ACTS OF SYNOD CALGARY 2026

FOURTEENTH SYNOD OF THE
UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES
IN NORTH AMERICA

JUNE 8-11, AD 2026

Convened and hosted by
Trinity Reformed Church
Lethbridge, Alberta

Printed on behalf of the convening consistory by:

Reformed Fellowship, Inc.
office@reformedfellowship.net
Phone: (616)532-8510
www.reformedfellowship.net

Additional copies may be requested from:

Rev. Doug Barnes, stated clerk
statedclerk@urcna.org
(269) 331-7120

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FOURTEENTH SYNOD OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA

JUNE 8-12, AD 2026

convened by
Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge, Alberta
at the Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre

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Monday, June 8, 2026
Evening Session

ARTICLE 1

The chairman *pro tem*, Rev. John van Eyk, Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge, Alberta, calls the meeting to order. He leads an opening devotional, reading Romans 12:3-8, calling the delegates to sing TPH 127A, "Unless the LORD the House Shall Build," and leading in prayer.

ARTICLE 2

The chairman *pro tem* welcomes all delegates, guests, and visitors.

ARTICLE 3

The chairman *pro tem* calls the roll, which reveals that the following delegates are present:

Abbotsford, BC	Immanuel Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Aaron van der Heiden Elder Mark Hummelman

Alto, MI	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Douglas Barnes Elder Kel Elzinga
Anaheim, CA	Christ Reformed Church	Rev. Dr. Daniel Borvan* Rev. Jared Pine*
Anaheim, CA	Covenant Chinese Reformed Church	*None*
Anchorage, AK	Redeemer United Reformed Church	Rev. Joe Varadi Elder Alex Troll
Apple Valley, CA	High Desert United Reformed Church	Rev. Tom Morrison* Elder Dr. Joseph Velasco*
Armstrong, BC	Providence Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Scottie Wright Elder Andre Hummelman
Aylmer, ON	Bethel United Reformed Church of Aylmer	Rev. Martin Vogel Elder Adrian De Dreu
Beecher, IL	Faith United Reformed Church	Rev. Nathan Voss Elder Trevor Woldhuis
Belgrade, MT	Belgrade United Reformed Church	Rev. Paul Lindemulder* Elder Jared Black*
Bellingham, WA	Bellingham United Reformed Church	Rev. Jason Vander Horst Elder Tommy Rivers
Boise, ID	Cloverdale United Reformed Church	Rev. Russell Herman Elder Jon Severns
Boise, ID	Dayspring Reformed Church	Elder Fin Dorough
Bolton, ON	Immanuel Reformed Church of Bolton	Rev. Alexander Proudfoot* Elder Jeff DeWalle
Bowmanville, ON	Salem United Reformed Church	Elder Paul Lawton Elder William Vogel

Brampton, ON	Hope Reformed Church	Rev. John Bouwers Rev. Eric Heida
Brantford, ON	Living Water Reformed Church	Rev. Greg Bylsma Elder Joe Schuit
Brantford, ON	Redeeming Grace Reformed Church	Elder Andrew DeVisser Elder Bruce Vermeulen
Brockville, ON	Bethel United Reformed Church	Elder Henk Cazemier
Burlington, WA	Burlington United Reformed Church	Rev. James Ogle Elder Dwayne Faber
Byron Center, MI	Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. Rodney Kleyn* Elder Wil Postma*
Caledonia, MI	Trinity United Reformed Church	Rev. Jacob London Elder Doug Suwyn
Calgary, AB	Bethel United Reformed Church	Rev. Keith Davis Elder Kevin Pasveer
Cape Coral, FL	Trinity Reformed Church	*None*
Carbondale, PA	Covenant Reformed Church	*None*
Centennial, CO	Coram Deo United Reformed Church	Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen Elder Nick Sealy
Charlottetown, PEI	United Reformed Church of Prince Edward Island	Rev. Maurice Luimes Elder Dave Hessels
Chino, CA	First United Reformed Church	Rev. Bradd L. Nymeyer Elder Michael Kiledjian*
Cincinnati, OH	Ascension Reformed Church	Rev. Zachary Wyse* Elder Mark Grubbs*
Coopersville, MI	Eastmanville United Reformed Church	Rev. Jephthah Nobel* Elder Adlai Brown*
DeMotte, IN	Immanuel United Reformed Church	Rev. Joel Wories Elder Derek Terpstra

Des Moines, IA	Providence Reformed Church	Rev. Jody Lucero Elder Ron Dorin
Doon, IA	Doon United Reformed Church	Rev. Daniel Hofland Elder Larry Van Oort
Dunnville, ON	Grace Reformed Church	Rev. Peter Van't Hoff Elder Ed de Schiffart
Dutton, MI	Dutton United Reformed Church	Rev. Talman Wagenmaker Elder Dan Damstra
East Stroudsburg, PA	Pocono Reformed Bible Church	Rev. Nick Costanzo Elder Tim Malefyt
Edmonton, AB	Cornerstone United Reformed Church	Rev. Jeremy Vander Lei Elder Pieter Kalkman
Escondido, CA	Escondido United Reformed Church	Rev. Angelo Contreras* Elder Mark Dirksen
Eureka, CA	Christ the Redeemer Reformed Church	Rev. John M. Kistler
Fenwick, ON	Pelham United Reformed Church	Elder Aaron Dykstra Elder Roger Smit
Fresno, CA	Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. David Inks Elder Eric Anderson
Gig Harbor, WA	Gig Harbor United Reformed Church	Elder Anthony Gilbert
Grand Rapids, MI	Sovereign Grace United Reformed Church	Elder Tony DeJonge
Grand Rapids, MI	Walker United Reformed Church	Rev. Quentin Falkena Elder Neal Westfall*
Grande Prairie, AB	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Keith Giles
Hamilton, ON	Rehoboth United Reformed Church	Rev. Jeremy Veldman Elder Henry Schilthuis

Hills, MN	Hills United Reformed Church	Rev. Praveen Muthusamy Elder Scott Van Dyken
Holland, MI	Faith United Reformed Church	Elder Luke Groenink Elder Brian Ten Haaf
Hudsonville, MI	Cornerstone United Reformed Church	Elder David Hondred Elder Bruce Sterk
Jenison, MI	Bethel United Reformed Church	Elder Allan James Elder Mitch W. Fynaardt
Jersey City, NJ	Grace Reformed Church	Rev. Samuel Perez
Jordan, ON	Immanuel United Reformed Church	Rev. Dr. Ryan Swale Elder Herb Sinke
Kalamazoo, MI	Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. Chris Engelsma Elder Tom Nagel
Kalamazoo, MI	Immanuel Fellowship Church	Rev. William Boekestein
Kansas City, MO	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Matthew Nuiver Elder Gordon De Jong
Kelowna, BC	Grace Reformed Church in Kelowna	Rev. James Roosma Elder Detmer Deddens
Kennewick, WA	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Craig Davis* Elder Paul Davis*
Lacombe, AB	Redeemer United Reformed Church	Rev. Robert Van der Woerd Elder Joel Kok
Lansing, IL	Oak Glen United Reformed Church	Rev. Steven Oeverman Elder Rod Zwier
Leduc, AB	Grace Reformed Church of Leduc	Rev. Tad Groenendyk Elder Derek Wassink
Lethbridge, AB	Trinity Reformed Church	Rev. John van Eyk Elder Calvin Tuininga
Listowel, ON	Immanuel United Reformed Church	*None*

London, ON	Cornerstone United Reformed Church	Rev. Steve Williamson Elder Eric Luth
Loveland, CO	Calvary United Reformed Church	Rev. Dale Piers
Lynden, WA	Covenant Grace Reformed Church	Rev. Dale Van Dyke Elder Jack Hoekstra
Lynden, WA	Lynden United Reformed Church	Rev. Mark Vander Pol Elder Al Vermeer
Lynwood, IL	Lynwood United Reformed Church	Rev. Nick Alons Elder Paul Dykstra
Medford, OR	Cornerstone Christian Church	Rev. Brad Lenzner Rev. Mark Delladio
Meridian, ID	Providence Reformed Church	Rev. Kristian Wassam Elder Martin Van Egmond
Missoula, MT	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Jared Beaird* Elder Tim Moody*
Nampa, ID	Christ Reformed Church	Rev. Nick Smith Elder Allan Huttema
Neerlandia, AB	Emmanuel Reformed Church	Rev. Matthew Van der Woerd Elder Jan Harink
New Hampton, NY	Hudson Valley United Reformed Church	Rev. Kevin Hossink Elder Walter Nop
New Haven, VT	New Haven United Reformed Church	Rev. Andrew Knott* Elder Gerard Sabourin*
New Holland, PA	Zeltenreich Reformed Church	Rev. Robert M. Godfrey Rev. Austin Reifel
New Westminster, BC	New Westminster United Reformed Church	Rev. Gary Zekveld Elder Jack Hummelman
New York, NY	Messiah's Reformed Fellowship	Rev. Daniel Ragusa* Rev. Paul Murphy*

Newton, NJ	Grace Reformed Bible Church	Rev. Aaron Verhoef Elder Peter Berlin*
Oak Lawn, IL	First United Reformed Church	Rev. Harold Miller
Oceanside, CA	Oceanside United Reformed Church	Elder Danny Miranda
Ontario, CA	Ontario United Reformed Church	Rev. Taylor Kern* Rev. Daniel Ventura*
Orange City, IA	Redeemer United Reformed Church	Rev. Todd De Rooy Elder Tim Van Voorst
Oro-Medonte, ON	Grace United Reformed Church of Simcoe County	Rev. Martin Overgaauw
Pantego, NC	Covenant United Reformed Church	Elder Ted Van Essendelft Rev. Calvin Tuininga
Pasadena, CA	Pasadena United Reformed Church	Rev. Movses Janbazian Elder Dr. Scott Swanson
Pella, IA	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Greg Lubbers Elder Bruce Schiebout
Phoenix, AZ	Phoenix United Reformed Church	Rev. Michael Spotts Rev. Chris Smith
Pompton Plains, NJ	Pompton Plains Reformed Bible Church	Rev. Justin Nobel Elder Mike Kukol
Ponoka, AB	Parkland Reformed Church	Rev. James Folkerts Elder Lykele Miedema
Portland, OR	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Josh Feil Elder Bernie Van Houten
Regina, SK	Redeemer Reformation Church	Elder Daniel Mundell
Rock Valley, IA	Rock Valley United Reformed Church	Elder Korrie Van Maanen

Saint John, IN	Redeemer United Reformed Church	Rev. Steve Swets Elder David Iwema
Salem, OR	Immanuel's Reformed Church	Rev. Todd Joling Elder Gerrit Kroes
Sanborn, IA	Cornerstone United Reformed Church	Rev. Dan Donovan Elder Curt Hartog
Santee, CA	Christ United Reformed Church	Rev. William Godfrey Rev. Charles Tedrick
Saskatoon, SK	Covenant United Reformed Church	Elder Art Pruim
Schererville, IN	Community United Reformed Church	Rev. David Klompien Elder Bruce Aardsma
Sheffield, ON	Zion United Reformed Church	Rev. Al Bezuyen Elder Richard Vanderboom
Sioux Center, IA	Sioux Center United Reformed Church	Rev. Jon Bushnell Elder Nathan Mulder
Sioux Falls, SD	Christ Reformed Church	Rev. Benjamin Davenport Elder Shaun Raap
Silverdale, WA	Anchor of Hope Reformed Church	Rev. Jacob Meadows Elder Jonathan King
Smithers, BC	Bethel Reformed Church	Rev. Simon Lievaart Elder Ed Ewald
St. Catharines, ON	Trinity United Reformed Church	Rev. Daniel Hamstra Elder Mike Brink
Strathroy, ON	Providence United Reformed Church	Rev. Harry Zekveld Elder Henk Pastoor
Sunnyside, WA	United Reformed Church of Sunnyside	Rev. Jeffrey S. Karel*
Surrey, BC	Surrey Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Michael Wall Elder Harry tenHaaf
Taber, AB	Taber United Reformed Church	Rev. Barry Beukema

Telkwa, BC	Faith Reformed Church	Rev. Kelvin Tiemstra Elder Jonny Krabbendam
Thunder Bay, ON	United Reformed Church of Thunder Bay	Rev. John Ysinga Elder Dick Dykstra
Toronto, ON	Covenant Reformed Church	Rev. Ben Verdonk Elder Jose Ramirez
Torrance, CA	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Brian Cochran Rev. Drew Admiraal
Twin Falls, ID	New Covenant United Reformed Church	Rev. Christopher Folkerts Elder Scott Myers
Vancouver, WA	Peace United Reformed Church	Rev. Chris Coleman Elder Brian Bergeron
Vineland Station, ON	Adoration United Reformed Church	Elder Ray Sikkema, Jr. Elder Randy Mulder
Visalia, CA	Trinity United Reformed Church	Rev. John Kirby Elder Charlie Van Der Kooi
Walnut Creek, CA	Trinity United Reformed Church	Rev. Dr. Fritz Harms
Washington, D.C.	Christ Reformed Church	Rev. Dr. Brian Lee Elder Robert Schmor
Waupun, WI	Grace United Reformed Church	Rev. Paul Freswick Elder Larry Van Den Berg
Wayne, NJ	Preakness Valley United Reformed Church	*None*
Wellandport, ON	Wellandport United Reformed Church	Rev. Joel Dykstra Elder Jake Veldman
Wellsburg, IA	United Reformed Church of Wellsburg	*None*
West Sayville, NY	West Sayville Reformed Bible Church	*None*

Winnipeg, MB	Providence Reformed Church	Rev. Rich Anjema Elder Andrew Bakker
Woodstock, ON	Bethel United Reformed Church	Rev. James Sinke Elder Clarence Markus
Wyoming, MI	Bethany United Reformed Church	Rev. Eric Van Der Molen Elder Mark Warner
Wyoming, ON	Covenant Christian Church	Rev. Tsjibbe de Jong Elder Andrew Hiemstra

Delegates marked with an asterisk* arrived late and were seated later. See Articles 14 and 20 below.

Note: The credentials of Rev. John Kistler are ruled to be out of order (see Art. 34).

Note: Rev. Keith Davis is replaced by alternate delegate Elder Leonard Vanwoudenberg (see Art. 72).

ARTICLE 4

The chairman *pro tem* reads the Form of Subscription. The delegates rise to declare their assent to the Form of Subscription.

ARTICLE 5

The chairman *pro tem* declares Synod Calgary 2026 constituted.

ARTICLE 6

The chairman *pro tem* welcomes the following fraternal delegates and fraternal observers:

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
..... Rev. Aaron De Boer
Canadian Reformed Churches .....Rev. Steve Vandevelde
Canadian Reformed Churches .....Mr. Henry Schouten

Église réformée du Québec..... Rev. Bernard Westerveld
Evangelical Reformed Church in India .. Rev. Anup Hiwale
Evangelical Reformed Church in India
..... Rev. Rakesh Kumar
Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)
..... Rev. William Macleod
Free Reformed Churches of Australia ..... Rev. Dirk Poppe
Free Reformed Churches of North America. Mr. Dirk Stolk
Orthodox Presbyterian Church ..... Rev. John Nymann
Reformed Churches in South Africa .... Rev. Gerben Meijer
Reformed Churches in New Zealand..... Rev. David Stares
Reformed Church in the United States
..... Rev. Travis Grassmid
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern
Europe ..... Rev. Peter Szabó
Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
..... Rev. Bruce Backensto

The chairman *pro tem* informs the fraternal delegates that they have the privilege of the floor.

ARTICLE 7

Election of Officers

1. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for chairman of Synod. Rev. Joel Dykstra is elected to serve as chairman.

2. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for vice-chairman of Synod. Rev. Bradd Nymeyer is elected to serve as vice-chairman.

3. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for first clerk of Synod. Rev. James Sinke is elected to serve as first clerk.

4. The chairman *pro tem* solicits nominations for second clerk of Synod. Rev. Nick Smith is elected to serve as second clerk.

ARTICLE 8

Reception of Provisionally Received Churches

1. Motion is made and supported to ratify the decision of Classis Central US to provisionally admit Redeemer Reformed Church of Golden Valley, MN, in accord with Church Order Article 32.

   Adopted

2. Rev. Caleb Janson and Mr. Jay Kroese from Redeemer Reformed Church rise to declare their assent to the Form of Subscription and are seated as delegates.

ARTICLE 9

Provisional Agenda and Advisory Committee Assignments

1. Motion is made and supported to adopt the Provisional Agenda.

   Adopted

2. The chairman *pro tem* assigns the Supplemental Report of the Stated Clerk to Advisory Committee 1.

   The chairman pro tem so orders

3. Motion is made and supported to adopt the advisory committee assignments as listed below.

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Reports

Materials: Credentials
Report of the Convening Consistory
Reports of the Stated Clerk
Report of the Statistician

Chairman: Rev. Todd De Rooy
Reporter: Rev. Pete Van't Hoff
Members: Ministers: Jon Bushnell, Angelo Contreras, Russell Herman, Rodney Kleyn, Andrew Knott, Alexander Proudfoot, Aaron van der Heiden, Marty Vogel
Elders: Daniel Damstra, Detmer Deddens, Mark Grubbs, David Hessels, David Hondred, Gerrit Kroes, Art Pruim, Tim Van Voorst, Joseph Velasco

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial and Study Committee

Materials: Reports of Treasurers
Reports of the Boards of Directors
Overture 1, URCNA Treasurers to Send the Churches Statements
Building Loan Fund Study Committee
Chairman: Rev. Paul Lindemulder
Reporter: Rev. Jeremy Veldman
Members: Ministers: Chris Engelsma, Daniel Hofland, Brian Lee, Martin Overgaauw, Dale Piers, Michael Wall
Elders: Eric Anderson, Andrew DeVisser, Jeff DeWalle, Tony Gilbert, Michael Kiledjian, Tom Nagel, Bruce Schiebout, Bruce Sterk, Derek Terpstra, Theodore Van Essendelft, Derek Wassink

Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures

Materials: Overture 2, Editorial Changes to the CO
Overture 12, Amend Art. 59 of the CO
Overture 13, Editorial Changes to the CO
Overture 15, Capitalization in the CO
Overture 16, Editorial Changes to the CO

Chairman: Rev. Dr. Ryan Swale
Reporter: Rev. Greg Lubbers
Members: Ministers: Nicholas Costanzo, Christopher Folkerts, Steve Swets, Calvin Tuininga, Joseph Varadi, Robert Van der Woerd, Brian Vos
Elders: Andrew Bakker, Brian Bergeron, Adlai Brown, Adrian De Dreu, Ron Dorin, Nathan Mulder, Henk Pastoor, Harry Ten Haaf, Alex Troll

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures

Materials: Overture 4, Amend CO Art. 27
Overture 10, Amend CO Arts. 8 & 47, Appendices 4 & 5
Overture 11, Adopt Doctrinal Affirmation Regarding Death before Sin
Overture 14, Study Committee on Bioethics
Chairman: Rev. Al Bezuyen
Reporter: Rev. Mark Vander Pol
Members: Ministers: Brian Cochran, Mark Delladio, Paul Freswick, Robert Godfrey, Eric Heida, Todd Joling, Harold Miller, John van Eyk
Elders: Gordon De Jong, Tony DeJonge, Dick Dykstra, Dwayne Faber, Curt Hartog, Ray Sikkema, Richard Vanderboom, Mark Warner

Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures and Communication

Materials: Overture 6, Affirm a Statement from the ARP, PCA, and RPCNA
Overture 7, Affirm Teachings on Race, Ethnicity, and Kinism
Communication 1

Chairman: Rev. Dr. Quentin Falkena
Reporter: Rev. Charles Tedrick
Members: Ministers: Chris Coleman, Benjamin Davenport, James Folkerts, David Klompien, Brad Lenzner, Austin Reifel, Scottie Wright
Elders: Aaron Dykstra, Andre Hummelman, David Iwema, Clarence Markus, Joe Schuit, Scott Swanson, Martin Van Egmond, Bernie Van Houten

Advisory Committee 6 – Appeals Report and Overtures

Materials: Standing Committee on Appeals
Overture 3, Deadline for Consistorial Adjudication of Appeals
Overture 5, Amend CO Art. 31 & Appendix 7
Overture 8, Amend CO Art. 66
Chairman: Rev. William Godfrey
Reporter: Rev. Dr. Daniel Ragusa
Members: Ministers: Tad Groenendyk, Fritz Harms, Caleb Janson, Justin Nobel, James Ogle, Gary Zekveld
Elders: Bruce Aardsma, Henk Cazemier, Paul Davis, Kel Elzinga, Eric Luth, Danny Miranda, Daniel Mundell, Gerard Sabourin, Henry Schilthuis, William Vogel, Neal Westfall

Advisory Committee 7 – Synodical Organizing Committee

Materials: Synodical Organizing Committee
Synod Escondido Financial Report
Overture 17, Synodical Rotation
Chairman: Rev. James Sinke
Reporter: Rev. Matthew Nuiver

Members: Ministers: Douglas Barnes, Barry Beukema, John Bouwers, David Inks, Jephthah Nobel, Bradd Nymeyer, Chris Smith, Dale Van Dyke
Elders: Jan Harink, Jack Hoekstra, Paul Lawton, Walter Nop, Wil Postma, Roger Smit, Al Vermeer, Bruce Vermeulen

Advisory Committee 8 – Missions

Materials: Synodical Committee on Home Missions
Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions
Chairman: Rev. Steve Oeverman
Reporter: Rev. Zachary Wyse
Members: Ministers: Rich Anjema, Greg Bylsma, Jared Beaird, Keith Davis, Joel Dykstra, Jody Lucero, Jacob Meadows, Jared Pine, Steve Williamson
Elders: Ed de Schiffart, Mark Dirksen, Allan James, Tim Malefyt, Lykele Miedema, Tommy Rivers, Calvin Tuininga, Charlie Van Der Kooi, Rodney Zwier

Advisory Committee 9 – Website Oversight, PRCC, and *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*

Materials: Website Oversight Committee
Liaison Committee for the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel
Trinity Psalter Hymnal Joint Venture Board
Chairman: Rev. Maurice Luimes
Reporter: Rev. William Boekestein
Members: Ministers: Andrew Admiraal, John Kistler, Tom Morrison, Jose Ramirez,

Nick Smith, Matthew Van der Woerd, Aaron Verhoef, Nathan Voss, Talman Wagenmaker, Joel Wories

Elders: Jared Black, Mitch Fynaardt, Randy Mulder, Kevin Pasveer, Jon Severns, Larry Van Den Berg, Korrie Van Maanen, Trevor Woldhuis

Advisory Committee 10 – CECCA and Overture

Materials: Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad
Overture 9, Amend CO Art. 64

Chairman: Rev. Dr. Dan Borvan

Reporter: Rev. Kelvin Tiemstra

Members: Ministers: Craig Davis, Kevin Hossink, Movses Janbazian, John Kirby, Praveen Muthusamy, Benjamin Verdonk, John Ysinga, Harry Zekveld

Elders: Peter Berlin, Michael Brink, Fin Dorough, Jack Hummelman, Joel Kok, Johnathan Krabbendam, Shaun Raap, Brian Ten Haaf, Larry Van Oort

Advisory Committee 11 – CERCU

Materials: Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity

Chairman: Rev. Samuel Perez

Reporter: Rev. Nick Alons

Members: Ministers: Tsjibbe deJong, Josh Feil, Jacob London, James Roosma, Michael Spotts, Jeremy Vander Lei, Daniel Ventura, Kris Wassam

Elders: Ed Ewald, Luke Groenink, Jonathan King, Mark

Hummelman, Tim Moody, Scott Myers, Rob Schmor, Herb Sinke, Scott Van Dyken

Advisory Committee 12 – Appeal

Materials: Appeal of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls
Chairman: Rev. Simon Lievaart
Reporter: Rev. Jason Vander Horst
Members: Ministers: Daniel Donovan, Keith Giles, J. Daniel Hamstra, Jeffrey Karel, Taylor Kern, Paul Murphy, Derrick Vander Meulen, Eric Van Der Molen
Elders: Paul Dykstra, Allan Huttema, Andrew Heimstra, Pieter Kalkman, Jay Kroese, Mike Kukol, Nick Sealy, Doug Suwyn, Jake Veldman

The motion to adopt the advisory committees assignments as made is:

Adopted

Article 10

Motion is made and supported to adopt the time schedule as printed on the first page of the agenda.

Adopted

Article 11

The officers of Synod Calgary 2026 assume their duties. The chairman, Rev. Joel Dykstra, speaks a word of encouragement and instructs the delegates to return to plenary session promptly Tuesday morning at 8:00 a.m. He leads the assembly in prayer and calls the assembly to sing TPH 568, “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow.”

Article 12

Rev. James Roosma concludes the assembly's opening session with devotions, reading Isaiah 6:1-7, offering a brief exhortation, and singing TPH 178, "We Have Not Known Thee as We Ought."

Tuesday, June 9, 2026
Morning Session

ARTICLE 13

Rev. John Ysinga calls the assembly to sing TPH 239, "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven." He reads Psalm 103:1-4, 19-22, delivers a brief meditation, and leads the assembly in prayer, particularly for Rev. Brian Vos who has been diagnosed with melanoma and is undergoing a procedure today.

ARTICLE 14

The chairman welcomes the following delegates who arrived after the roll call, each of whom rises to signify his assent to the Form of Subscription:

Rev. Dr. Daniel Borvan and Rev. Jared Pine from Christ Reformed Church of Anaheim, CA
Rev. Tom Morrison and Elder Dr. Joseph Velasco from High Desert URC of Apple Valley, CA
Rev. Paul Lindemulder and Elder Jared Black from Belgrade URC of Belgrade, MT
Rev. Alexander Proudfoot from Immanuel Reformed Church of Bolton, ON
Rev. Rodney Kleyn and Elder Wil Postma from Covenant URC of Byron Center, MI
Elder Michael Kiledjian from First URC of Chino, CA
Rev. Zachary Wyse and Elder Mark Grubbs from Ascension Reformed Church of Cincinnati, OH

Rev. Jephthah Nobel from Eastmanville URC of Coopersville, MI
Rev. Angelo Contreras from Escondido URC of Escondido, CA
Elder Neal Westfall from Walker URC of Grand Rapids, MI
Rev. Craig Davis and Elder Paul Davis from Grace URC of Kennewick, WA
Rev. Jared Beaird and Elder Tim Moody from Covenant Reformed Church of Missoula, MT
Rev. Andrew Knott and Elder Gerard Sabourin from New Haven URC of New Haven, VT
Rev. Daniel Ragusa and Rev. Paul Murphy from Messiah's Reformed Fellowship of New York, NY
Rev. Taylor Kern and Rev. Daniel Ventura from Ontario URC of Ontario, CA
Rev. Jeffrey S. Karel of URC from Sunnyside of Sunnyside, WA

ARTICLE 15

Motion is made and supported to approve the concept minutes from Monday's session, which had been distributed previously to the delegates.

Adopted

ARTICLE 16

Motion is made and supported to approve the press release from Monday's session, which had been distributed previously to the delegates.

Adopted

ARTICLE 17

The chairman gives instructions to the assembly for the schedule of the day and other matters. He dismisses the delegates to the work of their advisory committees.

Tuesday, June 9, 2026
Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 18

Following the break for lunch, the chairman informs the assembly that Rev. David Klompien has departed from the assembly due to the death of a member in the congregation of Community URC of Schererville, IN.

Rev. Aaron van der Heiden calls for the singing of TPH 410, "Christian Hearts in Love United," and reads from Psalm 1 and Hebrews 2:1. Rev. van der Heiden leads in prayer, particularly for the mercies of God for the congregation in Schererville.

ARTICLE 19

The chairman invites Rev. William Macleod of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) to bring greetings to the assembly. He offers a brief description of the history of the FCC since the year 2000, and recalls with appreciation the visits of CECCA members to their assemblies. He treasures the blessings and influence of Scottish Presbyterianism over the centuries, but the Scottish Church became proud in its liberalism, and today the churches in Scotland are in terrible decline. He pleads for prayers that seek the mercy of the Lord to bring revival to a nation that is perhaps the most secular in the world. He rejoices in the mission works that are ongoing throughout the world, where many share the same zeal for the gospel alongside the FCC.

Rev. John van Eyk offers brief remarks in response and leads the assembly in prayer for the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).

ARTICLE 20

The chairman welcomes Elder Adlai Brown from Eastmanville URC of Coopersville, MI, as a delegate who arrived after the roll call; he rises to signify his assent to the Form of Subscription.

ARTICLE 21

Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 2

Recommendation:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 2 with its grounds.

   Overture 2 states:

   > Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to instruct the Stated Clerk to use the Associated Press Style Guide for capitalization to update, as needed, the Church Order, the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, and their appendices, and that Synod declare that such capitalization changes to the Church Order do not need to be ratified by the consistories since the changes are editorial in nature and do not change the meaning of the document.

Grounds:

a. Consistently following the Associated Press Style Guide regarding capitalization will bring our documents into conformity with standard practice among editors and publishers.
b. This standard has already been followed in some additions made to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* over the past several synods, which is why, of the three documents, it needs least editing.

c. There is an established precedent for not requiring consistorial ratification for editorial modifications. For instance, the synod declared that the titles of the articles were considered editorial and therefore exempt from ratification.
d. Consistency in capitalization will enhance the readability and clarity of our documents and reflect our commitment to precision and excellence.
e. If we present ourselves to the world as having a language or grammar of our own, we appear isolated and disconnected from broader society. We should speak and write well the language of the people we hope to reach.

Adopted

ARTICLE 22

Advisory Committee 3 - Overtures
Materials: Overture 12

Recommendation:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 12 with its grounds.

   Overture 12 states:

   > Classis Ontario-East overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 59 of the Church Order by removing the parenthetical reference to Appendix 8. The amended Article 59 would then read:
   >
   > **Article 59 – The Exclusion of a Mature Baptized Member**
   >
   > Mature baptized members who are delinquent in doctrine or life shall be admonished and, if they persist, shall be excluded from the church of Christ.

The Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before proceeding to such exclusion.

Grounds:

a. The current reference to Appendix 8 is misleading, since Appendix 8 does not address the exclusion of delinquent baptized members but instead outlines procedures for transfers, releases, resignations, and erasures.
b. Article 59 already clearly defines the proper process for exclusion: admonition, persistence, advice of classis, and exclusion. No reference to Appendix 8 is necessary.
c. Removing the misleading reference will prevent confusion in consistories and ensure the consistent and historic application of discipline to baptized members.
d. Synodical clarity on this matter will better serve the churches, since consistories are bound to follow both the Church Order and its appendices.

Adopted without dissent

The chairman rules that the date for ratification of the above decision is Dec. 31, 2026.

ARTICLE 23

Advisory Committee 3 - Overtures
Materials: Overture 13

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 13 with its ground.

   Overture 13 states:

Classis Pacific Northwest overtures Synod 2026 to make the following changes to the Church Order in order to provide internal consistency and clarity.

a. In the first sentence of the Introduction, insert a comma after the word "infallible" so that it reads: "… the Word of God delivered to us in the inspired, infallible, and inerrant book of Holy Scripture."
b. In the last sentence of Article 27, insert a comma after the word "edification" so that it reads: "… help direct all things unto the peace, edification, and greatest profit of the churches."
c. In the second sentence of Appendix 8.2, insert a comma after the number "35" so that it reads: "... (see URCNA Church Order Articles 34, 35, and 36)."
d. In the first sentence of Foundational Principle 5, insert a comma after the word "national" so that it reads: "… The Lord gave no permanent universal, national, or regional offices to His church."

Ground:

a. This is the proper use of the Oxford comma.

Adopted

2. That Synod insert the following Oxford commas:
   a. In the second sentence of the Introduction, insert a comma after the word "Catechism" so that it reads: "... the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort."
   b. In the first sentence of the final paragraph of Article 6, insert a comma after the word "prayers" so that it reads: "... with appropriate instructions, admonitions, prayers, and subscription to the Three Forms of Unity ..."

c. In the first sentence of Article 16, insert a comma after the word “classis” so that it reads: “... the Consistory, the classis, and the synod.”
d. In the second sentence of Article 37, insert a comma after the word “Eve” so that it reads: “... the national Thanksgiving Day, New Year’s Eve, and New Year’s Day, as well as in times of great distress or blessing.”
e. In Article 50, insert a comma after the word “marriages” so that it reads: “... marriages, and deaths of members of the congregation.”

Ground:

a. This is the proper use of the Oxford comma.

The chairman rules this recommendation is out of order

ARTICLE 24

Advisory Committee 4 - Overtures
Materials: Overture 14

Recommendation:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 14 with its amendments (italicized) and grounds.

Overture 14 states:

> Classis Southwestern Ontario overtures the next synod to establish a URCNA 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. This committee should:
>
> 1. Explore the relationship between marriage,

sex, and procreation.
2. Offer reflections on the biblical theology of infertility, singleness, and adoption.
3. Provide a framework for assessing the merits and drawbacks of specific reproductive technologies.
4. Consider the ethical implications of the adoption of embryos by both married couples and single adults.
5. Deliberate how to balance Christian liberty with biblical and ethical considerations.
6. Provide recommendations that uphold human dignity and the integrity of human life.
7. *Report to the next synod.*

Grounds:

a. This matter is highly relevant to our contemporary context and questions that are asked in our churches. The church must examine critical issues and responsibly address them on the basis of God's Word.
b. Our contemporary bioethical questions are complex and may pose significant challenges for local consistories and individual congregations. These issues often require specialized expertise that may not be readily available at the local level.
c. There is an opportunity for the URCNA to provide leadership and help to the broader church.
d. Our stated positions on contemporary bioethical questions today can influence how future scientific advancements are integrated into the moral framework of our churches and society.

The chairman rules that the advisory committee report be recommitted

(**Advisory Committee 4** continued in Art. 65)

ARTICLE 25

Advisory Committee 9 – Web Oversight, PRCC, and Trinity Psalter Hymnal
Materials: Report on the PRCC

Recommendations:

1. That Synod acknowledge with gratitude that the URCNA has been granted full membership in the PRCC.

   Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2, "That Don Sampson, associate director for the PRCC, be given the privilege to briefly address Synod on behalf of our chaplains and the PRCC during missions night or on the Synod floor."

   Adopted

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3 with its grounds, "That Synod establish a standing committee called the Chaplaincy Coordination Committee (CCC) to coordinate the URCNA's participation in the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC), thereby relieving the Consistory of Faith United Reformed Church (Beecher, Illinois) of this responsibility, and that:
   a. The standing committee be composed of:
      1. One elder and/or minister appointed from each consistory that serves as a calling church for a chaplain; and
      2. Two at-large members appointed by Synod who are members in good standing of a URCNA congregation and possess chaplaincy experience, close familiarity with military life or medical settings, or

other experience appropriately suited to chaplaincy oversight.

b. Delegates to PRCC meetings be selected from and by the standing committee and attend meetings either in-person or virtually, as circumstances require.
c. The standing committee meets virtually at least once a year in conjunction with PRCC-related meetings.
d. The standing committee maintains communication with chaplains, provides churches with updates and prayer requests regarding URCNA chaplaincy ministries, and provides a report of its work to the calling consistories prior to submitting a report to all future synods.

Grounds:

a. The existence of multiple calling consistories within the URCNA demonstrates the appropriateness of broader ecclesiastical participation in the oversight of chaplaincy work.
b. A standing committee provides greater continuity over time than oversight vested in a single consistory, particularly as consistories experience changes in office bearers.
c. Broader involvement allows the URCNA to utilize chaplaincy experience and gifts distributed throughout the federation, consistent with the grounds adopted by Synod Escondido 2024.
d. The specialized nature of chaplaincy warrants the inclusion of those with experience and aptitude relevant to this ministry to provide support and advisement to chaplains and consistories.
e. Direct involvement of calling consistories promotes accountability, communication, and mutual encouragement in the support of chaplains.

Adopted

4. That the mandate of the CCC be to:
    a. Coordinate the URCNA's participation in the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC).
    b. Send delegates to PRCC meetings from the CCC either in person or virtually, as circumstances require.
    c. Meet virtually at least once a year in conjunction with PRCC-related meetings.
    d. Provide a report of its work to the calling consistories prior to submitting a report to all future synods.
    e. Maintain communication with URCNA chaplains and their calling consistories.
    f. Assist with updates to the URCNA missions website to include chaplaincy ministries.
    g. Provide the churches with PRCC-published resources and prayer requests from chaplains, such as the quarterly *Guardian* prayer calendar.
    h. Establish PRCC policy in concert with the other member denominations.
    i. Report on the decisions and work of the PRCC and trends within chaplaincy ministries to calling consistories and synod.

Motion is made and supported to recommit this recommendation to the advisory committee.

Defeated

The recommendation is:

Adopted

5. That the committee be composed of the following members:
    a. One delegate from each consistory that serves as a calling church for a chaplain.

b. Two at-large members, who are members in good standing of a URCNA congregation whose names will be brought by the CCC to the next synod.

Adopted

6. That Synod ask a delegate from Faith URC (Beecher, IL) to lead the Synod in prayer for the URCNA chaplains.

Adopted

Rev. Nathan Voss leads the assembly in prayer for the URCNA chaplains.

7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1, "That Synod set the budget for the CCC at $9,000 USD per annum to cover projected federational contributions to the PRCC and the travel costs of attending Commission meetings."

Adopted

8. That Synod thank the Consistory of Faith URC (Beecher, IL) for its years of faithful service as the URCNA liaison to the PRCC.

Adopted

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the Consistory of Faith URC for their diligent and committed work of providing support to the URCNA's chaplains through the PRCC.

ARTICLE 26

Advisory Committee 9 – Web Oversight, PRCC, and Trinity Psalter Hymnal
Materials: Report of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board

Recommendation:

1. That Synod receive the report of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board with thanks to the Board and with gratitude to the Lord.

Adopted

ARTICLE 27

Advisory Committee 9 – Web Oversight, PRCC, and Trinity Psalter Hymnal
Materials: Report of the Website Oversight Committee

<u>Recommendations</u>:

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1, "That Synod approve the mandate of the committee as proposed:

   > The Website Oversight Committee (WOC) is responsible for the production and maintenance of the URCNA websites (except for the missions website). This includes the messaging, design, and function of all aspects of the websites. This also includes the oversight of the work of the federation's Webmaster."

   Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2, "That Synod thank Bruce Vrieling for his many years of faithful service as the chairman of the WOC."

   Adopted

   The chairman instructs the Stated Clerk to send a letter to Bruce Vrieling on behalf of the Synod, expressing the gratitude of the assembly for his service as chairman of the WOC.

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3, "That Synod thank Gary Fisher for his faithful service in the position

of Webmaster for the federation and re-appoint him until the next synod."

Adopted

The chairman instructs the Stated Clerk to send a letter to Gary Fisher on behalf of the Synod, expressing the gratitude of the assembly for his service as Webmaster.

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4, "That Synod increase the annual honorarium paid to Gary Fisher by $1,500 USD; from $6,000 USD to $7,500 USD starting in 2027."

Adopted

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5, "That Synod approve the annual hosting costs of $3,100 USD and the annual development costs of $2,500 USD."

Adopted

6. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6, "That Synod approve the logo for use on the website."

United Reformed Churches
IN NORTH AMERICA

Ground:

a. Synod Niagara 2022 mandated (Art. 51) that the "Branding (fonts, logos, images) must be consistent across all pages." An approved logo allows for consistent branding across all pages of our website.

Adopted

7. That Synod assign the WOC to report to the next synod with branding guidelines (fonts, logos, images) for use

on the website and beyond, using outside contractors as necessary; and

That this be Synod's answer to the Website Oversight Committee report Recommendation 7, "That Synod note that developing branding guidelines are beyond the WOC, yet it would be good for branding guidelines to be developed"; and

That this be Synod's answer to Recommendation 8, "That Synod note that approving a logo for the federation is beyond the purview of the WOC, yet it would be good to have a logo for the federation."

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation to insert the word "proposed" after "report to the next synod with …"

Adopted

The recommendation, as amended, is:

Adopted

8. That Synod approve a one-time budget of up to $10,000 USD to fulfill Recommendation 7 (above).

Adopted

ARTICLE 28

Advisory Committee 12 - Appeal
Materials: Appeal of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls

Recommendation:

1. That Synod suspend Guideline 7.b. of Appendix 7 of the Church Order.

Ground:

a. This appeal is of a decision from Synod Escondido 2024, and many of the current advisory committee members and synodical delegates were delegates to that body. Suspending 7.b.i. and 7.b.ii. will allow for full participation in the deliberation and decision making that is required to dispose of this appeal.

The chairman rules this recommendation is out of order

ARTICLE 29

Advisory Committee 10 – CECCA and Overture
Materials: CECCA Report

Recommendations:

1. That Rev. Peter Szabó be given the floor to address Synod

   Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3, that "the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Sudanese Reformed Church."

   Adopted

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4, that "the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church (AEPC)."

   Adopted

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5, that "the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA)."

   Adopted

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6, that "the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Evangelical Reformed Church in India."

Adopted

6. That Synod accede to Recommendation 7, that "the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Free Church of Scotland."

Adopted

7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 8, that "the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia."

Adopted

8. That Synod accede to Recommendation 9, that "the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Presbyterian Church of Australia."

Adopted

9. That Synod accede to Recommendation 10, that "the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe."

Adopted

10. That Synod accede to Recommendation 11, that "Synod approve $15,000 USD per annum for the work of CECCA."

Adopted

11. That Synod amend CECCA's proposed mandate, in "Purpose," after "(Q&A 54 and 55)", to insert the following, "to express the visible unity of Christ's church around the world."

Adopted

12. That Synod amend CECCA's proposed mandate, in "Procedure, I.2.d." to state, "significant factors for the two federations (history, theology, ecclesiology, and stances on ethical issues);"

Adopted

13. That Synod amend CECCA's proposed mandate, under "Procedure I.2." to place items "i" through "n" under a third category, "3. Exchange of Ecclesiastical Materials," including:

    a. Minutes (Acts) of the broadest assemblies;
    b. Federational or Denominational Church Directories (Yearbooks);
    c. The most recently published edition of the Confessional Standards;
    d. The most recently published edition of the (Book or Manual of) Church Order;
    e. The most recently federationally-published or denominationally-published editions of Psalters/Hymnals;
    f. Information regarding current ecumenical relations.

Grounds:

    a. These items are materially different from and not properly treated as items under "Consultation," and rather speak to matters parallel with "Consultation."
    b. It improves the conceptual clarity by distinguishing ecclesiastical consultation from documentary exchange.
    c. It conforms to original organization from Synod Calgary 2004.

Adopted

14. That Synod amend CECCA's proposed mandate, to replace "step" with "phase" in the final sentence of

"Procedure I." to read, "this phase will be implemented …"

Adopted

15. That Synod amend CECCA's proposed mandate, to replace "step" with "phase" twice in the final sentence of "Procedure II." to read, "This phase will be implemented according to Church Order Article 36, (in addition to the points listed under phase one above)."

Adopted

16. That Synod amend CECCA's proposed mandate, to replace "a. authority and sufficiency of Scripture," in "Procedure I.2.a." with "a. view and place of Holy Scripture."

Grounds:

a. This brings conformity with the language of the CERCU report.
b. This brings conformity with the language of Synod Calgary 2004.

Defeated

17. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2, that "the proposed mandate be adopted as the mandate for CECCA," as amended.

The chairman rules the following perfections:

a. Under "Membership," that "pastor" be replaced with "minister"
b. Under "Membership," that "secretary" be replaced with "reporter"

Motion is made and supported to amend the proposed mandate by replacing "Ecumenical" with "Ecclesiastical" in "Procedure II."

Adopted

The recommendation, as amended, is:

Adopted

18. That Synod direct CECCA to return to the next synod with procedures to receive requests for training and/or material support from churches abroad, and to advise the synod regarding how to respond to such requests.

Adopted

19. That Synod receive the report from CECCA without agreeing with every formulation in the report.

Adopted

ARTICLE 30

The chairman calls the order of the day. The assembly is dismissed for refreshments and then to continue the work of the advisory committees until supper.

Tuesday, June 9, 2026
Evening Session

ARTICLE 31

The chairman calls the assembly to order.

Rev. Chris Gordon invites the assembly to sing TPH 122A, "I Was Filled with Joy and Gladness." He reads Psalm 122 and offers encouragement because of the power of the gospel and the treasure of peace we enjoy in our federation, then leads the assembly in prayer.

ARTICLE 32

The vice-chairman provides an update to the assembly from Rev. Brian Vos, who expresses gratitude for the prayers and encouragement of the synod. He has returned home after a

successful surgery and is praying for the synod, its deliberations, and the unity of our churches.

