



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

MINUTES

February 23, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.

**Bethel Christian Reformed Church
Listowel, ON**

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.

Delegates to Classis

Church	Pastor	Elder	Deacon
Acton – Bethel	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Sid Looyenga	Kevin Riedstra
Blyth	Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen	John Klassen	Dave Salverda
Cambridge – Maranatha	Rev. Norm Sennema	Clarence Louter	Mary MacGregor
Cambridge - River City	Rev. Darrell Bierman	Janet Ryzebol	Brian Veenstra
Clinton		Jake Rylaarsdam	Jeff Bylsma
Collingwood	Rev. Victor Laarman	Gerry Noordegraaf	Debbie Reitsma
Drayton	Rev. Paul Droogers	AndyKnetsch	Teresa Wikkerink
Exeter	Rev. Kevin te Brake	Cliff Knip	Teresa Buckman
Fergus - The Bridge	Rev. John Vanderstoep		
Goderich - Trinity	Rev. Stephen Tamming	Gilbert VanderHeuvel	Tiffany Craig
Guelph – Campus Ministry	Sara De Moor Neil & Virginia Lettinga		
Guelph – First	Rev. David Tigchelaar	Peter Kingma	Jackie Williams
Guelph – New Life	Rev. Ed Jager	Sharon Buisman	
Kitchener – Community	Rev. Amanda Bakale	Eugene Bradley	Rob Hiemstra
Kitchener – The Journey			
Listowel – Bethel	Rev. Ralph Wigboldus	Ray Heeres	Jetske Boer
Lucknow - Community	Rev. Tim Leferink	Trevor Askes	Gord Versteeg
Orangeville	Rev. Andrew Vis	Kevin Downe	
Owen Sound – First	Elder Tom Bergstra	Willard VanderPloeg	
Palmerston	Rev. Andrew de Gelder	Ralph Bakker	Betty de Lange
Stratford	Rev. Martin Dam	Dirk DeLange	
Vanastra - Community	Rev. Paul DeWeerd	Chris Rooseboom	John Van Walderveen
Waterloo	Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok	Tim Fisher	Evelyn Zwart
Waterloo – Campus Ministry			
Wingham – Maitland River Community	Elder: Stephen Vander Klippe	Jack Wilkins	

Devotions for the Day: •Opening: Listowel-Bethel
 •Pre-Lunch: Guelph Campus Ministry
 •Post-Lunch: Clinton

Committees of the Day: •Credentials: Drayton/ Palmerston
 •Balloting: Listowel-Bethel

Special Guests: •Cherylynn Lumasag, Director, Beginnings Family Care Centre, Guelph
 •Rev. Lesli van Milligen, CRCNA, Regional Catalyzer, Faith Formation Ministries
 •Atie Ott, Classis Huron Safe Church Coordinator
 •Amy Baarda, Classis Huron Youth Ministry Champion
 •Len Bakelaar, Disability Concerns Regional Advocate

1. Opening & Devotions:

- 1.1** Rev. Ralph Wigboldus [of Listowel-Bethel] welcomed all in attendance and provided details pertinent to the layout of the church facility. Devotion and worship time included prayer, reading of and meditation on 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, and Delegates singing "Lord, I Lift Your Name On High" and "In Christ Alone". Pastor Ralph opened Classis with prayer.
- 1.2** Rev. Paul Droogers, on behalf of the Credentials Committee, reported that Pastor Norm Sennema (of Cambridge-Maranatha) and Pastor John VanderStoep (of Fergus-The Bridge) were to be late, Pastor Ron Luchies was absent due to a congregational matter and that otherwise all churches, except The Journey and Waterloo Campus Ministry, were

represented. In light of Guelph-First being present without credential submission, it was moved and seconded to seat the respective delegates **-carried**

- 1.3** Pastor Ralph declared Classis constituted, then passed leadership to Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok [of Waterloo] who would be serving as Chair, with Rev. Amanda Bakale [of Kitchener-Community] serving as Vice-Chair, and Sharon Van Kampen as Stated Clerk. Pastor Vicki welcomed guests, noted the 'full' agenda and that the day was expected to conclude around 5:00 pm; Pastor Vicki provided an update on Rev. Vic Vandermolten whose cancer is active again with the prognosis not being good. Rev. Ralph Wigboldus led in a time of prayer for Pastor Vic.

