



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

MINUTES

September 25, 2024 – 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.**

Delegates to Classis

<u>Church</u>	<u>Minister delegate</u>	<u>Elder Delegate</u>	<u>Deacon Delegate</u>
Acton Bethel		Karen Kroes	Ryan Buisman
Blyth	Luke Bouman (Elder)	Micah Nonkes	Susan Buffinga
Cambridge Maranatha	Maynard Wiersma (Elder)	Tim Wolfert	Dave Timmerman
Cambridge River City	Darrell Bierman	James Carroll	Melissa Burmaster
Clinton	Ray Vander Kooij	Dwayne Feddes	John Vanderhaar
Collingwood	Victor Laarman	Richard Golby	Case Roest
Drayton	Wes Collins	Bill VanAndel	Rita Koster
Exeter	Jay Crossen	Gerard Steenbeek	Harry Knip
Fergus The Bridge	John Vanderstoep		
Goderich Trinity	Tim Keep	Rob Terpstra	Amy Fay
Guelph Campus Ministry	Sara DeMoor		-
Guelph New Life	Angela Nywening	Sharon Buisman	
Guelph Water Street	Peter Kingma	Tony Vyn	Bill Smedes
Kitchener Community	Laura De Jong	Chris Postma	Peter Hansma
Listowel Bethel	Henry Meinen (Alt.)	Tim Benjamins	Dennis Greidanus
Lucknow Community	Stacey Wellstead (Elder)	Frances Spaling	Lou Jurjens
Orangeville	Jan Scheurwater (Elder)	Justin Groen	
Owen Sound	Sid Couperus	Fred VanSligtenhorst	Barb Howson
Palmerston	Ken Labbé	Jono Barnhoorn	
Stratford	Barry Horensma (elder)	Stan Puklicz	-
Vanastra Community	Robert Hoekstra	Henry DeBoer	Nikki Wynja
Waterloo	Vicki Cok	Rudy Eikelboom	Betty Slothouber
Waterloo Campus Ministry		Caroline Kleefman	
Wingham Maitland River Community	Bart Eisen	Albert Teeninga	Matt Wilkins

Officers of the day:

- Chair: Rev. Sid Couperus (First CRC, Owen Sound)
- Vice-chair: Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood CRC)
- Stated Clerk: Mr. Fred Vander Sterre (Blyth CRC)

Committees of the Day:

- Credentials: River City CRC & Drayton.
- Overtures: N/A
- Balloting: Clinton & Orangeville.
-

Synodical Deputies:

- Rev. Phil Apol (Classis Ontario Southwest)
- Rev. Josh Tuininga (Classis Quinte)
- Rev. Michael Bootsma (Classis Hamilton)

1 Welcome, Devotions & Opening:

- 1.1 Rev. Jay Crossen (Exeter CRC) welcomed everyone including the guests: John Kowtecky from Family Outreach Ontario and Rick Zomer ThereforeGo Ministries and opened with devotions.
- 1.2 Rev. Wesley Collins (Drayton CRC) reported for the credentials committee. All churches were represented.

2 To begin the session of classis, Mr. Nick Geleynse (Clinton CRC) gave the delegates an opportunity to write a Psalm of lament. (A copy will go out with the minutes)

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

Delegates were reminded to disclose any conflicts of interest.

Classis Huron was declared Constituted.

Pastor Sid offered a prayer for delegate Ralph Bakker as he was admitted to hospital.

He also expressed his gratitude to CMC for creating the agenda and the Exeter church for their hospitality.

4 Examination of Tyler Kirkbride

Examiner Rev. Carel Geleynse introduced Tyler, who shared about his faith journey.

Pastor Carel proceeded with the examination related to the practical matters regarding Christian testimony, walk of life, relationships with others, love for the church, and approach to ministry, especially as it relates to youth and the promotion of Christ's kingdom.

The delegates were given an opportunity to ask questions.

Rev. Harry Zantingh examined Tyler's knowledge of theology, scriptures, reformed doctrine and the standards of the church and the Church Order. The delegates had an opportunity for questions.