ARTICLE 33

The chairman invites Rev. Aaron De Boer from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church to address the assembly. He extends greetings on behalf of the ARP and reflects on the parallels in the identities of our churches, especially in our faithful expression of the Reformed faith, the purity of our worship, and the commitment to faithful discipline in our assemblies. He notes that both of our traditions have experienced the need to secede from antinomianism and neonomianism, finding themselves in a new world and committed to preserving the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Reformation in their new surroundings. The culture in North America has declined, and both churches have been buffeted by the fierce winds of that culture, while the institutions that served the churches were undermining the faithfulness of the churches. Today, it is purely because of the love of the Lord that these two serious Reformed churches are still standing. Challenges remain, however, and the ARP Synod is addressing the rise of racial hatred this week. He encourages the churches to stand firmly upon the sovereign Word of the Lord.

Rev. Daniel Ventura leads the assembly in prayer for the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

ARTICLE 34

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Report
Materials: Credentials

Recommendations:

1. That Synod take note that the following consistories have not sent a delegation to Synod, but letters of explanation were received:
    a. Covenant Chinese Reformed Church, Anaheim, California
    b. Trinity Reformed Church of Cape Coral, Cape Coral, Florida
    c. Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, Carbondale, Pennsylvania
    d. United Reformed Church of Wellsburg, Wellsburg, Iowa
    e. West Sayville Reformed Bible Church, West Sayville, New York

    The assembly takes note

2. That Synod take note that the following consistories have sent only one delegate, but letters of explanation were received:
    a. Dayspring Reformed Church, Boise, Idaho
    b. Bethel United Reformed Church of Brockville, Brockville, Ontario
    c. Sovereign Grace United Reformed Church, Comstock Park, Michigan
    d. Gig Harbor United Reformed Church, Gig Harbor, Washington
    e. Covenant Reformed Church of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie, Alberta
    f. Grace Reformed Church of Jersey City, Jersey City, New Jersey
    g. Immanuel Fellowship Church of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan
    h. Calvary United Reformed Church, Loveland, Colorado
    i. Grace Reformed Bible Church, Newton, New Jersey
    j. First United Reformed Church of Oak Lawn, Oak Lawn, Illinois

k. Oceanside United Reformed Church, Oceanside, California
l. Grace United Reformed Church (of Simcoe County), Oro-Medonte, Ontario
m. Redeemer Reformation Church, Regina, Saskatchewan
n. Rock Valley United Reformed Church, Rock Valley, Iowa
o. Covenant United Reformed Church of Saskatoon, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
p. United Reformed Church of Sunnyside, Sunnyside, Washington
q. Taber United Reformed Church, Taber, Alberta
r. Trinity United Reformed Church of Walnut Creek, Walnut Creek, California

The assembly takes note

3. That Synod take note that the following consistory does not have a signature for the chairman on its credentials:
    a. Zion United Reformed Church of Sheffield, Sheffield, Ontario

The assembly takes note

4. That Synod rule the credentials of Christ the Redeemer Reformed Church of Eureka, California out of order, but also recommend that the brother may remain an observer at Synod Calgary 2026.

Ground:

a. The delegate's ministerial credentials are not held by the aforementioned church, but by Covenant United Reformed Church of Fresno, California.

The chairman so rules that the credentials are not in order

Motion is made and supported to permit the brother to remain as an observer at Synod Calgary 2026.

Adopted

5. That Synod thank the churches for their explanations given and express understanding that some churches are not always able to have a full delegation. Scheduling conflicts and concerns related to financial burden, however, should not impede a church from sending a full delegation to synod; in addition, that Synod encourage the consistories to submit a written explanation in advance to synod in accord with *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 1.3.

The chairman expresses the gratitude, understanding, and encouragement of the assembly.

ARTICLE 35

Advisory Committee 6 – Appeals Report and Overtures
Materials: Overture 5

Recommendation:

1. That Synod table indefinitely Overture 5.

   Overture 5 states:

   > Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Church Order Article 31 and Church Order Appendix 7 to state (proposed additions in bold):
   >
   > > Article 31: If any church member complains that he has been wronged by **a decision of his own consistory, or by any decision of another consistory or broader assembly in which he is personally named, disciplined, examined, or otherwise directly subject to that assembly's judgment**, he shall have the right to appeal to the broader assemblies. An individual's appeal must first be submitted to

the assembly whose decision is being appealed, and only then, if necessary, to the broader assemblies. Until a decision is made upon such appeal, the church member shall conform to the determination and judgment already passed. (See Appendix 7.)

Appendix 7 Guideline 1: Appellant: An appeal may be made by a consistory; a classis; or an individual who is **either** a member of a church within the federation **or whose ministerial credentials are held by a church within the federation**. The appeal may be submitted by the appellant himself or by a representative. **An individual member may appeal a decision of his own consistory, or any decision of another consistory or broader assembly in which he is personally named, disciplined, examined, or otherwise directly subject to that assembly's judgment. Standing to appeal is not removed when the loss of membership is itself the decision being appealed, nor when membership is lost or transferred during the appeal process.**

Grounds:

a. The overture misrepresents Article 31 and Appendix 7, Guideline 1, and is not clear in its proposed changes:
    a. The overture fails to bold all the proposed amendments to Article 31.
    b. Some of the bolded language is already present in Article 31 and Appendix 7, Guideline 1.
    c. The proposed amendments of Article 31 and Appendix 7, Guideline 1, contain deletions that are not noted.

d. The last sentence of Appendix 7, Guideline 1, is omitted.

b. The *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* require that an overture request a definite action regarding a specific matter. This overture lacks the specificity and definiteness required.

c. The errors of the overture were not recognized with adequate time for consistories to deliberate on all the proposed changes.

d. Dealing with this overture would require making changes that neither originated from a consistory nor were processed by a classis as required by *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 3.3. Therefore, it would not be wise or prudent for Synod to take a direct vote on this matter and decide it positively or negatively (see *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 6.3.3).

Adopted

ARTICLE 36

Advisory Committee 6 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 3

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 3 with its grounds.

   Overture 3 states:

   > Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary that Appendix B to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* and Appendix 7 to the Church Order be amended to **add the following provision** to the Guidelines for Appeals:
   >
   > *7 (f): For appeals made to a consistory, the consistory shall adjudicate and render a judgment*

on the appeal within 60 days of receipt of the appeal. If the consistory fails to adjudicate and render judgment on the appeal within 60 days, the appellant may advance the appeal to the next broader assembly for adjudication and judgment.

Grounds:

a. A deadline imposed on the appellant to bring an appeal ensures fairness to a consistory to receive prompt notice of appealable issues. Fairness to the appellant dictates that a deadline should likewise be imposed on the consistory to adjudicate the appeal.
b. A consistory's failure to adjudicate an appeal in a timely manner can result in justice being delayed or denied under our current Guidelines.
c. A consistory's failure to adjudicate an appeal should allow the appellant to advance his appeal to an assembly that will adjudicate the appeal.
d. This 60-day deadline would not apply to the adjudication of appeals by a classis or synod, given that appeals considered at such broader assemblies are necessarily adjudicated during the fixed time such assemblies are in session.

Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by replacing "60 days" with "90 days" and "60-day" with "90-day" wherever they occur in the recommendation.

Adopted

The recommendation, as amended, is:

Adopted without dissent

2. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 3.

Adopted

ARTICLE 37

Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures and Communication
Materials: Communication from Classis Eastern U.S. to Synod Calgary 2026

Recommendation:

1. That Synod acknowledge with appreciation the communication from Classis Eastern U.S. concerning seminarian and internship support and commend it to the churches and classes for consideration.

Grounds:

a. The preparation and financial support of men training for the ministry, together with the provision of useful pastoral internships, are matters of common concern to the churches.
b. The communication helpfully encourages councils and classes to consider generous and cooperative ways of supporting theological education and ministerial formation.
c. The communication presents several possible models without requiring Synod to adopt or endorse its particular provisions.

The chairman rules that the phrase "and commend it to the churches and classes for consideration" is out of order.

The recommendation, as corrected, is:

Adopted

ARTICLE 38

Advisory Committee 7 – Synodical Organizing Committee
Materials: Synod Escondido 2024 Financial Report

Recommendation:

1. That Synod receive for information the Synod Escondido 2024 Financial Report.

Adopted

ARTICLE 39

Advisory Committee 8 – Missions
Materials: SCFM Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5, "That Synod give the privilege of the floor to non-delegate SCFM members Rev. Casey Freswick and Rev. Richard Bout while foreign missions are being discussed."

Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1, "That Synod grant an opportunity for Rev. Richard Bout to give a verbal report in person on the floor of Synod 2026," and that he be granted 10 minutes for the report.

Adopted

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2, "That Synod approve the work of the Foreign Missions Coordinator with hearty thanks."

Adopted

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6, "That Synod note that our Foreign Missions Coordinator will continue to receive the cost-of-living increase as determined at Synod Wyoming 2016."

Adopted

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3, "That Synod keep the annual budget of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions at $14,500 USD."

Adopted

6. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4, "That Synod adopt the updated foreign missions manual, *The URCNA Foreign Missions Manual,* as helpful guidelines to assist consistories, missionaries, and church planters in the day-to-day activity of foreign missions. (Please note: Primary changes of content are found in sections I.A, II, and the end of III.C.1.)"

Grounds:

a. The original *URCNA Foreign Missions Manual* was adopted by Synod Wyoming 2016 with the same wording noted in this recommendation. (See Article 64.11 of the Acts of Synod Wyoming.)
b. Synod Niagara 2022 made some significant changes to the recommended structure of foreign missions, and these new changes have been incorporated into the updated document.
c. The document has not been significantly revised or changed beyond the updates required based on the decisions of Synod Niagara 2022.

Adopted

7. That Synod thank the SCFM for its work.

Adopted

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions with the work and diligence its members have given to serve the ongoing maturation of the URCNA's foreign missions.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to Rev. Richard Bout, the Foreign Missions Coordinator of the URCNA. He is a remarkable asset to the missionaries and churches of the URCNA.

ARTICLE 40

Advisory Committee 8 – Missions
Materials: SCHM Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod grant the privilege of the floor to any non-delegate members of the SCHM who are present during the discussion of this report.

   Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1, "That Synod receive this report for information," and encourage the churches to carefully read this report and take note of trends and encouragement for local church growth.

   Adopted

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2, "That Synod thank the churches for their continued prayers and support of home missions, and encourage the churches prayerfully to consider how they might more actively participate in the work of home missions."

   Adopted

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3, "That Synod humbly acknowledge, in light of this report, that the federation generally lacks a healthy culture of evangelism, and therefore direct the consistories prayerfully to explore ways in which they can lead the congregations to reform in this regard." (See, e.g., the bullet points on pages 252-53.)

Motion is made and supported to recommit this recommendation to the advisory committee.

Adopted

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4, "That Synod encourage consistories and classes to make regular use of *How to Plant a Reformed Church* (2nd ed.) and the resources listed at urcnamissions.org."

Adopted

6. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5, "That Synod commend the work of the Canadian Seminarian Bursary Fund and encourage the churches to consider whether similar regional or classical initiatives might help strengthen support for seminarians."

Grounds:

a. Current pastoral vacancies as well as upcoming retirements compel us actively to encourage men to consider the ministry and to support them in it.
b. The bursary is an efficient model God has used to mobilize churches to assist other churches in caring for their students.
c. Our Catechism teaches us that the Fourth Commandment requires that "gospel ministry and schools for it be maintained."

Adopted

7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6, "That Synod urge the churches to explore ways to expand the use of internships in our churches and provide greater financial support for them."

Grounds:

a. *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022* 95.3.(2)(d) mandates classis home mission committees to work with overseeing consistories and church plants to provide internships for identifying/training church planters (which could entail the maintenance of a classical fund that will cover or offset internship costs that most churches cannot handle).

b. Many of our pastoral vacancies have been created by ministerial burnout and moral failure, which are due in part to insufficient training and vetting.
c. Internships, especially year-long internships, provide additional manpower to the local church, enabling additional labor in potential mission fields.
d. Increasing internship opportunities in the URCNA will help us attract, assess, and retain more gifted men.

Adopted

8. That Synod accede to Recommendation 7, "That Synod continue to urge the churches to give prayerful consideration to the development of classical (or regional) home missionaries and submit feedback to the SCHM regarding the position."

Grounds:

a. Praying about and working at this challenge will allow the churches to gain wisdom as to whether and how the development of classical (or regional) home missionaries can serve the cause of home missions in our respective classical regions.
b. The churches' feedback to the SCHM will aid the committee as it seeks wisdom for the best way to encourage development at the classical level.
c. Although Synod Escondido 2024 urged the churches to do this, thus far feedback has not been forthcoming to the SCHM.

Adopted

9. That Synod maintain the SCHM budget for the following years at $13,000 USD per annum, which is the same as 2024, and that this be Synod's response to Recommendation 8.

***Ground*:**

a. Since the SCHM requested $10,000 USD per annum in Recommendation 8, they incurred an additional expense, i.e., publishing the prayer maps.

Adopted

10. That Synod accede to Recommendation 9, "That Synod reappoint Mr. Paul Lawton as Home Missions Clerk for the next synodical term."

Adopted

11. That Synod, noting that there was a typo in Recommendation 10, "set the remuneration rate for the Home Missions Clerk at ~~$75~~ **$50** (USD) per hour, with the existing annual maximum ($12,500 USD) unchanged."

Grounds:

a. Original compensation was set in anticipation of a more secretarial and administrative role.
b. Upon review of the final job description adopted by Synod Escondido 2024, our committee feels a higher rate of pay is in order.
c. A higher hourly rate of pay is supported by precedent of other URC functionaries.

Adopted

12. That Synod remind the SCHM of Synod Escondido 2024's directive to study the matter of church plant closure. (See page 51 of the *Acts of Synod Escondido 2024,* Article 35, recommendation 9.)

Adopted

13. That Synod take note of the organization of Providence Reformed Church (Meridian, ID) and Peace URC (Vancouver, WA) within Classic Pacific Northwest, as

noted in the Supplemental Report from the Stated Clerk.

Adopted

14. That Synod thank the SCHM for its work.

Adopted

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the Synodical Committee on Home Missions, noting the zeal of this committee to challenge the churches to see the white fields for harvest and to sacrificially take on the calling to bring the gospel to the lost.

(**Advisory Committee 8** continued in Art. 84)

ARTICLE 41

Advisory Committee 11 – CERCU
Materials: CERCU Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1, "That Synod commend the classes for their faithfulness in appointing or reappointing classical representatives (and alternates) to CERCU in the manner the classes deem appropriate."

Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2, "That Synod set the budget for CERCU at $12,000 USD per annum."

Ground:

a. The annual meeting of NAPARC each year is the primary place that CERCU meets, and that is where the majority of our budget is spent. As a committee, we see the need to continue to have at

least one face-to-face meeting each year. The importance of classical representation necessitates our being a large committee. It is also essential to travel for the synods/GAs of other churches to continue our encouragement in unity. This year, we have the privilege of hosting the NAPARC meetings; we will be doing so in Oak Lawn, IL.

Adopted

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3, "That the URCNA enter into Phase Two 'Ecclesiastical Fellowship' with the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) and make arrangements for ratification by the churches according to Church Order Article 36."

Grounds:

a. They are a federation of true churches of Christ confessing the same precious faith as we, in like Reformed understanding. The confessionally Reformed expression of the Christian faith lives among them in a vibrant and faithful manner, as indicated by the Phase One dialogue summarized in this report.
b. The practice of experiential and discriminatory preaching that has historically been emphasized among the HRC is not an impediment to unity, but a common practice that we can appreciate and endorse. Although there are more and less helpful formulations and sermonic practices of this, we both affirm a desire to avoid the opposite ditches of presumption and doubt.
c. A Phase Two relationship with the HRC will allow greater opportunity for iron to sharpen iron. Two areas where the HRC excel are their outward-facing mission endeavors and their strong organizational presence in PRTS and Reformation Heritage Books.

d. We have been in Level 2 (HRC) and Phase One (URCNA) for 13 years. In that time, the HRC has continued to develop balance in its discriminatory emphasis, and we have grown in our understanding and appreciation of one another.

Adopted

Rev. Boekestein leads the assembly in prayer, and the assembly rises to sing the Doxology.

The chairman rules that the date for ratification of the above decision is Dec. 31, 2026.

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4, "That Synod take note of the overture approved within the PCA by the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley, complete with an invitation to NAPARC churches (see Appendix B of CERCU report), and accept this invitation, tasking our Stated Clerk to coordinate and communicate a suitable date for all willing URCNA congregations to join in the day of fasting and prayer so described."

Grounds:

a. The six points outlined in the PCA's resolution ("Whereas…") are valid and timely for our churches as well.
b. Participation in such a day of fasting and prayer, though encouraged, is voluntary.

Adopted

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5, "That the URCNA enter into Phase One "Corresponding Relations" with the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC)."

Grounds:

a. They are a denomination of true churches of Christ confessing the same precious faith as we, in like Reformed understanding. The confessionally

Presbyterian expression of the Christian faith lives among them in a vibrant and faithful manner.

b. Through establishing this formal relationship, we will be ideally positioned to further explore the topics listed in our Guidelines under Phase One, with the intent that by correspondence and dialogue, mutual understanding and appreciation may develop between our federation and their denomination.
c. We will be able to invite them to send a fraternal observer to our synods, further facilitating ecumenical relations.

Adopted

6. That Synod not accede to Recommendation 6, "That Synod take note of the BPC's desire to apply for membership in NAPARC and sponsor them to that end, appointing our Stated Clerk to write a communication on behalf of this Synod, in keeping with the regulations and expectations of NAPARC."

Grounds:

a. Entering into a Phase One relationship with the BPC gives our federation the opportunity to get to know the BPC denomination. Getting to know this denomination better would be wise before we sponsor its entrance in NAPARC.
b. The BPC already has other denominations that are willing to sponsor its entrance into NAPARC.

Adopted

7. That Synod not accede to Recommendation 7, "That Synod task the CERCU to write a letter to the CRCNA, encouraging them in the signs of reformation that have taken place, and exhorting them to further reformation in areas where it ought to be pursued. [Or: …encouraging them in the direction of reformation.]"

Grounds:

a. The current state of the CRCNA and the debates within this denomination would make it difficult to write a letter that is appropriately applied and well received at this time. There is a significant diversity in teaching and in practice within various CRCNA congregations.
b. There remain significant differences between our federation and the CRCNA, and a letter of this nature might be viewed as a diminishing of these differences.
c. The content of this proposed letter was too vague to be approved by Synod.
d. The lack of unanimity on the CERCU committee itself would make writing this letter difficult.

Defeated

8. That Synod accede to Recommendation 8, "That Synod commend to the churches the suggested 'practical steps forward' with the CanRC and encourage their implementation as worthy endeavors."

Ground:

a. Many of these recommended activities are already taking place.

Adopted

9. That Synod accede to Recommendation 9, "That Synod remind the churches of our mutual responsibility to engage one another in our ecumenical task through prayer, classical dialogue, local efforts, and expression of concerns."

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to accede to Recommendation 7 of the CERCU report as presented. The recommendation states:

That Synod task the CERCU to write a letter to the CRCNA, encouraging them in the signs of reformation that have taken place, and exhorting them to further reformation in areas where it ought to be pursued. [Or: …encouraging them in the direction of reformation.]

Motion is made and supported to amend to add "inter-church relations committee of the" prior to "CRCNA".

Adopted

The motion, as amended, states:

That Synod task the CERCU to write a letter to the inter-church relations committee of the CRCNA, encouraging them in the signs of reformation that have taken place, and exhorting them to further reformation in areas where it ought to be pursued. [Or: …encouraging them in the direction of reformation."]"

The motion, as amended, is:

Adopted

10. That Synod approve the work of the committee.

Adopted

ARTICLE 42

The chairman declares the order of the day.

Rev. Jeremy Veldman reads Psalm 67, offers a brief exhortation, and leads in prayer. He calls the assembly to sing TPH 67B, "O God, Show Mercy to Us".

The assembly is recessed until the beginning of the morning session at 8:00 a.m.

Wednesday, June 10, 2026
Morning Session

ARTICLE 43

Rev. Kelvin Tiemstra calls the assembly to sing TPH 270, "At the Name of Jesus." He reads from 1 Kings 3:3-9, offers a brief exhortation, and leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 44

The chairman invites Rev. Bruce Backensto from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America to address the assembly. He has been blessed to be a fraternal delegate to many assemblies among the branches of the church and rejoices in singing the praises of the Lord with us. He gives thanks for the 50th anniversary of NAPARC and for the shared commitment to serve and worship the Lord in our churches. The RPCNA rejoices in the growth of a Reformed Presbyterian Church in a country to remain unnamed that now includes five presbyteries, many churches, thousands of members, and a seminary that is graduating many capable preachers. The Canadian Presbytery of the RPCNA has also now become its own church. There are many new and small churches, and there is a great need for faithful elders in the RPCNA, and they plead for the Lord to raise up more men for that service. The RPCNA is eager for a closer relationship with the ARP, and their upcoming assemblies will meet concurrently. Their upcoming synod will deliberate removing the ordination of female deacons from their Testimony, which would no longer require officers to subscribe to that component of the Testimony. He notes the ongoing judicial matter in the RPCNA addressing kinism and requests the prayers of the URCNA. The sword of the Lord's Word will cut the knot that prevents the progress of organic and organizational unity among our churches.

Rev. Jeremy Veldman leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

ARTICLE 45

Motion is made and supported to approve the concept minutes from Tuesday's session, which had been distributed previously to the delegates.

Adopted

ARTICLE 46

Motion is made and supported to approve the press release from Tuesday's session, which had been distributed previously to the delegates.

Adopted

ARTICLE 47

Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures and Communication
Materials: Overture 6

Recommendation:

1. That Synod table indefinitely Overture 6.

   Overture 6 states:

   > Classis Eastern U. S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to affirm the following statement from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America: *That the 14th Synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America along with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America condemn without distinction any theological or political teaching which posits a [moral] superiority of race or ethnic identity borne of immutable human characteristics and call to*

repentance any who would promote or associate themselves with such teaching, either by commission or omission.

Grounds:

a. The issues of race and ethnicity are weighty and complex matters that would better be addressed by a study committee to develop clear and robust doctrinal affirmations and/or pastoral advice.
b. Although Synod commends the desire of other NAPARC churches to make a statement to condemn racism, the grounds of this overture do not sufficiently justify its formal affirmation. We can stand in unity with other NAPARC churches without formally affirming their statements.
c. The proposed statement does not fit synodical definitions of doctrinal affirmation or pastoral advice (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, Appendix D.1-2).
d. The proposed statement utilizes undefined and unfamiliar terminology.

Motion is made and supported to grant the privilege of the floor to Dr. Alan Strange to speak to this recommendation.

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Jacques Roets to speak to this recommendation.

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to table this advisory committee report until after the assembly considers Overture 7.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 5** continued in Art. 89)

ARTICLE 48

Advisory Committee 10 – CECCA and Overture
Materials: Overture 9

Recommendation:

1. That Synod table indefinitely Overture 9.

   Overture 9 states:

   > Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 64 of the URCNA Church Order, as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article. ~~Strikethrough~~ indicates that words currently included are being removed.]
   >
   > **Article 64 – Departure of Members**
   > Those who seek the transfer of their membership to another congregation within the federation or one ~~in~~ *with which the URCNA has entered into* ecclesiastical fellowship shall request in writing that their current Consistory send to the receiving Consistory an official letter including pertinent membership information and testimony concerning doctrine and life, requesting the receiving Consistory to accept them under its spiritual care.
   >
   > The Consistory may release members in order to affiliate with congregations *with which the URCNA has* not *established* ~~in~~ ecclesiastical fellowship when the Consistory judges that doing so may aid the spiritual growth of the members.
   >
   > *If a member making a request for transfer or release is under discipline, transfer or release may be granted if the Consistory of the receiving church*

expresses a willingness to shepherd the individual toward repentance and restoration. A current Consistory declining to accede to a request for transfer or release shall explain in writing its reason to the member.

The Consistory may, with concurring advice from classis, erase the membership of those with whom they have not been able to communicate for at least two years. *(See Appendix 8.)*

Grounds:

a. The underlying issue of the rights of members in relation to the authority of the consistory is not addressed sufficiently by the overture and warrants further study before making changes to the Church Order.
b. While the background to the overture focuses on the calling and responsibility of a consistory, the churches would be better served by broadening the consideration to include the meaning, weight, and obligation of the membership vows.
c. It is our conviction that the churches would be better served by not ruling on this overture at this time. To accede or not accede to this overture could prejudice discussion on this matter of the authority of the consistory and the rights and responsibilities of members.
d. While the Church Order doesn't directly address all the underlying concerns presented in the overture's background, it does speak to the authority of the consistory in handling membership matters.

Adopted

ARTICLE 49

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Reports
Materials: Statistics and Directory Report for Synod 2026

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report of the Statistics and Directory Editor.

   Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1 with its grounds.

   Recommendation 1: That Synod amend *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.4.c as follows to reflect the current practice (delete ~~strikethrough~~, add underlined *italics*):
   4.8.4 c. Prepare an annual directory for digital download, which shall consist of a listing of: synodical and classical functionaries, synodical and classical standing committees, classical statistics; churches by province/state, including profiles of each church in the federation; alphabetical directories of all ministers of the United Reformed Churches, including those granted emeritus status, deceased, released, and deposed from office, as well as licensed exhorters and candidates for the ministry. ~~In addition, the Statistician shall differentiate between infant and adult baptisms; differentiate between exclusion of a baptized member and exclusion of professing members due to resignation; URCNA membership transfers (in / out); NAPARC membership transfers (in / out); non-NAPARC membership (release / receptions); differentiate between elders and deacons; minister's birth year; and same church membership analysis.~~ *The statistical data collected annually shall include:*
   - *number of ministers, elders, deacons, families, singles, baptized members, and professing members*
   - *number of infant/covenantal baptisms, professions of faith (with adult baptism),*

professions of faith (without adult baptism), and deaths

- *number of family, professing and baptized member transfers in/out of URCNA, transfers in/out of NAPARC, release/receptions to/from non-NAPARC*
- *removals due to excommunications, exclusions of baptized members, exclusions of professing members due to resignation, and erasures*

Each minister's birth year is collected for statistical purposes only.
Same church membership is to be made available to each church upon request.

Grounds:

a. There is no official comprehensive documentation on which statistical fields are to be collected.
b. Future Statisticians could choose not to collect important data that isn't set out clearly in the Statistician's mandate.
c. With no guidance beyond what has been traditionally practiced, potential changes to data collection requirements cannot be easily considered and implemented.

Adopted

3. That Synod appoint the next convening consistory to work with the Statistician in preparing a document that clearly and thoroughly explains the URCNA Statistical Data Categories as defined by previous synods, with references, as well as some FAQs to aid churches in submitting consistent and accurate statistical data, and that this be Synod's answer to Recommendation 2.

   Recommendation 2: That Synod appoint an ad-hoc committee to work with the Statistician in preparing a document that clearly and thoroughly explains the URCNA Statistical Data Categories as defined by

previous synods, with references, as well as some FAQs to aid churches in submitting consistent and accurate statistical data.

Grounds:

a. It is difficult for the website user to navigate links to the Church Order and the acts of synod when seeking to gain clarity on a statistical field.
b. The Statistician receives many emails with the same questions being asked.

Adopted

4. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3.

   Recommendation 3: That Synod encourage the churches to update their directory information as changes take place and make timely use of the Ministerial News. The Statistician can then respond as needed with appropriate reminders and/or instructions.

   Adopted

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 4.

   Recommendation 4: That Synod encourage the churches to document membership statistics as they happen either on the website or locally by using a program like Church Social. With this process in place, year-end statistical submissions should not be so difficult, daunting, or delayed.

   Adopted

6. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5 with its grounds.

   Recommendation 5: That the churches discontinue the reporting of family transfers, while continuing to report the transfer of individual professing and baptized members. This would require the amendment of the

Regulations for Synodical Procedure 4.8.4.c as follows: "The statistical data collected annually should include: … number of ~~family,~~ professing and baptized member transfers …"

Grounds:

a. This allows data entry to be less subjective and more mathematical. The reporting of member transfer data can be quite simple: members in, members out.
b. It can be easily observed that the collection of statistics is not the favorite task of most (if not all) clerks, administrative assistants, or pastors; the more straightforward the process, the more cooperation can be expected.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6 with its grounds, including an amendment to add a fourth sub-category titled: "Readmission of a Disciplined Baptized Member as per Article 60 of the Church Order."

   Recommendation 6: That Synod clarify the statistical data to be gathered regarding professions of faith with the following categories:

   Total Professions of Faith; with subcategories of:
   Profession of Faith (with adult baptism)
   Profession of Faith by a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member
   Reaffirmation of Faith/Profession of Reformed Faith
   (e.g. from non-NAPARC church)
   Readmission of a Disciplined Baptized Member as per Article 60 of the Church Order

   This would require the amendment of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.4.c as follows: "The statistical data collected annually shall include:….

number of infant/covenant baptisms, *total professions of faith*, professions of faith (with adult baptism), professions of faith ~~(without adult baptism)~~ *by non-communicant (baptized) members, reaffirmation of faith/profession of Reformed faith, readmission of a disciplined baptized member as per Article 60 of the Church Order*, and deaths …"

Grounds:

a. Adding a "Reaffirmation of Faith" category should eliminate ambiguity and the duplicate data created when some churches report both a profession of faith and a reception of non-NAPARC membership while others report only one of these values.
b. Adding the subcategory "Profession of a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member" to Total Professions of Faith should account for all types of professions: "Profession of a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member" and "Profession with Adult Baptism" by reporting; and "Profession of New Faith with no need for baptism" by calculating the difference.
c. These additional data points would help to make the process of data collection more mathematical and thus allow for the potential to double check the data by calculating members in and out and comparing with reported changes in the congregation.

(**Advisory Committee 1** continued in Art. 55)

ARTICLE 50

The chairman calls the order of the day. The assembly is dismissed for morning refreshments before returning to order at 10:35 a.m.

ARTICLE 51

Rev. John van Eyk reads to the assembly a letter from Dr. Falko Drijfhout, Clerk of Presbytery for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales. (See Appendix A)

ARTICLE 52

The chairman invites Rev. Anup Hiwale of the Evangelical Reformed Church in India to address the assembly. He extends greetings to the URCNA on behalf of the Evangelical Reformed Church in India. After graduating from Mid-America Reformed Seminary in 2006, he and his family returned to India to plant churches. He is eager to reflect upon the Lord's blessings for both that work and the URCNA in the past twenty years. He is filled with gratitude to the Lord for the great things God has done for the ERC, adding twelve congregations in the last two years and now numbering more than 50,000 souls. The ERC has been blessed through new facilities for theological education, expanding capacity for more students to serve in the churches. The sovereign Lord continues to gather, preserve, and increase his church. He assures the assembly that the ERC prays for the URCNA, and he encourages the URCNA to send a fraternal delegate to their synod in 2027.

Rev. Tsjibbe de Jong leads the assembly in prayer for the Evangelical Reformed Church in India and for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales.

ARTICLE 53

Rev. Keith Davis addresses the assembly to provide an update about the Missions and Pastors Conference to be held on March 15-18, 2027, and hosted once again at the Bonclarken Conference Center. He encourages the churches to highlight the opportunity of this conference for their pastors and elders and their families. The topic of the conference is "Healthy Leaders,

Healthy Churches." More information can be found at urcnamissions.org.

ARTICLE 54

Rev. Richard Bout addresses the assembly to report on his work as the Foreign Missions Coordinator of the URCNA. He reads 1 Peter 2:9 and reflects on the joy of a new believer being called out of darkness and into the Lord's wonderful light. He rejoices in the work of the foreign missionaries of the URCNA who have been so dedicated and faithful. He describes his relationships with missionary-sending churches regarding field committees, with churches interested in sending missionaries, and with churches working with home missionaries. There are several opportunities for more foreign mission fields to be considered. He has regular contact and prayer with foreign missionaries, and he has made visits to Ecuador, Mexico, Italy, and France. He also will be making trips to Egypt, Turkey, and Costa Rica. The Cross-Cultural Missions Training gives young people one month of training in missions, and planning is underway for CCMT in 2027. He also participates in several meetings and conferences with broader organizations, including NAPARC, the International Conference of Reformed Churches, Word & Deed, and the Reformed Seminary of the Americas. He has made investigative trips to Mexico and Liberia and is involved in local work with international families.

One of the passions of the Synodical Committee for Foreign Missions is to send new missionaries. Several of the URCNA foreign missionaries are approaching the age of retirement and there must be a clear path forward for younger people to enter foreign missions. He reports that the URCNA sends 80% fewer missionaries than had been customary in the CRCNA. He highlights the five phases in foreign missions, as described in the URCNA Foreign Missions Manual.

He urges the churches to be fervent in prayer for God's blessings upon our missionaries, for the difficulties faced in

many of the fields, for unity in the work of missions, and for the Lord to raise up the next generation of missionaries.

Rev. Greg Bylsma leads the assembly in prayer for the Foreign Missions Coordinator and the work of the URCNA in missions.

ARTICLE 55

(continued from Art. 49)

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Reports
Materials: Statistics and Directory Report for Synod 2026

Recommendations:

7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 6 with its grounds, including an amendment to add a fourth sub-category titled: "Readmission of a Disciplined Baptized Member as per Article 60 of the Church Order."

   Recommendation 6: That Synod clarify the statistical data to be gathered regarding professions of faith with the following categories:

   Total Professions of Faith; with subcategories of:
   Profession of Faith (with adult baptism)
   Profession of Faith by a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member
   Reaffirmation of Faith/Profession of Reformed Faith (e.g. from non-NAPARC church)
   Readmission of a Disciplined Baptized Member as per Article 60 of the Church Order

   This would require the amendment of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.4.c as follows: "The statistical data collected annually shall include: … number of infant/covenant baptisms, *total professions of faith*, professions of faith (with adult baptism), professions of faith ~~(without adult baptism)~~ *by non-*

communicant (baptized) members, reaffirmation of faith/profession of Reformed faith, readmission of a disciplined baptized member as per Article 60 of the Church Order, and deaths …"

Grounds:

a. Adding a "Reaffirmation of Faith" category should eliminate ambiguity and the duplicate data created when some churches report both a profession of faith and a reception of non-NAPARC membership while others report only one of these values.
b. Adding the subcategory "Profession of a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member" to Total Professions of Faith should account for all types of professions: "Profession of a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member" and "Profession with Adult Baptism" by reporting; and "Profession of New Faith with no need for baptism" by calculating the difference.
c. These additional data points would help to make the process of data collection more mathematical thus allow for the potential to double check the data by calculating members in and out and comparing with reported changes in the congregation.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

8. That Synod thank the Statistics and Directory Editor for her faithful and excellent service to the churches.

Adopted

The chairman and the assembly express their gratitude to Mrs. Jody Luth, the URCNA Statistician and Directory Editor.

ARTICLE 56

Advisory Committee 6 – Appeals Report and Overtures
Materials: Standing Committee on Appeals Report

Recommendation:

1. That Synod approve the work of the Standing Committee on Appeals.

Adopted

ARTICLE 57

Advisory Committee 6 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 8

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 8 without its grounds.

   Overture 8 states:

   > Classis Eastern U.S. overtures the next Synod to amend URCNA Church Order Article 66 (changes underlined).
   >
   > > **Article 66 – The Observance and Revision of the Church Order**
   > > These articles and appendices, relating to the lawful order of the church, have been so drafted and adopted by common consent, that they ought to be observed diligently. If it be found that God may be more honored and the churches better served by changing any article or appendix, this shall require a two-thirds vote of a synod and shall be ratified by two-thirds of the synodically-approved Consistories of the federation, after which they shall take effect.

Grounds:

a. The Church Order appendices have considerable weight. The procedure for changing the appendices

should be consistent with that of the articles of the Church Order.

i. Debate at recent synods suggested that many delegates saw the appendices as having the very same substance as the articles themselves (*homoousios* not *homoiousios*). Allowing for appendix changes, which take effect immediately by simple majority, would undermine the safeguards of Article 66.

ii. The additional time it takes to ratify appendix changes would better clarify and eliminate any concern that a proposed appendix is in ideological conflict with any other article or appendix. It may be difficult for the churches to fully anticipate the impact of implementing a large appendix.

b. "The regulations for synodical procedure may be suspended, amended, or revised, by a 2/3 majority vote of the synod" (Introduction to *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*). The procedure for changing the appendices should match or exceed the procedure for changing the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

The chairman rules that the date for ratification of the above decision is Dec. 31, 2026.

2. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 8.

Adopted

ARTICLE 58

Rev. Jeremy Vander Lei calls for the assembly to sing TPH 29B, "Now unto Jehovah, Ye Sons of the Mighty." He reads

Colossians 3:1-17, offers a brief exhortation, and leads in prayer.

The assembly is dismissed for a group photo and lunch.

Wednesday, June 10, 2026
Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 59

Rev. Tsjibbe de Jong calls for the assembly to sing TPH 403, "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken." He reads Psalm 123, offers a brief exhortation, and leads the assembly in prayer.

ARTICLE 60

Rev. John van Eyk reads to the assembly a letter from Rev. Kabongo Kalala Malebongo Athanase of the United Reformed Church in the Congo, who was prevented from attending the assembly in person. (See Appendix B.)

Rev. van Eyk leads the assembly in prayer for the United Reformed Church in the Congo.

ARTICLE 61

The chairman invites Rev. Dirk Poppe from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to address the assembly. He expresses gratitude to the URCNA for the fellowship and welcome, as well as for the growth of this relationship since 2014. The FRCA is growing gradually with new churches and a mission work on the east coast. They invest deeply in established Reformed schools, which anchors many families to their local areas and makes it difficult to uproot families to begin church plants. He remarks on the similarities with the URCNA, as well as the close relationship between the FRCA and the Canadian Reformed Churches. Six faithful men are being sent to the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, and Rev. Poppe

requests prayers for the provision of more men to proclaim the gospel. He mentions some of the unique challenges of their culture and government, for which they desire the prayers of the URCNA. He asks the churches of the URCNA to consider assisting the FRCA in their mission works in other countries. He urges the assembly to remember the riches we have received in Christ.

Elder Mark Dirksen leads the assembly in prayer for the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

ARTICLE 62

The chairman invites Mr. Dirk Stolk from the Free Reformed Churches in North America to address the assembly. The FRC is conducting its synod concurrently with the Heritage Reformed Congregations, and he rejoices that we can see the work of the Lord's grace to build His church. The FRC supports the "Banner of Truth" radio broadcast, and the broadcast is bearing fruit. They are struggling with a shortage of pastors for their churches, and he requests prayer for the Lord to provide. Some of the churches of the FRC are located near congregations of the URCNA and enjoy cooperation in various mission and community activities, as well as pulpit exchanges. The FRC is dismayed with the decline of the CGK, its mother church in the Netherlands. They pray that the URCNA would continue to be strong in the Lord, taking comfort in the gospel of Jesus, and he expresses gratitude to the Lord for the steadfastness and warmth of the URCNA. He offers a prayer to the Lord for the URCNA and the FRC.

Rev. Jason Vander Horst leads the assembly in prayer for the Free Reformed Churches in North America.

ARTICLE 63

The chairman relinquishes the chair to the vice-chairman.

The vice-chairman recognizes those delegates who are attending a synod for the first time. The assembly expresses its gratitude to these delegates.

The vice-chairman recognizes those ministers who have served the churches for many years and for whom this will likely be their final opportunity to attend a synod. The assembly expresses its gratitude to these delegates.

ARTICLE 64

Advisory Committee 12 – Appeal
Materials: Appeal of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls

Recommendations:

1. That Synod grant Rev. Ben Davenport and Rev. Dr. Brian Lee up to seven minutes each to address the appeal and answer questions, in accordance with Appendix 7.6 and the advice of the Standing Committee on Appeals.

Grounds:

a. Rev. Davenport is a member of the appealing consistory (Appendix 7.6).
b. Rev. Dr. Lee is a member of the consistory that put forward the overture that led to the decision of Synod Escondido 2024 in question (Standing Committee on Appeals advice).

Adopted

The vice-chairman invites Rev. Davenport to address the assembly.

The vice-chairman invites Rev. Dr. Lee to address the assembly.

2. That Synod find Specification of Error 1 not sustained.

Specification of Error 1 states:

> Synod Escondido 2024 erred in adopting language that narrows the individual right of appeal granted in Church Order Article 31.

Grounds:

a. There is some ambiguity between Article 31, which states, "If any church member complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a narrower assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to the broader assemblies. An individual's appeal must proceed first to the consistory," and Appendix 7.1, which states, "An individual member may only appeal a decision originating in his own consistory." The ambiguity lies in the difficulty of defining our terms in relation to "narrower assembly," "the decision of a narrower assembly," "a decision originating in his own consistory," and the aspect of how an appeal may proceed. Nevertheless, the claim that this restricts and removes the right of an individual to appeal as stated in Article 31 has not been sufficiently proven to rise to the level of error.
b. Appendix 7.4.c removes some of the ambiguity and harmonizes with Article 31 by directing an individual to urge his consistory to appeal decisions of other assemblies (consistories, classes, or synods) when the matter pertains to the churches in common. This preserves the individual's ability to raise concerns while ensuring that appeals concerning federational matters are made by the proper ecclesiastical body.
c. The emphasis on the need to proceed first to one's own consistory with appeals is valuable. While it is true that individual members may provide a helpful source of accountability for the decisions of

broader assemblies which pertain to the churches in common, their allegations should be weighed first in their own consistories by the officers directly charged with safeguarding the work of the churches in common [cf. *Acts of Synod Escondido 2024,* Art.113.4].

d. The language of Appendix 7 does not narrow or restrict the right of an individual to appeal, but emphasizes the need for "vetting" and "refinement" by the consistory. Vetting of individual allegations ensures that only sufficiently weighty decisions will be appealed and that these appeals will come in a form most conducive to healthy consideration and redress. This does not empower a consistory to unduly silence individual concerns, however, for the individual always has the right to appeal the consistory's decision to a broader assembly [cf. *Acts of Synod Escondido 2024,* Art.113.4].
e. The ambiguity introduced by Appendix 7 was not created by Synod Escondido 2024, but has existed since its inception in 2018. We have deliberated over the broadness and narrowness of the language since that time.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 12** continued in Art. 109)

ARTICLE 65

(continued from Art. 24)

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 14

Recommendations:

2. That Synod take the following action: establish 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. This committee shall:

1. Explore the relationship between marriage, sex, and procreation.
2. Offer reflections on the biblical theology of infertility, singleness, and adoption.
3. Provide a framework for assessing the merits and drawbacks of specific reproductive technologies.
4. Consider the ethical implications of the adoption of embryos by both married couples and single adults.
5. Deliberate how to balance Christian liberty with biblical and ethical considerations.
6. Provide recommendations that uphold human dignity and the integrity of human life.

Grounds:

a. This matter is highly relevant to our contemporary context and questions that are asked in our churches. The church must examine critical issues and responsibly address them on the basis of God's Word.
b. Our contemporary bioethical questions are complex and may pose significant challenges for local consistories and individual congregations. These issues often require specialized expertise that may not be readily available at the local level.
c. There is an opportunity for the URCNA to provide leadership and help to the broader church.
d. Our stated positions on contemporary bioethical questions today can influence how future scientific advancements are integrated into the moral framework of our churches and society.

Adopted

3. That Synod instruct this committee to report to the next synod.

Adopted

4. That Synod approve $10,000 USD to allow for a face-to-face meeting(s).

Adopted

5. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 14.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 4** continued in Art. 108)

ARTICLE 66

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 11

Recommendation:

1. That synod withhold action on Overture 11.

   Overture 11 states:

   > Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to adopt the following doctrinal affirmations, as a clear interpretation of Scripture's teaching regarding the relationship between sin, the curse, and death. In doing so, we ask Synod Calgary 2026 to demonstrate our commitment to "believe without a doubt all things contained" in the books of Scripture (Belgic Confession of Faith, Art. 5); and to reject teachings which stand contrary to the truth of Scripture (Belgic Confession of Faith, Art. 7).
   >
   > **1. Affirmation of the Trustworthiness of Scripture Regarding World History**

1.1. Since the Word of God set forth and preserved in Scripture was fully inspired by the Holy Spirit (Belgic Confession of Faith, Art. 3); and
1.2. Since "we believe without a doubt all things contained in them" (Belgic Confession of Faith, Art. 5); and
1.3. Since we confess that no one – even an apostle or an angel from heaven, as Paul says – ought to teach other than what the Holy Scriptures have already taught us (Belgic Confession of Faith, Art. 7); and
1.4. Since there is a "light of nature" which reveals truth, yet man "does not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society," such that he "distorts this light" (Canons of Dort, Head 3/4, Art. 4);
1.5. THEREFORE we affirm that the testimony of Scripture is true and trustworthy, even when modern science rejects its teaching and offers theories that undermine the clear facts which God's Word asserts.

