



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

MINUTES

May 9, 2012

**Waterloo
Christian Reformed Church
209 Bearing Rd.
Waterloo**

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	Michael Andrews
Blyth	Rev. Jack Quartel	Bert Reinink
Cambridge – Maranatha	Rev. John Vanderstoep	Arnold DePooter
Cambridge – River City	Rev. Darrell Bierman	
Clinton	Rev. Ron Luchies	Conrad Kaptein
Collingwood	Rev. Chris Pool	Rev. Harry Bierman
Drayton	Harry Mulder	John Zwart
Exeter	Rev. Harry Frielink	Ben Van Straten
Goderich	Rev. Stephen Tamming	Deacon Harry Sjaarda
Guelph – New Life	Rev. Tom Van Milligen	Lesli Van Milligen
Guelph – First	Rev. David Tigchelaar	Jake Bakelaar
Guelph – Campus	---	
Kitchener – Community	Rev. Carel Geleynse	Andy DeBoer
Kitchener – The Journey	Rev. Andrew Zantingh	
Listowel	Rev. Ralph Wigboldus	Jim Thalen
Lucknow	Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink	Byrne Burgsma
Orangeville	Rev. Andrew Vis	Charlie Zietsma
Owen Sound	Dirk Vanderploeg	Henry Feenstra
Palmerston	Rev. Andrew de Gelder	Wim Den Hartog
Stratford	Rev. Bill Hoogland	John DeWeerd
Vanastra	Rev. Siemen Speelman	Janet Styker
Waterloo	Rev. Vicki Cok	Jacinda Reitsma
Waterloo – Campus	---	
Wingham	Amanda Bakale	John Kranenberg

2. Constituting Classis

Rev. Vicki Cok and the Waterloo CRC praise team led the delegates through a litany involving prayer, scripture, singing and silence.

Credentials Committee reports on attendance. Deacon Harry Sjaarda was seated by motion.

Classis is declared constituted.

3. Officers of Classis

Chair: Rev. Bill Hoogland

Vice chair: Rev. Tom Van Milligen

Stated Clerk: Keith Knight

4. Opening of Classis

Officers of Classis take their positions.

The chair welcomed all delegates, including first time delegate Rev. David Tigchelaar who serves Guelph First. He also welcomed guests, Rev. Bruce Adema, Director of Canadian Ministries of the CRCNA; Mary Both, classis representative on the board of CRWRC; Rev. Adrian Van Giessen, Christian Reformed Home Missions Eastern Canada Regional Director; and synodical deputies, Rev. Ralph Koops, Rev. Jack Kerkhof and Rev. Nick Overduin.

5. Classis Ministry Committee -- Rev. Ralph Wigboldus

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

[Prayer was offered for the work of CMC]

6. Classis Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT) – Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink

MOTION: To approve the awarding of a forgivable loan to three students who have reapplied for classical support for the 2012-13 academic year. The students and the amounts are as follows:

- i. Laura Guichelaar, CTS, \$11,000 (full tuition)
- ii. Paul deWeerd, CTS, \$11,000 (full tuition)
- iii. Gareth Harker, CTS \$5,500 (full tuition of the EPMC) – carried.

MOTION: To approve the awarding of a forgivable loan to three students who have applied for classical support for the 2012-13 academic year. The students and the amounts are as follows:

- i.) Charles Van Hoffen, CTS, \$11,000 (full tuition) – Cambridge
- ii.) Ben Vanstraten, CTS, \$11,000 (full tuition) – Exeter
- iii.) Josh Friend, CTS, \$5,500 (1/2 time studies) – Kitchener – carried.

[Prayer was offered for these six students attending Calvin Theological Seminary]

7. Financial Resources Team – Cindy Tamming

MOTION: That a separate account be set up in the name of the “Huron Campus Ministry Guelph”.

Grounds:

- a. Guelph Campus Ministry(GCM) has established itself as a charitable organization.
- b. With the increased need for third-stream funding, this provides a clear way to contribute to the ministry. Currently all donations are made payable to Classis Huron with Guelph Campus noted on the memo line. This has been a little confusing to donors outside of Classis Huron and the CRC. A separate account in the name of the ministry would provide a clearer way to contribute to the ministry.
- c. The board of the Guelph Campus Ministry feels that they are financially stable enough to be on their own. With the change of the fiscal year end to December, Ministry Shares contributions and now properly aligned with the Campus Ministry year. –carried.

MOTION: That the 2011 Financial Statements be received. –carried.

