January 13, 2025

Dear Classis Huron:

Greetings from the Guelph Campus Ministry Board!

As you know, the Guelph Campus Ministry community, through the leadership of Sara DeMoor, provides a hospitable place for students, staff and faculty to connect and learn, a place as the mission statement says, “to wrestle with Scripture and be challenged to root their identity in Christ.” To speak winsomely of Jesus, crucified and risen, and the church as his continued ministry today in the anxious and politically charged atmosphere of the campus today is a risky but worthy venture.

Students desperately need a spiritual anchor in the stormy seas of emerging adulthood on campus. As a board, we continue to celebrate because of the tangible ways that our Classis Huron churches have been able to support the work of Guelph Campus Ministry. Let me highlight just a few:

* This is the sixth year that GCM has offered three students the opportunity to serve as interns, under the mentorship of Sara. Leadership development and faith formation are important aspects of GCM’s vision, and through this year-long internship experience these students are equipped and encouraged to take on leadership roles within the community, as they also commit to exploring different Christian spiritual practices as a team.
* Community dinner continues to be part of GCM’s weekly rhythms that helps students grow in fellowship with each other (including by our partnership with the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at UofG), while experiencing the good gift of being nourished—body and soul!—by local church communities, who provide the crock pot meals.
* Last fall GCM continued to embody the part of our mission, “to be a community where all who are curious about life and God *wrestle with Scripture*…” by offering “Bible read-aloud” evenings on a series of Wednesdays following Community Dinner. Read-alouds are less intimidating than “Bible Studies” to attend and to invite friends to attend, and it meant students could read more significant sections of the Bible in one sitting. Over the course of four weeks we read aloud one of Paul’s epistles each week (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians), and then continued with a few weeks in Romans.

Our board meetings are functioning well, allowing us to ask good questions about the vision and work of GCM. With six other board members representing five CRC congregations (Mark Hofstee, Nicole VanderWindt, Bruce Bos, Marge Siertsema, Carel Geleynse, and Peter Schuurman), we work well together in our governance task and are discerning together God’s leading of Guelph Campus Ministry, aware of these times of denominational uncertainty.

On that governance note, it has come to our attention that our own “Parameters and Protocols” document (adapted from the Bylaw No. 1, which was adopted by Classis Huron in September 2003) reads that “There shall be one director known as the Classis Huron Representative who shall be designated by Classis Huron.” While we named this person last year as Rev. Carel Geleynse, we suspect

that a formal vote may be necessary to confirm this. That being the case, we would suggest a motion be forwarded along these lines:

**MOTION:** that Classis Huron affirm Carel Geleynse as the Classis Huron Representative to serve on the Guelph Campus Ministry Board of Trustees.

Classis should be aware of the divergent ways in which the acts of Synod 2024 will be taken by our students, our supporting congregations and alumni, and the ministry itself on campus. Matters of sexual ethics are volatile territory on the campus, and while this makes our witness even more important, it also requires that it be full of “gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). Many Christian Reformed ministries (although not all) across the continent are troubled by the implications of this Synod for their ministries, and the Campus Ministry Association is fostering conversations on how best to respond. This is not just the content of the HSR, but even more so the way the confessional interpretation is being implemented. The university is a pluralistic culture of dialogue and debate that is too often silenced by a cancel culture. We wish to model an alternative that has “the aroma of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:15).

Two members of the board and Sara were part of the Classis Huron Listening Circle conversation on January 8th, 2025, and felt the tensions around the different responses, which can be exacerbated on campus in our polarized age. The bi-national campus ministry leader for Resonate—Rev. Brian Bork—has also hosted online meetings for campus ministry board members that have been most helpful. We ask for your discernment as we consider how best to respond to these changes so that the ministry can continue to flourish and bear witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ. We are committed to Reformed theological perspective to guide our direction, and hold to our mission “to be a community where all who are curious about life and God” are welcome, and where “Christ calls them to live faithfully without fear.” At this time, we are talking with the Waterloo Campus Ministry committee in order to benefit from each others’ learning on this matter.

The board continues to be thankful for Sara’s ongoing leadership in our ministry. We see her leading small groups, taking a weekend to lead a winter retreat, organizing Christian academic lectures, and feeding dozens and dozens of students, and we are deeply grateful. We want to ensure she stewards her time and dreams in a way that keeps this ministry vibrant, but also sustainable for years to come.

The purpose of this letter and our oral report is to give Classis a small window into GCM’s current status, to share our deep gratitude for your sustaining ministry share support, as well as to appeal to each of the supporting churches to please include GCM on your church’s upcoming budget and/or offering schedule. Please consider ways that you can be a part of God’s ongoing work at the University of Guelph. We also ask that you keep the GCM board, Sara DeMoor, Brianne Gayfer (GCM administrative

coordinator), the interns, the students, staff and faculty of GCM and the University of Guelph in your prayers. We wish to serve our campus, to guide the wandering, be faithful in our learning, and to listen well to God’s leading in all that we do.

We are grateful for the supporting churches of GCM and for God’s providential care for this ministry.

In Christ,

Dr. Peter Schuurman
Guelph Campus Ministry Board Chair

Rev. Carel Geleynse
GCM Classis Huron Representative