



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

MINUTES

September 14, 2011

**Vanastra Community
Christian Reformed Church
50 Fifth Avenue,
Vanastra**

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

Congregation	Minister	Elder	Elder
Acton	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Harry Bloemendal	
Blyth		Eric Nonkes	Bert Reinink
Cambridge – Maranatha	Rev. John Vander Stoep	Arnold Depooter	
Cambridge – River City	Rev. Darrell Bierman	Nicole Pereira	
Clinton	Rev. Ron Luchies	Jake Rylaarsdam	
Collingwood	Rev. Chris Pool	Len Noordegraaf	
Drayton	Rev. John Vanderburgh	Harry Mulder	
Exeter	Rev. Harry Frielink	Gerald Kodde	
Goderich	Rev. Stephen Tamming	James Giilcek	
Guelph – New Life	Lesli Van Milligen	Rochelle Sypkes	
Guelph – First		Marguerite Ridder	Jetty Vanderkamp
Guelph – Campus	James Vanderberg		
Kitchener – Community	Rev. Dr. Darren Roorda	Keith Oosthoek	
Kitchener – The Journey			
Listowel		Wil Bakker	Cor Reinink
Lucknow	Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink	Bob Damsma	
Orangeville	Rev. Andrew Vis	Peter DeLange	
Owen Sound	Rev. Harry Zantingh	Henry Feenstra	
Palmerston	Rev. Andrew de Gelder	Wim den Hartog	
Stratford	Rev. Bill Hoogland	Henry de Young	
Vanastra	Rev. Siemen Speelman	Henry Boot	
Waterloo	Rev. Vicki Cok	Amanda Bakale	
Waterloo – Campus	Rev. Brian Bork		
Wingham		John Kronenburg	Deacon Jack Wilkens

2. Constituting Classis

Henry Boot of Vanastra Community CRC offered a devotional on Psalm 100. Kelly Deboer provided musical accompaniment.

The Credentials Committee report on attendance. All churches are represented, except The Journey. Deacon Jack Wilkens of Wingham is seated by motion.

Classis is declared constituted.

3. Opening of Classis

Officers of Classis are: chair Rev. Dr. Darren Roorda, vice-chair Rev. John VanderStoep, stated clerk Keith Knight.

The chair welcomes all elders as well as guests, among them Rev. John de Vries. It was noted that this is Rev. John Vanderburgh's last meeting before he moves to Emo.

Delegates from Listowel provided an update on the health of Rev. Ralph Wigboldus. He is suffering from spinal stenosis and is under an immense amount of pain. He will be off until the end of the year.

4. Committees for the Day

Credentials Committee – Goderich and Lucknow

5. Classis Ministry Committee -- Rev. John Vanderburgh

5.1 Work of CMC, Administrative Committee (AdCom) and Stated Clerk

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

5.2 Renewal of license to exhort for Ken de Boer

MOTION: That a license to exhort for Ken de Boer be extended for a five-year term, ending September, 2016.
- carried.

The training day for exhorters and others will be on Feb. 25, 2012 to be held at Community CRC in Kitchener. More details to follow.

6. Financial Resources Team -- Cindy Tamming, treasurer

MOTION 1: That Classis adopt the following for 2012:

- a. That the rate for a church service be raised to **\$100.00 per service.**
- b. That the kilometer expense reimbursement be kept at the rate of **\$0.50 per kilometer.**
- c. That the host church for classis meetings be reimbursed **\$500.00.**
- d. That the remuneration for loss of wages while conducting the business of Classis (eg. delegates to synod) remain at **\$150.00 per day for up to five (5) per week.**
- carried.
- e. That the honorariums be raised to **\$4,000 for the Stated Clerk and \$4,000 for the Treasurer.**
- carried.

MOTION 2 : That the 2012 Budget as presented by the Financial Resources Team be adopted.
- carried.

Following discussion, Adcom and CMC are asked to look at an appropriate remuneration.

The treasurer will send out a full list of Classical and Denominational Ministry Shares for 2012 to the treasurers of the churches within Classis Huron.

