



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

MINUTES

May 21, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.
Held at Maitland River Community
Church, Wingham, ON.

C.O. Article 39:

A classis is a group of Christian Reformed churches that comes together to:

- **seek, discern, and submit to God's will;**
- **offer one another mutual support and accountability;**
- **find ways to live out a collective calling within their region;**
- **and allow for a healthy and sustained connection to the wider denomination.**

Our Mission: As a classis, we encourage and support one another in our respective and corporate journeys of faith in carrying out God's mission, so that all might know God's love and saving grace.

Our Vision: As we live out our mission and His calling, we will be an active, compassionate and loving community of churches and ministries, who rejoice in fellowship with God and each other. We will share joys, burdens and responsibilities with dedication and grace.

Delegates at Classis

<u>Church</u>	<u>Minister delegate</u>	<u>Elder Delegate</u>	<u>Deacon Delegate</u>
Acton Bethel	Craig Hoekema	Peter Duivesteyn	Nick Kuipery (Elder)
Blyth	Luke Bouman (Elder)	Rick Steele	Audrey Bos
Cambridge Maranatha	Tammy Den Bak (Elder)	Tim Wolfert	Dave Timmerman
Cambridge River City			
Clinton	Ray Vander Kooij	John Hoogendoorn	Richard Kaptein
Collingwood	Victor Laarman	Ron Jack	John van der Ster
Drayton	Wes Collins	Bill VanAndel	Teresa Wikkerink
Exeter	Jay Crossen	Gerald Kodde	Joy De Weerd
Fergus The Bridge	John Vanderstoep		
Goderich Trinity	Tim Keep	Hans Peters	Nick Heykoop
Guelph Campus Ministry			-
Guelph New Life	Jeff Vandermeer	Sharon Buisman	Angela Nywening
Guelph Water Street	Kasey Vander Veen	Peter Kingma	Ed Kuipery (Elder)
Kitchener Community	Tom Bomhof	Harry Oudman	Pete Hansma
Listowel Bethel	Henry Meinen	Rick Vandonkersgoed	David Dreisen
Lucknow Community		Stacey Wellstead	
Orangeville	Jan Scheurwater (Elder)	Justin Groen	
Owen Sound	Sid Couperus	Fred VanSligtenhorst	Anita Prange
Palmerston	Ken Labbé	Jono Barnhoorn	
Stratford	Martin Dam	Daryl Pol	-
Vanastra Community			
Waterloo		Rudy Eikelboom	Betty Slothouber
Waterloo Campus Ministry			
Wingham Maitland River Community	Bart Eisen	Albert Teeninga	Matt Wilkins

Rev. John Vanderstoep was granted permission to leave the meeting at 3:00.

Officers of the day:

- Chair: Mr. Peter Kingma (Water Street CRC, Guelph)
- Vice-Chair Rev. Cam Oegema (Bethel CRC, Listowel)
- Stated Clerk Mr. Fred Vander Sterre (Blyth CRC)

Committees of the Day:

- Credentials: Trinity CRC, Goderich & First CRC Owen Sound.
- Overtures: N/A
- Balloting: MRCC, Wingham & Maranatha, Cambridge.

Synodical Deputies:

- Rev. Phil Apol (Classis Ontario Southwest)
- Rev. Josh Tuininga (Classis Quinte)
- Rev. Michael Bootsma (Classis Hamilton)

Art. 1 Welcome and Introduction:

- Welcome/Announcements by Rev. Bart Eisen who led in a time of worship

Art. 2 First Morning Session

- The Credentials Committee reported on the attendance. River City CRC and Vanastra Community CRC were not represented.
The Campus Ministers were attending a Campus Ministers' Conference.
- Covenant of Office Bearers was signed by all first-time delegates.
- Classis Huron Primer was highlighted
- Declaration of Conflicts of Interest was explained
- Classis Huron was Constituted

Art. 3 Round Table Session

Rev. Sid Couperus (First CRC, Owen Sound) used the new classis ministry plan to focus on our Covenantal Responsibilities and Tasks.

The Round Table prayer time was based on Lord's Day 12, Q&A 32: *But why are you called a Christian?*

Pastor Sid gave prayer instructions, to pray for ourselves, church leaders, the classis and synod.

