

AGENDA

FOR 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)

GUESTS & PRESENTERS

(TIMES ARE TENTATIVE, FINAL TIMES ARE DETERMINED BY THE CHAIR)

11:30 Abuse of Power Report

Safe Church Committee

10:15 Calvin Theological Seminary Board

Keith Oosthoek &

3:30 Diaconal Presentation on Poverty

John Schuurman

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Tentative Schedule for the February 12, 2020 meeting of Classis Huron

Timeline	Report/Item	Presenter/Reporter
9:00a.m.	Opening Welcome/Announcements Opening Worship Credentials Committee: Attendance Summary Constitution of Classis	Chair Palmerston CRC Credentials Committee Chair
9:15a.m.	First Morning Session Guelph Campus Ministry Report Home Missions Reports	Sara DeMoor/GCM Board Home Missions Committee
10:15a.m.	Scheduled Presentation Calvin Theological Seminary Board	Keith Oosthoek & Shawn Brix
10:30a.m.	Morning Refreshment Break (15 min)	
10:45a.m.	Second Morning Session CMC/AdCom/Stated Clerk Report Disability Advocate	Martin Dam Len Bakelaar
11:30a.m.	Scheduled Presentation Abuse of Power	Safe Church Committee
12:00p.m.	Pre-Lunch Devotions	Community CRC
12:15p.m.	Lunch Break (45 min) <i>(Credentials Committee meets)</i>	
1:00p.m.	Post-Lunch Devotions	Orangeville CRC
1:15p.m.	First Afternoon Session Credentials Committee Report Synodical Delegate Election Council of Delegates Report Overture 2: Baptism Conversation Oversight Committee Report Regional Pastors Report Church Counsellors Report Church Visitor Reports	Credentials Committee Chair Ralph Wigboldus Overture Committee Oversight Committee Regional Pastors Church Counsellors Church Visitors
3:15p.m.	Afternoon Refreshment Break (15 min)	
3:30p.m.	Scheduled Presentation Diaconal Presentation on Poverty	John Schuurman
4:00p.m.	Second Afternoon Session as needed	
	Adjournment	Chair & Vice Chair

***Classis delegates are reminded that they are expected to remain seated at classis for the entire session until it is adjourned. Please refrain from scheduling evening appointments on this day as classis may unexpectedly continue through the supper hour. Delegates who need to leave prior to adjournment (i.e., due to an emergency) may do so only with permission of the Chair, who will then advise classis of their absence. Names of delegates who leave early will be recorded in the minutes.*

STANDING COMMITTEES

OF CLASSIS HURON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

CLASSICAL MINISTRIES COMMITTEE
DIACONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
FINANCIAL RESOURCES TEAM
GUELPH CAMPUS MINISTRY BOARD
HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE
MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM
SAFE CHURCH TEAM
WATERLOO CAMPUS MINISTRY BOARD

Winter 2020 Report from the Classical Ministry Committee, Administrative Committee, and Stated Clerk

The Classical Ministry Committee (CMC) consists of the Administrative Committee and representatives of all ministries/committees within Classis: Ministry Leadership Team, Brian Bork; Home Missions Committee, Kevin te Brake; Safe Church Committee, Atie Ott; Guelph Campus Ministry, David Tigchelaar; Waterloo Campus Ministry, John Medendorp; Diaconal Ministries; Mary Blydorp; Youth Champion, Amy Baarda; and Treasurer, John Bell (*ex officio*).

The Administrative Committee (AdCom) works on behalf of Classis in between meetings. AdCom consists of Martin Dam (chair), Gary Vanleeuwen (vice), Albert Hovingh (at-large), and John Medendorp (Stated Clerk, *ex officio*).

The Stated Clerk serves Classis Huron by keeping accurate records of the proceedings, decisions, and rules of Classis as per *Church Order*, Article 32-b. The Rules of Classis Huron also task the Clerk to serve as a resource to the churches of Classis on matters of order and procedure, maintain the records and website of Classis, and serve as a central point of communication for Classis, among other responsibilities.

The Administrative Committee met on September 30, 2019 to follow up on pressing items arising out of the September 18 meeting of Classis Huron. Since the last meeting of Classis Huron, the AdCom 1) received and responded to a number of communications, 2) appointed Ralph Wigboldus (Listowel), Kevin teBrake (Exeter), and Gilbert Vanden Heuvel (Goderich) to an Oversight Committee for Rev. Stephen Tamming in consultation with Pastor-Church Resources, 3) continued conversation with the Youth Champion and various interested parties about revisioning classical youth ministries, 4) appointed Henry Meinen (Listowel), Tim Leferink (Lucknow), and John Medendorp (Kitchener) as Classical Counsellors to Drayton CRC, Trinity CRC (Goderich), and The Journey (Kitchener), respectively, and 5) drafted the agenda for the February meeting of Classis.

The Classical Ministries Team met on January 15, 2020 to 1) process the requested extensions for licences to exhort for Wilma Hiemstra and John Zwart, 2) set the tentative schedule for the February meeting of Classis, and 3) receive reports from the various standing committees of Classis.

The Alternate Stated Clerk 1) managed the website (www.classishuron.ca) and email account (classishuron@gmail.com), 2) attended one meeting of Canadian Stated Clerks on January 28, 3) prepared and distributed agendas, minutes, and supporting documents for the meetings of AdCom and the CMC, and 4) prepared and distributed the agenda with supporting documents for the February meeting of Classis.

The following tasks are underway: 1) Revision of the Rules of Classis Huron, 2) Classical Ministry Plan, 3) updating the website, 4) securing an Alternate Synodical Deputy for Classis Huron, and 5) license to exhort renewal for Tom Mosterd (Stratford).

The following **RECOMMENDATIONS** are presented to Classis for approval by AdCom and CMC:

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.*

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.*

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

MINUTES

OF CLASSIS HURON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 | 9:00 A.M. | DRAYTON CRC
88 Main St. E | Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

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The VISION of Classis Huron

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OFFICERS OF THE DAY

Chair: Rev. Henry Steenbergen (Wingham)

Vice-Chair: Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford)

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

DEVOTIONS AND PRAYER

Opening: Drayton CRC

Pre-Lunch: Home Missions Committee

Post-Lunch: Bethel CRC (Acton)

COMMITTEES FOR THE DAY

Credentials: Stratford CRC and Collingwood CRC

Balloting: First CRC (Guelph)

MINUTES

- I. **Welcome & Announcements:** Rev. Paul Droogers (Drayton) welcomed delegates on behalf of Drayton CRC. Delegates heard a presentation from Father's Heart Ministries and the King's Cafe, which provided food for the day.
- II. **Opening Worship:** Rev. Droogers opened with reflections on the life and mission of CRC missionary to Nigeria Johanna Veenstra in honour of the 100th anniversary of her beginning her missionary work and a meditation based on Joshua 1:9. Delegates joined in singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness," "Blessed be Your Name," and "I am Not My Own."

Church Name	Minsiter Delegate	Elder Delegate	Deacon Delegate
Bethel CRC (Acton)	Rev. Ray Vander Kooij	Nick Kuipery	Rita Leferink
Blyth CRC	Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen	Douwe Top	Dave Salverda
Maranatha CRC (Cambridge)	Pastor Rick DeGraaf (Commissioned)	Clarence Louter	Herman Vandermunnik
River City Church (Cambridge)	Rev. Darrell Bierman	Andrew Johnson	—
Clinton CRC	—	John Hoogendoorn	—
Collingwood CRC	Rev. Victor Laarman	Richard Golby	Case Roest
Drayton CRC	Rev. Paul Droogers	Andy Knetsch	Teresa Wikkerink
Exeter CRC	Rev. Kevin teBrake	Mike Verhoog	Bill Branderhorst
The Bridge (Fergus)	Rev. John Vanderstoep	—	—
Trinity CRC (Goderich)	Gilbert Vanden Heuvel (elder)	Wilma Duckworth	Gertie Gerrits
Guelph Campus Ministry	Pastor Sara DeMoor (Commissioned)	—	—
First CRC (Guelph)	Rev. Dave Tigchelaar	Hans Zegerius	Bob van den Broek
New Life CRC (Guelph)	Rev. Ed Jager	Joel Koops	—
Community CRC (Kitchener)	Rev. Amanda Bakale	Rob Wiersma	Marjo Merkus
The Journey (Kitchener)	—	—	—
Bethel CRC (Listowel)	Pastor Bart Eisen (Commissioned)	Jan Koersen	Peter Rastorfer
Lucknow Community CRC	Rev. Tim Leferink	—	Tim Wellstead
Orangeville CRC	Rev. Andrew Vis	—	Henk Hoogendoorn
First CRC (Owen Sound)	—	John Tamming	Phil Visser
Palmerston CRC	Rev. Andrew de Gelder	Ralph Drost	Louise Van Andel
Stratford CRC	Rev. Martin Dam	Gene Veening	—
Vanastra Community CRC	Rev. Paul DeWeerd	Harry DenHaan	—
Waterloo CRC	Rev. Vicki Cok	Nick Denboer	Evelyn Zwart
Waterloo Campus Ministry	Rev. Brian Bork	—	—
Maitland River Community Church (Wingham)	Rev. Henry Steenbergen	Jack Wilkins	—

- III. **Credentials Committee:** Rev. Victor Laarman offered an initial report for the credentials committee. All credentials were received except for Exeter CRC. **A motion was made to seat the Exeter delegates pending credentials.** —*Approved* Rev. Droogers declared classis constituted and welcomed Rev. Henry Steenbergen (Wingham) as chair and Rev. Martin Dam (Stratford) as vice-chair. Rev. Steenbergen welcomed guests Rev. Darren Roorda (CRCNA), Joan Brady (Mission Catalyzer), Dr. Lyle Bierma (Calvin Seminary), Rev. Leslie VanMilligen (Faith Formation), and Mr. Keith Oosthoek (Pension Fund).
- IV. **Canadian National Gathering Report:** Delegates from Classis Huron to the Canadian National Gathering in Edmonton offered a report and led delegates in an exercise on the theme “Emptiness to Fullness,” based on Church Order Article 75 and the ministry priorities of the CRCNA in Canada and of Classis Huron. The ministry priorities identified by delegates from Classis Huron were: 1) Prayer and spiritual practices; 2) Progress in becoming a multicultural church in pace with the changing North American context; 3) Building bridges with newcomers to Canada; 4) Increased awareness that something is missing with regard to discipleship, spirituality, and being Spirit-led; and 5) Working together to deal with the continuous pace of change. Churches are asked to identify one of these priorities to work on over the coming year, and Classis Huron was asked to provide space for churches to tell stories of how they are making progress in these areas.
- V. **Canadian Pension Fund Report:** Mr. Keith Oosthoek presented on the Canadian Pension Fund for Ministers in the CRCNA. The CPF remains a Defined Benefit plan even as most organizations are moving toward Defined Contribution plans, and intend to remain so to allow ministers greater predictability and stability. The CPF is very healthy with 96% solvency and the salary level is no longer frozen. The CPF is overseen and regulated by the Ontario Financial Services Commission. The Pension Board provides strategy and investment management, which is approved by synod. Eckler Canada in Toronto and Merrill Lynch in Grand Rapids serve as financial consultants. Investments are diverse, managed through fund managers with a buy-and-hold strategy, and follow an ethical policy. The priorities for the future are to keep funding above 100%, maintain defined benefit design, investigate improvements and maintain good relationships, assist the US plan and explore changes to better accommodate bi-vocational ministers and ministry couples.

