



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

MINUTES of a special meeting

February 23, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

The PURPOSE of Classis Huron

We will foster the Kingdom through shared resources toward spiritual renewal

The VISION of Classis Huron

*The congregations, ministries, missional communities and people of Classis Huron will **surrender** to the work of the Spirit of Mission of Jesus, to **embody** the Kingdom of God. Recognizing the urgency of the times, we **stand on the foundation** laid for us by previous generations and **step forward** in the same faith we have been taught.*

Note: due to COVID this was a virtual meeting.

Delegates to Classis

Church	Minister delegate	Elder Delegate	Deacon Delegate
Acton Bethel		Simon Feddema	Barbara Kerkhof
Blyth	Gary Van Leeuwen	Ken Shortreed	Andy Roest
Cambridge Maranatha	Rick DeGraaf	Marg Siertsema	
Cambridge River City		Melinda Saunders	
Clinton		Andrew Dijkstra	Carolyn Van Dorp
Collingwood	Victor Laarman	James Visser	George Strampel
Drayton	Wes Collins	John Zwart	Albert Scholten
Exeter	Tim DeWeerd (elder)		
Fergus The Bridge	John Vanderstoep		
Goderich Trinity	Tim Keep	Kim Burgsma	Jason Vanderniet
Guelph Campus Ministry	Sara DeMoor		
Guelph New Life	Ed Jager		Dirk Kroon
Guelph Water Street			
Kitchener Community	Tom Bomhof	Dave Wilhelm	Bernie DeJonge
Kitchener The Journey	Toyosi Awesu		
Listowel Bethel	Henry Meinen	Steve Vogel	Gerrit Stolte
Lucknow Community	Tim Leferink	Richard Askes	
Orangeville		Kristen Pott	Jay DeWay
Owen Sound	Sid Couperus	Fred Veenstra	Laura Taylor
Palmerston	Andrew deGelder	John Katerberg	Irene Drost
Stratford	Martin Dam	Tim DeWeerd	
Vanastra Community			Jeff Greidanus
Waterloo	Vicki Cok	Carolyn Kleefman	Jim Vanderleeuw
Waterloo Campus Ministry			
Wingham Maitland River		Stephen Vander Klippe	

Officers of the evening:

Chair: Rev. Martin Dam

Vice chair: Rev. Sid Couperus

Stated Clerk: Fred Vander Sterre

Art 1 Opening by Gary Van Leeuwen, by reading Exodus 34:1-9.
Classis is constituted by the chair.

Art 2 Examination of Candidate Bart Eisen for Ordination.

Due to the virtual nature of the evening's session, the examination was conducted at the Palmerston CRC while the delegates joined by zoom.

1) Practica

Bart was examined in the area of Practica by Rev. Wes Collins (Drayton CRC).

Opportunity was given for questions and comments from delegates and the Synodical Deputies

Motion made and seconded to proceed to the next step. Carried

2) Sermon Evaluation

Rev. Andrew de Gelder and elder John Katerberg (Palmerston CRC) reported on the evaluation of the sermon that was based on Exodus 34:1-9. Bart delivered that sermon at Bethel CRC, Listowel, on January 30, 2022,

Opportunity was given for questions and comments from delegates and the Synodical Deputies.

Motion made and seconded to proceed to the next step. Carried

The concurrence of the Synodical Deputies was received.

3) Biblical & Theological Position

Candidate Bart Eisen was examined in the area of Biblical & Theological by Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen (Blyth).

Opportunity was given for questions and comments from delegates and the Synodical Deputies.

Motion to close the examination was declared by the Chair.

The Chair, declared Executive Session.

Motion was made and seconded to admit Bart Eisen to the Ministry of the Word.

Opportunity was given for discussion.

The Synodical Deputies were directed to a break-out room to prepare their recommendations.

Delegates voted in response to the motion to admit. **Motion carried.**

The Synodical Deputies returned and indicated their concurrence with the decision of Classis Huron. They also encouraged classis to appoint a mentor for Bart.

The Chair declared Executive Session ended.

Upon Bart's return to the main session, the Chair extended congratulations to Bart.

He led the delegates in a prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and on his ministry at the Maitland River Community Church CRC.

The Chair extended appreciation to all those involved in the examination. The Synodical Deputies were dismissed with a blessing.

The ordination service is scheduled for March 6th.

Art 3 Motions presented by the CCC2 delegates.

