**Safe Church Co-ordinator Report to Classis Huron**

**May 21, 2025**

**Mandate:** Classis Huron Safe Church Committee is mandated as follows:

**Advisory Panel:** To function as an Abuse Response Team according to Synodical Guidelines (as annotated for Classis Huron).

**Education:** To provide comprehensive and on-going education, training and resources to our churches in the prevention of and response to abuse.

**Support:** To provide support services\* to our churches, a victim of abuse, an offender of abuse and/or their family members.

\*Support services may include: consultations, resources and suggested written material, phone calls, visits, accompanying persons to civil or criminal legal proceedings, making referrals for treatment/counselling and/or being a prayer partner

**Safe Church Conference, March 1, 2025**: Waterloo CRC was the host church for the annual inter-Classis Safe Church conference. Anita Brinkman wrote a wonderful report on the conference: <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/news/safe-church-conference-encourages-action> Sheila Wray Gregoire <https://sheilawraygregoire.com>, a well-known author and speaker from Belleville, Ontario was the featured speaker for the day. As Brinkman reported, Gregoire suggested: *“Four things shape the culture of a church where safety and abuse are concerned: how we talk about sex and gender, how we talk about sin and gender, our emphasis on salvation, and our willingness to have [or deal with] “blind spots” when abuse is discovered.”*

Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen, led a workshop on the newly adopted **Code of Conduct**. It is a code that all ministry leaders ought to be aware of and adhering to as they conduct themselves in their leadership positions. Thrive has introduced a guide to the Code - <https://www.crcna.org/thrive/code-of-conduct>. It is a great tool designed to be used by the local council as part of their opening devotions or even as an agenda item for a number of meetings. It could even be used as a tool during mutual censure discussions.

Julia Rathbun, Thrive Safe-Church consultant, led a workshop on basic safe church policy and encouraged those in her workshop to keep up the good work.

One of the remarks made in the submitted evaluations was that every office-bearer ought to be present at these conferences. Since most safe church polices do require people to keep up with their training and awareness, such a conference does fit the bill.

**Classis Huron Safe Church Committee Members:** Thank you to the churches who responded to the call to fill their vacancy on the CHSCC! A number of vacancies were filled. In September, I will give you a complete list of those who now serve on the team.

Representatives have a key role in contributing to the ongoing issues and events, ensuring that all churches in Classis Huron have a voice and are kept informed of upcoming training opportunities, webinars and resources. They also assist the coordinator with advice, support and encouragement.

If I can be of help to your congregation in the area of Safe Church, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Meanwhile, if you know of someone who may be gifted in this area and willing to commit to the work of Safe Church, please also let me know.

**Question to ponder:** If an allegation of abuse would come to light in your congregation, would you know what to do?

**Links for further information:**

[crcna.org/safe church](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CHealt%5CDownloads%5C250521%20-%20Report%20to%20Classis%20Huron.docx)

<https://classishuron.ca/safe-church-ministry/>

Humbly submitted,

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