2. Rejection of a Significant Time Lapse Between the Formation of Animals and the Formation of Mankind

2.1. Since God created all things good in six days, defined as evenings and mornings (Genesis 1 & 2 and Exodus 20:11); and
2.2. Since "we reject any evolutionary teaching, including theistic evolution, concerning the origin of the earth and of all creatures (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 7)" (*Acts of Synod Escondido 2001*, Article 43.A.3.d.); and
2.3. Since Genesis 1 reports that mankind was made on Day Six, along with "the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle

according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind" (Genesis 1:25);

2.4. THEREFORE we reject any teaching that posits the existence of animal life for ages prior to man's creation.

3. Rejection of Animal Death Prior to Adam's Sin

3.1. Since God created all things good (Genesis 1:4,10,12,18,21,25), concluding at the end of His forming process that it was "very good" (Genesis 1:31); and

3.2. Since God, in the midst of this "good" creative process, gave to mankind "every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed … for food" (Genesis 1:29), while also giving "to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life … every green herb for food" (Genesis 1:30); and

3.3. Since green herbs and trees bearing fruit are distinct from men and animals – Scripture never calling them *living beings* (*nephesh chayah*); and

3.4. Since God declares that death is "the last enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26), which came as a consequence of man's sin (1 Corinthians 15:21);

3.5. THEREFORE we reject any claim that there could have been animal death prior to the sin of Adam.

4. Rejection of Non-Human Death as "Natural"

4.1. Since Adam's sin had corrupting effects upon the cosmos itself (Genesis 3:17); and

4.2. Since Adam's sin explicitly brought death to Adam and his offspring (Genesis 3:19; Genesis 5; Romans 5:12-14); and
4.3. Since death explicitly brought the creation under God's curse (Romans 8:20-22), even bringing it under "the bondage of corruption" (*phthora*); and
4.4. Since corruption (*phthora*) is closely tied to death and destruction (2 Peter 2:12);
4.5. THEREFORE we reject any claim that the death of non-human creatures was natural, rather than being the consequence of Adam's sin.

5. Affirmation of Sin as the Cause of All Death

5.1. Since God's Word declares that Jesus will renew all things (Acts 3:20-21); and
5.2. Since this renewal includes the cessation of death and pain (Revelation 21:4); and
5.3. Since Scripture explicitly indicates that, in that age of renewal, animals will no longer prey upon and kill one another – the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the leopard lying down with the young goat, the cow and bear grazing together, the lion eating straw like an ox, and none of them hurting or destroying (Isaiah 11:6-9); and
5.4. Since "renewal" or "restoration" indicates the returning of its object to its previous state;
5.5. THEREFORE we affirm that the state in which God created the world did not include any form of human or animal death, until sin entered to bring corruption and curse.

Grounds:

a. The confessional citations in this overture did not give enough clarity to support a Doctrinal Affirmation (*Regulations of Synodical Procedure,* Appendix D.1).
b. The committee believes there are other ways to address the doctrinal issues highlighted in this overture.
c. The overture lacks the use of the Reformed historical tradition. The committee believes such is needed before Synod can make an informed decision on such a statement.
d. Although the overture states no study committee was needed because the doctrines "are neither difficult nor complex," we believe that the doctrines before us demand more study which would consider the deliberations and positions of churches with which we have ecumenical relations.

(**Advisory Committee 4** continued in Art. 76)

ARTICLE 67

The vice-chairman invites Rev. Peter Szabó from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe to address the assembly. He brings warm greetings from his young denomination which subscribes to the Westminster Standards, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Second Helvetic Confession, allowing them to draw from the rich traditions of all Reformed churches. Though there are cultural and numerical differences, the RPCCEE shares much with the URCNA historically, theologically, and liturgically. In 1998, the RPCCEE began with twelve church plants simultaneously, and the Lord has been good in providing for their churches. Some of the congregations are struggling, but many are strong. Revs. Boekestein, Moes, van Eyk, Bout, and Bylsma have visited and encouraged their churches, and this has been a treasured blessing. He asks the URCNA to consider the tremendous need in Europe, where

most countries are deeply deprived of an evangelical presence. He commends the URCNA for its missionary zeal. In the darkness, the light shines even brighter – confessionally Reformed churches are being planted in countries where the Reformation has had nearly no history. There is a new spark because the Lord is the sovereign ruler of history, and the church is advancing right before our eyes in Europe. The progress of missions is supernatural, flowing from the love of our God to this world.

Rev. Greg Bylsma leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe.

ARTICLE 68

The vice-chairman invites Rev. Travis Grassmid from the Reformed Church of the United States to address the assembly. He rejoices in the precious unity that is shared among our churches in the Lord Jesus Christ and commends the URCNA for its careful and committed work in this assembly. He is thankful for the opportunities for pulpit exchanges and joint worship services. The RCUS celebrated 300 years of God's faithfulness in 2025, and the 2026 Synod was encouraging for its commitment to the growth of church planting efforts. He is encouraged to witness the brotherly love with which the weighty work of the advisory committees in this assembly has been conducted. The RCUS is seeking categories for making binding judgments that do not rise to the level of confessional status, and so is interested in the categories employed by the URCNA regarding pastoral advice and doctrinal affirmations. He seeks the Lord's blessing upon the URCNA and the RCUS.

Rev. James Roosma leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Church of the United States.

ARTICLE 69

The chairman calls the order of the day. The delegates are dismissed for their afternoon refreshments and for the completion of the work of their advisory committees.

Wednesday, June 10, 2026
Evening Session

ARTICLE 70

The call of the gospel needs to be carried to the lost, both in our communities and in the farthest reaches of the world. The delegates gather to rejoice in the Lord's provision of missionaries, chaplains, and church planters who have been called by Christ through the churches to serve the King.

Rev. Greg Bylsma, chairman of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, welcomes the delegates and many guests who have come to hear the presentations and to pray for the Lord's blessing upon the mission works of the URCNA. He calls for the singing of TPH 531, "Nearer, Still Nearer." He reads from Acts 4:29-31 and offers a brief meditation of encouragement that although the work of the church is warfare, the church has always found its refuge in the Lord. He encourages everyone to continue deeply in prayer for our missionaries, to eagerly support them financially, and to consider sending young and old to the work of missions. He extends gratitude to Rev. Richard Bout, Foreign Missions Coordinator of the URCNA, and Paul Lawton, Home Missions Clerk, for their labors and for organizing the presentations for the evening.

Rev. Bill Green (Costa Rica), Rev. Eric Kayayan (Reformed Faith and Life), Revs. Eric Pennings and Jose Ramirez (MINTS), Rev. Mike Brown via video (Italy), and Rev. Matt Van Dyken (Mexico) make presentations about their work in

foreign missions. Each presentation is followed by earnest prayer for the Lord's blessings.

Dr. Don Sampson of the Presbyterian & Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel addresses the assembly on the service of chaplains in military and civilian capacities in the United States. Rev. Bout leads in prayer for the PRCC and URCNA chaplains.

The assembly sings TPH 220, "The Ends of All the Earth Shall Hear."

Rev. John Bouwers, chairman of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions, welcomes seven home missionaries and church planters to speak about their labors for the Lord: Elder Tommy Rivers (Classis Pacific Northwest), Rev. Mitch Ramkissoon (Classis Western Canada), Rev. Jared Pine (Classis Southwest U.S.), Rev. Elijah Anderson (Classis Central U.S.), Rev. Tony Zekveld (Classis Southwestern Ontario), Rev. Eric Heida (Classis Ontario-East), and Rev. Dr. J. Brandon Burks (Classis Eastern U.S.). A video presentation is also provided by Classis Eastern U.S.

Rev. Bouwers offers prayer for the home mission works of the URCNA.

The evening concludes with the singing of TPH 418, "Arise, O God."

Thursday, June 11, 2026
Morning Session

ARTICLE 71

Rev. John Bouwers calls the assembly to sing TPH 103C:1-4, "Come, My Soul, and Bless the LORD." He reads Isaiah 55, offers a brief exhortation, and leads the assembly in prayer.

ARTICLE 72

The vice-chairman announces that Rev. Harold Miller, Elder Bruce Aardsma, and Rev. Keith Davis have been excused from the assembly.

The alternate delegate from Bethel URC of Calgary, Elder Leonard Vanwoudenberg, stands to indicate his assent to the Form of Subscription.

ARTICLE 73

Motion is made and supported to approve the concept minutes from Wednesday's sessions, which had been distributed previously to the delegates.

Adopted

ARTICLE 74

Motion is made and supported to approve the press release from Wednesday's sessions, which had been distributed previously to the delegates.

Adopted

ARTICLE 75

The vice-chairman invites Rev. John Nymann from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to address the assembly. He expresses gratitude to the assembly for the welcome he has received, and for the fellowship and devotion that he has witnessed. He speaks of being blessed by many URCNA congregations throughout the years. The OPC and URCNA are blessed to share a rich history, including the publication of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, joint work on the mission field in Uganda, pulpit exchanges, and conferences. The OPC has been blessed with growth in membership and mission works. Its General Assembly recently concluded, and a review of its Book of Church Order is underway. He commends to the assembly

the "Ruling Elder" and "Reformed Deacon" podcasts. The OPC and URCNA also share challenges, including a shortage of ministers, and the General Assembly has called for a day of prayer and fasting on September 13 to plead for the Lord's provision of men to serve at home and abroad. The OPC is facing the struggles of Kinism and Race Realism, and the General Assembly has adopted the statement that is before the Synod this week. Study committees have been struck to address the matters of Christian Nationalism and racism, and Rev. Nymann asks the URCNA to stand with the OPC against these attacks against the church. Together, the OPC and the URCNA stand for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Casey Freswick leads the assembly in prayer for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

ARTICLE 76

(continued from Art. 66)

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 11

Recommendations:

1. That synod withhold action on Overture 11.

Grounds:

a. The confessional citations in this overture did not give enough clarity to support a Doctrinal Affirmation (*Regulations of Synodical Procedure,* Appendix D.1).
b. The committee believes there are other ways to address the doctrinal issues highlighted in this overture.
c. The overture lacks the use of the Reformed historical tradition. The committee believes such is

needed before Synod can make an informed decision on such a statement.

d. Although the overture states no study committee was needed because the doctrines "are neither difficult nor complex," we believe that the doctrines before us demand more study which would consider the deliberations and positions of churches with which we have ecumenical relations.

Motion is made and supported to grant privilege of floor to Rev. Chris Gordon to speak to this recommendation.

Adopted

The recommendation is:

Adopted

2. That this be synod's answer to Overture 11.

Motion is made and supported to amend Recommendation 2 to state that Synod answer Overture 11 by reaffirming its commitment to the statements on creation that were made at Synod Escondido 2001 (*Acts of Synod Escondido 2001*, Art. 43).

Note: Acts of Synod Escondido 2001, Art. 43.A.3.d. states:

> *Synod affirms that Scripture teaches, as summarized by the Creeds and the Three Forms of Unity:*
>
> - *The authority and perspicuity of Scripture (Belgic Confession V; Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII).*
> - *Necessity and sufficiency of Scripture (Belgic Confession VII; Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII).*

- *God the Father almighty created the heavens and the earth and all things visible and invisible (Apostles' and Nicene Creed).*
- *The Father created the heavens and the earth out of nothing (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day IX).*
- *God gave every creature its shape and being (Belgic Confession XII).*
- *The creation and fall of man. "God made man of the dust of the earth; man gave ear to the devil." (Belgic Confession XIV).*
- *The historicity of Adam (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII.20; Canons of Dort III, IV.1).*
- *Man was created good, in a garden, and tempted by the devil, committed reckless disobedience (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day III and IV).*
- *God's words to the serpent in Paradise are noted as the first revelation of the Gospel (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VI).*
- *Adam plunged himself and his offspring by his first transgression into perdition (Belgic Confession XVI).*
- *Adam's fall into sin and our connection to it (Canons of Dort I.1).*
- *God came seeking man when he, trembling, fled from Him (Belgic Confession XVII).*
- *God created all things good in six days defined as evenings and mornings (Genesis 1 &2 and Exodus 20:11). This means that we reject any evolutionary teaching, including theistic*

evolution, concerning the origin of the earth and of all creatures (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day IX).

Motion is made and supported to grant privilege of the floor to Rev. Jacques Roets to speak to this recommendation.

Adopted

The motion to amend is:

Adopted

The recommendation, as amended is:

Adopted

ARTICLE 77

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 4

Recommendation:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 4.

Overture 4 states:

Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary to amend Church Order Article 27 to read as follows:

Article 27 – Church Visitors
Each Consistory of the classis shall invite two experienced office-bearers appointed by classis, either two ministers or a minister and an elder, to visit the council once every two years, who shall give account of their visit to the classis. These visitors shall inquire whether the office-bearers faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe in all

things the adopted order, and properly promote as much as lies in them, by word and deed, the edification of the congregation, including the youth, to the end that these visitors may fraternally admonish those office-bearers who have in anything been negligent, and may by their advice and assistance help direct all things unto the peace, edification and greatest profit of the churches. Upon the request of a Consistory, they may also be called upon to assist in cases of special difficulty. The church visitors shall give a written account of all their visits to the next classis.

Grounds:

a. Historically Article 27, as it stands, has served the churches well.
b. Article 27, as it stands, allows the various classes of the federation to exercise wisdom on how the details are practiced.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 4** continued in Art. 80)

ARTICLE 78

The vice-chairman calls the order of the day. The assembly is recessed for a time of refreshments before returning to order.

ARTICLE 79

Rev. John van Eyk reads to the assembly a letter from Rev. Alvis Sauka from the Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia and Rev. Artis Celmiņš from the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary. (See Appendix C.)

The vice-chairman invites Rev. Gerben Meijer of the Reformed Churches of South Africa (GKSA) to address the assembly. He brings greetings and encourages the URCNA to stand firmly on the principles of the gospel. He reflects on the years of relationship between the URCNA and the GKSA. Their churches face several challenges, including pressures from the culture and threats of division, and they seek the Lord's protection. North-West University, traditionally the theological institution for the training of ministers for the GKSA, has terminated its relationship with the GKSA. This training is now taking place at the Reformed Theological Academy, established in 2023. The need for ministers is significant, particularly in rural areas. It is essential that the Scriptures are presented clearly within the context of African languages and cultures. Over the past several years, the GKSA has engaged in discussions regarding women serving in the office of elder, and the GKSA has declared the office of elder to be open only to qualified men. Some churches, however, have resisted this judgment, and the Synod of 2026 declared that these churches have one year to rectify their situations according to the judgment, or they will be declared as having detached themselves from the GKSA. The Synod also expressed its gratitude for the fellowship the GKSA shares with the URCNA, and he prays that Christ would continue to be the basis of our unity.

Rev. Mark Vander Pol leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Churches of South Africa.

ARTICLE 80

(continued from Art. 77)

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 4

Recommendation:

2. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 4.

Adopted

ARTICLE 81

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 10

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 10, Part 1, with its grounds.

   Overture 10, Part 1 states:

   > Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 47 of the Church Order, as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article.]
   >
   > **Article 47 – The Church's Mission Calling**
   > The church's missionary task is to preach the Word of God to the unconverted. When this task is to be performed beyond the field of an organized church, it is to be carried out by ministers of the Word set apart to this labor, who are called~~,~~ *and* supported *by their councils*, and supervised by their consistories. A local consistory shall seek the advice of classis before sending a foreign or home missionary to a field or removing a foreign or home missionary from a field. The churches should assist each other in the support of their missionaries.

Grounds:

a. Calling: Our Church Order should strive to be internally consistent. As currently written, Article 47 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in Church Order Article 6,

which specifies that the council extends the ministerial call. This inconsistency is emphasized by the calling process for elders and deacons set forth in Article 12, which also occurs by the hand of the council.

b. Support: Since the deacons of a church are called to the duty of "gathering and managing the offerings of God's people in Christ's name, and distributing these offerings according to need" (Article 15), it is clear that the support of ministers requires the involvement of a church's council.
c. Supervision: While it seems clear that the council ought to be specified as having responsibility regarding the calling and support of a minister, it is equally clear from Article 14, Article 21, and Articles 37 and 38, that the supervision of ministers belongs to the work of the consistory.
d. This change will ensure that the language of Article 47 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our Church Order that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

2. That Synod accede to Overture 10, Part 2, with its grounds.

Overture 10, Part 2 states:

> Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 8 of the Church Order, as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article and deletions are indicated by ~~strikethrough~~.]
>
> **Article 8 – Calling a Minister from Outside the Federation**
> A minister who has been ordained in a church

outside the federation shall not be admitted to serve in a church within the federation without an examination conducted to the satisfaction of the delegates to the classis, according to the regulations adopted by the federation, whereupon the classis shall declare him eligible to be called by the *council of* *the sponsoring church* ~~sponsoring Consistory~~. (*See Appendices 5 and 6*)

Grounds:

a. As currently written, Article 8 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in Church Order Article 6. In Article 6, the man being called is elected by the council of the calling church, after prayer and reception of the advice of the congregation. The proposed change would bring Article 8 into conformity with this procedure.
b. Article 8 also currently implies a different procedure than that which is employed for the calling of elders and deacons in Article 12 of the Church Order. There, too, it is the council that presents nominations to the congregation – not the consistory.
c. This change will ensure that the language of Article 8 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our Church Order that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

3. That Synod accede to Overture 10, Part 3, with its grounds.

Overture 10, Part 3 states:

Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Procedure 2.d. of Appendix 5 of the Church Order, as indicated. [*Italics* with underline

indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article and deletions are indicated by ~~strikethrough~~.]

Appendix 5, Procedure 2.d.
Upon sustaining the colloquium doctum, the classis shall declare the minister eligible to be called by the *council of the sponsoring church* ~~sponsoring Consistory~~ as a minister of the Word and sacraments among the United Reformed Churches in North America.

Grounds:

a. As currently written, this provision within Appendix 5 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in Church Order Article 6. In Article 6, the man being called is elected by the council of the calling church, after prayer and reception of the advice of the congregation. The proposed change would bring Appendix 5 into conformity with this procedure.
b. Appendix 5 also currently implies a different procedure than that which is employed for the calling of elders and deacons in Article 12 of the Church Order. There, too, it is the council that presents nominations to the congregation – not the consistory.
c. This change will ensure that the language of Appendix 5 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our Church Order that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.
d. Should Part 2 of this overture be adopted, this amendment would be necessary to ensure that our Church Order is internally consistent with regard to the procedure for calling a man ordained beyond the bounds of our federation.

Adopted

4. That Synod accede to Overture 10, Part 4 with its grounds.

   Overture 10, Part 4 states:

   > Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Procedure 2.b. and Procedure 2.c. of Appendix 4 of the Church Order, as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article and deletions are indicated by ~~strikethrough~~.]
   >
   > **Appendix 4, Procedure 2.b.**
   > The *consistory of the* candidate's calling *church* ~~Consistory~~ must invite classis to participate in an ordination exam.
   >
   > **Appendix 4, Procedure 2.c.**
   > The candidate is to preach a sermon in a public worship service which he conducts under the auspices of *the consistory of* his calling church ~~Consistory~~.

Grounds:

a. As currently written, this provision within Appendix 4 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in Church Order Article 6. In Article 6, the man being called is elected by the council of the calling church, after prayer and reception of the advice of the congregation. The proposed change would bring Appendix 4 into conformity with this procedure.
b. Appendix 4 also currently implies a different procedure than that which is employed for the calling of elders and deacons in Article 12 of the Church Order. There, too, it is the council that presents nominations to the congregation – not the

consistory.

c. This change will ensure that the language of Appendix 4 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our Church Order that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

Motion is made and supported to amend by striking Ground b.

Adopted

The recommendation, as amended, states:

That Synod accede to Overture 10, Part 4 with its grounds.

Overture 10, Part 4 states:

Appendix 4, Procedure 2.b.
The *consistory of the* candidate's calling *church* ~~Consistory~~ must invite classis to participate in an ordination exam.

Appendix 4, Procedure 2.c.
The candidate is to preach a sermon in a public worship service which he conducts under the auspices of *the consistory of* his calling church ~~Consistory~~.

Grounds:

a. As currently written, this provision within Appendix 4 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in Church Order Article 6. In Article 6, the man being called is elected by the council of the calling church, after prayer and reception of the advice of the congregation. The proposed change would bring Appendix 4 into conformity with this procedure.

b. This change will ensure that the language of Appendix 4 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our Church Order that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

Adopted

The vice-chairman rules that the date for ratification of the above Recommendations 1 and 2 is Dec. 31, 2026.

ARTICLE 82

The vice-chairman relinquishes the chair to the chairman.

ARTICLE 83

Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures and Communications
Materials: Overture 7

Recommendations:

1. That, on the basis of Overture 7, Synod assign a study committee to investigate and evaluate the false teachings identified in this overture. This committee shall:
   a. Define Kinism and Race Realism with precision.
   b. Present to Synod a biblical, theological, and confessional evaluation of the principal forms of Kinism and Race Realism.
   c. Provide pastoral advice, doctrinal affirmations, and any other helpful guidance to aid consistories as they encounter these false teachings.

   Overture 7 states:

   > Classis Eastern U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to adopt the following affirmations:

We do hereby affirm Scripture's teaching, namely:

- That the gospel of Jesus Christ broke the spiritual division of ethnic lines (Ephesians 2:11–22);
- That, therefore, in the Church "there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11);
- That Christ intentionally went and preached in Samaria and intentionally commissioned the disciples to go to the ends of the earth – a clear message that the good news is for all people to receive, regardless of their race or ethnicity (John 4:1–45; Acts 1:8; 2:5–11);
- That Paul openly rebuked Peter for resorting to fellowship based on ethnic lines rather than pursuing unity in the gospel (Galatians 2:11–14);
- That the Old Testament's prohibition of marrying outsiders was to keep God's people from marrying foreign idolaters, and that this was waived if both spouses worshiped the God of Abraham (Deuteronomy 7:3–4; Ruth 4:10);
- That Scripture's prohibition of marrying outsiders does not bar people from marrying those of another race or ethnicity, but of believers being unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14).

We do also hereby re-affirm the relevant teachings of the Heidelberg Catechism and Canons of Dort, namely:

- That Christians are called to declare the gospel without discrimination (CD II.5);

• That it is the blood and Spirit of Christ – and not race, ethnic identity, or any other characteristic – that saves sinners (CD II.8);
• That this salvation, which includes the sanctification of God's people, is grounded upon the decree of God in eternity and the blood and Spirit of Christ in time (CD I.7; HC Q&A 70);
• That the revelation of the gospel is not according to greater worth of one nation over another, but rather to God's good pleasure (CD III/IV.7);
• That there is no exception on racial or ethnic grounds for ignoring God's will for us in the sixth commandment when it calls us not to "belittle, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor – not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds," and not even to be "party to this in others" (HC Q&A 118).

Grounds:

a. The issues of Kinism and Race Realism are weighty and complex matters that require careful biblical and theological study and pastoral application.
b. The overture identifies serious errors that should be opposed, but does not sufficiently define and distinguish the teachings it seeks to address.
c. A study committee would enable the churches to receive a more thorough and precise evaluation of the principal forms of Kinism and Race Realism.

Motion is made and supported to amend Recommendation 1.c by replacing "and" with "and/or" prior to "any other helpful guidance …" so that it reads:

"Provide pastoral advice, doctrinal affirmations, and/or any other helpful guidance to aid consistories as they encounter these false teachings.

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to grant Dr. Alan Strange the privilege of the floor to speak to this recommendation.

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to amend Recommendation 1.a. so that it reads: "Define with precision Kinism, Race Realism, and any other terms the committee deems necessary or relevant."

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to amend Recommendation 1.c. so that it reads: "Provide Pastoral Advice and/or Doctrinal Affirmations, and any other helpful guidance to aid consistories as they encounter these false teachings."

Adopted

The recommendation, as amended states:

That, on the basis of Overture 7, Synod assign a study committee to investigate and evaluate the false teachings identified in this overture. This committee shall:

a. Define with precision Kinism, Race Realism, and any other terms the committee deems necessary or relevant.
b. Present to Synod a biblical, theological, and confessional evaluation of the principal forms of Kinism and Race Realism.
c. Provide pastoral advice and/or doctrinal affirmations, and any other helpful guidance to

aid consistories as they encounter these false teachings.

Grounds:

a. The issues of Kinism and Race Realism are weighty and complex matters that require careful biblical and theological study and pastoral application.
b. The overture identifies serious errors that should be opposed but does not sufficiently define and distinguish the teachings it seeks to address.
c. A study committee would enable the churches to receive a more thorough and precise evaluation of the principal forms of Kinism and Race Realism.

Adopted without dissent

2. That Synod appoint the following men to serve on this committee:
   a. Rev. Ralph Pontier
   b. Rev. Dr. Ryan Swale
   c. Rev. Harry Zekveld – Chairman
   d. Rev. Bill Boekestein – Reporter
   e. Rev. Collin Welch
   f. Mr. Mark Van Der Molen
   g. Rev. Jonathan Van Hoogen
   h. Rev. Daniel Ventura

   Motion is made and supported to amend Recommendation 2 by adding "i. Mr. Alfredo Rodriguez."

   Adopted

   Motion is made and supported to amend Recommendation 2 by adding "j. Rev. Mitchell Persaud."

   Adopted

The recommendation is:

Adopted

3. That Synod set the budget for the Study Committee at $10,000 USD.

   Motion is made and supported to amend the recommendation by replacing "$10,000 USD" with "$12,000 USD."

   Adopted

   The recommendation, as amended is:

   Adopted

4. That Synod instruct the study committee to report to the next synod.

   Adopted

5. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 7.

Motion is made and supported to table this recommendation until after the assembly considers Overture 6.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 5** continued in Art. 116)

ARTICLE 84

Advisory Committee 8 – Missions
Materials: SCHM Report

Recommendation:

1. That Synod, in response to Recommendation 3 and in light of this report, acknowledge that the federation must continue to strive to take the gospel out through church planting and personal witness, and therefore encourage the consistories to explore, prayerfully and

humbly, ways in which they can cultivate a vibrant culture of evangelism within our congregations. (See the bullet points on pages 252-253 of the *Provisional Agenda.*)

(**Advisory Committee 8** continued in Art. 88)

ARTICLE 85

The chairman calls the order of the day and announces that Rev. James Folkerts will be excused from the assembly following the close of the morning session.

Rev. James Folkerts calls the assembly to sing TPH 379, "Come, Christians, Join to Sing." He reads Romans 16:1-20, exhorts the assembly, and leads the assembly in prayer.

The assembly is dismissed for lunch before returning to order at 1:15 p.m.

Thursday, June 11, 2026
Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 86

Rev. Robert Vander Woerd calls the assembly to sing TPH 281, "Rejoice, the Lord is King." He reads Isaiah 9:5-6 and offers a brief exhortation before leading the assembly in prayer.

ARTICLE 87

The chairman invites Rev. Steve Vandevelde of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches to address the assembly. Rev. Vandevelde mentions that the CanRC have also delegated two other members of their Committee for Ecumenical Relations, and it has been a joy for him to be a fraternal delegate to several URCNA synods. He reads Psalm 133 and notes there is no imperative to unity, but praise for the gift of

unity that flows from our Head, Christ, down to us, his people. Even with all the work done to pursue organizational and organic unity, we must appreciate the beautiful gift of the unity we already experience. The Lord has been bringing the CanRC and the URCNA closer together, even since the indefinite pause in the formal discussions regarding unity. With the flowing oil and the dew of Hermon, God commands blessing upon his people – what a gift the Lord has given to the CanRC and the URCNA! The bilateral meetings at NAPARC are uniquely warm and encouraging. Even when there are struggles, we seek to love each other because we are family. The Lord has blessed the prayers offered for the needs and health of the CanRC, reflected in the actions of Synod Aldergrove in 2025 to adjust its categories of ecumenical relationships and to recognize the freedom of local churches in supervising pulpit exchanges and the songs to be used in worship. He requests ongoing prayers for the CanRC, however, because struggles remain within the family with these new freedoms and responsibilities. He urges the URCNA to consider what would similarly unsettle our churches if our family traditions had changed. What we struggle with is not just how we came to be separate federations, but how to continue to speak as family with love and patience. But as the dew of Hermon is God's blessing upon the ground, so the Lord will bless the unity of the CanRC and the URCNA.

Rev. Casey Freswick leads the assembly in prayer for the Canadian and American Reformed Churches.

ARTICLE 88

(continued from Art. 84)

Advisory Committee 8 – Missions
Materials: SCHM Report

Recommendation:

1. That Synod, in response to Recommendation 3 and in light of this report, acknowledge that the federation must continue to strive to take the gospel out through church planting and personal witness, and therefore encourage the consistories to explore, prayerfully and humbly, ways in which they can cultivate a vibrant culture of evangelism within our congregations. (See the bullet points on pages 252-253 of the *Provisional Agenda.*)

   Motion is made and supported to substitute Recommendation 1 with the following:

   > That Synod, in response to Recommendation 3 and in light of this report, acknowledge that as a federation of churches we have often been God's reluctant missionary, indifferent to the miseries of our lost neighbors; yet we give thanks that the Holy Spirit is stirring up renewed evangelistic zeal in our churches, and encourage them to strive to take the gospel out through church planting and personal witness. We encourage the consistories to explore, prayerfully and humbly, ways in which they can cultivate a vibrant culture of evangelism within our congregations. (See the bullet points on pages 252-253 of the *Provisional Agenda*.)
   >
   > *Adopted*

   Motion is made and supported to grant Rev. Bill Green the privilege of floor during the discussion of this recommendation.

   Adopted

   > Motion is made and supported to amend the motion by inserting "preaching," prior to "church planting and personal witness."
   >
   > *Adopted*

The motion, as amended, states:

> That Synod, in response to Recommendation 3 and in light of this report, acknowledge that as a federation of churches we have often been God's reluctant missionary, indifferent to the miseries of our lost neighbors; yet we give thanks that the Holy Spirit is stirring up renewed evangelistic zeal in our churches, and encourage them to strive to take the gospel out through preaching, church planting, and personal witness. We encourage the consistories to explore, prayerfully and humbly, ways in which they can cultivate a vibrant culture of evangelism within our congregations. (See the bullet points on pages 252-253 of the *Provisional Agenda*.)
>
> *Adopted without dissent*

ARTICLE 89

(continued from Art. 47)

Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures and Communication
Materials: Overture 6

Recommendation:

2. That Synod table indefinitely Overture 6.

Grounds:

a. The issues of race and ethnicity are weighty and complex matters that would better be addressed by a study committee to develop clear and robust doctrinal affirmations and/or pastoral advice.
b. Although Synod commends the desire of other NAPARC churches to make a statement to condemn racism, the grounds of this overture do not sufficiently justify its formal affirmation. We

can stand in unity with other NAPARC churches without formally affirming their statements.

c. The proposed statement does not fit synodical definitions of doctrinal affirmation or pastoral advice (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, Appendix D.1-2).
d. The proposed statement utilizes undefined and unfamiliar terminology.

Motion is made and supported to recommit this recommendation to the Advisory Committee.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 5** continued in Art. 115)

ARTICLE 90

Advisory Committee 7 – Synodical Organizing Committee
Materials: Report of the Synodical Organizing Committee; Overture 17

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Recommendation 1, "That Synod grant the privilege of the floor to committee members whenever matters related to the SOC are discussed."

Adopted

2. That Synod accede to Recommendation 2, "That Synod declare the name of the standing committee on synodical logistics be: The Synodical Organizing Committee."

Ground:

a. Synod established a standing synodical organizing committee (*Acts of Synod Escondido 202*4, Article 100.1) but did not name the committee.

Adopted

3. That Synod accede to Recommendation 3, "That Synod approve the following changes in Regulations for Synodical Procedure" with the following amendments:

A. Changes Proposed by the SOC:

1.4 A synod shall convene at least once every three years. The ~~at a~~ times and places shall be determined by ~~the~~ a previous synod. ~~Each~~ A synod shall authorize a consistory to convene the next synod *(2+ years) and appoint another consistory to prepare for the subsequent synod (4+ years).* The meetings shall be convened by a consistory of each of the classes in turn.

Recommendation:

1.4 A synod shall convene at least once every three years. The times and places shall be determined by a previous synod. A synod shall authorize a consistory to convene the next synod and appoint another consistory to prepare for the subsequent synod. The meetings shall be convened by a consistory of each of the classes in turn.

Grounds:

a. These changes reflect the SOC's existence and mandate approved by Synod Escondido 2024 (*Acts of Synod Escondido 2024,* Article 100.1 and 105.2.)

b. Large event centers are often booked more than 2 years ahead of time. Designating a location 4 or more years ahead of time would give the SOC and the Synodical Interim Committee sufficient time to evaluate facilities.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

B. Changes Proposed by the SOC:

1.5 The convening consistory shall have the duties of announcing the next synod to the consistories at least four months in advance, preparing the provisional agenda with the assistance of the Stated Clerk, ~~securing the facilities needed for the synod, arranging the lodging of the delegates,~~ recommending to synod the assignment of each delegate to an advisory committee on the basis of a completed questionnaire, and all other necessary items to facilitate the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the ~~synodical treasurer(s)~~ *JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board.* The convening consistory shall give preference to experienced delegates to serve as chairmen and reporters of advisory committees and shall provide them with the material and the rules of procedure for their tasks.

Recommendation:

1.5 The convening consistory shall have the duties of announcing the next synod to the consistories at least four months in advance, preparing the provisional agenda with the assistance of the Stated Clerk, recommending to synod the assignment of each delegate to an advisory committee on the basis of a completed questionnaire, and all other necessary items to facilitate the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board. The convening consistory shall give preference to experienced delegates to serve as chairmen

and reporters of advisory committees and shall provide them with the material and the rules of procedure for their tasks.

Grounds:

a. These changes reflect the existence of the SOC and its mandate approved by Synod Escondido 2024 (*Acts of Synod Escondido 2024,* Article 100.1 and 105.2.)
b. These changes reflect the Synodically-approved current practice of having the URCNA JVA Treasurer take all responsibilities that would have been given to a convening consistory-appointed synodical treasurer (*Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 81.6).

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

C. Changes Proposed by the SOC:

1.5.1 The ~~synodical~~ *URCNA JVA* treasurer will give a detailed financial statement to the ~~next convening consistory~~ churches by the end of the calendar year in which a synod is convened, which shall then be reported to the following synod in the provisional agenda.

Recommendation:

1.5.1 The URCNA JVA Treasurer will give a detailed financial statement to the churches by the end of the calendar year in which a synod is convened, which shall then be reported to the following synod in the provisional agenda.

Add 1.5.2:

1.5.2 The URCNA JVA Treasurer will maintain, keep, and distribute funds for the purpose of hosting the next synod.

Ground:

a. These changes reflect the existence of the SOC and its mandate approved by Synod Escondido 2024 (*Acts of Synod Escondido 2024,* Article 100.1 and 105.2.)

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

D. Changes Proposed by the SOC:

Modifying section 1.8 dealing with the SOC by adding 1.8 and 1.8.1 and changing existing 1.8 to 1.8.2 in the following way:

1.8.2 ~~Provide~~ The SOC shall maintain and update the URCNA Synodical Logistical Handbook ~~handbook and other assistance to the next convening consistory~~ describing the responsibilities and logistics of organizing, convening, and hosting a synod.

Recommendation:

Replace 1.8 with the proposed 1.8, 1.8.1, and 1.8.2.

1.8 The Synodical Organizing Committee shall have the duties of publicizing the location of the next synod to the consistories, securing the facilities needed for the synod, arranging the lodging of the delegates, and all other necessary items to facilitate the logistical needs of the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the URCNA JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board.

1.8.1 The SOC shall recommend to the synod for approval the location and dates of the following synod.

1.8.2 The SOC shall maintain and update a handbook describing the responsibilities and logistics of organizing, convening, and hosting a synod.

Grounds:

a. These changes reflect the existence of the SOC and its mandate approved by Synod Escondido 2024 (*Acts of Synod Escondido 2024,* Article 100.1 and 105.2.)
b. This new regulation would give synod the final authority to determine the facility for the following synod.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

E. Changes Proposed by the SOC:

4.7.4 General Responsibilities:
f. Assist the Synodical Interim Committee / Convening Consistory *and Synodical Organizing Committee* in maintaining its pages, links, and documents on the website;

Recommendation:

4.7.4 General Responsibilities:
f. Assist the Synodical Interim Committee / Convening Consistory and Synodical Organizing Committee in maintaining their pages, links, and documents on the website;

Ground:

a. This regulation concerns the Webmaster's responsibilities related to the logistics of synod, which now includes the existence of the SOC.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

4. (a) That Synod accede to Recommendation 4, "If Synod approves the changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, we recommend the following language for Points 1 and 4 of the mandate of the SOC:"

A. Changes Proposed by the SOC:

1. Proposing a facility and date for hosting the next synod to synod for approval.
    a. Consideration may be given to Christian organizations able to host synod (universities, conference centers, etc.).
    b. The facility ought to take into consideration the availability of volunteers to assist in the hosting of synod.
4. ~~Preparing and m~~ Maintaining a manual for the organization of synod.

Recommendation:

1. Proposing for synod's approval a facility and date for hosting the next synod.
    a. Consideration may be given to Christian organizations able to host synod (universities, conference centers, etc.)
    b. Consideration ought to be given to the availability of volunteers to assist in the hosting of synod.

Ground:

a. Since the committee has time to find a facility before the next synod, it will be able to present such an option to synod. It is in keeping with good polity that synod be able to give the final determination for the specific when and where for its meeting.

Adopted

4. (b) That Synod add the following to the mandate of the Synodical Organizing Committee, as 1.c. "The committee shall use a classical rotation which is consistent with the decisions of Synod Escondido 2001, Synod Wheaton 2018, and the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 1.4."

Grounds:

a. This honors the requirement of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*.
b. This will allow more local congregation members to attend synod to see its operations and to hear first-hand reports from our missionaries.
c. This honors the decisions of both Synod Escondido 2001 and Synod Wheaton 2018.

Adopted

4. (c) That Synod declare this to be its answer to Overture 17.

Overture 17 states:

> Classis Southwest U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to add the following to the mandate of the Synodical Organizing Committee, as 1.c.:
>
> > When considering the location of synod, the committee shall use a classical rotation which is consistent with the decisions of Synod Escondido 2001, Synod Wheaton 2018, and the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 1.4.

Grounds:

a. This honors the requirement of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*.
b. This will help to avoid the centralization of ecclesiastical authority.

c. This will allow more local congregation members to attend synod to see its operations and to hear first-hand reports from our missionaries.
d. This honors the decisions of both Synod Escondido 2001 and Synod Wheaton 2018.

Adopted

4. (d) That Synod accede to Recommendation 4, "If Synod approves the changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, we recommend the following language for Point 4 of the mandate of the SOC:"

"4. Maintaining a handbook for the organization of synod."

Adopted

If the above recommendations of the Advisory Committee are adopted, the mandate of the SOC will read as follows:

1. Securing a location for hosting synod.
   a. Consideration may be given to Christian organizations able to host synod (e.g. universities, conference centers, etc.).
   b. The location ought to take into consideration the availability of volunteers to assist in the hosting of synod.
2. Providing all the logistical elements necessary for the churches to fulfill their work at synod (e.g. accommodations, meals, audiovisual, etc.).
3. Reporting its work to the convening consistory and to the appropriate national corporation and making recommendations to synod.
4. Preparing and maintaining a manual for the organization of synod.

5. That Synod accede to Recommendation 5, "That Synod approves the following composition for the SOC."

1. Composition
    a. There shall be 8 members of the SOC.
    b. One member shall be the JVA Treasurer.
    c. Two members shall be appointed by the convening consistory of the next synod.
    d. Two members shall be appointed by the convening consistory of the synod after the next synod.
    e. Three additional members shall be appointed by synod by the recommendation of the SOC (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 5.3.2.b.).
    f. Consideration should be made to select members appointed by the convening consistories or synod, gifted with organizational skills, and who are not necessarily members of a council.

Ground:

a. Communication between the SOC and the convening consistory is essential. Having such members from the churches of the convening consistories will facilitate good communication and coordination.

Adopted

6. That Synod receive for information the SOC Handbook. "The handbook will be modified by the SOC to be consistent with all synodically-approved decisions."

Adopted

7. That Synod accede to Recommendation 7, "That Synod appoint as members of the SOC through the next synod: Mr. Lloyd Van Eeden Petersman, Mrs. Pam Hessels, and Mrs. Dawn Dirksen"

Adopted

8. That Synod expresses its gratitude to the members of the SOC not only for their exceptional work in organizing Synod Calgary 2026, but also for thoroughly documenting what is necessary for the work of organizing future synods.

Adopted

The chairman and the assembly express their gratitude to the members of the SOC.

ARTICLE 91

Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 15

Recommendation:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 15 with its grounds.

   Overture 15 states:

   > Classis Southwest U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026, to make the following changes to the Church Order in order to provide internal consistency of language.
   >
   > 1. In the third sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the last word in the sentence from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "… and the only Head of the church."
   >
   > ***Ground:***
   > a. This is the only time in over 70 uses of the word "church" in the body of the Church Order that the word is capitalized (unless

required by context, e.g. in a title or beginning a sentence).

2. In the third sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the word "Head" in the phrase "Head of the Church" from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "… and the only head of the church."

Ground:

a. This reflects the case usage in Belgic Confession Article 31, Heidelberg Catechism QA 49, QA 50, QA 51, and QA 57, and the Canons of Dort I:7.

3. In Article 24, change the case of the word "Head" in the phrase "Head of the church" from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "… the spiritual and governing head of the church."

Grounds:

a. This reflects the case usage in Belgic Confession Article 31, Heidelberg Catechism QA 49, QA 50, QA 51, and QA 57, and the Canons of Dort I:7.
b. This puts it in conformity with the usage in the Introduction (depending on the outcome of 1 and 2 of this overture).

4. In the second sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the word "Confessions" from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "We are fully persuaded that the Reformed confessions do fully agree with this Word of God …"

Grounds:

a. This is not a reference to a specific confession, but to the Three Forms of Unity in general.
b. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 1, section 4.2.

5. In Appendix 3.3.b., Appendix 4.3., and Appendix 5.3., change the case of the word "Confessions" from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "… knowledge of and loyalty to Scripture and the confessions …"

Grounds:

a. This is not a reference to a specific confession, but to the Three Forms of Unity in general.
b. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 1, section 4.2., and the Introduction (depending on the outcome of point 4 of this overture).

6. In Appendix 3.3.b.(5), Appendix 4.3.(4), and Appendix 5.3.(4) change the case of the word "Confessions" from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "… the teaching of Scripture and the confessions …"

Grounds:

a. This is not a reference to a specific confession, but to the Three Forms of Unity in general.
b. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 1, section 4.2.; the Introduction; and Appendix 3.3.b., Appendix 4.3., and Appendix 5.3. (depending on the outcome of points 4 and 5 of this overture).

7. In the fourth sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the word "His" from upper case to lower case, so that it reads, "This headship is exercised in the churches by his Word and Spirit …"

Grounds:

a. The matter of capitalization for pronouns referring to God was dealt with at Synod Wyoming 2016. It is not our desire to resurrect that entire discussion. However, we do note the reasons given by the Liturgical Forms committee for not capitalizing such pronouns:

"The practice of capitalizing is of a more recent vintage. The New King James Version made the decision to capitalize the pronouns referring to God, although the King James Version did not. The 1984 NIV and the ESV, the versions widely used in our federation, do not capitalize these pronouns. Maybe most significantly, the earliest Greek Manuscripts do not show a preference for the pronouns referring to God.

"Of less significance, but worth noting, there is no uniformity within our tradition, especially as concerns the Liturgical Forms and Confessions. Form 1 for the Baptism of Infants capitalizes the pronouns, but Form 2 for the Baptism of Children does not. The same is true for the Profession of Faith forms, although the Lord's Supper Forms do. The same is true of the Confessions. The Belgic and the Canons capitalize the pronouns, but the Heidelberg

does not. Thus, there is no uniformity on the practice currently, leaving the committee to decide for our work.

"In reflecting on this matter we were not convinced of the necessity of capitalizing the pronouns. While the matter is certainly not essential to the faith, we believe that the relative newness of this practice, and the general practice in the Bibles used by our churches to not capitalize justify not following this practice. Furthermore, we are not convinced that the practice of capitalizing the pronouns is any more respectful than not capitalizing them. For this reason we have chosen not to capitalize the pronouns referring to God" (From *Acts of Synod Wyoming 2016*, page 307).

We note that the synod chose to "divide the baby" by not capitalizing the pronouns in the doctrinal standards to be printed in the Trinity Psalter Hymnal, since we share that book with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which does not capitalize them. However, they are capitalized in the liturgical forms which are not printed in the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.

b. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 8.3, where pronouns are used in reference to Christ four times, all of which are in lower case.

