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**CLASSIS HURON**  
**of the Christian Reformed Church in North America**  
[www.classishuron.ca](http://www.classishuron.ca)

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# **MINUTES**

**February 26, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.**

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***C.O. Article 39:***

**A classis is a group of Christian Reformed churches that come 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.**

This meeting was previously scheduled for February 19, 2025, but was postponed one week because of weather and road conditions.

**Delegates to Classis**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Minister delegate</u>	<u>Elder Delegate</u>	<u>Deacon Delegate</u>
Acton Bethel	Craig Hoekema	Simon Feddema	Peter Duivesteyn (Elder)
Blyth	Jim Shortreed (Elder)	Luke Bouman	Audrey Bos
Cambridge Maranatha	Tim Wolfert (Elder)	Tammy Den Bak	Colene Maerz
Cambridge River City			
Clinton	Ray Vander Kooij	Jeff Bylsma	Derek Rozendal
Collingwood	Victor Laarman		John van der Ster
Drayton	Wes Collins	Bill VanAndel	Rob Scholten
Exeter	Jay Crossen	Al Heyink	Anthony Nyman
Fergus The Bridge			
Goderich Trinity	Tim Keep	Nick Heykoop Sr	Rob Bos
Guelph Campus Ministry	Sara DeMoor		
Guelph New Life	Jeff Vandermeer	Andrea Winslow	Sharon Buisman (Elder)
Guelph Water Street	Kasey Vander Veen	Tony Vyn	Peter Kingma (Elder)
Kitchener Community	Tom Bomhof	Aaron Bokma	Pete Hansma
Listowel Bethel	Cameron Oegema	James Koetsier	
Lucknow Community	Stacey Wellstead (Elder)	Frances Spaling	Andrea Feeley
Orangeville	Jan Scheurwater (Elder)	Justin Groen	
Owen Sound	Sid Couperus	Fred VanSligtenhorst	Kevin Williams
Palmerston	Hilbert Koersen (Elder)	Ralph Bakker	Braedon Heikamp
Stratford		Barry Horensma	-
Vanastra Community	Albert Haak (Elder)	Henry De Boer	
Waterloo	Vicki Cok	Rudy Eikelboom	Thomas Pidduck
Waterloo Campus Ministry	Melissa Burmaster		
Wingham Maitland River Community	Bart Eisen		Matt Wilkins

Delegates Rev. Craig Hoekema and elder Luke Bouman were granted permission to leave the session at noon and Jeff Bylsma at 3:00.

### Officers of the day:

- Chair: Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC)
- Vice-chair: Mr. Peter Kingma (Water Street CRC, Guelph)
- Stated Clerk: Mr. Fred Vander Sterre (Blyth CRC)

### Committees of the Day:

- Credentials: Bethel, Listowel & New Life, Guelph.
- Overtures: Drayton, Exeter & Trinity, Goderich
- Balloting: Palmerston & Blyth.

### Synodical Deputies:

- Rev. Phil Apol (Classis Ontario Southwest)
- Rev. Josh Tuininga (Classis Quinte)
- Rev. Cragg Lawson (Classis Eastern Canada)

### 1 Welcome, Devotions & Opening:

1.1 Rev. Craig Hoekema (Bethel CRC, Acton) opened with devotions.

1.2 Rev. Cam Oegema reported for the credentials committee.

Two churches did not have any delegates in attendance. 54 delegates were present.

**Motion** to seat delegates despite not being listed on their Classical Credentials.

Due to the change of meeting date some delegates were replaced.

Carried.

**Motion** to allow delegates of churches to be seated despite their Classical Credentials were not received.

Carried.

It was noted that the delegates from the Waterloo CRC were present, and were granted to participate in the discussions, but will not have voting rights.

Classis Huron was declared constituted.

2 Chairman Rev. Victor Laarman welcomed everyone and introduced new pastors, Rev. Craig Hoekema, Bethel, Acton and Rev. Jeff Vandermeer, New Life, Guelph.

He also acknowledged the retirement of Rev. Vicki Cok.

There were some announcements:

2.1 First-time delegates were reminded to sign the Covenant of Office Bearers.

2.2 Delegates were reminded to disclose any conflicts of interest.

2.3 The Primer was introduced, with copies on the tables.

2.4 Rev. Sid Couperus served as chaplain for the day.

3 Rev. Sid Couperus led us through a Round Table time of listening/sharing/prayer.

4 After the coffee break, Peter Schuurman and Sara DeMoor reported on the work of the Guelph Campus Ministry.

Sara showed a PowerPoint presentation on the ministry, showing their ministry activities, building community, offering various workshops and also linking students with local churches.

