

MINUTES

OF CLASSIS HURON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

FEBRUARY 12, 2020 | 9:00 A.M. | PALMERSTON CRC
400 Whites Rd. | Palmerston, ON N0G 2P0

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.

www.classishuron.ca

OFFICERS OF THE DAY

Chair: Rev. Ralph Wigboldus (Listowel)

Vice-Chair: Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford)

Stated Clerk: Rev. John Medendorp (Kitchener, alternate)

DEVOTIONS AND PRAYER

Opening: Palmerston CRC

Pre-Lunch: Community CRC

Post-Lunch: Orangeville CRC

COMMITTEES FOR THE DAY

Credentials: Waterloo CRC and Water Street CRC (Guelph)

Balloting: Palmerston CRC

Overture 2: Maitland River Community CRC (Wingham) and Bethel CRC (Listowel)

Overture 3: Acton CRC and Collingwood CRC

MINUTES

- I. **Opening Worship:** Rev. Andrew De Gelder (Palmerston) welcomed delegates on behalf of Palmerston CRC. Delegates joined together in singing “Great are You Lord” and “Before the Throne of God Above.” Rev. De Gelder led in a meditation on Revelation 4: “God is on the Throne.”
- II. **Welcome & Announcements:** Rev. Ralph Wigboldus (Listowel) welcomed delegates and guests, and offered a number of announcements.

Church Name	Minsiter Delegate	Elder Delegate	Deacon Delegate
Bethel CRC (Acton)	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Christine Druif	Ann Adema
Blyth CRC	Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen	Rick Steele	Jamie Reinink
Maranatha CRC (Cambridge)	Rev. Norm Sennema	Clarence Louter	Herman Vandermunnik
River City CRC (Cambridge)	Rev. Darrell Bierman	Andrew Johnson	Melinda Saunders
Clinton CRC	John Hoogendoorn (elder)	Kimberly Van Wyk	John Vanderhaar
Collingwood CRC	Rev. Victor Laarman	George Strampel	Rob Noordegraaf
Drayton CRC	John Zwart (elder)	Andy Knetsch	Teresa Wikkerink
Exeter CRC	Rev. Kevin teBrake	Sylvia Hulshof	Bill Branderhorst
The Bridge (Fergus)	Rev. John Vanderstoep	—	—
Trinity CRC (Goderich)	Peter Bos (elder)	Johanna Steegstra	Paul Kroll
New Life CRC (Guelph)	Rev. Ed Jager	Eve Mazereeuw	Peter Timmerman
Guelph Campus Ministry	Pastor Sara DeMoor (Commissioned)	—	—
Water Street CRC (Guelph)	Rev. Dave Tigchelaar	Amanda Vandervinne	Rob Davis
Community CRC (Kitchener)	Rev. John Medendorp	Darlene Bokma	Scott Kooy
The Journey (Kitchener)	Toyosi Awesu	Emily Van Donk (guest)	—
Bethel CRC (Listowel)	Rev. Ralph Wigboldus	Walter Vandergroot	Maria Krabbe
Lucknow Community CRC	Rev. Tim Leferink	Ida Piel	Rick Bisset
Orangeville CRC	Rev. Andrew Vis	Fran Ousorren	—
First CRC (Owen Sound)	Rev. Sid Couperus	John Van Dorp	Joel Neerhof
Palmerston CRC	Rev. Andrew de Gelder	Wim den Hartog	Diane Norris
Stratford CRC	Rev. Martin Dam	Dirk DeLange	—
Vanastra Community CRC	Rev. Paul DeWeerd	Brian Wynja	Johan VanWalderveen
Waterloo CRC	Rev. Vicki Cok	Tim Fisher	Mark Parker
Waterloo Campus Ministry	—	—	—
Maitland River Community Church (Wingham)	—	Jack Wilkins	—

