



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

MINUTES

February 10, 2021 – 9:00 a.m.

Virtual session

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		Dean Vuyk	Evelyn Hurt
Blyth	Gary Van Leeuwen	Luke Bouman	Dan Bouman
Cambridge – Maranatha	Norm Sennema	Kevin Martens	Len Bakelaar
Cambridge - River City	Darrell Bierman	Andrew Johnson	Melinda Saunders
Clinton	Ray Vander Kooij	Francine Durrer	Derek Rozendal
Collingwood	Victor Laarman	Ary Vandermeer	George Strampel
Drayton	Elder Andy Knetsch	John Zwart	Teresa Wikkerink
Exeter	Elder Bert Visscher	Al Vanderlaan	Bill Branderhorst
Fergus - The Bridge	John Vanderstoep		
Goderich - Trinity	-	Jim Giilck	John Bruinsma
Guelph – Campus Ministry	Sara DeMoor	-	-
Guelph – First	David Tigchelaar	Peter Krygsman	Mary Blydorp
Guelph – New Life	Ed Jager	Peter Schuurman	Peter Timmerman & Jack Tacoma PM
Kitchener – Community	Amanda Bakale	Anita DeHaan	Jane VanderVelde
Kitchener – The Journey			
Listowel – Bethel	Ralph Wigboldus	Pete Slotegraaf	Rob Lee
Lucknow - Community	Tim Leferink	Margaret Vander Vaart	-
Orangeville	Andrew Vis	Neeltje Montgomery	
Owen Sound – First	Sid Couperus	Simon DeBoer	Brenda Posthumus
Palmerston	Andrew de Gelder	John Katerberg	Mike Oosterhof
Stratford	Martin Dam	Gary vanZandwijk	-
Vanastra - Community			
Waterloo	Vicki Cok	Dave Jaarsma	Grace Pidduck
Waterloo – Campus Ministry			
Wingham – Maitland River Community	Henry Steenbergen	Stephen Vander Klippe	Jack Wilkins

Officers of the day: Chair: Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen Vice chair: Rev. Ralph Wigboldus
 Stated Clerk: Fred Vander Sterre Technical Assistance: Albert Hovingh

Devotions for the Day: •Opening: Listowel-Bethel
 •Closing: Vice chair

Committees of the Day: •Credentials: Orangeville & Owen Sound
 •Overture: Clinton & Vanastra
 •Balloting: Google

Special Guests: Atie Ott, Classis Huron Safe Church Coordinator
 Len Bakelaar, Disability Concerns Regional Advocate
 Anna McMenemy, graduate of Guelph University
 Joan Bradly, Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer
 Darren Roorda, Canadian Ministry Director

1. Opening & Devotions:

- 1.1** Chairman Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen welcomed all in attendance and provided direction regarding the zoom connections and etiquettes.
 Rev. Ralph Wigboldus led us in devotion and worship time included prayer, reading of Hebrews 12: 1-3, all these witnesses who have suffered are witnesses to God's faithfulness, we also should run the race with perseverance. Our focus needs to be on Jesus Christ. Pastor Ralph opened Classis with prayer.
- 1.2** Gary introduced the executive present at the Stratford CRC.
 He also explained the voting and communication procedure and if needed how to proceed if executive session will be called.
- 1.3** The chair declared classis instituted.

2 Sharing session

- 2.1** Pastor Gary introduce the questions for the chat-room sharing session.
 The delegates and guests spent 20 minutes in the chat rooms sharing:
- How are our churches coping with the COVID pandemic?
 - What new opportunities has COVID presented themselves to your church, Which ones of those would you want to preserve after the crisis has passed.
 - Specific issues you may be struggling with.

3 Classis Huron Ministries Reports

3.1 Classical Ministry Committee:

Martin Dam reported for CMC and AdCom.
 The report included:

- 3.1.1** Approval of the October 17th 2020 session of Classis Huron
- 3.1.2** Having a break-out session during classis, focusing on COVID experiences among the churches
- 3.1.3** Discontinuing the provision of pulpit supplies to vacant churches during July and August.
- 3.1.4** In cases where churches make use of electronic versions of sermons from pastors of other churches, a fair compensation needs to be negotiated between the two churches and the pastor.
- 3.1.5** The appointment of Kathy Wassink to serve as Auditor to review both the 2020 and the 2021 fiscal records of Classis Huron.
- 3.1.6** The next meeting of Classis Huron is scheduled for Wednesday May 12, 2021.
 Deadline for the agenda is March 31.
- 3.1.7** **Motion** was made to approve the work of CMC. *Carried*

3.2 Guelph Campus Ministry:

Chair of the board Ray Vander Kooij introduced the board members.
 Sara DeMoor used a slide show to share the activities of the ministry, which included a one-

day fall retreat including several new students. Social isolation is a challenge for many students to which the ministry responds.

