



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

AGENDA

February 23, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.

Bethel Christian Reformed Church

Listowel, ON

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.

Classis delegates are reminded that they are expected to remain seated at classis for the entire session until it is adjourned. Dates of classis sessions are known well in advance, so it becomes the responsibility of delegates to 'clear' their schedules so that they can remain at the 'table'. Please refrain from scheduling evening appointments on this day because, in some situations, classis may unexpectedly continue through the supper hour. Delegates who need to leave prior to adjournment (i.e. due to an emergency) may do so with permission of the Chairperson only who will then advise classis of his/her/their absence; names of delegates who leave early will be recorded in the minutes.

Index of Agenda Items

Timeline	Report/Item	Presenter/Reporter	Page
9:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Opening of Classis & Officers take seats <i>Chair: Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok</i> <i>Vice Chair: Rev. Amanda Bakale</i> <i>Stated Clerk: Sharon Van Kampen</i> •Comments from Chair •Credentials Committee attendance summary •Constituting of Classis 	Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok → Drayton & Palmerston	
	•Welcome/announcements/opening devotions/worship	Listowel Bethel	
(1.5 hrs.)	•Renegotiating Faith Report: Presentation & Workshop	Rev. Lesli van Milligen, Regional Catalyzer, Faith Formation Ministries	
	Morning Refreshment Break		
	Classis Huron diaconates: opportunity to share "What we're doing" →Video for "Combining For Christ"	First CRC Owen Sound & Diaconal Min. rep. Mary Blydorp	
	Local Ministry presentation: <i>Beginnings</i> , Guelph	Cherylynn Lumasog	
Mid-day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pre-lunch prayer •Lunch Break [<i>Credentials Committee Meets</i>] 	→ Blyth	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Post-lunch devotions •Credentials Committee Report 	→Clinton → Drayton & Palmerston	
	Commissioned Pastor status pursuit for Shannon Cook •cover letter, job description, & synodical deputies' letter	→Kitchener Community CRC	5 - 9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Voting for [four] Synodical Delegates •Balloting Committee 	→Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok →Listowel Bethel	
	Council of Delegates (COD met Oct. '18 & Feb. '19)	Rev. Ralph Wigboldus	10-11
	CMC/AdCom/Stated Clerk report	Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok	12-13
	CH Home Missions Committee: Missional Catalyst position	Rev. Henry Steenbergen	14-18
	Update on River City Church Organization •narrative history, financial stmt, report from guidance team	Classical Guidance Team rep Rev. Martin Dam	19-24
	<i>The Bridge</i> (Fergus Church Plant) & opportunity to share re: "Dreaming Exercise"	Rev. John Vanderstoep	
	Afternoon Refreshment Break		
	<i>World Renew: Disaster Response Services</i>	Marguerite Ridder	
	Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Church Counselor for First CRC Owen Sound •Huron Campus Ministry - Guelph •Regional Pastors (i.e. East & West) •Youth Ministry 	→Rev. Victor Laarman →commissioned pastor Sara DeMoor →Rev. Norm Sennema & Rev. Henry Steenbergen →Amy Baarda, Champion	
	Adjournment	→ Chair & Vice-Chair	

Rec'vd for info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Classis" name survey notice from Rev. Al Postma ▪ ministry update from Canadian Ministries Director, Rev. Darren Roorda ▪ Diaconal Ministries Canada ▪ Why Deacons Are Needed at Classis & Synod ▪ Redeemer University College ▪ Calvin Theological Seminary ▪ World Renew 	-copies attached	25-38
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Devotions/Prayer:

- Opening → Bethel CRC, Listowel
- Pre-Lunch → Blyth CRC
- Post-Lunch → Clinton CRC

Committees for the Day:

- Credentials → Drayton & Palmerston CRC's
- Balloting → Bethel CRC, Listowel

1. **Opening of Classis:** Call to Order, Credentials Committee attendance report, Classis declared constituted.
2. **Welcome/Announcements/Opening Devotions:** Bethel CRC, Listowel
3. **Renegotiating Faith:** presentation & workshop led by Rev. Lesli van Milligen, Regional Catalyzer for Ontario & Eastern Canada, Faith Formation Ministries of the CRCNA
 - **Please note: link for Renegotiating Faith on-line report emailed to CH churches January 5, 2019
4. **Refreshment Break**
5. **Time of Diaconal Sharing "What We're Doing":**
 - Diaconal Ministries Rep. Mary Blydorp & First CRC Owen Sound & "Combining For Christ"
6. **Local Ministry presentation:** Cherylynn Lumasog, Director of *Beginnings*, Guelph
7. **Lunch Break:** pre-lunch prayer by Blyth CRC delegate
8. **Post-Lunch Devotions:** Clinton CRC delegate
9. **Credentials Committee Report:** Drayton CRC/Palmerston CRC delegate
10. **Synod 2019:** [ballot] voting for four classical delegates
 - one deacon, one elder, one pastor, & fourth delegate (also a pastor)
11. **Council of Delegates (COD) report/update** (body met in October, 2018 and February, 2019): Rev. Ralph Wigboldus
12. **AdCom/CMC/Stated Clerk Report:** (Chair) Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok
13. **Missional Catalyst Position** [tabled from Sept. '18 classis session]: Rev. Henry Steenbergen of CHMC
14. **River City Church Classical Guidance Team report:** Rev. Martin Dam
15. **The Bridge (Fergus Church Plant) & Dreaming Exercise:** Rev. John Vanderstoep
16. **Refreshment Break**
17. **World Renew: Disaster Response Services:** Board Rep: Marguerite Ridder
18. **Reports:**
 - 18.1 **Church counselor,** Rev. Victor Laarman, re: First CRC Owen Sound
 - 18.2 **Huron Campus Ministry** Chaplain – U of Guelph, Sara DeMoor

**18.3 Regional Pastors: East → Rev. Norm Sennema
West → Rev. Henry Steenbergen**

18.4 Youth Ministry: Amy Baarda, Youth Champion

19. Closing/Adjournment: (Vice-Chair) Rev. Amanda Bakale



Churches are asked to consider hosting future classis sessions.
Hosts are in place for 2019 but venues are needed for 2020 and 2021.
Please advise the Stated Clerk of your willingness to serve in this capacity.
-Thank you!

Future Classis Meetings

DATE	LOCATION	REPORTS DUE	CHAIR	VICE CHAIR
Wed., May 15, 2019	Clinton CRC	April 3, 2019	Amanda Bakale	Henry Steenbergen
Wed., Sept. 18, 2019	Drayton CRC	August 14, 2019	Henry Steenbergen	Ralph Wigboldus
Sat., Feb. 22 or 29, 2020		January 15, 2020	Ralph Wigboldus	Martin Dam
Wed., May 13, 2020		April 15, 2020	Martin Dam	Stephen Tamming
Wed., Sept. 16, 2020		August 15, 2020	Stephen Tamming	John Medendorp



1275 Bleams Rd.
Kitchener, ON
N2E 3X6

Tel: (519) 743-9482
Fax: (519) 743-4434
Email: office@ccrc.on.ca
www.ccrcc.on.ca

January 11, 2019

Dear Delegates to the meeting of Classis Huron, February 23, 2019

A member of Community CRC in Kitchener has expressed a desire to pursue the Commissioned Pastor Status for a Chaplaincy position at Forest Heights Long Term Care Home in Kitchener. The Administrative Council of CCRC has agreed to pursue the matter as per the Church Order. However, *before examining a person for the office of Commissioned Pastor or granting permission to install a previously ordained Commissioned Pastor in a new position, the classis, with the concurring advice of synodical deputies, will determine whether or not the position to which the person is being called fits the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001. (Article 23-a)*

Therefore as a first step in the process we ask that Classis decide whether or not the attached job description fits the guidelines as laid out by the Church Order and Synod.

Only once such an assurance is given will CCRC proceed with a call and request that Classis prepare for an exam at the May meeting of Classis.

We will await the decision of Classis.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Harry Oudman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Harry Oudman,

Clerk

Church Order Supplement

Article 23-a

General Regulations

The office of Commissioned Pastor is applicable to a variety of ministries, provided that these ministries fit the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001 and that the other Church order and synodical regulations for the office of Commissioned Pastor are observed. These include ministries such as education, evangelism, pastoral care, music, and ministries to children, youth, adults, and others within or outside of the congregation. Before examining a person for

the office of Commissioned Pastor or granting permission to install a previously ordained Commissioned Pastor in a new position, the classis, with the concurring advice of synodical deputies, will determine whether or not the position to which the person is being called fits the guidelines adopted by Synod 2001. In addition, the candidates for the office of Commissioned Pastor must have proven ability to function in the ministry to which they are called.

Synodical Guideline to Determine Whether a Job Description Fits the Office of Commissioned Pastor

The following statement was adopted by Synod 2001 as a guideline for classes and synodical deputies as they decide whether a job description is appropriate for the office of Commissioned Pastor*:

“The office of evangelist may be understood to have the character of pastoral extension. Evangelists extend the work of pastoral leadership by founding and working in new congregations and by extending the ministry of organized congregations into specialized areas, including, but not limited to, youth ministry, education, pastoral care, worship, and evangelism (Cf. Church order Article 24). By the broader application of the office of evangelist, with its existing regulations, to a variety of ministry positions, the church avoids the multiplication of offices and provides a way of recognizing and regulating a variety of pastoral positions in our churches. These positions may be identified by titles that indicate their ministry distinctiveness such as chaplain, pastor or education, pastor of youth, minister of congregational life, and so forth.” (Acts of Synod 2001, p. 506)

***Note:** In 2001 the office was known as “evangelist”. The title was changed to “Ministry Associate” by the Synod of 2003, and to “Commissioned Pastor” by the Synod of 2012

Note also that Church Order Article 24 offers some guidelines regarding the nature of the work that can be done under the “Commissioned Pastor” ordination.