- III. **Credentials Committee:** Rev. Vicki Cok presented on behalf of the Credentials Committee. All credentials were received except for Wingham and Stratford. **A motion was made to seat the delegates from Wingham and Stratford without credentials.** —*Approved.* Rev. Cok declared classis constituted.
- IV. **Guelph Campus Ministry:** Pastor Sara DeMoor and Rev. Ray Vander Kooij presented on behalf of Guelph Campus Ministry. Rev. Vander Kooij highlighted the faithful leadership of Pastor DeMoor, and the interim support offered by Virginia and Neal Lanninga over the past year. Delegates were presented with the new logo for the campus ministry as well as the renewed mission and vision statement for the next chapter. The Board is updating their handbook and shifting the staffing model to .75FTE campus minister and .25FTE ministry coordinator (Alison Piper). Pastor DeMoor expressed her gratitude to the GCM Board for their support, encouragement, and governance over the years, as well as to the churches of Classis Huron for their ongoing support of this vital ministry. Pastor DeMoor updated Classis on some of the regular ministries, including lectio divina, student dinners, the fall retreat, and podcast small groups. GCM is experimenting with a pilot project using 3 student interns to plan and lead programs who meet together for book study, prayer, and mutual encouragement. One of these interns (Ally) was recently featured in a video by Resonate Global Mission, which was shown to the delegates and will be distributed to the churches. Rev. Vander Kooij offered a prayer for the work of Pastor Sara DeMoor and Guelph Campus Ministry.
- V. **Calvin Theological Seminary Board:** Keith Oosthoek presented on behalf of the Board of Calvin Theological Seminary. Calvin Seminary is the oldest continuously operating CRC institution (since 1876). The seminary currently draws students from 26 denominations and 26 countries (currently 54% from the U.S., 11% from Canada, 22% from Korea, and 7% from China). The seminary has been operating without debt for several years now, and is providing creative financial aid to ease the burden on students. CTS has a thriving hispanic degree program and prison degree program, a new Bible Teacher certificate agreement with Christian Schools International (CSI), and a new Doctorate of Ministry program. About 60% of CTS students are graduating completely debt-free due to proactive financial counselling and strategic scholarships. The Seminary is actively seeking donors in Canada. Mr. Oosthoek asked Classis for prayers for the students, administration, and faculty of the Seminary. Churches can also support the Seminary by encouraging grade 12s to explore the DIG summer student program; encouraging gifted individuals to pursue ministry by enrolling in the M.Div. program; and encouraging their congregants to support the Seminary financially. Mr. Oosthoek introduced Rev. Shawn Brix, recently appointed Canadian Church Relations Liaison for Calvin Seminary. Rev. Brix explained his new role, which is focused on building relationships with Canadian churches and ministries, as well as connecting with and recruiting Canadian students. Rev. Brix highlighted the DIG program for Grade 11/12 students and encouraged churches to nominate youth for this life-changing program. Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen offered a prayer for CTS and Shawn Brix's work.

MORNING REFRESHMENT BREAK

- VI. **Home Missions Committee:** Rev. Kevin teBrake reported on behalf of the Classis Home Missions Committee. Rev. teBrake highlighted Ridder Church Renewal/Churches Learning Change and the practice of “faithwalking” as something that has been useful for churches. The Home Missions Committee is currently looking for new members (the committee usually meets via Zoom online video service). Joan Brady presented on her work as Mission Catalyzer for Classis Huron, highlighting the Church Renewal Weekend in Steinbach, Manitoba last year, and the upcoming “Go Local” event scheduled for Saturday, April 4, 2020 (location TBD). Pastor Ron Baker presented his story of God calling him to plant Vital Point Church and establish a new site in Exeter. Rev. John Medendorp offered a prayer for the work of Joan Brady and Ron Baker.
- VII. **Abuse of Power Presentation:** Rev. Carel Geleynse and Atie Ott led a presentation on the Abuse of Power Recommendations from Synod 2019. Over the coming years, the following items will be implemented throughout the denomination: 1. Training of individuals preparing for ministry; 2. Code

of conduct; 3. Anti-abuse training for CRCNA staff; 4. Anti-abuse training for classes and local churches; 5. Strengthening the denominational Safe Church Ministry; 6. Drafting a policy on non-disclosure agreements; 7. Classes encouraged to provide funds for counselling services; 8. Developing abuse prevention resources for culturally diverse churches; 9. Improving record-keeping around allegations of abuse and the responses of churches and classes; 10. Creating a culture that prevents abuse of power through common values and shared goals. The Council of Delegates is monitoring the progress of all of these items and ensuring implementation. Rev. Geleynse highlighted the upcoming Safe Church Conference in Waterloo on Saturday, March 7, 2020. The Safe Church Team challenged Classis to continue to hold its member churches accountable to these goals through church visits, the Safe Church Committee, and regular agenda items on council. Delegates engaged in a brainstorming exercise to dream about ways that churches can hold their pastors and officebearers accountable. Rev. Ed Jager offered a prayer for the Safe Church Team.

