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

**February 19, 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**: For more than two decades, Classis Huron has been the host of the annual inter-Classis Safe Church conference, held the first Saturday of March. So, on **March 1, 2025,** you are all invited to join us for the next conference to be held at Waterloo CRC from 9AM – 3 PM.

We are excited that our featured speaker is Sheila Wray Gregoire from Belleville, Ontario (<https://sheilawraygregoire.com>). Sheila is the author of eleven books including *The Great Sex Rescue,*the host of the Bare Marriage podcast, and the founder of [To Love Honor and Vacuum](https://tolovehonorandvacuum.com). An award-winning writer, Sheila calls the church to more than just pat answers by conducting original research to find out what advice works–and what really doesn’t.

Leading a workshop on the newly adopted Code of Conduct, Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen, Thrive Safe-Church consultant, will help churches figure out how to implement the code.

Leading a worship on safe church teams and how to keep safe church alive in the churches, Julia Rathbun, Thrive Safe-Church consultant will give teams renewed energy.

The film, “For Our Daughters” will be screened and panel discussion will follow.

A conference like this helps churches fulfill the educational component of your safe-church policies. For further information you can go to <https://classishuron.ca/safe-church-ministry/>

**April 27, 2025 has been designated as Abuse Awareness Sunday – Thrive**

The light of truth can dispel the shadows of abuse by offering hope and healing to those affected and together, we must stand firmly against abuse and ensure that light triumphs over darkness. Thrive staff are practitioners, pastors, and seasoned ministry leaders who are eager to serve as resources for the safety and wellbeing of your congregation. Call on us to help develop safer church policies and assist in challenging abuse of power and code of conduct situations.

Further information and resources can be found at crcna.org/safe church

**Classis Huron Safe Church Committee Members**

Acton - VACANT

Kitchener - Paula La Fontaine (Secretary)

Listowel - VACANT

Lucknow – Tim Wellstead

Maitland River - Yolanda Ritsema

Orangeville - VACANT

Owen Sound - VACANT

Palmerston - Irene Drost

Stratford - VACANT

Vanastra - VACANT

Waterloo - Atie Ott

Blyth - Giena Nonkes

Cambridge - VACANT

Cambridge River City - Melinda Saunders

Clinton - Angela Kaptein

Collingwood - Victor Laarman (acting)

Drayton - VACANT

Exeter - Joseph Lubbers

Goderich Trinity - Tiffany Graig

Guelph First - VACANT

Guelph New Life - Tom Bruulsema

Please note the churches that are currently without a representative – 9 vacancies. Please prayerfully consider filling those vacancies. If there is someone in place, but I don’t know about it, please pass on their contact information.

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.

Humbly submitted,

Carel Geleynse

Classis Huron Safe Church Co-ordinator

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