Synod 2012 added the following statement to the Church Order Supplement Art 23, and to the Ministry Associate Handbook:

Elements of a good job description include:

1. A description of the functions and responsibilities that are ministerial in nature (see the first paragraph of Church Order Supplement 23-a).
2. A description of the supervision and lines of accountability for the position.
3. Specific notation of whether preaching and/or leading the sacraments are to be included in the position

Role Profile – Chaplain



Mission:

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Chaplain is responsible for providing a variety of services to ensure the spiritual and religious needs of the Residents are met.

Key Outcomes:

- Live our values of Respect, Integrity, Compassion and Excellence
- Lend a helping hand
- Cultivate relationships with staff, residents and families
- Lead with H.E.A.R.T. (hear, empathize, acknowledge, respond, thank)

Key Responsibilities:

- To assist in the development of goals and objectives and policies and procedures for the pastoral care services
- To ensure pastoral care services are delivered in a manner that is keeping with the resident's needs and expectations
- To monitor, evaluate and continuously improve the quality of pastoral care services provided
- To ensure that services are delivered in a manner that respects choice, consent and customer satisfaction
- To coordinate, select, orient, and evaluate other pastoral service providers for the facility
- To act as a resource for education, counseling, and advocacy to residents, families, and staff
- To question, contribute, and give advice on ethical issues of the home, residents, or staff
- To assess the spiritual and religious needs of each resident which in turn will form the framework for the services offered
- To incorporate the following services for residents:
 - Ecumenical church services
 - Communion
 - Denominational services by clergy from specific faith
 - Non-denominational memorial service for residents, family, staff and volunteers
 - Ministerial visiting program
 - Prayer group
 - Reading or study groups
 - Special services for residents with cognitive impairments
 - Spiritual counseling
 - Off site religious / spiritual outings
 - Celebration of festivals and holy days for all faiths represented
 - Community worship within the facility

- To uphold and promote the organization's values and philosophy relating particularly to ethics, morality, and integrity as set out in Revera's Code of Conduct;
- To complete all other tasks as assigned.

Required Education, Credentials and Experience:

- Completion of post secondary education
- Post graduate education relevant to spiritual and religious care
- Endorsement by the multi-faith Council for Spiritual and Religious Care
- 3 to 5 years experience with seniors
- Trained or experienced in multi-faith programming
- Second language consistent with the resident population is an asset
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal
- Current (within 6 months) Vulnerable Position/Sector Screening (VPS).

Revera Core Competencies:

- **Accountability:** Takes ownership and holds self and others accountable to deliver high quality, timely and cost-effective results.
- **Business Acumen:** Understands financial and operational aspects and implications that are essential to achieve superior business results.
- **Coaching & Developing Talent:** Building capability of self, individuals and teams by engaging in feedback, coaching, learning and development. Building capability of self, individuals and teams by engaging in feedback, coaching, learning and development.
- **Customer Focus:** Keeping the customer in mind to deliver the highest possible quality of care, service and choices.
- **Execution Excellence:** Optimizes available resources and pursues implementation to consistently achieve exceptional outcomes.
- **Innovative Thinking:** Identifies, develops and implements new and innovative solutions to enhance opportunity, efficiency and quality.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Inspires and fosters a team environment and works collaboratively to achieve business goals and objectives.

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Role Profile Approved by:

Date:

T. Dait

September 4th 2015

Back Art 23 job description.jpg

Church Order Article 23-a: Declaration that a Commissioned Pastor's Position Fits Synodical Guidelines

Synodical deputies Siebert Van Houten (Classis Hamilton), Herman Praamsma (Classis Toronto), and James Dekker (Classis Niagara), having examined the written materials submitted by the council of Community Christian Reformed Church of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, and having compared them with the synodical guidelines re office and ordination, concur with the decision of Classis ~~Huron~~ in session on February 23, 2019, is in keeping with synodical guidelines for commissioned pastors.

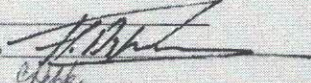
This position is to be filled by Shannon Cook. Position title: Chaplain at Forest Heights Long Term Care Home in Kitchener

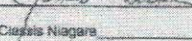
Has this person completed a learning plan, adopted by classis and approved by the Candidacy Committee, if appropriate? We do not know, but would recommend that be done.

Comments (not printed in the Acts of Synod): We remind Classis Huron and Community CRC of Kitchener that this position requires endorsement by the CRC Chaplaincy Committee.

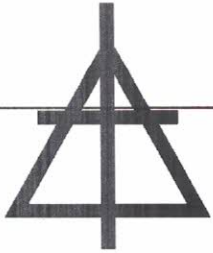
Synodical Deputies:

Classis Hamilton 

Classis Toronto 

Classis Niagara 

Date: February 23, 2019



COD Highlights

To: **CRC Council of Delegates Members and Directors**
From: Kristen deRoo VanderBerg, Director of Communication & Marketing
Date: October 15, 2018

Highlights from meeting of Oct. 11-12, 2018

Elmhurst, Ill. – The Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met at Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church on October 11-12, 2018.

During this meeting the Council:

- Heard a presentation and spent time discussing several ways to Reimagine Ministry Shares. Ultimately, the COD decided to recommend to Synod 2019 that the planning for and commitments to ministry shares would begin differently. Responding to targets approved by synod, churches would identify what their ministry share contribution could be. From this suggested amount, beginning at the congregational level and then the classis level, a ministry share commitment would be determined that would become the basis for the program budgets of the denominational ministries. Because of the significance of the intended change, the COD will recommend to Synod 2019 that this change—and its many implications for budgeting, fiscal years, and the like—be presented to churches before final consideration at Synod 2020.
- Adopted a mandate, composition, and selection process for a U.S. committee for guidance and support to the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action in response to Synod 2018 instructions.
- Approved several changes to staff compensation in response to the CRCNA staff salary review project. This included a discussion about equity of the current pay program. The COD discussion ultimately decided that the current system does fulfil the three equities contained within the Philosophy of Compensation of the CRCNA.
- Approved an addition to the mandate of Faith Formation Ministries to support children's ministry in Reformed congregations through the regular refreshing of curricula; providing training, support, consultation to teachers; and providing guidance for assessing other curricula.
- Asked the executive director to appoint people to several committees, including a committee to explore how to respond to synodical instruction regarding approval of Bible translations for use in worship, a committee to review possibilities and challenges for bivocational pastors, and a steering committee to oversee the establishment and initial operations of the Reformed Partnership for Congregational Renewal.
- Adopted a mandate for an Abuse of Power committee and appointed several people to the committee. It also encouraged committee members to identify two or three additional nominees from multicultural communities of the CRC.
- Endorsed a report on Assisting Immigrant Churches.
- Recommended to synod, in response to synod's instruction regarding the need for greater gender and ethnic diversity on the Judicial Code Committee, that synod adopt a change to Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c, section 8, to provide a goal of 25% ethnic diversity and an equal balance of men and women on the JCC.

- Adopted changes to the COD Governance Handbook, including asking COD members to refrain from approaching CRCNA staff for information or instruction and clarifying which parts of COD agendas, attachments and minutes are public information and which are confidential.
- Received an update on the progress of the *Our Journey 2020* Ministry Plan and adopted a policy to ensure continual evaluation of all agencies and ministries through the framework of the five ministry priorities.
- Received for information a list of reconciliation resources as a response to the instructions of Synod 2018 (see *Acts of Synod 2018*, p. 473).
- Received notice of the retirement of Dr. Gary Bekker from the position of director of Raise Up Global Ministries and thanked him for his service.
- Recommended that synod accept the invitation from Encounter Church in Grand Rapids, Mich. to serve as convening church for Synod 2020; and the invitation from First CRC in Orange City, Iowa to serve as host church for Synod 2021.
- Watched a video about Inspire 2019 and were encouraged to promote this event (taking place August 1-3, 2019 in Windsor, Ontario) to congregations in their region. Additional information is available at crcna.org/Inspire.
- Reviewed a list of churches that will be invited to participate in the 2019 denominational survey and were asked to actively encourage those congregations' participation.
- Appointed people to several positions, including synodical deputies and alternates, an interim COD delegate for Classis Quinte, and delegates to the Raise Up Global Ministries board, which oversees Educational Care, Global Coffee Break, and Timothy Leadership Training Institute.
- In addition to the ecclesiastical meeting of the COD, this meeting also included the meeting of four corporate entities: CRCNA Canada, CRCNA U.S., BTGMI Canada, and BTGMI U.S. Highlights from these meetings include:
 - Hearing an update on the Canadian National Gathering to be held in Edmonton, Alberta in May 2019
 - Approving the year-end audited financial statements for CRCNA Canada and BTGMI Canada
 - Appointing Ms. Verney Kho as treasurer of CRCNA Canada Corp and BTGMI Canada for the coming year
 - Appointing BDO as the auditors for the current fiscal year
 - Approving bylaw changes for BTGMI U.S. regarding the partnership with the Presbyterian Agency of Evangelization and Communication
 - Approving signatory resolutions for BTGMI in the U.S. and Canada
 - Approving an address change for BTGMI U.S. from Palos Heights, Illinois to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Steven Timmermans, Executive Director
executive-director@crcna.org

Upcoming meeting dates:

- February 20-22, 2019, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- May 1-3, 2019, Grimsby, Ontario
- October 9-11, 2019, Grimsby, Ontario

Winter Report from the Classis Ministry Committee, Administrative Committee, and Stated Clerk

The Classis Ministry Committee (CMC) consists of representatives of all ministries/committees within Classis: Chair, Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok; Vice-Chair, Rev. Martin Dam, Member at Large: Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen: Classis Ministry Leadership Team, Rev. Brian Bork; Home Missions Committee, Rev. Henry Steenbergen; Safe Church Coordinator, Atie Ott; Huron Campus Ministry (Guelph), Rev. David Tigchelaar; Diaconal Ministries, Mary Blydorp: Huron Campus Ministry (Waterloo), Rev. John Medendorp; Youth Champion, Amy Baarda; Treasurer John Bell, ex-officio, and Stated Clerk, Sharon Van Kampen, ex officio.