MORNING REFRESHMENT BREAK

- VI. **Church Counsellor Reports:** Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen reported as counsellor to Clinton CRC. Clinton CRC has said its farewells to Rev. Ron Luchies and celebrated his retirement. First CRC (Owen Sound) declared their appreciation for the support of Classis and Rev. Victor Laarman in their vacancy and celebrate the installation of Rev. Sid Couperus. Noted that Rev. Henry Meinen has been appointed counsellor to Drayton CRC. Noted that Trinity CRC (Goderich) is in need of a counsellor.
- VII. **Executive Session:** In executive session, Classis Huron heard reports from church visitors regarding the circumstances that led Trinity CRC and Rev. Stephen Tamming to request an Article 17 release from active ministry. In a ballot vote, Classis Huron, with the concurrence of the Synodical Deputies, *approved* the Article 17 release from ministry of Rev. Tamming together with a separation agreement mutually agreed upon by Rev. Tamming and the council of Trinity CRC and appointed an oversight committee to walk alongside Rev. Tamming over these next two years and make recommendations about his ongoing care and readiness for ministry. Classis Huron encouraged Trinity CRC to hire a Specialized Transitional Minister, and commended Trinity CRC and Rev. Tamming for their mutual love and support for one another through this process.
- VIII. **Resonate Global Mission:** On behalf of Resonate Global Missions, Rev. Jim Dekker thanked Classis for their support of the Thielke family through the death of Rev. Dwayne Thielke.

LUNCH BREAK

IX. **Post-Lunch Devotions:** The Home Missions Committee of Classis Huron led in a time of worship. Classis participated in a commissioning litany for Joan Brady (Exeter) in her newly appointed role as Mission Catalyzer for Classis Huron.

X. **Synodical Delegate Report:** Rev. Victor Laarman and Jane Vander Velden reported on behalf of the delegates of Classis Huron to Synod 2019. Rev. Laarman highlighted the deliberative nature of the assembly and the human element of decision making, and encouraged all members to remember synodical delegates in prayer during the week that Synod meets. Ms. Vander Velden highlighted the praise and worship, ecumenical relationships, and the powerful global work of our denominational agencies.

XI. **Financial Report:** John Bell reported on the 2020 budget on behalf of the Financial Resources Team. The FRT has encouraged the various standing committees to make use of some of the surplus we have accumulated over the years, which is reflected in the CMC report. Recommended: **That Classis Huron appoint Kathy Wassink (Kitchener) to review the 2019 financials.**

—*Approved.*

XII. **CMC/AdCom Report:** Rev. Vicki Cok reported on behalf of the Administrative Committee and the Classical Ministries Committee. In a ballot vote, **Mr. Albert Hovingh (Palmerston) was elected as the At-large Delegate on the Administrative Committee of Classis Huron.** On behalf of the committee, Rev. Cok presented the following recommendations:

4. **That Jim Williams be granted a renewed 5-year License to Exhort within Classis Huron.**

Grounds:

1. *The Council of First CRC (Guelph) has recommended Mr. Williams' License to Exhort be renewed.*
2. *Mr. Williams desires to continue exhorting within Classis Huron.*
3. *Mr. Williams has successfully completed the renewal process according to the Rules of Classis Huron.*

—*Approved.*

5. **That Classis Huron approve the 2-year extension of the loan of Rev. Jack DeVries to the Christian Reformed Church in Australia (CRCA).**

Grounds:

1. *The Council of Bethel CRC (Listowel) has requested an extension of Rev. DeVries's loan.*
2. *Rev. DeVries desires to continue his work with the CRCA.*
3. *A 2-year extension is in accordance with Church Order, Article 13-c.*

—*Approved.*

**Note: Synodical Deputies Henry Wildeboer (Quinte), James Dekker (Niagara), and Eric Groot-Nibbelink (Chatham) concurred with this decision of Classis.*

6. **That Classis Huron approve the request of the Waterloo Campus Ministry Board to earmark \$5,000.00 of the WCM reserve to hire an intern for the 2019-2020 ministry year.**

Grounds:

1. *There is a need to develop an alumni/donor database to lay the groundwork for future ministry expansion.*
2. *Surplus funds are available and making use of them will not burden the members of Classis Huron with higher ministry share rates.*
3. *\$5,000.00 ought to be sufficient to cover costs for an intern position.*

—*Approved.*

7. **That Classis Huron approve the requests of the Ministry Leadership Team to use \$3,000.00 of CMLT funds to support the proposed retreat for women ministers and candidates in the CRCNA and \$3,000.00 of the CMLT surplus for registration costs for young adults to attend the Leadership Studio in Muskoka Woods.**

Grounds:

1. *CMLT has excess funds in its budget this year as well as a \$27,000.00 surplus, and believes these two causes to fit within the larger mandate of Ministry Leadership, making support of them a stewardly use of excess funds.*
2. *Women ministers and candidates face unique challenges in the CRCNA and have few denomination-specific venues to establishing mentoring relationships and collegial connections with other CRC women in ministry.*
3. *While the Leadership Studio is not specifically for young adults who are considering ministry, it has been an important piece for many young people in planting a seed that has the potential to grow into a calling to ministry.*

—*Approved.*

8. **That Classis Huron continue to fund the Bridge App for the 2020 budget year and schedule time at the May 2020 meeting of Classis for a discussion about how churches are using the Bridge App and whether to fund it as a classis or as individual churches in the future.**

Grounds:

1. *Allowing for an additional year of funding provides churches with additional time to explore the substantial recent updates to the app and assess the app's value and use for their congregation.*
2. *Having an intentional time of conversation set aside at a Classis meeting will allow churches to share ways in which the app has been a valuable and useful resource in a structured setting, as well as frustrations with the app, which can be sent on to the developer via the denomination.*
3. *Setting aside time at a May meeting gives the Financial Resources Team important feedback in time for the budgeting process which takes place in the summer.*

—*Approved.*

9. **That Classis Huron approve the proposed 2020 budget presented by the Financial Resources Team.**

—*Approved.*

10. **That Classis Huron thank Rev. Vicki Verhulst Cok for her three years of faithful leadership on the Administrative Committee.**

—*Approved.*

11. **That Classis Huron affirm Rev. Martin Dam as Chair and Rev. Gary VanLeeuwen as Vice-Chair of the Administrative Committee.**

—*Approved.*

12. **That Classis Huron dismiss the Youth Ministries Team with thanks for their work, recognizing their years of service and the many ways in which youth ministry in Classis Huron has been blessed by current and former members of this team, and**

13. **That Classis Huron task the Administrative Committee and Classical Ministries Committee to strategize about how to better serve the churches of Classis Huron in the area of youth ministry—including the possibility of drafting a new mandate for a new committee—and present a plan for approval by Classis in February 2020.**

Grounds:

1. *The current mandate and composition of the committee has proven unsustainable in the current environment and culture of youth ministry.*
2. *The current membership of the committee does not have the capacity to do this work themselves.*
3. *Classis will be better served by a committee with a clearer mandate and purpose.*
4. *The hard and fruitful work of the Youth Ministries Team over the years ought to be recognized and honoured by Classis.*

—*Approved.*

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

—*Approved.*

XIII. Waterloo Campus Ministry: Rev. Brian Bork reported on his work as campus minister at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. Campus Ministry is a missional activity, “being with” people/institutions and joining the work of the Holy Spirit in the public, academic, and secular environment of the university. “Being with” *seekers and lapsed* Christians through mentoring, spiritual direction, and third-space discussion groups; “being with” *people of other religions* through participation on the multi-faith chaplain’s team and invitations to present in religious studies courses; “being with” *institutions* through participation in the Okanagan Charter and campus wellness pursuits; “being with” *the church* through preaching and teaching engagements, *Christian Courier*, “The Head and the Heart” lecture series; “being with” *Christian Reformed students* is a two-way street that needs a pastoral and mutual introduction. The next Head and Heart lecture is Friday, November 15, 2019 @ Community CRC with Brian Walsh and Sylvia Keesmat presenting on their latest publication: *Romans Disarmed*.

XIV. Safe Church Committee: Atie Ott reported on behalf of the Safe Church Committee of Classis Huron. Ms. Ott reminded delegates that this coming Sunday, September 22, has been designated by Synod as Abuse Awareness Sunday. The theme this year is “Circle of Grace,” a Sunday School curriculum to teach young children about abuse in an age-and-ability appropriate manner. Delegates watched a short video about the Circle of Grace curriculum. Ms. Ott also brought attention to the Abuse of Power recommendations approved by Synod 2019, which will be addressed in greater detail at the February meeting of Classis. Planning is well underway for the Annual Interclassis Safe Church Conference, which will be held on March 7, 2020 at Waterloo CRC. SCC is available to consult, advise, and resource local safe church committees as needed.

XV. The Bridge (Fergus): Rev. John Vanderstoep reported on his work as a church planter at The Bridge in Fergus. The Bridge was recently evaluated through a process overseen by Resonate Global Mission, which celebrated the fact that The Bridge is worshipping together on a regular basis, is intentional about making and growing disciples, has a good relationship with its parent church in navigating a bivocational position, the strong shared partnership and calling demonstrated by John and Carol, big-picture vision, outreach to marginalized groups, ecumenical relationships, involvement and transparency with Classis. Resonate encouraged The Bridge to 1) strategically assess its long-term sustainability and 2) clarify and simplify the discipleship track that new members are expected to follow. The Bridge will no longer receive classical or denominational funds at the conclusion of 2019. Rev. Vanderstoep thanked classis for their support over the past five years. The plan is to develop the bivocationality of the ministry to make it financially self-sustaining by 2020. Rev. Steenbergen offered a prayer for Rev. Vanderstoep and The Bridge.