8. In the title of Article 7, add the word "from" and change the case of "within" so that it reads "Calling a Minister from Within the Federation."

Grounds:

a. This puts it in conformity with the title of Article 8 (with regard to the word "from").
b. This puts it in conformity with the title of Articles 5 and 8 (with regard to the capitalization of the word "Within").

The recommendation is:

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

The chairman rules that the date for ratification of the above recommendation is Dec. 31, 2026.

ARTICLE 92

Advisory Committee 3 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 16

Recommendations:

1. That Synod accede to Overture 16.1-10 and 12-16 with its grounds.

   Overture 16.1-10 and 12-16 states:

   Classis Southwest U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to make the following changes to the Church Order in order to provide internal consistency of language:

   I. Ecclesiastical Offices

   1. In **Article 1**, add the Oxford comma after "elder" so that it reads: "minister of the Word, elder, and deacon."

Ground:

a. This is the proper place to use the Oxford comma.

2. In **Article 10**, paragraph 2, change the words, "A minister who has emeritated …" to "A minister who has been granted emeritus status …"

Ground:

a. The word "emeritus" is an adjective and cannot be properly made into a participle.

3. In **Article 14**, add the Oxford comma after the word "minister(s)" so that it reads: "their fellow-elders, the minister(s), and the deacons faithfully discharge …"

Ground:

a. This is the proper place to use the Oxford comma.

II. Ecclesiastical Assemblies

4. In **Article 32**, we recommend the addition of the word "sponsoring" before consistory so that it reads: "… upon the recommendation of a sponsoring Consistory and provided …"

Ground:

a. This makes the article consistent with Appendix 5, which uses that language.

IV. Ecclesiastical Discipline

5. In **Article 58**, change the title from "The Readmission of Disciplined Communicant Members" to "The Readmission of a Disciplined Communicant Member."

Ground:

a. When the title of this article was edited at Synod Escondido 2024, the proposed edit failed to make it consistent with the titles of articles 55, 56, 57, and 59, which all refer to a singular member, not plural members.

6. In **Article 59**, delete the parenthetical reference to Appendix 8, "(See Appendix 8)," at the end of the article.

Ground:

a. The Church Order uses the term "exclusion" in two distinct ways in its articles. Article 56 deals with a member who is forsaking Christ's church and seeks to resign. In that case, the consistory may proceed to exclusion. This is explained in Appendix 8.3., so the reference to Appendix 8 is appropriate at the end of that article. Article 59 deals with baptized members who are delinquent in doctrine or life. If they persist in their sin, they are to be "excluded." (This is the more historical use of the term.) Appendix 8 makes no mention of this situation, so the reference should be removed.

7. In **Article 60**, change the title from "The Readmission of Disciplined Baptized

Members" to "The Readmission of a Disciplined Baptized Member."

Ground:

a. When the title of this article was edited at Synod Escondido 2024, the proposed change failed to make it consistent with the titles of articles 55, 56, 57, and 59, which all refer to a singular member, not plural members.

Appendices

8. In **Appendix 3.1.a.**, change the word "council" to "Consistory" so that it reads: "A recommendation from the prospective candidate's Consistory.

Ground:

a. This is in keeping with the language of Article 4 which says, "At the conclusion of such training, a student must approach his Consistory to become a candidate …"

9. In **Appendix 3.2.d.**, change the word "declaration" to "determination" so that it reads: "A determination by the consistory that the candidate has sustained the exam …"

Ground:

a. This makes the wording consistent with Appendix 4.2.d. and 5.2.c.

10. In **Appendix 3.2.d.**, add the words "concurring advice of the" after the words which follow the comma, "along with the,"

so that it reads: “along with the concurring advice of the delegates to classis.

Ground:

a. This makes the wording consistent with Article 4, “sustaining the exam in the presence of his Consistory and with the concurring advice of the delegates …”

12. In **Appendix 4.2.c.**, change the words “preach a sermon” to “exhort” so that it reads: “The candidate is to exhort in a public worship service …”

Ground:

a. We have a practice of using the word “preach” to refer to that which is done by an ordained man and “exhort” to that which is done by a licentiate or candidate.

13. In **Appendix 4.3.**, delete the word “prospective” before the word “candidate’s” twice so that it reads: “The former regards the candidate’s knowledge of and loyalty to Scripture …” and “Practica: the candidate’s personal and spiritual life …”

Ground:

a. Throughout the appendices, we refer to men in their current state when being examined. The man undergoing an ordination exam is already a candidate.

14. In **Appendix 5.2** (second occurrence), insert letter “c.” from 5.2 (first occurrence),

after letter “b.” and rename the current letter “c.” as letter “d.”

Ground:

a. The language of letter “c” is included in the “Procedure” section of Appendix 3 and 4, and in the first occurrence in Appendix 5. We believe it is simply a clerical oversight that it is missing here.

15. In **Appendix 6.A.1.**, change the words “are satisfied” to “concur” so that it reads: “We concur that the examinee has sustained the _____ area of the examination.”

Ground:

a. This is consistent with the language of Article 4, “sustaining the exam in the presence of his Consistory and with the concurring advice of the delegates …”

16. In **Appendix 6.A.3.**, change the words “are not satisfied with” to “do not concur that he has sustained” so that it reads: “If the delegates do not concur that he has sustained any particular area(s) of the examination …”

Ground:

a. This is consistent with the language of Article 4, “sustaining the exam in the presence of his Consistory and with the concurring advice of the delegates …”

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

2. That Synod accede to Overture 16.11 with its grounds, as amended, with the substitution amendment of, “He is

to exhort the congregation in a public worship service using one of these sermons," in place of, "He is to exhort one of these sermons in a public worship service."

Overture 16.11 states:

> 11. In **Appendix 3.3.a.**, change the last sentence so that it reads: "He is to exhort one of these sermons in a public worship service."
>
> ***Grounds:***
> a. We have a practice of using the word "preach" to refer to that which is done by an ordained man and "exhort" to that which is done by a licentiate or candidate.
> b. This language is consistent with Appendix 4.2.c. [depending on the disposition of point 12 of this overture].

Grounds:

a. We have a practice of using the word "preach" to refer to that which is done by an ordained man and "exhort" to that which is done by a licentiate or candidate.
b. The verb "exhort" cannot have the content of the exhortation as its object.

Adopted

3. That Synod not accede to Overture 16.17.

Overture 16.17 states:

> 17. Throughout **Appendix 6**, standardize the capitalization as follows:
> ministry of the Word (two times)
> executive session (three times)
> chairman (three times)

general session (three times)
Consistory (one time)
Classis (four times)

Ground:

a. This Appendix is inconsistent with any other section of the Church Order. Consistency aids in reading and comprehension.

Grounds:

a. The ground for 16.17 does not identify a standard for capitalization beyond internal consistency. Overture 2 answers the concern of Overture 16.17 by granting the Stated Clerk the task of amending capitalization within the Church Order according to the standard of the Associated Press Style Guide.
b. The determination of whether words such as "consistory" and "classis" are capitalized depends upon whether they are used as proper or common nouns.

Adopted

The chairman rules that the date for ratification of the above recommendations is Dec. 31, 2026

ARTICLE 93

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Reports
Materials: Convening Consistory Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report of the convening consistory.

Adopted

2. A letter was received from the Stated Clerk concerning an error in Article 48.5 of the *Acts of Synod 2001*. It was noted that the word "decision" should be changed to "motion" and that the motion should be recorded as adopted. In light of this, the committee recommends that Synod note the change, with the recommendation that the official online record be corrected to reflect what was actually decided by Synod Escondido 2001.

   Adopted

3. That Synod thank the Consistory of Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge for its work in preparation for Synod.

   Adopted

ARTICLE 94

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Reports
Materials: Stated Clerk Report and Supplemental Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report and supplemental report of the Stated Clerk.

   Adopted

2. That Synod accede to the Stated Clerk's recommendation to publish online the Interim Report of 2020 as part of the URCNA's historical record.

Ground:

a. The recommendation is made in line with *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.m., specifying that the Stated Clerk is responsible to "preserve original records of all proceedings of synod, and all documents, letters and papers having reference to its proceedings" (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.e.).

   Adopted by a 2/3 majority

3. That Synod accede to the Recommendation – Reappointment of Functionaries.

   Recommendation – Reappointment of Functionaries

   The following recommendation is based on *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.j, which permits the Stated Clerk to recommend changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to bring them into conformity with prior synodical decisions and practices.

   Adopted

4. That Synod accede to the report's final recommendation with its grounds.

   Recommendation: Amend the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* by adding to the duties of the Convening Consistory a further item, numbered 1.5.3, to read:

   'The convening consistory shall make recommendations regarding the reappointment of the Stated Clerk and Statistician.'

Grounds:

a. Synod Escondido 2024 (Art. 106.8) clarified that the Statistician serves under the supervision of the Convening Consistory, as does the Stated Clerk (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.3.).
b. The Website Oversight Committee, which supervises the Webmaster, makes recommendations regarding the reappointment of the Webmaster. By analogy, it would be appropriate for the Convening Consistory to do the same for the functionaries under its supervision.
c. Because no one is explicitly charged with recommending the reappointment of the

Statistician, the matter was forgotten at Synod Escondido 2024.

d. Reappointment of the Stated Clerk has never been overlooked, but it would seem appropriate to include a recommendation regarding both functionaries under its supervision as part of the Convening Consistory's listed duties.

Adopted by a 2/3 majority

5. That Synod thank the Stated Clerk for his faithful and excellent service to the churches.

Adopted

ARTICLE 95

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Reports
Materials: Convening Consistory Report to Synod Calgary

Recommendations:

1. That Synod elect a Stated Clerk, according to *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.2.

   Note: Rev. Doug Barnes has indicated his willingness to continue to serve as Stated Clerk.

   Adopted

2. That Synod stipulate the honorarium of the Stated Clerk at $7,000 USD per annum, according to *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.2.

   Adopted

3. That Synod elect an alternate Stated Clerk, according to *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.2.

   Adopted

4. That Synod elect a Statistician, according to *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.2.

Note: Mrs. Jody Luth has indicated her willingness to continue to serve as Statistician.

Adopted

5. That Synod stipulate the honorarium of the Statistician at $5,600 CAD per annum, according to *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.2.

(**Advisory Committee 1** continued in Art. 98)

ARTICLE 96

The chairman calls the order of the day. The assembly is dismissed for a brief time of refreshments before returning to order at 3:30 p.m.

ARTICLE 97

Rev. John van Eyk reads a letter to the assembly from Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI). (See Appendix D.)

The chairman invites Rev. David Stares from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand to address the assembly. He brings warm greetings from the brothers and sisters of the RCNZ. He recalls his own path of growing up among the churches of the URCNA and is delighted to represent the RCNZ at this URCNA Synod. He gives a brief account of the history of the RCNZ, noting that they will be blessed with the addition of another congregation this coming weekend. He rejoices in the history of the relationship between the RCNZ and the URCNA and speaks of how beneficial this relationship has been to their churches through the education of many of their ministerial students. They have a few vacancies in their churches, and their desire is to train more men from their own churches, but they would welcome URC pastors to come for sabbaticals or for extended pulpit supply. The RCNZ has adopted, in addition to their own songbook, the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* for use in their

churches. He is thankful for the URCNA in its faithfulness to respond biblically to dangers that are threatening both the URCNA and RCNZ.

Rev. Peter Van't Hoff leads the assembly in prayer for the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

ARTICLE 98

(continued from Art. 95)

Advisory Committee 1 – Credentials and Reports
Materials: Convening Consistory Report to Synod Calgary

Recommendation:

5. That Synod stipulate the honorarium of the Statistician at $5,600 CAD per annum, according to *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.2.

Adopted

ARTICLE 99

The chairman opens the floor for nominations for Stated Clerk.

Rev. Doug Barnes is nominated.
Nominations are closed.
Rev. Doug Barnes is elected as Stated Clerk.

ARTICLE 100

The chairman opens the floor for nominations for Alternate Stated Clerk.

Rev. Mark Vander Pol is nominated.
Nominations are closed.
Rev. Mark Vander Pol is elected as Alternate Stated Clerk.

ARTICLE 101

The chairman opens the floor for nominations for Statistician.

Mrs. Jody Luth is nominated.
Nominations are closed.
Mrs. Jody Luth is elected as Statistician.

ARTICLE 102

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters and Study Committee Report
Materials: Overture 1

Recommendations:

1. That Synod not accede to Overture 1.

   Overture 1 states:

   > Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary to task the U.S Treasurer and Canadian Treasurer to send out statements of budgeted expenses to the clerk of each member church at the beginning of the calendar year informing the churches of their respective budgeted obligations and provide the churches a record of their received donations from the previous calendar year.

   Ground:
   a. The language of "budgeted obligations" in Overture 1 is not consistent with the URCNA's historic and current language of "askings."

   Adopted

2. That Synod Calgary task the U.S. Treasurer and Canadian Treasurer to send out statements of budgeted expenses to the clerk of each member church at the

beginning of the calendar year, informing them of the respective askings, and provide the churches with a record of their received askings from the previous calendar year.

Grounds:

a. The U.S. Treasurer has already begun sending statements using the language of "askings," with a positive response in the increase in contributing U.S. churches from 77% in 2023 to 92% in 2025.
b. This practice has been working well for the Canadian Treasurer of the URCNA, who uses the language of "askings" in statements sent to churches and receives 100% participation.
c. "Askings" is the accepted and approved language of the URCNA (*Acts of Synod Lynwood 1996,* Art. 36b; *Acts of Synod St. Catharines 1997,* Art 64e).
d. Statements sent for budget items are good accounting practice. Most diaconates employ statements for the budgets of their respective local churches.
e. Diaconates as well as the treasurers of the churches often change from year-to-year, and statements will help with these transitions by providing a reminder to any church treasurer who may be new to the task.

Adopted

3. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 1.

Adopted

ARTICLE 103

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters and Study Committee Report
Materials: Treasurers' Reports

Recommendations:

1. That Synod grant the privilege of the floor to the U.S. and Canadian Treasurers.

Adopted

2. That Synod approve the financial reports of 2024 and 2025 (unaudited) of the U.S. Treasurer.

Adopted

3. That Synod approve the financial reports of 2024 and 2025 (unaudited) of the Canadian Treasurer.

Adopted

4. That Synod approve the financial reports of 2024 and 2025 (unaudited) of the JVA.

Adopted

5. That Synod recommend to the U.S. Board that it increase the U.S. Treasurer's honorarium to $7,500 USD per annum.

Ground:

a. The honorarium was last set by Synod Escondido 2024 at $6,500 USD per annum. An increase accounts for inflation and workload.

Adopted

6. That Synod recommend to the Canadian Board that it increase the Canadian Treasurer's honorarium to a combined cap of $15,500 CAD per annum.

Ground:

a. The honorarium was last set by Synod Escondido 2024 at $13,500 CAD per annum. An increase accounts for inflation and workload

Adopted

7. That Synod request the U.S. and Canadian Boards to provide guidance in their future reports to synod on establishing annual honoraria for the treasurers, including methodologies for calculating cost-of-living adjustments and honorable compensation.

Ground:

a. The advisory committee struggled to set honorarium because we lacked a clear understanding of the process and an appropriate way of making recommendations.

Adopted

8. That Synod thank the U.S. and Canadian Treasurers for their work.

Adopted

The chairman and the assembly express their gratitude to the U.S. and Canadian/JVA Treasurers.

ARTICLE 104

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters
Materials: Board of Directors of the Canadian URCNA Corporation and Joint Venture Agreement Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report of the Canadian Board of Directors and thank it for its work.

Adopted

2. That Synod appoint Mr. Charlie Fluit, Mr. Jeff DeWalle, Mr. Daryl Van Dyke, Mr. Cliffe Hodgkinson, and Rev. Joel Dykstra as Members to the Corporation.

Ground:

a. This action satisfies the legal and regulatory

organizational criteria detailed in Article 10.01 of the Canadian Corporation By-Laws.

The chairman relinquishes the chair to the vice-chairman.

The recommendation is:

Adopted

3. That the Synod approbate the work of the Board without endorsing every aspect of it.

Adopted

The vice-chairman relinquishes the chair to the chairman.

ARTICLE 105

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters and Reports
Materials: U.S. Board of Directors Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report of the U.S. Board of Directors and thank it for its work.

Adopted

2. That Synod affirm the appointment of seven directors to the Board, including the six current directors willing to continue for another term.
Note: The six willing to continue are John Ehnis, Randy Groendyk, Michael Kiledjian, Mark Vander Pol, Dave Vander Meer, and Ted Van Essendelft.

Adopted

3. That Synod appoint a new director from Classis Central U.S. to replace Donald Roth on the U.S. Board of Directors.

Adopted

4. That Synod thank Donald Roth for his eight years of service on the U.S. Board of Directors.

Adopted

The chairman directs the Stated Clerk to send a letter to Donald Roth to express the gratitude of the assembly for his service on the U.S. Board of Directors.

5. That Synod thank Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen for nearly thirty years of faithful service on the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* project.

Adopted

The chairman and the assembly express their gratitude to Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen for his faithful and diligent service to the churches.

The chairman informs the assembly that the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* JVA Board has appointed Rev. Brian Cochran to serve on the board.

The chairman opens nominations for a new director from Classis Central U.S.

Motion is made and supported to table this nomination.

Defeated

Rev. Jon Bushnell is nominated.
Rev. Daniel Hofland is nominated.

Motion is made and supported to recommit the matter of nominations to the advisory committee.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 2** continued in Art. 118)

ARTICLE 106

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters and Study Committee Report
Materials: Building Loan Fund Study Committee Report

Recommendations:

1. That Synod grant Rev. Dr. Brian Lee the privilege of the floor to present this report.
   The chairman rules this recommendation unnecessary

2. That Synod receive the "Canadian Report" section of this report (Section 3) and judge it as having fulfilled the committee's mandate with regard to the Canadian context, recommending it to the Canadian churches for guidance when seeking funding solutions for the construction or purchase of ecclesiastical space.

   Ground:
   a. The Committee's mandate and membership anticipated that its work would be bifurcated between Canada and the United States.

   Adopted

3. That Synod thank the Canadian members of the committee for their service and dismiss them.

   Adopted

4. That Synod reaffirm the mandate of the BLFSC with respect to URCNA churches in the United States.

   Ground:
   a. The Committee has not yet been able to complete this portion of its mandate, and it requires more time to assess the willingness and ability of OPCLF to affiliate with the URCNA in this matter.

   Adopted

5. That Synod affirm its preliminary desire to further pursue a formal, cooperative relationship between the U.S. Board of Directors and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church Loan Fund (OPCLF), for the purposes of establishing a Building Loan Fund for the benefit of URCNA churches in the United States.

Grounds:

a. Further work toward affiliation between the URCNA and OPCLF depends upon a clear and formal statement from our Synod of the desirability of this goal.
b. Any affiliation between the OPCLF and the URCNA will require a significant investment in time and effort, which both parties should expend only with a clear understanding of the URCNA's desire for this goal.
c. Expressing a desire to further pursue an affiliation does not commit Synod to such an affiliation in fact. It provides a sufficient foundation for future labors, while reserving final approval to a future synod in the light of additional information.

Adopted

6. That Synod re-appoint Rev. Dr. Brian Lee (chairman) and Douglas Hoogerhyde to the committee, and also appoint Donald Roth and three additional U.S. members to facilitate the completion of its work.

Adopted

7. That Synod approve $7,500 USD per annum for the ongoing administrative and operational expenses of this committee.

Adopted

The chairman opens nominations for positions on the BLFSC.

Motion is made and supported to recommit the nominations to the advisory committee.

Adopted

Motion is made and supported to instruct the BLFSC to report to the next synod.

Adopted

(**Advisory Committee 2** continued in Art. 119)

ARTICLE 107

Motion is made and supported to rescind the motion in Art. 105, "That Synod appoint a new director from Classis Central U.S. to replace Donald Roth on the U.S. Board of Directors."

Adopted by 2/3 majority

Motion is made and supported that Synod appoint a new director to replace Donald Roth on the U.S. Board of Directors.

Adopted

ARTICLE 108

(continued from Art. 65)

Advisory Committee 4 – Overtures
Materials: Overture 14

Recommendation:

6. That synod appoint the following members to serve on the Study Committee on Bioethics of Reproductive Technology:

    a. Rev. Jacques Roets – Chairman
    b. Rev. Mark Vander Pol – Reporter
    c. Dr. John Elgersma
    d. Heidi Veldman

e. Karen Troost
f. Dr. J. Mark Beach
g. Dr. Ed Kreykes (alternate)

The chairman rules that this recommendation is tabled until confirmation can be attained from those to be appointed.

(**Advisory Committee 4** continued in Art. 117)

ARTICLE 109

(continued from Art. 64)

Advisory Committee 12 – Appeal
Materials: Appeal of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls

Recommendations:

1. That Synod find Specification of Error 2 not sustained.

   Specification of Error 2 states:

   > Synod Escondido 2024 erred by altering the substance of Article 31 without using the amendment process required by Church Order Article 66.

   Ground:
   a. Despite the ambiguity of Appendix 7 in relation to Article 31, Appendix 7 does not "alter, restrict, or redefine" the meaning of Article 31 to such an extent that a functional change has been imposed upon the Church Order, and so Article 66 is not in view.

   Adopted

2. That Synod find Specification of Error 3 not sustained.

Specification of Error 3 states:

> Synod Escondido 2024 erred in creating internal inconsistency within the Church Order by adopting an appendix that contradicts its corresponding article.

Grounds:

a. Despite the ambiguity of Appendix 7 in relation to Article 31, it is not certain there is an internal inconsistency within the Church Order concerning Article 31 and Appendix 7.
b. The ambiguity was not created by Synod Escondido 2024, but has existed since its inception in 2018. We have deliberated over the broadness and narrowness of the language since that time.

Adopted

3. That Synod find Specification of Error 4 not sustained.

Specification of Error 4 states:

> Synod Escondido 2024 erred in revising Appendix B of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* in a manner that contradicts Church Order Article 31.

Ground:

a. Despite the ambiguity of Appendix B of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* in relation to Article 31, there is not a clear contradiction between the appendix and the Church Order article.

Adopted

4. That Synod not sustain the appeal from Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls.

Ground:

a. No specifications of error were sustained.

The chairman rules this recommendation is unnecessary (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure* Appendix B.7.d.)

5. That Synod strongly encourage consistories to consider bringing overtures to clarify and remove the ambiguity between Article 31 and Appendix 7.

(**Advisory Committee 12** continued in Art. 114)

ARTICLE 110

The chairman calls the order of the day.

The chairman and the assembly express their gratitude to the staff of the Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre for their hospitality, service, and expertise.

ARTICLE 111

Rev. Simon Lievaart reads 2 Cor. 4:7-18 and offers a brief exhortation. He leads the assembly in prayer and then calls for the singing of TPH 37:1-3, "Do Not Fret on Account of the Wicked."

The assembly is dismissed for supper and reconvenes at 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 11, 2026
Evening Session

ARTICLE 112

Rev. Keith Giles calls for the assembly to sing TPH 75, "We Give You Thanks, O God." He reads Psalm 75 and offers a brief exhortation. He leads the assembly in prayer.

ARTICLE 113

The chairman invites Rev. Ben Westerveld of the Église réformée du Québec to address the assembly. He urges the assembly and the URCNA to do one thing: pray for the ERQ. The province of Québec is a large province with only the ERQ to serve as a Reformed presence. The province is historically Roman Catholic but today is very hedonistic with nearly no evangelical witness. The ERQ consists of five congregations and treasures its fraternal relations, and Rev. Westerveld requests that the URCNA send a fraternal delegate to one of their upcoming synods. They have experienced no growth in the past years and have four vacant pulpits, although there are two men who, hopefully, will be able to pastor in their churches. There are leadership tensions particularly among those who have been serving in the ERQ for many years, so again Rev. Westerveld pleads for the prayers of the URCNA as the ERQ wrestles with the Lord's providence and with the struggles of their own hearts. He asks for prayers that the ERQ may be zealous for graciousness, fellowship, and faithfulness for the sake of the spiritual harvest in Québec. There are brothers from many countries who are seeking to minister in French-speaking churches, and men who are seeking to faithfully serve as elders. He asks for prayers that the ERQ would not miss out on this harvest because of its internal conflicts. Jesus builds his church in response to our prayers, so he also pledges the prayers of the ERQ on behalf of the URCNA.

Rev. Jeremy Veldman leads the assembly in prayer for the Église réformée du Québec.

ARTICLE 114

(continued from Art. 109)

Advisory Committee 12 – Appeal
Materials: Appeal of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls

Recommendation:

5. That Synod strongly encourage consistories to consider bringing overtures to clarify and remove the ambiguity between Article 31 and Appendix 7.

Defeated

ARTICLE 115

(continued from Art. 89)

Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures and Communication
Materials: Overture 6

Recommendations:

1. That the 14th Synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America join with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and *condemn without distinction any theological or political teaching which posits a superiority of race or ethnic identity borne of immutable human characteristics and call to repentance any who would promote or associate themselves with such teaching, either by commission or omission.*

Grounds:

a. This statement conforms to the truth of Scripture as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity (*e.g.* BC 12 and CD II.5).
b. This statement was approved at the 221st General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in 2025.

c. This statement was approved at the 52nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America in 2025.
d. This statement was "commended" at the 193rd Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America in 2025.
e. This statement was publicly affirmed by the 92nd General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 2026.
f. This is a real problem that many congregations throughout the URNCA and all NAPARC are facing.
g. It is good to show unity with other churches in NAPARC on these serious issues.

Motion is made and supported to grant to Rev. Mitchell Persaud the privilege of the floor to speak to this recommendation.

Adopted

The recommendation is:

Adopted

Rev. Praveen Muthusamy registers his negative vote and submits a written protest:

I respectfully protest Synod's adoption of Overture 6. Kinism and Racism are indeed heresies and treacherous doctrines that need to be denounced from our pulpits biblically and confessionally. The statement made by the ARPC is, however, too ambiguous. I would appreciate a doctrinal affirmation or pastoral advice rather than adopting this statement.

Rev. Benjamin Davenport registers his negative vote and submits a written protest:

I respectfully protest Synod's adoption of Overture 6. Kinism and Race Realism are dangerous false teachings that the churches must confront. However, the

statement does not sufficiently demonstrate the biblical and confessional basis for its specific wording. It calls people to repentance while leaving key terms such as "association" and "omission" undefined, without identifying the duty neglected. Its nature is also unclear, since it was not identified as either pastoral advice or a doctrinal affirmation. The statement therefore risks creating confusion and does not adequately serve the churches. Synod should have modified it before adoption.

2. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 6.

Adopted

ARTICLE 116

(continued from Art. 83)

Advisory Committee 5 – Overtures and Communications
Materials: Overture 7

Recommendation:

5. That this be Synod's answer to Overture 7.

Adopted

ARTICLE 117

(continued from Art. 108)

Advisory Committee 4 - Overtures
Materials: Overture 14

Recommendation:

1. That synod appoint the following members to serve on the Study Committee on Bioethics of Reproductive Technology:
    a. Rev. Jacques Roets – Chairman

b. Rev. Mark Vander Pol – Reporter
c. Dr. John Elgersma (GP)
d. Heidi Veldman (nurse practitioner)
e. Karen Troost (nurse)
f. Dr. J. Mark Beach

Adopted

ARTICLE 118

(continued from Art. 105)

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters and Reports
Materials: U.S. Board of Directors Report

Recommendation:

1. That Synod appoint Kevin McNamara (Classis Central U.S.) to replace Donald Roth on the U.S. Board of Directors.

Adopted

ARTICLE 119

(continued from Art. 106)

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters and Study Committee Report
Materials: Building Loan Fund Study Committee Report

Recommendation:

1. That Synod reappoint Rev. Dr. Brian Lee (chairman) and Douglas Hoogerhyde to the committee, and also appoint Donald Roth (Central US), Rev. Dr. Quentin Falkena (Classis Michigan), Charlie Vander Kooi (Classis PNW), Mark Dirksen (Classis SWUS), and Mark Schiebout (Classis PNW) to facilitate the completion of its work.

Adopted

ARTICLE 120

Advisory Committee 2 – Financial Matters and Study Committee Report

Materials: Proposed Budget of 2027-28

Recommendations:

1. That Synod approve the proposed URCNA Budget of 2027-2028.

Federation Budget							
Budget: Combined U.S. and Canadian							
In USD (amounts budgeted in Cdn$ converted at 1.40 - Cdn$ items identified with *)							
Item	Report		2027		2028		Notes
Acts of Synod			-		-		
Bank charges			1,550		1,550		
Comp.Software – CDN			339	*	339	*	
Comp. Software – Joint			339	*	339	*	
Comp. Software – U.S.			100		100		
Committee Expenses							
Building Loan Fund Comm. (U.S.)	**2-E**		7,500		7,500		
Bioethics of Reproductive Technology Comm.	**4-A**		5,000		5,000		1
CECCA	**10-A**		15,000		15,000		
CERCU	**11-A**		12,000		12,000		
Home Missions Committee	**8-B**		13,000		13,000		
Foreign Missions Committee	**8-A**		14,500		14,500		
PRCC Liaison	**9-A**		9,000		9,000		

Race and Ethnicity Study Committee		6,000		6,000		1
Website Oversight Comm, (Rebrand)	**9-C**	10,000		-		
Directors & Liability Insurance						
Canadian board		857	*	857	*	
U.S. board		1,200		1,200		
Dues						
ICRC		3,250		3,250		2
NAPARC		1,100		1,100		2
Government filing fee						
Canadian churches		14	*	14	*	
U.S. churches		20		20		
Missions Coordinator						
Salary + benefits	**8-A**	110,579	*	114,121	*	3
Book fund		1,071	*	1,071	*	4
Communication / Telephone		1,429	*	1,429	*	4
Office supply		964	*	964	*	4
Mileage		3,571	*	3,571	*	4
Travel		13,929	*	13,929	*	5
Postage / supplies						
Treasurer(s)		286		286		
Stated Clerk		500		500		
Professional fees						
Canadian churches		2,250	*	2,357	*	6
Joint		500	*	550	*	6
U.S. churches		250		250		6
Synod		-		8,000		
Honorariums						
Treasurer(s)						
Canadian	**2-B**	4,429	*	4,429	*	
Joint	**2-B**	6,643	*	6,643	*	
U.S.	**2-B**	7,500		7,500		
Clerk	**1-E**	7,000		7,000		

	Webmaster	**9-C**		7,500		7,500		
	Statistician	**1-E**		4,143	*	4,143	*	3
	Home Missions Clerk	**8-B**		12,500		12,500		
Website								
	Maintenance	**9-C**		4,300		4,300		7
	Annual development costs	**9-C**		2,500		2,500		
Legal Fund (U.S.)				10,000		10,000		
CECCA benevolence				500		500		
				303,113		304,812		
	Estimated "askings" / family – URCNA CAD			63.80		64.21		8
	Estimated "askings" / family – URCNA U.S.			48.11		48.35		8

Notes for the budget:

1. New committee
2. No budget requests were received for ICRC and NAPARC dues. The amount presented is from the most recent dues paid. CERCU and CECCA representatives did not project any increases.
3. Salary and benefits increased at current rate of inflation of 3% and converted into USD.
4. Office supply and telephone/communication budgets were not changed.
5. Travel and mileage budgets were not changed.
6. Fees for external accountant increased to cover anticipated increase in fee for the review engagement. U.S. Board has requested $250 to be budgeted for 2027 & 2028 for their external accountant review.
7. Includes Prayers/Forms website, Three Forms website, and federation website

8. Shared expense split stayed at 40% Canada and 60% U.S.

Motion is made and supported to grant the privilege of the floor to Rev. Ralph Pontier to speak to this recommendation.

Adopted

The recommendation is:

Adopted

2. That Synod note that this will make the estimated "Askings" / Family for 2027-2028.

Estimated Asking for Year:	**2027** **2028**
Canadian:	$64.00 $64.00 CAD
U.S.:	$48.00 $48.00 USD

Adopted

ARTICLE 121

Motion is made and supported to appoint the executive of the assembly to review and approve the concept minutes.

Adopted

ARTICLE 122

Motion is made and supported to appoint the Consistory of Covenant Reformed Church of Kansas City as convening consistory of the next synod in 2028.

Adopted

ARTICLE 123

Motion is made and supported to appoint the Consistory of Zion United Reformed Church of Sheffield as the convening consistory of the subsequent synod in 2030.

Adopted

ARTICLE 124

The press release for the day's proceedings is presented. Motion is made and supported to approve the press release.

Adopted

ARTICLE 125

The chairman addresses the assembly, acknowledging the Lord's provision through the convening Consistory of Trinity Reformed Church in Lethbridge. In particular, the chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to Lloyd Van Eeden Petersman and Duane Konynenbelt.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the Synodical Organizing Committee: Rev. Casey Freswick, Pam Hessels, Dawn Dirksen, and Lloyd Van Eeden Petersman.

The assembly stands to express its gratitude to the Synodical Organizing Committee.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the chairmen and reporters of the advisory committees.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the team of technical supporters, particularly those from "Faith to Film," who cared for the assembly's technical needs.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to Logan Pitsenberger who accompanied the singing of the assembly throughout the week.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the Stated Clerk, Rev. Doug Barnes, for his diligent and precise work in caring for the URCNA.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the Statistician, Mrs. Jody Luth, for her careful, patient, and thorough work for the URCNA.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the elders who love the church by serving as delegates to the assembly.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the second clerk, Rev. Nick Smith, for his careful and focused work.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the first clerk, Rev. James Sinke, for his diligence and attention to detail.

The chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the vice-chairman, Rev. Bradd Nymeyer, for his remarkable preparation, insight, and graciousness to the chairman and to the assembly.

The assembly stands to express its gratitude to Rev. Bradd Nymeyer.

The vice-chairman expresses the gratitude of the assembly to the chairman, Rev. Joel Dykstra, for his leadership, diligence, wisdom, and humor.

The assembly stands to express its gratitude to Rev. Joel Dykstra.

ARTICLE 126

The chairman reads Psalm 117, offers a word of exhortation and encouragement, and leads the assembly in a closing prayer.

ARTICLE 127

Motion is made and supported to adjourn.

Adopted

The assembly stands to sing the Doxology.

Convening Consistory Report
To Synod Calgary 2026

Timeline of Notable Events Leading Up to Synod Calgary 2026

August 4, 2024
We received correspondence from the Stated Clerk requesting that Reformed Fellowship be used for the printing of the 2024 Acts of Synod and that bulk shipping to Lethbridge be utilized to reduce costs. We also received a request to approve the cover art for printing. These requests were approved.

August, 2024
Via a phone conversation with the Chairman of the Synodical Organizing Committee (SOC), our clerk at the time expressed our desire to host synod at our facilities in Lethbridge, Alberta. He also requested clarification regarding the respective roles of the Convening Consistory and the SOC, as well as how the structure and working relationship between these two bodies would function.

August, 2024
We received correspondence from the Synodical Organizing Committee confirming their role for Synod as mandated by Synod in 2024. Their responsibilities include:

1. Securing a location for hosting Synod
2. Considering Christian organizations able to host Synod, such as universities or conference centers
3. Taking into account the availability of volunteers to assist in hosting Synod
4. Providing all logistical elements necessary for the churches to fulfill their work at Synod, including accommodations, meals, and audiovisual needs
5. Reporting their work to the convening consistory and the appropriate national corporation, along with making recommendations to Synod

6. Preparing and maintaining a manual for the organization of Synod

In this correspondence, they also expressed concerns regarding hosting synod in Lethbridge, specifically related to space, meals and transportation. They indicated a preference to host synod at the Best Western Premier in Calgary.

September, 2024
We sent a letter to the Synodical Organizing Committee addressing their concerns regarding space, meals, and transportation, and again requested that synod be hosted in Lethbridge. We stated that we would acquiesce and accept their final decision on where synod would be hosted.

September, 2024
We received a letter from the Synodical Organizing Committee indicating that, after reviewing the logistical needs of synod and comparing our facilities with those of the Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Center, the committee decided to move forward with the hosting of synod at the conference center in Calgary.

The committee noted several important considerations. First, they affirmed that the Cnsistory of Trinity serves as the Synodical Interim Committee and remains responsible for all matters related to the synodical agenda. Second, they acknowledged that their small committee is not able to manage all logistical responsibilities before and during synod, including registration, technology, family events, and emergency planning. Third, they requested that Trinity appoint a representative to participate in their meetings in an ad hoc capacity, recognizing the need for close communication and cooperation.

In light of the change in venue and responsibilities, many items that would normally be included in this report will instead be addressed in the report of the Synodical Organizing Committee.

It was also determined that our chairman would serve as Trinity's ad hoc representative on the SOC.

September 7, 2024
We received correspondence noting that Synod Escondido failed to formally reappoint Mrs. Jody Luth as Statistician, an action that should have been taken. The Convening Consistory sent a letter to Mrs. Luth acknowledging the oversight, expressing regret, and asking whether she was willing to continue in this role. She indicated her willingness to do so, and the Convening Consistory formally affirmed her continued role as Statistician with thanks.

October 7, 2025
Having received a letter from the Stated Clerk concerning an error in Article 48.5 of the Acts of Synod 2001, it was noted that the word "decision" should be changed to "motion" and that the motion should be recorded as adopted. It was agreed that these changes should be noted at Synod Calgary 2026, with the recommendation that the official online record be corrected to reflect what was actually decided by Synod Escondido 2001.

November 6, 2025
We requested guidance regarding remuneration for the newly established Clerk of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions. Synod Escondido had specified compensation of $25 USD per hour, up to a maximum of $12,500 USD annually (Acts of Synod Escondido, Article 72.2). Upon implementing the role, the committee determined that this level of remuneration did not adequately meet the needs of the position and proposed increasing the hourly rate to $50 USD while maintaining the same annual cap. We were advised that the Convening Consistory only needed to acknowledge receipt of this correspondence and was not required to take further action. We acknowledged receipt accordingly.

January 21, 2025
We informed the Stated Clerk that the next Synod would be named Synod Calgary 2026, as the Synodical Organizing Committee had determined that the assembly would be held in Calgary rather than Lethbridge.

September 10, 2025
We received correspondence from the Stated Clerk regarding a representative of Reformed Presbyterian Global Missions whose name had been included in a report to Synod Niagara 2022. Due to her work in regions where Christianity is not welcomed, she requested that her last name be removed from online records to prevent identification that could hinder her mission work. This request was granted.

November 15, 2025
We created and shared a Google Form for vendors to register for Synod Calgary 2026.

March 16, 2026
We received communication from the Stated Clerk regarding Providence Covenant Reformed Church of Armstrong. We approved the recommendation that synodical ratification was not required, as this congregation is a church plant of an existing church. This should be noted at Synod 2026.

March 20, 2026
We approved the credential form for Synod Calgary 2026.

March 20, 2026
We approved the Table of Contents and Schedule for the provisional agenda for Synod Calgary 2026.

March 20, 2026
We received recommendations and supporting background information from the Synodical Appeals Committee regarding two appeals. Based on the information and rationale provided, we agreed with the committee that the appeal from Christ

Reformed Church of Sioux Falls was admissible, while the appeal from Sovereign Grace URC was inadmissible.

March 20, 2026
We approved the Convening Consistory Report to Synod 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Duane Konynenbelt
Clerk – Trinity URC Lethbridge

Stated Clerk's Report
An Appendix to the Convening Consistory Report
To Synod Calgary 2026

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

Following Synod Escondido, I attended to the following duties.

7/09/24	Created and distributed to all churches an order form for the Acts of Synod Escondido, with a due date of October 1, 2024.
7/09/24	Created and distributed to all churches a ratification letter and ballot for the 54 proposed changes to the Church Order. The deadline for ratification ballots, as set by the Chairman of Synod, was October 1, 2024.
7/15/24	Corresponded with the the Chairman of Synod Escondido and with the Convening Consistory regarding a concern raised over the relative nearness of the ratification date for the proposed changes to the Church Order. No change was made to the ratification date.
7/15/24	As directed by Synod and its Chairman, wrote and sent thank you notes to Webmaster Mr. Gary Fisher, former CERCU member Rev. Cal Tuininga, former Canadian Board member Mr. Stan Antonides, and former Canadian Board member Rev. Raymond Sikkema.
7/15/24	Notified members of the Building & Loan Fund Study Committee and the Synodical Organizing Committee of their appointment by Synod Escondido and of their respective mandates.
7/15/24	Notified Elder Paul Lawton of his appointment by Synod Escondido to serve as Home Mission Clerk.

7/22/24	Edited report of the Human Sexuality Study Committee, as directed by Synod Escondido, and created a pastoral advice handout. Both of these were distributed, and the pastoral advice was sent to the Webmaster for posting online.
7/24/24	Received finalized report and pastoral advice summary of the Digital Media and Worship Study Committee. Both of these were distributed, and the pastoral advice was sent to the Webmaster for posting online.
7/29/24	Updated the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* with amendments approved by Synod Escondido. This update was distributed via email to the consistories and, with help from our Webmaster, was posted online.
8/05/24	Corresponded with Reformed Fellowship Inc. (RFI) regarding the cost of printing the Acts of Synod with RFI. For the past few synods, this has been done through Dordt University, but RFI was able to provide the service more affordably, and the organization also was willing to handle distribution to consistories within the U.S. as part of its service to the federation. This information was provided to the Convening Consistory, which indicated on 8/13 that it desired to move forward with having RFI print the Acts of Synod Escondido.
8/13/24	Received Notice of Intent to Appeal from Christ URC of Sioux Falls, with regard to a decision of Synod Escondido. After acknowledging receipt, I forwarded this Notice to the Convening Consistory and to the Standing Committee on Appeals.
8/22/24	Received a revised version of the pastoral advice file from the Digital Media and Worship Study Committee. This was posted online,

replacing the original file, at the request of the committee's chairman.

8/24/24 Received correspondence suggesting several minor editorial changes to the pastoral advice from the Human Sexuality Committee. As these were minor edits that did not affect the substance of the report, I made these changes, requested that the Webmaster replace the original file with the updated one, and distributed this update to the consistories.

9/07/24 Received correspondence from the previous Stated Clerk noting that Synod Escondido failed to formally reappoint Mrs. Jody Luth as Statistician – an action which should have been taken, since her term is from one synod to the next. However, there are no term limits to this position, and she is continuing to do the work. Therefore I have formulated a recommendation for a minor change to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* (noted later in this report), and I notified the Convening Consistory of this oversight. The Convening Consistory wrote a letter to Mrs. Luth to notify her of the oversight, express sorrow for the oversight, and ask whether she was willing to continue in this role. She expressed willingness to do so, and therefore the Convening Consistory formally affirmed her continued role as Statistician, with thanks.

9/10/24 Received a letter from the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board, which the chairman desired to have distributed to the churches. This letter was forwarded to the consistories via email.