•**Motion** made and seconded to adopt the agenda with the following revisions:

- 1) Request from Kitchener-Community CRC for Classis to decide whether or not the job description [for Shannon Cook] fits the guidelines laid out by Church Order and Synod for the office of Commissioned Pastor.
- 2) a report from the Safe Church Team
- 3) a report from Classical Disability Concerns Regional Advocate Len Bakelaar
- 4) Agenda item 15: report from the Bridge and Dreaming Exercise not to occur; deferred.

-carried

3. Renegotiating Faith: Rev. Lesli van Milligen provided an informative and insightful presentation, with inclusion of a slide show, on the "Renegotiating Faith" report and its focus on the delay in young adult identity formation and what it means for the church in Canada, emphasizing the need to create a culture of mentoring/discipleship.

•Opportunity for small group discussion occurred therein to examine the questions of: 1) *What communal experiences, biblical truths, might we want to emphasize in our congregations? How?* and 2) *Where is mentorship already happening in your congregation and where might you want to lean into this strategy? Where do you need supports for this?*

•a list of printed resources was highlighted as well as the "take-aways" of: encouragement to read the report, attending the Redeemer UC evening presentation [of this report] on March 6/19 by its lead researcher and author, Rick Hiemstra, and a reminder that Pastor Lesli is "here" for Classis.

•A time of prayer was led by Rev. Amanda Bakale.

4. Refreshment Break

5. Disability Concerns: regional advocate Len Bakelaar highlighted the work of local church advocates and the upcoming conference "Walking Alongside: Youth with Mental Health" to be held April 27th at Hamilton's *Westdale Reformed Church*.

6. Time of Diaconal & Ministry Sharing: as introduced by *Diaconal Ministries* rep. Mary Blydorp:

6.1 Owen Sound-First diaconate shared a video regarding their *Canadian FoodGrains Bank* "Combining for Christ" soybeans growing project of 2018. Delegate Tom Bergstra noted that \$6 000 was raised and then tripled by the Canadian government; and that the 2019 grow project plan would also be soybeans.

6.2 Mary Blydorp noted that as of March 1st, 2019, the *Operation Manna* program will now be called *NewGround*.

6.3 Beginnings, Guelph Director Cherylynn Lumasag provided information pertaining to the *Family Services Care Centre's* purpose of serving families and mom's at risk including new Canadians, and the overall goals of this ministry; she expressed great appreciation to supporting churches and requested ongoing prayer and financial support.

•A time of prayer for diaconal efforts and Beginnings was led by Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen.

7. Church Counselor: Rev. Victor Laarman reported that First CRC, Owen Sound's search committee is in the process of making personal contact and visiting with three pastors at their respective churches.

8. Guelph Campus Ministry [GCM]: GCM Board Chair Rev. Ray Vander Kooij reported on the current reality of GCM, the time of transition for staff, students, and faculty and extended appreciation to classis for ongoing support and participation. Chaplain Sara DeMoor, with inclusion of a slide show, shared how God is at work in and through GCM by highlighting various stories about student faith walks, formation of intentional connections and the focus on cultivating a culture of gratitude, increasing the mentorship program, the winter retreat, and the ongoing occurrence of Wednesday community dinners [with 40-50 students in attendance] with the involvement of local churches providing food for these meals; Sara also expressed gratitude to Neil & Virginia Lettinga for their interim chaplaincy role.

•A time of prayer was led by Rev. Ed Jager.

9. Regional Pastors: Rev. Norm Sennema (East division) reported on the efforts of both he and Rev. Henry Steenbergen (West division) to connect with fellow pastors as there are those that struggle privately but simultaneously encourage contact between neighbouring pastors for the opportunity to share and support. Pastor Norm also noted, with appreciation, the opportunity to attend the Regional Pastors Conference, held in Orlando, FL, which focused on what this role entails.

•A time of prayer was led by Drayton Elder delegate Andy Knetsch.

10.1 Pre-Lunch devotions, led by GCM chaplain Sara DeMoor, included singing of grace by all in attendance.

10.2 Post-Lunch devotions: Clinton Deacon delegate Jeff Bylsma read from 1 Corinthians 12 ["One Body, Many Parts"] and led in a time of prayer.

