

**Report from your Classis Huron Mission Team (CHMT) May
2022**

Greetings from the CHMT. The current members of this committee are Kevin teBrake (chair), Jane Vander Velden (reporter), ex-officio member Joan Brady (CH Mission Catalyzer), and our newest member to the team – Paul deWeerd. Paul also informed us that he will be leaving our committee since he has accepted a call to Prince George, B.C. We wish him the Lord's blessings and thank him for his contribution to Classis and the Mission Team. **Once again, we appeal to the folks in Classis Huron to prayerfully consider joining this exciting team as together we assist and encourage existing churches and new church plants to join God in His mission.**

The CHMT oversees the work of Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer, Joan Brady. We are thankful for Joan's work and encourage churches to connect with Joan as a resource for working out God's mission for your church. Please continue to keep Joan and the many leaders and churches in prayer.

As an initiative by our Mission Catalyzer, the CHMT did some brainstorming about how our team fits into the mission of Classis Huron, and where we can serve God and the Classis in the reality in which we live, and what that will look like five years from now. This was an encouraging and beneficial exercise. Joan will be connecting with other teams and groups to also brainstorm, and together we can discern a ministry plan for each team and for Classis Huron. Joan has provided more detail in a separate report to Classis.

The CHMT continues to connect with and encourage the existing church plants: The Bridge (Fergus), The Journey (Kitchener), and Vitalpoint Church (Exeter). To share the exciting things that God is doing in these churches, we continue to highlight the church plants from time to time. Included with this report, Vitalpoint Church has been highlighted, to provide a snapshot of some of their kingdom work and how they are structured.

The CHMT thanks you for your prayers and encouragement, and we continue to lift your churches and ministries in prayer as well. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to connect with any one of the CHMT members.

On behalf of the CHMT,
Kevin teBrake

VitalPoint Church (VPC)

In this report, the CHMT is highlighting Vitalpoint Church. The CHMT asks that as you read this report, let's discern together "how Classis Huron can partner with VPC?"

History and Background:

VPC has a vision "To be a multi-site church that reaches thousands of people who are exploring and growing in their knowledge and commitment to Jesus and His Church." VPC is open to the Spirit's leading and sees that God is on the move! You can find out more information on their website www.vitalpointchurch.com.

In 2014, VPC began as a North campus church plant of Forest City Community Church (South London). Forest City Community Church (South London) resides in Classis Ontario Southwest and oversees VPC

and holds the credentials of Pastor Ron Baker. In 2016 after a lengthy discerning process, the North campus church plant merged with existing church plant Connections Community Church (London). In 2017, the name was changed to Forest City North Church. In 2018, as Forest City North began to expand outside of London, the name was changed to Vitalpoint Church.

In September 2019, VPC launched a multi-site in Exeter. Classis Ontario Southwest provided VPC with a launch grant of \$60,000 for equipment, salaries and initial launch costs. VPC gathered in the local South Huron high school with live simulcast from their main site. Vitalpoint desires to hire gifted leaders from within their community. David Baker became the Site Leader and Community Connection for the Exeter site. For 7 months, things were going well and growing, until COVID-19 impacted everyone. During COVID, the ministry in Exeter did not physically meet in one site and continued to flourish in creative ways. During a time of restrictions, VPC Exeter met as six separate micro-sites throughout Huron County. In the Fall of 2021, the Exeter site re-gathered as one group at the local Anglican Church on Sunday evenings. Ron currently preaches at the evening worship service at the Exeter site.

In 2021, VPC purchased property in Poplar Hill (west of London). This is now their central location, and Ron Baker is the lead pastor. Their purchase of this ministry property was approximately \$1.6 million dollars. VPC raised money both internally and externally. Classis Ontario Southwest provided VPC a first-time facility grant of \$250,000. Other funds came from the VPC community and supporters, and the remainder was loaned through the CRC Extension Fund.

The VPC Poplar Hill site is the central location. This church is situated in Poplar Hill just outside London and is in Classis Ontario Southwest. VPC is accountable to Classis Ontario Southwest. VPC is not yet an organized church in the CRC, and as a result, they are under the oversight of Forest City Community Church. In discussion with VPC, their hope is to become organized in the CRC soon.

In line with their vision, VPC continues to organically grow and discern where God is leading this church. As a result of experimenting with micro-sites during COVID, a group from the Clinton area along with leaders from VPC became curious about the possibility of starting another site in Clinton. VPC connected with CHMT and with the Clinton CRC and discerned the Lord's leading in this area of Huron County.

The Clinton site has begun part-time groundwork in February 2022 and hopes to fully launch the site in September 2022. VPC has communicated with both the pastor and the council at Clinton CRC. Clinton CRC prayerfully supports VPC, and financial support has been provided through the deacons. VPC continues to organically grow and discern where God is leading. VPC launch plan includes having the position of Site Leader and Community Connections in place before the official launch. Currently this position has been filled. VPC has a passion to see small towns in Ontario impacted for Jesus by starting new sites that are aligned with the mission and vision of VPC.

VPC has provided CHMT a budget for the upcoming launch and the first year of ministry. It is expected that the launch costs will be about \$60,000 and annual expenses about \$100,000. VPC initiated a "building the future" drive to assist in some of the launch costs and other VPC future initiatives, and this drive resulted in \$90,000 being raised. Falling in line with the vision of this drive, some funds were also used to assist an existing church plant in the city of London.

Their current leadership structure resides at the central location of VPC. VPC has a board of six people. Lead Pastor Ron Baker is accountable to this board, and the site leaders and other staff are accountable to Ron.

At the present, VPC is meeting with a consultant assisting them in visioning, hiring practices and policies and a restructuring plan that continues to encourage gifts, efficiency and accountability.

In discussions with Ron Baker and what the CHMT has noticed, there are some key advantages with this church plant method of launching sites:

- The sites are not independent, meaning that systems, strategies and ministries have an existing template to follow. The strategies are transferable from VPC central location to each site, keeping in mind that each town does have its own context and culture. But this means that one does not need to “re-invent the wheel.”
- VPC equips and builds up leaders within the community with an advantage of knowing the community and ministries of VPC.
- There is an established method of reaching out to the community, with respect to promotional strategies and various techniques leading up to the launch, and in initiating special events.

With respect to leader’s participation in their communities, Ron Baker participates in Classis Ontario Southwest as the chairperson for the Church Plant Site (equivalent to Classis Huron CHMT). Ron has assisted denominational leaders from Resonate Global Missions in other capacities. Ron attends the ministry network and conferences of CRC church planters. David Baker is actively involved in the Exeter and Area Ministerial. He desires to attend Classis Huron meetings to engage in what is going on in our Classis.

The CHMT had intentions to extend invitations from time to time to both Ron and David Baker to our regular Classis meetings to encourage networking and connecting with various leaders in our Classis. This began at our February 2020 meeting where Ron shared the ministry work of VPC. However, as a result of COVID, it became difficult to network over these past two years. We hope to continue this soon.

At the February meeting of Classis Huron, it was noted that the CHMT would prepare for further discussion about support for Vitalpoint Church. We are anticipating this to occur at the fall meeting. The CHMT would like to address and obtain clarity on a few more areas of ministry. We ask for continued prayer for this ministry and discernment where Classis Huron might be able to partner with VPC.