AFTERNOON REFRESHMENT BREAK

XVI. Infant Baptism & Covenant Dedication: Rev. Vicki Cok introduced Dr. Lyle Bierma (Calvin Theological Seminary) and Dr. Syd Hielema (formerly Faith Formation Ministries and Redeemer University College) who presented various views on this issue and led delegates in a conversation

about Infant Baptism and Covenant Dedication. Dr. Bierma addressed why the CRC has affirmed covenant baptism and discouraged infant dedication throughout its history. Synods 2007 and 2012 affirmed the CRC's commitment to covenant baptism *not* because our Confessions say so, but because we are convicted that this practice is "faithfully obedient to the Word of God." Dr. Hielema reflected on several questions that he has been asking since serving on the study committee that presented the recommendations approved by Synod 2012, focused on how the CRC can hold in tension a Reformed understanding of infant baptism, sanctification, and hospitality through winsome teaching and spiritual sensitivity. Delegates engaged in small group conversations and the time was concluded with a question and answer time moderated by Rev. Cok.

XVII.Closing: Rev. Steenbergen offered a prayer, delegates sang the doxology, and classis was adjourned.

**Classis Huron will meet next in session on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.
at Palmerston CRC, 400 Whites Rd, Palmerston**

Agenda items are due January 10, 2020

Please forward agenda items to classishuron@gmail.com

Scheduled Meetings of Classis Huron:

DATE	LOCATION	REPORTS DUE	CHAIR	VICE-CHAIR
Wednesday Feb. 12, 2020	Palmerston CRC	January 10, 2020	Ralph Wigboldus	Martin Dam
Wednesday May 13, 2020	First 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

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

Classis Huron Pulpit Supply Schedule*

Date	Clinton CRC <i><u>clintoncrc@tcc.on.ca</u></i> (519) 482-5264	Trinity CRC (Goderich) <i><u>trinity.contactus@gmail.com</u></i> (519) 524-8003	Drayton CRC <i><u>secretary@draytoncrc.com</u></i> (519) 638-2032
Feb 23	Lucknow Community CRC	Blyth CRC	Stratford CRC
Mar 8	Orangeville CRC	Maranatha CRC (Cambridge)	Vanastra Community CRC
Mar 22	First CRC (Owen Sound)	River City Church (Cambridge)	Waterloo CRC
Apr 5**	Palmerston CRC	Collingwood CRC	Maitland River Community Church (Wingham)
Apr 19**	Stratford CRC	Exeter CRC	Acton CRC
May 10	Vanastra Community CRC	Water Street CRC (Guelph)	Blyth CRC
May 24	Waterloo CRC	New Life CRC (Guelph)	Maranatha CRC (Cambridge)
Jun 14	Maitland River Community Church (Wingham)	Community CRC (Kitchener)	River City Church (Cambridge)
Jun 28	Acton CRC	Bethel CRC (Listowel)	Collingwood CRC
Jul 12	Blyth CRC	Lucknow Community CRC	Exeter CRC
Jul 26	Maranatha CRC (Cambridge)	Orangeville CRC	Water Street CRC (Guelph)

*The expectation is that an ordained minister of the word or commissioned pastor from the congregation scheduled on the assigned date will preach the Word and preside over any scheduled sacraments. If a minister or commissioned pastor from the congregation scheduled is not available on the assigned date, the council of the congregation scheduled is responsible to ensure a replacement is found (it is recommended to try and find a congregation willing to switch dates).

**Due to Easter falling on the second Sunday of April, pulpit supply has been scheduled for the first and third Sundays in April.

Exhorters for Classis Huron (updated Feb 2020)

Name	Phone	Email	Home Church	Renewal Due
de Vries, Betsy	269-908-7496	eadv048@gmail.com	Drayton RCA	n/a (candidate)
Folkema, Frank	613-432-6022 (C)	frankfolkema@gmail.com	Palmerston CRC	Sept 2022
Hiemstra, Wilma	519-440-2416	jwhiemstra@gmail.com	Trinity CRC, Goderich	Feb 2020*
Kuiper, Nick	519-853-0122 (H) 416-580-2076 (C)	nickkuiper@sympatico.ca	Bethel CRC, Acton	May 2024
Mosterd, Tom	226-921-8124 (C)	mosterdtom@gmail.com	Stratford CRC	May 2020
Puklicz, Stan	519-240-5004 (C)	spucklicz@royceayr.com	Stratford CRC	Sept 2021
Tacoma, Jack	519-823-5851	jacktacoma@sympatico.ca	New Life CRC, Guelph	Sept 2021
Van Dorp, John	519-534-3528	glenmount@bmts.com	First CRC, Owen Sound	Feb 2022
Vogel, Steve	519-577-4442 (C)	vogel@wightman.ca	Bethel CRC, Listowel	May 2020
Williams, Jim	519-837-2925	jim.williams@primus.ca	First CRC, Guelph	Sept 2024
Zwart, John	519-496-5607 (C)	john.zwart@homeandproperty.com	Drayton CRC	Feb 2020*
Ordained Ministers and Commissioned Pastors				Status
Bork, Rev. Brian	519-497-6152	bbork41@gmail.com	Waterloo CRC	Waterloo Campus Ministry
Fisher, Rev. Ron	519-747-1029	ronald.fisher@rogers.com	Waterloo CRC	Retired
de Graaf, Rick	519-620-2241	rickdg6@gmail.com	Maranatha CRC, Cambridge	Commissioned Pastor
DeMoor, Sara	519-732-3517 (C)	sdemoor@uoguelph.ca	Guelph Campus Ministry	Commissioned Pastor/Guelph Campus Ministry
Eisen, Bart	519-955-4211 (C)	barteisen45@gmail.com	Bethel CRC, Listowel	Commissioned Pastor

*pending renewal

Sermon Evaluation: Wilma Hiemstra

In short, Ray and Vicki have no concerns about renewing Wilma Hiemstra's License to Exhort.

The sermon presented, from Revelation 3:7-13, was interesting and biblical. Wilma researched the text well and explained what she learned in understandable and engaging terms, often drawing on other portions of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, to put the passage into historical and theological context. She focused on verse 8, emphasizing that good news that the church belongs to Christ, and the door to the church is open.

Visual references to the rock and gates of Hades in Caesarea Phlippi, and the temple pillars that survived the earthquake in Philadelphia helped bring the text to life.

The sermon was meant to be (and for the most part was) both encouraging and challenging -- encouraging to churches who might feel weak and small, but who continue in faith, and challenging to all churches and Christians to listen to the Spirit, love those who persecute, pray for those who do not know Jesus, and remain faithful.

A growing edge for Wilma would be to look for more explicit connections between the world of the text and present world and local context. There were, to be sure, attempts, mostly in the form of questions. "What is the Spirit saying to you?" "Are we that kind of church?" And a recognition that like the members of the church in Philadelphia, we might also feel worn out, battle weary, and tired. But these contemporary connections lacked the specificity and colour of the ancient illustrations (the rock and pillar, mentioned above). This is, of course, the most difficult part of any sermon for any preacher – trying to show God's active presence and grace in our world today – yet, it is something worth striving for.

The good news was proclaimed in this sermon – our strength, and the church's strength, come from Jesus, our rock. And the door to Christ's church is open and beckoning.

Review Committee

Rev. Vicki Cok

Rev. Ray Vander Kooij

Sermon Evaluation: John Zwart

Paul De Weerd and I were tasked with job of evaluating John Zwart's latest sermon and were asked to give Classis some advice as to John Zwart's request for an extension of his license to exhort. But before getting into all this, we do have a question as to the need. Is there a need in Classis Huron for exhorters? On the surface, there seems to be a need for exhorters. Presently, Classis Huron has at least three vacant churches. Yet, when looking at John Zwart's own records as to his preaching schedule, he has only been preaching once or twice a year. That is not a lot. Now this may simply be a matter of availability on John's part. We don't know. Perhaps Classis can have a short discussion on the issue of need.

Getting back to John's ability to preach, both Paul and I believe that John is a good writer and preacher and, according to the evaluations we received on another sermon that John has preached (i.e. Psalm 46), people would agree. They expressed their appreciation for John as a preacher.

When it comes to dealing with Psalm 119, John's explanation of Psalm 119, its structure, its content, and its lyrical intentionality is beautifully done. He does well to bring the text to life and to draw the listener words its central theme: the importance of the Word of the Lord. In dealing with Psalm 119, John demonstrates his knowledge of God's Word and ability to parse out its significance.

Because Psalm 119 is such a big and thick text, we feel that it might have been better for John to limit his focus to Psalm 119 only and not bring in John 1. In other words, we wanted to hear more about the importance of the law of God and the need to be teachable when it comes to God's law. In a church that struggles with biblical literacy and in a world that finds itself in a moral crisis, a message on Psalm 119 is timely.

Finally, John begins the sermon with a very good introduction that invites people to listen. Unfortunately, in our humble opinion it is the wrong introduction for the text. The introduction wrestles with the question "Why am I a Christian?" whereas the text wrestles with the importance of the law of God. In Psalm 119, the Psalmist is expressing his love for the law of God and its importance for life. We encourage John to find another introduction for this sermon and another sermon for the introduction.

As Church Order Art. 43. b. mentions, "licensed exhorters should be gifted, well informed, consecrated, and able to edify churches." Paul and I think that John fulfills each of these requirements. As such we would recommend extending his licence.

Review Committee
Rev. Paul DeWeerd
Rev. Ed Jager

Diaconal Report

Diaconal Presentation: February 2020

In this presentation, John Schuurman will explore why not all experiences of being poor are the same. Many poor have (hidden) assets which allow them to persevere in spite of not having adequate financial resources; others seem completely overwhelmed and approach churches for relief (money) to get through another day. A better understanding of the various faces of “the poor” will allow deacons and churches to better understand the difference between helping the poor manage their poverty and helping them to overcome their poverty, and how to better respond to both those experiencing poverty and their requests for help.

John Schuurman grew up in Hamilton where he still lives with his wife Alyssa. He is doing a Masters in Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University, and is currently placed with Indwell (formerly Homestead Christian Care), developing affordable housing across Southern Ontario. He was drawn to explore issues of poverty while participating in Serve trips during youth group.

Please save the date:

The Classis Huron Diaconal Conference annual meeting is set for Thursday, March 26, 2020, at Drayton CRC at 7:30 pm. Tammy Heidbuurt of Diaconal Ministries Canada and Peter Bulthuis of World Renew will lead a workshop on “When Helping Hurts”. More information will be sent out at a later date.

