# Mission Catalyst – Report to Classis – February 15, 2023

When I considered applying for the position of Mission Catalyst within Classis Huron, the job description included the task of supporting and promoting “vision casting”. It was a new term for me and I researched to find that simply put it is “articulating a picture of God’s better future for your church”. Rick Warren the author of the previous description goes on to say: “Vision casting is critical because people need a picture. They can focus with a picture. They can mark progress in their own spiritual growth with a picture. They can see beyond Sunday worship attendance with a picture. They can survive seasons in the wilderness with a picture. They can understand the real nature of discipleship with a picture. Jesus cast vision of a coming Kingdom and taught His followers with pictures”.

I have been privileged these past months to continue work within Classis on the Classis Huron Ministry Plan, and directly with a number of churches interested in revisiting their visions and missions based on the new space we find ourselves as a result of COVID and other relevant circumstances. The question that grounds these exercises is the same. What will we look like, act like, be like, if we are successful in discerning and enacting God’s purpose for us. Together, the Classis committee, leadership group or congregation, paint a picture of how they strive to be in 5 or more years. Once visions are articulated, the conversations turn to the activities, assumptions and attitudes that will lead to change, refinement or the steady continuance of gospel-shaped life moments.

I share with you a small sampling of the visions and ideas that have echoed through these exercises. Sharing some of the truly important ideas that reflect a kingdom vision as well as, a sense of resolve to discern His will for our lives, churches, ministries and Classis.

* Much faithfulness as we carry each other and our ministries.
* An urgency that our world and communities are facing unprecedented times and that we need to share the saving grace of God.
* Prayerful and intentional change is required to grow into God’s vision for us. For our efforts to be successful, everyone must be included in our deliberations and understand our unifying vision. We must learn to work through differences with love and acceptance.
* Our youth are integral to our future. We need to know them and ensure youth programing allows them to build lifelong Christian relationships with and within the Church.
* Churches should reflect their communities: culturally, socio-economically and demographically.
* Storytelling, both celebrating joy and sharing sorrow is a community builder – A Classis is an administrative body necessary to walk this denominational road together but is much more – a family and a community.
* Capacity can be an issue – what, how, why and for whom, are all part of the reflections as we discern His will for our lives, Churches and Denomination.

Even while we discuss and discern, God works within us to bring His plan to fruition. Pastor Sid Couperus (Owen Sound) shared with Classis Huron Mission Team, his vision for a Prayer Catalyst Ministry. Which is to unite Classis members in prayer; connecting, learning and interceding together to bring renewal to Churches, Classis and the Denomination. Pastor Sid has volunteered to coordinate this ministry and seeks contact information from each Church and Ministry in Classis to begin this process.

Additionally, a Youth Ministry Leaders retreat was held in September to discuss the future of youth ministry in Classis as well as to incorporate perspective into the Classis Huron Ministry Plan. 14 youth ministry leaders including 3 youth, CRCNA youth consultant, Ron Devries and Mission Catalyst Joan Brady participated in a vision casting session over a Friday evening - Saturday time frame. The resulting discussions emphasized a reliance on God for all, a lifelong, mentorship-based approach to youth ministry, vibrant youth ministries valued and supported by congregations ready to integrate children youth into church life, and the need for resources and networking to support the many volunteers in their desire to serve in this way.

Classis Huron is asked to re-visit the support of youth ministry in consultation with Churches and their youth ministry leaders. The position of youth ministry champion has been vacant since October 2020.

In His Name,

Joan - [Jbrady@crcna.org](mailto:Jbrady@crcna.org)