Art. 4 Waterloo Campus Ministry Report

Carolyn Kleefman, chair of the WCM Board, informed classis that the search committee has offered Melissa Burmaster, currently the interim campus minister, the full-time campus minister position.

Waterloo CRC will be the calling church, extending the official call to Melissa.

Melissa joined us via *Google Meet* as she was at a campus ministers' conference in Hamilton. She shared a video with the delegates (https://youtu.be/k_h5ilqhA88). This video included interviews of students and faculties.

She also reported on the work on the two campuses. There are 46,000 students at the

University of Waterloo and 20,000 at Wilfrid Laurier University.

She is already developing plans for the next season.

Melissa encouraged the delegates to share with students at home that there are exciting ministry opportunities at university campuses.

Motion to affirm the appointment of Melissa Burmaster as Waterloo Campus minister.

Carried.

Motion to approve the work of the Waterloo Campus Ministry.

Carried.

Rev. Tom Bomhof (member of WCM Board) led in prayer of thanksgiving.

Art. 5 Examination of Josh Sweetman

Examiners were Rev. Tim Keep (Trinity CRC, Goderich) on doctrinal and biblical knowledge and Rev. John Vanderstoep (The Bridge, Fergus) on character and practice.

Sermon reviewers were: Revs. Tom Bomhof (Community CRC, Kitchener) and Bernie de Jonge (retired). Rev. Tom Bomhof reported for the reviewers.

A time of discussion and questions followed.

THE CHAIR DECLARED EXECUTIVE SESSION.

Motion: to grant Josh Sweetman a one-year license to exhort in Classis Huron.

Carried.

The chair congratulated Josh and Rev. Kasey Vander Veen (Water Street CRC, Guelph) led in a prayer of blessings on Josh and his work.

THE CHAIR DECLARED THE EXECUTIVE SESSION CLOSED

Art. 6 Classis Huron Vision/mission/values

Joan Brady (Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer) introduced the new Classis Huron Vision/ Mission/ Value Statement 2024. She explained the stated vision and mission statements and highlighted the four priorities:

- Authentic Community,
- Discipleship,
- God's Mission,
- Covenantal Responsibility and Task, today's focus.

CMC will be the "owner" of the plan as it is part of the CMC's mandate: *Coordinating and planning future ministry in accordance with the goals set forth in the Classical Ministry Plan.*

Motion to receive the ministry plan as a working document.

Carried.

Pre-Lunch Prayer by Rev. Craig Hoekema (Bethel CRC, Acton)

The lunch break was combined with a visit to the CARS (Christian Automotive Repair Service) ministry just across the street in Wingham.

Albert Teeninga was available to introduce the ministry and answered questions.

Visit <https://diaconalministries.com/driving-the-community-forward/> for more information.

Post-Lunch prayer by Rev. Jeff Vandermeer (New Life, Guelph)

Art. 7 Art. 17 request for Rev. Laura de Jong.

THE CHAIR DECLARED EXECUTIVE SESSION

The chair welcomed the Synodical Deputies via *Google Meet*: Revs. Phil Apol (Classis Ontario Southwest), Rev. Josh Tuininga (Classis Quinte) and Rev. Michael Bootsma (Classis Hamilton).

Rev. Tom Bomhof (Community CRC) introduced the request and the background information.

Motion: to declare, on her own request, the termination of Rev. Laura de Jong's services to the Community CRC in Kitchener as per Art. 17a, of the Church Order, effective immediately.

Carried.

The synodical deputies concurred.

Rev. Cam Oegema (Bethel CRC, Listowel) led in prayer.

Art. 8 Art 14c request for Rev. Norm Sennema

STILL IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

Tim Wolfert, elder of Maranatha CRC, Cambridge, explained the reasons for the separation and responded to some questions.

Motion: to declare the honorably release of pastor Norm Sennema for weighty reasons from Maranatha CRC in Cambridge, as per Art. 14c of the Church Order, effective immediately.

Carried.

The synodical deputies concurred.

Pastor Cam Oegema (Bethel CRC, Listowel) led in prayer Maranatha CRC and for Norm Sennema.

