



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

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# **MINUTES**

**February 21, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.**

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## **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.*

**Delegates to Classis**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Minister delegate</u>	<u>Elder Delegate</u>	<u>Deacon Delegate</u>
Acton Bethel	David Burgess (Elder)	Lianti Muller	Angela Burgess
Blyth	Micah Nonkes (Elder)	Jim Shortreed	Andy Roest
Cambridge Maranatha	Rick De Graaf	-	Len Bakelaar
Cambridge River City	Darrell Bierman	-	-
Clinton	Ray Vander Kooij	John Reinink	Ryan Van Wijk
Collingwood	Victor Laarman	Ron Jack	John VanderSter
Drayton	Wes Collins	-	Bill Van Anandel
Exeter	Joe Lubbers (Elder)	Gerard Steenbeek	Nathan Boersma
Fergus The Bridge	-		
Goderich Trinity	Tim Keep	Nick Heykoop	Jason Vanderniet
Guelph Campus Ministry	Sara DeMoor		
Guelph New Life	Peter Meerveld (Elder)	Jake DeBruyn	Dirk Kroon
Guelph Water Street	Kasey Van der Veen	Peter Kingma	-
Kitchener Community	Tom Bomhof	Jerry Postma	Carl Stryker
Listowel Bethel	Cameron Oegema	Corné Koersen	Tim Hiemstra
Lucknow Community	-	Stacey Wellstead	Andrea Feeley
Orangeville	Andrew Vis	Keith Oussoren	Peter Ryzebol
Owen Sound	Sid Couperus	John Tamming	Laura Taylor
Palmerston	Ken Labbé	Mark Luymes	Kim Koeslag
Stratford	Martin Dam	Jeroen Oosterom	-
Vanastra Community	Robert Hoekstra	Margaret Dykstra	-
Waterloo	Vicki Cok	Rudy Eikelboom	Emily Jaarsma
Waterloo Campus Ministry	Carolyn Kleefman		
Wingham Maitland River	Bart Eisen	Albert Teeninga	-

**Officers of the day:**

Chair: Mr. Albert Hovingh (Palmerston CRC)  
 Vice-chair: Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC)  
 Stated Clerk: Mr. Fred Vander Sterre (Blyth CRC)

**Committees of the Day:**

Credentials: Stratford & Maranatha, Cambridge.  
 Overtures: River City & Water Street  
 Balloting: Menti, or Clinton and Exeter CRC.

## 1 Welcome, Devotions & Opening:

- 1.1 Rev. Cameron Oegema (Bethel CRC, Listowel) welcomed everyone present.
- 1.2 Rick De Graaf (Maranatha CRC, Cambridge) reported for the credentials committee. All churches were represented.
- 1.3 Rev. Sid Couperus (Owen Sound CRC) opened with devotions, focusing on Ephesians 4. The emphasis is on the vision and mission of Classis Huron. Many forces are splitting and dividing us as a church.  
God is raising leaders to guide us through those challenging times.  
Humility is foundational for a vibrant church.  
Pastor Sid led in prayer.
- 1.4 Joan Brady (Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer) led us in a time of visioning and identifying priorities for Classis Huron. Each of the groups had an opportunity to share their main points. Pastor Sid closed the session with group prayers.

- 2 **Guelph Campus Ministry:** Sara DeMoor (Guelph Campus Minister) and Carel Geleynse (member of the Campus Ministry Board) shared several slides about Sara's work, including about the winter retreat, and the training of students to lead Bible study sessions. There are also prayer groups on Fridays and other inter-denominational events.  
Several students shared their experiences through a video. They thanked the churches for their contributions through the ministry shares.

- 3 **Classical Counsellors Reports:** Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC) shared a summary of the reports submitted by the counsellors. Exeter has the acceptance of a call; the installation is scheduled for April 14. Bethel CRC in Acton has an interim pastor until May.

- 4 Rev. Robert Hoekstra (Vanastra CRC) led the delegates in pre-lunch prayer.

### Classis paused for a lunch break.

- 5 Rev. Cam Oegema (Bethel, Listowel CRC) led in post-lunch prayer.

## 6 Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford CRC) reported for the **credential committee**

- 6.1 Maranatha CRC asked about training for our churches, to become more relevant in the communities.
- 6.2 Maranatha CRC also informed classis that they are in the process of calling an additional pastor.
- 6.3 Drayton CRC is asking how the churches in Classis Huron updated their policies and procedures to make sure they are compliant with the Ontario Provincial Charities rules (ONCA).  
How do we update, what are best practices?  
The classis clerk is instructed to gather that information from the churches.
- 6.4 **Motion:** from Bethel CRC of Listowel that "*officebearers of Waterloo CRC not be seated as delegates at meetings of Classis Huron*", with grounds.  
The chair ruled to defer the motion to the May session of classis.  
The chair also recommended that AdCom/CMC set aside a time for structured discussion at the May meeting about how Classis should/could deal with the matter of churches in protest

and/or having difficulties with the outcome of Synod 2023's decision regarding the HSR.

