

Classis Huron Mission Team Discernment Process – April 11, 2022

Discernment Defined

Discernment is the pro-active capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and activity of God both in our ordinary moments and the larger decisions of our lives.

To discern means to sort out, sift through, distinguish, to tell the difference, recognize, discriminate, determine.

1 Corinthians 2:11 says, “No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. And we have received the Spirit of God that we may understand what God has freely given us”.

God knows everything, he wants us to know his will and direction. He gives us His Spirit to know. It is by spending time with God and learning His ways that we'll be able to look at our options and discern His will.

Contextual Analysis – what does today look like?

Broad Strokes

- Covid Crisis – living in pandemic mode with various perspectives
- War in Ukraine
- Global experience
- Decrease of Christianity in Canada
- People are still looking for something
- Much displacement – between countries, communities, socio-demographic
- Low unemployment rates in the country
- Restricted Immigration – Canada as a gate-keeper
- Technology which enables isolated work and ... worship
- Mobile workforce – not committed
- Lack of soft skills in upcoming generations
- Sense of entitlement

Closer to Home

- We are called to be different from the world
- Decrease in engaged membership
- Not necessarily committed to the denomination
- Lack of trust
- Leaving for preferences rather than Theology
- Lack of connectivity
- Lack of appreciation for divergent view points
- Within Classis a rural-urban, East-West divide
- Classis as a formal entity – pastors as the continuity
- Increase in silos

Not all is Bad

- Church as a community space
- Empty or full (sanctuaries) are not an indicator of life within the church
- Smaller communities can be closer – CCRC in Kitchener is a great example
- A time of change and new ways of thinking can be a positive opportunity
- Society wants to re-connect
- Technology can be a tool to reach out
- Learning to be the Church outside the church.

What is our vision based on God's purpose for Classis Huron – what will it look like if we are successful?

- The following themes appeared and are listed in order of perceived importance in our discussion today.
 - Connectivity – listening/hearing each other - 3
 - Church Renewal and Planting – 3
 - Prayer – 2 – but considered transversal
 - Developing Leadership – 2
 - Community Connections – 0 - not necessarily considered a primary task of Classis – but not to be forgotten when we consider the mission of the Church

Deeper Dive on the topic of Connectivity within Classis/the Church

What is the underlying obstacle to Connectivity within Classis/the Church?

- Time – what other things are we doing or not doing?
- Trust - Pride
 - Fear of judgement – difficult to ask questions
 - Lack of knowledge – i.e. racism – Have we not had the opportunity to learn or are we unwilling to know or change.
 - Not all voices are appreciated.
- Social media – too much information and truth is murky
- Noisy world – offering much to distract – travel, entertainment, etc. – also a hunger for novelty, the next great thing
- Lack of commitment – many things are expendable

How do the listed obstacles block Connectivity within Classis/the Church?

- Minimizes Empathy
- Creates fear and tension
- Weakens Relationships
- Prevents reconciliation
- Technical Disconnect
 - Difficult to know right from wrong
 - Easy to misunderstand (lack of verbal and physical cues)

- Interactions are surface
- Too many options

How can we address these obstacles to Connectivity within Classis/the Church?

- Listening Circle – drawing/creating the love under the fears
- Gather to pray regularly – Zoom as an impactful tool
- Build relationships by experiencing things together
- Emphasize human interactions
- Do meetings differently
- Participatory approach – everyone has something to contribute and together we build toward solutions – we have enough.
- Humble, open spirits
- Explore CRCNA media channels and utilise great resources
- Examine systems and structures – do they work in this time?
- Training and orientation

How do these solutions relate to our mission as Classis Huron Mission Team? (could also reflect from a Classis/the Church viewpoint)

- Continue to listen re: church plants and church renewal
- Host participatory events/discussions – use Zoom wisely
- Experience things together: tours, visits as a Mission Team and as Classis
- Define our mission within current context
 - Who else is doing it and how do we work together?
 - How do we communicate the mission effectively?
- Be intentional about our interactions at Classis
- Open meetings to bring in stakeholders relevant to the topic of discussion
- Reporting becomes storytelling.

Goals/Outcomes/Strategic Direction

CHMT would both emphasis and exemplify connectivity by:

- Being present, visiting first-hand, Church plants, and other transformational places.
- Inviting people to participate on our Team, in our discussions and in our vision.
- Providing information/training and orientation on:
 - Our mandate
 - New resources and opportunities in mission
- Facilitating networking to share experiences and build relationships.
- Promote ourselves and related work through new technology – video, zoom meetings, etc.

CHMT would champion Church Renewal and Church planting.

CHMT would encourage Leadership Development