The Administrative Committee (AdCom) works on behalf of classis between meetings. AdCom consists of Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok, [chair], Rev. Martin Dam [vice-chair], Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen, [Member] and Stated Clerk Sharon Van Kampen, ex-officio. Since the last meeting of classis, AdCom has met to respond to issues raised at the last meeting of Classis, and also to address a number of new matters, which have subsequently been referred to CMC and are addressed above.

Following, are a number of administrative matters provided for your information.

A] The issues raised in the Credentials submitted to the May 2018 Classis Meeting, have been dealt with by AdCom/CMC.

B] the minutes of the September 19, 2018 session of Classis Huron were approved.

C] the finalized list of Classis Huron representatives submitted December 14, 2018 to the 2019 CRC National Gathering planning team:

Shirley Feddema, Bethel Acton; Rick Hulshof, Exeter; Mechele te Brake, Exeter; Bart Eisen, Bethel Listowel; Jack Van Dorp, Owen Sound; Stuart Vandervaart, Lucknow; Lynda Marfisi, First Guelph; Diana Vroom, Orangeville; (Rev.) Paul Droogers, Drayton; Diana Zondag, Community Kitchener; Jane Vandervelden, Community Kitchener; Gerry Nordegraaf, Collingwood

D] Items to be included in the February classis agenda were reviewed (e.g. the revised job description for the Missional Catalyzer position) and/or approved.

E] Rev. Martin Dam advised of the membership and initial meeting of the *Ad Hoc Classical Guidance Team re: River City Church's Organization*

•members: Rev. Darrell Bierman, Janet Ryzebol, Rev. Amanda Bakale, Rev. Martin Dam, Rev. Norm Sennema, and Rev. Kevin DeRaaf (Regional leader with *Resonate Global Mission*)

F] determined the more specific guidelines to be issued to CH member churches regarding nomination of delegates to Synod 2019 which are to be included with/on February 23, 2019 session credentials.

G] as a number of classical licenses to exhort are due for renewal, the renewal process includes sermon manuscript evaluation. All Classis Huron pastors are requested to take their turn in evaluating these sermons; said documents will be issued electronically (i.e. two pastoral evaluators per manuscript) by the Stated Clerk. Pastors will be assigned alphabetically by church location.

In addition to these administrative matters, the following recommendations are submitted for Classis' approval:

R1] AdCom recommends that Classis Huron nominate to Synod 2019,

→Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen as a Synodical Deputy for a term of three years effective July 1, 2019.
and

→Rev. Stephen Tamming as Alternate Synodical Deputy for a second term of three years effective July 1, 2019.

Thank you to Rev. Ray Vander Kooij for serving in the capacity of Synodical Deputy for the three year term which concludes on June 30, 2019.

R2] That Rev. John Medendorp serve in the role of Stated Clerk, Alternate.

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R3] Ratification of the work of the Classis Ministry Committee, Administrative Committee, and Stated Clerk

Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk serves as secretary of Classis Huron, its Classis Ministry Committee [CMC], and Administrative Committee (AdCom). The Clerk continues to respond to ongoing requests for information and direction from individual members, church leadership, classis committees, and denominational offices. Since late September to the time of writing this report, the Clerk has:

- dealt with/responded to a handful of [phone] conversations and requests for information.
- Since late August, dealt with/responded to many, many (500+) email messages and requests for information from Denominational agencies, Classis Huron churches, Classis Huron members, etc.
- With Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen, participated in a *Canadian Classis Leadership Gathering* in late January hosted by Canadian Ministries Director Rev. Darren Roorda & Classis Renewal rep. Rev. Al Postma.
- attended, prepared agendas for, wrote minutes for, and did follow-up work and correspondence for two AdCom meetings and one CMC meeting: this is in addition to conversations with CRCNA/pastors/members and others re various issues dealing with matters relative to Classis and its member churches.
- on behalf of Denominational agencies, para-church organizations, and others, forwarded a number of announcements and other information to the Classis Huron churches.
- filed the minutes and agenda of the September 19, 2018 Classis meeting with the Denominational office.
- prepared the agenda and attachments for Classis Huron meeting of February 23, 2019

Classis Huron Mission Catalyser – February 2019

Background to the Mission Catalyser Recommendation

Our Current Reality: Having reviewed the past four years stats of Classis Huron (CH), our churches total membership has reduced from 7,773 in 2015 to 7,523 in 2018. A reduction of 250 members. There has been 467 infant baptisms in four years, meaning that the average CH congregation baptizes 6 infants per year. In addition, we have received 80 members through evangelism, averaging about 1 person per church per year. There have also been 241 reversions, or about 3 per congregation per year. Put another way, our 20 established congregations, averaging 375 total members are seeing 1 person come to Christ through evangelism, while 3 others are leaving the church through reversion. The current reality is that as a Classis, we have a crisis! Things are changing in our churches and in our culture at a rapid pace. Together, we can strengthen our missional engagement, and what it means to embrace a shared responsibility for the region of CH as a whole.

God's Preferred Outcome: God's desire which He puts onto our hearts is that the gospel message will go out and more people will come to Christ. That each of our churches will be fully engaged in mission in our neighbourhoods, in our region, and in our world.

The Mission of CH is "We will foster the Kingdom through shared resources toward spiritual renewal."

The Vision of CH is "the congregations, ministries, missional communities and people of CH will surrender to the word 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."

In 2014, CH approved a five year plan with five ministry initiatives (briefly summarized):

- Initiative 1: Missional Clusters: To encourage missional clusters of churches and leaders to engage in ministry partnerships, to foster missional leader development, and collaborate in ministry initiatives. This was to equip us for mission without creating new or rigid organizational structures.
- Initiative 2: Plant & Water: We desire to plant two new churches by 2018. And continue to water and support church plants in becoming organized, contributing stakeholders in CH and denominational ministry, and invest in congregations who need support for specific measurable missional discipleship efforts.
- Initiative 3: Increase Creative Funding: Look for alternate streams of funding for ministry growth in CH.
- Initiative 4: Consider Campus Ministry Expansion: To seek out the possibility to expand Campus Ministry at both Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier.
- Initiative 5: Consider Classis Ministry Staff: Adcom will direct a process for looking at our ministry needs and hopes and learning from other Classis in order to create a recommendation as to whether and what type of staff person would advance our mission by helping us grow internally (our youth) and externally (our neighbours), keeping in mind the advice to make whatever positions we might look at task-and-timelines-specific with annual revisiting of goals and purposes to maintain sustainability and effectiveness.

What's Next? Consistent feedback from CH credentials have included councils requesting assistance with local mission, discipleship, and community engagement. Leadership in CH churches is naming the current reality, and having the courage to respond accordingly and sacrificially as servants in unity on mission.

In 2017 CH meetings, there was discussion on the ministry plan initiatives. Following that meeting, the Classis Ministry Committee (CMC) discussed the role of the Classis Huron Home Missions Committee (CHHMC) in furthering that plan. It was also agreed that the Ministry Plan needs to be discussed and reviewed on a regular basis.

As a result, the CHHMC was empowered with this task. This committee brought forward a plan to hire a part-time Mission Catalyser. The recommendation for a CH Mission Catalyser is in response to feedback received from CH to provide support for our established churches in their own outreach endeavours. We recognize the desire for CH to support both new church plants and the mission work of our established churches.

CHHMC was tasked to seek out opportunities that will work towards CH mission and the initiatives. CHHMC looked into what other Classes were doing in this area. We met with representatives from a nearby Classis that has a pastor serving as a paid part-time Mission Catalyser (one day per week).

The CHHMC put together a draft Mission Catalyser job description presented at the September 2017 Classis meeting for feedback. The feedback was mostly positive, and there was also a clear sentiment that this was too much work for a one-day per week position. There was also some concern about the proposed salary numbers being somewhat high. CHHMC received the feedback, and re-worked the job description, which was then submitted as part of the February 2018 Classis agenda, but due to the length of that meeting, the recommendation was tabled, and discussed at the September 2018 CH meeting.

In addition, following the February 2018 Classis meeting, CHHMC entered into discussion with Resonate Global Missions Regional Leader, Kevin DeRaaf. Resonate desires to hire a part-time "Mission Leader" within Classis Huron to stimulate and equip congregations to become more missional in their focus. CHHMC thought this would complement with our proposal for CH to hire a part-time Mission Catalyser. In addition, Resonate was prepared to provide some of the funding for this position.

