

CLASSIS HURON
of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

MINUTES

January 13, 2010 – 9:00 a.m.

**Christian Reformed Church
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

Congregation	Minister/ Elder	Elder
Acton	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Henry Larsen
Blyth	Rev. John Kuperus	Bert Sjaarda
Cambridge – Maranatha	Mark Klein-Geltink	Gareth Harker
Cambridge – River City	Rev. Darrell Bierman	
Clinton	Rev. Ron Luchies	John Hoogendorn
Collingwood	Rev. Chris Pool	Merton Veldhoen
Drayton	Rev. John Vanderburgh	Albert Scholten
Exeter	Rev. Harry Frielink	Henry Post
Goderich	Rev. Stephen Tamming	Gilbert VandenHeuvel
Guelph – New Life	Mark Wallace	Jamie VanderBerg
Guelph – First	John Ridder	Ed Kuipery
Guelph – Campus	Jamie VanderBerg	
Kitchener	Rev. Darren Roorda	Clarence Sol
Kitchener – The Journey	Rev. Adrian Van Giessen	Toyosi Awesu
Listowel	Rev. Ralph Wigboldus	Hilbert Van Anjum
Lucknow	Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink	Ken de Boer
Orangeville	John Oosterhof	Pete Ryzebol
Owen Sound	Rev. John Veenstra	Paul Delleman
Palmerston	Terry Roorda	Roel Van Zandwyk
Stratford	Rev. Bill Hoogland	Gene Veening
Vanastra	Rev. Siemen Speelman	Leo Greidanus
Waterloo	Rev. Vicki Cok	Brian Eelkema
Waterloo – Campus	Rev. Brian Bork	
Wingham – Maitland River	Bill Cooper	Jack Wilkins

2. Constituting Classis

Chair Rev. Bill Hoogland welcomed Rev. Ralph Wigboldus to Classis Huron. Opening devotions were offered by Rev. Wigboldus, pastor of Bethel CRC in Listowel.

Credentials Committee reported that there are five first time delegates who have signed the Form of Subscription. Classis is declared constituted and the officers of classis take their seats:

Chair: Rev. Bill Hoogland

Vice chair: Rev. Adrian Van Giessen (morning), Rev. John Vanderburgh (afternoon)

Stated Clerk: Keith Knight

3. Applications for Renewal of Licenses to Exhort

Rev. Harry Frielink reported on behalf of the Exhortation License Review Committee.

MOTION: To approve the renewal of Stan Puklicz' license to exhort for five years.
– approved.

MOTION: To table John Den Bok's license for renewal until May, 2010.
-approved.

An update was provided on Hank Den Hollander's health. (Hank also has a license to exhort) He underwent stem cell transplant in December. About 20 per cent of the stem cell has been

engrafted. He has lost a lot of weight and is recovering slowly. Please continue to keep Hank in your prayers.

Prayer was offered for all those with licenses to exhort.

4. Classis Youth Ministry Team – Jamie Vanderberg

The committee has undergone much restructuring. A Youth Leaders retreat, sponsored in part by Youth Unlimited, is taking place in February.

A town hall meeting will take place on Feb. 28 at Waterloo CRC for all young adults in classis, designed to create a revitalized young adult ministry in classis.

Prayer was offered for youth and young adult ministries.

5. Classis Ministry Leadership Team – Rev. Bill Hoogland

It was reported that cheques are sent out twice a year to those students we support.

A bulletin announcement was sent to all the churches, inviting interested potential students to apply for grants from this classis. The committee is constantly looking for young people within our churches who feel called to the ministry.

The CMLT is looking for one or two lay members. Those interested may contact the committee. Rev. Hoogland's term on the committee has ended.

Prayer was offered for this ministry in support of young people attending seminary.

6. Church Visitor – Rev. Paul Stadt

Rev. Stadt reported on visits made with Ralph Van Dallen to councils at Acton, Stratford and Cambridge CRCs.

Prayer was offered for these three congregations.

7. CWRWC -- Ida Mutoigo

Ida Kaastra Mutoigo, director of CRWRC, reported that the agency is facing a challenging time economically. They have had to scale down their work. They have laid off 10 people and closed ministries in three countries. For every dollar received, it is matched three to one by government and other agencies. Many individuals within Classis Huron give more than \$1,000 annually to CRWRC.

Goderich raised \$28,000 for wells in Niger during advent. Knitting circles in Owen Sound have made a huge impact overseas.

On average, CRC members in Canada give \$30 to \$40 a year to CRWRC. That comes to 10 cents a day. If CRWRC continues to receive that, they will meet their budget. Several classes, including Huron, are not meeting that request. A summary of giving within classis was handed out to the churches.

