

Classis Huron Mission Catalyst Report – May 2023

Conversation Summary – Youth Ministry Leaders Consultation – April 06, 2023

Ron Devries, CRCNA Youth Ministry Consultant and I, CH Mission Catalyst, led a series of conversations on April 06, 2023. Classis Pastors and Youth Leaders were invited to attend. The resulting discussion followed a year and half focus on the question of support of Classis for Youth Ministry in its member churches.

Former Youth Champion, Amy Baarda, the first in Classis, served from 2017- 2020 and had not been replaced during COVID. Clerk, Fred Vander Sterre surveyed other Canadian Classes as to their Youth Ministry support and received a number of responses. Classis then went on to host a consultation around Youth Ministry in May 2022 followed by a Youth Ministry Leaders Retreat in September 2022.

The Youth Ministry Leaders at the retreat, emphasized various areas of concern/interest as well as recommended that Classis take a role in networking and supporting Youth Ministry Leaders. As a follow-up, the meeting on April 06, focused on the question: 'If moving forward means a Classis Huron Ministry position, what are some of the key characteristics to the role that are important to you?'

The discussion recommended a robust Youth Ministry position (YMP) that invested in the development of local youth leaders. The YMP would develop pastoral relationships with youth leaders as well as with youth elders who might be seeking or filling the youth leader role within their churches. Youth Leaders, in attendance, shared various challenges with recruiting volunteers and filling the local youth ministry role. Lack of training, lack of access to resources and curriculum and the related lack of confidence in their ministry were cited as barriers to maintaining volunteers and paid staff to the positions. Lack of volunteers and resources impact the ability to engage and ensure the participation of youth. The position would need the capacity to support 21 Youth Ministries in Classis with a goal of increasing capacity within each of the Youth Ministries by supporting Youth Ministry Leaders.

A potential candidate for YMP will need to be carefully selected and supported. The YMP should have a strong theological base and/or a willingness to upgrade theological knowledge. They will need to be accessible, easily identifiable and reach out to youth leaders regularly. They could act as the voice of youth for Classis, Informing, sharing and acting as a link to youth ministry leaders and their youth. They could act as a connector and encourage networking amongst Classis' congregations.

Currently 5 Classes in the denomination employ a fulltime Youth Ministry lead. They utilise various mandates but could provide experienced guidance in a YPM development process. Other preparatory activities could include a congregational survey, determining demographics and existing youth ministry programming and further targeted discussions. An adhoc committee could be tasked with building a case for YPM in the Classis by creating a proposal and financial plan.

Taking a proactive approach to youth ministry, giving Churches and Youth Ministry Leaders the support required to both retain youth and welcome community youth, is a critical consideration in the future of our Congregations, Classis and Denomination.

Opportunities for training and support

This past winter, I took advantage of a series of learning opportunities that I would like to share with you all. Some training sessions have enabled me to support Congregations in Classis in their ministry and mission and others I can recommend as fulfilling and worthwhile.



Thrivng Essentials is a new way to get all the ministry leaders in your church—elders and deacons, volunteers and staff, newbies and old-timers—aligned on core concepts of mission, discipleship, discernment, and leadership. This four-hour course, offered via Zoom and in-person, provides refreshing insights and can serve as a springboard to deeper conversations about ministry in your local context. [Learn more here.](#)

I have been privileged to assist in session facilitation and will be able to support in-person training sessions. A number of Classis Congregations have already participated, I will be glad to pass on their contacts, if you are interested to hear more.



Faithwalking is a journey of growth, transformation, and formation. This 6 series course combines tools and practices designed to help open your heart to a deeper connection with God and learn to align your life with the life and teachings of Jesus. Become more self-aware, gain freedom from wounds of your past, and experience the personal freedom that comes from living a less reactive life. Develop more healthy, authentic, and meaningful relationships by growing your capacity to manage yourself. [Learn more here.](#)

Having taken Modules 1 and 2 – I will be able to support upcoming cohorts as a coach – please connect with me if you are interested in participating or hosting a new cohort.

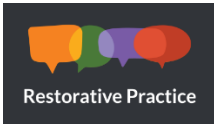


HEARTS EXCHANGED

Hearts Exchanged is a learning and action journey designed to equip Reformed Christians to engage with Indigenous people as neighbours and fellow image bearers.

This co-learning setting models the sacred journey of reconciliation, preparing us as Christians to build relationships with Indigenous communities that are marked by mutual respect and reciprocity. Participants are transformed in their minds and hearts as they are invited into honest dialogue about the harms of colonialism, and encounter 'hearts broken' stories and experiences. [Learn more here.](#)

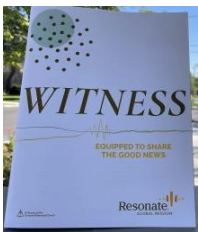
I highly recommend this course for anyone who would like a deeper understanding of our wrongful history in regards to Canada's First Nations. Intense at times, the leaders are intentional about working with participants on difficult realities and each student is paired with another to discover and process the curriculum together.



I attended a 2-day training on [Restorative Practice](#), learning how to design and facilitate proactive listening circles for a variety of topics and occasions. Also included was learning how to incorporate restorative practices to enrich interpersonal relationships, small groups, teams, congregational life, and many other contexts.

I would be glad to lead Classis Huron Churches in intentional conversation on the topics important to you. We can learn together how Restorative Practice can enrich:

- Leadership meetings
- Staff meetings
- Bible studies
- Small groups
- Youth group
- Congregational Discernment



The ingredients for being a gospel witness today are now available in a free curriculum from Resonate called [Witness: Equipped to Share the Good News](#). This downloadable resource provides five sessions with short videos, small group guides, and a participant journal. As your small groups, adult education class, youth group, or other community go through these sessions together, you'll learn about how Prepare, Be Present, Proclaim, Participate, and Power come together to help us be gospel witnesses.

I recommend this for churches who are looking to better understand what their missions might look like, within the community and beyond. It is a great resource for small groups, your outreach teams and even Council. Contact me, I would be glad to share more.

Finally, this fall, I am planning the final sessions for the Classis Huron Ministry Plan. I have met with the various committees and ministries that constitute the management and operations of Classis, we are developing a clearer vision of who/what God is calling us to be. Next steps are to take this vision and attach an action plan. What will it take to get there? Where should our focus and priorities be? What are the postures and values we are to exemplify? And when will we know we have achieved what God is calling Classis Huron to?

I would be glad to have some church leaders participate – please let me know of your interest or reach out if you require additional information.

In His Name,

Joan Brady – CH Mission Catalyst

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