



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

MINUTES

January 11, 2012 – 9:00 a.m.

**Drayton
Christian Reformed Church
88 Main St. E
Drayton**

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	Elder
Acton	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Jake Adema	
Blyth	Walter Eigenheer	Jim Parish	
Cambridge – Maranatha	Rev. John Vanderstoep	Arnold DePooter	Jackie Verhest
Cambridge – River City			
Clinton	Rev. Ron Luchies	Henry Buffinga	
Collingwood	Rev. Chris Pool	Len Noordegraaf	
Drayton	Nick Den Boer	John Zwart	Deacon Alan Rumph
Exeter	Rev. Harry Frielink	Mike Zandwyk	
Goderich	Rev. Stephen Tamming	Sid Bruinsma	
Guelph – New Life	Rev. Tom Van Milligen	Janet Ryzebol	
Guelph – First	Hans Zegerius	Jake Bakelaar	
Guelph – Campus	James Vanderberg	Jenn McIntyre	
Kitchener – Community	Rev. Dr. Darren Roorda	Andy De Boer	
Kitchener – The Journey			
Listowel	Rev. Ralph Wigboldus	Deacon Alfred DeVries	
Lucknow	Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink	Henry Jurjens	
Orangeville	Rev. Andrew Vis	Diane Johnston	Bill Prins
Owen Sound	Rev. Harry Zantingh	Paul Delleman	
Palmerston	Rev. Andrew de Gelder	Eric Stam	
Stratford	Rev. Bill Hoogland	Fred Olbach	
Vanastra	Rev. Siemen Speelman	Deacon Rienk Feddes	
Waterloo	Carolyn Kleefman	Brian Lubberts	
Waterloo – Campus	Rev. Brian Bork		
Wingham	Amanda Bakale	John Kranenburg	

2. Constituting Classis

Opening devotions were led by Elder John Zwart of Drayton CRC. He read from 1 Corinthians 13, followed by reflections. We sang, *We Praise You Oh God*, and *Christian Hearts in Love United*.

Rev. Ron Luchies of the Credentials Committee reported on attendance. Guelph First was seated without credentials. Deacons Alfred De Vries of Listowel, Rienk Feddes of Vanastra and Alan Rumph of Drayton were seated by motion. Classis was declared constituted.

3. Officers of Classis

Chair: Rev. John Vanderstoep
Vice chair: Rev. Bill Hoogland
Stated Clerk: Keith Knight

4. Opening of Classis

The chair welcomed guests, including Guelph Campus Ministry students, Youth Ministry leaders and Banner correspondent Anita Brinkman.

The day's agenda was approved.

5. Classis Ministry Committee -- Rev. Ralph Wigboldus

MOTION: That the work of the Classis Ministry Committee, Administrative Committee (AdCom) and Stated Clerk be approved. – carried.

It was noted that Rev. Stephen Tamming, not Rev. Harry Frielink, is serving as counselor of Maitland River CRC in Wingham.

6. Classis Home Missions Committee – John Vanderstoep

Individual committee members are responsible for specific areas: Janet Ryzebol – leadership development; Marguerite Ridder– prayer; John Vanderstoep, church renewal; Tom Van Milligen – church planting. The terms of both Janet Ryzebol and Marguerite Ridder will conclude this year and the committee is looking for new members.

MOTION: That the revised mandate of the Classis Home Missions Committee be approved.

- **carried.**

- Prayer for the Home Missions Committee was offered by Rev. John Vanderstoep.

7. Overture – Not to adopt the Belhar Confession (Owen Sound CRC)

MOTION: That Synod of the CRC should not adopt the Belhar Confession as a fourth confession.

Grounds:

1. The presentation of the Belhar to the denomination has been heavily biased. Eg. Classis Heartland Overture Synod 2011.
2. The Belhar is people-centered not Christ-centered. It is the “Deification of Tolerance.”
3. The Belhar is not relevant, nor applicable to our situation in North America.
4. Confessions are designed to settle issues, not raise them.
5. The Belhar is biblically weak, implying only the poor are special.
6. The adoption of the Belhar is politically motivated.

Willard VanderPloeg, Clerk of Council

Committee on pre-advice reported as follows:

“We recommend that classis not accede to the overture, with the ground that it makes blanket statements with little or no substantiating material from the Belhar Confession itself or from other commentators.

