



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

MINUTES

May 20, 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.**

Our Mission

As a Classis, we encourage and support one another in our respective and corporate journeys of faith in carrying out God's mission, so that all might know God's love and saving grace.

Our Vision

As we live out our mission and His calling, Classis Huron will be an active, compassionate and loving community of churches and ministries, who rejoice in fellowship with God and each other. We will share joys, burdens and responsibilities with dedication and grace.

Our Mission Plan Priorities/Goals

Authentic Community; Discipleship; God's Mission; Covenantal responsibilities and tasks.

Delegates to Classis

Church	Minister delegate	Elder Delegate	Deacon Delegate
Bethel CRC, Acton	Craig Hoekema	Ken Kamminga	Aimee Adams
Bethel CRC, Listowel	Henry Meinen	Steve Vogel	Luke Benjamins
Blyth CRC	Douwe Top (Elder)	Rick Steele	Audrey Bos
Clinton CRC	Ray Vander Kooij	Wanda Rozendal	Arlene Van Maar
Collingwood CRC	Richard Golby (Elder)	Neeltje Montgomery	Michael Dykstra
Community CRC, Kitchener	Irene Geleynse (Elder)	Harriette Mostert	Matthew Wassink
Cornerstone CRC, Kitchener	Michael Grootenboer	Rick Hoekstra	John Lammers
Drayton CRC	Wes Collins	Andy Knetch	Teresa Wikkerink
Exeter CRC	Jay Crossen	Joe Lubbers	Joy DeWeerd
First CRC, Owen Sound	Sid Couperus	John Tamming	Heather Burrows
Guelph Campus Ministry			
Lucknow Community CRC	Raymond Evans	Trevor Askes	Ethan Winterburn
Maitland River CRC, Wingham	Tyler Kirkbride	Murray Ritsema	Matt Wilkins
Maranatha CRC, Cambridge	Maynard Wiersma (Elder)	Tammy den Bak	Dave Timmerman
New Life CRC, Guelph	Jeff Vandermeer	Sharon Buisman	Edward Koopman
Orangeville CRC	Jim Broekema (Elder)	Justin Groen	
Palmerston CRC	Ken Labbé	Jono Barnhoorn	Irene Drost
River City CRC, Cambridge	Darrell Bierman	Mike Gregory	Lauren Harvey
Stratford CRC	Nick Bierma	Adam Roth	
The Bridge, Fergus			
Trinity CRC, Goderich	Tim Keep	Johanna Steegstra	Nick Heykoop
Vanastra Community CRC		Tina Dekens	
Water Street CRC, Guelph		Phil Schmidt	Jason Stoter
Waterloo Campus Ministry	Melissa Burmaster		
Waterloo CRC	Carolyn Kleefman (Elder)	Pieter Looyenga	Brian Eelkema

Officers of the day:

- Chair: Bart Eisen (Maitland River Community CRC, Wingham)
- Vice-chair: Rev. Sid Couperus (First, Owen Sound)
- Stated Clerk: Mr. Fred Vander Sterre (Blyth CRC)

Committees of the Day:

- Credentials: New Life CRC, Guelph & Orangeville CRC
- Balloting: Bethel CRC, Acton & Lucknow Community.

Synodical Deputies:

- Rev. Josh Tuininga (Classis Quinte)
- Rev. Jeff Klingenberg (Classis Niagara)
- Rev. Phillip Apoll (Classis Ontario SW)

1 **Welcome, Devotions & Opening:**

- 1.1 Rev. Craig Hoekema (Bethel, Acton) opened with devotions.
- 1.2 Rev. Jeff Vandermeer (New Life, Guelph) reported for the credentials committee. All churches were represented; however, the Vanastra Community CRC credentials were not submitted.
Motion: to allow elder Tina Dekens (Vanastra) to be seated as a voting delegate. *Carried.*
 (The classical credentials of the Vanastra Community Church were received by 11:30.)
 Collingwood CRC extends an invitation to member churches of Classis Huron to join with them on May 23rd from 2-4 for a final farewell to their pastor Victor Laarman and his family.
- 1.3 Classis Huron was declared constituted.

