

MINUTES

OF CLASSIS HURON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 | 9:00 A.M. | DRAYTON CRC
88 Main St. E | Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

The PURPOSE of Classis Huron

We will foster the Kingdom through shared resources toward spiritual renewal.

The VISION of Classis Huron

The congregations, ministries, missional communities, and people of Classis Huron will surrender to the work of the Spirit of Mission of Jesus, to embody the Kingdom of God. Recognizing the urgency of the times, we stand on the foundation laid for us by previous generations and step forward in the same faith we have been taught.

www.classishuron.ca

OFFICERS OF THE DAY

Chair: Rev. Henry Steenbergen (Wingham)

Vice-Chair: Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford)

Stated Clerk: Rev. John Medendorp (Kitchener, alternate)

DEVOTIONS AND PRAYER

Opening: Drayton CRC

Pre-Lunch: Home Missions Committee

Post-Lunch: Bethel CRC (Acton)

COMMITTEES FOR THE DAY

Credentials: Stratford CRC and Collingwood CRC

Balloting: First CRC (Guelph)

MINUTES

- I. **Welcome & Announcements:** Rev. Paul Droogers (Drayton) welcomed delegates on behalf of Drayton CRC. Delegates heard a presentation from Father's Heart Ministries and the King's Cafe, which provided food for the day.
- II. **Opening Worship:** Rev. Droogers opened with reflections on the life and mission of CRC missionary to Nigeria Johanna Veenstra in honour of the 100th anniversary of her beginning her missionary work and a meditation based on Joshua 1:9. Delegates joined in singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness," "Blessed be Your Name," and "I am Not My Own."

| Church Name | Minsiter Delegate | Elder Delegate | Deacon Delegate |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Bethel CRC (Acton) | Rev. Ray Vander Kooij | Nick Kuipery | Rita Leferink |
| Blyth CRC | Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen | Douwe Top | Dave Salverda |
| Maranatha CRC (Cambridge) | Pastor Rick DeGraaf (Commissioned) | Clarence Louter | Herman Vandermunnik |
| River City Church (Cambridge) | Rev. Darrell Bierman | Andrew Johnson | — |
| Clinton CRC | — | John Hoogendoorn | — |
| Collingwood CRC | Rev. Victor Laarman | Richard Golby | Case Roest |
| Drayton CRC | Rev. Paul Droogers | Andy Knetsch | Teresa Wikkerink |
| Exeter CRC | Rev. Kevin teBrake | Mike Verhoog | Bill Branderhorst |
| The Bridge (Fergus) | Rev. John Vanderstoep | — | — |
| Trinity CRC (Goderich) | Gilbert Vanden Heuvel (elder) | Wilma Duckworth | Gertie Gerrits |
| Guelph Campus Ministry | Pastor Sara DeMoor (Commissioned) | — | — |
| First CRC (Guelph) | Rev. Dave Tigchelaar | Hans Zegerius | Bob van den Broek |
| New Life CRC (Guelph) | Rev. Ed Jager | Joel Koops | — |
| Community CRC (Kitchener) | Rev. Amanda Bakale | Rob Wiersma | Marjo Merkus |
| The Journey (Kitchener) | — | — | — |
| Bethel CRC (Listowel) | Pastor Bart Eisen (Commissioned) | Jan Koersen | Peter Rastorfer |
| Lucknow Community CRC | Rev. Tim Leferink | — | Tim Wellstead |
| Orangeville CRC | Rev. Andrew Vis | — | Henk Hoogendoorn |
| First CRC (Owen Sound) | — | John Tamming | Phil Visser |
| Palmerston CRC | Rev. Andrew de Gelder | Ralph Drost | Louise Van Andel |
| Stratford CRC | Rev. Martin Dam | Gene Veening | — |
| Vanastra Community CRC | Rev. Paul DeWeerd | Harry DenHaan | — |
| Waterloo CRC | Rev. Vicki Cok | Nick Denboer | Evelyn Zwart |
| Waterloo Campus Ministry | Rev. Brian Bork | — | — |
| Maitland River Community Church (Wingham) | Rev. Henry Steenbergen | Jack Wilkins | — |