CRWRC is responding to the disaster in Haiti caused by an earthquake and aftershocks. A special appeal will be sent out to all churches by the weekend. Several people from CRWRC will be travelling to Haiti. CRWRC has staff in Port au Prince and they are safe.

Ms. Mutoigo asked: "What is it that you see within your classis that might help us understand what we should do?" Several delegates responded: World Vision and other organizations are media-savvy. Goderich created their own video clips to promote wells for Niger. "People want to be educated. They want to see video clips." Churches want to see the results of their giving through the use of video. CRWRC seems to be doing a poorer job in creating those resources. There is a disconnect between CRWRC and the local church. "Churches long to learn. We are a market-driven church. All denominational agencies need to find ways to connect back to the local church."

Prayer was offered for CRWRC and its work globally and domestically.

8. All Ontario Youth Convention – Jake Hiemstra

The All Ontario Youth Convention began in 1975 with about 500 attending. Two years ago, the All Ontario Youth Convention was made accountable to the Youth Ministry Board of Ontario under the CRCNA's Burlington office.

The convention is held annually at Wilfred Laurier University at the May 24 weekend. About 800 attend annually. There are a potential 4,000 CRC teens in Ontario who could attend. There is a planning team of 12 people in place. Registration is \$229 and many church councils provide partial or all funds to encourage their young people to go.

Church leaders are encouraged to promote attendance at the convention. These big events often serve as a catalyst for profession of faith.

Prayer was offered for youth ministry within classis.

9. Approve Ministry Associate position

John Vanderstoep presented the recommendation to approve a new Ministry Associate position for CRWRC's ministry leader in Cambodia. Rick De Graaf, who will fill that position, is a member of Maranatha CRC in Cambridge.

MOTION: That Classis Huron affirm that CRWRC's Country Consultant position in Cambodia is consistent with the Ministry Associate requirements of the Church Order, Article 23a. - approved

The synodical deputies from classes Hamilton, Chatham and Toronto, having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Maranatha CRC of Cambridge, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re: office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis Huron that the ministry associate position to be filled by Rick De Graaf through CRWRC as ministry leader in Cambodia is in keeping with synodical guidelines for ministry associates.

MOTION: That an examination of Rick DeGraaf for the position be arranged for either the May or September meetings of classis, depending on the time of his home service assignment. - approved

Prayer was offered for Mr. DeGraaf's ministry in Cambodia.

10. Safe Church – Atie Ott

Giena Nonkes has volunteered to represent Blyth on the Safe Church Team.

The Safe Church training session will take place on March 6 at Waterloo CRC, beginning at 9 a.m.

Cambridge, Clinton, Exeter and Guelph New Life need to appoint reps on this committee.

Prayer was offered for this important ministry within local congregations and classis.

11. Nominations

By ballot, the following appointments were approved:

Youth Ministry: Jamie Vandenberg, Hilma Steenbergen, Ralph Wigboldus.

Synodical deputy, Ron Fisher. Alternate synodical deputy, Ray Vander kooij.

Church visitors: Stephen Tamming (North), Paul Stadt (East)

CMLT: Harry Frielink.

CMC: Jack Quartel, Ralph Wigboldus.

Synod delegates:

Ministers – Darren Roorda, Harry Frielink; alternates, Vicki Cok, Adrian Van Giessen.

Elders – John Ridder, John Oosterhof; alternates Clarence Bos, Clarence Sol

12. Revised Form of Subscription Committee – Rev. Jim Dekker

Rev. Dekker led classis through an exercise to reflect upon the proposed Covenant. This is a summary of those discussions:

1. How important would you say confessional identity is to your church?
 - The more involved you are in church leadership, the more important it becomes.
 - The new wording is an improvement to the old FOS.
 - Confessional identity is very important.
 - The closer one is to leadership, the more important it is. The younger one is, the less important it is.
 - Conversely, the younger one is (on university campus), the more important it is.
 - It is hard to articulate.
 - We shouldn't equate 'being Reformed' with being 'confessional'.
 - Important to the older generation.
2. If important, how, specifically, is this emphasis carried forward? In preaching? In teaching? Other?
 - Not too important for church plants, but it is preached and taught. It is critical in every new members' class and an element of pastoral care.
 - It's important to those coming in to leadership but difficult to implement across the church.
 - It is preached and taught in church plants.
 - More emphasized in teaching than in preaching. Trying to reach the culture, an emphasis on the Reformed doctrine might turn people away.
 - A lot of catechism preaching, very little focus on Canons of Dort.
 - It's more important for the older generation.
3. If Reformed confessional identity is not emphasized, why not?
 - We are too steeped in tradition that we no longer see it as important. We are a multicultural church.
 - Difficult to those not of a typical Reformed culture. There is a desire among new Christians to focus on what unites us rather than divides us.
 - In some churches it's being talked about a lot and in other churches, the language is nuanced.
 - The Confessions aren't relevant to today's society. We want 'relevant' preaching.
 - "Reformed" has a stigma attached to it. We don't even have "Reformed" appearing on our bulletin or in our promotion.
4. What role does the Form of Subscription play in your congregation's life?
 - Formality.
 - In principle it's important but in the day to day workings of the church, very little.
 - It holds council members accountable.
 - It's a sleeping dog that no one wants to touch.
 - I signed it years ago but maybe my beliefs have changes.
 - It should be signed whenever someone returns to being an elder or deacon.
 - Some don't sign the FOS because they don't agree with what it says.
5. What role is played by Contemporary Testimony in your churches?
 - If the Contemporary Testimony changes, what value is my signature on the FOS 10 years ago? There are enough "fences" in the FOS without adding two more confessions.

- It is used a lot in liturgies.
 - CT is already dated and no longer relevant.
6. What are your reactions to the discussions regarding the Belhar Confessions? Should the Belhar Confession and the CT be understood and dealt with similarly?
- they should be treated the same so that they can be updated similarly.
 - Why bother with more confessions?
 - There is a slide in some churches having conversations about salvation issues. Love to see more emphasis for salvation issues.
 - I mourn the loss of the tougher language in the FOS which is lost in the Covenant.
7. What reactions do you have to the draft revision presented here, in particular any of the sections highlighted in our presentation?
- It's read well.

PLENARY

One participant: This was a waste of time because it didn't address the larger issue: Let's have a whole day to talk about what the word 'reformed' means. We have lost the Kuyperian notion of 'reformed' meaning 'church', 'tradition' and 'culture'. Specifically what do we do with the elders functioning in the church. The forms of unity do not deal with today's reality. Our creeds don't touch today's real experience in church.

Prayer was offered for the work of this synodical committee and for a blessing upon lunch.

Lunch

13. Examination of Gareth Harker for license to exhort

Gareth Harker opened the afternoon session by delivering a short sermon on his assigned text: Jeremiah 31: 33-34. This was followed by a biblical/theological conversation with Rev. Ron Luchies and a practica conversation with Rev. Ray Vander kooij

MOTION: That Classis Huron grant Gareth Harker a license to exhort within the boundaries of Classis Huron for one year. – approved

14. Home Missions – Marguerite Ridder

Classis held a celebration of two church plants which have moved into 'self-sustaining' status.

River City Church – Rev. Darrell Bierman

River City has moved from being a supportive church to a self-sustaining church.

There has been 17.6 per cent growth in the congregation. On average, two new families attend worship every Sunday. There are several home groups involving 50 adults. Worship is held in a movie theatre where there is much more space.

But there are also challenges. The most pressing challenge is the financial one. In addition to the lost of financial support from Home Missions, there are also reductions in weekly giving. Some people have left the church this past summer over conflict. After a plea for funds, giving went up considerably in November. They are dealing with financial survival week by week. But God keeps bringing new people.

The Journey – Rev. Adrian Van Giessen

The Journey has focused for the past two years on identifying who they are within the Waterloo community. What does it mean to be 'missional'? Adrian was appointed by Home Missions to serve as a regional director a year ago. He has subsequently also cut back on time at The Journey and has reduced their financial obligation to him.

Their focus is on how many people can they send into the mission field If their church wasn't there in 10 years, would anyone care? Members are expected to be of service to the community. There is a cost to having a specific focus: about six couples have left. "We want to really light the fire among our members. People are joining us because they're excited about this transforming call. We call people to a high commitment."

There are three paid staff who form the pastoral team.

Finances are a constant challenge. "God has always provided just what we need financially over the past year. We aren't stressed about it."

Delegates gathered around Rev. Bierman and Rev. Van Giessen to pray for their ongoing ministry.

Milton Church Plant – John Vanderstoep

Milton is one of the fastest growing cities in Ontario. It had a population of 18,000 about 30 years ago. Now it has 85,000 people. A proposed church plant is being developed jointly between Classis Huron and Classis Toronto involving three parent churches: Acton, Georgetown and Meadowvale.

The vision for the church planter is someone who should be intentionally engaged in the community, possibly bi-vocational.

A small group of Meadowvale CRC members regularly come to Milton to pray for the city. There is a new Christian school and a new Christian business group in Milton.

