



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

MINUTES

February 19, 2026 – 9:00 a.m.

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 18, 2026, but was postponed one day because of the weather and road conditions.

Delegates to Classis

<u>Church</u>	<u>Minister delegate</u>	<u>Elder Delegate</u>	<u>Deacon Delegate</u>
Bethel, Acton	Craig Hoekema	Peter Duivesteyn	Rob VanderLaan (Elder)
Bethel, Listowel	Cameron Oegema	Wil Bakker	Tim Hiemstra
Blyth		Douwe Top	Susan Buffinga
Clinton		Jeff Van Wijk	Jack Kroes
Collingwood	Victor Laarman	Ron Jack	Allan Veldman
Community Kitchener	Zach Schiedel (Elder)	Derrick Grift	Art Timmerman
Cornerstone Kitchener	Michael Grootenboer (Leadership Team)	Rick Hoekstra (Leadership Team)	John Lammers (Leadership Team)
Drayton	Wes Collins	Andy Knetch	Rob Scholten
Exeter	Jay Crossen	Gerard Steenbeek	Anthony Nyman
First Owen Sound	Sid Couperus	Linda VanSligtenhorst	Brenda Foster
Guelph Campus Ministry	Sara DeMoor		
Lucknow Community	Raymond Evans		
Maitland River Community Wingham	Tyler Kirkbride	Murray Ritsema	Doug Kuyvenhoven
Maranatha Cambridge	Marg Siertsema (Elder)	Tammy den Bak	
New Life Guelph	Jeff Vandermeer	Sharon Buisman	
Orangeville	Jim Broekema (Elder)	Justin Groen	
Palmerston	Ken Labbé	Mark Luymes	Irene Drost
River City Cambridge			
Stratford	Martin Dam	Harry Vander Kuylen	
The Bridge Fergus			
Trinity Goderich	Tim Keep	Hetty Stuart	Hugh Burgsma
Vanastra Community		Henry De Boer	
Water Street Guelph		Webb Kamminga	Tony Vyn (Elder)
Waterloo Campus Ministry	Melissa Burmaster		
Waterloo	Jim Poelman	Carolyn Kleefman	Thomas Pidduck

The chair granted the requests of several of the delegates to leave early.

Officers of the day:

- Chair: Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford CRC)
- Vice-chair: Rev. Bart Eisen (Maitland River CRC, Wingham)
- Stated Clerk: Mr. Fred Vander Sterre (Blyth CRC)

Committees of the Day:

- Credentials: Palmerston CRC & Collingwood CRC.
- Overtures: Bethel, Acton & Bethel, Listowel
- Balloting: Drayton & Trinity, Goderich.

Synodical Deputies:

- Rev. Phil Apol (Classis Ontario Southwest)
- Rev. Michael Bootsma (Classis Hamilton)
- Rev. Richard Grift (Classis Toronto)

1 Welcome, Devotions & Opening:

- 1.1 Rev. Wesley Collins (Drayton CRC, Drayton) opened with devotions.
 - 1.2 Rev. Victor Laarman reported for the credentials committee.
With the change of date, several delegates were replaced by their alternates.
Marg Sierstema, an elder at Maranatha CRC (Cambridge), was seated as a voting delegate.
Motion: to permit Cornerstone CRC (an emerging church) to send up to three members of their leadership team to serve as delegates to the sessions of classis. *Carried.*
 - 1.3 Classis Huron was declared constituted.
- 2 Chairman Rev. Martin Dam **welcomed** everyone and made several **announcements**:
 - 2.1 Rev. Victor Laarman has accepted a call to Strathroy East CRC and will be leaving us this spring.
 - 2.2 Rev. Tom van Miligen was welcomed, serving Community CRC, Kitchener, as STM.
 - 2.3 First-time delegates were reminded to sign the Covenant of Office Bearers.
 - 2.4 Delegates were reminded to disclose any conflicts of interest.
 - 2.5 The Primer was introduced, with copies on the tables
 - 2.6 Delegates needing to leave early need to ask permission from the chair.
 - 2.7 Speakers need to identify themselves, including the name of the church.
 - 2.8 Speakers are not to speak more than twice on the same motion

- 3 Joan Brady (Classis Huron Mission Catalyst) and Rev. Sid Couperus (Classis Huron Prayer Catalyst) led classis through a **Round Table Conversation** with a focus on neighbouring, sharing what is known about the communities and about the congregation's heart for service.

4 Rev. Craig Hoekstra (Bethel CRC, Acton) introduced the **CMC report**

The following motions were presented:

- Sharon Van Kampen was introduced.
Motion: to elect Sharon Van Kampen (Bethel, Listowel CRC) as alternate stated clerk. *Carried.*
- Jane Vander Velden was thanked for her five years of service as the alternate stated clerk.

