

February 23, 2022

To the churches of the URCNA:

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ whose reign is a powerful comfort during these challenging times.

In our ongoing planning for Synod we recognized that a decision needed to be made in mid-February about hosting Synod in June. The preparations for a Synod in June begin in earnest by the beginning of March. For this reason we set our deadline for deciding on the possibility of a Synod in June in mid-February.

Our decision took into consideration both the pressing need for Synod as well as the changing circumstances in both our countries. Thankfully, and even though we have been here before, it looks like the restrictions related to COVID are drawing to an end in all the jurisdictions where our churches are found. For this we are thankful to the Lord. The question we needed to answer at this time was whether the lifting of those restrictions would be in time to host a Synod in June.

The most significant restriction impeding our meeting involves the border. As the rules are currently written no unvaccinated persons can cross our shared border. If these rules were to remain in effect in June about a third of our American churches would not be able to send delegates to Synod in Canada and about ten percent of Canadian churches would not be able to send delegates to Synod in the USA. And though many restrictions are currently being lifted, we are not confident that this restriction will be lifted in time for a Synod in June. For this reason, we have decided to postpone Synod until later this year.

Having made this decision, we find ourselves back at the beginning of our planning. We need to find a venue and make all the arrangements necessary for meals, lodging, etc. Our organizing committee is busy with that work and we have identified a possible location. We are not yet ready to identify that location as much still needs to be done and our plans may need to be adjusted. What we can say is that we are now looking for a facility in the USA. We recognize that this may prohibit attendance by some Canadian congregations, though we believe there is a greater likelihood of Canadians being able to cross the border than for Americans to do the same, yet we believe this will allow the largest number of churches to send delegates to an in-person Synod. Since finding a facility so late in the year is difficult (most facilities are already fully booked by now) we are working towards a date in the fall, possibly in September or in November. We will keep you posted as we are able to finalize matters. And while things may not work out as we all wish, join with us in appreciating the uniqueness of this situation and the importance of our meeting in person.

While the challenges of hosting Synod have been many, we are looking forward to being able to meet together in person soon. Keep us in your prayers and ask the Lord to establish the work of our hands.

In Christ and on behalf of the Wellandport URC Consistory,

Rev. Joel Dykstra