One of the graduates, Anna McMenemy, shared her experience and spiritual growth through the campus ministry. She expresses her appreciation for the support for the Guelph Campus Ministry.

Other local churches are also providing support, for instance through potluck lunches.

Sara responded to some questions. The synodical report on human sexuality, in its current format, may cause some concerns in the relationships with universities.

The chairman thanked the presenters and the board and lifted the ministry up in prayer.

3.3 Safe Church Committee:

The chair pointed out the need for liability insurance coverage for Classis Huron by Robertson-Hall. The requirement is that every church of Classis Huron has its own insurance policy and a copy of that needs to be made available to Robertson-Hall, before classis can be covered.

Atie Ott reported on the work of the committee. In addition to the printed report, she highlighted the formation of a small support group to help her with her work. Also a new Safe Church Director, Amanda Benkhuisen, is appointed.

Atie promoted a new webinar *Unmute: The Impact of a Pandemic on Gender-Based Violence*, produced by various agencies in the Waterloo Region. This will be offered as a free participatory workshop during this time of COVID.

Atie is thanked by the chair.

Sid presented a prayer for the Safe Church Committee and the new Director.

3.4 Classical Mission Team / Mission Catalyzer:

Joan Brady submitted a written report and in addition shared about her work. She now is a trained facilitator, equipped to present the Crossroads Discernment Toolkit to the churches. This tool helps churches to look both ahead as well as to the past and includes congregational engagement. The link to the tool is <https://network.crcna.org/church-renewal/crossroads-discernment-toolkit-not-just-hard-times>. Joan is available to help the churches in their journeys. The Chair thanked Joan for her work.

4 Other Classical Committee Reports

4.1 Classical Councilors:

For Acton – Andrew Vis. The church is doing some visioning/discerning work. There is a good group of leaders serving the church.

For Drayton – Andy Knetch reports that they are continuing the process of calling a pastor.

For Trinity Goderich – Tim Leferink reported that Rev. Tim Keep from California accepted a call to Goderich and he should arrive sometime in May.

Kitchener Community – Vicki Cok reported that Kitchener is exploring to extend a call

The Journey – Norm Sennema reported that they have a search team in place. They are working out details, as they continue to be an emerging church.

The Chair thanked the classical councilors for their work.

4.2 Overture Committee: Rev. Ray Vander Kooij reported

4.2.1 On overture #1 from Maitland River CRC:

The advice is to accept the overture requesting the retirement of pastor Henry Steenbergen effective July 31.

Motion was made by the committee and supported.

Carried.

Ray prayed for the church and Henry's ongoing journey.

4.2.2 Overtures #2, 3, 4 are dealing with the Human Sexuality Report to Synod.

The committee advised to adopt overture #4 from Kitchener CRC:

That Classis Huron overture Synod 2021 to delay decisions regarding the recommendations

of the report from the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality until Synod 2022.

Grounds:

Primary discussions on aspects of the committee's report which may be controversial should happen in local churches before a decision is made at Synod.

The Toolkit provided by Pastor Church Resources and commended by the study committee gives churches a healthy and productive way to process the controversial aspects of the report and share insights or concerns with their councils and classes.

There is not enough time to complete the Toolkit before churches are required to send in overtures to classis if they are to be considered at Synod 2021.

The threshold for prior opportunity has not been met in either a quantitative or qualitative sense.

Motion was made by the committee and supported to adopt Kitchener's overture. *Carried.* Classis agreed to allow New Life, Guelph and Bethel, Listowel to submit their overtures directly to Synod, if that is their wish.

The overture committee was thanked for their work.

4.3 Credentials committee:

Rev. Andrew Vis reported:

4.3.1 Clinton thanks classis for the guidance during the time of vacancy and the support provided by Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen.

Clinton also has some questions about best practices for live-streaming services.

The response is that there are many other organizations and individuals that have written such documents.

Clinton asked classis providing a way for churches to share hymn / worship videos to use in services.

The suggestion to Clinton is to email the churches of Classis Huron and ask if there are any churches willing to share hymn / worship videos with Clinton.

Pastor Ray can contact other churches across the denomination by posting a comment on the CRC Pastors Facebook page.

Clinton can also consider contacting worship artists directly to ask permission to use the artists' videos.

4.3.2 Drayton communicated to classis that they like to go on record affirming the tone and analysis of the Human Sexuality Report to Synod.

Drayton also asks if classis is aware of the Niagara 2020 Declaration and what classis' position is on this declaration.

Rev. Sid Couperus shared a bit about the declaration, that focuses on the COVID restrictions set out by the Ontario government. It was signed by many churches, but very few CRCs.

The declaration is something to be looked at by the individual churches, rather than by classis.

Classis decided to take the declaration for information for now.

The Credential Committee's work is declared to be concluded and the committee is thanked.