Mary Blydorp

Classical Ministry Shares Summary Report

Classis Huron of the Christian Reformed Church as of December 31, 2019

Classical Ministry Shares Summary

Church	Expected	Received	Difference	% Given
Acton	19,096	18,781	-315	98.35
Blyth	13,020	13,000	-20	99.85
Cambridge Maranatha	23,594	23,594	0	100.00
Cambridge RC	-		0	-
Clinton	18,781	18,781	0	100.00
Collingwood	5,682	5,682	0	100.00
Drayton	22,568	22,568	0	100.00
Exeter	14,519	15,232	713	104.91
Goderich	11,363	11,363	0	100.00
Guelph NL	16,729	16,729	0	100.00
Guelph Water Street	13,257	13,160	-97	99.27
Kitchener Com.	39,691	40,323	632	101.59
Kitchener Journey	-		0	-
Listowel	25,725	25,800	75	100.29
Lucknow	7,181	7,181	0	100.00
Orangeville	9,075	9,076	1	100.01
Owen Sound	17,676	17,676	0	100.00
Palmerston	15,151	15,151	0	100.00
Stratford	22,963	17,991	-4,972	78.35
Vanastra	7,181	7,181	0	100.00
Waterloo	13,573	15,272	1,699	112.52
Wingham	5,050	5,050	0	100.00
Total	321,875	319,591	-2,284	99.29

Guelph Campus Ministry (GCM) Board of Directors Report

We celebrate a welcome year of looking forward and turning the page on a new chapter as a board and ministry. We began a visioning process with a retreat in January 2019, and the journey culminated in December 2019 with a new logo, refreshed mission and vision, ministry tag-line, and clarification of our core practices or values.



Guelph Campus Ministry

The new logo embodies our refreshed mission and vision.

The design speaks to GCM's community, rooted and growing in Christ. It's fresh, fluid and colourful (from left to right the leaves are: red, yellow/orange, green, purple), welcoming all students, staff and faculty to live joyfully and faithfully without fear and with hope.

Our Mission

To be a community where all who are curious about life and God wrestle with Scripture and are challenged to root their identity in Christ.

Guelph Campus Ministry welcomes students – believers and seekers – who are curious and thoughtful about Jesus in their lives. It is a place to belong that welcomes questions, encourages wonder and is willing to struggle together toward identity in Christ.

On the university campus, students engage with life and grow into adulthood. GCM acknowledges that Christ is present in all aspects of our lives, including academic life, and seeks to provide an environment where students can root themselves deeply in Christ and find their calling; where their gifts and talents can be identified and encouraged; and where they can find comfort and guidance in the midst of their struggles and disappointments.

GCM encourages Christians – students, staff and faculty – to be rooted in Christ, knowing that good fruit comes from deep roots.

Our Vision

Resilient graduates who know that Christ calls them to live faithfully without fear and with hope, stepping into the challenges of their time.

As followers of Christ, GCM declares with joy and trust that our world belongs to God. We strive to equip students to go out into our troubled world, living faithfully into the challenges of today, knowing they are called for times such as these to bear good fruit, and overcome despair and fear with love and hope – resisting the anxiety of today's culture and trusting in God.

We believe with confidence that the Lord is faithful, giving meaning to our days and hope to our years. Our future is secure because our world belongs to God.

Our Core Practices

- Honest reading of scripture
- Authentic and vulnerable conversations
- Loving and supporting of one another
- Sharing food and fellowship
- Praying together
- Enjoying and growing in Christian community
- Practicing cultural discernment
- Expressing gratitude to God, one another and our neighbours.

Our new chapter this year has also included the exploration of a new staffing model. Campus Minister Sara DeMoor has increased from 0.5FTE to 0.75FTE and we hired Alison Pyper to serve as a 0.25FTE Program & Planning Coordinator on a 1-year contract. This has proved to work well as a staffing model and Sara and Alison work well as a team, with different roles and complementary strengths. We will do a full review in the Spring and determine if we continue with this staffing model, and whether the Program & Planning Coordinator contract is extended or transitioned to a staff position.

We are also in the process of updating components of our GCM Handbook, and recently reviewed our Safe Campus Policy to update it, including reflecting new legislation.

The Board seeks to be Spirit-led in discerning and guarding the vision and mission of GCM, guiding and supporting the campus ministry staff, and ensuring sustainability.

We are deeply thankful for the faithful partnership and support of Classis Huron, including the many years that the treasurer of Classis Huron also served as treasurer of Guelph Campus Ministry, most recently John Bell. We are now served by our own treasurer, Trudy Mafe-van Halem, who has also joined our dedicated Board of Directors.

Guelph Campus Ministry Board of Directors:

Jennifer Adema (Safe Campus Coordinator), Ellen Kupp (Secretary & Staff Care), Trudy Mafe-van Halem (Treasurer), Pastor David Tigchelaar (Classis Huron and Supporting Church Connection & Vice-Chair), Pastor Ray Vander Kooij (Chair)

Home Missions Committee Report

The current members of this committee are Kevin teBrake (chair), Jane Vander Velden (reporter), John Vanderstoep, John Zwart, ex-officio member Joan Brady (Mission Catalyzer), and advisor Lesli van Milligen (Faith Formation and Connection rep).

Over the past 2019 year, the Home Missions Committee has had the privilege and opportunity to hire a part-time Mission Catalyzer. Joan Brady, from Exeter CRC, was hired in June, and Classis Huron is blessed to have her on this missional journey. Joan comes with much experience in justice and organizations, and she exhibits her love for the Lord and for his church. This is a shared position with Classis Huron and Resonate Global Missions. On average, Joan schedules 12 hours per week for Classis Huron and 4 hours per week for Resonate. Do not hesitate to connect with Joan at churonmissioncatalyzer@gmail.com.

Over the year, the CHHMC has had several discussions with established and newly-established church plants/sites. We are beginning the habit of “zooming” folks from these churches into our meetings to share hi-lites. We have been blessed hearing the stories from The Bridge (Fergus), The Journey (Kitchener), Vitalpoint Church (Exeter), and River City (Cambridge). Having said that, River City is no longer an established church plant, but a newly-established congregation, also having purchased their own facilities. Classis Huron can praise God for them and with them. Included in the Classis agenda is an opportunity in which Classis Huron can financially support River City with a First Facility Grant (see agenda item). At the Classis Huron February meeting we hope to have other reports, and also hear what God is doing through some of these ministries, and particularly from Ron Baker, lead pastor of Vitalpoint Church – London and Exeter site.

In 2019, Classis Huron had the privilege to support Darrell Bierman to attend a church planting congress in Montreal. Darrell shared with CHHMC some of the blessings of that conference. Do not hesitate to ask him about this. In January 2020, some members of the CHHMC team and others will have attended a Church Renewal Conference in Steinbach, Manitoba. A Resonate grant has been a blessing for this. The names of those attending are: Joan Brady (Exeter), Mechele teBrake (Exeter & Sanctuary London), John Vanderstoep (The Bridge, Fergus), Sid Couperus (First, Owen Sound), Ray VanderKooi (Bethel, Acton), Darrell Bierman (River City, Cambridge), James Burmaster (River City, Cambridge).

Speaking of church renewal and church planting, CHHMC is always open and willing to hear your dreams about church renewal and establishing new church plants. We have heard some dreams this year, and will be excited to see where the Lord leads in 2020.

For the 2020 year, we are also anticipating a name change from CHHMC to..... we will see. We are also seeking two or three more people on this committee. Please prayerfully consider this opportunity. We typically meet four to six times a year in Drayton. But we have changed this to having more meetings through Zoom video in the comfort of our favourite place. This saves time and driving costs.

Thank you for your prayers and encouragement, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to connect with any one of us.

On behalf of the CHHMC, Kevin teBrake

Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer Report

I have been blessed to be in the position of Classis Huron Mission Catalyzer for 6 months. I have been supported and encouraged by both the Classis Huron Home Missions Committee (CHHMC) and the staff and leadership of Resonate. I have also been welcomed by the Pastors and congregations I have reached out to in that time. For this I am thankful.

Much of my time has been spent in orientation, organizing my work and familiarizing myself with Classis and its members. I have been studying and prayerfully seeking God's direction in this role. My understanding of the role of Mission Catalyzer, of missional living/discipleship and vision casting has expanded and I have been intentional to discover the skills and resources required to serve in this way. As a denomination, the CRCNA, has many ministries, programs and leaders that will support the work of Classis Huron as we seek to be missional in our congregations, communities and the broader world.

Highlights of this initial reporting period include:

- Attending Inspire 2019 in Windsor in July
- Completing Transformational Coaching Training with New Leaf Network
- Ten visits with Classis Huron Pastors/congregations/church plants
- Development, facilitation and follow-up of discernment workshop with Lucknow CRC in partnership with Pastor and Council.
- Co-writing a successful grant for related homelessness ministry
Plans for the upcoming year include:
- Church Renewal Weekend in Steinbach, Manitoba along with other Resonate staff and Ontario Pastors
- Continued outreach within Classis Huron to complete introduction and orientation process.
- Acting as a resource to Classis Huron Churches as opportunities are presented.
- Hosting a Go Local (A journey to discover and join God in our neighborhoods) introductory workshop.

Save the date – Saturday April 04, 2020 – more details to follow.

As I continue this work that I am increasingly feeling called to, I request your prayers as I reach out to Classis members that there may be interaction points that we might together discover and live God's Mission in our churches, communities and beyond.

In His Name,

Joan Brady

Email: churonmissioncatalyzer@gmail.com

Cell: 226-237-3108

The Bridge Report

Greetings from The Bridge in Centre Wellington! We look ahead to 2020 as the beginning of our next five years. Over our first four years, we have learned much and developed habits, rhythms, learnings, and relationships which we believe God will use to grow his church in Centre Wellington. In addition, 2020 is the first year of our new economic model which will allow us to grow at the speed of relationship. We are a small, optimistic, group of Jesus-followers learning how God is at work in our lives and in our community.

We have developed what we call an “Up-In-Out” rhythm (probably better explained as our “Communion/Community/Commission” life) to our life on mission together. Each month we dedicate at least two Sundays to developing our UP relationship with God in Worship, a Sunday for our IN relationship with each other in Fellowship, and a Sunday for our OUT relationship with our neighbours in Service & Mission. In addition to our Sunday morning gatherings, we have weekly DNA group which is more about Discipleship, Hearing God, paying attention to our Kairos moments, growing character, abiding in Jesus, and developing a prayer life together. God is making us a community and as a community we are noticing and engaged in the lives of people around us.