VIII. Classis Ministry Committee: Rev. Martin Dam presented on behalf of the Administrative Subcommittee and Classis Ministry Committee. On behalf of the committee, Rev. Dam presented the following recommendations:

- 1. That Wilma Hiemstra and John Zwart be granted a renewed 5-year License to Exhort within Classis Huron.**

Grounds:

- 1. Their respective councils have recommended their licenses be renewed.*
- 2. They desire to continue exhorting within Classis Huron*
- 3. They have successfully completed the renewal process according to the Rules of Classis Huron.*

—Approved

- 2. That Classis Huron approve the retirement of Rev. Carel Geleynse on May 31, 2020, celebrate this in pre-lunch devotions, and declare this its response to Overture 1.**

Grounds:

- 1. The Council of Community CRC has requested this.*
- 2. This is in accordance with Church Order Article 18-a.*

—Approved

- 3. That Classis Huron approve the work of the Classical Ministries Committee, the Administrative Committee, and the Stated Clerk.**

—Approved

IX. Pre-Lunch Devotions: Rev. John Medendorp led in pre-lunch devotions with a reflection on Philippians 1:3-6 and Rev. Carel Geleynse's faithful years of ministry. Rev. Medendorp offered a prayer for Rev. Geleynse and delegates sang "My Friends May You Grow in Grace."

LUNCH BREAK

X. Post-Lunch Devotions: Rev. Andrew Vis opened the afternoon session with prayer.

XI. Credentials Committee: Rev. David Tigchelaar reported on behalf of the credentials committee. Lucknow Community CRC expressed its appreciation for the work of Joan Brady in her capacity as Mission Catalyzer. Clinton CRC asked for clarification about the qualifications for delegates to synod. River City CRC (Cambridge) asked to host a meeting of Classis Huron. Blyth CRC asked for additional resources on Reimagining Ministry Shares. Drayton CRC asked for resources/advice from other churches on restructuring their governance model and standing committees. Maranatha CRC (Cambridge) asked for resources/guidance on preparing for the implementation of the Ontario Not-

For-Profit Corporations Act. **All referred to AdCom.** Community CRC presented the following recommendation:

1. **That Classis Huron approve a one-year extension of Rev. Andrew Zantingh’s eligibility for call.**

Grounds:

1. *Rev. Zantingh is actively pursuing a call.*
2. *This is in accordance with Church Order Article 17-c.*

—Approved

Synodical Deputies Siebert VanHouten (Hamilton), Henk Bruinsma (Toronto), and Eric Groot-Nibbelink (Chatham) concurred with this decision of Classis. It was noted that items of such importance ought to come to Classis via an overture included in the regular agenda rather than the credentials. Rev. John Vanderstoep offered a prayer for Rev. Zantingh.

XII.Election of Synodical Delegates: In a ballot vote, the following delegates were elected to Synod 2020 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In the absence of any deacon nominees, Classis Huron tasked the Classis Ministry Committee with recruiting a suitable delegate and alternate.

	Delegate	Alternate
Minister Delegate	Rev. Vicki Cok (Waterloo)	Rev. Tim Leferink (Lucknow)
Elder Delegate	John Tamming (Owen Sound)	Rick DeGraaf (Cambridge)
Deacon Delegate	— —	— —
Fourth Delegate	Rev. John Medendorp (Kitchener)	Rev. Amanda Bakale (Kitchener)

XIII.River City First Facilities Fund: Rev. John Vanderstoep presented the following motion on behalf of the Home Missions Committee:

1. **That Classis Huron direct the Classis Huron Treasurer to disburse a First Facility Grant in the amount of \$100,00.00 to River City Church out of the Church Plant Fund.**

Grounds:

1. *There is a need.*
2. *Classis Huron has the funds.*
3. *River City has long been counting on support in this form.*
4. *River City is a great example of a church that has remained deeply engaged classically and denominationally.*
5. *This is not precedent-setting for our other church plants who have not had this expectation.*

—Approved

XIV.The Bridge: Rev. John Vanderstoep reported on his work at The Bridge church plant in Fergus. The Bridge is currently in its first year of financial independence. Rev. Vanderstoep works bi-vocationally as a real-estate agent, deriving his income from his second career as a real estate agent while he pastors the growing community of worshippers. Rev. Norm Sennema offered a prayer for the work of The Bridge and River City in their respective communities.

XV.Disability Concerns: Len Bakelaar, the regional Disability Advocate, introduced Jenna DeGraaf of Maranatha CRC, who shared her own family’s story of disability and finding belonging in the church. Rev. Darrell Bierman offered a prayer for Disability Concerns, the work of the Disability Advocate, and the DeGraaf family.

XVI. Council of Delegates: Rev. Ralph Wigboldus reported on behalf of the Council of Delegates, highlighting ongoing changes to the corporate structure of the denomination to bring the CRCNA in Canada in line with CRA legislation regulating non-profit charities. The Canada Corporation of the CRCNA has made changes to corporations and agencies operating in Canada and reported these changes to the Council of Delegates. Rev. Wigboldus, Rev. Darren Roorda (Canadian Ministries Director), and Ashley Medendorp (Canada at-large delegate) fielded questions regarding the restructuring, including concerns of a denominational split along national lines.