- III. **Credentials Committee:** Rev. Victor Laarman offered an initial report for the credentials committee. All credentials were received except for Exeter CRC. **A motion was made to seat the Exeter delegates pending credentials.** —*Approved* Rev. Droogers declared classis constituted and welcomed Rev. Henry Steenbergen (Wingham) as chair and Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford) as vice-chair. Rev. Steenbergen welcomed guests Rev. Darren Roorda (CRCNA), Joan Brady (Mission Catalyzer), Dr. Lyle Bierma (Calvin Seminary), Rev. Leslie VanMilligen (Faith Formation), and Mr. Keith Oosthoek (Pension Fund).
- IV. **Canadian National Gathering Report:** Delegates from Classis Huron to the Canadian National Gathering in Edmonton offered a report and led delegates in an exercise on the theme “Emptiness to Fullness,” based on Church Order Article 75 and the ministry priorities of the CRCNA in Canada and of Classis Huron. The ministry priorities identified by delegates from Classis Huron were: 1) Prayer and spiritual practices; 2) Progress in becoming a multicultural church in pace with the changing North American context; 3) Building bridges with newcomers to Canada; 4) Increased awareness that something is missing with regard to discipleship, spirituality, and being Spirit-led; and 5) Working together to deal with the continuous pace of change. Churches are asked to identify one of these priorities to work on over the coming year, and Classis Huron was asked to provide space for churches to tell stories of how they are making progress in these areas.
- V. **Canadian Pension Fund Report:** Mr. Keith Oosthoek presented on the Canadian Pension Fund for Ministers in the CRCNA. The CPF remains a Defined Benefit plan even as most organizations are moving toward Defined Contribution plans, and intend to remain so to allow ministers greater predictability and stability. The CPF is very healthy with 96% solvency and the salary level is no longer frozen. The CPF is overseen and regulated by the Ontario Financial Services Commission. The Pension Board provides strategy and investment management, which is approved by synod. Eckler Canada in Toronto and Merrill Lynch in Grand Rapids serve as financial consultants. Investments are diverse, managed through fund managers with a buy-and-hold strategy, and follow an ethical policy. The priorities for the future are to keep funding above 100%, maintain defined benefit design, investigate improvements and maintain good relationships, assist the US plan and explore changes to better accommodate bi-vocational ministers and ministry couples.

MORNING REFRESHMENT BREAK

- VI. **Church Counsellor Reports:** Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen reported as counsellor to Clinton CRC. Clinton CRC has said its farewells to Rev. Ron Luchies and celebrated his retirement. First CRC (Owen Sound) declared their appreciation for the support of Classis and Rev. Victor Laarman in their vacancy and celebrate the installation of Rev. Sid Couperus. Noted that Rev. Henry Meinen has been appointed counsellor to Drayton CRC. Noted that Trinity CRC (Goderich) is in need of a counsellor.
- VII. **Executive Session:** In executive session, Classis Huron heard reports from church visitors regarding the circumstances that led Trinity CRC and Rev. Steven Tamming to request an Article 17 release from active ministry. In a ballot vote, Classis Huron, with the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies, *approved* the Article 17 release from ministry of Rev. Tamming together with a separation agreement mutually agreed upon by Rev. Tamming and the council of Trinity CRC and appointed an oversight committee to walk alongside Rev. Tamming over these next two years and make recommendations about his ongoing care and readiness for ministry. Classis Huron encouraged Trinity CRC to hire a Specialized Transitional Minister, and commended Trinity CRC and Rev. Tamming for their mutual love and support for one another through this process.
- VIII. **Resonate Global Mission:** On behalf of Resonate Global Missions, Rev. Jim Dekker thanked Classis for their support of the Thielke family through the death of Rev. Dwayne Thielke.

LUNCH BREAK

IX. **Post-Lunch Devotions:** The Home Missions Committee of Classis Huron led in a time of worship. Classis participated in a commissioning litany for Joan Brady (Exeter) in her newly appointed role as Mission Catalyzer for Classis Huron.

X. **Synodical Delegate Report:** Rev. Victor Laarman and Jane Vander Velden reported on behalf of the delegates of Classis Huron to Synod 2019. Rev. Laarman highlighted the deliberative nature of the assembly and the human element of decision making, and encouraged all members to remember synodical delegates in prayer during the week that Synod meets. Ms. Vander Velden highlighted the praise and worship, ecumenical relationships, and the powerful global work of our denominational agencies.