As a church without programs, we look for experimental ways to learn and to love our neighbours. We continue to host a monthly meal for about 80 people in the community who live with either financial or relational poverty. In our neighbourhood, we hosted a Christmas gathering with about 45 people there. This winter we have a neighbourhood skating rink we set up (in our neighbour’s backyard :). While Carol and I seek to model living on mission in our neighbourhood for others in the Bridge, others are picking up these lessons and also coming alongside neighbours and coworkers. We often feel like salt, out of the saltshaker but not quite sure yet how we have flavoured those whom we have been in contact with. It is a hopeful but slow process, especially when genuinely being lived with the agenda of love and good news, and not simply the agenda of getting people into ‘our’ church.

While The Bridge does not have programs, we do have a number of Rhythms we live as we learn mission. For a couple of years now, we have been developing a relationship with a local seniors’ home, Caressant Care. One of our members is there every week visiting with people and regularly I am there preaching on Tuesday mornings, also leading their memorial services, and this year again The Bridge led their Christmas Eve service. While we don’t anticipate that residents of Caressant Care would become “members” of The Bridge, we do sense that if Jesus were to visit Centre Wellington that the folks at Caressant Care would be the kind of people he would visit.

One of the ways we know that God is at work in Centre Wellington is in the ways churches are looking for ways to work together. I continue to meet weekly with a group of pastors and we look for ways to help each other out. One of those pastors and his wife, together with Carol and I and a gay married couple from Elora, lead a group called Generous Space in our home. We have been given the privilege of not only hearing stories but growing to know and love LGBTQ people in our community who love Jesus but have been hurt by their perception of the church’s

rejection of them. It is a privilege to pray with, learn with, and genuinely become friends with these folks all with the purpose of following Jesus. On that, if you or your church would like some help developing understanding and a posture that would help seeking LGBTQ people in your area reach out to God through your church, let me know. I'd be glad to help.

As I have reported before, there are a number of ways in which we have been learning in these first years - Gravity Leadership, 3DM, ReLearn (MCEC), and Church Renewal. It is this last one that has been instrumental for us in developing our skill of listening to God and letting Jesus be our functional Lord in every area of our life. I am glad to report that at the end of January I will be going with 9 other CRC pastors and leaders to introduce them to what Church Renewal could do for their church and communities.

Finally, in September, I reported to you that Resonate had helpfully done a review of The Bridge in August and that I would have their full report soon. Three commendations they made to us are getting our attention: a) Putting in place what we need for us to thrive long term; b) Clarifying our Discipleship pathway; and c) Implementing our discipleship pathway to move people from becoming disciples to making disciples. While we began with an advisory team, we now have two teams -- one is external mostly and looks to take care of finances, administration, and charitable status (our administrative team) while the other is really The Bridge itself, the team of people learning to be on ministry and mission together.

Please pray for The Bridge, for Carol and I, for our administrative team, for collaboration between churches, for Caressant Care, for LGBTQ people in Centre Wellington (and in your own communities), and for the group of CRC pastors and leaders who will be going to the Church Renewal Conference in January. And, thank you for your prayers and financial support which make our life as your experiment possible.

Genuinely,

John Vanderstoep
thebridgecw@gmail.com

Recommendation re: River City First Facility Grant

The Classis Huron Home Missions Committee recommends that Classis Huron direct the Classis Huron Treasurer to disperse a First Facility Grant in the amount of \$100,000.00 to River City Church out of the Church Plant Fund.

Grounds:

- 1. There is a need.** After 17 years of doing “portable church” without a building of their own, River City is at the stage of growing and maturing where having a building is needed to grow into their “chapter 2” of not only being a people on mission but ministering from a ‘community hub’ in the heart of historic Cambridge. In the past two years, they have been on a journey of discernment to purchase the oldest church building in Cambridge, the First United Church at 15 Wellington Street, originally built in 1828 by the Associated Reformed Church. Together with the help of Trinity Centres (www.trinitycentres.org), River City Church will not only eventually own this building and it will be their permanent worship and ministry space, but it will also be a key community hub used by a host of other community-serving organizations. This is a huge stretch of faith for River City Church, but Classis Huron’s encouragement of approximately 4% of their total cost for the renovated building will be our part in making it possible.
- 2. Classis Huron has the funds.** With our historic support of the Classis Huron Church Plant Fund, Classis Huron has grown it to a healthy amount and even with the funding of this grant, an anticipation of being cash positive on December 31, 2020, with \$43,695 in this account after the grant has been paid. With \$108,695.00 in the account at the end of 2019, and \$35,000 budgeted to come in from Classical Ministry Shares, this \$100,000 grant would leave \$43,695 in the account at the end of 2020.
- 3. River City has long been counting on this support in this form.** In the era in which River City was planted, the denomination was employing an attractional model where the Sunday morning event functioned to draw people to church to hear the message, experience community, and engage God. In that era, churches were granted a first facility grant, usually of \$175,000.00 once they were at a point of buying or building their first building. In January 2003, when the CRCNA recognized it was no longer able at a denominational level to provide First Facility Grants, Rev. Al Mulder, head of Home Missions at that time, was urging Classes to set up such funds. While Classis Huron did not set up such a fund, we continued to budget \$35,000.00 per year into our church plant fund. In 2013, when River City requested support from Classis, for a discipleship staff person, it was understood at that time that the \$25,000.00 which was granted to River City and paid out in June 2014, would be a reduction from the \$125,000.00 first facility grant they would eventually be applying for. That time is now. While the documentation of these conversations is scant, the expectation is sincere and ought to be honoured. (see attached memo from Christian Reformed Home Missions) These funds would have strategic impact. Moving to 15 Wellington will allow River City’s ministry to grow in a number of ways: a) They will have a visible and dramatic presence in the downtown core; b) Volunteer time previously spent on set-up and take down can now be used more mission-critically; c) Fellowship opportunities

for worshippers including guests will be greatly enhanced as they no longer need to “leave the theatre before the next show.”; d) Integrated strategic mission partnerships will be developed with tenants who rent space in the building (all managed by Trinity Centres).

4. **River City is a great example of a church that has remained deeply engaged in Classis and Denomination.** Darrell and others from River City have regularly attended Classis, served on Synodical Committees, been delegated to Synod, and River City took the unusual but laudable step when seeking status as a formally ‘organized’ church of pointing out to us the important conversation we should have of their practice of both infant baptism and infant dedication. They are a team player par excellence and a great example of what our church plants can be. We ought to water plants that grow and flourish. This is about capacity building for us as a Classis.
5. **This is not precedent-setting** for our other church plants who have not had this expectation. While not technically a ground, we list it here so that it is sure to be known. None of the other church plants of Classis Huron have expressed either a need for or a founding expectation of a first-facility grant. This grant is unique to River City both because of the era in which they were planted and because of the model of church that they are.

Background:

- a) Take the time to go to www.trinitycentres.org to understand the model of church ownership and utilization which River City is pursuing, a model that is just the second of its kind in Canada but that we will likely see more of in the future. Note the affirmation of the historic church and the pursuit of contemporary mission.
- b) 15 Wellington Street, Cambridge, the building they have bought, was sold at a price of \$1,525,000.00 and there is an anticipated \$800,000.00 in renovations plus a contingency of approximately \$175,000.00. Both John Mohle (Palmerston CRC, Wellington Construction) and Phil Schiedel (Kitchener Community CRC, Schiedel Construction) have advised on the project. The anticipated renovations will allow the building to have an “Ancient Future” look and will facilitate updating of accessibility. The renovated building cost is estimated therefore to be \$2,500,000.00 of which our donated First Facility Grant of \$100,000.00 will be 4%.
- c) The \$35,000.00 which Classis Huron annually budgets to go into the Church Plant Fund is for the initiation of new church plants. All of that initiation funding is not given at the very beginning and Classis has used these funds to nurture along church plants that had already been started (such as River City and The Journey received in 2014, a decade after they had each begun). With this First Facility Grant of \$100,000.00 to River City in 2020, Classis Huron can anticipate that the 2020 year end balance (minus interest) in this fund will be \$43,695.00.

Safe Church Team Report

Mandate: The Classis Huron Safe Church Team is mandated to:

- 1. To function as an ART (Abuse Response Team) according to synodical guidelines.*
- 2. To provide comprehensive and ongoing education.*
- 3. To provide support to our churches in the prevention of, and response to abuse.*

To fulfil such a mandate, your Classical Safe Church Team meets 3-times per year in order to share information, plan for the annual conference, and help any local Safe Church Team or congregation if the need arises.

We are pleased that Stratford CRC has appointed Henri Van Drunen as an interim rep. Henry served on Classis Huron Safe Church committee previously for many years and has much experience with abuse related issues. The Collingwood CRC is actively looking for a committee rep.

Abuse is on-going as evidenced by the issues of sexual harassment and assault which have been much in the news over the last year. Victims have been empowered to tell their stories and we know that the church is not immune from such realities. You are invited to read some stories from the CRC at: <https://network.crcna.org/safe-church/sos-sharing-our-stories>

In the face of it all we need to continue to ask ourselves some questions like: Would victims feel safe to come forward with a story in your congregation? Would your council know what to do if someone were to come forward with a story of “me too”? If you wonder how to respond we would encourage you to <https://www.crcna.org/SafeChurch> and follow the links to “Responding to Abuse—A Toolkit for Churches.”

Your classical team has organized the next Annual Interclassis Safe Church Conference scheduled for March 7, 2020 at the Waterloo CRC. The day will begin with a presentation by WAYVE—a group of youth from across Kitchener-Waterloo who have developed and will deliver a presentation on issues confronting youth today. Other presenters will include: Lesli Smith (a lawyer) on the topic of harassment in the church; John VanPelt (Woodland Christian High principal) on the issues raised by the WAYVE presentation; Yvonne Lammers on “criminal sexual history and involvement in the church”; Becca Sawyer (Generous Spaces) on the ways in which churches harm LGBTQ+ members and practical steps to change that; Bonnie Nicholas (CRCNA—Safe Church) on walking along side abused members; Carol Penner (Conrad Grebel University College) on abuse and forgiveness. It is a full day of learning and being stretched. Come and join us!

Synod 2019 acted on the report from the taskforce addressing the issue of the abuse of power at every level in the CRCNA. The Safe Church Team is grateful that Classis has allowed for some time at this meeting to discuss the approved recommendations, since they have an impact on classis.

We responded to a number of calls and requests from churches asking for advice/direction on how to deal with abuse related matters.

Atie Ott travelled to Charlottetown, PEI to facilitate a weekend Advisory Panel Process Training for the leadership of the CRC churches in PEI and Nova Scotia.

In addition, several presentations/trainings were held in churches of Classis Huron.

We have available books and videos for use either on a personal level or to be used as training opportunities for your churches/committees.

The Safe Church Team encourages congregations to ask the team for resources, training and advice on any safe church matters.