Sermon critics: Rev. Ken Labbé (Palmerston CRC) and Rev. Jay Crossen (Exeter CRC) reported on their review of Tyler's sermons: "Overall, Tyler did a good job." The examiners appreciated his sermons and his passion very much, and are looking forward to seeing how Tyler continues to

grow in this call and skills.

Motion: to declare Tyler Kirkbride eligible to be ordained as a Commissioned Pastor.
Executive Session was declared.

By voice vote, Classis Huron declared that Tyler had sustained his examination and was declared eligible to be ordained as a Commissioned Pastor.

The chair congratulated and blessed Tyler and provided him with the classical diploma.

Rev. Bart Eisen (Maitland River Community Church, Wingham) led in a prayer of thanksgiving.

The installation date has been set for October 20.

AdCom appointed Rev. Tim Keep to serve as Tyler's mentor.

- 5 **Family Outreach Ontario** John Kowtecky reported on this important ministry offering a Christian response to addictions.

They offer: 1) Education related to drugs and alcohol addictions. 2) support for families and offering information for help. 3) liaison with other organizations.

Their main objectives are: 1) Councils need to be aware that addiction is very likely a problem in each church. 2) Addictions affect the person and the family. It is a family disease. 3) Alcoholics need help from others. 4) Awareness and education are sorely needed. The distribution of the news letters is an important way to reach people.

John is available to come to meet with church groups.

[Family Outreach Ontario](#)

Rev. John Vanderstoep (Bridge, Fergus) thanked John for his presentation and led in prayer for F.O.O. and for our lunch.

After Lunch Break:

Rev. Laura DeJong (Community CRC, Kitchener) led in prayer for the afternoon session.

- 6 **Exeter CRC's request for Art 12-c for Rev. Kevin teBrake**

Gerard Steenbeek, delegate of the Exeter CRC, presented the motion to declare that the work of the Director of Planned Gifts & Investments of the Christian School Foundation is consistent with the calling of the Minister of the Word and that Classis Huron grants approval for Rev. Kevin teBrake to be called to this position under Art. 12-c of the Church Order, as requested by the Exeter CRC.

A time of debate followed.

The synodical deputies left to prepare their decision.

The classis voted by ballot. The motion was defeated.

The synodical deputies returned and concurred with Classis.

The synodical deputies were thanked for their work and submitted a copy of their report.

Motion to destroy the ballot Carried.

- 7 **Credentials Committee**

Rev. Darrell Bierman (River City CRC, Cambridge) reported for the committee.

- 7.1 Via the credentials, Maranatha CRC (Cambridge) seeks advice on the process of discipling those officebearers who have difficulty with one of the confessions.

The committee recommends utilizing the resources from Thrive.

[Next Steps | Pastor & Church Support | Christian Reformed Church \(crcna.org\)](#)

- 7.2 Rev. Vicki Cok (Waterloo CRC), with the blessing of her church council, gave Classis Huron the official request for retirement from the Ministry of Word in the Christian Reformed Church in accordance with Church Order Article 18, effective May 1, 2025, as she will have reached her age of retirement.
Motion to approve the request. *Carried*
- 7.3 Rev. Laura DeJong submitted a letter for the Community CRC, Kitchener, related to the seating at classis meetings. This letter was referred to AdCom.
Motion to approve the work of the credentials committee *Carried.*
- 8 **ThereforGo Ministries:** Executive director Rick Zomer gave an update on the work of ThereforGo Ministries. According to Rick the Canadian churches provide substantial financial support. He discussed the ministry's development and journey, as well as the change in name. Rick also showed a ministry-related video. He made the important point that worry is a major issue among youth. The website [ThereforeGo Ministries – Youth Mission Trips, Training & Coaching](#) has further details.
 Stan Puklicz (Stratford CRC) prayed for the ministry.
- 9 **Classical Ministries:**
- 9.1 Pastor Sara DeMoor (Guelph Campus Ministry) reported for the Classical Ministries Committee.
 She clarified the functions of the CMC and AdCom.
 She urged councils to encourage their elders and deacons to consider serving as potential delegates to synod 2025.
 Classis expressed their gratitude to Atie Ott for her many years of service as the Safe Church Coordinator.
Motion: to extend Frank Folkema's five year license to exhort. *Carried.*
Motion: to approve the actions of AdCom, CMC, and Stated Clerk *Carried.*
- 9.2 Classical Counsellors report: The clerk stated that Rev. Craig Hoekema accepted a call from Bethel, Acton, with an installation date of October 4 and Rev. Jeff Vandermeer accepted a call from New Life, Guelph, with an installation date of November 3.
 The Waterloo Campus Ministry Committee and six congregations are actively seeking pastors at this time.
Motion was presented to approve the work of the church counsellors, with special gratitude to those who have completed their work. *Carried.*
- 9.3 Financial Resources Team: Treasurer Evert Nagel presented the 2025 Classis Huron proposed budget, that is posted on the Classis Huron website.
Motion was made to adopt the \$295,000 proposed budget for 2025. \$103,500 is included in this for each Campus Ministry. *Carried.*
 The delegates from the Waterloo CRC declared that they will continue to fully support Classis Huron's work and ministries, despite being placed on limited suspension.
Motion was made to approve the work of the FRT *Carried.*
- 9.4 Safe Church: In her role as coordinator, Atie Ott shared with classis her experiences.
 The interim coordinator, Rev. Carel Geleynse, provided an update and on his availability.
 March 1, 2025, is the date of the next Annual Inter-classis Safe Church Conference.

