

United Reformed Churches in North America
Synod Calgary 2026
Press Release #3
Wednesday, June 10, 2026

Wednesday began with greetings from Rev. Bruce Backensto of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America. He spoke of the importance of NAPARC and of fellowship among Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

Most of the morning was spent in debate regarding overtures from consistories asking Synod to act on various matters. After much discussion, Synod withheld action on an overture to amend the *Church Order* to clarify the role of the consistory when a member requests transfer or release while under discipline. (According to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, withholding action is a motion that “may be used when synod decides that it is wise and prudent to avoid a direct vote on a matter without deciding either positively or negatively.”)

Rev. Anup Hiwale greeted Synod on behalf of the Evangelical Reformed Church in India. He brought a very encouraging report of the progress of the gospel in India and an increasing number of Reformed churches.

Rev. Richard Bout reported on his work as the URCNA Foreign Missions Coordinator. The Missions Coordinator assists local churches in the work of sending and supporting missionaries. He reported on his work in various areas: advising and working with sending churches, regularly visiting missionaries, leading the annual Cross-Cultural Missions Training for young people who are interested in missions, working with other NAPARC missions coordinators, and encouraging the cultivation of potential missionaries. He presented an overview of the phases of developing a foreign mission work and requested prayer for the work of our missionaries.

The afternoon session began with greetings from Rev. Dirk Poppe of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia. He described the history of their churches and requested prayer for more young men to pursue the ministry and for the expansion of their mission works. Mr. Dirk Stolk (an elder) greeted Synod on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches in North America. He spoke of their shortage of pastors and also spoke highly of examples of cooperation between the Free Reformed Churches and the URCNA in outreach and mercy ministry in local contexts.

Synod then took up an appeal from Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls, SD. The appeal’s first specification of error (of four) alleged that Synod 2024 erred in its decision to amend Appendix 7 of the *Church Order* by adding 7.1, “An individual member may only appeal a decision originating in his own consistory.” The appeal asked Synod to rule the decision of Synod 2024 out of order as a contradiction of Article 31 of the *Church Order*. After a lengthy debate, Synod judged that the appeal’s first specification of error not be sustained, concluding that the decision of Synod 2024 was clarifying rather than contradicting Article 31, highlighting the article’s words, “an individual’s appeal must proceed first to the consistory.”

In response to an overture, Synod established a Study Committee on Bioethics of Reproductive Technology (including members respected for their expertise in medicine, science, theology, and ethics) to address bioethical questions related to reproductive technology. The committee will report to the next synod.

Rev. Peter Szabó brought greetings from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe, with whom the URCNA entered into Ecumenical Contact at this Synod. The church separated from the mainline Hungarian Reformed Church in 1998 and works mostly among ethnic Hungarians. Rev. Szabó spoke passionately of the progress and security of the church on the basis of God's promises in Christ. Rev. Travis Grassmid greeted Synod on behalf of the Reformed Church of the United States. He spoke of the RCUS's work in church planting and missions and commended Synod for its attention to detail in the decisions being made. The remainder of the afternoon session was spent meeting in Advisory Committees.

In the evening delegates gathered for a special session highlighting the work of URCNA missionaries. Delegates heard presentations from several foreign missionaries, from the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel, and from representatives of each classis regarding their work in home missions.

Several other matters were taken up throughout the day as well. Synod:

- Received the report of the Statistics and Directory Editor, modifying the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to clarify the categories of membership statistics that should be collected, and thanking Mrs. Jody Luth for her work as the Statistics and Directory Editor;
- Approved the work of the Standing Committee on Appeals;
- Adopted an overture to amend Article 66 of the *Church Order* to require a 2/3 vote and ratification by 2/3 of the consistories to make changes to an appendix of the Church Order (the same process for making changes to the main articles); and
- Received letters of greeting from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales and the United Reformed Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Nick Smith

Second Clerk of Synod Calgary 2026