	Rita Klein-Geltink	Darren Roorda
Sept. 18, 2013	Waterloo	Aug. 14, 2013	Darren Roorda	John Vanderstoep
Feb. 12, 2014	Drayton	Jan. 10, 2014	John Vanderstoep	