11. Credentials Committee Report (Drayton and Palmerston)

Rev. Andrew de Gelder (Palmerston) reported on behalf of the committee, noting the following entries:

- Acton-Bethel:* Pastor Ray Vander Kooij not available to serve as a Synod 2019 delegate.
- Blyth:* Pastor Gary Van Leeuwen not available to serve as a Synod 2019 delegate
- Cambridge-Maranatha:* Pastor Norm Sennema not available to serve as a Synod 2019 delegate.
- Clinton:* Rev. Ron Luchies retiring in 2019 with last service occurring in early September.
- Collingwood:* 1) Rev. Victor Laarman willing and able to serve as a Synod 2019 delegate.
2) requested February classis meetings not be held on Saturdays due to the possibility of being snowed-in for the Sunday following. -referred to CMC
- Drayton:* requested opportunity for Classis to discuss "Implementation of the New CRCNA Church Visiting Process Guide (PCR)" [pub. Spring 2018] -referred to CMC
- Goderich-Trinity:* Highly recommended Pastor Stephen Tamming to serve as a Synod 2019 delegate.
- Kitchener-Community:* 1) Pastor Carel Geleyense and Pastor John Medendorp willing and able to serve as Synod 2019 delegate. 2) Synod 2019 Elder delegate nominations: Irene Geleyense and Gary Brands; Deacon delegate nomination: Jane Vander Velden.
- Palmerston:* 1) Pastor Andrew de Gelder willing to serve as Synod 2019 delegate but prefers to defer to another. 2) Synod 2019 Elder delegate nomination: Albert Hovingh.
- Stratford:* Pastor Martin Dam not available to serve as a Synod 2019 delegate.
- Vanastra:* 1) Aspect of ministry desiring discussion at Classis: How are churches in CH managing their lapsed membership list? -referred to CMC
2) Council concerned with what seems to be a rushed process of organization for River City Church; requesting possibility of having a conversation on infant baptism/dedication practices before deciding on the organization of RCC.
- Wingham-Maitland River Community:* Pastor Henry Steenbergen willing to serve as Synod 2019 delegate but prefers to defer to another.

12. Commissioned Pastor status pursuit by Shannon Cook of Kitchener-Community as presented by Rev. Amanda Bakale noting Shannon's role of Chaplain at *Forest Heights Long Term*

Care Home in Kitchener to be multi-faith but taken on by a Christian.

•**Motion** made and seconded to declare the position fitting the guidelines laid out by Church Order and Synod for the office of Commissioned Pastor. **-carried**

•delegates were advised of the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies with endorsement by CRC Chaplaincy Committee yet pending with a view to hold Shannon's examination at a future classis session accordingly.

13. Election of Synodical Delegates: Chair Rev. Vicki Verhulst-Cok reviewed the process for this election process and the history of what has occurred in Classis Huron. Delegation to include: *Minister, Elder, Deacon, and 4th delegate as Minister, with alternates needed for each.*

•Names of all pastors 'eligible' to serve as delegates (i.e. names removed as per credential entries as well as those serving in emerging congregations) was posted for viewing.

•[classical] delegates from those congregations nominating elder and deacon synodical delegates shared the biographies accordingly.

Deacon Delegate:

•**Motion** made and seconded to affirm Jane Vander Velden as the Synodical Deacon delegate. **-carried**

Chair Rev. Vicki Verhulst-Cok ruled that no alternate for the deacon delegation would be provided.

•Ballot voting occurred to select two minister and one elder:

→ Minister Delegate: Rev. Stephen Tamming

Alternate: Rev. Carel Geleynse

→ Elder Delegate: Albert Hovingh

Alternate: Irene Geleynse

→ Fourth Delegate (Minister): Rev. Victor Laarman

Alternate: Rev. Paul DeWeerd

14. Missional Catalyzer Position -- Classis Huron Home Missions Committee

(•**Motion tabled from September 19, 2018** session of Classis Huron taken 'off the table')

Referencing the documents provided with the agenda, a joint presentation was made by Rev. John VanderStoep (as a *Classis Huron Home Missions Committee* rep) and Rev. Kevin DeRaaf (*Regional Leader for Resonate Global Mission*) which included provision of the outstanding details (i.e. goals, objectives, accountability, financing, and measurability of the position) requested at the September 2018 session of Classis Huron.