Feedback from the Classis meetings and discussions with Resonate, led to some changes in the job description to reflect this additional new focus. Instead of the original one-day per week proposal, the job description is proposed to include two-days a week with one-half day of those two days devoted to Resonate Global Missions. Following the September 2018, clarity on the job description and accountability were brought forward, and CHHMC was to re-address these important concerns.

Recommendation to Classis Huron on Mission Catalyser

Purpose: To support a missional movement in Classis Huron by empowering Christian Reformed churches and key leaders to engage in God's mission.

Motion: That Classis Huron approve the following recommendation:

Recommendation:

- **That** Classis Huron hire a part-time Mission Catalyser along with Resonate Global Missions fulfilling the job description attached to this recommendation, and empower the CHHMC to hire the individual.
- **That** the Mission Catalyser position is for two days of work per week or equalling 16 hours per week.
- **That** Classis Huron remunerate a Mission Catalyser for two days of work per week. The total amount for the 16 hours would be \$25,000. This would be \$5,000 supported by Resonate and \$20,000 supported by CH. (Note: this would be 16 hours / week for 50 weeks of a year).
- **That** Classis Huron approve \$5,000 in costs relating to employee costs and mileage, some of which will be pro-rated with Resonate.
- **That** the Mission Catalyser position be accountable to Classis Huron and provide regular reports to the CHHMC through the chairperson.
- **That** this be a four year pilot project, reviewed annually.
- **That** the monies for the first part-year of this position be used from the Creative Outreach Venture Fund to cover the wages and costs of this position. There is \$14,000 in this fund.

Grounds:

1. This position falls in line with Classis Huron Mission and Vision statements, and facilitates the implementation of the five-year ministry plan approved by Classis in 2014.
2. It reflects the input of Classis Huron delegates at the September 2017 and September 2018 meetings.
3. The work of similar positions in other Classis appear to benefit the congregations.
4. This position will complement the work of the CHHMC and Resonate.

JOB DESCRIPTION – Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Encourage vision casting, strategies and goals for mission-shaped ministry in the region. Work in collaboration with the Resonate Canada East Regional Mission Team and Classis Huron Home Missions Committee (CHHMC). Includes regular meetings with the Resonate Team and CHHMC.
2. Equip, encourage and empower congregations with resources and training to develop further mission-shaped ministries and/or birth new church plants and missional projects.
3. Stimulate the intentional discipleship and growth of missional leaders in the local context by identifying, recruiting and equipping potential leaders, especially ethnic and younger leaders, so that each individual is equipped to participate and lead in God's mission.
4. Encourage and equip churches to shift from maintenance to mission, and working with churches to share the stories and to teach one another.

5. Connect with local mission networks that unite God's people locally and globally who work for spiritual and social transformation of their communities.
6. Develop relationships with partners, such as other ecumenical groups, mission organizations and denominational partners- that support the development of mission-shaped congregations and leaders for local and global engagement.
7. Work with Resonate and other partners to provide tools and resources for cross-cultural competencies to assist local congregations in connecting with their diverse communities.
8. Strengthen the connection between the churches and ministries of Classis and their global Resonate missionaries and partners.
9. Other duties and tasks as assigned by the chair of CHHMC and/or Resonate Global Missions Regional Leader as the role of Mission Catalyser evolves and develops.

Qualifications and Skills

- Be a member of a Christian church and agreement with the Statement of Faith documents listed in the Covenant for Officebearers for the CRC.
- A proven, mature Christian leader in their community of faith
- Wholly committed to the mission of God through His church, with a heart for the lost and a passion to reach people with the Gospel and be part of the Kingdom movement of God
- Spirit led person of prayer and discernment who can lead others in this discernment process
- Awareness of and willingness to continue learning about the missional context in North America and around the world
- Catalytic leader, with demonstrated ability in vision casting, leadership, team building, coaching, collaboration, and networker, active and influential in their local setting
- Creative, adaptive and flexible, able to be a non-anxious presence amidst diversity and ambiguity
- Personally motivated and a self-starter, with demonstrated ability to accomplish goals and produce results with little direct oversight/management
- Works across systems and partnerships with ease, building trusting relationships with a variety of partners to build synergy, significant consensus and communal identity
- Demonstrates commitment to diversity and to racial reconciliation and to enfolding and empowering members of racial and ethnic communities within and outside the CRCNA.
- Able to use technology effectively and consistently in order to contribute to the health of a distributed staff network
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Strong interpersonal and relational skills with a servant heart

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree preferred with some academic engagement on missional topics
- A minimum of three years ministry leadership experience with demonstrated fruitfulness in global and/or local missions and ministry where they are currently serving
- Coach training, or willingness to participate in coach training, required

Physical Demands

- The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions

Work Environment

- The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job
- This employee will work from home as part of a distributed team and so, must have access to reliable internet for video conferencing and be able and willing to travel as needed to meet duties

Hours and Re-imbusement

- This position is expected to total 16 hours per week for 50 weeks per year for a total of \$25,000 plus mileage expenses and employee expenses (CPP, EI, etc).

Accountability

- The Mission Catalyser will attend meetings and make regular reports directly to the CHHMC. The chair of the CHHMC will ensure that annual goals are set and conduct an annual review in partnership with the Resonate Global Missions Regional Leader. The CHHMC will report annually to CH on the work of the Mission Catalyser. The Mission Catalyser will give a written and verbal report to Classis at each meeting, and ensuring that churches will share their missional stories.

Narrative History of River City Church

Rev. Darrell Bierman, his wife Barb and their two children moved to Cambridge in October 2001 in order to plant River City Church. From day one, this church's mission was clear: reaching people far from Christ and helping them experience life change by becoming fully-devoted followers. Twelve other families from seven different denominations ultimately joined this launch team, and River City Church held its grand opening worship service on January 26, 2003.

Since its inception more than 17 years ago, River City has been unapologetically focused on developing a church specifically for people who don't think they want one or need one. These are the people that most other churches aren't reaching who need a safe place to ask their questions and discover their beliefs. To this day, more than 80% of our regular attenders are people who previously were not in the habit of attending church, including those who have never attended church as well as those completely skeptical about church.

Gratefully, River City has a disproportionately high percentage of spiritual seekers and new believers. They are people who don't know what regular churchgoers know with respect to Bible stories and themes. They don't believe what regular churchgoers believe and many arrive as humanists, atheists, spiritualists or general relativists. They don't accept what regular churchgoers accept such as the importance of tithes and offerings or volunteering in order to use spiritual gifts.

People attending River City tend to arrive with greater ministry needs than what most established churches must navigate. In order to meet those needs River City has historically met in public spaces that are non-intimidating and don't present a spiritual barrier for those attending. Over the years, River City Church has met in several different schools around the city, in local arts buildings, in hotel conference rooms and most recently, at a movie theatre. For the first time in its history River City is now exploring a permanent home.

River City Vision

At River City Church, we want to be **City Lights** to the community of Cambridge. We want to show our neighbours God's love through our actions.

River City employs a "5G" system which provides a framework for that kind of life change:

Grace: truly understanding that there is nothing we have done or can do that will change how God feels about us and demonstrating that same grace towards others

Growth: participating in spiritual practices that will bring us closer to God and our ability to hear from him and live differently

Groups: authentically spending time with other believers in order give and receive support and encouragement in life-changing faith

Gifts: learning about and understanding our uniquely chosen, spiritual gifts and how to use them more effectively

Generosity: lavishly sharing the resources which God has lovingly provided with others and experiencing God's promised blessings

Core Values

We value people- All people matter to God and so they matter to us as well

We Value God's Word - The Bible contains complete unchanging messages for changing times

We Value Real Worship - God conveys his love for us and his plan for us when we connect to him through regular worship

We Value Doing Church As A Team - Every person is created for, gifted for, authorized for and needed for ministry

We Value Personal Growth In Small Groups - Life change happens most effectively in healthy small groups

We Value "Love In Action" - Believers need to "walk the talk" of the Christian faith, demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ

We Value Unity on The Essentials & Understanding On The Non-Essentials - Remaining focused on the essential truths of Christianity while demonstrating wide tolerance for the issues open to interpretation

We Value Kingdom Expansion - All of us have people in our lives who don't yet know Jesus and so we are committed to inviting and bringing others to church

Budget and Financial Statements (Attached Separately)

2018 - 2019 Budget Plans

Year: 2018

Income Type	Past Actuals				Past Budgets				New Fiscal Budget 2018-2019
	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	
Specified Contributors	164,723	187,516	204,535	213,593	188,000	198,500	225,300	237,005	249,260
Non-Specified Contributors	2,874	4,694	3,523	4,410	4,000	3,000	3,600	3,600	4,200
Partnership (Regional Churches)	7,431	3,126	6,330	5,735	10,000	7,500	1,800	1,800	1,800
Gift in Kind	4,560	4,032	7,511	2,898	4,000	4,000	4,200	4,200	2,000
Other Designated	1,600	5,100	26,456	11,056	500	0	0	375	3,000
TOTAL	181,188	204,469	248,355	237,692	206,500	213,000	234,900	246,980	\$260,260 TOTAL INCOME

Ministry Cost	Past Actuals				Past Budgets				Ministry Costs 2018-2019
	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017-2018	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	
Worship	4,867	4,207	10,574	6,223	12,000	6,000	7,428	6,100	6,560
Communications	7,883	7,619	5,338	5,926	10,835	13,155	7,487	4,649	6,649
First Impressions	7,200	4,665	5,231	5,649	8,200	8,200	6,995	5,874	6,340
Discipleship	411	0	2,067	2,017	1,200	2,140	2,790	3,240	2,990
Childrens Ministries	1,821	1,549	1,580	463	2,600	2,630	2,770	3,042	3,100
Youth Ministries	267	334	1,377	1,549	2,040	1,050	1,000	1,000	1,135
Facilities & Set-up	393	0	96	137	850	600	1,000	1,000	600
Pastor Ministry Specific Costs	This amount was included in Non Discretionary Expenses in past years								6,240
TOTAL	22,842	18,373	26,263	21,964	37,725	33,775	29,470	24,905	\$33,614 EXPENSE MINISTRY