A proposal for approval is scheduled to come in the winter of 2010 to the three parent congregations, Home Missions and the two classes.

Congregations are encouraged to pray for the three organizing churches and for the growth of this church plant. A motion for funding will come to the May meeting of classis.

Prayer was offered for the development of this exciting ministry.

Clusters – Stephen Tamming

Two clusters of churches currently exist within classis: the Blyth cluster and the Guelph Cluster.

They consist of church leaders, lay and clergy, who regularly get together to look at a wide range of local issues. The Blyth cluster recently discussed: "What would you have to change in your life to recognize your neighbourhood as your mission field?"

People need to know Jesus; not necessarily attend a church.

15. Campus Ministry: Guelph – Ray Vander kooij, Jamie VanderBerg

The board needs to raise \$10,000 annually because of reduced funding by Home Missions. Regional fundraising dinners are being held; recently in Vanastra and early in 2010 in the Kitchener-Cambridge area.

Jamie VanderBerg spoke about the exciting life and challenges on campus.

16. Classis Ministry Committee -- Rev. John Vanderburgh

Revised Rules of Classis Huron

The Revised Rules of Classis Huron were presented as information to the September meeting of classis. Committees were asked to review the document and to present any changes to the Stated Clerk. Changes were made to two appendices: Guelph Campus Ministry (to reflect their incorporation) and the inclusion of the mandate of the Financial Resources Team (formerly Finance Committee).

MOTION: That the Revised Rules of Classis Huron be adopted as amended and posted on the classishuron.ca website. -adopted

MOTION: That the work of the Classis Ministry Committee, AdCom and Stated Clerk be approved. -adopted

Classis' Connection with Diaconal Conference

Deacons are involved in the work of classis, but they aren't attend 'meetings' of classis. Deacons have indicated in the past that they do not want to attend classis meetings.

The Classis Ministry Committee was encouraged to discuss the connection between classis and deacons (Diaconal Conference) at their March meeting.

Prayer was offered for the work of the deacons and diaconal conference.

17. Church counsellors

- Owen Sound will vote soon on calling Rev. Harry Zantingh of Ponoka, Alta.
- Orangeville has hired a seminary intern for February through May.
- Guelph First hired Rev Bernie Dejonge to serve as part time interim pastor.
- Guelph New Life. Rev. Tom and Lesli Van Milligen will be starting ministry at the end of the month. Their installation service will take place on January 31.
- Palmerston will vote on Jan. 24 on calling Rev. Harry Zantingh of Ponoka, Alta.
- Prayer was offered for the vacant churches.

18. Credentials Committee

- Cambridge CRC requests classis to advise on best practices and how privacy laws relate to the public nature censure and church discipline. How do privacy laws relate to council discussions of confidential matters? CMC was encouraged to put it on a future classis agenda.
- Exeter CRC asks that classis discuss children at Lord's Supper. The Credentials Committee advised them to look at the denomination's Faith Formation Committee report in the Agenda for Synod. CMC was asked to look at this to see if it is worthy of a future discussion.
- Guelph First CRC asked how many churches use only wine for communion? By a show of hands, about one-half of the churches do. The other half use both wine and grape juice.
- Guelph New Life CRC is planning an installation service of Rev Tom and Lesli Van Milligen on January 31. Ed DenHaan will represent classis at that service.
- Listowel CRC wants to have classis discuss the practice by some churches to have their children dedicated rather than baptised. CMC was asked to consider putting this as a discussion item at a future classis meeting.
- Orangeville CRC requested church visitors. Classis was advised that this has been dealt with.

- Orangeville CRC endorses a request by Jan Oorebeek to be examined for a license to exhort. This was referred to AdCom for inclusion at the May classis meeting.
- Orangeville CRC asked classis to come up with an overture to reform the Ministers pension Fund so that pastors will personally contribute to their pension fund. It was pointed out that Orangeville needs to come with an overture to present to classis for consideration.
- Vanastra CRC asked if any churches or individuals within classis have information about immigration law. No one attending classis could offer advice.

19. Closing

The vice-chair, Rev. John Vanderburgh, thanked the chair, Rev. Bill Hoogland for his leadership as chair. Closing devotions were offered by Rev. Chris Pool, followed by singing the doxology.

20. Future Classis Meetings

Date	Place	Reports due	Chair	Vice-chair
May 12, 2010	Guelph New Life	April 7, 2010	John Vanderburgh	Adrian Van Giessen
Sept. 15, 2010	Drayton	Aug. 11, 2010	Adrian Van Giessen	
Jan. 12, 2011		Dec. 1, 2010		