Fall and winter retreats were organized and opportunities were provided to wrestle with scripture.

Internships are also offered. Sara read a letter of thanks from one student to classis. Peter Schuurman shared about his role as chair of the Campus Ministry. He thanked classis for the ongoing support.

**Motion** was made to accept Rev. Carel Geleynse as Classis Huron liaison to the Guelph Campus Ministry. Carried.

Rev. Carel Geleynse led in prayer for the Guelph Campus Ministry

5 Sara DeMoor, chair of CMC, presented the CMC/AdCom report.

5.1 Sara reported on the activities of both CMC and AdCom. It has been a busy season.

5.2 The Pastors and Spouses retreat was promoted by pastor Sid Couperus.

5.3 **Motion:** that classis appoints Rev. Cameron Oegema to the Classical Ministerial Leadership Team. Carried.

Additional nominations are still welcome.

5.4 Larry Lutgendorff was nominated to serve on the steering committee to help Classis Quinte organize an ecclesiastical meeting of the Canadian churches represented by four office-bearer representatives from each classis under Church Order Article 44a.

The purpose of this initial meeting would be:

5.4.1 to pray for the Canadian churches and worship together,

5.4.2 to discuss matters of mutual ecclesial interest (via agenda items submitted by the various Classes),

5.4.3 perhaps create partnerships around these discussions between classes to take up certain matters in common with respect to Synod,

5.4.4 determine the need for future meetings and

5.4.5 if desirable to determine the structure for regular ecclesiastical gatherings of the Canadian churches, whether simply meeting together under Church Order article 44a is sufficient or whether a more formal structure under 44b would be advantageous and if so to determine a process to arrive at that place, and establish a committee to operate between meetings to facilitate agenda and logistics.

**Motion** to appoint Larry as our representative to the steering committee. Carried.

It was noted that with this decision, classis is committed to **explore** the possibility of participating in such a gathering, not a commitment to actually participate.

Classis will need to decide once more information becomes available.

5.5 **Motion:** to nominate Rev. Sid Couperus as Synodical Deputy for a second term Carried

5.6 **Motion:** to nominate Rev. Victor Laarman as alternate for a second term. Carried

5.7 **Motion:** that pastor Toyosi Awesu be honorably released from the office of Commissioned Pastor in Classis Huron (Art 24-d C.O.) Carried.

This concludes the final steps of The Journey

5.8 **Motion:** that Classis Huron grant Mr. Toyosi Awesu a license to exhort in Classis Huron for a period of five years. Carried.

5.9 It was noted that Wilma Hiemstra is retiring from her role as exhorter.

5.10 **Motion** that the examination of Joshua Sweetman for licensure to exhort to be scheduled for the May 2025 session of classis. Carried.

5.11 Classis Ontario SW informed Classis Huron that VitalPoint has disaffiliated from the CRCNA. This includes its satellite churches in Exeter and Clinton.

5.12 The annual re-signing of the Covenant of Office-bearers for all office-bearers will be

implemented at the May sessions of classis.

5.13 Request for nominations for AdCom.

5.14 **Motion** to approve the actions of CMC & AdCom.

*Carried.*

5.15 Pastor Victor Laarman led in prayer for the work of CMC.

6 Mary Blydorp reported for the Classis Huron Diaconal Team and Diaconal Ministries Canada. The NewGround ministry continues to be effective. Mary listed several projects serving within the region of Classis Huron, that were initiated through NewGround.

Amy Baarda is appointed as new NewGround coordinator.

The National Director Ron Vanden Brink is retiring and the position is open.

She also promoted the Spring Diaconal Conference, scheduled for April 10, 2025.

She concluded with a video from Crossroads for Prisoners, by Harry Stam.

[Crossroads 2024 Update 2024 \(at MND\) on Vimeo](#)

Mary responded to a few questions.

Rev. Melissa Burmaster (River City) led in prayer for the ministry of the deacons and for lunch.

#### **After Lunch Break:**

Rev. Ray Vander Kooij (Clinton) led in prayer for the afternoon session.

7 The chair declared a strict executive session.

Classis dealt with a request from a church asking for a separation of their church and pastor according to Article 17 of the Church Order. After considerable discussion in executive session, classis granted the requests to formally release Rev. Robert Hoekstra from Vanastra Community CRC. Classis committed itself to continue to provide pastoral support for pastor Robert and the Vanastra congregation. The synodical deputies – ministers representing synod from Classis Eastern Canada, Classis Hamilton and Classis Ontario SW, present via Zoom – concurred with classis' decisions.