Non Discretionary Cost	Actual				Budget				Non Discretionary Costs 2018-2019	
	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017-2018	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018		
Payroll	113,604	123,517	139,213	156,439	115,200	124,800	153,060	158,495	169,146	
Automobile	5,569	5,673	6,548	2,053	6,000	6,000	6,000	4,200	0	<---- Included above Pastor Ministry
Conferences & Training	3,554	11,579	2,319	3,144	4,809	3,600	3,600	2,000	0	<---- Included above Pastor Cost
Internal Events	0	0	2,660	3,973	0	0	2,700	2,700	2,300	<---- \$1,500 Project Hope Cottage + Annual Gala
Office Supplies	2,674	3,348	1,141	1,877	4,100	3,090	1,800	1,500	1,200	
Telephone	2,777	3,066	3,293	2,229	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,280	1,560	<---- New phone plans in place for Pastor
Insurance	1,877	1,762	2,070	2,118	1,900	1,747	2,070	2,100	2,200	
Bank Charges & Interest	1,381	1,615	1,201	1,434	1,440	1,440	1,560	1,560	1,500	
Worship Facility	28,188	30,174	31,790	30,619	27,026	29,728	31,820	35,120	37,295	<---- Increases for 2019 incorporated
Storage Facility	3,389	2,824	3,388	3,389	3,600	3,420	3,420	3,420	3,420	
Ministry Centre / Maranatha	1,600	2,400	2,400	2,400	1,200	2,400	2,400	5,100	2,625	<---- \$200/month Maranatha + occasional rental
Operating Reserve	0	0	0	3,600	0	0	6,000	3,600	2,400	<---- Reduce reserve to \$200 Monthly
Other (Designated)	0	0	300	6,947	0	0	0	0	3,000	<---- Designated income to match designated expenses
TOTAL	164,614	185,958	196,323	220,222	168,275	179,225	217,430	222,075	\$226,646 NON DISCRETIONARY EXPENSES	

TOTAL EXPENSES	187,456	204,332	222,586	242,186	206,000	213,000	246,900	246,980	\$260,260 TOTAL EXPENSES
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Report from Classical Guidance Team of Classis Huron

After the last Classis meeting, The “Classis Huron River City Guidance Team” was asked to take the feedback from the churches regarding River City’s request to organize as a congregation in the Christian Reformed Church. After processing all of the responses, we determined that they largely fit into 4 areas of ministry. Those 4 areas were:

1. Forming of a Council;
2. Commitment to a membership process,
3. Commitment to ministry shares, and
4. Their practice of embracing both infant baptism and covenant dedication.

Our Team consisted of Darrell Bierman and Janet Ryzebol representing River City Church (RCC), Martin Dam representing AdCom, Amanda Bakale and Norm Sennema representing Classis at Large, and Kevin DeRaaf as an advisor from Resonate.

Below is our report on each of the 4 issues raised:

Forming of a Council: While this might not have been clear in earlier correspondence, RCC intends to form a council. Their current board will transition to a council (consisting of administrative elders), with their finance committee becoming their initial diaconate. They are working on a system of replacement to generate new office-bearers as leadership changes. The guidance team sees no issues here. There is a fair amount of diversity in the CRC as to how councils function and how elders and deacons are chosen, and RCC sounds like they will fit somewhere within that spectrum.

Developing a Membership system: Defining and tracking membership is always a challenge for emerging churches and is a growing challenge for established congregations. Some of that challenge was reflected in the original communication with Classis. In conversation, the guidance team is confident that RCC is committed to developing a membership process. Some details need to be worked out but the guidance team does not see this as an obstacle to organization.

Ministry Shares: Concerns over ministry shares, we believe, were largely a misunderstanding. RCC is currently committed to a large-scale partnership with World Vision, supporting over 60 children in a community in Columbia, at a cost of over \$30,000 annually. This commitment will be fulfilled in 2021. It’s important to remember that the people River City Church is reaching (community-curious seekers, new believers, or Christians transitioning from one church to another) typically have not yet developed a capacity for generous giving and need to be taught

how and why and given time to grow in that capacity. This World Vision project (which began in 2013) has been a great way to model both generous and long term giving. River City Church has also been successful fostering financial generosity to support the local mission of reaching people in Cambridge (via the Foodbank, Bridges Homeless Shelter, Nightlight, Cambridge Pregnancy Resource Ctr., etc.). RCC's budget this year is just under \$250,000 so it is seeing success in teaching giving both as a form of worship and also as a surrender to God. RCC also recently sought donations from leaders for a downpayment on a building and are poised to launch a building campaign fund drive in the near future.

Once the World Vision obligation has been completed (January 2021) River City will be able to introduce the concept of ministry shares in the budget and giving vision of the church. So again, the guidance team sees no issues going forward. In the area of ministry shares, RCC joins every other congregation in Classis Huron and our denomination as we wrestle with balancing the local needs of our congregations, the differing missional vision of our churches, and our denominational commitments.

Infant Baptism and Covenantal Dedication: This was the area that generated the largest amount of discussion and concern within Classis; similarly, the bulk of the work of this committee was spent in this area. After considerable dialogue, we want to affirm a few things. First, RCC does strongly endorse and promote infant baptism and the covenantal theology behind it. This comes through not only in how they explain both baptism and dedication, but also in their theological emphases as a whole. Second, they embrace infant dedication as a second option. They do so for two primary reasons.

1. Theologically, RCC sees baptism as a historically contested doctrine within the larger Church of Jesus. While strongly affirming a covenantal view of baptism, RCC believes that the discussion about the practice of baptism is a secondary issue in the Church with differing viewpoints possible. Therefore RCC is intentional about being a community where other theological perspectives on this issue are also welcome.
2. Pastorally, many in RCC come from traditions in which a nominal form of infant baptism was practiced, and react strongly against their negative experience. Infant baptism is therefore, a stumbling block for a number of those connected to RCC.

The guidance team wrestled with this issue for quite some time. We recognize that Synod as recently as 2011 and 2012 reaffirmed our denominational commitment to promote and endorse infant baptism and "to discourage the practice of infant dedication" (quote from Banner summary in 2011). But we also recognized that a minority of organized congregations all over the denomination continue to offer both baptism and dedication, (See Banner Sept 2014). We appreciate RCC's transparency on this issue and believe that it would be unfair to allow this one issue to prevent RCC from becoming a formally organized congregation in the

CRC. This issue is part of an ongoing and important discussion in the CRC. We note that the Synodical decision was intentional in using a word like "discourage" and not "ban", and that to our knowledge, no disciplinary action has been taken by any Classis against any church over this issue.

So our recommendation, rather than to tie RCC's application for organization to this practice, is to recognize that this issue is both important and separate. We recommend that Classis schedule a separate discussion on the whole question of infant dedication, one that our entire Classis, including RCC, should participate in.

With those 4 areas dealt with, we feel like RCC could proceed towards organization.

Recommendations:

1. That River City Church be recognized as an organized congregation within the Christian Reformed Church of North America and be permitted to form a Council.
2. That Classis schedule a separate discussion on the issue of covenantal infant dedication.

Grounds:

- a. River City Church meets the qualifications of an organized church according to the Church Order (Article 38)
- b. There is a recognition that the development of a church's structures and systems continue to develop even after it is organized and RCC has demonstrated clear intentions to continue this organizational development.
- c. The issue of covenantal infant dedication is part of a broader discussion within Classis and the denomination as a whole, and that the organization of RCC should not be tied to this one matter.

Below you will also find a Supplementary link to denominational guide towards organization: (see pg 13 and following) This document did not exist when we started the process, but it does now.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1omPJ2HNqHgAuFoEAwjHmbT-V4B5pqv9w/view>



Classis Huron <classishuron@gmail.com>

"Classis" Name

Al Postma <apostma@crcna.org>
Bcc: classishuron@gmail.com

Mon, Dec 17, 2018 at 3:11 PM

Dear Stated Clerks,

Our friends in Classis Eastern Canada overtured Synod 2018 to change the name "Classis" to "Regional Assembly." This overture was referred to the Classis Renewal Advisory Team, which I was just in the process of starting to form.

While our own team represents a diverse experience of classis across North America, we want to ensure that there is as much input as possible from people within each classis. As such, we have created a survey to collect some data related to the original overture and the further analysis which Synod requested. We would love for you to participate, and for you to share this survey widely. We are hoping to have some early data prior to our January 10 team meeting, but we will be keeping the survey open at least through the end of March. Our plan is to report to Synod 2019 via the Council of Delegates supplemental report, which requires us to provide a final report in April.

Someone has suggested that the survey link could be shared at a classis meeting with time given during the meeting itself (5-10 minutes) for delegates to fill out the survey. There was also a suggestion that a classis could print off the questions so people could fill it in that way at the meeting, and then just have someone type the responses into the survey. I only offer these as ideas that have come up; it is completely up to you how your classis gives feedback.

The survey can be found at crcna.org/classis at the top of the page, a link that allows you to easily share the location of the survey. You can also access it directly by clicking here.