[Prayer was offered for the Financial Resources Team and the Treasurer]

8. Rev. Jack de Vries, request to extend his service to CRC in Australia.

MOTION: That a two-year extension to serve the CRC of Australia be granted to Rev. Jack de Vries until October 2013. –carried.

(The synodical deputies from classes Hamilton, Chatham and Toronto concurred)

9. Request to create Ministry Associate position at Bethel (Acton) CRC.

MOTION: That the position of Ministry Associate at Bethel (Acton) CRC fits the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001. –carried.

(The synodical deputies from classes Hamilton, Chatham and Toronto concurred)

MOTION: That Classis Huron, at its September 2012 meeting, examine Andrew Nunn to serve as Ministry Associate at Bethel CRC, Acton. –carried.

[Prayer was offered for Bethel CRC and for Andrew Nunn as he prepares for his examination]

10. Rev. Bruce Adema, Director of Canadian Ministries.

Rev. Adema focused on three areas in his presentation to classis: Youth Ministry, Aboriginal Ministries, and Refugees.

Youth Ministry: He indicated that the All Ontario Youth Convention is the largest gathering of Christian Reformed folks in North America. About 975 are registered for the convention. The convention is also a formal part of the CRC structure in Canada, supported by the Ontario Youth Ministry Team. He spoke about the loss of youth ministry developers in Canada because of cuts by Youth Unlimited. Churches which feel the need to have a youth ministry developer for Canada are encouraged to tell the denomination's board of trustees about that need.

Aboriginal Ministries: Rev. Adema spoke about the 30-year history that the CRC has with aboriginal ministries in Canada, especially in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Saskatoon. He said Aboriginal Ministries is looking for a potential fourth centre and encourages classes or congregations to come forward with suggestions. He said there is a crying need for reconciliation. He mentioned the ReForming Relationships Art Tour taking place across the country, most recently at Guelph (New Life). He said the CR Centre for Public Dialogue has set aboriginal education for children as a priority.

Refugees in Canada. He said that the federal government is proposing troubling legislation concerning the deportation of refugees. He raised the question: How do we as CRC welcome new Canadians to our church communities?

[Prayer was offered for Bruce Adema and for the denomination]

11. Mary Both, CRWRC representative

Mary mentioned the proposed name change from CRWRC to *World Renew*, pending approval by Synod in June. She mentioned the ongoing work in Haiti where more than 3,000 homes have been built.

She cited the recent deaths of two long-time servants of CRWRC, including John Orkar of Nigeria.

She mentioned that the 50th anniversary DVD is available by downloading from the website.

[Prayer was offered for the work and ministry of the CRWRC]

12. Discussion: Church Growth, Kingdom Growth – Rev. Adrian Van Giessen

Rev. Van Giessen led a 90-minute interactive discussion on church growth within Classis Huron and challenged delegates to focus more on kingdom growth than on church growth. After each 15-minute presentation, table groups discussed a range of questions. All of the material will go to the Classis Home Missions Committee for further digestion and action.

1. Present realities

We as churches tend to view church growth by membership statistics:

In 1992, we had 9,100 members in classis. In 2012, we have 8,300 members, representing a net loss of 800 members over 20 years. That represents a 12 per cent loss in membership during a time when there was an 18 per cent growth in population across classis.

When it comes to evangelism, we gained 12 new members in 1992 while we gained 153 new members in 2012.

Are we counting our membership correctly? Is this the best indicator? We have 5 churches responsible for 80 per cent of numbers.

We have the same number of churches, emerging churches, campus ministries in 2012 than we had 20 years ago. Some churches have shrunk by one third or one half over past 20 years.

Classis Huron has an obvious urban/rural divide: how do you multiply ministries in rural areas?

He said that we need to shift from a focus on church growth to kingdom growth; from a focus away from church programs. As the church, there was a focus on people as spiritual consumers. If we did church really well; really good preaching, music, etc., we would serve the needs of people.

But the target of God's redemptive love is the world, not the church. You find Jesus in the streets and at work. People don't *go to* church, they *are* the church.

He said that we need to stop measuring attendance. Release our people into the community. It is not so much about buildings but about building community.

2. From program development to people development (discipleship)

Do we really know what the church is supposed to be about: programs, programs, programs? What is the aim of all of these meetings and activities? What is the hoped-for outcome? How do you 'count' when members serve their neighbor, spend time in prayer, grow spiritually?

3. From church-based leadership to kingdom-based leadership.

We need a shift in how we do church leadership. We need to provide training for those beyond our pastors, elders and deacons. How we identify them, train them, release them? How do we empower young adult leaders?