“However, we also recognize the desire to discuss the merits of the Belhar as a fourth confession of the CRC a very significant and substantial matter, and so we recommend that AdCom and the Classis Ministry Committee consider having a minimum half hour discussion at the May meeting of classis, which would be helpful for all of us and especially for the delegates to Synod 2012.”

The Credentials Committee informs classis that Orangeville CRC has attached an overture to its credentials which also asks synod not to adopt the Belhar Confession. Since the overture was not submitted in time to be included in the printed agenda, it is not technically on the agenda. (*“If overtures are not included in the printed agenda, they shall only be taken up by special decision of classis in case of urgency.”* – 2.2.7.3 Rules of Classis Huron)

TABLED: Overture is tabled and will be taken up later in the meeting.

8. Guelph Campus Ministry – Jamie Vanderberg

Guelph Campus Ministry provided delegates with a taste of campus life. This is Jamie’s seventh year at University of Guelph. Jenn McIntyre has completed her internship program and has been hired as campus ministry staff. She will be going to Kenya in May with a team with 4-6 students.

Three students shared their experiences at the University of Guelph: Emmalena Huyer, Jackie Breg , Alana Watt.

- Prayer for campus ministry was offered by John Zwart.

9. Finances – Cindy Tamming

The treasurer is working on year end financial statements which will be provided at the May meeting. She handed out financial reports and left behind expense forms.

- Prayer for the work of the treasurer and the Financial Resources Team was offered by Rev. John Vanderstoep.

10. Youth Ministry – Lesli Van Milligen

Delegates heard from youth ministry high school students Kiana Ryzebol, Sam Fitzpatrick, Quinton Mol, and Sean Kraal who took part in a leadership training program at The Leadership Studio, Muskoka Hills Retreat Centre.

This year, there are plans to expand the program to include 32 students and eight adults. The program runs Thursday evening and all day Friday. Church councils were encouraged to support the participants and the program. It will cost about \$4,400 to send all 40 participants.

- Prayer for youth ministry within classis was offered by Rev. Andrew DeGelder.

11. Credentials Committee – Andrew Vis

- Acton CRC has offered to host Classis in May 2013. Referred to CMC.
- Exeter CRC requests that there be a discussion of faith pledges at a future meeting of classis, as well as “balancing budget collections and cause collections.” Referred to CMC.
- Maranatha CRC of Cambridge asks Classis Huron “to put a process in place to invoice each congregation for its classical ministry shares. This would include regular statements (quarterly, semi-annually).” Referred to Financial Resources Team.
- Orangeville CRC. An overture dealing with the Belhar Confession was attached to the credentials. The committee suggested that the overture be given to the Overtures Committee that is dealing with a similar overture from the Owen Sound.

MOTION: To consider the overture from Orangeville CRC regarding the Belhar Confession.

-carried.

The Overtures Committee, Orangeville and Owen Sound delegates, and Rev. Kathy Smith will meet over lunch to consider how best to proceed.

12. Pre-lunch Devotions

Rev. Harry Zantingh of Owen Sound read from Psalm 147 and offered brief reflections.

LUNCH

13. Post-lunch devotions

Rev. Darren Roorda of Kitchener read from Ephesians 6 and the Heidelberg Catechism’s Question and Answer 104 dealing with honoring your father and mother, and those in authority.

14. Discussion on Membership -- Rev. Kathy Smith, Calvin Seminary

Rev. Kathy Smith teaches church polity at Calvin Seminary and has her ThM in church polity and administration. She is also the associate director of the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship, and she promoted the upcoming Worship Symposium, Jan. 26-28, on Psalms for All Seasons. She gave two copies of the new book, *Psalms for All Season*, to classis which were creatively distributed.

She promoted the newest publication dealing with the Church Order, “Christian Reformed Church Order Commentary” by Henry DeMoor.

Rev. Smith began a discussion and then had delegates meet in table groups around various themes. She said that the topic begs several questions:

- What does it mean to be a member of the CRC?
- How do we encourage people to become members, in a world that doesn't value membership?
- Is membership a positive concept or a negative one?
- In what contexts today is membership a positive concept?
- If it's true that people don't join a church because they think they ought to, but still want to belong to a community, how do we acknowledge that people 'belong' .. aside from formal 'membership'?

In round table discussions, delegates ...

1. Discussed what are the issues related to membership.
 - Two kinds of membership: Baptized members and confessing members
 - Membership seems disconnected from discipleship
 - What is an appropriate level of participation for non-members?
 - Should we pay Ministry Share for non-members?
 - Membership is seen as an exclusive club
 - Accountability and discipline.
 - Membership covenant: what happens when you break it?
 - How do you deal with long distance members?