2 Chairman Rev. Bart Eisen welcomed everyone and made several 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 Delegates needing to leave early need to ask permission from the chair.
- 2.5 Speakers need to identify themselves, including the name of the church.
- 2.6 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 *Authentic Community*.
 Pastor Sid led in prayer.

- 4 Rev. Melissa Burmaster and Carolyn Kleefman shared about the work at the Waterloo Campus Ministry. The ministry includes the faculty and staff on campus.
 The presentation concluded with testimonies from several students via video.
 Elder Phil Schmidt of the Water Street CRC, Guelph, led in prayer.
Motion to approve the work of the Waterloo Campus Ministry Committee. *Carried.*

- 5 Joan Brady presented the search process for the Classis Huron Youth Ministry Consultant.
 The hiring team recommended Grace Bierma for the position.
Motion: to appoint Grace Emma Bierma to the position of Youth Ministry Consultant of Classis Huron. *Carried.*
 Joan was thanked for her work in this process.
 Pastor Bart Eisen led in prayer.

- 6 Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford CRC) introduced Josh Sweetman and examined Josh for ordination as a Commissioned Pastor with a focus on the knowledge of the standards of the church and the Church Order.
 Following several questions, the chair called for an executive session.
Motion: to declare Josh Sweetman eligible to be ordained as a Commissioned Pastor.
 The voting was done by ballot. The motion *Carried.*
Motion to destroy the ballots *Carried.*
 The chair declared the executive session closed.
 Rev. Bart Eisen congratulated and blessed Josh, provided the classical diploma, and Pastor Casey Vander Veen (Water Street CRC, Guelph) offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

Pastor Jeff Vandermeer (New Life CRC, Guelph) offered to serve as Josh's mentor.

- 7 Revs. Cam Oegema (Bethel, Listowel) and Jay Crossen (Exeter), delegates to Synod 2026, shared about items on the agenda of Synod. They need our prayers for their time at Synod. Elder Tammy den Bak (Maranatha, Cambridge) led the delegates in prayer.

Rev. Ray Vander Kooij (Clinton) led in pre-lunch prayer.

After lunch, Rev. Tim Keep (Trinity, Goderich) led in prayer for the afternoon session.

- 8 C.O. Art 17a for Rev. Duane VanderLaan

The chair declared a strict executive session.

Rev. Craig Hoekema introduced the Art. 17 separation proposal of Rev. Duane VanderLaan, as was recommended by CMC.

Synodical deputies – ministers representing synod from Classis Ontario SW (Rev. Phillip Apoll), Classis Niagara (Rev. Jeff Klingenberg) and Classis Quinte (Rev. Josh Tuininga) – were present via Zoom and were introduced.

Elder Andy Knetch (Drayton CRC) led in prayer.

Motion: to approve Drayton CRC's motion to approve the release of Rev. Duane VanderLaan from his active ministerial service at Drayton Reformed Church, as per Article 17a of the CRC Church Order. *Carried.*

Synodical deputies concurred.

Motion: that Classis Huron declare Rev. Duane VanderLaan eligible to receive a call. *Carried.*

The synodical deputies concurred.

The review team members, Revs. Craig Hoekema, Henry Meinen and Wes Collins were thanked for their work with Pastor Duane.

Rev. Ken Labbé offered to serve as Pastor Duane's mentor.

Motion to destroy the ballots and the copies of the review team's report. *Carried.*

The chair declared the strict executive session closed.

- 9 Maynard Wiersma, director of Christian Stewardship Services, reported on the work of CSS. Their staff is available to serve our church communities in the area of financial stewardship.

- 10 Communications from River City Church and the Waterloo CRC were introduced.

Both churches informed classis that they are in the process of disaffiliation from the Christian Reformed Church.

An opportunity was given for classis delegates to ask questions.

Church visitors will be assigned to meet with the two church councils.

Pastor Sid Couperus read paragraph 43 of the Contemporary Testimony:

#43. We grieve that the church which shares one Spirit, one faith, one hope,
And spans all time, place, race and language
Has become a broken communion in a broken world.

When we struggle for purity of the church and for the righteousness God demands,
We pray for saintly courage.

When our pride or blindness blocks the unity of God's household,
We seek forgiveness.