- **Motion:** to acknowledge that Rev. William Steele can no longer be a CRC minister, as he is not a member of the CRC anymore. *Carried.*
- **Motion:** based on legal advice: (Art 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 of the agenda):
 - We follow the decision of synod, affirm the Covenant for Office Bearers at every classis meeting.
 - The delegates of churches that are under suspension will have no voting rights at this time.
 - Individuals (delegates) who cannot affirm the Covenant for Office Bearers will not have voting rights.

This is to go into effect at the May 20, 2026, classis meeting.

Motion to Amend to separate the motion into three parts. *Defeated.*

Motion to table so Synod 2026 can provide more clarity. *Carried.*

Motion: to instruct AdCom to explore the necessary changes to the Bylaw that are required to bring the document in line with the directives of Synod. *Defeated.*

- **Motion** to classis to approve the actions of AdCom, CMC and the Stated Clerk. *Carried.*
Rev. Cam Oegema (Bethel CRC, Listowel) led in prayer.

5 Hank de Jong, Associate Vice President, represented **Redeemer University**. The university receives substantial support from the churches of Classis Huron. He indicated that both the number of programs and enrollment had grown significantly.

6 Chidi Nwene from **World Renew** presented a report by means of a slide presentation. He shared an impact report, showing that in 2024/2025, over 720,000 participants were impacted. He also reported on volunteer opportunities. See: www.worldrenew.ca/volunteer

Pre-lunch: Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC) read from Psalm 67 and led in prayer.

Rev. Raymond Evans (Lucknow Community CRC) presented a post-lunch prayer

7 **Commissioned Pastor position description.**

Synodical Deputies Rev. Phil Apol (Classis Ontario Southwest), Rev. Richard Grift (Classis Toronto) and Rev. Michael Bootsma (Classis Hamilton) received copies of the position description before the classis meeting.

Rev. Michael Bootsma joined classis via Zoom and was welcomed.

- Rev. Cam Oegema (Bethel CRC, Listowel) reported for the Ecclesiastical Credentials Committee. **Motion** that Classis agrees that the position description submitted by Water Street CRC is in keeping with the requirements of C.O. Article 23 and its Supplements and that AdCom shall schedule the classical examination of Josh Sweetman and secure appropriate examiners.

Carried.

Rev. Michael Bootsma indicated that he and his fellow Synodical Deputies, Rev. Phil Apol, and Rev. Richard Grift concurred with the classis' decision.

- Josh Sweetman was examined in May 2025 in the areas of doctrinal and biblical knowledge, character and practice, for a license to exhort.

Motion that the examination of Josh, during the May 2026 session of classis, for the position of

Commissioned Pastor as per Church Order Art. 23, will focus on the knowledge of the standards of the church and the Church Order. *Carried.*

- The CMLT, serving as the Ecclesiastical Credentials Committee, was thanked for its work.

8 Introduction of the **overture from Drayton CRC**, requesting Classis Huron approve the release of Rev. Duane VanderLaan from his active ministerial service with the Drayton Reformed Church as per Art. 17a, of the Church Order, effective immediately.

Rev. Craig Hoekema (Bethel CRC, Acton) reported for the overture committee and explained that AdCom is collecting additional information and will report back to classis in May with a recommendation.

9 **Examination of Jan Oorebeek for a license to exhort.**

Examiners:

doctrinal and biblical knowledge: Rev. Sid Couperus (First CRC, Owen Sound);

character and practice: Rev. Wes Collins (Drayton CRC).

Sermon reviewer: Rev. Darrell Bierman (River City, Cambridge).

In pastor Darrell's absence, the classis clerk summarized his report.

The chair declared executive session.

Motion: to grant Jan Oorebeek a one-year license to exhort in Classis Huron.

Voting was conducted by a show of hands.

Motion Carried.

Upon admission, the chair congratulated and blessed Jan Oorebeek.

Elder Jim Broekema (Orangeville) offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

10 **Credentials report:**

Rev. Ken Labbé (Palmerston CRC) reported for the Credentials Committee.

10.1 Maranatha CRC, Cambridge, requested that classis allow elders to serve communion to shut-ins.

Motion to grant that request.

Carried.

Maranatha also asked for any guidance or materials that their Elder Team can use in order to serve Communion to the shut-ins.

In addition to the back of the grey Psalter Hymnal, various liturgical forms are posted at: [Lord's Supper | Christian Reformed Church](#)

10.2 Collingwood CRC requests pulpit supply starting in May. This was granted by classis.

11 Linda VanSlightenhorst (First CRC, Owen Sound) reported for the **Council Of Delegates**.

She reminded that several churches received invitations to take part in the Denomination Survey.

For 2026, the following churches are invited: Bethel, Acton; Community, Kitchener; First, Owen Sound; Lucknow Community; New Life, Guelph; Palmerston; Vanastra Community.