2. What would you say to a group of 20- and 30-somethings about why church membership is important?
 - Membership is conferred by Christ, the church just confirms that.
 - Salvation comes through the church.
 - Belonging to a family of Christ, united in Christ
 - Stages of engagement with members: introduction, engagement, connection, commitment.

3. Is there a continuum of attitudes about membership? Delegates were asked where they see their church fitting in under these five definitions:
 - a) *Membership is an old-fashioned concept. People need to be free to attend as they please without anyone checking up on them.*
 - b) *Membership is a good goal for fellowship and accountability, but people today need to be given plenty of time to choose whether or not they will be members.*
 - c) *Membership is the way people care for one another in the body of Christ – both showing love to them in times of trouble and confronting them when they stray for God's path.*
 - d) *Membership is required for full participation in the life of the church so that members' life and doctrine can be monitored, and so that the church's ministry will receive proper support.*
 - e) *Membership is an obligation and required for correct records in the church's books, and in the Book of Life.*

Most picked a blend of c) and d), though there are good elements in all five.

4. Rev. Smith handed out a four-page summary of the 2011 Church Order articles pertaining to membership. She will forward that document to the stated clerk who will send it out to all the churches, either as an addendum to the minutes or separately.
5. The final handout, on Best Practices, was left for delegates to fill in due to a lack of time. Church councils were encouraged to fill them in and to provide input to Kathy.

Rev. Smith concluded: "When you disciple people into Christ, you also need to disciple them into the church and you also get them involved in the life and responsibility of the church. Each congregation has the freedom to decide how that happens."

15. Overtures committee

MOTION: With the Owen Sound overture tabled, that Classis consider the overture from Orangeville, dealing with A and B separately.

- carried

OVERTURE

Classis Huron overtures Synod 2012:

A. Not to adopt the Belhar Confession as the fourth form of unity of the CRCNA.

Grounds:

1. There are concerns about the content of the Belhar Confession which are significant enough that we should not bind ourselves to it as a confession.
2. There are concerns about the motivation for adopting the Belhar Confession. The grounds offered, namely, ecumenical relations, are neither proper nor sufficient for the adoption of a binding confession.
3. There are concerns about the application of the Belhar Confession.

- carried.

B. That Synod formally express by letter its support of the principles of the Belhar Confession, our commitment to live them out, and our intention to stand with them against all who would distort the gospel in word or deed, the letter to be sent to the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the member churches of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the Reformed Church in America.

Grounds:

1. It will be beneficial to the CRC's ecumenical relations.
2. This would satisfy the grounds presented by the EIRC:
 - a. It will formally state our commitment to live out the principles of unity, reconciliation and justice.
 - b. It will formally state our commitment to stand with our Reformed brothers and sisters around the world against injustice and, in particular, racism.
 - c. It will serve as a testimony to our own members that we are taking a public stand to promote such principles.

-carried.

16. Tabled overture from Owen Sound

Owen Sound withdrew its overture.

WATCH THE BELHAR DISCUSSION ON VIDEO

Since Classis Huron will be discussing the Belhar Confession at its May 9 meeting, classis' AdCom (Administrative Committee) suggests councils consider watching the Belhar video on the CRC Network. Panel participants are John Cooper, Peter Borgdorff, and Victoria Proctor-Gibbs. The moderator is Thea Leunk.

<http://network.crcna.org/forums/discussion-networks/belhar-confession/video-belhar-panel-discussion-oct-12>

17. Nominations Committee – Stated Clerk

MINISTER DELEGATES TO SYNOD

Rev. Harry Frielink – first delegate
Rev. Ray Vanderkooj – second delegate
Rev. Brian Bork – 1st alternate
Rev. Bill Hoogland – 2nd alternate

ELDER DELEGATES TO SYNOD

Jamie Vandenberg – first delegate
Janet Ryzebol – second delegate
Arnold DePooter – 1st alternate
Marguerite Ridder – 2nd alternate

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AFFIRMED BY CLASSIS:

Safe Church Committee

Drayton - Jane Vandervelden
Guelph New life – Maggie Grift
Vanastra – Henry Boot
Lucknow – Henry Jurjens