Blessings to you in this Advent season! I recognize this may be a less-than-ideal time to send out a survey. Feel free to distribute it with your discretion. I figured I'd send it now, and follow up in the new year with a reminder rather than wait until the new year altogether.

-Al Postma

--
Rev. Albert Postma
Classis Renewal
Christian Reformed Church
1-800-730-3490 Ext.4563
www.crcna.org/classis

→ Stated Clerk's note:

Hard copies of this survey will be available on Feb. 23rd if you have not taken the opportunity to complete it on-line.

-Shawn Van Kampen

From my heart & mind to yours: Classis letter - Winter, 2019



Dear Fellow Ministry Partners of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada. I am firmly convinced that Jesus Christ has great things in store for the Canadian side of the CRCNA. I believe that because I see the work that many of you are doing on the local level and am given privy to the ways in which our denominational agencies and ministries are working to serve in this same manner.

It has been a few months since I have seen many of you last in my attempt to participate in as many classis meetings as I could in the fall. It is my hope to see many of you this winter and spring as well, but for those that I cannot this ministry update will at least inform you of a few things going on that can enable, strengthen and broaden the impact of your local church.

Because there are so many things, I will bullet point them for easy readability:

- **Grant money available:** there are still some grant monies available for any of your churches that are doing any ministry in an ecumenical form, locally speaking. If you are partnering with a presbyterian church to do VBS, hosting a prayer service with the Catholic church down the street, or a missional project with a partner community church, let us know. Just send an email and tell us what you are doing and you can receive 500 dollars to support your effort. Email me or Peter Elgersma for more info. pelgersma@crcna.org
- **The Bridge App** is being used increasingly more and more as churches are trained and get used to the functionality. In February you will notice over 50 improvements that have come out of our co-participation with you as local churches in developing this excellent tool. If you have not done so yet, please reconsider the use of the app for your church. It is an increasingly powerful set of tools that takes a very Reformed approach to using the gift of IT and online community/communication. As motivation, I give you a quote from Rev. Carey Nieuwhof: *"We're at the point where, for church leaders to ask if 'online' counts is almost like Sears asking if Amazon counts or New York City cabs asking if Uber counts."* dorothyvandersteen@crcna.org
- Your **denominational building** in Canada (Burlington, Ontario) was recently renovated. It is filled with content from CRC churches across Canada. From art to ideas, the whole week gave us pause to appreciate. One way we did that was by bringing together 25 key historical partners of the CRC during the re-opening week to talk about the nature of our ministries. Leadership from Christian colleges, CLAC, InDwell, Institute for Christian Studies and more. Ian DeWaard from the Christian Labour Association of Canada wrote to his staff "... we left encouraged that in our work we need not feel isolated. As individuals and as organizations it was clear that we all belong to a larger community directed by a common faith and whose convictions prompt us to put our beliefs and hope into action so that all the world can know that the best is yet to come." I take this to mean "we are better together."

- Thank you to all of you who have been participating in the ***I Am Not My Own Tour***. Our fundraising for your local ministry efforts and also for the global impact of World Renew and the Canadian Food Grains Bank is on schedule. The tour will be travelling through Ontario and on to the Canadian National Gathering in May. I hope you see in this effort the posture of the denominational agencies to serve locally and to extend the impact of the local church nationally and internationally. That is the power of our denomination together. Read more [here](#).
- Speaking of impact that is discovered when we work together, have you taken advantage of opportunities to grow through participation with your **regional representatives** of our various ministries? If our Resonate, Faith Formation, Disability Concerns advocates or others can help...Let us Know! We wish to serve you. As a matter of fact, we have developed the [Click, Call Chat](#) program from our end as 3 of the ways we can speak together in an effort to serve the local church well. Click: Check out our website (crcna.org/canada), call 800-272-5125 for designated help during 8-5 EST, and chat by reaching out on the webchat space on any of our web pages.
- Have you checked out the [Resources](#) available to you? For the first time, all of the agencies and ministries of the denomination are available in one spot for you to peruse. Almost like a CRCNA google. Articles, manual, books, webinars, network blog posts and more around ministry issues. A great way to stay connected to the Reformed Community and find some trustworthy content. Go to <https://www.crcna.org/resources> for more or click on the word '**Resources**' at the top of the **CRCNA home page**.
- Thank you to all of you for the work you did in discovering who God intends to be part of the [National Gathering in May, 2019 in Edmonton](#). We have reached our 150 people without too much difficulty and between January and May we will be walking with them through an intentional discipleship process in an effort to prepare them for the gathering itself. Pray that God would be clear and powerful in His voice through them and to the church gathered at the National Gathering.
- For Information on the [Binational gathering](#) and its effort in August- to be held in Windsor, Ontario see here: <https://www.crcna.org/gatherings>
- The Canadian context still remains unique and demands from us fitting responses as churches and leaders. It is why I am so glad for support of ministry like **The Centre for Public Dialogue** and the **Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee** (together with the centres in Regina, Edmonton and Winnipeg). As illustrations of the importance and impact of this work I cite two examples: first, regarding [Refugees](#) and second, on the federal government's changes to the [Summer Jobs Program](#), in large part because of the partnership of our ministry efforts through the CPD. We commit ourselves to responsible work on Parliament Hill and for your churches.

Feel free to reach out to me or any of your other servants in the denomination at any point. We are more than happy to serve you in your context. Whether by video or in person, it is easy to partner together for the sake of Christ in our communities.

Pastor Darren Roorda - Canadian Ministries Director, CRCNA



DIACONAL MINISTRIES
CANADA

*Relying on the Holy Spirit, Diaconal Ministries Canada exists to
Inspire, Empower and Equip Deacons, as they animate congregations to join
in God's transforming work in communities across Canada.*

SPRING REPORT TO CLASSIS

January 11, 2019

Happy New Year to our partners in ministry!

It is an exciting time here at Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC). As part of our 2020 Strategic Plan, we have several new initiatives and projects on the go. This plan involved a detailed review of DMC's vision, mission, policies and processes, and was a helpful exercise in providing focus and direction for our organization to move forward. DMC is and continues to be an organization created "**by** Deacons **for** Deacons", as we help Deacons fulfill their calling/mandate as spelled out in the Church Order (2016) and the Charge to Deacons as articulated in the form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons (2016).

Here's a look at what we've been working on since our last report to Classis in the fall:

- A comprehensive evaluation on the annual Ancaster Day of Encouragement (DOE) was completed in July 2018. With input from DMC partners, stakeholders, staff and beyond, the decision was made to no longer offer the annual gathering and to pursue other meaningful and intentional ways to encourage and equip deacons in the work they do. (It's important to note that regional DOEs still continue in various communities across Canada with the support and involvement of DMC.). You can read the official Press Release on our website: <https://bit.ly/2RPxnc1>.
- We continue to strengthen our agency's communication strategies and improve brand recognition. We are currently working on building a brand new website that will provide encouragement and relevant resources to deacons in the work they do.
- Much work has been done in the area of Stewardship and Benevolence to better equip deacons and congregations to live stewardly:
 - Collaboration with agencies like Christian Stewardship Services will ensure deacons receive helpful resources and training;
 - A National Benevolence Training Program was developed and piloted in partnership with Ms. Anje Attema to help deacons move from "handing out money" to partnering with people in improving their situation in more holistic ways;
 - We've partnered with World Renew to lead a workshop entitled "Helping Without Harming" where participants learn how to alleviate poverty and injustice without hurting the ones they are serving. These half- or full-day workshops teach the differences between *Relief* (offering temporary relief during a crisis), *Rehabilitation* (helping communities recover from a crisis), and *Community Development* (helping those in chronic poverty to support themselves and to challenge systems that work against people fulfilling these callings.) This

workshop has gone over very well and more dates are being booked for 2019 in cities like Edmonton, Nanaimo, and Toronto.

- We have some exciting news on the horizon regarding our Operation Manna Program, which has been helping churches start or grow community ministries for over 20 years. Stay tuned for a press release coming out in late January regarding how this program will extend its reach to help churches love their communities.

To accomplish all of the above-mentioned work and more, we continue to be funded primarily through Diaconal Ministry Shares (formerly "Dues") which are invoiced yearly to each Canadian CRC. It's important to note that these are NOT the same as *Denominational* or *Classical* Ministry Shares. Diaconal Ministry Shares are part of the agreement that **Canadian** Deacons made with each other in the 1960s and recommitted themselves to in 2001 when DMC was officially formed. Each year the DMC Board reviews and approves the amount – and each year these amounts, along with audited financial statements, are presented at DMC's Annual General Meeting in the fall.

Again we want to say thank you for partnering with us in fulfilling the vision which God has given us to inspire, empower, and equip deacons, churches, and their partners across Canada as **together** we join in God's transforming work. Thank you for your time, your prayers, and your financial support: we could not do this without you. May God continue to bless and guide us all as we carry out the ministries He calls us to.

For your information, here is our **Board Executive for 2018-19:**

Chair – Erica Snippe-Juurakko (Thunder Bay, ON) erica.snippejuurakko@gmail.com

Vice-Chair – Martin Slofstra (Toronto, ON) martinslofstra9@gmail.com

Secretary – Norm Hasyema (Leduc, AB) normhaayema@gmail.com

Treasurer – Scott Plante (Hamilton, ON) scott.plante@gmail.com

We invite you to visit our website www.diaconalministries.com to become familiar with the vast array of resources available. For more information, call us at the Burlington office (1-800-730-3490 ext. 4304) or contact one of the board members listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



ron vanden brink
National Director, Diaconal Ministries Canada

TOP REASONS WHY

Deacons are Needed at Classis & Synod

To compile our list of reasons, we've used the Bible, the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons (2016), the Church Order, and our own experience.