XI. **Financial Report:** John Bell reported on the 2020 budget on behalf of the Financial Resources Team. The FRT has encouraged the various standing committees to make use of some of the surplus we have accumulated over the years, which is reflected in the CMC report. Recommended: **That Classis Huron appoint Kathy Wassink (Kitchener) to review the 2019 financials.**

—*Approved.*

XII. **CMC/AdCom Report:** Rev. Vicki Cok reported on behalf of the Administrative Committee and the Classical Ministries Committee. In a ballot vote, **Mr. Albert Hovingh (Palmerston) was elected as the At-large Delegate on the Administrative Committee of Classis Huron.** On behalf of the committee, Rev. Cok presented the following recommendations:

1. **That Jim Williams be granted a renewed 5-year License to Exhort within Classis Huron.**

Grounds:

1. *The Council of First CRC (Guelph) has recommended Mr. Williams' License to Exhort be renewed.*
2. *Mr. Williams desires to continue exhorting within Classis Huron.*
3. *Mr. Williams has successfully completed the renewal process according to the Rules of Classis Huron.*

—*Approved.*

2. **That Classis Huron approve the 2-year extension of the loan of Rev. Jack DeVries to the Christian Reformed Church in Australia (CRCA).**

Grounds:

1. *The Council of Bethel CRC (Listowel) has requested an extension of Rev. DeVries's loan.*
2. *Rev. DeVries desires to continue his work with the CRCA.*
3. *A 2-year extension is in accordance with Church Order, Article 13-c.*

—*Approved.*

**Note: Synodical Deputies Henry Wildeboer (Quinte), James Dekker (Niagara), and Eric Groot-Nibbelink (Chatham) concurred with this decision of Classis.*

3. **That Classis Huron approve the request of the Waterloo Campus Ministry Board to earmark \$5,000.00 of the WCM reserve to hire an intern for the 2019-2020 ministry year.**

Grounds:

1. *There is a need to develop an alumni/donor database to lay the groundwork for future ministry expansion.*
2. *Surplus funds are available and making use of them will not burden the members of Classis Huron with higher ministry share rates.*
3. *\$5,000.00 ought to be sufficient to cover costs for an intern position.*

—*Approved.*

4. **That Classis Huron approve the requests of the Ministry Leadership Team to use \$3,000.00 of CMLT funds to support the proposed retreat for women ministers and candidates in the CRCNA and \$3,000.00 of the CMLT surplus for registration costs for young adults to attend the Leadership Studio in Muskoka Woods.**

Grounds:

1. *CMLT has excess funds in its budget this year as well as a \$27,000.00 surplus, and believes these two causes to fit within the larger mandate of Ministry Leadership, making support of them a stewardly use of excess funds.*
2. *Women ministers and candidates face unique challenges in the CRCNA and have few denomination-specific venues to establishing mentoring relationships and collegial connections with other CRC women in ministry.*
3. *While the Leadership Studio is not specifically for young adults who are considering ministry, it has been an important piece for many young people in planting a seed that has the potential to grow into a calling to ministry.*

—Approved.

5. **That Classis Huron continue to fund the Bridge App for the 2020 budget year and schedule time at the May 2020 meeting of Classis for a discussion about how churches are using the Bridge App and whether to fund it as a classis or as individual churches in the future.**

Grounds:

1. *Allowing for an additional year of funding provides churches with additional time to explore the substantial recent updates to the app and assess the app's value and use for their congregation.*
2. *Having an intentional time of conversation set aside at a Classis meeting will allow churches to share ways in which the app has been a valuable and useful resource in a structured setting, as well as frustrations with the app, which can be sent on to the developer via the denomination.*
3. *Setting aside time at a May meeting gives the Financial Resources Team important feedback in time for the budgeting process which takes place in the summer.*

—Approved.

6. **That Classis Huron approve the proposed 2020 budget presented by the Financial Resources Team.**

—Approved.

7. **That Classis Huron thank Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok for her three years of faithful leadership on the Administrative Committee.**

—Approved.

8. **That Classis Huron affirm Rev. Martin Dam as Chair and Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen as Vice-Chair of the Administrative Committee.**

—Approved.

9. **That Classis Huron dismiss the Youth Ministries Team with thanks for their work, recognizing their years of service and the many ways in which youth ministry in Classis Huron has been blessed by current and former members of this team, and**

10. **That Classis Huron task the Administrative Committee and Classical Ministries Committee to strategize about how to better serve the churches of Classis Huron in the area of youth ministry—including the possibility of drafting a new mandate for a new committee—and present a plan for approval by Classis in February 2020.**

Grounds:

1. *The current mandate and composition of the committee has proven unsustainable in the current environment and culture of youth ministry.*
2. *The current membership of the committee does not have the capacity to do this work themselves.*
3. *Classis will be better served by a committee with a clearer mandate and purpose.*
4. *The hard and fruitful work of the Youth Ministries Team over the years ought to be recognized and honoured by Classis.*

—*Approved.*

11. That Classis Huron approve the work of the Classical Ministries Committee, the Administrative Committee, and the Stated Clerk.