4.4 Oversight Committee:

Rev. Ralph Wigboldus reported on behalf of the committee. The in-person meetings with Rev. Stephen Tamming have been sporadic. Several phone-calls have been made. It will take some time for Stephen to identify God's direction.

5 Denominational Ministries Reports

5.1 Council of Delegates:

Rev. Ralph Wigboldus gave a short report in addition to his written report. Several senior leaders in the denomination are retiring. He highlighted the lists of links to helpful websites at the end of his printed report.

COD will be meeting later in February.

Rev. Darren Roorda briefly joined to respond to questions. The Canadian Restructuring Team Report should be made available soon.

5.2 Disability Concerns and Pastor Church Resources:

Len Bakelaar reported that Disability Concerns is there to help churches be more aware of those struggling with disabilities. Care-giving has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has added stress and frustration, also to the pastors.

A video by Pastor Church Resources was shown. Rev. Norm Sennema shared about his work as Regional Pastor. He is noticing the stress among the pastors in this time of pandemic. He strongly encourages church leaders to watch the video, to ask their pastor how they are doing and not to hesitate to get in contact with one of the regional pastors.

The link to the video is <https://youtu.be/FFP9GvvkVjM>

Rev. Henry Steenbergen encourages the church leaders to check in with their pastors regularly. The Classical Councilors are encouraged to continue to stay in touch with the leadership of the vacant churches as well. Henry concludes with a time of prayer.

The chair thanks the regional pastors for their work. Also a word of thanks to Len Bakelaar and his long-term service on the Disability Concern Committee.

5.3 Diaconal Ministries:

Mary Blydorp started by thanking Len Bakelaar for his service as diaconal coach in the classis. She also introducing Peter Timmerman as the new diaconal coach. She highlighted and recommended a book-study stewardship webinar offered by Diaconal Ministries. The link is: <https://library.crcna.org/resource/what-do-i-owe>. Through New Ground grants are available to support the work within the neighborhood in this COVID-time. The Bridge and River City both made use of the program. Youth Justice initiative is another resource that engages the youth of the church.

5.4 World Renew:

Mary also reported on behalf of World Renew. Referring to the written report and the link of a video by Peter Bulthuis (Church and Community Engagement Director pbulthuis@worldrenew.ca) <https://vimeo.com/500220527/0584163eae> . Nearly \$400,000 was given to World Renew by the churches of our classis. Revenue was down a bit, but so were travel expenses. March 7 is Canadian Foodgrains Sunday. More information is at: <https://worldrenew.ca/downloads/canadian-foodgrains-bank-sunday-2021>

International Disaster Response is still active in Nicaragua, Honduras, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Syria, and other areas of disasters and lacking food security. Refugee sponsorship is still ongoing. Local churches can partner with a church in another country. More information about this type of partnership is available from Naomi Bula, the Global Engagement Opportunities Coordinator with the World Renew office (nbula@worldrenew.ca).

Mary also mentioned Ida's husband's death recently.

The chair led in prayer for the two ministries and the loss experienced by Ida.

It was ruled that the stated clerk will send a card to Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo on behalf of classis due to the loss of her husband.

6 Election of Delegates to Synod 2021

6.1 The ballots of minister and elder nominees for Synod were distributed electronically. During break the delegates had a chance to vote for the delegates.

The results are:

Minister Delegate: Rev. Henry Steenbergen

Alternate: Rev. Amanda Bakale

Minister Delegate: Rev. Martin Dam

Alternate Rev. Brian Bork

Elder Delegate: Theodula (Theody) Corton

Alternate: John Tamming

Jane VanderVelde is declared as deacon delegate to Synod.

No alternate was identified.

7 Final items:

- 7.1** A question was raised about the finances for our various denominational agencies. Some agencies have been impacted harder by COVID than others. The deacons should be aware of the challenges these organizations are facing and find ways to help them out. COD may be able to give the churches/deacons a better picture of the financial status of the various agencies.
- 7.2** Closing devotions were led by vice chair Ralph Wigboldus with thanks to the chairman Gary.
- 7.3** Meeting was declared adjourned at 12:30 PM.
The delegates were reminded to fill out the evaluation sheets and submit them.

**Next Session: D.V., Wednesday, May 12, 2021.
Deadline for agenda items is March 31, 2021.**

Chair of Classis
Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen

Stated Clerk of Classis
Fred Vander Sterre

Helpful Links:

Crossroads Discernment Toolkit <https://network.crcna.org/church-renewal/crossroads-discernment-toolkit-not-just-hard-times>.

Pastor Church Resources video: <https://youtu.be/FFP9GvvkVjM>

Book-study stewardship webinar offered by Diaconal Ministries:
<https://library.crcna.org/resource/what-do-i-owe>.

World Renew video: <https://vimeo.com/500220527/0584163eae>

2021 Can. Foodgrains Bank promo: <https://worldrenew.ca/downloads/canadian-foodgrains-bank-sunday-2021>

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