Motion to approve the work of the Safe Church Team. *Carried.*

Rev. Victor Laarman led in prayer for Safe Church, for Atie and for Carel.

- 9.5 Classis Huron Mission Team: Rev. John Vanderstoep provided an update on Bridge the emerging church in Fergus. He distinguished his church as being a missional, rather than an attractional church.

The church is in a sound financial situation. He noted that in our classis, there isn't as much of a push toward church planting as there once was.

Rev. Darrell Bierman (River City, Cambridge) led in prayer for the Bridge and pastor John.

- 9.6 **Mission Catalyst:** Joan Brady used a PowerPoint presentation to report on her work. She described how Resonate operates. She is available to the local churches. She also promoted the "Moving Forward in Faith" event that would take place in Burlington on Nov. 15-16.

Motion was made to approve the work of CHMT and for Joan Brady. *Carried.*

- 9.7 **Classical Ministerial Leadership Team:** the team is now helping five students, according to Rev. Wesley Collins (Drayton) who address classis, which is wonderful news.

Motion to approve the work of CMLT *Carried.*

Rev. Victor Laarman (Collingwood) talked briefly about his wife Chelsea's illness and the therapies she receives. Sid led in prayer for the family and for God's hand in the healing process.

10 Denominational Ministries:

- 10.1 Report on Synod 2024: Rev. Sid Couperus (First CRC Owen Sound) gave a summary of the Synod's decisions, which included the admission of the new candidates. He left having developed a far greater respect for the work that our denomination does.
- 10.2 A video message was presented by the General Secretary Rev. Zachery King and the Canadian Director, Rev. Al Postma.
- 10.3 Roshani Morton provided an update on her work with the Ministry Shares initiative. She explained how denominational finances are divided up by using the metaphor of an octopus. She is more than happy to have one of her team members visit the local church. Rev. Sid Couperus prayed for the denominational Ministry Shares Program.

11 Other printed reports submitted on the Classis Huron website:

- 11.1 Thrive Playlist
 11.2 Redeemer University
 11.3 Diaconal Ministries Canada
 11.4 World Renew
 11.5 Calvin University
 11.6 Calvin Seminary

- 12 **Evaluation** was offered to the delegates through Menti.

- 13 **Motion** to adjourn at 3:50 PM. *Carried.*

- 14 **Closing blessings** led by Rev. Sid Couperus.

Classis Huron Psalm of Lament and of Praise, Sept. 25, 2024

How long oh lord ...

Woa this sucks!

How long until the pews are full again?

We miss our brothers and sisters...

Lord, we lament the unrest around the world...

Lord we lament the unrest in our Denomination...

Lord we lament the unrest in each church...

Lord We lament the Sin within us...

How long till you set me free...

It all feels uncertain God....

What are you doing?

Where are you?

Do we still believe you are good?

And sovereign...

But Lord we know that you're still at work...