9/12/24 Sent a draft of the Acts of Synod Escondido to the Webmaster for posting on the private side of the federational website. The consistories

	were notified, with the request that those reviewing the Acts and finding errors notify me of these. I wish to thank the previous Stated Clerk, Rev. Ralph Pontier, for his extensive work in compiling the Acts of Synod Escondido 2024, tutoring the present Stated Clerk in the process.
10/2/24	Tallied votes for the ratification of proposed changes to the Church Order. Out of 121 synodically-approved consistories, 116 consistories responded. All 54 of the proposed changes were ratified by more than 90 percent of the synodically-approved consistories of our federation. The newly revised edition of the Church Order was distributed to the consistories by email and, thanks to our Webmaster, was posted online.
10/3/24	Sent the final draft of the Acts of Synod Escondido to Reformed Fellowship Inc., along with a tabulation of orders for the Acts. The tabulation of orders also was sent to the URCNA's treasurers, who were to handle billing for those who ordered. Two dozen extra copies also were ordered for the sake of fulfilling late requests. These will be stored by the Stated Clerk and distributed upon request.
11/4/24	Requested that the Webmaster post the Acts of Synod Escondido on the public side of URCNA.org, since ample time had passed for finding errors.
11/6/25	Received correspondence from the Convening Consistory requesting guidance regarding remuneration for the newly established and appointed Clerk of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions. Synod Escondido specified that the Home Mission Clerk should be paid $25 USD per hour, up to $12,500 USD

	annually (Acts of Synod Escondido, Art. 72.2). Upon implementing this new role, however, the SCHM determined that this remuneration did not accurately or adequately fill the need. Instead, the committee proposed remunerating the clerk at a higher rate of $50 USD per hour, but with the maximum remaining at $12,500 USD annually. I advised that the Convening Consistory needed only to affirm receiving this correspondence, without acting to ratify the SCHM's actions.
11/16/24	Received and forwarded to the churches, via email, a report from the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity regarding a recently held meeting of NAPARC.
12/4/24	Received Notice of Intent to Appeal from Trinity URC of Cape Coral, FL, indicating the intention of the Consistory of Trinity URC with regard to a decision of Classis Eastern U.S. This Notice was forwarded to the members of the Standing Committee on Appeals, and the Convening Consistory also was notified.
12/9/24	Received notice from a former Stated Clerk that Synod Niagara 2022 adopted a language change effecting the pastoral advice found in Church Order Appendix 8. This change was made in Appendix 8 of the Church Order, but it was never made in the pastoral advice itself, which is posted seperately on the website. This change was made, and a revised copy of the pastoral advice was posted online, with the assistance of our Webmaster.
1/6/25	Received and responded to an inquiry from the chairman of a committee, inquiring about the wisdom of recommending particular online file storage options for the use of our committees. It was noted that some committees use Google

	Docs with Google's online storage options; others use Dropbox; and other options also exist. After some discussion and private deliberation, I concluded that it would be unwise for me to make a recommendation in this regard, both because of my own lack of expertise in this matter and because of the varied needs of our committees.
1/21/25	Was informed by the Convening Consistory that the name of our next synod would be Synod Calgary 2026, since the Synodical Organizing Committee had determined that the assembly should be held in Calgary, rather than in Lethbridge. The name change follows our precedent of naming synods not according to the convening consistory, but according to the place where the assembly is held. I notified the Webmaster, who changed online references from Synod Lethbridge 2026 to Synod Calgary 2026.
2/6/25	Responded to an inquiry from the Consistory of Faith URC in Beecher regarding the best way for URCNA delegates to the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains to be appointed and overseen, and the best way to bring recommendations regarding that committee to synod. I noted that the Faith URC Consistory was appointed in 2014 to serve indefinitely as the URCNA's Liasison to the PRCC, making that Consistory the *de facto* standing committee for the PRCC. As such, I recommended that the Consistory include recommendations for any needed changes in its report to Synod Calgary 2026.
4/3/25	Received correspondence from Rev. Charles Dey of the Presbyterian & Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military

	Personnel. Rev. Dey reported that the PRCC commissioners voted unanimously in February to receive the URCNA's application for full membership in the PRCC. This now must be ratified by the PRCC's member denominations. Rev. Dey also requested an updated letter from the URCNA to the Armed Forces Chaplain Board affirming the URCNA's standing and affiliation with the PRCC. I complied and submitted the requested letter.
5/20/25	Forwarded to the churches, via email, a notice that was submitted to me by the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity. This notice provided an editorial correction to the CERCU report that was submitted to Synod Escondido 2024.
5/26/25	Distributed to the churches, via email, a notice from the Synodical Committee on Home Missions announcing the availability of a newly revised and expanded edition of the URCNA Church Planting Manual.
5/29/25	At the request of and in cooperation with the Committee for Ecumical Relations and Church Unity, filmed and uploaded a statement of greetings and congratulations for the Tricentennial Celebration of the Reformed Church in the United States, on behalf of the URCNA.
6/10/25	Discussed with the chairman of the Synodical Organizing Committee the mandate of that committee, along with its relationship to the Convening Consistory and the federation's boards of directors.
6/11/25	Discussed with a representative from the Convening Consistory the relationship between the Synodical Organizing Committee, the

	Convening Consistory, and the federation's boards of directors.
6/20/25	Forwarded to the consistories, via email, a request from the Building Loan Fund Study Committee asking for consistories to participate in a survey.
7/8/25	Discussed with Rev. Casey Freswick, chairman of the Synodical Organizing Committee, the need to propose revisions to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* in order to update our regulations in a manner that acknowledges the mandate and work of the SOC. Although the Stated Clerk's responsibilities include proposing changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* "to bring them into conformity with prior synodical decisions and practices," the SOC's mandate (Acts of Synod Escondido 2024, Art. 100) includes making recommendations to synod related to its work. Therefore I recommended that the SOC, in its report to Synod Calgary 2026, include recommendations for necessary changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*.
7/14/25	Received a request from a representative of Campaign Life Coalition in Hamilton, ON, requesting that I endorse the 2025 Life Chain Canada on behalf of the URCNA. I politely declined this request, explaining that I have no authority to speak on behalf of the federation in this manner.
8/26/25	Received correspondence from Rev. Charlie Dey of the Presbyerian & Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel, seeking IRS documentation for the URCNA's armed services chaplaincy certification. I was able to obtain and provide

this document, through the generous labors of URCNA U.S. Treasurer John Ehnis.

9/10/25 Our Webmaster forwarded correspondence from a representative of the Reformed Presbyterian Global Missions (RPCNA), whose name was cited in a report to Synod Niagara 2022 (page 460 of the Acts of Synod Niagara 2022). Due to her need to travel to areas where Christianity is not welcome, she requested that we redact her last name from our online posting, lest an internet search connect her name with missionary labors and impede her work. I brought this matter to our Convening Consistory, which concurred that we should honor this request. The online record of the Acts of Synod Niagara 2022 was amended, replacing her last name with her last initial. This file was posted as a replacement to the existing file by our Webmaster.

9/18/25 Corresponded with the Chairman of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad regarding an error in our official record of Synod Escondido 2001. *Please see the further explanation of this matter in the notes below.*

10/31/25 Responded to an inquiry regarding the preparations for the synod of 2020 that was postponed. An agenda for the expected synod was prepared, but it was distributed under the heading of "Interim Report." The question was raised as to why this document has not been published on our website as part of our historical record. See the separate recommendation below regarding this matter.

11/3/25 The Canadian Corporation of the URCNA requested that a report of the Bursary Committee be distributed to the churches via

	email. After seeking guidance from the Convening Consistory, this material was distributed to the consistories.
11/17/25	Received and distributed, via email, a report on a recent NAPARC meeting created by the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity.
11/29/25	On behalf of the Synodical Organizing Committee, forwarded to the consistories a letter regarding lodging at Synod Calgary 2026. This was followed up by an explanatory email, clarifying how hotel rooms could be reserved.
11/29/25	Provided feedback and insights to the Synodical Organizing Committee regarding the timeline and deadlines for making preparations for synods.
12/10/25	Received Notice of Intent to Appeal from Sovereign Grace URC of Grand Rapids, MI, with regard to a decision of Class Michigan. After acknowledging receipt, I forwarded this Notice to the Convening Consistory and to the Standing Committee on Appeals.
1/8/26	Corresponded with Rev. Cal Tuininga regarding his replacement as chairman of the Standing Appeals Committee. Having determined that no chairman had been appointed for this committee after Rev. Tuininga's departure, I contacted Rev. Joel Dykstra to request that he ensure that a report for the committee was submitted for the synodical agenda.
2/19/26	Received notice from Trinity URC of Cape Coral that it no longer intends to submit its appeal. The Standing Committee on Appeals and Convening Consistory were notified.

2/20/26	Compiled and distributed fraternal invitations on behalf of our Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity.
3/5/26	Received from Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls the text of its appeal against Synod Escondido 2024. This was forwarded to the Standing Committee on Appeals and to the Convening Consistory.
3/11/26	Received notice from the Canadian & JVA Treasurer that registration for Synod Calgary 2026 was opened. I notified the churches of this.
3/14/26	Received from Sovereign Grace URC of Grand Rapids the text of its appeal against Classis Michigan. This was forwarded to the Standing Committee on Appeals and to the Convening Consistory.

In addition to the specific actions listed above, I also:

- ✓ Sent to the consistories reminders of upcoming deadlines, in coordination with the Convening Consistory.
- ✓ Distributed reports from the U.S. and Canadian treasurers, as I received these.
- ✓ Distributed correspondence from the Statistician, as requested.
- ✓ Distributed a prayer publication produced by the Presbyterian & Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel, as this was made available.
- ✓ Updated the list of Pastoral Openings numerous times, whenever a change was submitted to me.
- ✓ Prepared credentials, as requested, for those serving as fraternal delegates to assemblies of church federations with which we have ecumenical relations.

- ✓ Made updates to the Church Order and the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to correct minor typographical errors (e.g., misspelled words, capitalization errors, etc.). All of these are detailed later in this report. Those submitted by July 2025 were corrected, and new versions of the documents were posted online. Those received after that date were added to my electronic file, for inclusion in the next release of the Church Order and the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*.
- ✓ Answered numerous requests for information from office-bearers of our churches and from other interested parties. Some of these sought general information about the URCNA or inquired about the possibility of planting churches in particular areas. Others sought information regarding polity questions. In each case, I sought to answer the questions as accurately and pastorally as possible, when necessary directing the contacts to others who were better able to answer their inquiries. I sought to remind these individuals that the Stated Clerk bears no authority to render "official" pronouncements on behalf of the federation.
- ✓ Directed a variety of inquirers to particular individuals – including committee chairmen, the Webmaster, and the Statistician – who could better address their needs. Many of these were representatives from church federations abroad, who were directed to representatives of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad, and representatives from North American church federations extending invitations for fraternal representation at broader assemblies, which were forwarded to the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity.
- ✓ Received a handful of allegations of theological error against ministers within our federation – all of which I forwarded to the relevant consistory without comment.
- ✓ Provided Certificates of Ordained Status for several ministers, at their request.

Consistory Ratification of the Decisions of Synod Escondido 2024

Of the 121 eligible consistories, 116 submitted ballots by the October 1, 2024, deadline. All 54 of the proposed changes were ratified by more than 90 percent of the synodically-approved consistories of our federation.

The churches that did not submit a ballot were counted as negative votes on the items, as per a previous synodical decision (*Acts of Synod Calgary 2004*, Art. 82.B.). All ballots have been preserved in electronic format.

Article 22 Churches

Three church plants have been approved, in accord with the regulations set forth in Church Order Article 22.

Classis Ontario-East approved the organizing of **Pelham URC** of Fenwick, ON – a daughter congregation of Wellandport URC of Wellandport.

Classis Southwest U.S. approved the organizing of **Covenant Chinese Reformed Church** of Anaheim, CA – a daughter congregation of Christ Reformed Church of Anaheim.

Classis Western Canada approved the organizing of **Providence Covenant Reformed Church** of Armstrong, BC – a daughter congregation of Immanuel Covenant Reformed Church of Abbotsford.

It should be noted, concerning the organizing of Providence Covenant Reformed Church of Armstrong, that this was reported in the minutes of Classis Western Canada from October 21-22, 2025, as the admittance of a church pending ratification by synod, as is specified in Article 32 of our Church Order. Upon consultation with the Consistory of Immanuel

Covenant Reformed Church, the Stated Clerk of Classis Western Canada, and the Synodical Committee on Home Missions, it was determined that this action involved *not* admitting an established church; but organizing, as a distinct congregation, a church plant raised up by the church at Abbotsford. This falls under the provisions of Church Order Article 22 and does not require synodical ratification. On March 16, 2026, I explained this situation to the Convening Consistory of Synod, *recommending synodical ratification not be sought* for this congregation, since it was a church plant of an existing congregation. The Convening Consistory concurred with this judgment.

Article 32 Churches

Classis Central U.S. approved provisionally receiving, in accord with Church Order Article 32, **Redeemer Reformed Church** of Golden Valley, MN. This action was taken on March 2, 2026. A synodical vote on ratification should be taken after the elction of officers and before the adoption of the provisional agenda.

Correcting the Historical Record of Synod Escondido 2001

On Sept. 18, 2025, I was contacted by the Chairman of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad, Rev. Jason Tuinstra, regarding a discrepancy in our official record of Synod Escondido 2001.

While researching the history of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad, Rev. Tuinstra sought the record of the first ecumenical relationship entered by the URCNA with a church federation located beyond the bounds of the U.S. and Canada. This happened in 2001, when we entered into a relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Suid Afrika

(GKSA). However, when this was recorded in Art. 48.5 of the Acts of Synod Escondido 2001, two significant errors occurred:

1. When the motion was made to enter into Phase 1 relations with the GKSA, that motion was amended. The Acts then records: "The decision now reads: 'We recommend to synod that the URCNA enter into phase 1 ecumenical relations with the G.K.S.A. (R.C.S.A.).'" The word "decision" ought to be "motion," indicating that the action had not yet been approved by the synod.

2. This motion is not recorded, in the Acts, as having been adopted.

Rev. Tuinstra brought this to my attention because of the historical significance of the event therein recorded. This was the first time the URCNA entered into any kind of ecumenical relationship with a church beyond North America.

I brought this matter to the attention of the Convening Consistory, suggestion that this matter be raised with Synod Calgary 2026, with encouragement that the synod correct the official record – in its online form – to reflect what actually was done by Synod Escondido 2001. To be clear: this would mean changing "decision" to "motion," and inserting the word "Adopted" after the record of the motion.

The Convening Consistory responded favorably to this suggestion.

Note that the recommendation below is made in line with *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.m., specifying that the Stated Clerk is responsible to "preserve original records of all proceedings of synod, and all documents, letters and papers having reference to its proceedings" (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.e.).

In light of this, **I recommend that the historical record of Synod Escondido 2001, Article 48, be corrected by changing "decision" to "motion," and inserting the word "Adopted" after the record of the motion.**

Publishing the Historical Record of the Synod That Wasn't in 2020

In preparation for the synod which was scheduled to be held in 2020, which was postponed due to Covid-related issues, the former Stated Clerk prepared a synodical agenda. When it was decided to postpone the synod, this agenda was distributed to the churches under the heading of "Interim Report."

As a matter of historical record, it has been suggested that this Interim Report should be posted on our website. This seems wise to me, for the sake of historical interest.

Note that the recommendation below is made in line with *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.m., specifying that the Stated Clerk is responsible to "preserve original records of all proceedings of synod, and all documents, letters and papers having reference to its proceedings" (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.e.).

In light of this, **I recommend that the Interim Report of 2020 be published online, as part of the URCNA's historical record.**

Errata in the Church Order

Since there is no official printed copy, and since the Church Order is often amended at every synod, these mistakes have already been corrected in the digital copy. Those received by July 2025 are included in the copy currently available on the

website. The others, as noted below, will be included in the next release of the Church Order.

1. Article 3
   The adjective "reformed" should be capitalized, as it is elsewhere in the Church Order (Art. 34, Appendix 1.4.2, Appendix 2.3.b., etc.).
   Correction made 10/9/25, for the next release of the Church Order.
2. Article 40
   The title was missing a space between "40" and the dash.
   Correction made 7/2/25.
3. Article 47
   The title was missing a dash between the article number and title.
   Correction made 7/2/25.
4. Article 56
   The parenthetical reference was italicized, as it is elsewhere in the Church Order.
   Corection made 10/9/25, for the next release of the Church Order.
5. Article 58
   In the title, "Disciplined" was missing the final "d."
   Correction made 7/2/25.
6. Article 58
   "Excommunicated" was misspelled.
   Correction made 7/2/25.
7. Appendix 7, Guideline 4.a.1.
   This read: "Notice of intent to appeal by a consistory of an individual must be filed with the clerk of the adjudicating assembly within 60 days of the announcement of the decision."
   It should have read: "… by a consistory ***or*** an individual …"
   Correction made 10/5/24.

8. Appendix 7, Guideline 4.c.
   This read: "If a member alleges … "
   It should have read: "If an ***individual*** member alleges …"
   NOTE: See Acts of Synod Escondido 2024, Art. 113.4.
   Correction made 7/2/25.
9. Appendix 7, Guideline 7.b.ii.
   This read: "… A synod may suspend this particular rule (Guideline 7.b.11.) …"
   It should have read: "… A synod may suspend this particular rule (Guideline 7***.b.ii***.) …"
   Correction made 7/2/25.
10. Appendix 8.1
    In paragraph 3, sentence 1, "synodically approved" should have been hyphenated. Likewise in footnote 4 on the same page.
    Correction made 9/15/25, for the next release of the Church Order.

Errata in the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*

Since there is no official printed copy, and since the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* are often amended at every synod, these mistakes have already been corrected in the digital copy. Those received by July 2025 are included in the copy currently available on the website. The others, as noted, will be included in the next release of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*.

1. RSP 4.3.1.
   The phrase "synodically appointed" needed to be hyphenated.
   Correction made 9/15/25, for the next release of the RSP.
2. RSP 4.4.4.
   The phrase "synodically approved" needed to be hyphenated.

Correction made 9/15/25, for the next release of the RSP.

3. RSP 4.5.1.
   An unnecessary comma was removed between "currently serving" and "or having served."
   Correction made 9/30/25, for the next release of the RSP.
4. RSP 4.7.1.
   The first sentence lacked a space between "the" and "United."
   Correction made 9/15/25, for the next release of the RSP.
5. RSP 4.7.1.
   An unnecessary comma was removed between "currently serving" and "or having served."
   Correction made 9/30/25, for the next release of the RSP.
6. RSP 4.7.4.a.
   The phrase "day to day" needed to be hyphenated, since it is used as an adjective.
   Correction made 9/15/25, for the next release of the RSP.
7. RSP 5.3.2.c.
   The phrase "synodically appointed" needed to be hyphenated.
   Correction made 9/15/25, for the next release of the RSP.
8. RSP Appendix B, Guideline 4.a.1.
   This read: "Notice of intent to appeal by a consistory of an individual must be filed with the clerk of the adjudicating assembly within 60 days of the announcement of the decision."
   It should have read: "… by a consistory ***or*** an individual …"
   Correction made 10/5/24.

9. RSP Appendix B Guideline 4.c.
   This read: “If a member alleges … ”
   It should have read: “If an ***individual*** member alleges …”
   Correction made 7/2/25.

10. RSP Appendix B, Guideline 7.b.ii.
    This read: “… A synod may suspend this particular rule (Guideline 7.b.11.) …”
    It should have read: “… A synod may suspend this particular rule (Guideline 7***.b.ii***.) …”
    Correction made 7/2/25.

11. RSP Appendix C, Procedural Note 2.
    This read: “If the Advisory Committee is recommending a change the Church Order … ”
    It should have read: “If the Advisory Committee is recommending a change ***to*** the Church Order …”
    Correction made 1/14/26, for the next release of the RSP.

12. RSP Appendix D, 1.1.
    This read: “… applying them in response to doctrinal questions that has arisen in the churches.”
    It should have read: “… applying them in response to doctrinal questions that ***have*** arisen in the churches.”
    Correction made 1/14/26, for the next release of the RSP.

13. RSP Appendix D, 1.2.
    This read: “… alone may serve as grounds in matter of discipline … ”
    It should have read: “… alone may serve as grounds in matter***S*** of discipline … ”
    Correction made 1/14/26, for the next release of the RSP.

Recommendation – Reappointment of Functionaries

The following recommendation is based on *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.4.j, which permits the Stated Clerk to recommend changes to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* to bring them into conformity with prior synodical decisions and practices.

Recommendation: Amend the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* by adding to the duties of the Convening Consistory a further item, numbered 1.5.2, to read: *"The convening consistory shall make recommendations regarding the reappointment of the Stated Clerk and Statistician."*

Grounds:

1. Synod Escondido 2024 clarified (Art. 106.8) that the Statistician serves under the supervision of the Convening Consistory, as does the Stated Clerk (*Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.5.3.).
2. The Website Oversight Committee, which supervises the Webmaster, makes recommendations regarding the reappointment of the Webmaster. By analogy, it would be appropriate for the Convening Consistory to do the same for the functionaries under its supervision.
3. Because no one is explicitly charged with recommending the reappointment of the Statistician, the matter was forgotten at Synod Escondido 2024.
4. Reappointment of the Stated Clerk has never been overlooked, but it would seem appropriate to include a recommendation regarding both functionaries under its supervision as part of the Convening Consistory's listed duties.

Respectfully submitted, your servant,
Rev. Douglas B. Barnes
URCNA Stated Clerk

Stated Clerk's Supplemental Report to Synod Calgary 2026

June 5, 2026

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers,

1. **The Provisional Agenda** was distributed to the churches on April 7, 2026, 9 weeks before synod and one week ahead of schedule. **Advisory committee assignments** were distributed to the churches on April 29, 2026.

2. **Agenda Error Regarding Article 22 Churches**

   In my report included in the Provisional Agenda, I noted that three church plants have been organized as particular churches, in accord with the regulations set forth in Church Order Article 22.

   On April 15, I was notified of the organization of two additional churches which had escaped my notice. These included:

   - Classis Pacific Northwest approved the organizing of **Providence Reformed Church** of Meridian, ID – a daughter congregation of Christ Reformed Church of Nampa, ID.
   - Classis Pacific Northwest approved the organizing of **Peace URC** of Vancouver, WA – a daughter congregation of Grace URC of Portland, OR.

   These join the churches previously named as having been organized under Article 22:

   - **Pelham URC** of Fenwick, ON
   - **Covenant Chinese Reformed Church** of Anaheim, CA
   - **Providence Covenant Reformed Church** of Armstrong, BC

Note that the two omitted churches also should have been listed in the Synodical Committee on Home Missions Report in the Provisional Agenda, on page 240.

I sincerely apologize for this oversight.

3. **Registration Matters**

With help from Synodical Organizing Committee member Pam Hessels, I sent last-minute reminders to the churches that had not registered a full complement of delegates by April 15, reminding them that the deadline for registration was April 17.

In response, I learned that the following consistories were unable to send delegates to synod this year.

- ✓ Covenant Chinese Reformed Church of Anaheim, CA;
- ✓ Trinity Reformed Church of Cape Coral, FL;
- ✓ Covenant Reformed Church of Carbondale, PA;
- ✓ Immanuel URC of Listowel, ON (currently under care of Covenant URC of Wyoming, ON);
- ✓ Preakness Valley URC of Wayne, NJ;
- ✓ The United Reformed Church of Wellsburg, IA; and
- ✓ West Sayville Reformed Bible Church of West Sayville, NY;

I requested that each of these consistories (excepting Immanuel of Listowel) send credentials, indicating why they were unable to send delegates. I have received credentials from all consistories except Immanuel URC of Listowel and Preakness Valley URC of Wayne.

4. **Advisory Committee Changes**

a. On May 1, I received a request from Rev. Keith Davis that he be released from the role of serving as chairman of Advisory Committee 8, as a family commitment would require his early departure from synod. Rev. Steve Oeverman was willing and able to take his place. The Convening Consistory approved this switch, which was entered into a revised list of advisory committee assignments.

b. I also swapped two delegates between Advisory Committees 10 and 11, due to an error on my part that would have left a classis without a representative on Advisory Committee 11.

c. On May 20, I was contacted by Rev. Simon Lievaart regarding concerns he had about serving as reporter for Advisory Committee 12. After discussion with the designated chairman, Rev. Jason Vander Horst, it was determined that both men were comfortable with Rev. Lievaart serving as chairman and Rev. Vander Horst serving as reporter. This change was reviewed by the Convening Consistory, which gave its approval.

d. On May 28, I was contacted by Elder Wil Postma regarding concerns he had about serving as reporter for Advisory Committee 7. I contacted Rev. Matthew Nuiver, who was already slated to serve on that committee, and he graciously agreed to take on that role. This change was reviewed by the Convening Consistory, which gave its approval.

5. **Book Giveaway:** On April 13, I received correspondence from Mr. Isaac Wingfield, who co-authored a book with his brother – RPCNA minister Rev. Gabriel Wingfield – which emphasizes the importance of the local church. These brothers desired to give away a copy of this book, entitled *Together,* to each delegate of Synod Calgary. I consulted with the Convening Consistory, which approved of this offer. After making inquiries regarding transportation of the books, Rev. Casey Freswick agreed to bring the books, which I received from the publisher. Each delegate is encouraged to take a complementary copy of this book home.

6. **Prayer Maps:** On May 2, I sent a notice at the request of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, indicating that new mission prayer maps would be distributed at Synod Calgary for delegates to take home and distribute to their congregations.

7. **Final Numbers:** As of the date of this report, there are 127 organized churches (seven of which are not sending any delegate) and 223 registered delegates (not including fraternal delegates and observers), as well as one provisionally received church with two delegates. There are 116 ministers and 109 elders registered to attend.

8. **Correspondence:** On May 14, I received an item of correspondence from the Consistory of Cornerstone URC in Sanborn, IA, with the request that this be distributed to the churches for their consideration. Having clarified matters with a member of that consistory, I sent the communication and accompanying email to the Convening Consistory for guidance. On May 18, the Convening Consistory advised that I should distribute the communication as requested. This was done on May 19.

9. **Overture 5:** On May 26, I was contacted by Rev. Brian Lee, who had noted that there was an error in Overture 5, which seeks to change the language of Church Order Art. 31 and Appendix 7. In the text of the overture – both as recorded in the minutes of Classis Central US and in the Provisional Agenda for Synod Calgary – proposed changes were indicated by bold print. However, some of the unbolded text also indicates a proposed change. It was confirmed with the originating consistory that this was a typographical error, and the intent was to propose adopting Art. 31 as written in the overture (even though some of the changes were inadvertently left without bold highlighting). Information about this error was conveyed to the chairmen and reporters of Advisory Committee 6 (which will handle the overture) and Advisory Committee 12 (which handles an appeal that refers to the overture).

10. **Synod Welcome Packet:** On May 29, having reviewed the Synod Welcome Packet that was compiled by the Convening Consistory and the Synodical Organizing Committee, I distributed this to the churches at the request of these committees.

11. **This has been my first term as Stated Clerk.** I freely admit that I entered into the work of the Stated Clerk with trepidation. However, I have found it to be rewarding, and I pray that I have been able to serve the churches in a helpful manner. Should the delegates to Synod Calgary 2026 believe it wise to reappoint me, I would be honored to serve again.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Douglas B. Barnes
URCNA Stated Clerk

To: Delegates of Synod Calgary 2026
From: John Ehnis, Treasurer, URCNA-US
Date: March 2, 2026

Dear Brothers,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This report summarizes the financial activity of the URCNA-US across the General, Psalter Hymnal, and Litigation Funds for the **two years ended December 31, 2025**, for the United States churches of the United Reformed Churches in North America.

Unless otherwise noted, the financial results discussed below are prepared using **accrual accounting**, meaning income and expenses are recorded when earned or incurred rather than when cash is received or paid.

Overall Financial Summary

Overall, the URCNA-US experienced stable financial performance during the two-year period. Contributions remained strong, litigation expenses concluded during 2024, and the Joint Venture distributions strengthened the cash position during 2025. Net assets across all funds increased, and no significant financial risks are currently anticipated.

General Fund

Full Year 2024 Results

Total support and revenue for 2024 was **$155,743**, consisting of **$155,024 in Contributions** and **$719 in interest income**. Contributions equaled approximately **93% of the URCNA-US contributions budget** of $166,800.

Total expenses for the year were **$142,677**, or approximately **85% of budgeted expenses**, resulting in a **General Fund**

surplus of $13,066 for the year. Overall, 2024 reflects strong contribution participation and controlled spending.

The General Fund experienced mid-year relief due to a $32,500 transfer from the Psalter Hymnal Fund and the transfer of $40,098 of legal expenses to the newly created Litigation Fund.

Full Year 2025 Results

Total support and revenue for 2025 was **$161,475**, consisting of **$159,837 in Contributions** and **$1,638 in interest income**. Contributions equaled approximately **99% of the URCNA-US Contributions budget** of $162,000.

Total expenses for the year were **$125,210**, or approximately **78% of budgeted expenses**, resulting in a **General Fund surplus of $36,265** for the year. Overall, 2025 reflects strong contribution participation and controlled spending.

The General Fund transferred **$10,000 of the unused annual Litigation budget** and **$1,321 from an unused retainer refund**.

As of December 31, 2025, the General Fund's **Cash balance was $76,786** and its **Net Asset balance was $63,376**. The difference reflects timing of receivables and payables at year-end.

Psalter Hymnal Fund

The **Trinity Psalter Hymnal (TPH) Joint Venture Agreement (JVA)** is a 50/50 partnership between the URCNA-US and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to publish and distribute the Trinity Psalter Hymnal (hereafter "Joint Venture"). The **Psalter Hymnal Fund (PH Fund)** in the URCNA-US accounting records tracks the URCNA-US's 50% ownership interest in the Joint Venture and is accounted for using the equity method under generally accepted accounting

principles.

The Statement of Financial Position includes both cash received from the Joint Venture, any interest on cash balances, and the URCNA-US's ownership interest in the Joint Venture. Cash distributions from the Joint Venture to the URCNA-US are recorded as a reduction in its investment in the TPH JVA rather than as revenue, since the income is recognized separately through Equity in Earnings. The Statement of Activities includes the URCNA-US's share of the Joint Venture's net income each period, recorded as Equity in Earnings. Payments from the Psalter Hymnal Fund to entities outside the URCNA-US are treated as expenses.

Total change in net assets for 2024 was a **loss of $54,275**, consisting of a $19,109 loss of Equity in Earnings, $2,334 in interest income, and a payment to the URCNA's Canadian Board of $37,500 per an approved resolution by Synod Escondido 2024. The Joint Venture experienced a loss in 2024 primarily due to a major printing run during the year. Cash from the PH Fund totaling $62,500 was transferred to the General Fund and the Litigation Fund per an approved resolution by Synod Escondido 2024.

In 2024, the Joint Venture authorized a **$25,000 distribution** to the URCNA-US, with an identical distribution made to the OPC. The cash was received in early 2025.

Total change in net assets for 2025 was a **surplus of $91,621**, consisting of $90,844 in Equity in Earnings and $777 in interest income. No expenses or transfers between funds were recorded in 2025.

In 2025, the Joint Venture authorized a **$50,000 distribution** to the URCNA-US, with an identical distribution made to the OPC. The cash was received in Q4 2025.

As of December 31, 2025, the PH Fund's **cash balance was**

$78,440 and its **net asset balance was $168,049**. The difference reflects the URCNA-US's ownership interest in the Joint Venture.

Litigation Fund

Litigation activity remained significant in 2024 as an ongoing legal dispute finally came to an end. Expenses recorded in this fund totaled **$70,098**. When combined with the legal expenses recorded in the General Fund (before the Litigation Fund was established), total legal expenses incurred during 2024 were **$78,226.**

There was no litigation activity during 2025. Activity in the fund consisted of:

- A **$10,000 transfer from the General Fund**, and
- A **transfer of unused legal retainer funds of $1,322** from a New Jersey law firm.

As of December 31, 2025, the Litigation Fund's Cash balance and Net Asset balance was **$11,322**. No legal expenses are currently expected for the foreseeable future.

Cash Position

The **combined cash balance across all funds** was **$166,547 on December 31, 2025**, compared to **$20,628 on December 31, 2024,** and **$127,568 on December 31, 2023**. The decrease in 2024 was related to legal expenses incurred and a distribution from the Psalter Hymnal Fund to the Canadian board. The increase experienced in 2025 was primarily driven by distributions from the Joint Venture distribution, lower than expected expenses, and strong Askings collections. Overall, the URCNA-US financial position strengthened significantly during 2025.

Fund Balances at December 31, 2025

Fund	Cash	Net Assets
General	$76,786	$63,376
Psalter Hymnal	$78,440	$168,049
Litigation	$11,322	$11,322
Total	$166,547	$242,747

Askings

URCNA "Askings" represent a **suggested annual contribution per family** to support the ongoing ministry of the federation. The Askings amount for 2025 was **$43.00 per family**.

The **2026 Askings amount is $44.00 per family**. A family was defined by Synod Hudsonville 1999 and was used by the Synodical Statistics and Directory Editor and member churches to report their stats at the end of 2025. The 2026 URCNA-US budget and a statement will be sent to each church in March 2026 indicating total Askings amount ($44 x # of families).

Some churches use a free-will offering approach rather than the formula; each member church is encouraged to participate in supporting the shared work of the URCNA.

2025 Participation Analysis

Of **83 member churches** (93 U.S. churches less 10 church plants):

- **76 churches (92%)** made a 2025 designated contribution

- Of those contributing, **62 churches (75%)** gave at or above the suggested Askings amount

For comparison, in 2024:

- **75 churches (90%)** contributed
- **51 churches (61%)** met or exceeded the suggested amount

This reflects a **meaningful improvement** in both participation and commitment across the churches.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Ehnis
Treasurer, URCNA-US
USTreasurer@URCNA.org

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Statement of Financial Position - By Fund

	Ref	December 31, 2025 General Fund	Litigation Fund (7)	Psalter Hymnal Fund	Total	2024 General Fund	Litigation Fund (7)	Psalter Hymnal Fund	Total
ASSETS:									
Cash and cash equivalents		76,786	11,322	78,440	166,547	17,966	-	2,663	20,628
Receivables	(1)	5,888	-	-	5,888	467	-	25,000	25,467
Prepaid expenses	(2)	20,858	-	-	20,858	20,000	-	-	20,000
Investment in TPH Joint Venture	(3)	-	-	89,609	89,609	-	-	48,766	48,766
Total Assets		**103,531**	**11,322**	**168,049**	**282,902**	**38,433**	**-**	**76,428**	**114,861**
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:									
Accounts Payable	(4)	38,822	-	-	38,822	-	-	-	-
Deferred Contributions	(5)	1,333	-	-	1,333	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities		**40,155**	**-**	**-**	**40,155**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Transfers Between Funds	(6)	(11,322)	11,322	-	-	(7,598)	70,098	(62,500)	-
Net Assets-Without Donor Restrictions		38,433	-	76,428	114,861	32,965	-	193,203	226,168
Curr Year Change in Net Assets		36,265	-	91,621	127,886	13,066	(70,098)	(54,275)	(111,307)
Total Net Assets		**63,376**	**11,322**	**168,049**	**242,747**	**38,433**	**-**	**76,428**	**114,861**
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		**103,531**	**11,322**	**168,049**	**282,902**	**38,433**	**-**	**76,428**	**114,861**

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Statement of Financial Position - By Fund

NOTES:

(1) Receivables consist of Contributions received in the following period but designated by donating church for the period year.

(2) Prepaid expenses include a $20,000 advance to the JVA to allow bills to be paid in a reasonable time.

(3) The Trinity Psalter Hymnal JVA is a separate entity in which the URCNA maintains a 50% stake. The balance represents the equity value of the URCNA's stake in the joint venture (the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) maintains the other half).

(4) Accounts Payable consists of outstanding bills due at the end of the current period and paid in the following period.

(5) Deferred Contributions consist of Contributions received by a donating church in the current period but designated for the following period.

(6) Transfers between Funds consist of transfers between internal funds. Transfers to outside parties, unless a joint venture, are classified as expenses.

(7) Synod Escondido 2024 adopted the establishment of a Litigation Fund to be funded initially by the distribution of monies from the Trinity Psalter Hymnal Fund in the amount of $30,000. Furthermore, the same Synod adopted the establishment of a Litigation line item in the General Fund of $10,000 USD per year beginning in 2025. This amount from the Litigation line item is to be contributed to the Litigation Fund until this fund reaches $60,000 (See Article 93, Rec 3).

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Statement of Activity - By Fund

	Ref	Year Ended December 31, 2025 General Fund	Litigation Fund	Psalter Hymnal Fund	Total	2024 General Fund	Litigation Fund	Psalter Hymnal Fund	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:									
Askings		147,959	-	-	147,959	143,142	-	-	143,142
Additional Contributions	(1)	11,878	-	-	11,878	11,882	-	-	11,882
Contributions		159,837	-	-	159,837	155,024	-	-	155,024
Interest Income	(16)	1,638	-	777	2,415	719	-	2,334	3,052
Equity in Earnings of Joint Venture	(17)	-	-	90,844	90,844	-	-	(19,109)	(19,109)
Other Inc		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Income		1,638	-	91,621	93,259	719	-	(16,775)	(16,056)
Total Support and Revenue		**161,475**	**-**	**91,621**	**253,096**	**155,743**	**-**	**(16,775)**	**138,968**
EXPENSES:									
Acts of Synod	(15)	(1,539)	-	-	(1,539)	1,541	-	-	1,541
Benevolence-CECCA	(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benevolence-CERCU	(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benevolence		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Committee-Building Loan Fund	(8)	-	-	-	-	687	-	-	687
Committee-CECCA	(2)	2,363	-	-	2,363	2,970	-	-	2,970
Committee-CERCU	(3)	3,724	-	-	3,724	3,848	-	-	3,848
Committee-Foreign Missions		6,994	-	-	6,994	5,576	-	-	5,576
Committee-Home Missions		5,929	-	-	5,929	10,257	-	-	10,257
Committee-PRCC	(4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Committee-Sexuality		-	-	-	-	3,182			3,182
Committees		19,009	-	-	19,009	26,520	-	-	26,520
Dues & memberships-ICRC	(5)	1,944	-	-	1,944	2,106	-	-	2,106
Dues & memberships-PRCC/MNA	(4)(6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Statement of Activity - By Fund

Year Ended December 31,

	Ref	2025 General Fund	2025 Litigation Fund	2025 Psalter Hymnal Fund	2025 Total	2024 General Fund	2024 Litigation Fund	2024 Psalter Hymnal Fund	2024 Total
Dues & memberships-NAPARC	(7)(14)	1,320	-	-	1,320	-	-	-	-
Dues & memberships		3,264	-	-	3,264	2,106	-	-	2,106
Missions Coordinator	(11)	73,936	-	-	73,936	71,293	-	-	71,293
Websites		6,178	-	-	6,178	3,331	-	-	3,331
Ministry Initiatives		100,849	-	-	100,849	104,791	-	-	104,791
Bank Charges		156	-	-	156	12	-	-	12
Computer Software		260	-	-	260	-	-	-	-
Honorariums-Home Missions Clerk		3,119	-	-	3,119	-	-	-	-
Honorariums-Stated Clerk		4,200	-	-	4,200	4,875	-	-	4,875
Honorariums-Statistician	(11)	2,424	-	-	2,424	2,338	-	-	2,338
Honorariums-Treasurer-JVA	(9)(11)	3,774	-	-	3,774	4,865	-	-	4,865
Honorariums-Treasurer-US	(11)	6,500	-	-	6,500	6,000	-	-	6,000
Honorariums-Web Master	(9)(11)	3,600	-	-	3,600	3,900	-	-	3,900
Honorariums		23,618	-	-	23,618	21,978	-	-	21,978
Insurance		1,086	-	-	1,086	1,052	-	-	1,052
Miscellaneous		-	-	-	-	829	-	37,500	38,329
Office supplies		272	-	-	272	585	-	-	585
Professional Fees-Accounting		270	-	-	270	-	-	-	-
Professional Fees-Legal	(12)(13)	(1,322)	-	-	(1,322)	8,128	70,098	-	78,226
Professional Fees		(1,052)	-	-	(1,052)	8,128	70,098	-	78,226
Synod	(10)	-	-	-	-	5,283	-	-	5,283
Taxes & Licenses		20	-	-	20	20	-	-	20
Administration & Other		24,361	-	-	24,361	37,886	70,098	37,500	145,484
Total Expenses		**125,210**	**-**	**-**	**125,210**	**142,677**	**70,098**	**37,500**	**250,275**

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Statement of Activity - By Fund

		Year Ended December 31,							
		2025				2024			
	Ref	General Fund	Litigation Fund	Psalter Hymnal Fund	Total	General Fund	Litigation Fund	Psalter Hymnal Fund	Total
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS:		**36,265**	**-**	**91,621**	**127,886**	**13,066**	**(70,098)**	**(54,275)**	**(111,307)**
Transfers Between Funds	(12)(13)	(11,322)	11,322	-	-	(7,598)	70,098	(62,500)	-
Net Assets, Beginning of Year		38,433	-	76,428	114,861	32,965	-	193,203	226,168
Net Assets, End of Year		**63,376**	**11,322**	**168,049**	**242,747**	**38,433**	**-**	**76,428**	**114,861**

NOTES:

(1) Additional Contributions are gifts above and beyond the Askings amount apportioned among established US churches to cover the annual budget.

(2) CECCA = Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad

(3) CERCU = Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity

(4) PRCC/MNA = Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains/Missions to North America

(5) ICRC = International Conference of Reformed Churches

(6) MNA is the Dues paid, set by the number of URCNA Chaplains, as part of PRJCC

(7) NAPARC = North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council

(8) Synod Escondido 2024 established a study committee to investigate the feasibility of establishing a building loan fund for use in the federation. Synod approved a budget of $7,500 per annum. (See Article 98)

(9) Synod London established Honorariums for the Treasurers and the Web Master. US and Canadian treasurer's are paid fully by their respective countries and the JVA Treasurer and Web Master are paid jointly based on the 60/40 split.

(10) URCNA General Fund pays expenses for Synodical Functionaries as approved by convening council. An amount was budgeted for 2026 only.

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Statement of Activity - By Fund

(11) The Missions coordinator, JVA Treasurer, and Statistician are paid in Canadian Dollars. Budget for 2025/26 was established using an exchange rate of 1.43. Actual expenses may vary from budget depending on the exchange rate at the time of payment.

(12) Synod Escondido 2024 adopted the establishment of a Litigation line item in the General Fund of $10,000 USD per year beginning in 2025. This amount from the Litigation line item is to be contributed to the Litigation Fund until this fund reaches $60,000, at which point unused funds would be treated the same as any unused portion of the general budget. (See Article 93, Rec 3c). The yearly contribution of unused funds in the General Funds is treated as a fund transfer.

(13) The URCNA US received a refund in 2025 for an unused retainer from a previously used NJ law firm. This amount was recorded as a return of funds to the General Fund and was later transferred to the Litigation Fund in 2025.

(14) The US portion for NAPARC dues was budgeted for $1,200 and was split evenly between 2025 and 2026. Actual biannual payment occurred in 2025.

(15) Payments for printed copies of the Acts of Synod 2024 were treated as a return of funds. Expenses related to printing of the Acts of Synod 2024 were recorded in a prior period.

(16) Interest was earned on cash reserves during the period. Due to comingled cash, interest income was recorded in the General Fund throughout the year for expediency. At the end of the year, the US Treasurer calculated an amount to apportion to the other Funds and recorded a transfer on December 31.

(17) Equity in Earnings of Joint Venture records the URCNA's portion of net income earned by the Trinity Psalter Hymnal JVA (TPH JVA). The TPH JVA is a separate entity in which the URCNA maintains a 50% stake (the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) maintains the other half). Cash distributions reduce the investment balance and do not affect revenue.

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

General Fund Stewardship Summary

	Two Years Ended December 31, 2025			
	Annual Actual	Annual Budget	% Used	Remaining Fav (+)
2024	155,743	166,797	93%	(11,054)
2025	161,475	162,000	100%	(525)
Total Support and Revenue	**317,218**	**328,797**	96%	**(11,579)**
2024	142,677	165,934	86%	23,256
2025	125,210	160,611	78%	35,401
Total Expenses	**267,887**	**326,545**	82%	**58,657**
2024	13,066	863		12,202
2025	36,265	1,389		34,876
Change in Net Assets	**49,331**	**2,252**		**47,078**
2024	(7,598)	-		(7,598)
2025	(11,322)	-		(11,322)
Transfers Between Funds	**(18,920)**	**-**		**(18,920)**
Net Assets, Beginning of Cycle (YE 2023)	**32,965**			
Net Assets, End of Cycle (YE 2025)	**63,376**			

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Net Asset Rollforward - By Fund

	Two Years Ended December 31, 2025			
	General Fund	**Litigation Fund**	**Psalter Hymnal Fund**	**Total**
Beginning Balance - 2024	**32,965**	**-**	**193,203**	**226,168**
Support and Revenue	155,743	-	(16,775)	138,968
Expenses	(142,677)	(70,098)	(37,500)	(250,275)
Transfers In from Funds	32,500	70,098		102,598
Transfers Out to Funds	(40,098)	-	(62,500)	(102,598)
Ending Balance - 2024	**38,433**	**-**	**76,428**	**114,861**
Support and Revenue	161,475	-	91,621	253,096
Expenses	(125,210)	-	-	(125,210)
Transfers In from Funds	-	11,322	-	11,322
Transfers Out to Funds	(11,322)	-	-	(11,322)
Ending Balance - 2025	**63,376**	**11,322**	**168,049**	**242,747**

NOTE:

This report summarizes fund activity for the two-year Synod cycle. Ending balances agree with the Net Asset balances noted on the Statement of Financial Position.

United Reformed Churches in North America - United States

Cash Rollforward - By Fund

	Two Years Ended December 31, 2025			
	General Fund	**Litigation Fund**	**Psalter Hymnal Fund**	**Total**
Beginning Balance - 2024	**27,239**	**-**	**100,329**	**127,568**
Support and Revenue	165,313	-	777	166,090
Expenses	(167,766)	(70,098)	(35,166)	(273,030)
Transfers In from Funds	32,500	70,098	-	102,598
Transfers Out to Funds	(40,098)	-	(62,500)	(102,598)
Ending Balance - 2024	**17,188**	**-**	**3,440**	**20,628**
Support and Revenue	159,486	-	75,000	234,486
Expenses	(88,567)	-	-	(88,567)
Transfers In from Funds	-	11,322	-	11,322
Transfers Out to Funds	(11,322)	-	-	(11,322)
Ending Balance - 2025	**76,786**	**11,322**	**78,440**	**166,547**

NOTE:

This report summarizes cash activity for the two-year Synod cycle. Ending balances agree with the Cash balances noted on the Statement of Financial Position.