AFTERNOON REFRESHMENT BREAK

XVII. Diaconal Presentation on Poverty: John Schuurman and Cindy Stover led a workshop on different experiences of poverty. Churches interested in hosting this workshop should contact Cindy Stover. Rev. Martin Dam offered a prayer for the work of World Renew.

XVIII. Church Visitors: Rev. Martin Dam and Rev. Andrew de Gelder reported on the church visits to Palmerston CRC and Stratford CRC. Highlights were Palmerston CRC's outreach to the growing Filipino community in town and Stratford CRC's continued membership growth.

XIX. Church Counsellors: Rev. Tim Leferink reported that Trinity CRC (Goderich) is in the process of calling an interim pastor. Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen reported that Clinton CRC is in the process of calling an interim pastor. Rev. John Medendorp reported that The Journey (Kitchener) is currently vetting eight candidates for their Senior Pastor position.

XX. Regional Pastors: Rev. Norm Sennema reported that he and Rev. Henry Steenbergen have divided classis between them, with Rev. Sennema taking the south/east churches of Classis and Rev. Steenbergen taking the north/west churches. The Regional Pastors ensure that all pastors in classis are supported and encouraged in their ministry. Through visits and conversations with ministers throughout Classis Rev. Sennema is encouraged by the relationships of mutual encouragement and support that exist between pastors. Rev. Sennema also reported that mentor-mentee relationships are ongoing and well-supported.

XXI. Oversight Committee: Rev. Kevin teBrake reported on behalf of the oversight committee for Rev. Stephen Tamming. The committee has been constituted with Rev. Ralph Wigboldus, Rev. Kevin teBrake, and elder Gilbert VanderHeuven (Goderich). They have had one meeting at which they set expectations and goals, which they will be reviewing with Rev. Tamming at their next meeting. Rev. Ralph Wigboldus offered a prayer for the important work of the various ecclesiastical functionaries of classis.

XXII. Overture 2: Jack Wilkins reported on behalf of the overture committee. Since the overture committee was unable to reach consensus for a recommendation, the following overture from Community CRC (Kitchener) was presented to Classis:

1. **That Classis Huron instruct the Classis Ministry Committee to set aside time at a future meeting of Classis to have an open and hospitable conversation in which delegates are invited to share the stories of their congregational practices around infant baptism and dedication.**

Grounds:

1. *Such an exercise is a natural extension of the ongoing conversation as a classis about infant baptism and dedication practices.*
2. *Entering into this conversation with a posture of mutual learning and hospitality will allow for openness to the ways the Spirit has been moving in our sister churches.*
3. *We are unable to discern a way forward together until we create the space to listen and learn from each other as sisters and brothers in Christ.*

—Approved

XXIII. **Overture 3:** Rev. Victor Laarman reported on behalf of the overture committee. The committee recommended that Classis adopt the following overture from New Life CRC in Guelph:

1. **That Classis Huron overture Synod to amend the supplement to Church Order Article 40-a to formally allow campus ministers to serve as delegates to classis as follows:**

If a classis so desires, it may also invite emerging churches to delegate three officebearers to the meetings of classis it may invite councils to delegate up to three officebearers from emerging churches and campus ministries under their care.

Grounds:

1. *Such delegation will benefit classes by the expected presence and contributions of campus ministers at classis meetings.*
2. *Such delegation will give greater recognition and encouragement to these officebearers in classis.*
3. *An amendment to the supplement would allow classes to implement this practice without obligating them to do so.*

—Approved

XXIV. **Closing:** Vice-chair Rev. Martin Dam offered a few closing announcements and thanked Rev. Ralph Wigboldus for chairing, Rev. John Medendorp for clerking, and Palmerston CRC for hosting. Rev. Wigboldus closed in prayer, delegates rose to sing the doxology, and classis was adjourned.

**Classis Huron will meet next in session on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.
at Water Street CRC, 287 Water St., Guelph, ON**

Agenda items are due April 15, 2020

Please forward agenda items to classishuron@gmail.com

Upcoming Meetings of Classis Huron:

DATE	LOCATION	REPORTS DUE	CHAIR	VICE-CHAIR
Wednesday May 13, 2020	Water Street CRC (Guelph)	April 15, 2020	Martin Dam	Gary Van Leeuwen
Saturday Sept. 19, 2020	Community CRC (Kitchener)	August 15, 2020	Gary Van Leeuwen	Amanda Bakale
Wednesday February 10, 2021	Bethel CRC (Listowel)	January 13, 2021	Amanda Bakale	John Vanderstoep
Wednesday May 12, 2021	River City CRC (Cambridge)	April 14, 2021	John Vanderstoep	— —

****If your church desires to host a classis meeting in 2021 or 2022, please email classishuron@ccrc.on.ca****