The CCC2 delegates presented the following motions:

Motion 1: That Classis Huron send the following "Communique of Appreciation and Concern" to the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA and the CRC Canada Corp.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We give thanks for your love for Jesus and the church, demonstrated by the countless hours of diligent and faithful work on both the Council of Delegates and the Canada Corporation Board. We recognize that you do your work under difficult circumstances: Covid-19 which restricts our ability to meet in person, a shrinking denomination and shrinking ministry share giving, and significantly, long-standing under-addressed cultural and structural binational challenges. Before listing a number of concerns and questions we would like to see addressed and get answers to, we do have two significant items of appreciation: the establishment of the Canadian Office of the CRC and the Joint Ministry Agreements now being implemented as part of the Structure and Leadership Task Force Report implementation. These two realities, if empowered and enacted as we understand them, will go a long way toward truly being a binational denomination.

Joining you in your love for Jesus and the church, we recognize that part of our contribution to our shared work is to name remaining concerns that we ask you to address so that your work can be thorough and strengthen the church. We are concerned that the original model to have two national directors has been replaced by a model without a US Director. The absence of a distinct US office, effectively makes the denominational head office also function as the US office creating an unequal power dynamic structurally and a culture that is blind by design to the uniqueness of contextual Canadian ministry. Rather than naming and addressing our cultural challenges and structural imbalances, this model, which our Canada Corporation asked the Council of Delegates to pause on, exacerbates both the structural imbalance and the cultural blindness, doing serious harm to the binationality of our denomination. In fact, we would suggest that the Council of Delegates not pausing but overruling our Canada Corporation request to pause is exhibit "A" of our argument. We admit our limits of perspective. The SALT report is a complex document and implementation of its recommendations has many implications that are not clearly understood by us at this time. Yet, Canada Corp's request to allow time for input from Canadian stakeholders was out-voted at the COD, with Canadian members having a minority vote. While certain recommendations have been put into action

already, we respectfully submit that it is not too late to slow down, and reconsider the request of the Canada Corp.

Again, know that we are with you in prayer as you do your work. Please demonstrate that you are with us and respond favourably to our request to reconsider the request of Canada Corp for more time before fully implementing the SALT report.

In Christ Alone, on mission together,

Classis Huron

Motion to approve motion 1 was supported. The motion carried.

The CCC2 delegates presented the following motion:

Motion 2: “That Classis Huron asks CRCNA Canada Corporation to appoint a study committee to comprehensively answer the question: “How does it help/hinder the mission of God through the CRC’s in Canada to remain part of a US-based denomination and what things would need to be addressed in order to remain rather than forming a separate Canadian CRC denomination?”

Parameters:

1. This study team not be comprised of any current denominational staff members, nor any members of Canada Corporation so that it can work independently.
2. This study should be done within one year, completed by April 15, 2023 so that it can be made available to each Canadian Classis for their Spring 2023 Classis Meetings.
3. This study committee shall engage all willing former Canadian Ministry Directors and shall find a way for all current Canadian ministry leaders to give anonymous input.

This study should include the following:

a) History:

1. What were the reasons and purposes for the CRC's in Canada joining the CRC in the US and are those reasons and purposes still valid?
2. Interview the past four Canadian Ministry Directors for their insights into the above question and use their responses to inform the study.

b) Address the following challenges:

1. Cultural Differences missionally between the CRC in Canada and US
 - a) The impacts of these differences on activities of Canadian CRCs - past, current and future.
 - b) Ways in which Canada-only ministries, such as OSJ, have experienced practical frustration and distraction because of critique by US Classes and churches.
2. Structural imbalances between the US and Canada offices
For example:
 - a) The lack of the existence of a US office (other than a head office) and how this has may have made US concerns trump Canadian concerns.

- b) That after over 100 years of being a binational denomination, the head office has never been in Canada.
- c) That efforts by the Canada Office which impact ministry in Canada can be overruled by the COD.
- 3. General cultural divergences between broader US CRCs and Canadian CRCs around issues of politics, justice, mission, and leadership style.

The parameters, as presented by the CCC2 delegates, was slightly amended.

Motion with two amendments was made and supported. *Carried*.

Art 4 Martin was thanked for his leadership.

The suggestion was made to spend some time to celebrate at the May session, once we can meet in-person again.

Art 5 Motion to adjourn at 10:14 pm was supported

Martin closed in prayer.

Chair of Classis
Rev. Martin Dam

Stated Clerk of Classis
Fred Vander Sterre

Minutes were approved by CMC, April 20, 2022