1 **Deacons Are Equals** God provides the unique gifts and abilities required for each role on Council and none are greater, or more important, than another. We call this "Parity between Church Offices".

- A whole new set of spiritual and practical gifts are represented when deacons are present.
- Given the different gifts, responsibilities and mandates of Deacons, Elders and Pastors, it seems clear that all three ought to be represented at Classis and Synod meetings in order to listen, pray and assist in the hearing of God's voice.
- *Deacons serve by leading and equipping the church to minister to its members and the world in a rich diversity of ministries... The deacons and elders, together with the ministers, are responsible for the general administration of the church. As well, Church Order Article 75 states that each classis shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.*

2 **Deacons Add Value** It's important to note that the areas of *Service, Justice, Stewardship, Compassion and Prophetic Criticism* are specifically described as the work of Deacons. In order to carry out this part of their calling it is very important that Deacons are well represented at the meetings of Classis and Synod.

- **Service** - Deacons are called not only to serve, but to *inspire faithful ministries of service to one another, to the larger community, and to the world.*
- **Justice** - Deacons are charged with the responsibility of reminding the church *that the Lord requires us to act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with [our] God (Micah 6:8).* They are to do this by offering *holistic responses that respect the dignity of all people, working to change exploitative structures and systems, equipping the church for ministries of reconciliation and peacemaking, and seeking opportunities for advocacy.*
- **Stewardship** (of Time, Trees, Talents & Treasures) - Deacons are called to prompt the church *to seize new opportunities to love God, our neighbours, and the creation, with acts of generous sharing, joyful hospitality, thoughtful care for the poor, and wise stewardship of all of God's gifts.*

- **Compassion** – The Charge to the Deacons reminds us that, *with respectful compassion for the needy and awareness of the often hidden needs of the wealthy*, the Deacons are to *teach us to minister to rich and poor alike, both within and outside the church*. And Deacons are to *encourage with words that create hope in hearts and with deeds that bring joy into lives*.
- **Prophetic Criticism** – Deacons are also entrusted with the responsibility of being *prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in our society, and [are to] be sensitive counselors to the victims of such evils*.

3 **Deacons Add Diversity** Since diaconates are often more diversified in age and gender than the offices of Elder and Minister, having Deacons “at the table” will help to diversify these denominational gatherings.

4 **Deacons Remind the Church to Live into its Missional Calling** Throughout the history of the church, the areas of Justice, Stewardship, Compassion, and Ministries of Service have always had a rich connection to mission.

- For the Church to live into its missional calling, both as individual congregations and as a denomination, decisions that are made in these areas need to involve the people ordained to live into that calling, namely Deacons.

5 **Deacons Hold the Church Accountable** Given the gravity of the Deacons’ Mandate and their responsibility to animate congregations to live into it, it seems prudent to have them hold the church accountable in these areas.

- For example, if Deacons see the church allowing its most vulnerable members to languish alone, or if they notice apathy within the church for those outside of the church, it is important for them to raise these issues at every assembly of the church, calling it back to its responsibilities.

6 **Deacons ~ It’s Not Just Another Meeting** Since Deacons are seen as the “doers” of the church, it can seem counterproductive to attend another meeting!

- Without Deacons at the table of the major assemblies of the church, some of the conversations we *must* be having may never be had. Classis and Synod meetings are places where all office-bearers can hear and share stories concerning where God is at work locally and internationally. Being in these meetings allows Deacons to learn from these stories and helps them establish best practices.

7 **We are ALWAYS Better Together** Seating Deacons at Classis and Synod meetings strengthens God's Church, the body of Christ.

- “[Christ] makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)

Redeemer University College
Report to Classis Huron of the Christian Reformed Church: Winter 2019

In 1985 at one of its first academic conferences, Redeemer proudly displayed the motto "Learning is for Serving." More than 30 years later, students continue to discern in chapel services, classrooms and conversations how they can offer their lives wholeheartedly to serve God and their world. They are learning to say, along with Moses, "Here I am." These words, taken from Exodus 3:4, are the theme on campus this year.

As we enter the final year of the 2020 Strategic Plan, we are grateful to continue to help students intentionally connect their university learning with Kingdom purpose. Over the past three years, we have developed and launched a new Core curriculum, the Centre for Christian Scholarship, a Media and Communication Studies program, the Centre for Experiential Learning and Careers and, most recently, an Urban and Intercultural Ministry program. Together, these initiatives are renewing Redeemer's academic program, raising the university's profile and securing a stable financial foundation for the future. Thanks in part to the strategic plan, enrolment this year is up, with approximately 700 students enrolling this past fall.

Donors, including the generous donors in churches in Classis Huron, make each of these initiatives and each year of education at Redeemer possible. The support has helped the *Re Campaign*, which funds the 2020 Strategic Plan, surpass \$18.5 million in early December. This is significant progress in the past calendar year toward the campaign's \$20 million goal. This coming February, the Redeemer campus is again honouring the faithful support of the donor community with a week-long series of events called The Gratitude Project. The celebration gives Redeemer students, faculty and staff an opportunity to thank donors who make Christian education for the next generation of leaders possible.

In addition to the ongoing exciting work of faculty in scholarship and in the classroom, several other significant initiatives are underway. The Act Five gap year program will encourage that same discernment in students wrapping up their high school education and unsure of their next steps. Launched this fall, the Act Five program has been developed in partnership with Hamilton District Christian High School, Smithville Christian High School, London District Christian Secondary School, Toronto District Christian High School and Woodland Christian High School. The eight-month Christian gap year program will take on its first cohort in fall 2019. More information will be available in January at redeemer.ca/act-five.

Redeemer also looks forward to investing in another cohort of high school students through its intensive summer research fellowship. As the program runs a second time this summer, grade 11 and 12 students will gain a deeper understanding of what it means to study science as a Christian, learn practical lab skills and connect with Christians in the sciences.

It's been an exciting fall at Redeemer. In particular, it was a pleasure to host more than 50 pastors from a variety of denominations for the first event in our Pastor Professor Exchange series. On February 26, Dr. Marie Good will speak on the impact of young people's faith on their desire. Ministry teams and pastors are invited to join us and can find more information at redeemer.ca/pastor-prof-exchange.

As part of leadership transition, this January Redeemer welcomes its new dean of humanities: Dr. Karen Dieleman, an experienced leader in Christian higher education. In 2019, Redeemer is also seeking a provost to complete its academic leadership. We look forward to providing further

updates from the search committee appointed by president Dr. Robert Graham. Throughout this process, we welcome your prayers for the search committee and its candidates.

Finally, in March, Redeemer will mark the inauguration of Dr. Robert Graham as the university's fourth president. On Friday, March 1, we invite you to celebrate with us this new season in Redeemer's institutional life and hear Dr. Graham share his vision for the university's future. Further information about the event can be found at redeemer.ca/inauguration.

As we look back on the progress made in 2018 and look forward to the opportunities that 2019 will bring, Redeemer is truly grateful for the support of the Christian Reformed Church and in particular that of churches in Classis Huron. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Christian higher education at Redeemer. May God bless your work on behalf of His Church.

David Zietsma, PhD
Vice President, External Relations and Enrolment

Calvin Theological Seminary – Fall/Winter 2018/2019 Update

Thank you for your prayers, support and encouragement! We are now in our 143rd year of continuous ministry since 1876. From one pastor who became the professor for the then new school serving five students, we continue to see God at work through our faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Where Do our Students Come From?

In the fall, we welcomed 357 continuing and new students who are a part of our degree and non-degree programs. (Non-degree students include those in our Latino Ministry certificate programs and students at Handlon prison.)

The countries represented in our student body illustrate the breadth and depth of our global ministry. Students come from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Peru, Rwanda, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, United States and Venezuela. Thank you for praying for and supporting these students!

New On-Line M.A. Program:

The Calvin Seminary Board recently approved our offering a fully on-line version of the Master of Arts in Ministry Leadership beginning in the fall of 2019. This on-line version means that there are no requirements for a student to come to Grand Rapids (even for an intensive week) as all work can be completed on-line. If you want to learn more about this on-line version, please email – ctsadmissions@calvinseminary.edu

Hybrid (online courses with one week of face to face each semester) and residential delivery of this M.A. program will still be available as well.

Investigation of Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) Degree:

Calvin Seminary is also investigating offering a D.Min. program in keeping with a recent request of Synod dealing with a report for continuing education of pastors. If you would like to provide input or raise questions, please email us at ctsdmin@calvinseminary.edu

We would appreciate your comments and your help in shaping this possible program to serve the church and pastors!

Calvin Seminary Scholarship and Donor Appreciation – Legacy Award – Jen Family Scholarship:

We are glad that 1.5 million dollars of scholarship support helped students at Calvin Seminary this year. As part of the celebration, we told the story of how multi-generational stewardship has impacted multiple students. To read more about the Legacy Award to the family of Rev. Isaac and Lily Jen – go here – <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/2018/11/13/the-jen-family-recognized-at-annual-scholarship-dinner/>

New Website being Developed while Center for Excellence in Preaching Site continues to Grow:

You have seen those signs before – Under Construction! Our website is being redeveloped to serve you better. For example, our summer conference – Loving Your Neighbor: Ministry Among Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees – was a gathering with great insights that we want to share again via our website.

