

Classis Huron: Who, What, When, Where, Why

Welcome to this meeting of Classis Huron! We are glad that you have volunteered to be a delegate from your congregation for this upcoming meeting. This *Classis Primer* is intended to help you navigate your experience (especially if it's your first time). You'll find an explanation of all the various committees that you see on the agenda. If you have questions please don't hesitate to ask the one of the officers of the day, or the stated clerk.

Classis Huron is a regional association of Christian Reformed Churches from Owen Sound to Goderich, to Cambridge, to Acton, to Orangeville, to Collingwood, and all the areas in between. We are one of 47 classes that comprise the CRCNA.

We meet three times each year, in February, May, and September, to spend time together worshiping and learning, discussing and making decisions on our shared ministries, examining candidates for ministry, hearing reports from our denominational ministries, as well as other ministries with ties to the CRC, and more.

In general, our meetings are governed by the *Church Order of the CRCNA*, the Rules of Classis Huron, and Roberts Rules of Order. At the time of registration for the meeting, all first time delegates are asked to declare their agreement with the Covenant for Officebearers.

Each church is expected to send three delegates to classis, usually one minister, one elder, and one deacon, although sometimes these get moved around for a variety of reasons. If you are an elder or deacon delegate, we encourage you to participate fully in the discussion. Don't assume that your pastor will speak on your behalf. Our meetings are deliberative meetings. This means that you are not merely a representative of your council (your council should not/cannot instruct you how to vote). You are here to listen and respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting through open and deliberative discussion. The point of the meeting is to hear all discussion before deciding how to cast your vote. If something is unclear please ask—if you are not sure about something, chances are good that there are more people who are unsure and need clarification as well.

If you need assistance, please don't hesitate to ask the Stated Clerk or the Chair. We hope you enjoy your time at classis!

Classis Primer- Especially for First Time Delegates

Commonly Used Acronyms at Classis

ADCOM	- Administrative Committee of the CMC	DCC	- Diaconal Conference Committee
COD	- Council of Delegates of the CRCNA	FRT	- Financial Resources Team
CHMC	- Classis Home Missions Committee	GCM	- Guelph Campus Ministry
CMC	- Classis Ministry Committee	RUC	- Redeemer University College
CMD	- Canadian Ministries Director	SC	- Stated Clerk
CMLT	- Classis Ministerial Leadership Team	SCT	- Safe Church Team
CRCNA	- Christian Reformed Church in North America	WCM	- Waterloo Campus Ministry
RGM	- Resonate Global Missions (formerly CRWM)	WR	- World Renew (formerly CRWRC)

The following Committees exist for the duration of classis, or for a specific time frame: *If your church is assigned to one of these committees, the delegates from your church (including you!) make up the committee*

- **Credentials Committee:** Credentials are the forms that each church's delegates must bring to classis verifying that they are the duly appointed delegates from their church. The credentials committee is the committee that makes sure all credentials are duly received, and that issues raised on the credentials are brought to the attention of classis.
- **Balloting Committee:** The Balloting Committee distributes, counts, and destroys ballots for any votes taken by ballot. Any delegate can ask for any vote to be taken by silent ballot, but there are some votes that are automatically taken by ballot, including votes to extend a license to exhort or ordination to an individual, sensitive church order procedures, and elections.
- **Overtures Committee:** A formal request from a congregation (or sometimes an individual) usually comes in the form of an "overture" asking classis to do something. A committee (usually delegates from two churches) is assigned to study the overture and offer advice to classis on how to deal with the overture.

Standing Committees of Classis

- **Administrative Sub-Committee – (AdCom)** This Committee takes care of all matters between Classis meetings and is empowered to act in an administrative capacity, and is accountable to CMC.
- **Classis Ministry Committee – (CMC)** This committee takes care of matters that cannot wait until the next classis meeting, as well as preparing/approving the agenda for classis meetings.
- **Classis Home Missions Committee – (CHMC)** This committee works with congregations to develop new churches/ministries, encourage outreach and leadership development.

- **Classis Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT)** - Administers funds for financial aid and works with students preparing to enter full-time ordained or non-ordained ministry within the CRC.
- **Diaconal Conference Committee (DCC)** - Works to heighten awareness of diaconal ministries and diaconal conferences
- **Financial Resources Committee (FRC)** – oversees all matters pertaining to the budget of classis, including requests for new or increased ministry shares.
- **Campus Ministries (Guelph and Waterloo)** – promote the gathering of God’s people in the context of higher education, and engage in holistic kingdom ministries in the university setting
- **Safe Church Team** – (SCT) Helps churches to develop safe church communities and administers the counselling fund.

Other roles in classis:

- **Church Counsellors:** When a church is in the process of calling a pastor, a pastor from a nearby church is assigned as a counsellor to assist the council and ensure that everything is done properly and in good order.
- **Church Visitors:** Each church and its council should be visited regularly by the “church visitors.” The church visiting teams are made up of a pastor and an elder, and the churches are assigned to a team based on geography.
- **Regional Pastor:** A regional pastor is appointed to the west side and the east side of classis to help provide pastoral care and encouragement to the pastors in the region.
- **Synodical Deputies:** Some decisions that a classis makes are so important and complicated that Church Order requires that representatives from other classes are called in to make sure that proper procedure is followed and that they agree with the decision classis makes. Each classis has one Synodical Deputy and one alternate.
- **Stated Clerk:** The Stated Clerk keeps the records of classis in order and serves as a point person for communication within classis. The Stated Clerk serves on the Administrative Committee *ex-officio*.

Church Order

Much of the work done by classis is regulated by the Church Order of the CRCNA. The Church Order contains the rules and procedures that, by common consent, all the churches in the denomination abide by. Only a synod (the annual leadership meeting of the CRCNA) can change the Church Order (and it does change...every year!). The most up-to-date version of the Church Order can be found at crcna.org/resources/synod-resources.

Basic Rules of Order

- **A main motion** - A motion that requests an action of Classis. It must be supported, or seconded, and discussed before a vote is held. It must be presented in written form at the request of chair or clerk.
- **A motion to amend** - A proposal to alter a main motion, in language or in meaning, before a final action is taken on the motion.
- **A motion to defer action, withhold action, or table** - When Classis deems it advisable, it may decide to table a motion temporarily. Tabling a motion implies that the meeting will resume consideration of it at a later hour.
- **Objection to a ruling by the chair** - If any member of Classis is not satisfied with the ruling of the chair he/she may ‘challenge the chair’ and the matter is then referred to the assembly for a final decision.
- **Right of protest** - It is a right of any member to protest any decision of Classis. Protests should be registered immediately, or at least during the session in which the matter was acted upon. Members may, if they desire, ask to have their negative vote recorded.
- **Call for the division of the question** - At the request of one or more members of Classis, a motion consisting of more than one part may be divided and voted upon separately.
- **A motion to reconsider/rescind** - If any member of Classis, for weighty reasons, desires reconsideration of a matter already decided upon at that meeting of Classis, one of the following methods may be used:
 - A motion to reconsider may be offered only by a person who has voted with the majority. The purpose of this motion is to propose a new discussion and a new vote.
 - A motion to rescind has as its purpose to annul or to reverse a previous decision.
- **Discussion** - To speak on the floor, a speaker must first be recognized by the chair (i.e. raise your hand or walk over to a microphone). If possible, please stand and speak into the microphone. State your name and what church you are delegated from every time you speak, and let people know right away whether you are in favour of the motion on the floor (or not). Always speak directly to the Chair, not other delegates, and keep your comments focused on the decision being made.