Prepared by:
Carel Geleynse
Atie Ott

Synod 2019 Acts on Addressing Abuse of Power in the CRCNA

(Notes taken from the Network Article by Safe Church)

In 2018, synod considered an overture from an individual member, Bev Sterk concerning the abuse of power she had experienced in her own classis. As a result of that overture Synod 2018 adopted a variety of motions to address abuse in the CRC. One of the major adoptions of that synod 2018 was *"to appoint a small team to bring recommendations through the Council of Delegates to Synod 2019 regarding how the CRCNA can best address the patterns of abuse of power at all levels of the denomination."*

The team to Address the Patterns of Abuse of Power finished their report, the Council of Delegates approved it and it was sent to Synod 2019. (The full report is the supplement to the 2019 Synod agenda pages 50-78). Over the coming years there will be a direct impact on pastors, churches and classis.

Synod 2019 Adoptions

1. Training of pastors

That synod mandate the Council of Delegates to form a committee to develop a training program on abuse of power. The committee shall include members from the offices of Candidacy, Pastor Church Resources, Safe Church Ministry, Calvin Theological Seminary, and Calvin College (because of available expertise). The training program shall:

- be a requirement for all persons entering vocational ministry in the CRC.
- focus on dynamics of power within the variety of pastoral relationships, boundaries, tools for positive use of power and influence, and tools for preventing harmful use of power and influence.
- be widely available and presented as enabling effective ministry (not as an impediment to entering ministry).
- take into account the cultural diversity within CRC churches.

2. Code of conduct

That synod mandate the committee appointed (see point 1) to draft a code of conduct for all employed ministry staff within the CRC. The draft code of conduct will be presented to Synod 2020 for approval and with recommendations for implementation for the denomination, classes, and churches.

3. Prevention of abuse in CRCNA offices

That synod mandate the Council of Delegates to review the adequacy of the training provided to CRCNA staff, the adequacy of the provisions for support to a complainant, and mechanisms to avoid potential conflicts of interest in the process for dealing with complaints. A review should be informed by careful listening to persons who found the processes helpful and persons who did not.

4. Training at classis and local levels

That synod encourage all classes to develop a strategy to train officebearers and key church leaders to be alert to power dynamics within the communities they serve and to be equipped to prevent abuse of power. The goal of the strategy is to ensure that all officebearers receive initial training and refreshment through ongoing educational initiatives. An effective strategy will include the following:

- appropriate training resources
- reasonable time allocation for training
- acknowledgment and monitoring of completion of training

That synod encourage all classes to monitor implementation of the training strategy and to consider adopting policies to include completion of training and safe church policies in the regular review of credentials or as a requirement for being seated at a classis meeting.

That synod mandate the executive director to develop, in cooperation with Safe Church Ministry, Pastor Church Resources, Calvin College, and others, a resource toolkit for training officebearers and leaders, readily accessible through the CRC website and Faith Alive Christian Resources.

5. Strengthening Safe Church Ministry

That synod mandate the executive director to oversee the development of appropriate measures for responding effectively to emotional abuse. Such measures will include definition, inclusion in relevant CRC policies, and appropriate responses through restorative practices and the safe church advisory panel process.

That synod mandate the executive director to oversee a review of the adequacy of safe church policies for follow-up in reported cases that involve church leaders. Findings and actions taken by the executive director shall be reported to the Council of Delegates to ensure that the CRCNA is exercising due diligence to prevent repeat occurrences or transfer of abusive leaders to other churches. The review shall consider best practices in church abuse ministry.

That synod mandate the Council of Delegates to examine in detail the potential for conflicts of interest in current safe church procedures and to evaluate the need for and benefits of using outside experts to deal with situations that have a high potential for conflicts of interest.

6. Policy on non-disclosure agreements

That synod direct the executive director to do the following:

- review the history of the use of nondisclosure agreements within the CRCNA to draw learnings from it, be transparent about its frequency, and contribute to greater public accountability
- develop a policy with criteria for the use of NDAs that limits their use to cases in which it is clearly in the best interests of the victim and the church and not acceptable when solely motivated by protection of the reputation of the church and its leaders. The policy should include a provision for some form of review by an independent party before final signature by the two main parties.

- develop good practices and protocols on the use of NDAs for distribution to classes and councils when faced with situations that might lead to the use of a nondisclosure agreement
- develop a reporting and accountability mechanism to monitor practices going forward

7. Funds for counseling services

That synod encourage all classes to take measures to ensure that survivors of abuse within their classis have access to appropriate counseling services.

That the annual report of each classis for the CRC Yearbook include information about a counseling fund or other arrangements to ensure access to counseling services for abuse survivors.

8. Abuse prevention resources for culturally diverse churches

That synod mandate the executive director to give a high priority to providing information about existing policies and mechanisms for abuse prevention and response in forms that use the language, examples, and styles of learning that are culturally appropriate for all communities including but not limited to the Korean, Latino, Chinese, African American, and Indigenous communities, through Safe Church Ministry and Pastor Church Resources. In each context, the tools shall be developed with input from members of the community to ensure they will be accessible and useful for members of the community.

9. Recordkeeping

That synod mandate the Council of Delegates and executive director to put in place a system of recordkeeping of cases that come to the attention of any level of church authority, to allow for the analysis of patterns and trends over time, without compromising the confidentiality of individual persons. Collection of data should include some record of responses and outcomes, as well as reporting of incidents.

10. Creating a culture that prevents abuse of power That synod affirm the following as core values for the culture within the CRC:

- mutual respect for every person as created by God and equally responsible to respond to God's call to use their gifts for God's mission in the world, including the ongoing work of building God's church
- an understanding of servant leadership that emphasizes mutual submission as a corrective to the hierarchical tendencies within our culture
- mutual accountability through checks and balances built into governing structures

That synod affirm the importance of care in the use of language within church assemblies, with attention to the impact of language that harms the ability of others to fully exercise their gifts and calling.

That synod refer this report to the Classis Renewal Advisory Group to consider how the role of regional pastors and church visitors might be strengthened to foster a respectful culture and

support churches with early assistance in situations that may give rise to concerns about abuse of power.

That synod mandate the Council of Delegates to establish a team that would act as a guardian of our commitment to foster a culture characterized by respect for all and mutual service. Consideration should be guided by the following features, which draw on good practices in other sectors of society for preventing and responding to all forms of abuse of power:

- The mandate would include the use of a range of measures designed to allow early intervention in response to complaints, including mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative justice tools.
- The mandate would include concerns about abuse of power that may cross lines between the denomination, classes, and individual churches. The team might serve an “ombudsperson” role within the internal human resources system and for cases that cross jurisdictions, without violating CRC governance of the local church by the local council.
- Position holders outside the “chain of command” within the established organizational and management structure would help to foster confidence because they are “independent” but accountable through reporting to the Council of Delegates and through their ability to bring issues to the attention of the Council of Delegates if needed.
- The role of the team would be reviewed after three years for effectiveness, as part of the follow-up to this report.

11. Implementation

That synod mandate the Council of Delegates to ensure implementation by

- monitoring progress at each meeting of the COD.
- making necessary adjustments in specific plans.
- reporting to synod each year on progress made toward specific objectives and toward the general goal of creating a culture in which abuse of power is not tolerated and any incidents are dealt with in a way that contributes to the healing of broken relationships.

ECCLESIASTICAL MATTERS

OF CLASSIS HURON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

REQUESTS FROM CHURCHES
CHURCH COUNSELLORS
CHURCH VISITORS
MENTORS & MENTEES
REGIONAL PASTORS
SYNODICAL DELEGATES

Overture 1: Approve the Retirement of Rev. Albert Carel Geleynse

In recognition of 38 years of faithful ministry in Port Perry, Charlottetown, Flamborough, Port-au-Prince, Chilliwack, and Kitchener, the council of Community Christian Reformed Church (Kitchener) recommends that Classis Huron approve the retirement of Rev. Albert Carel Geleynse for May 31, 2020, and celebrate this at Classis with a time of prayer and thanksgiving.

Alesha Hoekstra
Clerk of Council

Overture 2: Have a conversation about congregational practices around baptism and dedication.

Background

In response to the recommendations of the Classical Guidance Team,¹ Classis Huron hosted Drs. Lyle Bierma and Syd Hielema to lead in a conversation about covenant baptism and infant dedication.² In this conversation, delegates to Classis were given a powerful reminder of our Reformed identity, along with a challenge to create a hospitable place for people of different backgrounds who may still be growing in their understanding and acceptance of confessional Reformed identity.

It is our desire to continue this conversation, and in our opinion the clear next step is to practice this hospitality ourselves by creating space at a classis meeting for delegates to share the stories of their congregations around infant baptism and dedication. Part of the difficulty in this conversation is that we have not talked openly as churches in fellowship with one another about our practices and learnings. We have not heard each other's stories, we do not know each other's practices, and we have not taken a posture of learning from one another.

It is our conviction that an open conversation in a humble posture of sharing and mutual learning could be a powerful way of helping us better understand one another and together discern a way forward on this issue that pleases the Holy Spirit. It is in that spirit that we offer the following overture.

Overture

The council of Community Christian Reformed Church (Kitchener) recommends 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.

Alesha Hoekstra
Clerk of Council

¹ cf. February 2019 Agenda Package, p.24.

² A video recording of this conversation is posted on the Classis Huron website (<http://www.classishuron.ca/events/september182019meetingvideo>).

Report for Classis Huron on Church Visit to Stratford CRC - Tuesday December 3rd, 2019

We were warmly welcomed as church visitors. The meeting began with a reading from Colossians 3:12 and prayer. After the minutes from several previous meetings were read aloud the floor was handed to Church Visitor Andrew de Gelder. Each person in the room introduced themselves and explained briefly their role at Stratford CRC. Andrew spoke about what church visitation is and proceeded with the visit. There were no members from the congregation who wished to speak with the church visitors.

This is an active congregation with many activities and thriving programs such as GEMS, Cadets, Friendship, GriefShare, a Men's Bible Study, and more. One notable ministry this church has is a community meal which is held every other week and hosts between 60 and 100 people each time. Stratford CRC's building was built in 2005 and is at capacity; the congregation is exploring options for dealing with the need for more space. The nursery is full, high school classes are well-attended, and infant baptisms are a regular occurrence. Stratford CRC strongly supports Christian day school education.

Several innovative practices have been helpful in the ministry of this church. One of these is the creation of the position of "deaconess" several years ago which allows women to use their gifts in ministry without becoming council members. Another is the recent invention of a membership category entitled "deep inactive." This category allows office bearers to focus more on members who actually desire pastoral care while keeping the door open for wayward members who may return in time.