The chair declared the strict executive session closed.

8 Election of Delegates to Synod 2025

The chair ruled to go ahead with the election.

The chair was challenged as an overture was on the agenda concerning the election of delegates.

The vice chair took the chair and called for a vote.

Classis voted and concurred with the chair's ruling.

The election of the delegates took place by ballots.

The following delegates were elected to go to synod:

Minister delegate: Ray Vander Kooij	Alternate: Cameron Oegema
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Elder delegate: John Tamming	Alternate: Richard Golby
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Elder delegate: Rich Vandonkersgoed	Alternate: Richard Golby
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Fourth delegate: Jayson Crossen	Alternate: Cameron Oegema
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As no deacon nominees were received, two elders will serve as delegates to synod

**Motion** to destroy the ballots.

*Carried.*

## 9 Overture Committee Report.

Overture from First CRC, Owen Sound.

*That synod add the following caveat to the Covenant of Office-bearers:*

*Notwithstanding any past synodical decisions, if a prospective office bearer cannot bring him/herself to detest same sex intimate relationships, such a person may nevertheless i) sign this covenant in good faith; and ii) still be considered eligible for church office.*

**Motion** to accept this overture and send it to Synod 2025. defeated.

The chair prayed for the issue this overture addressed and its impact on the church.

Overture from Community CRC, Kitchener: asking Classis Huron to protect its authority and decide for itself who it will receive as delegates, how it will proceed, and who it will send to Synod.

The overture committee recommends to not accede Community's overture, based on Art 31.

Community CRC delegate Rev. Tom Bomhof moved to accept recommendation "A":

*We will continue to welcome, seat, and respect voting privileges of all delegates appointed by member Councils regardless of their being under "limited suspension" by Synod or holding a letter "in protest".*

The chair ruled the motion out of order.

The chair was challenged, the vice chair took the chair and called for a vote.

Classis voted and concurred with the chair's ruling.

Community CRC delegate Rev. Tom Bomhof moved to accept recommendation "B" and "C":

*We will not send church visitors or appoint any in loco committee to guide or direct local Councils into compliance with synodical decisions with respect to chastity, and we will delegate to Synod those office-bearers it deems worthy and suited to the task.*

The chair ruled the motion out of order.

The chair was challenged, the vice chair took the chair and called for a vote.

Classis voted and concurred with the chair's ruling.

Recommendations B and C were ruled out of order.

**Motion** to destroy the ballots Carried.

Community CRC is encouraged to submit an overture to the May session.

**Motion** to discuss the recommendations of the overture committee. Defeated.

**Motion** to destroy the ballots Carried.

## 10 Joan Brady reported for the Classis Huron Mission Team

She introduced the Creative Outreach Venture Fund 2.

This is a fund available to the established churches for the support of the initiation of new ministry projects, that are about increasing the vitality of congregations and strengthening discipleship in Jesus Christ while meeting community needs. A brochure was distributed.

## 11 Rev. Cam Oegema reported for the Credentials Committee

Owen Sound: requesting to have classis meetings on Saturdays. Referred to AdCom.

Stratford: asks when all delegates will sign the Covenant of Office-bearers.

Pastor Dam is not available to go to synod.

Clinton: to discuss youth and youth attention including catechism. Referred to AdCom

## 12 Denominational Reports

Due to the postponement of the classis meeting one week, no denominational staff were able to attend.

The chair referred to the printed reports on the classis website.

### 13 **Other Classical Committees**

- 13.1 Len Bakelaar reported for the Disability Concerns Committee  
Approximately 20% of the general population are living with disabilities.  
He showed a video on Coming to the Table of the Lord.  
<https://vimeo.com/478656244>
- 13.2 Rev. Carel Geleynse reported for the Safe Church Team.  
Abuse of power is a real thing. Synod needs to be very careful about the exercise to power.  
Carel encouraged the delegates to attend the Safe Church Conference on March 1.
- 13.3 Regional Pastor:  
Ray Vander Kooij reported on his work as Regional Pastor West.
- 13.4 Classical Counsellors report was presented by the classis clerk.  
Several churches have conversations with prospective pastors.

### 14 **Other printed reports submitted on the Classis Huron website:**

- 14.1 Thrive Playlist
- 14.2 Redeemer University
- 14.3 Diaconal Ministries Canada
- 14.4 World Renew
- 14.5 Calvin University
- 14.6 Calvin Seminary

15 **Evaluation** was requested from the delegates through Menti.

16 **Motion** to adjourn at 5:07 PM.

Carried.

17 **Closing blessings** led by Rev. Sid Couperus.