7. Restorative justice – Rev. John de Vries

Rev. de Vries oversees the restorative justice portfolio in Canada. He mentioned that the Restorative Justice Congregation Pilot Project was carried out in consultation with Shalem Mental Health Network. The report should be coming out soon. He said that restorative justice has an impact on how we do work, how we do business, how we do church school. The Classis Alberta North Restorative Justice task force is working with churches within the classis. It's all about healthy churches making things right. There are opportunities for training for local churches. We are terrible employers when we have conflict in the church. We need trained ombudsman in the church to help deal with these situations.

Prayer for this ministry was offered by Rev. John Vander Stoep. He read Psalm 33: 4 and 5.

8. Waterloo Campus Ministry

Rev. Brian Bork is beginning his fourth year as campus minister. Life on two campuses is a lot of work. The student body at both universities has grown considerably over the years and the board is looking at how to manage campus ministry at both University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. Following a spring board retreat, campus ministry has decided to focus on ministry at University of Waterloo and then to spend the next year looking at ministry opportunities at Wilfrid Laurier University. Brian spends 90 per cent of his time at UW and 10 per cent at WLU. Laurier has 16 or 17 different Christian clubs or groups. Campus ministry is asking: "How do we enrich that mix without setting up our own Reformed presence?"

Dr. Rudy Eikelboom has been involved on campus for 18 years. "Now we're at the point where the two Waterloo institutions have a difference in tone and size. The kids who are coming from your churches look at the opportunities at Waterloo. We're getting more and more CRC students and we want to support them through our campus ministry."

MOTION 1: That Classis approve the work of the Waterloo Campus committee this past year.

- carried.

MOTION 2: That Classis endorse the recommendation that this ministry be largely focused on working at the University of Waterloo.

- carried.

9. Canadian Christian Education Foundation – Barb Ferrier, executive director

Barb Ferrier is formerly a Christian school teacher in Guelph, a curriculum developer with Christian Schools International and an adjunct prof at Redeemer University.

CCEF raises money for the development of Christian school curriculum materials within Canada.

The 2011 project is to fund the update the Choices and Decisions anthology.

In this digital age, hard copy textbooks are becoming passé. The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools is developing e-curriculum. In 2011-2012, CCEF will fund the digitalization of the Bible curriculum.

She says there is a real commitment to work together with other Christian educational organizations. Some Christian schools are strong and some have closed due to lack of enrolment.

CCEF is recognized as a synodically approved organization for offerings. She urged deaconates to hold offerings in support of CCEF.

Three new board members have joined CCEF and they are looking for new board members.

10. Redeemer University – Dr. Hubert Krygsman, president

Enrolment is at 895 full time students, down a bit from last year. About 50 per cent of students come from Reformed background. The rest come from a growing diversity of evangelical and mainline churches.

Redeemer had a successful year last year with record church donations. Redeemer received \$109,123 from Classis Huron from Jan – Aug., up 30 per cent. It is still not at synodical levels, but it's getting close.

Construction and renovations on campus are winding down. Official opening was recently held of their roof top solar panel structure. The new soccer complex will open in early October when the dome will be in place.

Five new faculty have been hired, filling vacant positions.

New program initiatives: Redeemer has launched an international studies minor and a youth ministry certificate program.

In the fall of 2012 it will launch a health sciences bachelor degree program.

Redeemer's Theatre department has entered a partnership with Crossroads Media. There is also a partnership with Job Prosperity Collaborate to establish a downtown Hamilton presence by hiring a community coordinator for Redeemer's student volunteer and internship program in downtown Hamilton. Redeemer wants to get an express bus route to downtown Hamilton.

CIDA is funding international internships in next four years, in Ghana to teach literacy and establish Christian schools.

Dr. Syd Hielema is heavily involved in faith formation and especially in launching a new youth ministry certificate program. Ontario CRCs have some of the most vibrant youth ministry programs.

Coming events:

Sept 24, worship conference on incarnational literacy.

Sept 30, annual general membership meeting.

Nov 9, Zylstra Symposium with Dr. James Skillen as featured lecturer.

Nov. 10, Business Partnership open house.