Worship is blended and there is a wide range of music styles represented. Pastor Martin Dam's preaching is appreciated by the congregation and he is not afraid to tackle difficult subjects from the pulpit. The morning service has about 350 people and the evening service 50-100. There is a committee that evaluates the pastors' sermons and Pastor Martin recently went through an extensive formal evaluation. Currently Stratford CRC does not have a sabbatical policy; however it was mentioned that upon receiving the call Pastor Martin received a 2 month period of refreshment before beginning full-time ministry.

Stratford CRC is a generous congregation that consistently meets its budget and often has a surplus. Yet some in the congregation have caught the vision for living generously more than others. Pastor Martin recently gave a sermon called "Giving From the Heart." This church is incorporated. The books are reviewed but a full audit is not done.

Council members indicated that they were excited about the willingness of the members to volunteer for various positions in the church. There is harmony in the church and it appears that doing ministry as a conservative congregation within a more diverse denomination is bearing fruit. Their greatest challenge at the moment is how to deal with the numerical growth that they have been blessed with. A final comment for Classis Huron from one of the office bearers is that Stratford CRC desires to continue to have the freedom to "do their own thing" in a way that works for their ministry context. Church Visitor Ralph Drost closed in prayer.

Humbly submitted, Church Visitors Andrew de Gelder (Pastor) and Ralph Drost (Elder)

COMMUNICATIONS

TO CLASSIS HURON OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

PETER BULHUIS, WORLD RENEW
ROBERT GRAHAM, REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
DARREN ROORDA, CRCNA
RON DEVRIES, FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES

Classis Huron Report

Submitted by Peter Bulthuis, Canadian Director of Church and Community Engagement

Thank you, brothers and sisters of Classis Huron, for your churches' support of the work of World Renew. Without your prayers, and your donations of time, talents and treasure, there would be many communities around the world that would have less, and feel less than now. You have walked alongside folks to listen, encourage and embolden. During this fiscal year (since July 1), the churches in this classis have given \$158,541.95 for the work of World Renew.

Let me illustrate something of the impact you have made:

World Renew ministered to a total of 918,663 participants worldwide who experienced powerful change in their lives in 2019.

- 241,154 participants changed their story through World Renew's community development programs.
- World Renew helped 677,509 participants recover from an international disaster.
- With your support, World Renew helped 206 refugees resettle in Canada.
- 258 churches in the U.S. and Canada were involved in justice activities with World Renew.
- 511 global volunteers served others in North America and around the world.
- 1,330 communities worldwide joined World Renew through a local church or outreach ministry
- World Renew placed 12 international relief managers in Bangladesh, Honduras, Malawi, Madagascar, or Niger.
- 256 North American congregations were engaged in partnerships with churches internationally.
- 1,900 Free A Family® donors gave US \$719,683, helping to free 2,221 families from poverty.
- Last year, DRS placed 2,784 volunteers from 36 denominations on disaster sites, and repaired or rebuilt 290 damaged homes, giving 243,196 hours of their time to serve others.

A. General Updates:

There are quite a few general updates that are important here:

In order for World Renew to continue to its work well, efficiently and effectively in a continually changing environment (both in North America and around the world), there have been ongoing transition in the Burlington and the Grand Rapids offices.

- The website is undergoing changes, one of which is that there is a Canadian and an American iteration.
- We are re-imagining our interactions with the churches to ensure the best possible connections, the best possible responses and the best engagement, supporting both churches, participants and World Renew.
- The same with interactions with donors; striving for responsive engagement.

- in order to support these changes in the way we do things, several staff positions have been added to both the US and Canadian World Renew offices.
- Diaconal Ministries Canada, and World Renew Canada are continuing to work together better, sharing resources, plans and passion so that the churches are better served.

B. Upcoming Offering Dates

The CRC in North America continues to have the tradition of designating certain Sundays throughout the year for specific offerings, for specific agencies of the CRCNA (among other organizations). World Renew receives no member shares; all the funds used to support participants across the world, are received from donors, like your churches. That being the case, let me recommend these specific offering dates to you congregations:

1. **March 8: Canadian Foodgrains Bank:** Funds are used to give food security to 10s of 1000s of people annually.
2. **March 29: Refugee Resettlement:** The World Renew program housed in the CDN office, supports churches and community groups sponsoring refugees fleeing from ravaged regions of the world.
3. **May 10: Maternal, Newborn and Child Health:** World Renew works with families to support pregnant mothers, and the first 1000 days of a child's life.

C. Community Development: Stories of Transformation

Dennis DeGroot, a World Renew board member from British Columbia, writes an amazing story about his experience of being part of a regular partnership review in Uganda. Here are a few excerpts:

Agnes Atim and her husband Moses Ogwang know what Micah 4:4 is all about in a very practical way. For, "Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid..." In fact if they had 700 children rather than the ten they do have, each would be able to sit under his or her own orange tree and enjoy the fruit of their labors. This family has worked hard to achieve the kind of shalom that Micah was talking about. They have turned their 12 acre farm into a little piece of paradise and they no longer live in the fear that comes with poverty. Everywhere you look, something is blooming, growing, ripening, drying, and giving this family the security they longed for. With the help of World Renew training in

Conservation Agriculture and a Village Savings and Loan program, life looks very different today. But the training not only impacted their food security it impacted their relationship.

This was a truly beautiful experience; to hear these men and women speak with confidence about how saving money was not part of their previous experience and they always felt vulnerable to the challenges of everyday life, money for school fees, medications or seeds for next year's crops was always a challenge. The savings and loan program changed all of that. They were themselves amazed at how the funds grew to levels previously unimagined; a loaves and fishes miracle of sorts.

Wives and husbands spoke shyly, but honestly about how prior to training there was often discord in the family whereas now decisions about money were made together. We were proudly shown a photo of a previous WR intervention of goats. A number of families received goats which also, ‘miraculously’ multiplied into herds of goats, providing protein and milk. There was so much pride and a feeling of empowerment for their own lives that emanated from the happy group, a sense of hope for the future.

We then drove to various family compounds to get closer to what we had heard about. Agnes and Moses’ family compound exudes peace. Though homes are simple, the entire acreage was a bounty of fruits and vegetables: bananas, guavas, and 700 orange trees. Cassava, amaranth, Irish potatoes, and ground nuts. The family now exports their orange crop into Kenya; not just a farm but a business. Moses said that he could never have imagined a million shillings. That is now a reality for the family who work the land together when the children are home from school.

The day was coming to an end but we could well imagine what it might be like at this family farm to sit in the shade of an orange tree as the sun set, to sit in peace and unafraid, husband and wife together, talking about the day’s work, what needed doing tomorrow, about their children’s schooling and the good prices for oranges.

D. Disaster Response

Update International:

We want you to see the global impact of the work God accomplishes through World Renew: Since July, 2019, we have been led to work in 19 countries impacting 290,000 people. God has resourced World Renew to give \$1.13M USD to projects funded through the US, and \$2.45M CDN to projects funded through Canada, partnering with over 29 implementing partners. And that’s just from July, 2019 through the end of the calendar year. The disasters are: storms, drought, earthquakes, floods, and conflicts.

Update Domestic: Canada and US:

A simple, quick statistic: World Renew’s Disaster Response Service (DRS) is responding by house-building, needs assessment and personal support in areas where **eight different disasters** impacted communities across North America.

E. Refugee Settlement Activities:

These statistics are for Jan. 1, 2019 – Dec. 5, 2019, and *they’re awesome!* World Renew is a SAH (*Sponsorship Agreement Holder*) and was given a total of 209 “Private sponsorship of Refugees” spaces this year, the most ever.

This is a listing of the applications submitted:

PSR (Private Sponsorship of Refugees) Cases

- **CRCs** = 31 CRCs have submitted 55 applications representing 133 refugees
- **Beyond CRCs** = 15 BCRC’s submitted 24 applications representing 60 refugees
- **Community Sponsors (CS)** = 4 CS’s submitted 15 applications representing 16 refugees

BVOR (Blended Visa Office Referred) Cases

- **CRCs** = 4 CRCs submitted 8 applications representing 16 persons refugees
In-Canada JAS (Joint Assistance Sponsorship) Case

- **CRCs** = 3 CRCs partnered together to submit 1 application for 1 refugee
Arrivals Statistics

- 34 CRCs have welcomed 147 refugees.

- Beyond CRCs & Community Sponsors have welcomed 77 refugees.

Total = 224 refugees welcomed, from 13 countries.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! And thank you to the churches across Canada for *welcoming the stranger*.

F. What else can the people and the churches of Classis Huron do?

May I suggest one, most powerful bridge: prayer. Pray for:

-trauma healing in Nigeria,

-families in Uganda,

-appropriate disaster responses in North America,

-wisdom and thoughtfulness in gender relations.

Do poke around the website; and then share the website with one person who doesn't know about World Renew. She/he will be grateful you did!

Blessings,

Peter Bulthuis, Director, Church and Community Engagement Canada

Redeemer University College Report to Classis Huron of the Christian Reformed Church

As the first semester of 2019 draws to a close, Redeemer is pleased to see the positive impact that tuition and fee restructuring has had on enrolment. A recent student expressed her gratitude in being able to attend this fall. “My mom works part-time, and my dad runs a non-profit, so sending four girls to university has become a difficult task for them. The only reason I was able to come to Redeemer was because of the drop in tuition. I’m here because I want to open a Christian women’s shelter in my hometown. This is the only school that would allow me to do Non-Profit Management in hand with Social Work. It has been a lot of work, but it is going to be so worth it!”

February 2020 will feature Gratitude Week once again where students thank a large community of donors who support Redeemer. Redeemer students are thankful for these generous contributions that make their Christian university education possible.

The campus theme for this year is “Come and See” from John 1:39, where Jesus calls to the disciples to see where he lives and who he is. Faculty, staff, and students have been blessed by the chapel services, held every Wednesday during the year, centred around this theme led by Rev. Josiah Bokma and many guest speakers.

Redeemer is blessed with a faithful faculty and staff, and this fall, we were pleased to welcome Kevin Johnson as the new Dean of Students and June Hulbert as the Associate Vice President-Human Resources. These are key roles as members of the leadership team that will help Redeemer’s mission move forward in God’s service.

This fall, Dr. Jim Vanderwoerd, Professor of Social Work, spoke on “Sex After the Revolution: Called to be Faithfully Comprehensible” for Redeemer’s bi-annual Pastor Professor Exchange. There was a time for questions and discussion following the talk, considering ways to bring these conversations back to churches. This winter, the Pastor Professor Exchange will run on February 26, 2020 with Dr. David Beldman, Associate Professor of Religion and Theology, speaking on “Reading Judges for the 21st Century.” Redeemer looks forward to hosting this event and connecting with pastors in the surrounding community.