We marvel that the Lord gathers the broken pieces to do his work,
And that he blesses us still with joy, new members,
And surprising evidences of unity.

We commit ourselves to seeking and expressing the oneness of all who follow Jesus.

Rev. Bart Eisen led in prayer for God's guidance as the two churches navigate this process.

11 Rev. Henry Meinen introduced the CMC Report

Classical Pulpit Supply policy:

Motion: For sending churches:

Classis Huron churches will be assigned to provide pulpit supply to pastoral vacant churches up to three appointments annually (Sept. 1–June 30). One appointment will be assigned for each of the three timeframes: September through November, January through March, and April through June. Defeated

Motion: For receiving churches:

The number of classical pulpit supplies to pastoral vacant churches during each of the three periods is matched with the number of available assignments. Motion was withdrawn.

Appointments:

Motion: to re-elect Rev. Martin Dam as Regional Pastor for a second term. Carried.

Motion: to nominate Rev. Jay Crossen to serve as alternate synodical deputy. Synod elects. Carried.

Motion: To elect/re-elect Rev. Ed Den Haan, Rev. Harry Zantingh and Rev. Jay Crossen for three-year terms as Church Visitors. Carried.

Motion to approve the actions of CMC & AdCom. Carried.

12 Annual General Meeting.

See the separate AGM minutes.

13 Oversight Team of Pastor Robert Hoekstra:

Rev. Ray Vander Kooij (Clinton CRC) introduced their report.

Motion: to approve the transfer of Pastor Robert Hoekstra's membership and ministerial credentials to Clinton CRC. Carried.

The Oversight Team continues to work with Pastor Robert Hoekstra and hopes to bring a recommendation to the September meeting of Classis Huron or the February meeting at the latest.

14 Church Visitors' reports

- 14.1 The church visitors' report with the Vanastra Community CRC was brought by Pastor Tim Keep (Trinity CRC, Goderich).

This comes with thankfulness to God, and with Vanastra CRC's renewal and spirit of hope.

Motion: That Classis approve Vanastra's initiative in preparing to call a minister. *Carried.*

Motion: That Classis thank Revs. Tim Keep, Darrell Bierman and Ed Den Haan for their support of Vanastra and that their work in supporting Vanastra continues in view of the hoped-for calling and the installation of a minister in Vanastra.

Classis thanked the committee for its work.

- 14.2 Rev. Ken Labbé (Palmerston CRC) referred to the written report of the church visit with Community, Kitchener

15 Classis Huron Mission Team:

Joan Brady reported for the CHMT. She worked with several churches and church councils.

She shared about the Creative Venture Fund available to local congregations.

The *Moving Forward in Faith Conference* is planned for the fall in Burlington.

Pastor Sid Couperus shared about the annual prayer retreat, planned for Feb 7-9, 2027. The focus will be on *Leaning into Lent*.

Motion to approve the work of CHMT.

Carried.

- 16 Elder Sharon Buisman (New Life, Guelph) reported on refugee sponsorship in Guelph. It is a great blessing to their faith community. She challenged the delegates to get their families involved in opportunities to serve as welcoming communities.
World Renew is a great resource for refugee sponsorship.
Mary Blydorp reported on the work of Diaconal Ministries Canada.
Pastor Bart Eisen led in prayer for DMC and the refugee sponsorship.

- 17 Rev. Carel Geleynse brought the Safe Church report.
He reported on the review of the Classis Huron Safe Church Policy. This needs an update.
June 15 is the next team meeting. He challenged the delegates to be familiar with their local Safe Church Policies.

- 18 The classis clerk summarized the Classical Counsellors' reports.
There are currently no churches in the process of calling a pastor.

- 19 Peter Meerveld COD.

He used a PowerPoint presentation to report on how our church governance works.

This presentation is available on the Classis Huron website: [Art-16.1-Classis-Report-May-2026-2.pptx](#)

- 20 Roshani Morton reported, by means of a potluck presentation, on the impact of the Denominational Ministry Shares. She encouraged the delegates to share this message with the local congregations.

21 Other printed reports available on the Classis Huron website:

21.1 Thrive Playlist

21.2 Redeemer University

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

23 **Motion** to adjourn at 4:26 PM.

Carried.

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