Responding to a question about church plants, she noted that planting new churches is inspiring to the established churches.

12 **Election of delegates to synod 2026.**

Nominated were Rev. Cam Oegema (Bethel CRC, Listowel), Rev. Jay Crossen (Exeter CRC), Elder Jim Broekema (Orangeville CRC), Elder Jonathan Barnhoorn (Palmerston CRC) and Elder Wilmar Bakker (Bethel CRC, Listowel).

Rev. Nick Bierman (Stratford CRC) was reported to be willing to serve as an alternate delegate.

Pastors Jay and Cam were acclaimed as delegates, and Pastor Nick as alternate.

The election of the elder delegates took place by ballot.

As no deacon nominees were received, two elders will serve as delegates.

The following delegates were acclaimed and elected to go to synod:

Minister delegate: Rev. Cameron Oegema Alternate: Rev. Nick Bierma

Elder delegate: Mr. Wilmar Bakker Alternate: Mr. Jonathan Barnhoorn

Elder delegate: Mr. Jim Broekema Alternate: Mr. Jonathan Barnhoorn

Fourth delegate: Rev. Jason Crossen Alternate: Rev. Nick Bierma

Motion to destroy the ballots.

Carried.

13 **Classis Huron Mission Team:**

Rev. Sid Couperus (First CRC, Owen Sound) reported as Prayer Catalyst. He shared about a fantastic pastor's retreat earlier in the week at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre.

Joan reported on her work as Mission Catalyst. She is working with several individual churches. She is also involved in the hiring process of the Youth Ministry Coordinator and the implementation of the vision and mission plan of Classis Huron

Rev. Sid Couperus led in prayer.

14 Josh Sweetman reported on the **Canadian National Gathering**, to be held on May 28-31.

There are six streams during the event. These are: Leadership Ecosystem, Conflict Navigation, Faith Formation for Children and Youth, Discipleship Pathways, Community Outreach and Building Authentic Community. Nominations are open. The registration form is on their website.

[Foundation to Future | Canadian National Gathering | Canada | Christian Reformed Church](#) Ten people per classis will be invited. March 16 is the deadline.

15 A **Thrive** video was shown. Rev. David Den Haan encouraged the delegates to consider the various languages spoken in the congregations.

16 Mary Blydorp reported for the Classis Huron **Diaconal Team** and **Diaconal Ministries Canada**. The

Classis Huron Diaconal Team is organizing a training session on *Building Community Partnerships*.

This event is open to all church members and is scheduled for April 8, 2026, in Palmerston.

The NewGround ministry continues to be effective. Ten projects are supported by NewGround this year.

[Classis Huron Diaconal Team training session on Building Community Partnerships. – Classis Huron](#)

17 Rev. Carel Geleyse brought the Safe Church report.

The Inter-Classis Safe Church conference is scheduled for March 7, 2026.

The conference also addresses spiritual abuse.

[Inter-Classis Safe Church Conference – Classis Huron](#)

A Dignity Team is a new development in the denominational Safe Church ministry.

- 18 Sara DeMoor (New Life CRC, Guelph) reported on the work of the **Guelph Campus Ministry**. She showed a PowerPoint presentation on the ministry. She highlighted that they are “a community, where all who are curious about life and God, wrestle with scripture, and are challenged to root their identity in Christ.” Additionally, internships are offered. Sara read a letter of thanks from Kennedy, one of the interns. Rev. Martin Dam led in prayer for the Guelph Campus Ministry and the Safe Church Team.
- 19 **Classical Counsellors reports** were available on the Classis Huron website.
- 19.1.1 Community CRC, Kitchener, is served by a Specialized Transitional Minister, Rev. Tom van Milligen.
- 19.1.2 Vanastra Community CRC has engaged Joan Brady to facilitate at two congregational meetings that focused on discerning the present and future.
- 19.1.3 Waterloo CRC continues to be served by Specialized Transitional Minister, Rev. Jim Poelman.
- 19.1.4 Maranatha CRC, Cambridge, contracted Jack Tacoma (from Guelph) to guide them through a series of discernment exercises, which will take place over a 2–3-month period of time.
- 20 **Printed reports available on the Classis Huron website:**
- 20.1 Thrive brochure
- 20.2 World Renew
- 20.3 Calvin University
- 20.4 Diaconal Ministries Canada
- 20.5 Calvin Seminary
- 20.6 COD Highlights
- 20.7 Letter from Rev. Zach King, General Secretary
- 20.8 Waterloo Campus Ministry
- 21 **Evaluation** was requested from the delegates through Menti.
- 22 **Motion** to adjourn at 4:25 PM. Carried.
- 23 **Closing blessings** led by Rev. Bart Eisen.