URCNA - Canada

Johnathan Fennema, Canadian URCNA Treasurer
3665 Glen Road, Jordan, ON, L0R 1S0

2024 Fourth Quarter Report (not audited)

February 6, 2025

Dear Brothers,

Greetings in the name of the Lord. Please find the Fourth Quarter Treasurer's report for the Canadian churches of the United Reformed Churches in North America attached. From a participation perspective, I have received 2024 askings from 47 (2023 – 42) *o*f the Canadian churches.

Askings:
Overall, 2024 was a positive year with 100% of churches participating and remitting their askings.

We can report that the result for 2024 was a deficit of $8,026. This deficit is the result of the following factors:

1. The askings for 2024 were intentionally set at an amount to result in a deficit. The intention for 2024 was to "return" some of the accumulated surplus to the churches.
2. Many of the travel budgets were not spent in 2024:
   a. Of the $30,380 budgeted for committee meetings, only $21,411 was spent. Partly due to several committees being dissolved at Synod 2024.
   b. Of the $7,087 budget for travel for the Missions Coordinator, only $5,142 was spent.
3. Treasurer was higher than expected with Pam Hessels retiring and Johnathan Fennema starting the role. There was a transition period where both treasurers were paid.

4. The sale of the liturgical forms and creeds and confessions books generated a profit of $6,007; this is an unbudgeted revenue.

Please note that on the Canadian financial report, payments made by the JVA are reflected separately under joint venture advances. Only the Canadian portion (translated from US to Canadian dollars) is reported.

Legal Fees:
The URCNA corporation has been named in a lawsuit resulting from a charge against a Canadian federation church. The corporation has paid a deposit with the law firm to cover the legal fees. The deposit is expected to be returned at the end of the lawsuit. Legal fees paid have been reflected in professional fees on the Canadian report. At this time the amount of costs to be incurred is not known.

URCNA – Joint (JVA) Report:
Attached is the joint venture report for the period of October to December 2024. Please note that this report is in US dollars. Effective January 1, 2014, all committee expenses, dues and stipends are paid directly by the joint venture as recommended by the finance committee and approved at Synod 2012. Committee chairmen should use this report to evaluate their spending room for their committee.

2024 Askings:
The askings amount calculated on the budget at Synod is only an estimate. US churches, please contact the US Treasurer for the US 2024 askings amount.

The askings for 2025 will be emailed during February to clerks / treasurers to show what has been budgeted to be received from their church.

Committee Expenses:
In the beginning of 2024, the US Treasurer and Canadian Treasurer revised the expense reimbursement form to reflect the current mileage reimbursement rate. Committee members are asked to contact either the US or Canadian Treasurer for a copy of the reimbursement form, if they do not already have a copy. A revised expense reimbursement form will be available at the end of February 2025.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Serving the Lord together.

Johnathan Fennema, Treasurer, URCNA
Home: 905-246-4371
E-Mail: CdnURCNA@gmail.com

URCNA - Canada

Johnathan Fennema, Canadian URCNA Treasurer
3665 Glen Road, Jordan, ON, L0R 1S0

2024 Fourth Quarter Report (not audited) – in USD

General Fund

	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Income				
Askings	105,307.00		105,307.00	106,726.00
Donations		350.00	630.00	
Total Income	105,307.00	350.00	105,937.00	106,726.00
Expenses				
Joint Venture Advances				
Bank Charges	8.67		8.67	24.50
CECCA Benevolence (note 1)	1,275.70		1,275.70	3,675.00
Committee Expenses				
CECCA (note 2)	2,360.09	52.68	2,412.77	7,350.00
CERCU (note 3)	822.48	2,758.72	3,581.20	6,125.00
Building Loan Fund	502.88		502.88	
Foreign Missions	3,799.75	549.63	4,349.38	5,390.00
Home Missions	4,064.76	4,112.23	8,176.99	6,370.00
Human Sexuality Committee	2,388.26		2,388.26	2,450.00
PRCC (note 4)				245.00
Worship & Digital Media				2,450.00

	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Dues				
ICRC (note 5)	1,580.72		1,580.72	1,078.00
MNA (note 6)				980.00
NAPARC (note 7)				490.00
Honorariums (note 8)	8,462.16	1,881.10	10,343.26	11,777.50
Missions co-ordinator	41,939.31	13,870.34	55,809.65	58,700.00
Professional fees	315.40		315.40	
Supplies	107.57		107.57	269.50
Synod attendance	3,839.61		3,839.61	3,920.00
Website (note 1 & 9)	4,497.48	831.18	5,328.66	6,664.00
Bank charges				
Director's & officers insurance		945.83	945.83	1,000.00
Government filing fee				20.00
Postage and supplies	483.45	114.28	597.73	50.00
Professional fees	3,164.97		3,164.97	3,000.00
Treasurer	11,929.21	3,311.10	15,240.31	8,000.00
Total Expenses	91,542.47	28,427.09	119,969.56	130,028.50
	13,764.53	(28,077.09)	(14,032.56)	(23.302.50)
Liturgical Forms Book & Creeds/Confessions Booklet				
Sales (note 7)	7,212.52	3,417.20	10,629.72	
Cost of sales	5,381.33	2,501.22	7,882.55	
Exchange gain	(646.22)	(2,613.60)	(3,259.82)	
	2,477.41	3,529.58	6,006.99	
Net Total	16,241.94	(24,547.51)	(8,025.57)	(23,302.50)

Balance Sheet	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec. YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Bank		65,526.89	
Accounts Receivable (note 10)		6,219.35	
Advance to JVA (note 11)		48,292.58	
Inventory – LFB + CCB (note 12)		14,820.68	
Prepaids (note 1)		9,435.28	
Accounts payable (note 13)		17,702.83	
General fund balance (note 1)		126,591.95	

NOTES

(1) As indicated in the report, the 2023 financials were adjusted for unspent CECCA Benevolence and website development accruals made. No accruals have been made in 2024; balances represent actual spending done in 2024.(note prepaids are reduced as actual expenses are incurred).
(2) CECCA - Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad
(3) CERCU - Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity
(4) PRCC - Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel
(5) ICRC - International Conference of Reformed Churches
(6) MNA - Mission to North America
(7) NAPARC - North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
(8) Represents the Canadian portion of the webmaster, clerk, and JV treasurer honorariums. These honorariums are paid via the "joint venture" since these positions serve both the Canadian and US corporations.
(9) Website expenses represent the cost for all websites maintained by the URCNA. Effective 2023, there is no separate web fund; all expenses are paid from askings.
(10) Represents the refundable portion of GST/HST to be received from Canada Revenue Agency, the receivable from Great Commission Publications (GCP) for the sale of books, as well as amount owing from the JVA for committee expenses paid to Canadian committee members (payment is made quarterly).

(11) The liturgical forms book (LFB) and creeds/confessions booklet (CCB) sales are received in US funds. The funds received on the sale of the LFB and CCB had been deposited into the JVA account. Funds were used to pay for the creeds and confessions booklet. Funds continue to be deposited into the JVA account for future replenishment of inventory. The "advance to JVA" and LFB sales have been presented in Canadian dollars for this report. The exchange gain represents the impact of exchange rate fluctuations.
(12) Represents value of unsold copies of LFB and creeds and CCB.
(13) All amounts were paid in the subsequent quarter. Represents expenses related to the current quarter but not yet paid and payroll remittances owing to the CRA.

URCNA – Joint

Johnathan Fennema, Canadian URCNA Treasurer
3665 Glen Road, Jordan, ON, L0R 1S0

2024 Fourth Quarter Report (not audited) – in USD

General Fund

	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Income				
URCNA - Canada	53,053.82	16,508.56	69,562.38	84,256.37
URCNA - US	98,596.41	31,516.84	130,113.25	156,476.13
Deferred revenue (note 1)	8,363.00		8,363.00	
Interest	39.41	23.19	62.60	
Sundry – presentations / speeches	101.00	2,400.00	2,501.00	
Total Income	160,153.64	50,448.59	210,602.23	240,732.50
Expenses				
Acts of Synod		2,278.70	2,278.70	
Bank charges	56.10	49.11	105.21	50.00
CECCA Benevolence (note 1)				7,500.00
Committee Expenses				
CECCA (note 2)	7,763.50	111.47	7,874.97	15,000.00
CERCU (note 3)	1,490.93	5,552.67	7,043.60	12,500.00
Building Loan Fund	1,057.23		1,057.23	
Foreign Missions	8,548.37	1,132.11	9,680.48	11,000.00
Home Missions	8,267.11	8,665.37	16,932.48	13,000.00
Human Sexuality Committee	4,895.52		4,895.52	5,000.00
PRCC				500.00
Worship & Digital Media				5,000.00

	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Dues				
ICRC	3,240.19		3,240.19	2,200.00
MNA				2,000.00
NAPARC				1,000.00
Honorariums (note 4)				
Clerk	6,000.00	1,500.00	7,500.00	6,000.00
Statistician	2,720.90	876.07	3,596.97	3,464.00
Treasurer	6,284.01	1,506.63	7,790.64	8,572.00
Webmaster	4,500.00	1,500.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Missions co-ordinator				
Office supplies / telephone	1,660.84	1,545.85	3,206.69	3,821.50
Salary and benefits	78,185.99	23,046.16	101,232.15	101,511.00
Travel and mileage	6,885.71	1,108.55	7,994.26	14,464.00
Professional fee	264.77		264.77	
Supplies				
Clerk				500.00
Treasurer	495.69	63.40	559.09	50.00
Synod travel	8,127.78		8,127.78	8,000.00
Website (note 5)	1,346.00	1,512.50	2,858.50	3,600.00
Website redevelopment (note 1)	8,363.00		8,363.00	10,000.00
Total Expenses	160,153.64	50,448.59	210,602.23	240,732.50

Balance Sheet	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Bank (note 6)			119,171.92	
Accounts Receivable (note 7)			3,532.21	
Prepaids (note 8)			3,500.00	

Accounts payable (note 9)	34,500.83
Advance from URCNA – US (note 10)	20,000.00
Advance from URCNA – Canada (note 10)	29,366.30
Hymnal Fund Distribution (note 11)	37,500.00
Deferred revenue (note 1)	4,837.00
General fund balance	

NOTES

(1) As indicated in the report, the 2023 financials were adjusted for unspent CECCA Benevolence and website development accruals made. No accruals have been made in 2024; balances represent actual spending done in 2024. CECCA Benevolence balance represents spending done in addition to the $7,500 budgeted for in 2023 but not used. Current unused CECCA Benevolence balance from 2023 is $4,837.00. (note deferred revenue - BS has been reduced and recorded as income as actual expenses are incurred).
(2) CECCA - Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad
(3) CERCU - Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity
(4) Represents the webmaster, clerk, and JV treasurer honorariums. The honorariums paid to the Canadian and US Treasurers are represented on the financial report from the Canadian and US operations.
(5) Website expenses represent the cost for all websites maintained by the URCNA. Effective 2023, there is no separate web fund; all expenses are paid from askings.
(6) The bank balance is provided for information purposes.
(7) Represents the amount owing from the Canadian and US treasurers to the JVA for committee expenses.
(8) Represents the deposit on the facility for the missions conference in 2025
(9) Represents the amount owing to the US committee members for travel expenses as well as amounts owing to the Canadian URCNA for expenses incurred by Canadian committee members.
(10) URCNA - US has advanced money to the JVA to ensure that expenses can be paid in a more timely manner. The amount advanced has increased due to the higher number of expenses being incurred each quarter.
(11) Represents the funds received on the sale of the LFB and CCB that have been deposited into the US$ account. Funds were used to pay for the printing of the creeds and confessions booklet and will be used for future inventory replenishment.

Synod

Balance Sheet	USD	Budget (USD)	CAD
Bank (note 1)	7,510.80	5,454.55	30,563.26
Prepaids (note 2)			16,500.00
Synod balance	7,510.80		47,063.26
Income Statement			
Revenues			
Registration Fees	76,010.00	99,362.25	52,610.00
Exhibitor Fees	1,600.00	2,000.00	555.00
Outings	50.00		84.00
Total Revenues	77,660.00	101,362.25	53,249.00
Expenses			
Audio visual	854.80	12,000.00	4,924.50
Bank charges	1,448.95	3,596.60	553.85
Facilities	2,566.33	2,500.00	707.39
Fraternal delegates	1,743.90	4,956.00	
Meals	68,150.34	62,723.65	
Meeting rooms	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Miscellaneous	958.80	986.00	
Office	1,794.56	3,500.00	
Stipends	800.00	500.00	
Website	3,250.00	4,600.00	
Total Expenses	82,567.68	96,362.25	6,185.74
Net Total	(4,907.68)	5,000.00	47,063.26

NOTES

(1) Represents the funds available for Synod 2026

(2) Deposit paid for Synod 2026 facility

URCNA - Canada

Johnathan Fennema, Canadian URCNA Treasurer
3665 Glen Road, Jordan, ON, L0R 1S0

2025 Fourth Quarter Report (not audited)

January 17, 2026

Dear Brothers,

Greetings in the name of the Lord. Please find the Fourth Quarter Treasurer's report for the Canadian churches of the United Reformed Churches in North America attached. From a participation perspective, I have received 2025 askings from 46 (2024 – 47) *o*f the Canadian churches.

Askings:
Overall, 2025 was a positive year with 100% of churches participating and remitting their askings.

We can report that the result for 2025 was a surplus of $12,504. This surplus is the result of the following factors:

1. Many of the travel budgets were not spent in 2025:
    a. Of the $36,718 budgeted for committee meetings, only $19,583 was spent.
    b. Of the $9,000 budget for travel for the Missions Coordinator, only $5,922 was spent.
2. The home missions clerk salary was less than budgeted. Of the $7,000 budgeted, only $2,043 was spent. The budget at Synod 2024 was set high as the actual costs were unknown as there was no previous position. A higher budget was set to prevent any funding short falls for the position.
3. The sale of the liturgical forms and creeds and confessions books generated a profit of $1,173; this is an unbudgeted revenue.
4. The treasurer fee was more than budgeted. The cost of

the treasurer was $1,411 over due to additional work required for the planning of Synod and the transition to a new bank.

Please note that on the Canadian financial report, payments made by the JVA are reflected separately under joint venture advances. Only the Canadian portion (translated from US to Canadian dollars) is reported.

Legal Fees:
The URCNA corporation was named in a lawsuit resulting from a charge against a Canadian federation church. We are grateful to report that the URCNA corporation is no longer named in the lawsuit. The deposit paid to the lawyers has been returned and the prepaid legal fees removed.

URCNA – Joint (JVA) Report:
Attached is the joint venture report for the period of October to December 2025. Please note that this report is in US dollars. Effective January 1, 2014, all committee expenses, dues and stipends are paid directly by the joint venture as recommended by the finance committee and approved at Synod 2012. Committee chairmen should use this report to evaluate their spending room for their committee.

2025 Askings:
The askings amount calculated on the budget at Synod is only an estimate. US churches, please contact the US Treasurer for the US 2025 askings amount.

The askings for 2026 will be emailed during February to clerks / treasurers to show what has been budgeted to be received from their church.

Committee Expenses:
In the beginning of 2026, the US Treasurer and Canadian Treasurer revised the expense reimbursement form to reflect the

current mileage reimbursement rate. Committee members are asked to contact either the US or Canadian Treasurer for a copy of the reimbursement form, if they do not already have a copy. A revised expense reimbursement form will be available at the end of February 2026.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Serving the Lord together.

Johnathan Fennema, Treasurer, URCNA
Home: 905-246-4371
E-Mail: CdnURCNA@gmail.com

URCNA - Canada

Johnathan Fennema, Canadian URCNA Treasurer
3665 Glen Road, Jordan, ON, L0R 1S0

2025 Fourth Quarter Report (not audited)

General Fund

	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Income				
Askings	124,592.00	5,252.00	129,844.00	126,844.00
Pulpit Supply		350.00	350.00	
Total Income	124,592.00	5,602.00	130,194.00	129,844.00
Expenses				
Joint Venture Advances				
Bank Charges		237.73	237.73	868.00
CECCA Benevolence (note 1)				280.00
Committee Expenses				
CECCA (note 2)	626.76	2,577.54	3,204.30	8,400.00
CERCU (note 3)	1,129.11	2,283.88	3,412.99	5,600.00
Building Loan Fund				4,200.00
Foreign Missions	4,994.53	2,217.01	7,211.54	8,720.00
Home Missions	2,752.66	3,001.43	5,754.09	8,680.00
PRCC (note 4)				1,118.00
Dues				
ICRC (note 5)	1,860.13		1,860.13	1,820.00
MNA (note 6)				1,120.00
NAPARC (note 7)		1,226.72	1,226.72	560.00

Honorariums (note 8)	7,273.11	2,376.76	9,649.87	16,440.00
Missions co-ordinator	49,280.52	15,891.90	65,172.42	69,625.00
Professional fees	3,736.80		3,736.80	3,402.00
Website (note 1 & 9)	685.03	966.56	1,651.59	3,136.00
Director's & officers insurance		900.72	900.72	1,000.00
Government filing fee		12.00	12.00	20.00
Postage and supplies	385.10	268.30	653.40	728.00
Treasurer	6,883.21	3,168.19	10,051.40	8,640.00
Website Redevelopment	4,126.90		4,126.90	
Total Expenses	83,733.86	35,128.74	118,862.60	144,357.00
	40,858.14	(29,526.74)	11,331.40	(14.513.00)
Liturgical Forms Book & Creeds/Confessions Booklet				
Sales (note 7)	11,946.07	3,179.92	15,125.99	
Cost of sales	8,706.68	2,935.39	11,642.07	
Exchange gain	1,459.09	852.14	2,311.23	
	1,780.30	(607.61)	1,172.69	
Net Total	42,638.44	(30,134.35)	12,504.09	(14,513.00)

Balance Sheet	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Bank			67,526.20	
Accounts Receivable (note 10)			11,799.53	
Advance to JVA (note 11)			71,593.15	
Inventory – LFB + CCB (note 12)			6,067.57	
Prepaids (note 1)			2,260.47	
Accounts payable (note 13)			20,150.88	
General fund balance (note 1)			139,096.04	

NOTES

(1) As indicated in the report, the 2023 financials were adjusted for unspent CECCA Benevolence and website development accruals made. No accruals have been made in 2025; balances represent actual spending done in 2025.(note prepaids are reduced as actual expenses are incurred)
(2) CECCA - Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad
(3) CERCU - Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity
(4) PRCC - Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel
(5) ICRC - International Conference of Reformed Churches
(6) MNA - Mission to North America
(7) NAPARC - North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
(8) Represents the Canadian portion of the webmaster, clerk, and JV treasurer honorariums. These honorariums are paid via the "joint venture" since these positions serve both the Canadian and US corporations.
(9) Website expenses represent the cost for all websites maintained by the URCNA. Effective 2023, there is no separate web fund; all expenses are paid from askings.
(10) Represents the refundable portion of GST/HST to be received from Canada Revenue Agency, the receivable from Great Commission Publications (GCP) for the sale of books, as well as amount owing from the JVA for committee expenses paid to Canadian committee members (payment is made quarterly).
(11) The liturgical forms book (LFB) and creeds/confessions booklet (CCB) sales are received in US funds. The funds received on the sale of the LFB and CCB had been deposited into the JVA account. Funds were used to pay for the creeds and confessions booklet. Funds continue to be deposited into the JVA account for future replenishment of inventory. The "advance to JVA" and LFB sales have been presented in Canadian dollars for this report. The exchange gain represents the impact of exchange rate fluctuations.
(12) Represents value of unsold copies of LFB and creeds and CCB.
(13) All amounts were paid in the subsequent quarter. Represents expenses related to the current quarter but not yet paid and payroll remittances owing to the CRA.

URCNA – Joint

Johnathan Fennema, Canadian URCNA Treasurer
3665 Glen Road, Jordan, ON, L0R 1S0

2025 Fourth Quarter Report (not audited) – in USD

General Fund

	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Income				
URCNA - Canada	54,669.60	23,676.93	78,346.53	96,052.00
URCNA - US	82,032.81	35,209.91	117,242.72	144,078.00
Foreign missions conference	31,246.73		31,246.73	
Interest	80.57	14.56	95.13	
Total Income	168,029.71	58,901.40	226,931.11	240,130.00
Expenses				
Acts of Synod	49.45	274.71	324.16	1,550.00
Bank charges				500.00
CECCA Benevolence (note 1)				
Committee Expenses				
CECCA (note 2)	1,931.69	3,938.00	5,869.69	15,000.00
CERCU (note 3)	1,242.01	4,982.56	6,224.57	10,000.00
Building Loan Fund				7,500.00
Foreign Missions	6,160.88	1,019.81	7,180.69	14,500.00
Foreign Missions Conference	36,591.95		36,591.95	
Home Missions	5,755.95	10,137.77	15,893.72	28,000.00
PRCC				1,996.00

	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Dues				
ICRC	3,240.19		3,240.19	3,250.00
MNA				2,000.00
NAPARC		2,200.00	2,200.00	1,000.00
Honorariums (note 4)				
Clerk	5,250.00	1,750.00	7,000.00	7,000.00
Statistician	3,028.16	1,011.97	4,040.13	3,857.00
Treasurer	3,257.40	1,509.42	4,766.82	5,786.00
Webmaster	4,500.00	1,500.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Missions co-ordinator				
Office supplies / telephone	1,908.88	536.52	2,445.40	3,464.00
Salary and benefits	78,824.12	24,890.89	103,715.01	104,796.00
Travel and mileage	6,985.86	3,136.47	10,122.33	17,142.00
Professional fee	450.00		450.00	450.00
Supplies				
Clerk		275.88	275.88	500.00
Treasurer	214.18	79.01	293.19	239.00
Website (note 5)	8,638.99	1,658.39	10,297.38	5,600.00
Total Expenses	168,029.71	58,901.40	226,931.11	240,130.00

Balance Sheet	Jan.-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.	YTD Total	Yrly Budget
Bank (note 6)			118,202.01	
Accounts Receivable (note 7)				
Prepaids (note 8)			2,184.47	

Accounts payable (note 8)	19,695.51
Advance from URCNA – US (note 9)	20,000.00
Advance from URCNA – Canada (note 9)	38,217.00
Hymnal Fund Distribution (note 10)	37,500.00
Deferred revenue (note 1)	4,974.00
General fund balance	

NOTES

(1) As indicated in the report, the 2023 financials were adjusted for unspent CECCA Benevolence and website development accruals made. No accruals have been made in 2024; balances represent actual spending done in 2024. CECCA Benevolence balance represents spending done in addition to the $7,500 budgeted for in 2023 but not used. Current unused CECCA Benevolence balance from 2024 is $4,837.00. (note deferred revenue - BS has been reduced and recorded as income as actual expenses are incurred).
(2) CECCA - Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad
(3) CERCU - Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity
(4) Represents the webmaster, clerk, and JV treasurer honorariums. The honorariums paid to the Canadian and US Treasurers are represented on the financial report from the Canadian and US operations.
(5) Website expenses represent the cost for all websites maintained by the URCNA. Effective 2023, there is no separate web fund; all expenses are paid from askings.
(6) The bank balance is provided for information purposes.
(7) Represents the amount owing from the Canadian and US treasurers to the JVA for committee expenses.
(8) Represents the amount owing to the US committee members for travel expenses as well as amounts owing to the Canadian URCNA for expenses incurred by Canadian committee members.
(9) URCNA - US has advanced money to the JVA to ensure that expenses can be paid in a more timely manner. The amount advanced has increased due to the higher number of expenses being incurred each quarter.
(10) Represents the funds received on the sale of the LFB and CCB that have been deposited into the US$ account. Funds were used to pay for the printing of the creeds and confessions booklet and will be used for future inventory replenishment.

Synod

Balance Sheet – assets held in both currencies	USD	CAD
Bank (note 1)	7,408.50	30,399.88
Prepaids (note 2)		16,500.00
Synod balance	7,408.50	46,899.88

NOTES

(1) Represents the funds available for Synod 2026

(2) Deposit paid for Synod 2026 facility

Statistics and Directory Report for Synod 2026

This report provides a summary of the 2024/2025 statistics for the United Reformed Churches in North America with a focus on 1) Churches & Plants 2) Ministers 3) Candidates and Exhorters 4) Office Bearers 5) Members 6) Responsibilities and 7) Observations and Recommendations. The complete statistical data for these years can be found in the 2024 URCNA Archival Directory and the 2025 URCNA Archival Directory.

Summary of 2024/2025:

During the year 2024, the number of churches in the URCNA decreased by one to 139 congregations with 124 organized churches and 15 church plants. Membership grew slightly to a total membership of 25,574, of which 16,951 (66.3%) were professing members and 8,623 (33.7%) were baptized members.

At the end of 2024, there were 212 ministers in the URCNA. This is an increase of five pastors from 2023. Five new pastors were received by ordination, one by colloquium doctum and one of our pastors was released by deposition. Of the total, 121 are pastors of local congregations, 27 work in missions, 6 in theological education at MINTS and Divine Hope, 10 are seminary professors, 4 are chaplains and 42 are emerited ministers.

As of December 31, 2024, there were 8 candidates and 25 licensed exhorters. Across the URCNA, there were 699 elders and 529 deacons.

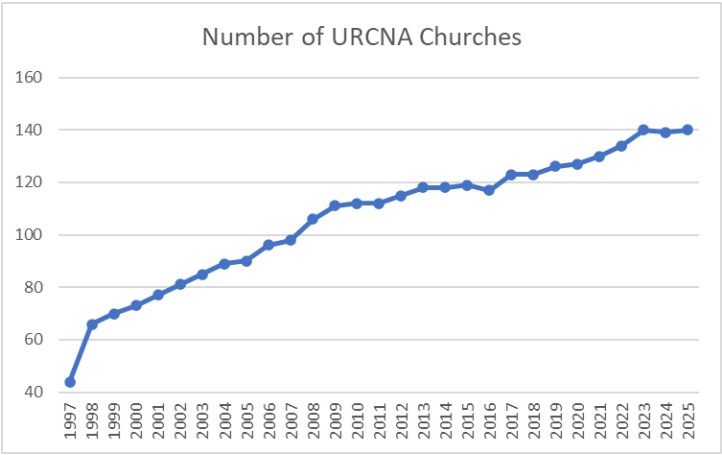
During the year 2025, the number of churches in the URCNA increased by one to 140 congregations with 125 organized churches and 15 church plants. Membership grew slightly to a total membership of 26,034, of which 17,212 (66.1%) were professing members and 8,822 (33.9%) were baptized members.

At the end of 2025, there were 214 ministers in the URCNA. This is an increase of two pastors from 2024. Eight new pastors were received by ordination, while three men accepted a call outside the URCNA, one was deposed and two went home to be with the Lord. Of the total, 117 are pastors of local congregations, 28 are in missions, 6 in theological education at MINTS and Divine Hope, 8 are seminary professors, 4 are chaplains and 48 are emerited ministers.

As of December 31, 2025, with 18 pastoral openings, there were 8 candidates and 27 licensed exhorters. Across the URCNA, there were 735 elders and 545 deacons, an increase of 36 elders and 16 deacons from 2024.

1) Churches and Church Plants:

We give thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness to the URCNA as can be seen in the graph below. In the First Edition of the URCNA directory (Feb 1997), there were 44 congregations represented and a total of 9,299 souls. Fast forward to the present and there are 140 churches and 26,034 souls in the United Reformed Churches. Praise the Lord and may He continue to bless us with both spiritual and numerical growth!



Here are the changes in churches and plants over the last two years:

Church Additions:
(2025) Pelham United Reformed Church of Fenwick, Ontario

Church Reductions:
(2024) Redemption Reformed Church of Chilliwack, British Columbia

Church Plant Additions:
(2024) Providence Reformed Church of Sioux Falls, South Dakota
(2024) Christ Reformed Church of Bellevue, Kentucky
(2024) Covenant URC of Colorado Springs, Colorado (restored)
(2025) Inheritance United Reformed Church of Phoenix, Arizona

Church Plant Reductions:
(2024) Christ United Reformed Church of Norfolk, Virginia
(2024) Birmingham United Reformed Church of Birmingham, Alabama
(2025) Ripon Reformed Fellowship of Ripon, California

Church Plant Organizations:
(2024) Peace United Reformed Church of Vancouver, Washington
(2024) Providence Reformed Church of Meridian, Idaho

2) Ministers:

The following table summarizes the ministerial changes over the last five years:

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Ordinations	4	7	7	5	8
Received (Colloquium Doctum etc)	3	1	4	1	0
Emeritations	3	2	1	4	9
Deaths	3	0	1	0	2
Calls Accepted Outside URCNA	3	5	2	0	3
Depositions	2	0	1	1	1
Leave of Absence	1	0	0	0	0
Withdrawal	0	0	1	0	0
Release	0	0	1	0	0

Here are the ministers who have been ordained, transferred, emerited and removed in 2024 and 2025.

Ordinations:

2024		
Rev. Drew Admiraal	Torrance, CA	Southwest U.S.
Rev. Elijah Anderson	Sanborn, IA	Central U.S.
Rev. Joe Hamm	Christ Reformed, Sioux Falls, SD	Central U.S.
Rev. Matthew Van der Woerd	Neerlandia, AB	Western Canada
Rev. Kristian Wassam	Meridian, ID	Pacific Northwest
Rev. Rodney Kleyn (by C.D.)	Byron Center, MI	Michigan

2025		
Rev. Eric Heida	Brampton, ON	Ontario-East
Rev. Daniel Hofland	Pella, IA	Central U.S.
Rev. John Kirby	Visalia, CA	Pacific Northwest
Rev. Alexander Proudfoot	Bolton, ON	Ontario-East
Rev. Gavin Poe	Inheritance, Phoenix, AZ	Southwest U.S.
Rev. Jeremy Vander Lei	Edmonton, AB	Western Canada
Rev. Ben Verdonk	Covenant, Toronto, ON	Ontario-East
Rev. Michael Wall	Surrey, BC	Western Canada

Ministerial Transfers:

2024	
Rev. Brandon Burks	Cincinnati OH to Bellevue KY
Rev. Brian Cochran	Regina, SK to Torrance, CA
Rev. Benjamin Davenport	Christ, Sioux Falls, SD to Providence, Sioux Falls, SD
Rev. H. James Folkerts	Uganda to Ponoka, AB
Rev. Dr. Frederik Harms	Interim Pastor, Colorado Springs, CO to MINTS (Miami International Theological Seminary)
Rev. Jeffrey Karel	Missoula, MT to Sunnyside, WA
Rev. Roberto Rossi	DeMotte, IN to Chaplaincy in U.S.Navy

Rev. Jason Vander Horst	Surrey, BC to Bellingham, WA
Rev. Pete Van't Hoff	Brockville, ON to Dunnville, ON
2025	
Rev. Quentin Falkena	Medford, OR to Walker, MI
Rev. Kirk Gibbons	Sioux Falls, SD to Available for Call
Rev. Matthew Nuiver	Holland, MI to Kansas City, MO
Rev. Steve Oeverman	Portland, OR to Lansing, IL
Rev. Joel Wories	Wellsburg, IA to DeMotte, IN
Rev. Scott Wright	Pantego, NC to Armstrong, BC

Emeritations:

2024	*Last Church Served*	*Classis*
Rev. Stephen Lauer	Kansas City, MO	Central U.S.
Rev. Ancel Merwin	Listowel, ON	Southwestern Ontario
Rev. Martin Overgaauw	Oro-Medonte, ON	Ontario-East
Rev. John Vermeer	Doon, IA	Central U.S.
2025		
Rev. Richard J. Kuiken	East Stroudsburg, PA	Eastern U.S.
Rev. Ernest Langendoen	Jordan, ON	Ontario-East
Rev. Maurice Luimes	Bolton, ON	Ontario-East

Rev. Ed Marcusse	Lansing, IL	Central U.S.
Rev. William Pols	Edmonton, AB	Western Canada
Rev. Mark Stromberg	Lynden, WA	Pacific Northwest
Rev. Mark D. VanderHart	Lansing, IL	Central U.S.
Rev. Dr. Cornelius P. Venema	St. John, IN	Central U.S.

Former Ministers:

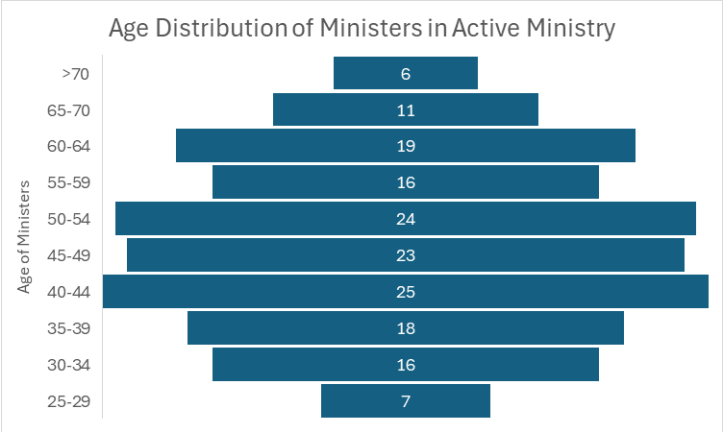
2024		*Last Church Served*
Rev. Joel Weaver	Deposed	Visalia, CA
2025		
Rev. F. Lucas Gossett	Transferred to OPC	Birmingham, AL
Rev. Caleb Janson	Transferred to RCUS	Gig Harbor, WA
Rev. Stephen Lauer	Transferred to OPC	Kansas City, MO
Rev. Ancel Merwin	Deposed	Listowel, ON
Rev. William Renkema	Deceased	Salem, OR
Rev. Richard Stienstra	Deceased	Dunnville, ON

URCNA ministers in active service are involved in various areas of ministry. Their roles are compared with previous years and outlined in the table below:

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Ministers of Local Congregations	114	118	123	121	117
Missions Coordinator	1	1	1	1	1
Domestic/Foreign Missionaries	23	24	25	27	27
Theological Education (MINTS & DHRBS)	7	6	5	6	6
Seminary Professors	9	8	10	10	8
Chaplains	6	3	3	4	4
Emeritus	36	38	38	42	48
Other	2	3	2	2	3
Total URCNA Ministers	**198**	**201**	**207**	**212**	**214**

The number of emerited ministers at the end of 2025 was 48 which is an increase of 6 from 2024. This can be explained by nine new emeritations, two deaths and a deposition.

The average age of our ministers in active service is 50 years old which is older than previous years (avg age=49 at the end of 2023). If the end of active ministry is the traditional retirement age of 65, there are 17 ministers currently in active service who could request emeritation at any time, based on age. In addition to this concern, there were 18 pastoral openings at the end of 2025 but only 8 candidates and 2 ministers awaiting a call. The need for more ministers in the URCNA is great.



3) Candidates and Licensed Exhorters:

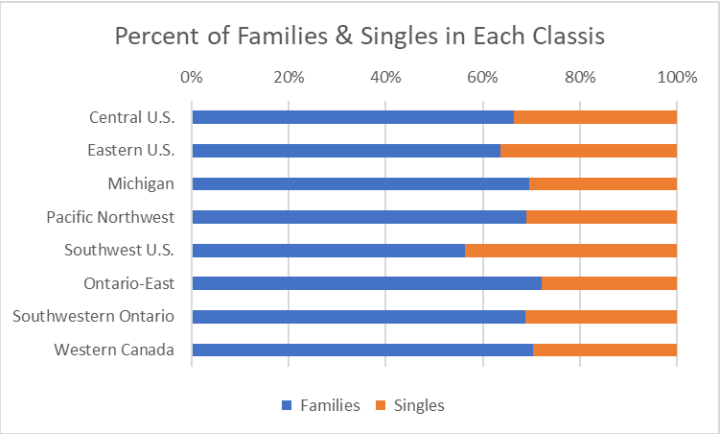
In 2024-2025, there were 17 successful candidacy exams and 20 successful licensure exams. One candidate and four licensed exhorters were removed in the last two years as they were each transferred to or received a call from another NAPARC church.

4) Elders and Deacons:

Historically the *total* number of office bearers has been gathered, but since Synod 2022, the number of elders and deacons has been counted seperately. This data allows a church visitor to assess the elder/deacon to professing member ratio. This ratio is not without its complications when assessed for the federation as some churches give the clerk or pastor a ward while others do not. When determined for each congregation, it can be quite helpful in determining the workload of each office bearer. For example, families and singles can be added together (allowing for the calculation of households) and that value can be used to determine the number of house visits required.

Churches and church visitors can reference the statistical tables in the latest directory for the exact values for each congregation. The simple ratio at 2025 year end is 24 professing members per elder and 32 per deacon. Alternately, the ratio is 13 households (families + singles) per elder and 18 households per deacon. Note: there seems to be some confusion across the federation as to how certain individuals should be counted (i.e. family vs. single).

Here is a graph of the percentage of families vs. singles in each of the classis of the URCNA:



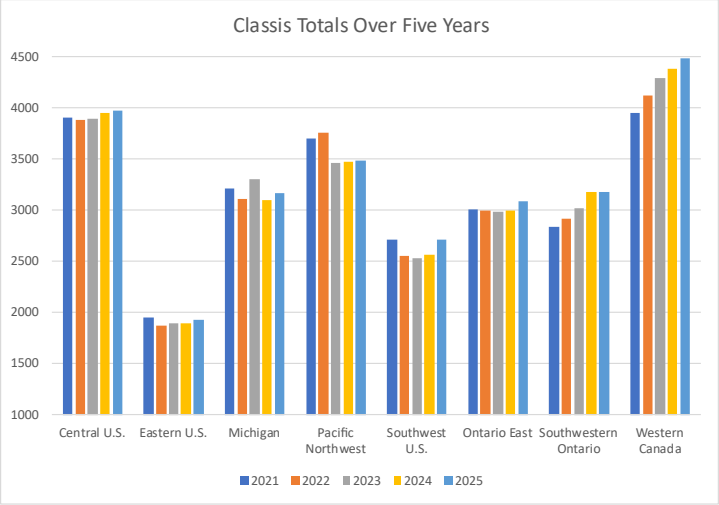
5) Membership:

There is great potential for analysis of the members within the URCNA. Membership can be analysed by congregation, classis, and federation. For the sake of this report, a summary analysis will be presented.

Individual Congregations (Same Church Analysis):

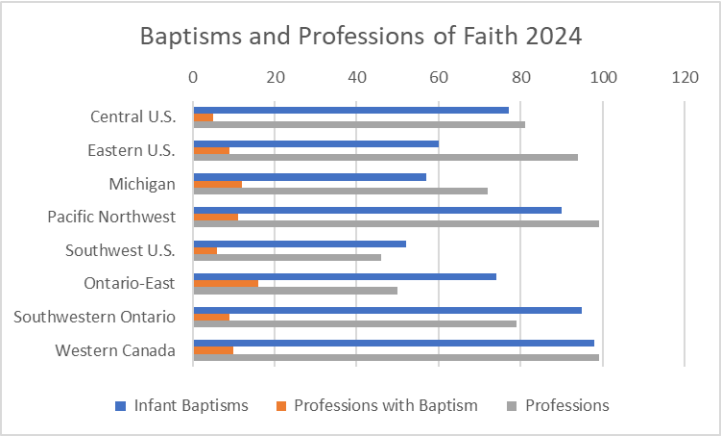
There is much potential for statistical analysis for each congregation. This information is not as useful to the federation as a whole and is available to each church upon request. Contact the statistician at stats@urcna.org with the specific data you would like to receive. Please keep in mind that the statistical data prior to 2018 is not available in digital format and is more difficult to include.

By Classis:
Over the last 5 years, most classes have increased in size with some experiencing a slow and steady rise while others show less consistency in continual growth.

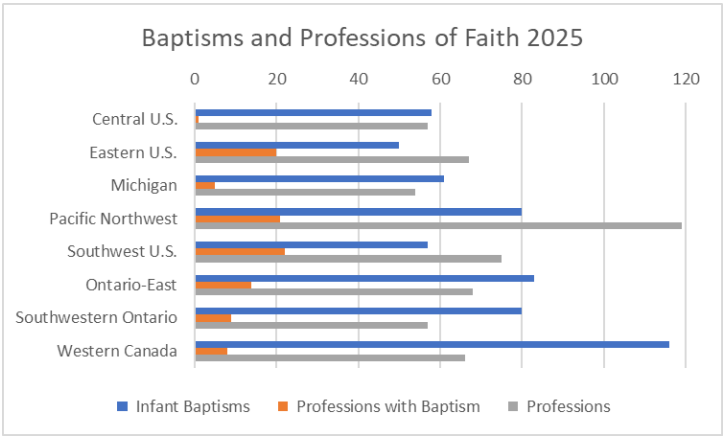


Professions of Faith and Baptisms:

In the year 2024, there were 681 baptisms, 78 of which were of adults and 603 were infant/covenantal. In total, there were 698 professions of faith in 2024 with 78 (11%) being a profession of faith with an adult baptism.



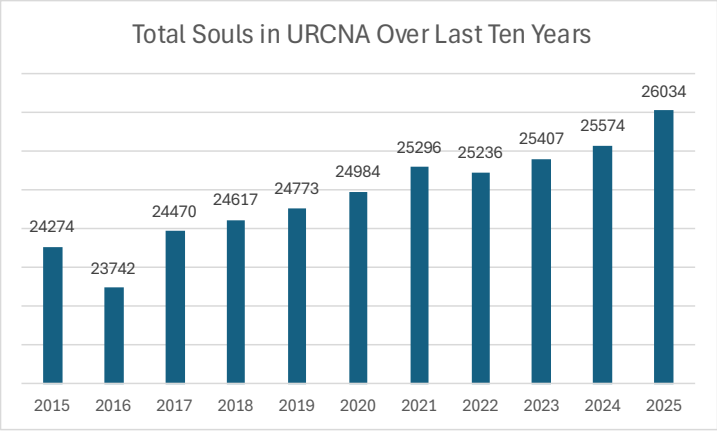
In the year 2025, there were 685 baptisms, 100 of which were of adults and 585 were infant/covenantal. In total, there were 663 professions of faith in 2025 with 100 (15%) being a profession of faith with an adult baptism.



Praise be to God for his work within his covenant people and in bringing in the lost!

URCNA Federation:

In 2024, total URCNA membership grew slightly to a total of 25,574, of which 16,951 (66.3%) were professing members and 8,623 (33.7%) were baptized members. In 2025, membership grew slightly again to a total of 26,034 souls, of which 17,212 (66.1%) were professing members and 8,822 (33.9%) were baptized members, a consistent ratio over the last five years (within 1.5%).

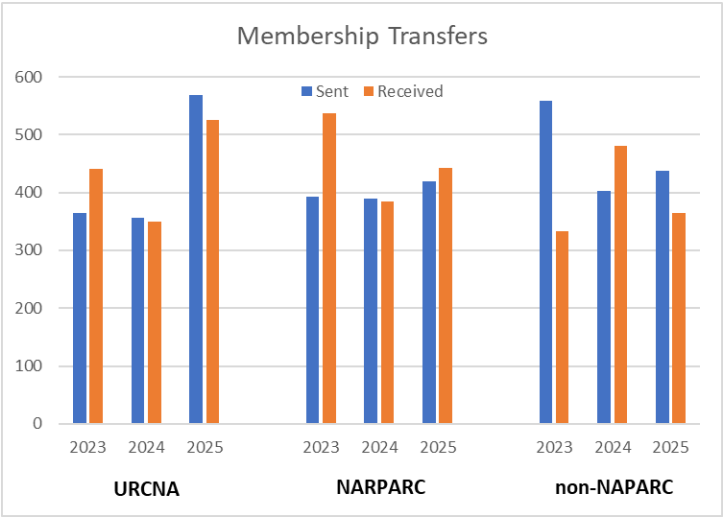


Transfers:

In the year 2025, the churches in the URCNA received 1332 total members and sent 1425 members to other congregations. This is an increase in total transfers from previous years as can be seen in the graph below:

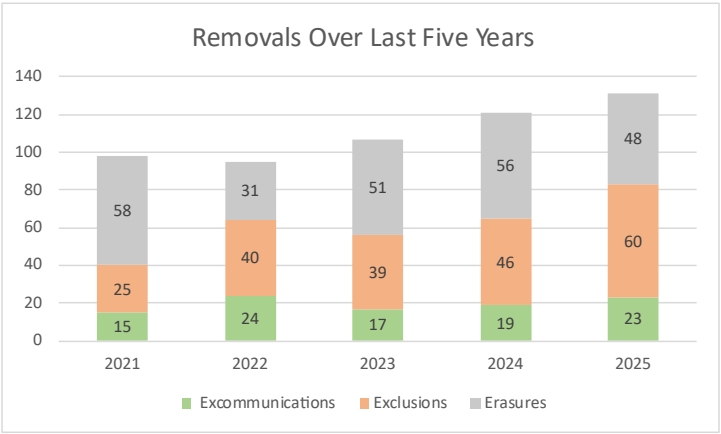


There are now three years' worth of detailed data to examine with regards to transfers. The graph below shows a comparison of membership transfers for the years 2023-2025. Of the transfers into the churches in 2025, 968 were received from other URCNA or NAPARC congregations. This is 73% of the receiving transfers. The sending transfers to URCNA and NAPARC congregations was 988 members which is 69% of the total.