March 6, 2012, Ministers' Conference, Bruxy Cavey of Meeting House, guest speaker

Prayer was offered by Rev. Harry Zantingh for Redeemer University College and CCEF.

11. Classis Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT) – Rev. Harry Frielink

MOTION 1: To accept Michelle VanHarten's application for support to complete the Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) at Calvin Seminary for \$5,810. This covers tuition, mentored ministry and Logos seminar. In one instalment for the Fall semester. -carried

MOTION 2: To reimburse mentors for the expenses incurred for travel whenever mentoring a student in the EPMC "At A Distance" program. -carried

MOTION 3: To expand the CMLT mandate to include support of members of classis participating in the Eastern Canada Leadership Development Network. - carried

MOTION 4: (tabled from May 2011 classis meeting) To cease efforts to recover the outstanding student loans of four people.

Grounds:

a. These people have not met the contractual requirements of items 4, 5, and 6 of the CMLT/student contract,

4) The party of the second part furthermore promises and hereby agrees to make full and complete repayment to the said Classis Huron of all monies received, should (s)he discontinue his/her studies toward ordained ministry.

5) The party of the second part furthermore promises and hereby agrees to make repayment if (s)he should leave the ministry of the CRCNA within five years after his/her ordination; such repayment will be proportionate to the duration of his/her ordained ministry in the CRCNA.

6) When repayments under this term and stipulations shall be required, the party of the second part promises and hereby agrees to make repayments at the rate of 20 per cent per year of the original amount owing, which repayments shall begin not later than one year after discontinuing studies for the ministry or leaving the ministry of the CRCNA.

b. There is little chance of recovering these funds due to the financial situation of the individuals.

-carried

12. Waterloo CRC – Jacinda Rietsma, chair of council.

Pastor Vicki Cok and her husband Dennis decided to separate at the beginning of July. Council is very supportive of Pastor vicki's continued ministry and of Dennis' efforts to find another church. Church visitors will visit over next couple of months.

Amanda Bakale, a member of Waterloo CRC ad a candidate for the ministry, will serve as interim pastor in Wingham for next six months.

Prayer for Waterloo CRC and for Maitland River CRC was offered by Rev. Darren Roorda.

13. Lunch devotions – Leslie Van Milligen

Delegates spent two or three talking in groups of three or four about new ministry initiatives within their congregations. Leslie concluded this time with prayer, followed by the doxology.

LUNCH

14. Opening devotions – Rev. Chris Pool

Rev. Chris Pool led devotions by having us together recite the Apostles Creed, singing How Majestic Is your Name and The Servant song, followed by prayer.

15. Lifestyle presentation/ discussion – facilitated by Judy Cook

Judy Cook worked as a therapist for Salem Christian Counselling Services, now called Shalem.

She said that it is very tempting to deal with lifestyle issues in black and white. “But lifestyle issues aren’t black and white. We often join the world in practicing selfish ambition. We know what it is to be greedy. We know what it is to be proud. We feel comfortable spending a lot of money in pleasure pursuits. We feel comfortable in joining the world in these lifestyle pursuits. We idolize sports, movies and the stars. Often we don’t seek the kingdom first. We seek our own self-gratification first.” She said that we are all having to deal with lifestyle issues and the sin attached to those lifestyle issues.

She handed out a cast study about a new couple moving into a church community. She is a new Christian and she is twice divorced and is living common law. (See appendix)

Through small group discussions there was consensus that we want those who are in a lifestyle that we feel is wrong come into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our response is not always about what is best for the person in question but about what the congregation will think of council’s decision.

Should a couple that is living common law live apart before they get married? Both need to be equally committed to Christ in order to see value in being apart, as a sign of confession to each other and to God.

Q. Should each lifestyle issue be approached differently, depending on circumstances, or should there be a policy that applies to all equally?

There was consensus that it depends on the circumstances. Having a policy would be easy for council, but it should depend on circumstances.

Q. A young couple who grew up in the church decides to live common law. The action seems ‘willful and rebellious.’ How do we respond?

Judy said that “most young couples in the CRC today have sex together. It’s part of today’s society. They don’t see anything wrong with engaging in sex.”