Church Visitors

West Region – Rev. Ron Luchies

Classis Home Missions Committee

Rev. Tom Van Milligen

Guelph Campus Ministry Board

Gary Van Arragon

Waterloo Campus Ministry Committee

Kitchener CRC rep – Jeff Feddema
Student rep – Colin Van Nienhuis
Student rep – Kyle Vander Meer
Student rep – Kaitlynn Buisman

Youth Ministry Committee

Lesli Van Milligen

18. Diaconal Conference – Mary Blydorp

Mary Blydorp spoke about Operation Manna. She introduced Heather Thompson, Coping Centre, Cambridge, who spoke about the program, expressing deep appreciation for the funding that comes from the Christian Reformed Church through the Diaconal Conference. The ministry has been going for 20 years, providing support to those who have lost loved ones. They provide an eight week support group as well as an optional second eight-week series, Coping Plus. They also provide seminars for area churches.

19. Upcoming events

Exhorters and Others Training Event

A training event for exhorters and others with John Rottman and Scott Hozee will take place on Feb. 20 at Community CRC in Kitchener. Pastors and others interested in preaching will be invited to attend. It is funded by the Centre for Excellence in Preaching.

Quad Classis Retreat

The Quad Classis Pastors' Retreat will be held at Muskoka Bible Centre on May 15-17. Rev. Harry Zantingh reported that Scott Hozee from Centre for Excellence in Preaching is the guest speaker. Harry Zantingh, who was the classis point person, is looking for someone else to take over this task.

Disabilities Conference

All-Ontario Disabilities Conference will be held at Community CRC in Kitchener on April 28 with Dr. Anthony Diekema as the guest speaker.

Classis Safe Church Training Event

The next Classis Huron Safe Church Committee training event will take place on March 3.

20. Classis Ministerial Leadership Team – Rev. Harry Frielink

Instead of applying for and approving grants just once a year, people are applying for grants throughout the year. It was

reported that Gareth Harker has been accepted into Calvin Seminary's MDiv program.

MOTION: To approve the disbursal of \$1,300 for the tuition portion of Chris Rooseboom's participation in the Eastern Canadian Leadership Development Network over two years.

-carried.

MOTION: To approve a forgivable loan to Ken DeBoer of \$5,810 for the EPMC costs (not including the Logos Program or books). Ken is finishing up his MDiv at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and is part of the EPMC at a distance program at Calvin Seminary. This will be disbursed over the next two years.

-carried.

MOTION: To support Michele Elisen to receive \$2,750 for her final semester in the MDiv program at Regent.
-carried.

21. Church counsellors.

Guelph First --- Rev. Dave Tigchelaar will be installed next Thursday. Rev. Ray Vander kooj will represent classis.

Drayton – Rev. Andrew De Gelder reported that Drayton is pursuing a possible interim ministry.

Blyth – Rev. Ron Luchies reported that Blyth is looking at potential pastors.

Wingham – Rev. Stephen Tamming said he had nothing new to report.

22. Church visitors

Fred Vandersterre reported on the visit to Lucknow with Rev.Siemen Speelman. Lucknow reported 13 baptisms during 2011. Their GEMS program has 22 girls, all except one from the community. There is a strong sense of unity and community outreach.

23. Closing

The chair, Rev. John Vanderstoep, thanked the vice-chair and stated clerk for their work, and thanked the kitchen staff for providing excellent means throughout the day. The chair then offered closing devotions based on Luke 15 followed by prayer and the singing of the doxology.

24. Future meetings of Classis

Date	Place	Reports due	Chair	Vice-chair
May 9, 2012	Waterloo	April 4, 2012	Bill Hoogland	Tom Van Milligen
Sept. 12, 2012	Owen Sound	August 8,2012	Tom Van Milligen	Ralph Wigboldus
Jan. 9, 2013	Listowel	Dec. 12, 2012	Ralph Wigboldus	Darren Roorda
May 8, 2013	Acton	April 3, 2013	Darren Roorda	

25. Current Pulpit Supply schedule

Date	Drayton	Blyth
Jan. 22	Stephen Tamming	Harry Frielink
Feb. 12	Siemen Speelman	Andrew de Gleder
Feb. 26	John Vanderstoep	Ron Luchies
March 11	Andrew de Gelder	Bill Hoogland
March 25	Chris Pool	Ralph Wigboldus
April 1	Andrew Vis	Ron Luchies
April 22	Brian Bork	Rita Klein-Geltink
May 13	Darren Roorda	Andrew Vis
May 27	Tom Van Milligen	Stephen Tamming