The Synodical Deputies were thanked for their work.

Motion to destroy the ballots for the two motions.

Carried

THE CHAIR DECLARED THE EXECUTIVE SESSION CLOSED.

Art. 9 Classical Credentials Committee

Rev. Tim keep (Trinity CRC, Goderich) reported for the Credentials Committee.

One request was received from Clinton CRC: *Have classis discuss the interpretation of the 10th commandment in regards to greed.*

This was passed on to AdCom. This topic aligns with the Classis Huron vision statement.

Art. 10 CMC Report

Rev. Henry Meinen (Bethel CRC, Listowel) reported for the CMC.

Motion to grant seminarian Aaron Tollenaar a one-year license to exhort in Classis Huron.

Carried.

Motion to re-elect Michelle VanderWal (Palmerston) as treasurer alternate.

Carried.

Motion to elect Rev. Kasey Vander Veen as CMLT member (Classical Ministerial Leadership Team).

Carried.

(One delegate declared having a conflict of interest and refrained from voting.)

Motion to reappoint Mr. Stan Puklicz (Stratford) as Church Visitor.

Carried.

Motion to approve the actions of CMC & AdCom.

A request was made splitting of the motion into two parts.

Motion to divide the question into two parts.

Carried.

Motion was made to approve the actions of CMC and the Administrative Committee, with the exception of point 2.6 of the CMC & the Administrative Committee report.

Carried.

Motion was made to approve point 2.6 of the CRC & the Administrative Committee report.

This motion was discussed.

The motion *Carried.*

Art. 11 AGM

MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING FOR CLASSIS HURON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

As required by the Canadian Not-for-profit Corporations Act.

Chaired by Board of Directors member Rev. Henry Meinen.

1. A Quorum (By-Law Art. 24) was established.

2. Proof of Notice for the Meeting (By-law Art. 21) was distributed

3. **Motion:** to approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting held on May 17, 2024.

Carried.

4. **Motion** to receive the 2024 Financial Statements of the Corporation, and the Review Report and to approve the work of the treasurer, Evert Nagel. (Bylaw Art. 68)

Carried

5. Appointment of a Public Accountant for an Audit or Review Engagement for fiscal 2025. (Bylaw Art 69)

Motion: to re-appoint MAC LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants, to conduct an official Review of the 2025 Financial Statements.

Carried.

6. **Motion:** to endorse Mr. Nick Geleynse (Clinton) and Rev. Henry Meinen as members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

Carried

7. **Election** of a new Board of Directors member:

Nominations from the floor of classis were opened. Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC) made the **motion to acclaim** as the new Member-at-Large of the Board of Directors: Rev. Craig Hoekema. Carried

The term of the Board member shall commence at the next meeting of the Board of Directors. (June 17, 2025).

8. **Motion** to adjourn the Annual General membership meeting

Carried.

Rev. Sid Couperus (First CRC, Owen Sound) led in prayer for the CMC and AdCom members, the classical treasurer and the stated clerk.

Art. 12 Church Visitors' and Oversight Committees' Reports

A church visitors' report to Bethel CRC, Acton, from Rev. John Vanderstoep (The Bridge) and Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC) was received.

Rev. Tim Keep (Trinity CRC, Goderich) reported for the Oversight Committee, on the progress of the Vanastra Community CRC. The committee members will attend a planned congregational committee.

Art. 13 Classis Huron Mission Team

Joan Brady (Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer) reported for the CHMT.

- The second *Moving Forward in Faith* conference is planned for this fall.
- She also introduced the new *Creative Outreach Venture Fund 2.0*. This fund utilizes a portion of their budget to support and encourage Classis Huron churches and ministries to engage in their communities in a missional way.
Joan reported that one application was received already.
- A Youth Catalyst proposal will be presented at the September session of classis.
- Joan is available to support local churches with their outreach ministry opportunities.

Rev. Sid Couperus (Prayer Catalyzer) reported on the Multi-Classis Pastors' Retreat and the planned retreat for February 2026, with invitations to include the retired ministers.

Motion to approve the work of the Classis Huron Mission Team.

Carried.