There are other implications to living common law vs. marrying. Seniors who remarry may lose their pensions.

We want to cast a vision for holy living. Is everybody living up to that? No.

Should there be a lifestyle policy for key leadership positions?

Church membership:

Judy said that becoming a member of a church should not focus solely on lifestyle issues. “They all belong. We all have lifestyle issues. Would we deny membership to someone who is selfish, who lies or is greedy? Why do we single out sexual expression without the benefit of marriage?”

We often make membership in the church dependent upon making lifestyle changes; ie being free to come to communion and being baptized.

“What would change if we thought of membership based on the confession “I want to put my trust in Jesus Christ as my Saviour.”

Think about membership in terms of inclusiveness.

Prayer: Judy Cook offered a prayer for the church councils as they deal with various lifestyle issues.

16. Goderich’s ministry response to the tornado – Rev. Stephen Tamming

Delegates watched a PowerPoint presentation on the devastation caused by the Goderich tornado. Then Rev. Tamming talked about the church’s response to the community’s needs.

Trinity CRC in Goderich was supposed to have a church picnic on the day that the tornado hit the town. Rev. Tamming was driving into the heart of the town when the tornado hit... for 15 terrifying seconds.

As a precaution, the town’s gas was shut off. Since the Salvation Army had no gas, they asked if they could use Trinity CRC to serve 500 meals a day. Within a week they cooked 3,000 meals. The town needed a place to sort non-perishable items so the entire church building was used. Since the sanctuary served as a sorting station, the Sunday service was cancelled, and members were encouraged to attend neighbourhood churches. Jake and Wilma Hiemstra became ministry coordinators that week.

This was the first time that every church closed their buildings on Sunday so that they could worship together in a school gym, attracting over 1,200 people. The service theme was on ‘hope’.

The salt mine was shut down for three weeks. Suddenly, there were 1,200 people who were unemployed. Many of them became involved in cleaning up the downtown area.

The ministry that has opened up has been truly amazing. CRWRC will not set up a specific fund for Goderich but Trinity CRC deacons will identify the need over the next two or three weeks and inform the churches. Many churches have provided support. Deacons will be setting up a relief account to help those in the community who need help

17. Classis Home Missions Committee – Rev. John Vander Stoep, chair

MOTION: That Classis Huron give Rev. John Bouwers \$9,000 in second stream funding.

- carried.

18. Reflections on Synod 2011 – Keith Oosthoek, delegate to synod

Keith Oosthoek provided highlights of the meeting of synod.

He pointed out that 42 new candidates were approved. Candidate John Moelker (Kitchener) is going to Dresden CRC.

Rev. Dr. Darren Roorda will serve on the Board of Trustees.

New pension plan changes were approved. The retirement age for pastors is 66. Premiums to churches increased by 15 per cent. It was a requirement because of funding changes in Canada.

As a result of the rule changes, 116 pastors decided on early retirement, effective June 30.

The denomination has a new emphasis on diversity, with the goal of having 25 per cent of denominational leadership coming from ethnic communities.

19. Nominations Committee – Stated Clerk

MOTION 1: That Rev. Tom Van Milligen be appointed to the Classis Home Missions Committee.

- carried.

MOTION 2: That classis appoint Rev. Ralph Wigboldus as chair and Rev. Rita Klein-Geltink as vice-chair of the Classis Ministry Committee and its Administrative Committee. –carried.

MOTION 3: That Gerald Klein Geltink be nominated by Classis Huron to represent Region 4 on the CRC Home Missions Committee. –carried.

MOTION 4: That Lesli Van Milligen be nominated by Classis Huron to represent Region 4 on Faith Alive Christian Resources.

-carried.

20 Correspondence -- Lucknow CRC (Request for retirement of Rev. Dwayne Thielke)

MOTION: That Classis Huron grant Rev. Dwayne Thielke’s request for retirement because of age, effective June 30, 2011. – carried.

20. Church visitors

Blyth -- Rev. Ron Luchies reported that Candidate Joel Bootsma was in Blyth and council will recommend that he be called.