Membership Removals:

This category includes Excommunications, Exclusions and Erasures. In the graph below, the number of membership removals can be seen over the last five years.



In 2023, the Exclusion data began to be more specifically collected to differentiate between the Exclusion of Baptized Members and the Exclusion of Professing Members by Resignation. The breakdown of Exclusions for the years 2023-2025 was reported as follows:

	2023	**2024**	**2025**
Exclusion of Professing Members by Resignation	69%	67%	65%
Exclusion of Baptized Members	31%	33%	35%

6) Responsibilities:

The role of Statistics and Directory Editor was created at Synod Wheaton 2018. According to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.4, the general responsibilities of the Statistician are to:

a. Collect and compile statistical reports of the churches for the calendar year ending December 31.

b. Review the information submitted by the churches to ensure its accuracy.

c. Prepare an annual directory for digital download, which shall consist of a listing of: synodical and classical functionaries, synodical and classical standing committees, classical statistics; churches by province/state, including profiles of each church in the federation; alphabetical directories of all ministers of the United Reformed Churches, including those emeritated, deceased, released, and deposed from office, as well as licensed exhorters and candidates for the ministry. In addition, the Statistician shall differentiate between infant and adult baptisms; differentiate between exclusion of a

baptized member and exclusion of professing members due to resignation; URCNA membership transfers (in / out); NAPARC membership transfers (in / out); non-NAPARC membership (release / receptions); differentiate between elders and deacons; minister's birth year; and same church membership analysis.

d. Prepare and present a report to synod with an explanation and analysis of the statistical reports for a meaningful understanding of them by synod.

e. Make recommendations within the bounds of the statistician's mandate.

This task is year-long with a lighter workload during the summer months and more labour-intensive activity in December, January and February. January requires two weeks of nearly full-time hours in the close examination and review of the statistical and directory information and the compilation of the annual archival directory. The statistical analysis completed for the synodical report requires a variable amount of time in February/March depending on the depth of the analysis. There is much potential for data observation and analysis, and some analyses require considerably more work with the data than others. Throughout the year, submissions need to be approved, emails answered, and specific data requests granted. These, along with projects to improve the directory require about 4-6 hours each week.

7) Observations and Recommendations:

a) In the writing of this report, it became apparent that not all the statistical fields that we traditionally collect are written in the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*. This may be due, in part, to some of the syntax of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.4.c.

Recommendation 1: That Synod amend the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.4.c as follows to reflect the current practice (delete ~~strike through~~, add underlined *italics*):

4.8.4 c. Prepare an annual directory for digital download, which shall consist of a listing of: synodical and classical functionaries, synodical and classical standing committees, classical statistics; churches by province/state, including profiles of each church in the federation; alphabetical directories of all ministers of the United Reformed Churches, including those emeritated, deceased, released, and deposed from office, as well as licensed exhorters and candidates for the ministry. ~~In addition, the Statistician shall differentiate between infant and adult baptisms; differentiate between exclusion of a baptized member and exclusion of professing members due to resignation; URCNA membership transfers (in / out); NAPARC membership transfers (in / out); non-NAPARC membership (release / receptions); differentiate between elders and deacons; minister's birth year; and same church membership analysis.~~

The statistical data collected annually should include:

- *number of ministers, elders, deacons, families, singles, baptized and professing members*
- *number of infant/covenantal baptisms, professions of faith (with adult baptism), professions of faith (without adult baptism) and deaths*
- *number of family, professing and baptized member transfers in/out of URCNA, transfers in/out of NAPARC, release/receptions to/from non-NAPARC*
- *removals due to excommunications, exclusions of baptized members, exclusions of professing members due to resignation and erasures*

Each minister's birth year is collected for statistical purposes only.

Same church membership is to be made available to each church upon request.

Grounds:

a. There is no official comprehensive documentation on which statistical fields are to be collected.
b. Future statisticians could choose not to collect important data that isn't set out clearly in the statistician's mandate.
c. With no guidance beyond what has been traditionally practiced, potential changes to data collection requirements cannot be easily considered and implemented.

Recommendation 2: That Synod appoint an ad-hoc committee to work with the statistician in preparing a document that clearly and thoroughly explains the URCNA Statistical Data Categories as defined by previous Synods, with references, as well as some FAQs to aid churches in submitting consistent and accurate statistical data.

Grounds:

a. It is difficult for the website user to navigate links to the Church Order and the Acts of Synod when seeking to gain clarity on a statistical field
b. The statistician receives many emails with the same questions being asked

b) Submissions and the Annual Archival Directory:

The submission of directory information (the contact information for churches and ministers/exhorters, not the statistical numbers) occurs throughout the year and too often requires the statistician having to initiate

communication with churches about specific changes to be made.

Recommendation 3: That Synod encourage the churches to update their directory information as changes take place and make timely use of the Ministerial News. The statistician can then respond as needed with appropriate reminders and/or instructions.

c) Statistical Data Collection and Analysis:

In 2024 and 2025, the response rates for statistical data were 100% and 98%, respectively. The submission of statistical information (not contact info, just numbers) is completed by most churches at the end of the calendar year, although some (albeit few) churches are diligent to update their stats as baptisms, professions and membership transfers occur within their congregation. The numbers are briefly reviewed by the statistician when they are submitted, and churches are contacted if the numbers seem grossly inconsistent with themselves or with numbers from recent records. Aside from the column entitled "Changes in 2025 as % of 2024", statistical analysis is not present in the archival directory but rather saved for this report. Classical Treasurers are given opportunity each year to review the statistical tables before the directory is published.

Recommendation 4: That Synod encourage the churches to document membership statistics *as they happen* either on the website or locally by using a program like Church Social. With this process in place, year end statistical submissions should not be so difficult, daunting, or delayed.

d) Process:

Since last Synod, the majority of the Statistics and Directory process has gone well but some issues have arisen with the data fields that have been added at Synod 2022. Three years of statistical data have been submitted since then and it is concluded that there are two main areas that are worth a re-evaluation, namely the Membership Transfer of Families and the clarity of the Profession of Faith category.

a. Membership Transfer of Families:
   The collection of families and singles in the church is important to get a picture of the demographics of each congregation, however, determining the number of families that have transferred in and out of the church each year is not as useful as it is very challenging in its calculation. A family can be created or removed within the church simply by changes in marital status and dependent children. Recalling the status of a group of people when they arrived at the church can be difficult. For example, a young couple arrives and only the wife is a professing member. By definition, they are not a family, however by year end, the husband has professed his faith so on December 31, they ARE a family. The probability of one clerk entering them in as a family and the next not entering them as a family, is quite high. Also, when a group of people comes from a non-covenantal background, they may "look" like a family but may not be defined as a covenant family as only one of them is baptized when they arrive. With this known inconsistency in reporting, the statistics of family transfers have purposely never been analysed.

Recommendation 5: That Synod discontinue the reporting of family transfers, while continuing to report the transfer of individual professing and baptized members.

[Subject to the adoption of Recommendation 1] This would require the amendment of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* **4.8.4.c** as follows: "The statistical data collected annually should include:…. number of ~~**family,**~~ professing and baptized member transfers…"

Grounds:

a. This allows data entry to be less subjective and more mathematical. The reporting of member transfer data can be quite simple: members in, members out.

b. It can be easily observed that the collection of statistics is not the favorite task of most (if not all) clerks, administrative assistants or pastors and the more straightforward the process, the more cooperation can be expected.

b. Profession of Faith:

Although Profession of Faith data has been collected since the beginning of the URCNA, the collection of "Professions of Faith with Adult Baptism" began after Synod 2022, hoping to differentiate between evangelical and covenantal salvation. The remaining data, contained in the "Profession of Faith" field has been observed to currently include:

1. Profession of faith of baptized members
2. Profession of new faith (but individual was baptized previously e.g. Roman Catholic)
3. Profession of reformed faith (reaffirmation of faith, often from a non-NAPARC church)

There are two main issues that have arisen which degrade the integrity of the data.

1. The current practice of reporting a "Profession of Reformed Faith/Reaffirmation of Faith" as a Profession

of Faith as well as receiving the same individual as a non-NAPARC member may result in duplicate data. If the submission of the data were consistent, this would be of no consequence but email correspondence regarding this issue suggests otherwise.

2. The original intent of adding the category "Profession of Faith with Baptism" was to count the evangelical salvations in the URC congregations. This is only being partially accomplished. New believers who have had a trinitarian baptism in their past are not being differentiated at all but are lumped into "Professions of Faith" along with the covenantal baptisms.

Recommendation 6: That Synod clarify the statistical data to be gathered regarding professions of faith with the following categories:

Total Professions of Faith; with subcategories of:

Profession of Faith (with adult baptism)

Profession of Faith by a Non-communicant (Baptized) Member

Reaffirmation of Faith/Profession of Reformed Faith

(e.g. from non-NAPARC church)

[Subject to the adoption of Recommendation 1] This would require the amendment of the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* 4.8.4.c as follows: "The statistical data collected annually should include:…. number of infant/covenant baptisms, *total professions of faith,* professions of faith (with adult baptism), professions of faith ~~(without adult baptism)~~ *by non-communicant (baptized) members, reaffirmation of faith/profession of Reformed faith*, and deaths…"

Grounds:

a. Adding a "Reaffirmation of Faith" category should eliminate ambiguity and the duplicate

data created when some churches report both a profession of faith and a reception of non-NAPARC membership while others report only one of these values.

b. Adding the subcategory "Profession of a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member" to Total Professions of Faith should account for all types of professions: "Profession of a Non-Communicant (Baptized) Member" and "Profession with Adult Baptism" by reporting; and "Profession of New Faith with no need for baptism" by calculating the difference.

c. These additional data points would help to make the process of data collection more mathematical thus allow for the potential to double check the data by calculating members in and out and comparing with reported changes in the congregation.

<u>In conclusion:</u>

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as the Statistics and Directory Editor for the URCNA and am willing to continue to use my skills and abilities for the Lord in this way. I appreciate the support and cooperation of the URCNA as we work together to keep contact information and statistical numbers up to date. May God be glorified in our federation and may we encourage one another in the faith as together we serve the Lord and long for the coming of his kingdom.

In His Service,
Jody Luth, Statistics and Directory Editor, URCNA.

Overture 1

URCNA Treasurers to Send the Churches Statements of Budgeted Federation Expenses

Background

- At Synod Escondido 2024 the U.S. Treasurer URCNA reported "As of December 31,2023, 55 out of 79 U.S. based churches (total excludes church plants), or 70%, have made 2023 earmarked donations".
- It was further reported that in the previous decade the percentage of U.S. based churches that did not provide any "askings" was on average 8.3%.
- At Synod Escondido 2024 the Canadian Treasurer URCNA reported 100% participation by the Canadian churches of the URCNA in both 2022 and 2023.
- It was further reported by the Canadian Treasurer "Statements were emailed at the end of January 2023 to Clerks/Treasurers to show what has been budgeted to be received from their churches".

Overture

Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary to task the U.S treasurer and Canadian treasurer to send out statements of budgeted expenses to the clerk of each member church at the beginning of the calendar year informing the churches of their respective budgeted obligations and provide the Churches a record of their received donations from the previous calendar year.

Grounds

1. We do not function as a united federation when churches do not meet mutually agreed upon obligations.

2. Statements sent for budget items are good accounting practice. Most deaconates employ statements for the budgets of their respective local churches.

3. The federation already expects compliance by the member churches in other areas, such as sending delegates to Synod (often at a far greater expense than the per family asking), providing data to the statistician in a timely fashion, ratifying synodical decisions, etc.

4. The language of “askings” is confusing to deaconates and creates an unnecessary obstacle as they create their individual church budgets.

5. The Canadian treasurer of the URCNA is already practicing the essence of the motion.

6. Deaconates as well as the treasurers of the churches often change from year to year and statements will help with these transitions and be a helpful reminder to a new treasurer who is often new to the task.

Respectfully,
Rev. Greg Lubbers, Stated Clerk of Classis Central U.S.

Overture 2
Editorial Changes for the Church Order

Background

Our current *Church Order, Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, and their appendices lack consistent capitalization, particularly for the words “consistory,” “classis,” and “synod.” "Consistory" appears 78 times in the *Church Order* and is incorrectly capitalized 77 times. In the appendices, it appears 64 times and is incorrectly capitalized only 20 times. (We’re getting better.) "Classis" appears 25 times in the appendices and is incorrectly capitalized 3 times. "Synod" is used 230 times in the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure*, with about 28 incorrect capitalizations. (There appears no need to correct any instance of the word “council.”) Regardless of what guidelines we use, these inconsistencies reflect badly on us.

These inconsistencies are puzzling. The 1934 edition of the *Church Order of Dort*, upon which we first federated, did not capitalize any church assembly names. However, the edition of that church order in the 1926 CRC Psalter has all assembly names capitalized along with all the church offices and several other common nouns as well. This may reflect our 19th-century history when English was a second language for many of our church leaders.

At our last synod, an overture for consistent capitalization was rejected due to its unique rules that did not align with common American English usage. It would have taken us back to the style of the 1926 edition. No alternative overture was available, so no action was taken, and the inconsistencies remain. This overture aims to provide a solution by proposing common modern usage guidelines.

The AP Style Guide (easily discoverable by an internet search) states:

Plural, Nonspecific References

> All words that are capitalized when part of a proper names should be lowercase when they are used in the plural or do not refer to a specific, existing body.

Consistent with that is a noted grammar textbook which states:

> The names of government bodies are capitalized when they are exact names. Do not capitalize such general terms as the following: *the state legislature, the latest department meeting."* (*English Grammar and Composition* (Revised Edition) by John E Warriner and Francis Griffith, published by Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc, 1965, page 614.)

According to these guidelines, the words "consistory," "council," and "synod" should not be capitalized unless they are part of the name of a particular assembly such as "Synod Escondido 2024." When the words are nonspecific, merely referring to such assemblies in general, whether in the singular or the plural, they should not be capitalized.

Overture

Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to instruct the stated clerk to use the Associated Press Style Guide for capitalization to update, as needed, the *Church Order,* the *Regulations for Synodical Procedures* and their appendices, and that synod declare that such capitalization changes to the *Church Order* do not need to be ratified by the consistories since the changes are editorial in nature and do not change the meaning of the document.

Grounds

1. Consistently following the Associated Press Style Guide regarding capitalization will bring our documents into conformity with standard practice among editors and publishers.

2. This standard has already been followed in some additions made to the *Regulations for Synodical Procedure* over the past several synods, which is why, of the three documents, it needs least editing.

3. There is an established precedent for not requiring consistorial ratification for editorial modifications. For instance, the synod declared that the titles of the articles were considered editorial and therefore exempt from ratification.

4. Consistency in capitalization will enhance the readability and clarity of our documents and reflect our commitment to precision and excellence.

5. If we present ourselves to the world as having a language or grammar of our own, we appear isolated and disconnected from broader society. We should speak and write well the language of the people we hope to reach.

Respectfully,
Rev. Greg Lubbers, Stated Clerk of Classis Central U.S.

Overture 3

Deadline for Consistorial Adjudication of Appeals

Background

Appendix B to the Regulations for Synodical Procedure and Appendix 7 to the Church Order provide the Guidelines for Appeals, including deadlines for submitting a Notice of Appeal and the Appeal itself. However, the Guidelines provide no corresponding deadline for the adjudication of an appeal by a consistory. Without such a deadline, consistories can delay or choose not to adjudicate an appeal indefinitely. An unadjudicated appeal leaves an appellant in ecclesiastical limbo, without recourse to advance the appeal. Such cases have been reported in our federation. This situation can be rectified by amending the Guidelines to impose a deadline for consistories to adjudicate and render a judgment on an appeal.

Overture

Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary that Appendix B to the Regulations for Synodical Procedure and Appendix 7 to the Church Order be amended to **add the following provision** to the Guidelines for Appeals:

7 (f): For appeals made to a consistory, the consistory shall adjudicate and render a judgment on the appeal within 60 days of receipt of the appeal. If the consistory fails to adjudicate and render judgment on the appeal within 60 days, the appellant may advance the appeal to the next broader assembly for adjudication and judgment.

Grounds

1. A deadline imposed on the appellant to bring an appeal ensures fairness to a consistory to receive prompt notice of appealable issues. Fairness to the appellant dictates that a deadline should

likewise be imposed on the consistory to adjudicate the appeal.

2. A consistory's failure to adjudicate an appeal in a timely manner can result in justice being delayed or denied under our current Guidelines.

3. A consistory's failure to adjudicate an appeal should allow the appellant to advance his appeal to an assembly that will adjudicate the appeal.

4. This 60-day deadline would not apply to the adjudication of appeals by a classis or synod, given that appeals considered at such broader assemblies are necessarily adjudicated during the fixed time such assemblies are in session.

Respectfully,
Rev. Greg Lubbers, Stated Clerk of Classis Central U.S.

Overture 4

Amend Church Order Article 27 to Clarify Church Visitors' Reports to Classis

Background

There is uniform agreement in our federation that church visitors must give a report to classis on the biennial church visits required by Church Order Article 27. However, a practice has developed in some classes that church visitors are using their *own judgment* as to whether to report on special visits to churches seeking advice on particularly difficult situations. This practice may have developed since Church Order Article 27 only references the biennial visits and makes no mention of "special visits" made by church visitors.

It has been suggested that because such "special visits" may contain sensitive information, this material should be kept "confidential" because consistories may be reluctant to call on church visitors if they know such visits will be reported. It has also been questioned whether informal calls for advice to an individual pastor/elder who is also a church visitor would be covered by the reporting requirement. However, we do not believe these concerns are sufficient to exempt a certain category of visits from reporting to classis.

For historical comparison, the 1967 version of the CRCNA Church Order Article 42 recognized both the regular and special visits made by church visitors and made no exemption from reporting on special visits:

> a. *The classis shall appoint at least one committee composed of two of the more experienced and competent ministers to visit all its churches once a year.*
> b. *The church visitors shall ascertain whether the office-bearers faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church*

Order, and properly promote the edification of the congregation and the extension of God's Kingdom. They shall fraternally admonish those who have been negligent, and help all with advice and assistance.

c. The churches are free to call on the church visitors whenever serious problems arise.

d. ***The church visitors shall render to classis a written report of their work.***

(emphasis added)

The current version of CRCNA Church Order Article 42 retained recognition of both regular and special visits by church visitors and does not exempt special visits from the reporting requirement:

a. The classis shall be responsible for appointing persons to provide counsel to churches and to pastors. The classis shall appoint church visitors to visit each church in classis on a yearly basis. The classis shall appoint classical counselors to provide advice to any church in the process of calling a minister of the Word. The classis shall appoint regional pastors to support ministers of the Word and commissioned pastors.

b. The church visitors shall consist of one or more teams of officebearers chosen for their experience and counsel. Team composition shall include a minister of the Word and at least one other officebearer. Their task shall be to ascertain whether the officebearers of the church faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe the provisions of the Church Order, and promote the building up of the body of Christ and the extension of God's kingdom. ***Churches are free to call on the church visitors whenever serious challenges arise that would benefit from their advice****.* ***The church visitors shall provide classis a written report of their work.***

(emphasis added)

The *Van Dellen & Monsma Commentary on the Church Order* provides an added rationale for church visitors reporting on all their work: accountability for the visitors:

> *"Of course, the visitors must give an account of* ***all their work*** *to classis. Consistories or consistory members who feel that the visitors have neglected their duty, or have gone beyond their authorization, or have misdirected matters, may appeal to classis."*
> *(Commentary, p. 174).*
> *(emphasis added).*

This overture seeks to bring proper accountability regarding the work of the church visitors as classically appointed representatives.

Overture

Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary to amend Church Order Article 27 to read as follows:

> Article 27 – Church Visitors. Each Consistory of the classis shall invite two experienced office-bearers appointed by classis, either two ministers or a minister and an elder, to visit the council once every two years, ~~who shall give account of their visit to the classis~~. These visitors shall inquire whether the office-bearers faithfully perform their duties, adhere to sound doctrine, observe in all things the adopted order, and properly promote as much as lies in them, by word and deed, the edification of the congregation, including the youth, to the end that these visitors may fraternally admonish those office-bearers who have in anything been negligent, and may by their advice and assistance help direct all things unto the peace, edification and greatest profit of the churches. Upon the request of a Consistory, they may also be called upon to assist in

cases of special difficulty. The church visitors shall give a written account of all their visits to the next classis.

Grounds

1. Visitors are *classical* church visitors, so by the very nature of the appointment and function they should give an account to classis on their church visits. Such accountability guards against potential hierarchicalism of classical visitors acting as independent counselors in special cases accountable to no one.

2. Where the Church Order speaks of church visitors, the aim is to involve the full wisdom and mutual accountability of classis. (*cf.* Articles 11 and 27)

3. The advice of church visitors is necessarily weightier since their advice has in view the broader wisdom of the many churches from the classis who appointed them.

4. The employment of the church visitors—appointed and paid for by classis—typically involves a weightier matter that often finds its way to classis (*e.g.*, pastoral care of a member or conflict among office bearers). By requiring reporting on these visits, classis would be informed of an issue at an early stage, giving classis an opportunity to offer advice and prayer for the consistory and the church visitors in their labors. Furthermore, it would prevent classis from being blindsided at a later stage if an appeal is lodged by a member who was the subject of such special visit.

5. Concerns over sensitive case information can be addressed by way of handling the report in executive session at classis. Furthermore, if a

consistory does not want their matter to be reported to classis, a consistory need not involve *classical* church visitors.

6. Informal calls for advice to an ***individual*** pastor/elder, who also happens to be a church visitor, would not be covered by this reporting requirement. Church visitors, in their role as church visitors, operate in tandem in response to a consistory request for assistance. Only when a **consistory** officially calls upon **both** church visitors in their capacity as church visitors would the reporting requirement be applicable.

Respectfully,
Rev. Greg Lubbers, Stated Clerk of Classis Central U.S.

Overture 5

Overture Regarding Church Order Article 31 and Appendix 7

Background

Church Order Article 31 grants individual members the right to appeal decisions of "a narrower assembly" to the broader assemblies. In 2018, Synod adopted Appendix 7, which stated that *"any consistory or church member may appeal against a decision of any assembly of the federation,"* and that such an appeal *"must first be made to the assembly whose decision is being appealed."*

At Synod Niagara 2022, an appeal was brought against Classis Eastern U.S. for ruling an individual appeal of a classis decision "out of order" on the ground that Church Order Articles 29 and 31 did not allow an individual to initiate an appeal directly against a classis. Synod sustained the specification of error that this disposition contradicted Appendix 7, which *"explicitly permits an individual appeal of a classis decision and requires such an appeal to be directly initiated with the assembly whose decision is being appealed."*

Subsequently, Synod Escondido 2024 acceded to an overture from Classis Eastern U.S. to amend Appendix 7, Guideline 1, adding the sentence: *"An individual member may only appeal a decision of his own consistory."* This revision narrowed individual appeal rights to local consistory decisions, while Article 31 itself was left unchanged. As a result, Article 31 and Appendix 7 now stand in tension: Article 31 speaks of an individual's right to appeal from "a narrower assembly" to the broader assemblies, while Appendix 7 confines an individual's right of appeal to decisions of his own consistory.

In addition, the present wording of Appendix 7 does not explicitly address situations in which ministers hold communicant membership outside the federation while their ministerial credentials remain under the oversight of a URCNA

consistory. This circumstance can arise, for example, when an emeritus minister joins a church outside the federation while his former URC consistory retains his ministerial credentials, in accordance with Church Order Article 10. Such ministers may still be examined, disciplined, or released by that consistory or by broader assemblies, yet their standing to appeal those actions is not clearly expressed in the current text.

For these reasons, amendments to both Article 31 and Appendix 7 are needed to remove ambiguity, restore internal consistency, and ensure that individuals who are directly subject to an assembly's judgment retain appropriate access to the appellate process, and that the right of appeal is not nullified when membership loss is itself the action under review.

Overture

Classis Central U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Church Order Article 31 and Church Order Appendix 7 to state (proposed additions in bold):

> Article 31: If any church member complains that he has been wronged by **a decision of his own consistory, or by any decision of another consistory or broader assembly in which he is personally named, disciplined, examined, or otherwise directly subject to that assembly's judgment**, he shall have the right to appeal to the broader assemblies. An individual's appeal must first be submitted to the assembly whose decision is being appealed, and only then, if necessary, to the broader assemblies. Until a decision is made upon such appeal, the church member shall conform to the determination and judgment already passed. (See Appendix 7)
>
> Appendix 7 Guideline 1: Appellant: An appeal may be made by a consistory; a classis; or an individual who is **either** a member of a church within the federation **or whose ministerial credentials are held by a church**

within the federation. The appeal may be submitted by the appellant himself or by a representative. **An individual member may appeal a decision of his own consistory, or any decision of another consistory or broader assembly in which he is personally named, disciplined, examined, or otherwise directly subject to that assembly's judgment. Standing to appeal is not removed when the loss of membership is itself the decision being appealed, nor when membership is lost or transferred during the appeal process.**

Grounds

1. The current wording of Article 31 ("decision of a narrower assembly") is ambiguous and has produced conflicting synodical interpretations (e.g., Synod Niagara 2022 vs. Synod Escondido 2024). Because the Church is called to conduct its affairs "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40), the standard for who may appeal must be unambiguous. The proposed revision provides necessary clarity by specifying exactly which decisions give an individual rightful standing to appeal.

2. Appendix 7, Guideline 1 currently restricts individual appeal rights beyond what Article 31 provides, limiting appeals to decisions "originating in his own consistory." This narrowing constitutes a substantive alteration of Church Order Article 31 made by Synod Escondido 2024 through an appendix revision rather than through the constitutional amendment process required by Article 66, which alone permits changes to the Church Order through a two-thirds vote of synod and ratification by two-thirds of the consistories of the federation. The proposed amendment corrects this procedural irregularity, restores harmony between Article 31 and Appendix 7, and reinstates

a just and transparent process for those directly affected by ecclesiastical decisions.

3. The proposed wording preserves proper lines of authority and responsibility, limiting standing to those who are actually subject to an assembly's judgment—those personally named, disciplined, examined, or otherwise directly bound by its decision. This protects assemblies from improper or abstract appeals while ensuring that individuals who are directly affected may seek just review, in keeping with the church's calling to exercise authority without partiality or prejudice (cf. Lev. 19:15; Jas. 2:1).

4. The proposed revision to Appendix 7 corrects an unintended vulnerability affecting ministers. Ministers may have their communicant membership outside the federation while their credentials remain under a URCNA consistory. Because they remain under that consistory's oversight and may be disciplined, examined, or released by it, they must retain the ability to appeal decisions directly involving their office. The proposed wording secures this rightful protection without extending standing beyond those legitimately under URCNA jurisdiction.

5. The proposed changes establish full internal consistency between Article 31 and Appendix 7. At present, the two sections operate with conflicting definitions of who may appeal. Aligning them prevents procedural conflict, promotes coherent governance, and strengthens confidence that appeals will be handled with integrity.

6. The overture preserves the established and orderly movement of appeals within the URCNA. By

retaining the requirement that an appeal be submitted first to the assembly whose decision is being challenged, the revision maintains the proper flow from local to broader assemblies and prevents appeals from bypassing appropriate steps.

7. Without explicit clarification, an appellant could lose standing if the action being appealed results in the loss of membership, or if membership is removed during the appeal process, thereby undermining the right of appeal guaranteed in Church Order Article 31. Because justice requires that the act under review may not itself eliminate the possibility of appeal (cf. Deut. 16:19), a brief statement in Appendix 7 ensures that standing persists when membership loss is the matter under appeal or occurs during the appeal process.

    a. Together, these revisions promote fairness, accountability, and peace within the churches. They ensure that individuals who are directly affected by ecclesiastical judgments have proper recourse while preventing the misuse of appeals by those not personally involved. Such clarity strengthens the church's ability to render decisions that are upright, impartial, and conducive to good order.

Respectfully,
Rev. Greg Lubbers, Stated Clerk of Classis Central U.S.

Overture 6

Affirm a Statement from the ARP, PCA, and RPCNA

Background

The power of the gospel makes it clear that there is neither Greek nor Jew…barbarian or Scythian…but Christ is all and in all (Colossians 3:11; see also Acts 10:28, 34-35; Romans 10:12; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:11-22). The shocking truth of the good news of Jesus Christ was one that broke the division of ethnic lines. Christ intentionally went and preached in Samaria. Christ intentionally commissioned the disciples to go to the ends of the earth. His message was clear, the good news is for all people to receive, regardless of their ethnicity.

Yet this basic truth of the Christian faith continues to be questioned and attacked in our day. Amongst the NAPARC denominations/federations, there have been increasing cases, where people within the churches (both in leadership and congregants) are appealing to teachings that are racist (such as anti-Semitism, white supremacy, and Kinism, among others). While these sinful views may only come from a very small number of people within the whole of NAPARC, it is a dangerous problem that must be addressed.

Overture

Classis Eastern U. S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to affirm the following statement from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.:

That the 14th Synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America along with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America condemn without distinction any theological or political teaching which posits a [moral] superiority of race or ethnic identity born of immutable

human characteristics and call to repentance any who would promote or associate themselves with such teaching, either by commission or omission.

Grounds

1. This statement affirms the truth of Scripture, summarized in Belgic Confession, Article 12 that God our Father "has given *all* creatures their being, form, and appearance, and their various functions for serving their Creator." It further affirms the truth of the Canons of Dort in the Second Main Point of Doctrine, Article 5 that "it is the promise of the gospel that *whoever* believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared *without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people*, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel." (emphasis added).

2. This statement was approved at the 221st General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

3. This statement was approved at the 52nd General Assembly of PCA (with the bracketed addition of 'moral')

4. The ARP's statement was 'commended' at the Synod of 2025 of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Northern America.

5. Rather than drafting a statement for the URCNA on this topic, it is good to show unity with NAPARC on these serious issues by affirming what the ARP has adopted.

6. This is a real problem that many congregations throughout the URCNA and all of NAPARC are facing.

Classis Eastern U.S.
Rev. Daniel Ragusa, Stated Clerk

Overture 7

Affirm the Teachings of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity on Race, Ethnicity, and Kinism

Background

Officers in the churches of our Lord are tasked with correcting errors, especially when those errors threaten the unity of the saints' fellowship. This fellowship is a blessing that Christ has purchased by His blood and, therefore, worth defending. Certain errors concerning race and ethnicity have crept into our ranks as Reformed Christians, such as: some races are spiritually superior to others, some races experience obstacles to their sanctification on account of their race, interracial marriage is sinful even if both spouses are Christians, and other related teachings. We in the URCNA recognize the recent statement that other NAPARC communions have adopted to identify and correct these errors. We also find it useful to speak concerning this matter by citing specific passages of Holy Scripture and excerpts from our Three Forms of Unity.

Overture

Classis Eastern U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to adopt the following affirmations:

> We do hereby affirm Scripture's teaching, namely:
> - That the gospel of Jesus Christ broke the spiritual division of ethnic lines (Ephesians 2:11–22);
> - That, therefore, in the Church "there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11);
> - That Christ intentionally went and preached in Samaria and intentionally commissioned the disciples to go to the ends of the earth—a clear message that the good news is for all people to

receive, regardless of their race or ethnicity (John 4:1–45; Acts 1:8; 2:5–11);
- That Paul openly rebuked Peter for resorting to fellowship based on ethnic lines rather than pursuing unity in the gospel (Galatians 2:11–14);
- That the Old Testament's prohibition of marrying outsiders was to keep God's people from marrying foreign idolaters and that this was waived if both spouses worshiped the God of Abraham (Deuteronomy 7:3–4; Ruth 4:10);
- That Scripture's prohibition of marrying outsiders does not bar people from marrying those of another race or ethnicity, but of believers being unequally yoked with unbelievers (1 Corinthians 7:48).

We do also hereby re-affirm the relevant teachings of the Heidelberg Catechism and Canons of Dort, namely:
- That Christians are called to declare the gospel without discrimination (CD 2.5);
- That it is the blood and Spirit of Christ—and not race, ethnic identity, or any other characteristic—that saves sinners (CD 2.8);
- That this salvation, which includes the sanctification of God's people, is grounded upon the decree of God in eternity and the blood and Spirit of Christ in time (CD 1.7; HC Q&A 70);
- That the revelation of the gospel is not according to greater worth of one nation over another, but rather to God's good pleasure (CD 3/4.7);
- That there is no exception on racial or ethnic grounds for ignoring God's will for us in the sixth commandment when it calls us not to "belittle, hate, insult, or kill my neighbor—not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds," and not even to be "party to this in others" (HC Q&A 118).

Grounds

These affirmations:

1. Direct Christians back to Scripture and our confessions to answer divisive controversies in our day;
2. Allow for a variety of views about the definitions of "race" and "ethnicity" while still holding us to the Christian duty of love for our neighbors;
3. Allow for distinguishing between a particular race and nation-state that tends to be identified by that race.
    a. E.g., it is not inherently anti-Semitic to oppose the modern Israeli government, though Israel is majority-populated by Jews.
    b. E.g., it is not inherently an expression of white supremacy to have national pride in the United States of America, though the U.S. is majority-populated by Whites.

Classis Eastern U.S.
Rev. Daniel Ragusa, Stated Clerk

Overture 8

Amend Church Order Article 66

Summary

Overture for Synod to amend C.O. article 66 in order to make appendix changes require a 2/3 vote and 2/3 ratification like the articles of the church order.

Background

In recent years the deliberations of Synod have indicated that the church order appendices possess the exact same authority as the language of the church order articles themselves. The appendices are regarded as adding no new substance but only fleshing out what is already in the church order. If this premise is true, then changes to the appendices of the church order are as weighty as the main body of the church order. If, however, the appendices differ from the church order articles, it creates dissonance.

Changing articles of the church order requires a 2/3 majority vote of Synod. This must be followed by a 2/3 ratification of the changes by URC consistories before the new language takes effect. Meanwhile, a church order appendix may be changed by a simple-majority vote, and takes effect immediately. (On a related note, the Synodical Rules of Procedure require a 2/3 majority vote for any changes.)

At Synod 2022 and 2024, the possibility of ideological conflict between an appendix and a church order article highlighted a weakness in our polity. A simple-majority change of an appendix may potentially equal or outweigh articles of the church order (Some referred to this as the tail wagging the dog). It is rather difficult to anticipate all of the church order implications of the adoption of large appendices like the addition of Appendix 7 several years ago. The change was immediate, but it took considerable time to iron out whether the

articles fully agreed with the appendix in substance. Since the rate of implementation of appendix changes can create significant consequences for church order interpretation, it should be subject to the same standards as a church order article change.

Overture

Classis Eastern U.S. overtures the next Synod to amend URCNA Church Order Article 66 (changes underlined).

Article 66 – The Observance and Revision of the Church Order

These articles and appendices, relating to the lawful order of the church, have been so drafted and adopted by common consent, that they ought to be observed diligently. If it be found that God may be more honored and the churches better served by changing any article or appendix, this shall require a two-thirds vote of a synod and shall be ratified by two-thirds of the synodically-approved Consistories of the federation, after which they shall take effect.

Grounds

1. The church order appendices have considerable weight and should match the weight of the articles they clarify.
    a) Debate at recent synods suggested that many delegates saw the appendices as having the very same substance as the articles themselves (homoousios not homoiousios). Allowing for appendix changes, which take effect immediately by simple majority, would undermine the safeguards of Article 66.
    b) The additional time it takes to ratify appendix changes would better clarify and eliminate any concern that a proposed

appendix is in ideological conflict with any other article or appendix. It may be difficult for the churches to fully anticipate the impact of implementing a large appendix.

2. The church order appendices have considerable weight and should at least match or exceed the procedures for changes to the Synodical Rules of Procedure.

Classis Eastern U.S.
Rev. Daniel Ragusa, Stated Clerk

Overture 9
Amend Church Order Article 64

Background

What is the calling and responsibility of a consistory when receiving a request for the transfer or release of a member? Our answer to that question is in need of clarification.

In the vast majority of cases, when members seek to transfer from one United Reformed Church to another, or to a church within a sister federation, little discussion is needed. Although we grieve the departure of members – even when circumstances make it unavoidable – these are routine aspects of church life. A certificate of membership is sent to the receiving church.

But on rare occasions, a request for a membership transfer or release is troubling. It may appear to be an attempt to flee a conflict which should be addressed in a biblical manner; or it may seem to be an attempt to flee the accountability of church discipline. Circumstances such as these can raise legitimate spiritual concerns regarding a request to transfer to a different church.

The question is: does the consistory receiving that request have the right to evaluate the request and judge whether it should be granted? Or does the consistory have no choice but to grant the request?

Some claim the consistory has no right to refuse. They point out that Article 64 of our *Church Order* explicitly calls consistories to evaluate whether to grant a request for release to join a congregation that is not in ecclesiastical fellowship; whereas a similar caveat is not stated regarding a request to transfer to a sister congregation. Further, when Appendix 8 addresses transfer requests, it declares: “When the consistory accedes to the member’s request, it should send appropriate membership information … directly to the elders of the receiving church,

including an attestation to the member's good standing or disciplinary status." Since no alternative is stated – and since provision is made for noting disciplinary status – it is inferred that the consistory has no right to decline.

On the other side of the debate, however, arises a reminder of the consistory's shepherding responsibility. The *Church Order* instructs that those desiring a membership transfer "shall *request* in writing that their current Consistory send to the receiving Consistory an official letter." The fact that this is a *request,* and not a requisition or demand, indicates that the consistory is called to make a decision in the matter. Likewise, in Appendix 8, a member is directed to *ask* his consistory for the transfer, and this is characterized as a request to which the consistory must determine to *accede* – suggesting the possibility of *declining* the request.

This may seem a small matter, but at stake is the biblical calling of the elders of the church to carefully and intentionally shepherd the lambs which Christ has entrusted to them (Acts 20:28 ff.; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17). If the consistory has neither the right nor the calling to evaluate the propriety of a member's request to transfer to a different church, then meaningful accountability of members to the consistory is undermined, at best.

Having said that, we must not overlook the need for accountability. If a consistory declines a request for transfer or release, it should be required to explain this to the member, giving opportunity for dialogue or, if necessary, the filing of an appeal.

We believe these changes to Article 64 of our *Church Order* will serve to helpfully clarify the shepherding role of a consistory when receiving a request for transfer.

In addition, a pair of small changes are suggested to clarify when a membership transfer is appropriate, versus a release to affiliate.

Overture

Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 64 of the URCNA *Church Order,* as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article. ~~Strikeout~~ indicates that words currently included are being removed.]

Article 64 – Departure of Members

Those who seek the transfer of their membership to another congregation within the federation or one ~~in~~ *with which the URCNA has entered into* ecclesiastical fellowship shall request in writing that their current Consistory send to the receiving Consistory an official letter including pertinent membership information and testimony concerning doctrine and life, requesting the receiving Consistory to accept them under its spiritual care.

The Consistory may release members in order to affiliate with congregations *with which the URCNA has* not *established* ~~in~~ ecclesiastical fellowship when the Consistory judges that doing so may aid the spiritual growth of the members.

If a member making a request for transfer or release is under discipline, transfer or release may be granted if the Consistory of the receiving church expresses a willingness to shepherd the individual toward repentance and restoration. A current Consistory declining to accede to a request for transfer or release shall explain in writing its reason to the member.

The Consistory may, with concurring advice from classis, erase the membership of those with whom they have not been able to communicate for at least two years. *(See Appendix 8.)*

Grounds

1. This change will clarify the implications already present in our *Church Order*: that a consistory which receives a request for membership transfer or release must evaluate and act upon this request, as part of its shepherding duties before the Lord.

2. Scripture is abundantly clear that the elders and ministers of the church are responsible for carefully shepherding members under their care. This is clear from passages such as Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17; and others. No provision of our *Church Order* should be allowed to overrule the calling of the consistory to fulfill its calling from God to shepherd the lambs entrusted to its care.

3. The *Foundational Principles of Reformed Church Government,* appended to our *Church Order*, affirm this calling and responsibility of the consistory. "Christ cares for His church through the office-bearers whom He chooses" (Foundational Principle #12). "Christian discipline, arising from God's love for His people, is exercised in the church to correct and strengthen the people of God, maintain the unity and the purity of the church of Christ, and thereby bring honor and glory to God's name" (Foundational Principle #16). When discipline must be formally exercised in the church, "it must be exercised by the elders of the church, the bearers of the keys of the kingdom" (Foundational Principle #17).

4. This aspect of the calling of the consistory to evaluate requests for transfer or release is consistent with the counsel given in Appendix 8, which characterizes a member's pursuit of transfer as a "request," brought when the member "asks the consistory for transfer." This language clearly reveals the consistory's calling to render a decision

regarding whether the transfer or release is wise and beneficial for the member.

5. The language of this amendment emphasizes the consistory's duty to shepherd the member making the request, ensuring that the member is not seeking a course of action that would be spiritually harmful to him.

6. By requiring the consistory to consult with the receiving consistory in the case of a member who is under discipline, this amended language allows for the transfer or release of a member who is under discipline in a manner consistent with the member's vow "to submit to the government of the church, and also, if you should become wayward, either in doctrine or in life, to submit to its admonition and discipline" (Form 1 for Public Profession of Faith).

7. In the case of a consistory declining a request for transfer or release, the requirement that the consistory's reasons be explained to the member ensures accountability and allows for the filing of an appeal, if such seems warranted.

8. Two small proposed changes seek to clarify a sometimes confusing distinction that determines whether a transfer or a release is appropriate. The synodically-approved Guidelines for Ecumenicity and Church Unity, employed by our Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity, indicate that in Phase Two, "Ecclesiastical Fellowship," the URCNA and another federation "recognize and accept each other as true and faithful churches of the Lord Jesus." Among other things, this means "the churches shall accept each other's certificates of membership." This "sister church" status would

seem to be the proper stage at which to accept a transfer of membership, with a release to affiliate being more appropriate for members going to churches that have not been so thoroughly evaluated and embraced.

Classis Michigan
Rev. Talman Wagenmaker, Stated Clerk

Overture 10

Amend Church Order Articles 8 and 47, & Appendices 4 and 5

Background

We have been encouraged by the effort begun at Synod Escondido 2024 to carefully refine our Church Order, ensuring that it is internally consistent, fully accurate, and reflective of the excellence which we owe to our holy God.

In the course of our labors, we discovered an inconsistency that needs to be addressed. This inconsistency is found in Article 47 of our Church Order, relating to the Church's Missionary Calling, and it has been present from the first edition in 1996.

Article 47 emphasizes that the church's formal missionary task is to be done by a properly called and supervised minister of the Word. Such a man must be lawfully called, supported, and supervised – *not* entering the field as an ecclesiastical Lone Ranger.

However, the present wording of Article 47 indicates that ministers performing missionary labors are to be "called, supported, and supervised by their Consistories." This is inconsistent with other relevant provisions of our Church Order.

It is clear from Articles 14, 37, and 38, along with Foundational Principle 5, that the *supervision* of ministers belongs to the work of the consistory. However, the *calling* of a minister is a task assigned to the council, according to Article 6 (cf. Article 12 regarding elders and deacons). And the *support* of ministers, which necessarily involves the diaconal task of the gathering and distribution of the offerings of God's people, also falls under the responsibility of the council.

Therefore, to prevent inconsistency that could foster misunderstanding, Article 47 should be changed to clarify that ministers set apart to missionary tasks – like *any* duly-called

ministers – are called and supported by their councils, while being supervised by their consistories.
While researching this matter, we noted a related inconsistency encompassed in *Church Order* Article 8 and Appendix 5. These sections focus on the need for a minister ordained outside our federation to sustain a colloquium doctum prior to receiving a call from one of our churches. However, the language in both locations erroneously indicates that the consistory is to extend the call, when in fact it is the council which extends calls.

This overture aims at clarifying the roles of the consistory and council in calling, supporting, and supervising ministers, in an effort to be precise and consistent in our language.

Overture – Part 1

Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 47 of the *Church Order,* as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article.]