Art. 14 Other Classical Ministries

- Safe Church

Rev. Carel Geleynse (Classis Huron Safe Church Coordinator) reported that there are seven new members on the classis team. The team's mandate calls for one representative from each of the Classis Huron churches.

He referred to the printed report in the agenda and also cautioned about the abuse of power in the church.

Motion to approve the work of the Safe Church Team.

Carried.

- Classical Counsellor Reports

The classis clerk reported for the classical counsellors on:

Blyth;	Lucknow Community;
Maranatha, Cambridge;	Orangeville;
Water Street, Guelph;	Waterloo Campus Ministry;

Stratford extended a call to Nick Bierma, to serve as the Co-pastor, and this call was accepted. They have an anticipated start date of August, 2025. Nick is the former pastor at Kelowna CRC, where he served as their pastor for 12 years.

Art. 15 Denominational Reports

- Council of Delegates representative Peter Meerveld used a PowerPoint to explain the structure of the denomination, covering the different agencies and the governing bodies. He also highlighted several denomination issues, like a decline in membership and the Ministry Shares. He pointed out that the revenue for our denomination is dropping.
Sharon Buisman (elder at New Life CRC, Guelph) led in prayer for our denomination.
- Revs. Ray Vander Kooij (Clinton CRC) and Jay Crossen (Exeter CRC) reported on the agenda of Synod 2025. Several agenda items were highlighted. The candidacy committee is presenting a revised journey for Commissioned Pastors towards the Minister of the Word position. The reports of three task-forces were mentioned.
- Rev. Shawn Brix reported for Calvin Theological Seminary using a PowerPoint. 90 % of Canadian Seminarians are studying remote.
A new curriculum for the students was introduced, training to deal with mental health issues.
Canadian tuition dollars are treated on par with the US dollar, while scholarships are also available. Shawn responded to several questions.

Art. 16 Christian Reformed Church in Canada

A year ago, a letter was circulated to the Canadian CRCs, about "*Declaration of Readiness for a Distinct Christian Reformed Church of Canada*". Community CRC, Kitchener requested classis to have a discussion about how to respond to that letter.

Rev. Tom Bomhof (Community CRC) explained the history of the movement that is directed toward a more Canadian focus of our churches.

He mentioned that his council is not sure how to deal with this letter.

The chair invited one delegate from each church to report on the responses of their respective councils to the "*Declaration of Readiness...*" letter:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| • It gives a richer environment. | • Not knowing how to respond. |
| • Not a big thing. | • Not pursuing it. |
| • Interested, but nothing definite yet. | • Keeping an eye on it. |
| • No impact. | • Not many conversations. |

- Not responded yet.
- Not discussed it.
- Not discussed this.
- Not much interest in (national) separation.
- It may have some traction.
- No appetite for it.
- Talked about it, keep an eye on it.
- It is hard to separate from other (political) issues.
- Not much appetite for it.
- Not much conversation.
- Discussed it a bit, living in a different culture.

Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC) prayed for our churches and for the denomination.

Art. 17 Exhorters Renewal of their licenses to exhort for five years:

- Tom Mostert (Stratford)
Sermon reviewers were Revs. Cam Oegema (Bethel, Listowel) and John Heidinga (retired).

Motion to renew his license for five years.

Carried.

- Steve Vogel (Bethel, Listowel)
Sermon reviewers were Rev. Tom Bomhof (Community CRC, Kitchener) and Bernie de Jonge (retired).

Motion to renew his license for five years.

Carried.

- John Zwart (Drayton)
Sermon reviewers were Revs. Cam Oegema and John Heidinga.

Motion to renew his license for five years.

Carried.

Art. 18 Other printed reports:

- Advancement Report
- Diaconal Ministries Canada
- Redeemer University
- World Renew
- Calvin University. **Note:** The second term of our board representative, Rosanne Lopers is coming to an end and her work has been much appreciated.
- Thrive Playlist

Rev. Tom Bomhof was thanked for his service here in Classis Huron and at Community CRC, Kitchener. He will be moving away to the west coast, in order to be closer to his children and take on new challenges. He will be missed by his church and by classis.

Art. 15 Evaluation by Menti

Art. 16 Motion to Adjourn and Closing at 5:00.

Vice-chair Rev. Cam Oegema closed with prayer.