

CMC – Visioning discussion

Contextual Analysis – Classis and Denomination

Conditions of Classis

- Dwindling attendance
- Classis relevance not well understood
- Classis faithful through Campus Ministry
- Formal structure and process
- Place of networking and connection
- Difficult to break into (newcomers)
- Diversity of opinions but no conversation
- Polarization mirrors society
- Lack of clarity for vision
- Natural Connections have weakened
- Classis only administrative?
- Disconnected from agencies, missionaries, etc.
- Capacity issues – gaps in what we should and can do
- Decrease Admin – make in into relationship time
- Time to come out of trauma – mentally – acknowledge the losses
- We are still in COVID (?)
- Finding the energy for forward motion – resistance to change
- Lost the vision of the Body – focus on personal survival

Actions

- More prayer needed
- Need to renew around vision and re-build relationships
- Should be a place of storytelling
- Weary – how do we “oomph” them up?
- Reassess – rearticulate not our failure but our faithfulness
- What are we doing “down here” – part of the kingdom story
- Take joy in the simple things that bring us together

Theme: Reliance on Christ

1. **Post-it Notes:**

- More interactions between pastors, chaplains, ministry leaders for engagement and prayer.
- Try to understand where others are
- Curious about Jesus – his words, actions, thoughts, affections
- Classis could become more open to change and other novel ideas – more prayer and singing and telling of positive stories while also acknowledging stresses and hurts
- Worship together
- Prayer as essential
- Praying together
- Pray together for/with each other

1. **Why is it important that we do this as classis?**

- This is what makes us unique. This is what distinguishes us from other social clubs. Belonging to Jesus and being the Body of Christ is what defines us and makes “us” possible.

- Jesus is our center, what draws us together – closer to God and to each other.
- Reclaiming our Reformed worldview that Christ in all and through all and holds all things together – not us, not our work, not our meetings, not our structures.
- Practices of prayer that cultivate listening and discerning (not just talking and directing) and invite us to actually rely on Jesus’s presence in our midst guiding us.

2. What if anything is standing in our way of achieving the priority?

- Cultural movement – within and outside of the church - that communities of faith and church structure keeps us from reliance on Christ. Our structures are the barrier.
- Our view of our own irrelevance....and in extension irrelevancy of faith and Jesus in our lives and world.
- We are often limited by our bounded set thinking. We focus on boundary-making than drawing closer to Jesus alongside each other.
- We’re drawn together by what we believe...but not always what we’re living our faith now.
- Our love of “being right” keeps us from being experimental, adaptive, and learning from our failures.
- Our inability to be silent and still.
- Our time-keeping tendencies reduce our ability to dwell together in Scripture, discussion, and discernment.

Theme: Structure of Classis Huron – operations and administration

1. Post-it Notes:

- Reduce administration
- Classis meetings that allow for story-telling & celebration of what God is doing in each congregation & ministry
- Experimental – celebrating the learning we do through failure
- A nimble, adaptive leadership structure – integrated teams and leadership in local churches
- As much time on fellowship and spiritual matters as on administrative business
- We have the resources/capacity/commitment to what we are called to do (as gifted by God)
- Additional connections in other meetings (Pastor’s breakfast) – mutual support and prayer
- Difficulty populating Classis sub committees

2. Why is it important that we do this as Classis?

- Classis is the natural place for administration, hold ministries and relationships and engage in the broader denomination
- Need a shift to more story telling to encourage each other, share success, best practice, hard-won knowledge – place as much emphasis on this aspect as on administration – become more relational
- Work within/mitigate delegate structure – Pastors are the continuity
- What are the barriers to participation – how do we build agreement for our processes
- This is the place that we carry each other.

3. What if anything is standing in our way of achieving the priority?

- We have corporatized our process – it is about efficiency rather than relationship – some of our administration is rooted in spiritual elements – what have we forgotten?
- Many are unfamiliar with our process
- Not all voices are heard – what provisions are required
- Lack of understanding of disagreement and conflict, its role in change and fair resolution

- East and west/rural and urban/established and church plant divide
- We have lost or activism and outreach

How we are together as Classis

1. Post-it Notes

- Classis is inclusive – tolerant of newcomers who may not be familiar with the traditional role – mix of genders and ages
- A community where everybody belongs and everyone serves – based on passion for Christ and His word – not ethnicity
- Respectful dialogue – posture of listening closely – questions asked to clarify – brave spaces that allow vulnerability
- People engaged in meeting joyfully and eagerly – playful – curious
- Lead with heart – respond with heart
- Warmth and empathy in our relationships – share joy and sorrow
- Celebrate with good food
- Talk about the things that matter rather than avoid conflict – meaningful conversations
- Together focus on spreading the aroma of God among our neighbors
- Connect with denominational ministries
- Networking and working together as churches
- Being involved in the ministry of reconciliation
- Vibrant Campus Ministry

2. Why is it important that we do this as classis?

- We need a posture/tone of joyful respect if we are to relate together.
- Connections are important – fellowship, relationships and a light to our neighbors
- We need to create shared visions, common understanding and unity in Christ.

3. What if anything is standing in our way of achieving the priority?

- Lack of time and capacity – actual and perceived
- Distance
- Covid Mentality – exhaustion and tiredness
- Inward focus
- Identity Crisis

Goals/Outcomes/Strategic Direction

CMC/ADCOM as guide of Classis would:

- **Promote and exemplify, a reliance in Christ, discerning His will for Classis, its member churches and the Denomination by:**
 - **Following the leading of the spirit, having a posture of curiosity and being open to change**
 - **Praying and worshiping together**
 - **Jesus is our center, what draws us together – closer to God and to each other.**
- **Structure of Classis Huron – operations and administration**
 - **Balance Administration tasks with mutual support and learning**
 - **Have Confidence in his provision and be experimental and curious**
 - **Take ownership of the process**
- **Be intentional about how we are together**
 - **Inclusive: everyone belongs and everyone serves**
 - **Brave spaces where vulnerability is welcomed and meaningful conversations occur**
 - **Networking and working together with Churches and Denominational Ministries.**