For the past two years, Redeemer has been denied Canada Summer Jobs program funding. Redeemer has two cases before the Federal Court of Canada with respect to these denials. Please pray for those involved and for a timely and just resolution of these cases.

As the Re Campaign ends, and we see all that has been accomplished through it, we look forward to Redeemer’s new strategic plan which will be announced in early 2020. Redeemer is blessed and grateful for a community of believers who support the mission of preparing the next generation of Christians to bring the gospel’s transformative power to all kinds of careers and vocations. Your contribution through offerings and ministry shares is vital in keeping Redeemer an excellent liberal arts and sciences university that is unabashedly Christ-centred. May God’s blessings be evident in your work with your church families and in your broader community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Graham

Classis Letter

Outcomes of the National Gathering: I am just so thankful for the ways in which the National Gathering in Edmonton have created changes in attitudes, practices and planning in a variety of ways across Canada. Each classes' response has been different but they range from a concentration on discipleship, evangelism, reconciliation or spiritual practices within classis to a plan to re-write the classis ministry plan.

Finances: As of the writing of this report, the giving in the Canadian Christian Reformed Church has maintained a steady state year over year. We are grateful for this faithfulness as it allows our collective ministry to be extended through places such as *The Centre for Public Dialogue* but also to spend extra effort on important conversations about the future of missions and church planting from coast to coast. Together with the considerations of ongoing support for the local church, when financial giving is strong, we can do more together. If you are a church whose financial giving needs support locally, let us help you with that. Reach out to myself or Peter Elgersma for assistance.

New Pastors to Canada Gathering – On January 20-22 we will be hosting a gathering for new lead pastors in Canada. This will be the third time we have hosted this bi-annual gathering and with approximately 10-15 pastors that attend, this has been a wonderful way to continue in creating alignment and effectiveness across the denomination in Canada. When we all work together in a direction that both strengthens our local expressions and extends the collective ministries we share such as World Renew, Resonate or our Social Justice impact...we become increasingly Christ-like as an institution.

Stated Clerks across Canada – January will also mark one of our regular meetings with Stated Clerks; this time by video. These meetings are always good for reconnecting and resourcing especially in a time when several of our Stated Clerks are new-ish to the job. I am so pleased with the collaboration I see amongst them and so very happy to play a part in fostering it. One of our key issues in January 2020 is to consider insurance coverage for classes across Canada.

Calvin Seminary – Introducing a new servant in Canada – Calvin seminary is hosting a new position through the Canadian side of the church. Allow me to introduce you to him: His name is Pastor Shawn Brix and he most recently pastored in Peterborough, Ontario

- He graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) in 1995 and has since served congregations in Acton, Burlington, and Peterborough, Ontario.

- As the Canadian Church Relations Liaison, he is tasked with building and strengthening bridges between CTS and Canadian CRC churches and ministries.

In Shawn's own words: "I hope to help identify and develop ministry leaders, provide continuing education opportunities for pastors and other church leaders, and help strengthen local churches by extending the resources and tools CTS has to offer."

Update on the Bridge App – Thank you to all of you who have been part of the Bridge App covenantal experiment. It has gone so well that [WayBase](http://WayBase.com) (waybase.com) has determined it to be the app of choice for their national initiative that will also go international at some point. WayBase' goal through the initiative is to connect ALL Christian charities across Canada for impact and influence. We are happy to be a key part in it and it will mean some great advantages for CRC churches. Stay tuned.

As well, we are on the cusp of finally launching automatic checking in the 'Give' function. The terms and conditions will be much more financially affordable than other key competitors such as Tithely. In addition, we as the CRC have something to financially gain as churches sign up.

Including additional functionality with 'Give', other features, and more key changes from Waybase, I am excited about what the next phase will bring!

Ecumenical Grants – I have been so delighted in the participation so far! There have been four grants awarded thus far. Below are churches that have received the awards and the example of what they are using the funding for.

1. Hope Fellowship in Courtice, Ontario is working through a prayer campaign with other local churches and with Dunamis.
2. Discovery, Bowmanville, ON, is planning a "Church in the Park" event.
3. EastHill Community, in Vernon BC is looking at some options including a reconciliation program across churches.
4. New Westminster, BC, is using the funding for number of events with local congregations, as described in the testimonial below:

Since October 2018, New Westminster CRC, together with House for All Nations Church (an Indonesian Mennonite Brethren congregation), Nanoom (a Korean Christian gathering) and people from other neighbouring congregations have been gathering in an ecumenical initiative called "Multicultural Worship Night" - a monthly worship of people from various denominational and ethnic/cultural backgrounds. We intentionally worship and pray in different languages and through different cultural expressions to foster a multicultural, multi-congregational community in Christ.

With the grant we have received from EIRC, we were able to have a service in June that included what we called "Community Celebration Dinner" just before we took a summer break. As an ecumenical/multicultural gathering, having a meal together was a great blessing and enhanced this ministry. The grant helped us with the cost of food and promotion. We had about 80 people join us that night.

Our focus so far has been getting to know each other, and the emphasis was on the unity of the church in Christ and the diversity in the family of God. Starting the fall, the mission of God and how we together can reach out to our neighbours will be an important theme for our upcoming gatherings.

The grant application process for 2019-2020 has begun and eligible Canadian CRC congregations can apply by sending an email to Peter Elgersma at pelgersma@crcna.org.

Ministry Share Reimagined: Many of our classes are trying to discern what they might do given the influx of change they are expecting around the “*Ministry Share Re-Imagined*” thrust you have heard about starting from Synod 2019. At this point, our Canada Corp chair has determined that the issue of this process will be visited by the Canada Corp directors in its February board meetings in an effort to discern its application on all levels for the Canadian context. Stay tuned for more following the Canada Corp meetings held in late February.

Partners and their resources: The ecumenical work we do as a church can be valuable on a local scale. I am constantly asking and imploring entities like the Canadian Council of Christian Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to work in such a way that there is payoff for the local scene. Here are their two web links for you so that you might find material from them ranging from scientific research, bible studies, worship material for the Week of Christian Unity and others.

A special thanks to many CRC volunteers who serve in a variety of ecumenical roles. See [here](#) for complete description. Feel free to reach out to any of them in regards to questions about how their ministry efforts in these settings can serve you in your church setting.

Canadian Council of Churches: <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/>

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada: <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/>

Also note our partnership with the 4 C's: Canadian Council of Christian Charities which can be a key help for so many administrative matters at a church level: <https://www.cccc.org/>

New Canadian staff for Disability Concerns and Safe Church: Disability Concerns serves all of the Christian Reformed churches with 1.6 FTE staff. We multiply the efforts of our small staff through several means: recruiting and equipping volunteer disability advocates in CRC churches and classes, working closely with RCA Disability Concerns ministry, and creating and curating print and online resources. With a recent staff transition, it's a good time to introduce our Canadian staff. She can be reached at bjones@crcna.org.

“Becky Jones is excited to begin work with Safe Church and Disability Concerns at the Burlington office. She has two girls who are both attending high school – one just starting, one just ending. Becky has been working as the Volunteer Coordinator at the Art Gallery of Burlington and brings a passion for art with her as she transitions to this new role. Before being the Volunteer Coordinator, she practiced as an art therapist, working with people with mental health issues and cognitive delays. Becky is currently enrolled at Martin Luther University

College –Wilfrid Laurier, working towards her Master of Arts in theology, spiritual care and psychotherapy.”

Last but not least: Please do not hesitate to reach out to any CRC staff person in Canada as there is so much support you in for your local context. We would love to serve you to create impact and health! Click [here](#) for a full directory listing of all the ministry in Canada. Print it out for the church too! <https://www.crcna.org/Canada/ministry-canada-directory>

Blessings in 2020 to all of you in your differing contexts,

Darren Roorda
droorda@crcna.org
289-208-9918

Dear Classis leadership, I want to thank you for encouraging healthy youth ministry within your classis. Classis Youth Ministry Champions, I want to thank you for your willingness to come together for intentional prayer, fellowship and growth as we work together for the church, and retreat in community. We will, God willing, assemble the team in Chicago on May 5-7, 2020.

For the sake of clarity, let me remind/inform you of the purpose(s) of our gathering together.

Classis is an important structure within our ecclesiology that is meant to serve local churches and participate in collaboration with each other to carry out the larger mission of God in growing disciples locally and around the world. One way that mission of serving the local churches (and by extension the entire classis) is carried out is by championing youth ministry. As co-labourers in that shared mission, the binational Youth Ministry Champions retreat will be spent in the following ways:

- **To be in fellowship with other Classis Youth Ministry Champions**
 - o Learning in community is a blessing given to us from Christ as he modelled this with his disciples
 - o Building a team mentality serves to stave off feelings of isolation in ministry
- **To Receive Equipping**
 - o We will be learning of best practices for our roles as Champions within a classis setting
 - o We will be learning about new resources to take back to our churches and classis
 - o Together, we will be casting and crafting vision for Youth Ministry in the CRCNA
- **To be Encouraged**
 - o Our community will have shared intentional times of devotion and prayer
 - o Creating safe spaces to work together in groups and wrestle with relevant youth ministry issues
 - o You will receive support from the Faith Formation Ministry team for your call to classis work

As the leadership team and I ponder this event, it is important to note that this is third time we will be meeting together as a binational team. God has done some amazing things in leading us to this point and is doing amazing things as we consider the future of youth ministry in the CRCNA. I believe we are in a special moment in the Church, and you are all playing a significant part of this story. So, let me say it again; Thank you for responding to this call.

You may have some logistical questions and my hope is to try and preempt as many as I can in the rest of this document.

What is the Classis financial obligations of this event and how do we navigate this?

- We are asking that each classis invest \$400.00 towards the cost of sending a Champion to the retreat. Since we have people coming from all parts of the US and Canada, the costs will vary based on travel needs. We hope this set price can be a way of sharing the costs of the many to help the greater distances of the few. Please have the check made out to the Christian Reformed Church, and in the comments line state, "Faith Formation Ministries." Please work together as a Classis and Youth Ministry Champion to have

this check brought to the retreat. (If your church or classis can help with more of the cost for your or other youth ministry Champions to attend, it would be a lovely gift we would humbly accept.)

- Since the Classis investment will NOT cover all the costs of the event, Faith Formation Ministries will cover the balance.

What about food and accommodations?

- We will be staying at the Cenacle Retreat Center in Chicago
- All meals will be included in the cost.

Let me know if you have any questions.

In Christ,

Ron deVries

Youth Ministry Catalyzer

Faith Formation Ministries

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