—*Approved.*

XIII. Waterloo Campus Ministry: Rev. Brian Bork reported on his work as campus minister at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. Campus Ministry is a missional activity, “being with” people/institutions and joining the work of the Holy Spirit in the public, academic, and secular environment of the university. “Being with” *seekers and lapsed* Christians through mentoring, spiritual direction, and third-space discussion groups; “being with” *people of other religions* through participation on the multi-faith chaplain’s team and invitations to present in religious studies courses; “being with” *institutions* through participation in the Okanagan Charter and campus wellness pursuits; “being with” *the church* through preaching and teaching engagements, *Christian Courier*, “The Head and the Heart” lecture series; “being with” *Christian Reformed students* is a two-way street that needs a pastoral and mutual introduction. The next Head and Heart lecture is Friday, November 15, 2019 @ Community CRC with Brian Walsh and Sylvia Keesmat presenting on their latest publication: *Romans Disarmed*.

XIV. Safe Church Committee: Atie Ott reported on behalf of the Safe Church Committee of Classis Huron. Ms. Ott reminded delegates that this coming Sunday, September 22, has been designated by Synod as Abuse Awareness Sunday. The theme this year is “Circle of Grace,” a Sunday School curriculum to teach young children about abuse in an age-and-ability appropriate manner. Delegates watched a short video about the Circle of Grace curriculum. Ms. Ott also brought attention to the Abuse of Power recommendations approved by Synod 2019, which will be addressed in greater detail at the February meeting of Classis. Planning is well underway for the Annual Interclassis Safe Church Conference, which will be held on March 7, 2020 at Waterloo CRC. SCC is available to consult, advise, and resource local safe church committees as needed.

XV. The Bridge (Fergus): Rev. John Vanderstoep reported on his work as a church planter at The Bridge in Fergus. The Bridge was recently evaluated through a process overseen by Resonate Global Mission, which celebrated the fact that The Bridge is worshipping together on a regular basis, is intentional about making and growing disciples, has a good relationship with its parent church in navigating a bivocational position, the strong shared partnership and calling demonstrated by John and Carol, big-picture vision, outreach to marginalized groups, ecumenical relationships, involvement and transparency with Classis. Resonate encouraged The Bridge to 1) strategically assess its long-term sustainability and 2) clarify and simplify the discipleship track that new members are expected to follow. The Bridge will no longer receive classical or denominational funds at the conclusion of 2019. Rev. Vanderstoep thanked classis for their support over the past five years. The plan is to develop the bivocationality of the ministry to make it financially self-sustaining by 2020. Rev. Steenbergen offered a prayer for Rev. Vanderstoep and The Bridge.

AFTERNOON REFRESHMENT BREAK

XVI. Infant Baptism & Covenant Dedication: Rev. Vicki Cok introduced Dr. Lyle Bierma (Calvin Theological Seminary) and Dr. Syd Hielema (formerly Faith Formation Ministries and Redeemer University College) who presented various views on this issue and led delegates in a conversation

about Infant Baptism and Covenant Dedication. Dr. Bierma addressed why the CRC has affirmed covenant baptism and discouraged infant dedication throughout its history. Synods 2007 and 2012 affirmed the CRC's commitment to covenant baptism *not* because our Confessions say so, but because we are convicted that this practice is "faithfully obedient to the Word of God." Dr. Hielema reflected on several questions that he has been asking since serving on the study committee that presented the recommendations approved by Synod 2012, focused on how the CRC can hold in tension a Reformed understanding of infant baptism, sanctification, and hospitality through winsome teaching and spiritual sensitivity. Delegates engaged in small group conversations and the time was concluded with a question and answer time moderated by Rev. Cok.

XVII. Closing: Rev. Steenbergen offered a prayer, delegates sang the doxology, and classis was adjourned.

**Classis Huron will meet next in session on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.
at Palmerston CRC, 400 Whites Rd, Palmerston**

Agenda items are due January 10, 2020

Please forward agenda items to classishuron@gmail.com

Scheduled Meetings of Classis Huron:

| DATE | LOCATION | REPORTS DUE | CHAIR | VICE-CHAIR |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Wednesday Feb. 12, 2020 | Palmerston CRC | January 10, 2020 | Ralph Wigboldus | Martin Dam |
| Wednesday May 13, 2020 | First CRC (Guelph) | April 15, 2020 | Martin Dam | Paul Droogers |
| Saturday Sept. 19, 2020 | Community CRC (Kitchener) | August 15, 2020 | Paul Droogers | Gary Van Leeuwen |

If your church desires to host a classis meeting in 2021, please email classishuron@ccrc.on.ca