In addition, the Center for Excellence in Preaching continues to serve 19,000 unique visitors per month leading to more than a million pages being downloaded. Check it out and make the site one of your favorites - <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/> While our revised website will be better, you can still use it now to find out more about your seminary and the work we are doing with your support and encouragement!

<http://www.calvinseminary.edu/>

Classis Huron Report – Feb. 23, 2019

Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Associate Director of Church Relations

Thank you, Classis Huron, for your support of the work of World Renew. Because of this, lives are transformed, hope is restored and the power of the Lord is made manifest. As you read this, the Christmas Gift Catalogue campaign has wrapped up. It has again been incredible to be part of a campaign in which there have again been so many participants, using so many ideas to learn about, to teach and to share the work of World Renew. One school had an animal dress-up day for THE FARM TEAM; a church asked their Sunday school children to weekly put a loony in a basket of seeds on the Christmas tree. The delightful and creative list goes on and on!

(This report is going to be a little bit longer than usual, but there are some incredible stories here!!!!!!!)

A. General Update

Three updates of note:

-The I AM NOT MY OWN tour was pretty much at its ½-way mark by the end of 2018. It has been simply remarkable! A few numbers to back that claim up: Jeremy and his family have driven 25K km; he was involved in 81 events since early June (!); there have been almost 10K voices recorded; 24 local missions have been supported, **over \$167K** (including the match from CFGB) raised for trauma healing and food distribution in Nigeria. We look forward to *The Gathering* in May, in Edmonton: we'll get to hear the **Virtual Choir!**

-Most of World Renew's work is done through partnership with other, on-the-ground organizations and agencies. In fact, we work with more than 75 partners. Through bringing our expertise to bear on their knowledge of their assets and their needs, God's work is wonderfully collaborative and effective.

-Not only do we partner with organizations on the ground, we also partner with other global development agencies. In fact, we are seen as leaders around the globe, to the point that our staff is often asked to sit of these agencies' boards. For example: Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo was recently appointed to the ACT Alliance board, and its executive committee (both Carol and Ida served on committees at their most recent assembly); Carol and Ida are also both on the Integral Alliance Board; Ken Kim is the Board chair of CFGB; Jacquie Koster sits on the board of Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), after having helped to shepherd the concept from infancy to maturity.

B. Upcoming Offering Dates

Just a reminder that the whole ordering process for resources that can be used for offerings, changed a while ago. Church AAs are encouraged to watch for time-sensitive ordering information from the denomination. Here are World Renew's upcoming offering dates for the first half of 2019, as approved by Synod:

On Mar. 3, the offering is for CFGB. World Renew is one of the 15 agencies that make up CFGB, which has been instrumental in bringing food and hope to 100s of 1000s of people worldwide.

On April 7, the offering is for Refugee Resettlement. This program in World Renew supports churches in their sponsorship of refugees into Canada.

On June 30, we recognize the work of the Canadian government in supporting the work that world Renew does on its own, and corporately through CFGB.

C. Community Development: Stories of Transformation

There are many(!) stories of transformation in which World Renew plays a part. This is one of them; from Zambia. (Please, do wander through the website for more stories: www.worldrenew.net/stories. This one is written by Steve Sywaka, team leader of the southern Africa team: *"It was such a strange feeling: was I really becoming numb to success? For hours, I sat and listened, as person after person shared how our programs*

have dramatically impacted their lives. At first, my eyes would fill with tears; I was humbled, grateful, amazed, and encouraged. But by the afternoon of the second day, as people in village after village told their story, drawing pictures of what their lives were like just three years ago and what they are like today, I found myself overwhelmed and, well, numb.

Recently, World Renew Zambia conducted what we call a “discovery process” with our partner in Zambia, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Our partnership commitments include regular, thorough evaluations where we can celebrate achievements, discuss and make plans for improvements and future projects, and assess our ability to achieve those plans.

The stories we saw and heard were so dramatic and so numerous that I truly felt almost numb. The following chart shows with stark contrast the nature of some of the stories we heard. **World Renew’s** tiny Zambian team assists three devoted staff members from the **Church of Central Africa Presbyterian’s Relief and Development Department**. This department alone is working in 42 villages in three districts, and in every village we are met by more people who want join the program. They have seen how much our work has impacted others. It’s difficult to accept that we cannot help everyone. And here’s what been happening, before and after:

	Before	After
Roofing	Leaky thatch	Iron sheets, with a solar panel
Clothing	“almost naked” torn clothes	Clothes
Footwear	No shoes	Our kids have shoes
Cooking	Clay pots	Metal pots
Fetching Water	Heavy clay pots	Plastic buckets
Farming	Ridges	Conservation agriculture
Farming tool	Hoe	Ripper
Food supply	Little food, hunger-stricken	Eating properly
Personal hygiene	No soap or lotion	Soap and lotion
Giving to church	Avoid going because we have nothing	Able to give
To relieve oneself	Go to the bush	Pit latrine
Drinking water	The river	Borehole pump
Children’s education	Not in school because of no money	Children going to school
Animals	No livestock	Chickens
Activity	Sat idle under a tree	Small businesses
Alcohol consumption	Husbands drinking beer	Men more involved in the community and with family activities
Marriage	Fighting and spouse violence	Less conflict, spouses fighting less

There it is: your support of World Renew’s work. Thank you!

D. Disaster Response

Update International:

World Renew is involved with more than 25 international disaster responses; here are two examples:

Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh: To date, food assistance has been provided for thousands of families, and monsoon-preparedness related items to 2,700 families. Right now, 500 community kitchens, 500 household cooking stoves, and hygiene training is the priority.

Indonesia: The response to the Lombok earthquake and Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami continues, with the support of local staff and partners. In response to the Lombok earthquake, with generous funding from ZOA, CRWRF, and the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, we are constructing shelters, latrines and providing access to clean drinking water. In response to the crisis in Sulawesi, emergency assistance is being provided to affected families.

Update Domestic: Canada and US:

This is a snapshot of activities that Disaster Response Services (DRS) were involved with in early December. These projects, of course, change regularly, so I suggest you stay updated by checking the website here: (<https://worldrenew.net/disaster-response-services>)

- California fires: regional managers are meeting with fire-affected communities to plan long-term, which is where we specialize.
- Alaska earthquake: our volunteers there are in conference calls with federal and state response efforts to see where we can help.
- Hurricane Florence, NC: working with communities organizing responses. Offering needs assessments. Have about five sites in the New Year to which we can send group mission trips.
- Hurricane Florence, SC: meeting with communities, offering services
- Hurricane Michael, GA: possible needs assessment for a community for whom we did an assessment after a 2017 tornado, now having to respond to Michael.
- Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico: working on 2019 dates for home repairs
- Hurricane Harvey, TX: new long-term site is ready in Dickinson and repairing homes
- Hurricane Irma, FL: a facilitated site for group mission trips will start Jan 2019.

E. Refugee Settlement Activities:**YOU MUST READ THIS!**

The Refugee Program is delighted to share a story about a moving cross-border partnership that has emerged over the past year. In August of 2016, Loop CRC in Chicago supported a Syrian refugee family after their move from Jordan to the United States. As one member of the church put it, "It was our small way of living out God's call to love our neighbours and welcome the stranger."

The welcomed family soon became the ones doing the welcoming. They would frequently invite members of Loop CRC to join their table to share a meal. The relationships that developed were deep and transformative for the Loop CRC volunteers involved.

In October of 2017, the Syrian family asked Loop CRC if they would be able to help one of their sisters and her family who are currently living in a Jordanian refugee camp. Given that there is no private refugee sponsorship program in the United States, it seemed there would be no way to offer assistance.

Through a series of phone calls, a member of Loop CRC connected with World Renew's Refugee Program in Canada. It turned out that the family in Chicago had a relative in Regina, Saskatchewan. Eventually Loop CRC was put in touch with Sonlight CRC in Regina. They appealed to the Sonlight CRC community to take on the sponsorship of the family still in Jordan, offering to cover the full costs of the sponsorship if Sonlight would commit to resettling the family. Sonlight has agreed and God-willing the application will be submitted in early 2019. What a beautiful illustration of the Body of Christ at work!

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the *Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program* in Canada. The Christian Reformed Church was among the first denominations to take part in the program after its inception in 1979. To mark this occasion, celebration events are being planned for communities in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. Visit www.worldrenew.net/40yearsofwelcome in the new year for more details (the page should be live by February 2019 at the latest). A video to mark the occasion is also being produced. This will be available for churches to use for their 2019 Refugee Sunday along with other materials. Lastly, the Refugee Program is currently collecting photographs and stories from the 40 years of sponsorship history. If you have photos or stories to share, please contact Rebecca Walker at rwalker@worldrenew.net

F. What else can the people and the churches of Classis Huron do?

-Make sure you get to an I AM NOT MY OWN Jeremy Benjamin concert yet this year. Check the tour dates here. (<https://iamnotmyown.org/new-events/>)

- Encourage your church to partner with a church or community outside North America. Call the office.
- Make plans to go to the Canadian **Gathering, 2019**, in Edmonton, and/or the CRCNA-wide **Inspire, 2019** in Windsor.
- Check out our reading/resource list on the website here: (<https://worldrenew.net/learn>)

Contact Peter Bulthuis (pbulthuis@worldrenew.net; 800-730-3490, ext. 4237), or Chris Orme (corne@worldrenew.net, ext. 4319) for more ideas on how we can help you achieve your ministry objectives. To learn more about World Renew's ministry and/or to sign up for our regular newsletter, please visit www.worldrenew.net.

Blessings,



Peter Bulthuis, Church Relations