You have been faithful to future generations..

We remember your testimonies through those with addictions

We see hope in their eyes...

We see you providing for the poor

Feeding bellies through your people...

Praise God that you are leading us in having hard conversations!

Thank you for the ways you continue to do your work through ministries...

Lord, you are growing your church world wide!

Praise God for renewal, you are bringing in newcomers,

Making your church reflect the kingdom

Lord We praise you that you will return and make all things new

We joyfully await your kingdom come on earth as in heaven...

Fall Psalm

We lament that young and old are not immune to distraction from worshiping your great name.

We lose people in our lives tragically and can't feel compassion.

Hear the grief... We struggle with terms that strangle our healing.

People build walls to protect themselves and we lose relationships, we lose understanding, we lose connection.

We remember your sovereignty over the little and the great things of our daily lives.

It took the Israelites 40 years, ... why are we so easily put off, frustrated with waiting for your hand to move.

We remember you led your people through wilderness, through conflicts, through rejections, through pain.

Your hand of mercy did not fail then, nor will it fail now.

Every morning your mercy falls upon your loved children like the dew falls on Mount Hermon.

Your spirit falls upon your people individually and corporately. Your generosity abounds to every generation.

Your love stretches to us, through the cross reconnecting us to our hearts, our neighbours, and our community; breaking down walls that divide.

Renew the work of your hands in our midst - renew us to do your will.

Amen.

We feel lost, broken, discouraged, powerless and overwhelmed.

Where are you?

Are you there?

But

You are still on the throne

You are still building this church

You are in control

You have brought dry bones back to life

Accomplish your work through us

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

We lament:

- Pain, anger, frustration, brokenness, division and suspension in our church.
- Youth that find it difficult to find relevance in the church/corporate worship.
- Ever increasing war.

God is faithful:

- He knows and loves us even when we forget.
- God has blessed Christian education at all levels.
- Many youth and young families do serve and worship in the church.
- We see his faithfulness in past difficulties.

We praise him:

- For his sovereignty and love.
- His mighty army - He will conquer all
- God will unite us if we put him first.
- We are still and know that He is God!

Lament:

- For the pain people are struggling with
- That people are going to leave the/our denomination
- That God's presence seems to be absent resulting in confusion, division, disorientation.
- That there is no single solution.
- For the chaos in the world and the escalating conflicts.

Remember:

- Just like the Hebrews crossing the sea, the waters seem to open slowly - one step at a time.
- The church is not dead yet.
- God does not give up on us.
- Celebrating that God's mission can still be carried out through different churches
- How the scattering of humanity at Babel fulfilled God's purposes. He will use this too.

Praise:

- That both sides are (have been) seeking God's will.
- For new families and that the church grows, changes and becomes more diverse through the chaos.
- That even in the chaos people are seeking the Lord. The global chaos too is causing people to search for an anchor.
- That there seems to be a desire to get back to the Word.

Lord,

You are LORD of all the earth - including the chaos.

We lament that chaos often brings pain and confusion and that some chaos results in loss of life and meaning.

BUT,

As your spirit hovered over the waters at creation

We trust and remember your faithfulness through the generations and that YOU have brought life out of chaos:

- At Babel
- At the Red Sea
- At the Cross
- Through church history

And so...

Even through the chaos we praise you for signs of life:

- New members and seekers
- Renewed zeal for your word

You have been our anchor and we will move forward trusting you.

We lament:

- Poverty, homelessness
- Wanton destruction through war, people, buildings
- Impact of COVID on the church
- Mental health
- Synod 2024 - those who feel like they don't belong anymore
- No place for me in my church family
- Israel/Hamas tragedy - Gaza
- Lack of transformation in the church
- Shift from Christ to power and control.
- Weariness from all of the above

- Children leaving the church, the faith.

Praise for:

- Kids coming back to faith
- Increased faith in gay friends
- Guelph Campus Ministry exists because of faith - Guelph and Waterloo - 51 years
- So many kids - Wingham and Owen Sound
- Missional ministries in eastern Europe
- God entrusts us - we trust Him.
- Missions - God is always at work
- God's hand is in the confusion and chaos
- Diaspora conference