- 7 Waterloo CRC** submitted a Communication declaring itself to be a “*church in protest*” and requested that classis adopt this communication and forward it to Synod 2024. Elder Rudy Eikelboom reported for the Waterloo CRC. He pointed out that room is needed to allow us to be obedient to God's word. Not all council members agree with the confessional status.  
**Motion:** to accept the submitted communication and to plead to leave the door open for ongoing dialogue. Defeated.
- 8 Redeemer University:** President Dr. Zietsma reported on the blessings and the challenges the institution has experienced and the current move forward. He addressed a few questions.
- 9 Council of Delegates:** Roberta Vriezema and Peter Meerveld reported on the stories and strategies of the existing churches in Canada. Also, the *Gathering* in Minneapolis was mentioned. Congregations are encouraged to submit nominations of members to attend this event to the classis clerk.
- 10 Disability Advocate:** Len Bakelaar reported on the changes that took place when Disability Concerns became part of Thrive. He concluded with a video of the “5 changing attitudes”: <https://www.wheaton.edu/wheaton-center-for-faith-and-disability/disability-foundations/the-5-stages/>
- 11 Safe Church:** Atie Ott highlighted the mandate of the Team. The Annual Inter-Classis Safe Church conference is scheduled for March 2, at the Waterloo CRC. The Safe Church coordinator's position is opening up, as Atie is planning to step down. She strongly recommended that this should become a paid, (part-time) position. She also reported on the appointment of the new ministry consultant, Julia Rathbun. Several books were introduced.  
  
Rev. Sid Couperus led in prayer for both Safe Church and Disability Concerns.
- 12 CMC** report was presented by Rev. Victor Laarman. He highlighted the special notes concerning the Classis Huron Mission Team.  
**Motion:** to approve Rev. John Vanderstoep, Rev. Ken Labbé, Rev. Victor Laarman and Rev. Darrell Bierman as Church Visitors. Carried  
**Motion:** pastors who are approved to serve as church visitors are encouraged to bring either another approved church visitor, or an elder of their church as their partner to the visit. Carried  
**Motion:** To appoint Fred Vander Sterre for a second term as Classis Huron Stated Clerk, Jane Vander Velden for a second term as Alternate Stated Clerk, Evert Nagel for a second term as Classis Huron Treasurer. Carried  
**Motion** to approve the actions of AdCom, CMC and the Stated Clerk. Carried
- 13 The Council of the Exeter Christian Reformed Church** and pastor Kevin teBrake requested that

classis extends the art. 17c status to Rev. Kevin teBrake for one year.

Three synodical deputies: Rev. Phil Apol (Classis Ontario Southwest), Rev. Michael Bootsma (Classis Hamilton) and Rev. Dan Brown (Classis Quinte) joined by Zoom and were introduced.

**Motion:** to extend the art. 17c status to Rev. Kevin teBrake for one year was introduced by elder Joe Lubbers, delegate from the Exeter CRC. Carried

The synodical deputies concurred with the decision of classis.

The synodical deputies were thanked for their work.

#### 14 Election of Delegates to Synod 2024

The election took place by Menti.

As no deacon nominees were received, two elders will serve as delegates to synod, along with two ministers

Elected were:

Minister delegate: Rev. Sid Couperus

Alternate: Rev. Ray Vander Kooij

Elder delegate: John Tamming

Alternate: Ron Jack

Elder delegate: Jeroen Oosterom

Alternate: Ron Jack

4<sup>th</sup> delegate: Rev. Tom Bomhof

Alternate: Rev. Bart Eisen

#### 15 New Life, Guelph: delegate Jake De Bruyn introduced an overture to classis:

*"In response to Article 80 of the Acts of Synod 2023 (p 1032 – 1039), we call upon Synod 2024 to not implement any new acts of discipline or mandatory timelines for office-bearers who have offered a Confessional Difficulty Gravamen with regards to the confessional status of the Human Sexuality Report (HSR)."*

**Motion:** was moved and supported to adopt the overture and submit to synod. Carried

#### 16 Exhortation License Review Committee

Rev. Ray Vander Kooij reported for the committee.

The committee recommended granting a license to exhort to Jim Broekema. Two sermons were reviewed and, as Jim was examined for ordination, and served as an ordained pastor for several years prior, no additional examination was considered necessary.

**Motion:** to grant a license to exhort to Jim Broekema for five years. Carried

#### 17 Church Visitor report to Blyth CRC was received.

#### 18 Classis Huron Mission Team

Joan Brady reported on Thriving Leadership Training and the Go Local program.

A pastors' prayer retreat is planned in London.

Rev. Ray Vander Kooij explained the process of the Moving Forward program, initiated by Joan, and how it benefitted the Clinton church.

Rev. Tim Keep shared about the process implemented at the Trinity CRC in Goderich.

Jane Vander Velden promoted the book *"Joining Jesus"*, stories of "Luke 10 Christians".

Resonate provided one copy of the book per church.

#### 19 Diaconal Story Diaconal Ministry / Diaconal Conference

Jane Vander Velden also shared about her role as deacon coach, she and Fred are available to

meet with the diaconates in Classis Huron.

Mary Blydorp read a short story from the deacons of the Orangeville CRC. They organized, along with the Cadets and GEMS, a successful food drive for the local foodbank.

The book *“Helping without Hurting in Church Benevolence”* is a valuable resource for deacons.

NewGround has been instrumental in helping local churches, launching many diaconal-focused programs over the decades. Many of those programs are still going strong.

Mary also introduced several new projects to be supported by NewGround during the coming season.

A Diaconal Conference for the deacons in Classis Huron is planned for April 18.

**20 Creative ways to have classis meetings:**

Rev. Victor Laarman shared with classis some of the results of the survey distributed among the churches of classis Huron, gathering ideas and suggestions to improve the way we hold classis meetings in the future. The report was referred to the May session of classis.

**21** The delegates are encouraged to fill out the evaluation sheets on Menti.

**22** Motion to adjourn at 4:55 PM.

Carried

**23** Closing prayer presented by prayer catalyst Rev. Sid Couperus.

**Minutes were approved by CMC, , 2024**