4. Three new opportunities for Classis Huron

a. Imagine new ways to pray, learn and do ministry. How do we get out of being program-based?

Do not leave each church to figure it out on our own.

The classis' church plant fund has \$165,000. How about creating groups of churches in geographical areas. Allow a small group to start a missional community? Plant new ministries that are less resource-intensive. We should revive the Families of Churches model. Have regional teams of staff. Create groups of CRCs and also groups with other denominations.

b. A fresh look at communities. We need to look at all kinds of expressions of the people of God; consider new forms of churches: spiritual communities meeting in meeting halls, on campuses, in coffee shops, as Christians who get together. How can these new types of churches impact the traditional churches?

c. Leadership training. We still need seminaries and trained theological leaders but how can we identify, train and release different kinds of leaders? More than 75 lay leaders have graduated from the Eastern Canada Leadership program.

13. Home Missions – Rev. John Vanderstoep

The committee has sent out a survey to churches within classis and about half of them have been returned. The results will provide valuable input to the committee.

As the work and vision of the committee expands, they continue to search for new members to join the committee, especially in light of the departure of Marguerite Ridder and Janet Ryzebol, whose terms of service have ended.

[Prayer was offered for Adrian Van Giessen and the work of Home Missions]

14. Nominations Committee – Stated Clerk

Redeemer University College is looking for a representative from Classis Huron to replace Dr. Henry Feenstra, who has served two terms on their board. Classis is asked to approve a new board representative. Since there were no nominees for the position, Dr. Feenstra will attend the September annual meeting of the board. Classis will need to appoint a replacement in September.

DENOMINATIONAL BALLOT—REGION 4
(Classes Chatham, Hamilton, Huron, and Niagara)

Christian Reformed Home Missions

Mr. Gerald Klein-Geltink -- 27

Ms. Beth Fellingner -- 13

Faith Alive Christian Resources

Ms. Deb Flaherty -- 20

Ms. Lesli Van Milligen -- 20

Voting results will be passed on to the denominational office, to add these votes to elections taking place in the other three classes in order to determine who our regional representative is.

15. Agenda for Synod

Our delegates to Synod 2012 are Rev. Harry Frielink, Rev. Ray Vanderkooij, Jamie Vandenberg, Janet Rysebol. They highlighted three main issues going to synod: The Task Force on Structure, the Covenant for Officebearers, and a 100-page Study on Creation Care.

16. Credentials Committee – Lesli Van Milligen

The Credentials Committee noted three items.

Listowel is concerned about some churches that do not provide catechism instruction to young people.

Through a show of hands, three churches indicated that they do not have a formal catechism class.

Drayton informed classis of the pending arrival of Rev. Les Kuiper as a specialized transitional minister who will serve from one to two years.

Kitchener presented an overture, attached to the credentials, asking synod to not accept the report from the Task Force Reviewing Structure and Culture as it is written. The chair ruled that the overture was out of order since it did not arrive before the agenda deadline so that it could be considered by councils prior to coming to classis. The chair was challenged but his ruling was sustained by the delegates. Representatives from Kitchener were allowed to speak to the issue in order to provide input to the delegates going to synod.

17. Church Visitor reports

Rev. Ron Luchies read abbreviated versions of church visitor reports to Exeter, Vanastra, Blyth and Goderich.

Fred VanderSterre read abbreviated versions of church visitor reports Clinton and Wingham.

Complete reports are on file with the stated clerk.

[Prayer was offered for these churches and their ongoing ministries]

18. Church counselors to vacant churches

Rev. Ron Luchies reported that Blyth is getting a summer student and anxiously looking forward to calling a new pastor.

Rev. Andrew de Gelder reported that Drayton is receiving a transitional pastor, Rev. Les Kuiper, on August 1. Rev. de Gelder is also leading a profession of faith class there.

Rev. Stephen Tamming reported that Amanda Bakale is completing her interim term at Wingham, and they continue to go through the process of seeking a new pastor.

[Prayer was offered for these vacant churches]

19. Closing

The chair, Rev. Bill Hoogland, offered closing comments and words of appreciation for the various participants in the day's deliberations. The vice-chair, Rev. Tom Van Milligen, offered words of appreciation for the chair's leadership. The chair offered a closing prayer after which delegates arose to sing the doxology.

20. Future Classis Meetings

Date	Place	Reports due	Chair	Vice-chair
Sept. 19, 2012	Owen Sound	Aug. 22, 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	Rita Klein-Geltink
Sept. 18, 2013		Aug. 21, 2013	Rita Klein-Geltink	John Vanderstoep