•Opportunity for discussion/questions/comments was followed by a ballot vote by delegates.

•ballot vote resulted in approval to proceed with hiring for this part-time position. **-carried**

15. Council of Delegates [COD]: rep Rev. Ralph Wigboldus provided an update on matters addressed by the COD at its October 2018 and February 2019 sessions with the following highlights: planned review of differences in the Canadian and American pastoral pay scale; attendance of Inspire 2019 bi-national gathering encouraged; CRCNA in good financial standing with both Back to God Ministries International and Resonate Global Mission being recipients of willed funds; bi-nationality continues to be an issue for the denomination; Ministry Plan survey received greater response than expected; as it pertains to congregational renewal, the RCA and CRC continue to work together.

→ *Post-session entry: COD Highlights document from its meeting of Feb. 21-22, 2019 as received from Synodical Services, was issued, for information, to Classis Huron churches on March 2, 2019.*

16. River City Church [Cambridge] Organization

•matter was opened with a time of prayer led by Rev. Norm Sennema (Cambridge-Maranatha)

•as a means of providing background to the matter, Chair Rev. Vicki Verhulst-Cok made reference (and projected via slides) to the entries in the May and September, 2018 CH minutes, the questions sent to CH church councils for feedback, the documents included in this session's agenda (i.e. pp. 22-24), and C.O. Article 38

•Rev. Martin Dam, summarized the work of the Guiding Team

•**Motion** to adopt recommendation #1 [*that River City Church be recognized as an organized congregation within the CRCNA, noting this to entail movement of the 'board' to 'Council and installation of office bearers*] made and seconded.

•opportunity for discussion

•ballot vote by delegates resulted in approval for River City Church to pursue organization

-carried

•**Motion** to adopt recommendation #2 [that a separate discussion occur at Classis on the issue of covenantal infant dedication.] made and seconded

-carried

-referred to CMC

17. AdCom/CMC/Stated Clerk Report:

Rev. Vicki Verhulst-Cok (Chair of CMC/AdCom) referred Delegates to the information and the recommendations being made for consideration and/or approval:

R11 Motion made and seconded to nominate to Synod 2019,

→Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen as a Synodical Deputy for a term of three years effective July 1, 2019.

-carried

→Rev. Stephen Tamming as Alternate Synodical Deputy for a second term of three years effective July 1, 2019.

-carried

R21 Motion made and seconded that Rev. John Medendorp serve in the role of Stated Clerk, Alternate.

-carried

R31 Motion made and seconded to ratify the work of the Classis Ministry Committee, Administrative Committee, and Stated Clerk

-carried

18. World Renew – Disaster Response Services: board rep Marguerite Ridder took the opportunity to share her personal experience as a DRS volunteer with provision of a video clip of an individual blessed by the efforts of DRS, noting that God works through us to get his message and love 'out' to our 'neighbours' around the world.

19. Ministry Reports

19.1 Safe Church: Atie Ott (Classis Huron Safe Church Coordinator) and Kitchener-Community rep. Eugene Bradley highlighted the following: upcoming March 6 conference; changes anticipated with respect to mandatory Safe Church training; police checks are not required for volunteers under age 18 and this change is to be reflected in each church's safe church policy; need for awareness and implementation of Bill 132; updates made to Classis Huron church rep list and contact info; continued prayers and support for the classis Safe Church Team requested.

19.2 Youth: Amy Baarda (Classis Huron Youth Ministry Champion) closed the day by speaking further to Pastor Lesli's morning presentation regarding youth/young adults and the need for a relational ministry and going beyond the youth program 'model'.

20. Closing & Adjournment:

•**Motion** made and seconded to destroy the ballots associated with all voting activities. **-carried**

•The Chair extended appreciation to Listowel-Bethel CRC for hosting and to the Ladies' Society for food prep and delivery, and to the Vice-chair and Stated Clerk for their efforts.

•Vice-chair Rev. Amanda Bakale expressed appreciation to Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok for her leadership and then led a time of prayer surrounding the River City Church delegation; thereafter delegates sang The Doxology.

•Classis adjourned.

Next Session: D.V., Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at Clinton CRC, Clinton.