Guelph First – Rev. Ray Vander kooij reported that Rev. Dave Tigchelaar of Renfrew. (Rev. Tigchelaar has subsequently accepted the call)

21. Announcements

Young Adult Ministry: Rev. Dr. Darren Roorda spoke on behalf of the Classis Youth Ministry Team. He reported that the group has fallen apart. Each church is asked to send one young adult and one adult to the next town hall meeting to wrestle with how do we do ministry with and alongside young adults in classis. No firm date has been set.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank: Will Bakker of Listowel mentioned that listowel area farmers hope to net \$200,000 and set a record when they harvest 160 acres of soybeans in the Monkton area during the last half of September. They want to make this the fastest combining of soybeans, and expect 200 participants.

22. Credentials Committee – Rev. Stephen Tamming

a. Owen Sound CRC is willing to host classis in September, 2012.

b. River City Church “feels like its on the edge of some big change. Pastor Darren Bierman has come back from sabbatical. The visionary board is looking at short-term and long-term goals for the church, trying to determine whether they should stay in rented space or seek to get their own space. They want to keep their mission of being a church for the unchurched. “It’s hard to be on a visionary board in these hard financial times.” CMC was encouraged to follow up with River City.

c. Exeter CRC asks: How do we teach young adults about intentional giving? This may be part of a future discussion.

d. Blyth asks why we only have pulpit supply in morning services when they have two services? Because it was a classis decision two years ago to do so.

e. Guelph First provided grounds to reduce the number of times classis meets from three to two classis meetings.

- there would be cost-savings in transportation, paper and time.

- the prevalence of electronic communications.

23. Closing

The chair thanked the stated clerk, vice chair and the elders for their contribution to classis. The vice-chair thanked the

chair for his leadership.

Rev. John Vanderburgh was thanked for his years of service within classis and Drayton. Rev. Siemen Speelman read from Psalm 121.

The meeting closed with the doxology at 4 p.m., followed by soup and buns before delegates headed home.

24. Future Classis Meetings

Date	Place	Reports due	Chair	Vice-chair
Jan. 11, 2012	Drayton	Dec. 2, 2011	John Vanderstoep	Bill Hoogland
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	

25. Addendum -- Classis Huron discussion on Lifestyle Issues – Judy Cook

CASE STUDY:

Angie started coming to Coffee Break about a year ago. Soon after that she started attending church, slipping into the back pew. Angie had moved to town, with her common-law husband Ben and two children about a year ago, in order to be closer to her in-laws who needed support. Soon after the move Ben lost his job. It took a while for Angie to share their financial struggles with the Coffee Break women, but eventually she did so. Angie has come to feel like she belongs to the church, and she is working hard to understand the beliefs of the CRC; she calls it “her church.” In conversations with the pastor Angie began attending the new members’ class where the creeds and the confessions are explained and discussed. As the prospect of making public profession of faith and becoming a full member of the church becomes her desire, Angie has been asking her pastor “What will the church council do with me?” You see, Angie is twice divorced, has children from both of those marriages, and has been living with Ben for about 10 years. Their two children are 7 and 9. Their lives are very unsettled right now; the house they are renting is about to be sold, finances are tight as Ben begins his training to become a trucker. Ben has only attended church occasionally, and he has no interest in getting married at this time. The elders of the church will soon have to decide how to proceed.

Q. What would the deepest desire of the council likely be? What action by the elders would address that desire best?

Further questions about Lifestyle

Q. How do we deal pastorally with those living in common-law relationships, especially as we reach out into the community where this lifestyle is seen as normal?

Q. How do we respond to the onslaught of acceptance of couples living together before marriage, also young couples brought up in the faith?

Q. How do we respond to teenage drinking and partying, which seems to be the cultural norm also accepted by our teens?

Q. With the sexualization of younger teens in our culture coupled with the trend of waiting to be married well into adulthood, how do we promote sexual purity?

Q. How do we disciple as well as discipline people who have fallen into sexual sin? How do we maintain righteousness as well as extend grace?

Q. Should we have a lifestyle policy, or set up guidelines & procedures which leave room for discernment as we walk alongside people? What kind of procedures?