> **Article 47 – The Church's Mission Calling**
>
> The church's missionary task is to preach the Word of God to the unconverted. When this task is to be performed beyond the field of an organized church, it is to be carried out by ministers of the Word set apart to this labor, who are called~~,~~ *and* supported *by their councils*~~,~~ and supervised by their Consistories. A local Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before sending a foreign or home missionary to a field or removing a foreign or home missionary from a field. The churches should assist each other in the support of their missionaries.

Grounds

1. Calling: Our *Church Order* should strive to be internally consistent. As currently written, Article 47 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a

minister as outlined in *Church Order* Article 6, which specifies that the council extends the ministerial call. This inconsistency is emphasized by the calling process for elders and deacons set forth in Article 12, which also occurs by the hand of the council.

2. Support: Since the deacons of a church are called to the duty of "gathering and managing the offerings of God's people in Christ's name, and distributing these offerings according to need" (Article 15), it is clear that the support of ministers requires the involvement of a church's council.

3. Supervision: While it seems clear that the council ought to be specified as having responsibility regarding the calling and support of a minister, it is equally clear from Article 14, Article 21, and Articles 37 and 38, that the supervision of ministers belongs to the work of the consistory.

4. This change will ensure that the language of Article 47 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our *Church Order* that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

Overture – Part 2

Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 8 of the *Church Order,* as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article.]

Article 8 – Calling a Minister from Outside the Federation

A minister who has been ordained in a church outside the federation shall not be admitted to serve in a

church within the federation without an examination conducted to the satisfaction of the delegates to the classis, according to the regulations adopted by the federation, whereupon the classis shall declare him eligible to be called by the *council of the sponsoring church* ~~sponsoring Consistory~~. (*See Appendix 5 and 6*)

Grounds

1. As currently written, Article 8 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in *Church Order* Article 6. In Article 6, the man being called is elected *by the council* of the calling church, after prayer and reception of the advice of the congregation. The proposed change would bring Article 8 into conformity with this procedure.

2. Article 8 also currently implies a different procedure than that which is employed for the calling of elders and deacons in Article 12 of the *Church Order*. There, too, it is *the council* that presents nominations to the congregation – not the consistory.

3. This change will ensure that the language of Article 8 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our *Church Order* that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

Overture – Part 3

Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Procedure 2.d. of Appendix 5 of the *Church Order,* as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article.]

Appendix 5, Procedure 2.d.
Upon sustaining the colloquium doctum, the classis shall declare the minister eligible to be called by the *council of the sponsoring church* ~~sponsoring Consistory~~ as a minister of the Word and sacraments among the United Reformed Churches in North America.

Grounds

1. As currently written, this provision within Appendix 5 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in *Church Order* Article 6. In Article 6, the man being called is elected *by the council* of the calling church, after prayer and reception of the advice of the congregation. The proposed change would bring Appendix 5 into conformity with this procedure.

2. Appendix 5 also currently implies a different procedure than that which is employed for the calling of elders and deacons in Article 12 of the *Church Order*. There, too, it is *the council* that presents nominations to the congregation – not the consistory.

3. This change will ensure that the language of Appendix 5 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our *Church Order* that carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

4. Should Part 2 of this overture be adopted, this amendment would be necessary to ensure that our *Church Order* is internally consistent with regard to the procedure for calling a man ordained beyond the bounds of our federation.

Overture – Part 4

Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Procedure 2.b. and Procedure 2.c. of Appendix 4 of the *Church Order,* as indicated. [*Italics* with underline indicates the words to be added to the present form of the article.]

> **Appendix 4, Procedure 2.b.**
> The *consistory of the* candidate's calling *church* ~~Consistory~~ must invite classis to participate in an ordination exam.
>
> **Appendix 4, Procedure 2.c.**
> The candidate is to preach a sermon in a public worship service which he conducts under the auspices of *the consistory of* his calling church ~~Consistory~~.

Grounds

1. As currently written, this provision within Appendix 4 is inconsistent with the procedure for calling a minister as outlined in *Church Order* Article 6. In Article 6, the man being called is elected *by the council* of the calling church, after prayer and reception of the advice of the congregation. The proposed change would bring Appendix 4 into conformity with this procedure.

2. Appendix 4 also currently implies a different procedure than that which is employed for the calling of elders and deacons in Article 12 of the *Church Order*. There, too, it is *the council* that presents nominations to the congregation – not the consistory.

3. This change will ensure that the language of Appendix 4 does not present a confusing contrast with provisions elsewhere in our *Church Order* that

carefully describe the duties of the consistory and council.

Classis Michigan
Rev. Talman Wagenmaker, Stated Clerk

Overture 11

Adopt Doctrinal Affirmation Regarding Death before Sin

Background

Synod Escondido 2001 adopted a doctrinal affirmation to answer several overtures that sought clarity regarding the interpretation of the creation account in Genesis. In that statement, Synod Escondido 2001 affirmed – among other things – that we, as a federation, "reject any evolutionary teaching, including theistic evolution, concerning the origin of the earth and of all creatures (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 9)."

In recent years, URCNA office bearers have taught publicly that death occurred for millions of years prior to Adam's sin. Animal death has been characterized as part of God's original design for the world, with appeals to general revelation as interpreted by modern science.

This seems to us to be a dangerous undermining of the testimony of Scripture. To be sure, Adam alone was threatened with death in consequence of his sin (Genesis 2:17); yet Scripture is clear that, because Adam was the covenant head of mankind, his sin brought death to all men (Romans 5:12-14). Likewise, because of Adam's covenantal headship, his sin brought down a curse upon the creation itself (Genesis 3:17-19), subjecting the creation to the corruption under which it groans to this day. A significant cause of that groaning is the death of living creatures. The very first of these was slaughtered in order to clothe God's wayward servants with tunics of skin (Genesis 3:21), foreshadowing the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

Limiting the consequence of sin to *man's* death makes God – and not man, through his sin – the author and cause of death and suffering in the world. It means that God's verdict that the creation was "very good" included the suffering and death of

countless animals, regardless of the choice Adam would make in the Garden. And it means that the restoration of all things at Jesus' return does not imply an end to all death – since only the death of men and women could be attributed to sin.

We believe this view to be both false and dangerous. We therefore urge the adoption of these doctrinal affirmations, by which our federation may gain clarity regarding the nature and extent of the authority of God's Word regarding sin, the curse, and death.

Some will suggest that this matter calls for the establishment of a study committee. We heartily disagree. Study committees are useful for addressing matters of great difficulty and complexity. But the questions before us here are neither difficult nor complex.

Is the death of creatures – "everything that has the breath of life" (Genesis 1:30) – part of the poisonous fruit of Adam's sin … or not? Did God's good creation originally include the suffering and pain of death *prior* to sin … or was *all death* a consequence of Adam's transgression?

If death universally *is* a consequence of sin, will we boldly affirm that fact, despite the world's scorn? Will we call death a tragedy, which Christ came to overcome? Or will we stand silent?

Will we affirm what Scripture reveals about the extent of sin's curse over all of this groaning creation … or will we draw back, unwilling to challenge the false god of evolutionism, with its uniformitarian demands?

This is the issue. This is the core, the substance, the heart of the matter before us.

We pray that the United Reformed Churches, through the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit, will stand boldly on the Word

of God. We pray that we, as servants of God, will proclaim both the creation-wide extent of Adam's sin and the creation-wide implications of His triumph!

This is our humble plea. This is our bold request.

Overture

Classis Michigan overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to adopt the following doctrinal affirmations, as a clear interpretation of Scripture's teaching regarding the relationship between sin, the curse, and death. In doing so, we ask Synod Calgary 2026 to demonstrate our commitment to "believe without a doubt all things contained" in the books of Scripture (*Belgic Confession of Faith,* Art. 5); and to reject teachings which stand contrary to the truth of Scripture (*Belgic Confession of Faith,* Art. 7).

1. **Affirmation of the Trustworthiness of Scripture Regarding World History**
   1.1. Since the Word of God set forth and preserved in Scripture was fully inspired by the Holy Spirit (*Belgic Confession of Faith,* Art. 3); and
   1.2. Since "we believe without a doubt all things contained in them" (*Belgic Confession of Faith,* Art. 5); and
   1.3. Since we confess that "no one – even an apostle or an angel from heaven, as Paul says – ought to teach other than what the Holy Scriptures have already taught us" (*Belgic Confession of Faith,* Art. 7); and
   1.4. Since there is a "light of nature" which reveals truth, yet man "does not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society," such that he "distorts this light" (*Canons of Dort,* Head 3/4, Art. 4);
   1.5. THEREFORE we affirm that the testimony of Scripture is true and trustworthy, even when modern science rejects its teaching and offers theories that undermine the clear facts which God's Word asserts.

2. **Rejection of a Significant Time Lapse Between the Formation of Animals and the Formation of Mankind**
   2.1. Since God created all things good in six days, defined as evenings and mornings (Genesis 1 & 2 and Exodus 20:11); and
   2.2. Since "we reject any evolutionary teaching, including theistic evolution, concerning the origin of the earth and of all creatures (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 7)" (Acts of Synod Escondido 2001, Article 43.A.3.d.); and
   2.3. Since Genesis 1 reports that mankind was made on Day Six, along with "the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind" (Genesis 1:25);
   2.4. THEREFORE we reject any teaching that posits the existence of animal life for ages prior to man's creation.

3. **Rejection of Animal Death Prior to Adam's Sin**
   3.1. Since God created all things good (Genesis 1:4,10,12,18,21,25), concluding at the end of His forming process that it was "very good" (Genesis 1:31); and
   3.2. Since God, in the midst of this "good" creative process, gave to mankind "every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed … for food" (Genesis 1:29), while also giving "to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life … every green herb for food" (Genesis 1:30); and
   3.3. Since green herbs and trees bearing fruit are distinct from men and animals – Scripture never calling them *living beings* (*nephesh chayah*); and
   3.4. Since God declares that death is "the last enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26), which came as a consequence of man's sin (1 Corinthians 15:21);
   3.5. THEREFORE we reject any claim that there could have been animal death prior to the sin of Adam.

4. Rejection of Non-Human Death as "Natural"

4.1. Since Adam's sin had corrupting effects upon the cosmos itself (Genesis 3:17); and

4.2. Since Adam's sin explicitly brought death to Adam and his offspring (Genesis 3:19; Genesis 5; Romans 5:12-14); and

4.3. Since death explicitly brought the creation under God's curse (Romans 8:20-22), even bringing it under "the bondage of corruption" (*phthora*); and

4.4. Since corruption (*phthora*) is closely tied to death and destruction (2 Peter 2:12);

4.5. THEREFORE we reject any claim that the death of non-human creatures was natural, rather than being the consequence of Adam's sin.

5. Affirmation of Sin as the Cause of All Death

5.1. Since God's Word declares that Jesus will renew all things (Acts 3:20-21); and

5.2. Since this renewal includes the cessation of death and pain (Revelation 21:4); and

5.3. Since Scripture explicitly indicates that, in that age of renewal, animals will no longer prey upon and kill one another – the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the leopard lying down with the young goat, the cow and bear grazing together, the lion eating straw like an ox, and none of them hurting or destroying (Isaiah 11:6-9); and

5.4. Since "renewal" or "restoration" indicates the returning of its object to its previous state;

5.5. THEREFORE we affirm that the state in which God created the world did not include any form of human or animal death, until sin entered to bring corruption and curse.

Grounds

1. The evolutionary worldview permeates modern Western educational institutions, asserting a

necessity for the world to have existed for millions of years and for death to have been a constant. This stands in contrast to what the Bible declares, calling into question our confession regarding the trustworthiness of God's Word (*Belgic Confession of Faith,* Art. 5 and Art. 7).

2. God's people need the church to speak clearly and unambiguously regarding the trustworthiness and authority of Scripture, the deceptive presuppositions of evolutionary views, and the worldwide consequences of sin.

3. God's people need the hope arising from a bold proclamation that all the effects of sin – including the death of both men and animals – have been conquered by Christ and shall be ended at His return.

4. Our office bearers need to be reminded – in the face of great academic pressure to the contrary – that the leaders of Christ's church may not and must not compromise on the truth of Scripture, even though the world may mock us.

5. We must prepare a strong and unified defense that affirms the truth of God's Word concerning the consequences of sin – and the ultimate triumph of Christ over those consequences.

Classis Michigan
Rev. Talman Wagenmaker, Stated Clerk

Overture 12
Amend Article 59 of the Church Order

Background

Article 59 of the URCNA Church Order currently reads:

> ***Article 59 – The Exclusion of a Mature Baptized Member***
>
> *Mature baptized members who are delinquent in doctrine or life shall be admonished and, if they persist, shall be excluded from the church of Christ. The Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before proceeding to such exclusion. (**See Appendix 8**)*

The parenthetical reference "(See Appendix 8)" is confusing and misleading.

- **Article 59** deals specifically with the discipline of *mature baptized members* who persist in delinquency of doctrine or life. This provision was carried over directly from the CRC Church Order (formerly Article 78), which established a distinct process of *exclusion* for delinquent baptized members, in parallel to but distinct from the excommunication of professing members.
- The CRC's provision was itself based on the principles of the Church Order of Dort (1619), which affirmed that all members of the congregation, including baptized but non-professing members, are under the oversight and discipline of the elders. Although Dort did not use the later terminology of "exclusion," its understanding of covenant membership and discipline led naturally to this category.
- **Appendix 8**, however, does not address the exclusion of mature baptized members. It provides pastoral guidance for membership transfers, releases, resignations, and erasures. Section 3 of Appendix 8 is titled "Membership Exclusion," but it addresses cases of resignation or

departure from the church, not the exclusion of delinquent baptized members under Article 59.

Overture

Classis Ontario-East overtures Synod Calgary 2026 to amend Article 59 of the Church Order by removing the parenthetical reference to Appendix 8. The amended Article 59 would then read:

> ***Article 59 – The Exclusion of a Mature Baptized Member***
>
> *Mature baptized members who are delinquent in doctrine or life shall be admonished and, if they persist, shall be excluded from the church of Christ. The Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before proceeding to such exclusion.*

Grounds

1. The current reference to Appendix 8 is misleading, since Appendix 8 does not address the exclusion of delinquent baptized members but instead outlines procedures for transfers, releases, resignations, and erasures.

2. Article 59 already clearly defines the proper process for exclusion: admonition, persistence, advice of classis, and exclusion. No reference to Appendix 8 is necessary.

3. Removing the misleading reference will prevent confusion in consistories and ensure the consistent and historic application of discipline to baptized members.

4. Synodical clarity on this matter will better serve the churches, since consistories are bound to follow both the Church Order and its appendices.



Rev. Bryce Zwarte
Stated Clerk, Classis Ontario-East

Overture 13

Regarding Editorial Changes to the Church Order

Background

Synod 2024 saw numerous changes to the Church Order. However, they were mostly of an editorial nature and not substantial. One of the most innocuous was the insertion of the Oxford comma where it was appropriate. Upon further study of the Church Order, we have found several other instances where that comma is needed.

Overture

Classis Pacific Northwest overtures Synod 2026 to make the following changes to the Church Order in order to provide internal consistency and clarity.

1. In the first sentence of the Introduction, insert a comma after the word "infallible" so that it reads: ". . . the Word of God delivered to us in the inspired, infallible, and inerrant book of Holy Scripture."
2. In the last sentence of Article 27, insert a comma after the word "edification" so that it reads: ". . . help direct all things unto the peace, edification, and greatest profit of the churches."
3. In the second sentence of Appendix 8.2, insert a comma after the number "35" so that it reads: ". . . (see URCNA Church Order Articles 34, 35, and 36)"
4. In the first sentence of Foundational Principle 5, insert a comma after the word "national" so that it reads: ". . . The Lord gave no permanent universal, national, or regional offices to His church."

Ground

1. This is the proper use of the Oxford comma.

Classis Pacific Northwest
Rev. Nick Smith, Stated Clerk

Overture 14

Study Committee on Bioethics

Background

As technology continues to develop at a rapid pace, the church is challenged with how to biblically discern the ethical implications of emerging technologies. In particular, insight and clarity are needed in the areas of procreation, fertility, and reproductive technology. Rapid developments in reproductive technology raise intricate bioethical questions that demand wisdom and godly discernment (Proverbs 2:6). The complexities of modern bioethical questions pose significant challenges that individual congregations and local consistories may not have the specialized expertise to navigate. This overture proposes the establishment of a URCNA Synodical Study Committee to provide Pastoral Advice to our congregations regarding the ethical and theological implications of emerging reproductive technologies. Such Pastoral Advice can help local churches navigate these challenging issues with wisdom, discernment, and a firm commitment to the biblical principles of human dignity and the sanctity of life.

Overture

Classis Southwestern Ontario overtures the next Synod to establish a URCNA Study Committee on Bioethics to address bioethical questions related to reproductive technology. This committee should:

1. Explore the relationship between marriage, sex, and procreation.
2. Offer reflections on the biblical theology of infertility, singleness, and adoption.
3. Provide a framework for assessing the merits and drawbacks of specific reproductive technologies.
4. Consider the ethical implications of the adoption of embryos by both married couples and single adults.

5. Deliberate how to balance Christian liberty with biblical and ethical considerations.
6. Provide recommendations that uphold human dignity and the integrity of human life.
7. Include members respected for their expertise in medicine, science, theology, and ethics.

Grounds

1. This matter is highly relevant to our contemporary context and questions are asked in our churches. The church must examine critical issues and responsibly address them on the basis of God's Word.

2. Our contemporary bioethical questions are complex and may pose significant challenges for local Consistories and individual congregations. These issues often require specialized expertise that may not be readily available at the local level.

3. There is an opportunity for the URCNA to provide leadership and help to the broader church.

4. Our stated positions on contemporary bioethical questions today can influence how future scientific advancements are integrated into the moral framework of our churches and society.

5. The increasing presence and use of reproductive technology can affect the way we think about children (even if we don't use these technologies). Guidance on these matters can prevent confusion.

6. We need tools to counsel congregants on specific ethical issues that provide a holistic vision of marriage, sex, and procreation.

Classis Southwestern Ontario
Rev. James Sinke, Stated Clerk

Overture 15

Regarding Capitalization in the Church Order

Background

It seems as if the last two years have been the season for fine-tuning our thirty-year-old Church Order. Therefore, we thought it proper to bring the following forward at this time.

Overture

Classis Southwest U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026, to make the following changes to the Church Order in order to provide internal consistency of language.

1. In the third sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the last word in the sentence from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "… and the only Head of the church."

   Ground:

   A. This is the only time in over 70 uses of the word "church" in the body of the Church Order that the word is capitalized (unless required by context, e.g. in a title or beginning a sentence).

2. In the third sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the word "Head" in the phrase "Head of the Church" from upper case to lower case so that it reads, "… and the only head of the church."

   Ground:

   A. This reflects the case usage in Belgic Confession Article 31, Heidelberg Catechism QA 49, QA 50, QA 51, and QA 57, and the Canons of Dort I:7.

3. In Article 24, change the case of the word “Head” in the phrase “Head of the church” from upper case to lower case so that it reads, “… the spiritual and governing head of the church.”

   Grounds:

   A. This reflects the case usage in Belgic Confession Article 31, Heidelberg Catechism QA 49, QA 50, QA 51, and QA 57, and the Canons of Dort I:7.

   B. This puts it in conformity with the usage in the Introduction (depending on the outcome of #1 and #2 of this overture).

4. In the second sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the word “Confessions” from upper case to lower case so that it reads, “We are fully persuaded that the Reformed confessions do fully agree with this Word of God …”

   Grounds:

   A. This is not a reference to a specific confession, but to the Three Forms of Unity in general.

   B. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 1, section 4.2.

5. In Appendix 3.3.b., Appendix 4.3., and Appendix 5.3., change the case of the word “Confessions” from upper case to lower case so that its reads, “… knowledge of and loyalty to Scripture and the confessions …”

   Grounds:

   A. This is not a reference to a specific confession, but to the Three Forms of Unity in general.

B. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 1, section 4.2., and the Introduction (depending on the outcome of #4 of this overture).

6. In Appendix 3.3.b.(5), Appendix 4.3.(4), and Appendix 5.3.(4) change the case of the word "Confessions" from upper case to lower case so that its reads, "… the teaching of Scripture and the confessions …"

Grounds:

A. This is not a reference to a specific confession, but to the Three Forms of Unity in general.

B. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 1, section 4.2., the Introduction, and Appendix 3.3.b., Appendix 4.3., and Appendix 5.3. (depending on the outcome of #4 and #5 of this overture.)

7. In the fourth sentence of the Introduction, change the case of the word "His" from upper case to lower case, so that it reads, "This headship is exercised in the churches by his Word and Spirit …"

Grounds:

A. The matter of capitalization for pronouns referring to God was dealt with at Synod Wyoming 2016. It is not our desire to resurrect that entire discussion. However, we do note the reasons given by the Liturgical Forms committee for not capitalizing such pronouns:

"The practice of capitalizing is of a more recent vintage. The New King James

Version made the decision to capitalize the pronouns referring to God, although the King James Version did not. The 1984 NIV and the ESV, the versions widely used in our federation, do not capitalize these pronouns. Maybe most significantly, the earliest Greek

Manuscripts do not show a preference for the pronouns referring to God.

Of less significance, but worth noting, there is no uniformity within our tradition, especially as concerns the Liturgical Forms and Confessions. Form 1 for the Baptism of Infants capitalizes the pronouns, but Form 2 for the Baptism of Children does not. The same is true for the Profession of Faith forms, although the Lord's Supper Forms do. The same is true of the Confessions. The Belgic and the Canons capitalize the pronouns, but the Heidelberg does not. Thus, there is no uniformity on the practice currently, leaving the committee to decide for our work.

In reflecting on this matter we were not convinced of the necessity of capitalizing the pronouns. While the matter is certainly not essential to the faith, we believe that the relative newness of this practice, and the general practice in the Bible's used by our churches to not capitalize justify not following this practice. Furthermore, we are not convinced that the practice of capitalizing the pronouns is any more respectful than not capitalizing them. For this reason we have chosen not to capitalize the pronouns referring

to God" (From *Acts of Synod Wyoming 2016*, page 307).

We note that the synod chose to "divide the baby" by not capitalizing the pronouns in the doctrinal standards to be

printed in the Trinity Psalter Hymnal, since we share that book with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which does not capitalize them. However, they are capitalized in the liturgical forms which are not printed in the Trinity Psalter Hymnal.

B. This puts it in conformity with the usage in Appendix 8.3 where pronouns are used in reference to Christ four times, all of which are in lower case.

8. In the title of Article 7, add the word "from" and change the case of "within" so that it reads "Calling a Minister from Within the Federation."

Grounds:

A. This puts it in conformity with the title of Article 8 (with regard to the word "from").

B. This puts it in conformity with the title of Article 5 and 8 (with regard to the capitalization of the word "Within").

Classis Southwest U.S.
Rev. Brian Vos, Stated Clerk

Overture 16
Editorial Changes to the Church Order

Background

At Synod Escondido 2024, over 80 editorial changes were proposed for the Church Order, including 15 in the appendices. Since that time, we have received several e-mails pointing out other editorial changes that should have been recommended and asking for them to be included in another overture. As a result of that, we present the following 17 suggested editorial changes (relatively few, compared to our last synod), over half of which deal with the appendices.

Please note, we do not believe that this editorial process will continue at each synod. We present this overture to a second synod simply because some of the changes in the 66 articles and 8 appendices were missed the first time around. We do not see this as an ongoing process each time that synod convenes and it should not be necessary, provided that we are careful that the language used in any future Church Order changes, conforms to the editorial changes already made.

As with the previous suggested changes, we believe that these recommendations are not substantive, but that they are only editorial in nature.

Overture

Classis Southwest U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026, to make the following changes to the Church Order in order to provide internal consistency of language.

I. Ecclesiastical Offices

1. In **Article 1**, add the Oxford comma after "elder" so that it reads: "minister of the Word, elder, and deacon."

Ground: This is the proper place to use the Oxford comma.

2. In **Article 10**, paragraph 2, change the words, "A minister who has emeritated …" to "A minister who has been granted emeritus status …"

   Ground: The word "emeritus" is an adjective and cannot be properly made into a participle.

3. In **Article 14**, add the Oxford comma after the word "minister(s) so that it reads: "their fellow-elders, the minister(s), and the deacons faithfully discharge …"

   Ground: This is the proper place to use the Oxford comma.

II. Ecclesiastical Assemblies

4. In **Article 32**, we recommend the addition of the word "sponsoring" before consistory so that it reads: "… upon the recommendation of a sponsoring Consistory and provided …"

   Ground: This makes the article consistent with Appendix 5 which uses that language.

IV. Ecclesiastical Discipline

5. In **Article 58**, change the title from "The Readmission of Disciplined Communicant Members" to "The Readmission of a Disciplined Communicant Member."

Ground: When the title of this article was edited at Synod Escondido 2024, the proposed edit failed to make it consistent with the titles of articles 55, 56, 57, and 59, which all refer to a singular member, not plural members.

6. In **Article 59**, delete the parenthetical reference to Appendix 8 "(See Appendix 8)" at the end of the article.

   Ground: The Church Order uses the term "exclusion" in two distinct ways in its articles. Article 56 deals with a member who is forsaking Christ's church and seeks to resign. In that case, the consistory may proceed to exclusion. This is explained in Appendix 8.3., so the reference to Appendix 8 is appropriate at the end of that article. Article 59 deals with baptized members who are delinquent in doctrine or life. If they persist in their sin, they are to be "excluded." (This is the more historical use of the term). Appendix 8 makes no mention of this situation, so the reference should be removed.

7. In **Article 60**, change the title from "The Readmission of Disciplined Baptized Members" to "The Readmission of a Disciplined Baptized Member."

   Ground: When the title of this article was edited at Synod Escondido 2024, the proposed change failed to make it consistent with the titles of articles 55, 56, 57, and 59,

which all refer to a singular member, not plural members.

Appendices

8. In **Appendix 3.1.a.**, change the word "council" to "Consistory" so that it reads: "A recommendation from the prospective candidate's Consistory.

   Ground: This is in keeping with the language of Article 4 which says, "At the conclusion of such training, a student must approach his Consistory to become a candidate …"

9. In **Appendix 3.2.d.**, change the word "declaration" to "determination" so that it reads: "A determination by the consistory that the candidate has sustained the exam …"

   Ground: This makes the wording consistent with Appendix 4.2.d. and 5.2.c.

10. In **Appendix 3.2.d.**, add the words "concurring advice of the" after the words which follow the comma "along with the" so that it reads: "along with the concurring advice of the delegates to classis.

    Ground: This makes the wording consistent with Article 4, "sustaining the exam in the presence of his Consistory and with the concurring advice of the delegates …"

11. In **Appendix 3.3.a.**, change the last sentence so that it reads: "He is to exhort one of these sermons in a public worship service."

Grounds:

A. We have a practice of using the word "preach" to refer to that which is done by an ordained man and "exhort" to that which is done by a licentiate or candidate.

B. This language is consistent with Appendix 4.2.c. [depending on the disposition of point 12 of this overture.]

12. In **Appendix 4.2.c.**, change the words "preach a sermon" to "exhort" so that it reads: "The candidate is to exhort in a public worship service …"

    Ground: We have a practice of using the word "preach" to refer to that which is done by an ordained man and "exhort" to that which is done by a licentiate or candidate.

13. In **Appendix 4.3.**, delete the word "prospective" before the word "candidate's" twice so that it reads: "The former regards the candidate's knowledge of and loyalty to Scripture …" and "Practica: the candidate's personal and spiritual life …"

    Ground: Throughout the appendices, we refer to men in their current state when being examined. The man undergoing an ordination exam is already a candidate.

14. In **Appendix 5.2** (second occurrence), insert letter "c." from 5.2 (first occurrence), after letter "b." and rename the current letter "c." as letter "d."

    Ground: The language of letter "c" is included in the "Procedure" section of Appendix 3

and 4, and in the first occurrence in Appendix 5. We believe it is simply a clerical oversight that it is missing here.

15. In **Appendix 6.A.1.**, change the words "are satisfied" to "concur" so that it reads: "We concur that the examinee has sustained the _____ area of the examination."

    Ground: This is consistent with the language of Article 4, "sustaining the exam in the presence of his Consistory and with the concurring advice of the delegates …"

16. In **Appendix 6.A.3.**, change the words "are not satisfied with" to "do not concur that he has sustained" so that it reads: "If the delegates do not concur that he has sustained any particular area(s) of the examination …"

    Ground: This is consistent with the language of Article 4, "sustaining the exam in the presence of his Consistory and with the concurring advice of the delegates …"

17. Throughout **Appendix 6**, standardize the capitalization as follows:
    ministry of the Word (two times)
    executive session (three times)
    chairman (three times)
    general session (three times)
    Consistory (one time)
    Classis (four times)

    Ground: This Appendix is inconsistent with any other section of the Church Order. Consistency aids in reading and comprehension.

Classis Southwest U.S.
Rev. Brian Vos, Stated Clerk

Overture 17
Regarding Synodical Rotation

Background

When the URCNA began there was a significant sentiment toward avoiding a centralized location of ecclesiastical authority. One visible expression of this was the practice of convening our first four synods in four different geographical locations. This practice was codified at Synod Escondido, 2001, when the synod decided,

> "The federation adopts a policy of holding synodical meetings in each of the classes in turn" (Article XXXV.A.3., Acts of Synod Escondido, 2001).
>
> This overture provided three grounds for this decision:
>
> "1. This may help to avoid a sense of centralization.
> 2. As we have experienced in our first three synodical meetings, in the Chicago area, in southern Ontario, and in western Michigan respectfully, this will help both the local churches and the delegates to have an increased awareness of the federation, and their connection to their sister churches across North America.
> 3. Increased ease of travel makes this practice more feasible than it may have been in the past." (Acts of Synod Escondido, 2001, page 160).

This provision for rotation was included from the beginning in the Regulations for Synodical Procedure, 1.4, proposed in 2007, and adopted in 2010.

> "A synod shall convene at least once every three years at a time and place determined by the previous synod. *The meetings shall be held in each of the classes in turn*

> (emphasis added). Each synod shall authorize a consistory to convene the next synod."

The rotation was interrupted in 2018 because of the concurrent meeting held with the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Illinois. However, the principle and practice of synodical rotation was affirmed at that same synod with the adoption of Overture 4, which asked synod

> "… to adopt the following classical rotation for hosting synod, beginning with the next synod." (Article 36.1., Acts of Synod Wheaton, 2018)

This was the second time that the synod formally acknowledged the value of moving the location of synod throughout the churches of the federation.

An overture came to Synod Escondido, 2024, asking that committees be struck to streamline the logistics of hosting a synod. The Advisory Committee dealing with that overture recommended that synod not adopt. The synod disagreed with that recommendation and the overture itself was brought to the floor. As the delegates began offering amendments to the overture, it became clear that we were doing committee work on the floor of synod. The matter was referred back to the Advisory Committee.

They brought back a recommendation that upheld the intention of the original overture. It included the following in the committee mandate:

> "Securing a location.
> While the location may move from place to place, the location ought to be as convenient as possible for the churches." (Article 105.2.(1)(b), Acts of Synod Escondido, 2024).

There was no mention of required synodical rotation. Two amendments were adopted to correct this by adding the following to the end of the sentence,

> "which is in keeping with Regulations for Synodical Procedure 1.4, and Acts of Synod 2001, Art. 35.a.3." (Article 105.2., Acts of Synod Escondido, 2024)

Then, inexplicably and apparently without considering the grounds given for the decisions of past synods, that entire provision for synodical rotation was struck from the mandate (Acts of Synod Escondido, 2024, p. 140). This overture seeks to address the issue of synodical rotation.

Overture

Classis Southwest U.S. overtures Synod Calgary 2026, to add the following to the mandate of the Synodical Organizing Committee, as 1.c.

> "When considering the location of synod, the committee shall use a classical rotation which is consistent with the decisions of Synod Escondido 2001, Synod Wheaton 2018, and the Regulations for Synodical Procedure 1.4."

Grounds

1. This honors the requirement of the Regulations for Synodical Procedure.

2. This will help to avoid the centralization of ecclesiastical authority.

3. This will allow more local congregation members to attend synod to see its operations and to hear first-hand reports from our missionaries.

4. This honors the decisions of both Synod Escondido 2001 and Synod Wheaton 2018.

Classis Southwest U.S.
Rev. Brian Vos, Stated Clerk

Christ Reformed Church
400 E. 41st St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
605-330-0271
Sundays: 10:00 am & 5:00pm

www.ChristReformedSF.org

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ~Acts 2:42

To Doug Barnes, Stated Clerk of the URCNA, and the Convening Consistory of Synod:

And now, this 12th day of August, AD 2024, comes the Consistory of Christ Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD, and gives notice of intention to appeal to the Synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America concerning the decision of Synod Escondido 2024, made known on June 21, 2024, to amend Appendix 7 of the URCNA Church Order and Appendix B of the Regulations for Synodical Procedure by adding the words "An individual member may only appeal a decision originating in his own consistory", a statement in conflict with Article 31 of the URCNA Church Order.

Date: 8/12/2024
Consistory of Christ Reformed Church, Appellant
Mr. Mark Hoogwerf, Clerk

APPEAL BY THE CONSISTORY OF CHRIST REFORMED CHURCH OF SIOUX FALLS FROM A DECISION OF SYNOD ESCONDIDO 2024

To: Doug Barnes, Stated Clerk of the URCNA, and the Convening Consistory of Synod
From: Christ Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD, Appellant
Re: Appeal of Synod Escondido 2024's amendment of Appendix 7, Guideline 1 (Acts of Synod 2024, Art. 108)
Date: March 5th, 2026

I. The Decision Being Appealed

And now, this fifth day of March, 2026, comes the Consistory of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls and appeals the judgment or decision of Synod Escondido 2024 in the matter of amending Appendix 7 of the URCNA Church Order and Appendix B of the Regulations for Synodical Procedure by adding the words "An individual member may only appeal a decision originating in his own consistory", a statement in conflict with Article 31 of the URCNA Church Order.

II. Background

1. Prior to Synod Escondido 2024, neither the Church Order nor Appendix 7 restricted individual appeals solely to decisions "originating in his own consistory."

2. By inserting this new limitation into Appendix 7, Synod Escondido substantively altered the meaning and application of **Church Order Article 31**.

3. Such an alteration may be made **only** through the amendment procedure prescribed in **Church Order Article 66**, which was not followed.

4. The result is a direct contradiction within the Church Order:
    a. **Article 31** permits appeals from the decisions of *any* narrower assembly;
    b. **Appendix 7** now restricts appeals to decisions of *one* such assembly.
    c. Synod Escondido also imported the same restrictive language into Appendix B of the Regulations for Synodical Procedure, compounding the inconsistency.

5. This creates procedural confusion, removes rights previously recognized in the federation, and imposes a substantive change in the Church Order. However, this change was not made by amending the Church Order itself—which would require approval by a **two-thirds vote** of a synod and ratification by **two-thirds of the consistories of the federation**—but by effectively altering the meaning and application of the Church Order through an appendix revision adopted by synod **without ratification by the consistories**.

III. Specifications of Error

Specification of Error 1:

Synod Escondido 2024 erred in adopting language that narrows the individual right of appeal granted in Church Order Article 31.

Grounds:

Article 31 states that a church member “shall have the right” to appeal a decision of “a narrower assembly.” Appendix 7, as amended, restricts this right to decisions “originating in

his own consistory." These two provisions cannot be harmonized; the amendment removes a right the Church Order explicitly guarantees and therefore contradicts the higher authority.

Specification of Error 2

Synod Escondido 2024 erred by altering the substance of Article 31 without using the amendment process required by Church Order Article 66.

Grounds:

Appendices may explicate or apply the Church Order, but they may not alter, restrict, or redefine the meaning of its articles. Any substantive modification to Article 31 requires a two-thirds vote of synod **and** ratification by two-thirds of the consistories of the federation. This did not occur. The amendment to Appendix 7 therefore imposed a functional change upon the Church Order without submitting to the procedure specified in Church Order Article 66, thereby circumventing the safeguard established by Article 66 for the orderly and collectively approved amendment of the Church Order.

Specification of Error 3

Synod Escondido 2024 erred in creating internal inconsistency within the Church Order by adopting an appendix that contradicts its corresponding article.

Grounds:

Church Order Article 29 requires that decisions of the assemblies must not conflict with the

Church Order. Appendix 7, as amended by Synod Escondido, contradicts Article 31 by restricting appeals to decisions "originating in his own consistory," whereas Article 31 guarantees the right to appeal a decision of any narrower assembly. Because the amendment introduces a conflict, Article 31 must govern.

Specification of Error 4

Synod Escondido 2024 erred in revising Appendix B of the Regulations for Synodical Procedure in a manner that contradicts Church Order Article 31.

Grounds:

The Regulations for Synodical Procedure must remain subordinate to the Church Order. The RSP itself requires that synodical actions *must not conflict with the Church Order* (RSP 6.1.2(a)), and Appendix B itself declares that its principles operate "in accord with Church Order Articles 29 and 31." By inserting the phrase, "An individual member may only appeal a decision originating in his own consistory," Appendix B now contradicts Article 31, which guarantees the right of appeal from the decision of any narrower assembly. Where such a contradiction exists, the Church Order governs (CO Art. 29).

IV. Remedy Sought

The Consistory of Christ Reformed Church respectfully requests that Synod Calgary 2026:

1. **Declare** that Synod Escondido 2024 erred in adopting the statement,
   "An individual member may only appeal a decision originating in his own consistory,"
   as it conflicts with Church Order Article 31 and was adopted without following the amendment process of Article 66.

2. **Judge** that where Appendix 7 contradicts Article 31, **Article 31 governs**, in accord with Church Order Article 29, which requires that decisions must not conflict with the Church Order.

3. **Direct** the churches and assemblies to interpret and apply Appendix 7 in conformity with **Article 31's guaranteed right of appeal from the decision of any narrower assembly**, unless and until the Church Order is lawfully amended through Article 66.

4. **Acknowledge** that an overture addressing this inconsistency and proposing the necessary constitutional revision has been forwarded through the churches and will follow the required process for amendments to the Church Order.

5. **Restore** Appendix B of the Regulations for Synodical Procedure to the wording in use prior to Synod Escondido 2024, specifically reinstating the previously adopted sentence, "Any consistory or church member may appeal against a decision of any assembly of the federation," and removing the later-added sentence, "An individual member may only appeal a decision originating in his own consistory," thereby bringing Appendix B back into conformity with Church Order Articles 29 and 31.

V. Conclusion

For the sake of clarity, consistency, and the orderly administration of justice in the churches, the Consistory of Christ Reformed Church appeals the judgment of Synod Escondido 2024 and requests synodical correction consistent with the authority and requirements of the Church Order.

Respectfully submitted,
The Consistory of Christ Reformed Church
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
March 5th, 2026

Communication from Classis Eastern U.S. to Synod Calgary 2026

To Our Sister Churches of the URCNA:

In recent years, we have grown increasingly aware of a rising number of pastoral vacancies in the URCNA, due in part from a shortage of well-qualified candidates for ministry. In addition to the current shortage, the average seniority of our current ministers suggests that something of a "demographic cliff" may also impact our ability to fill current pulpits and continue the work of home and foreign missions in the future. A growing chorus in the URCNA has recognized that we need to increase and augment current pathways to ministry in our federation, including consistories in Classis East and our colleagues on the Synodical Committee on Home Missions (SCHM).

We believe that increased funding for seminarians and internships are two crucial areas of investment that promise to significantly increase our pool of well-qualified candidates for ministry. Furthermore, these steps can effectively be undertaken at either the consistorial and classical level, which means that there is nothing hindering swift and timely action. Furthermore, neither local nor consistorial action will inhibit future, more comprehensive efforts at the synodical level should this body determine that to be prudent.

On November 3, 2025, a letter to the churches was circulated by the Canadian Seminary Bursary Committee, a funding mechanism established by the consistory of Cornerstone URC (London, ON). This is a consistorial level effort that over a short span of time has successfully raised and distributed funds to seminary students sponsored by sister URC consistories across Canada. It appears the impact of this funding has been significant. Eight seminarians are already benefitting from the fund, and based upon inquiries it appears that next year as many as ten men may be pursuing theological studies, a high water

mark for the Canadian churches. The fund has set a generous level of support, at $18,000 CAD ($13,000 USD), and hopes to increase that level to $25,000 CAD ($18,122 USD).

We believe these strong levels of support are merited given the increasing cost of graduate study, the increase of student indebtedness, and the high value the URCNA places on in-person theological education. Classis Eastern U.S. (CEUS) commends this letter from the Canadian committee, and supports its call to U.S. churches establishing a similarly structured fund.

However, we also wish to share with Synod that CEUS has for many years provided financial support for seminary students, formalizing our policy by adopting an Appendix to our Rules of Procedure in 2013. After making a few inquiries, it is our understanding that we are the only classis in the U.S. that has such a program, which fact has emboldened us to write this letter. A couple of years ago, we added a provision to this Appendix that also provides classical funding for pastoral internships. This provision was in addition to a distinct “Church Planting Internship” program that we have funded for over a decade from our Church Planting Fund. Both relevant Appendices are included with this communication for your consideration.

We believe that both the Canadian model (overseen by a committee of a local consistory) and the CEUS classical model are worthy of consideration. The purpose of this communication is to bring this matter to your attention again and encourage classes to consider establishing such funds, as well as to provide our guidelines as an “off the shelf” model for you to emulate, and perhaps improve upon. We don’t believe in a one-size fits all solution, but rather wish to invite our sister classes to consider the benefits of any and all avenues to attaining this goal.

We understand that many congregations already support the cost of sending their men to seminary and the important work of pastoral internships. However, we believe that classical support offers a number of benefits that could encourage and incentivize more men to attend seminary and receive much-needed mentorship and training in our churches. Among the benefits of classical seminarian and internship support are the following:

1. A clearly articulated policy of classical support for education and internships enshrined in the rules of procedure serves as a public statement of our commitment to theological education and mentoring, as well as our commitment to supporting it financially.

2. All churches equally benefit from a robust supply of well-qualified ministerial candidates, and we should all joyfully share the financial burden of their preparation.

3. Classical support ensures that seminarians from both large and small churches can receive sufficiently generous support to provide access to theological education. By providing classical support for internships, it ensures that seminarians can get experience in all differently sized congregations, those with large and small budgets, including missions works. The Center for Missions and Evangelism at Mid-America Seminary has already identified the urgent need for funding missions-focused internships, and our SCHM wholly concurs.

4. In addition to encouraging and supporting our own "cradle confessional" seminarians, public statements of financial support may encourage recently-reformed and unaffiliated seminarians to seek out ministry

opportunities in the URCNA. Since URCNA consistories provide strong oversight of our seminarians, we should not fear offering significant financial incentives to pursuing ministry in our federation. Seminarians are asked to make many sacrifices, and those willing to endure the grueling demands of our high candidacy standards should be assisted to the fullest degree possible.

5. Though CEUS has funded seminarian and internship needs through classical askings, a classis could choose to seek other funding sources, including special offerings from the churches, or charitable donations from individual members. Historically, many believers have been willing to support theological education of future ministers and this gives them a mechanism by which to do so.

Below we have included Appendix 1 and Appendix 4 of our Rules of Procedure. We invite the synodical delegates to take these proposals back to their classes and consider adopting similar programs. We trust that many will improve upon our work.

It is worth closing with an important historical note. Reformed churches have traditionally invested heavily in theological education at the institutional level by establishing and supporting theological seminaries. Since its founding approximately 30 years ago, the URCNA has somewhat passively adopted an independent seminary model, a change from our prior practice in the CRCNA. Doubtless this has produced many good and ill consequences. One consequence, undoubtedly, is less overall *institutional* funding for seminaries that serve our federation. In the meantime, more low-cost (and in our opinion, lower quality) options for theological education have come online. Yet our standards in the URCNA rightly remain high, insisting upon a “thoroughly reformed theological

education," per Appendix 1 of our *Church Order*. Now, more than ever, it is important that we "put our money where our mouth is" and make the requisite investments to maintain our high standards.

We in CEUS believe it is important that the URCNA preserve our historically strong commitment to funding theological education and training, and continue to invest boldly in the preparation of our future ministers. We invite our sister classes to join us in this undertaking.

Sincerely,
Classis Eastern U.S.
Adopted March 5, 2026

CLASSIS EASTERN US of the URCNA
RULES OF PROCEDURE
Adopted October 14, A.D. 1998
(Revised March 5, 2026)

Appendix 01. Seminarian Support Guidelines

1. The student's church Council should send a letter of request for financial assistance to the Clerk of the Classis for inclusion in the Spring Classis agenda each financial year. This letter should indicate the student's enrollment in a Reformed Seminary, that the student has ministry as a goal as well as the student's sense of piety, calling, and gifts suited for ministry.

2. The student should send a letter to the Clerk of Classis for inclusion in the agenda outlining his education and financial need.

3. The student should also agree to repay funds received if ordained ministry is not pursued (interest free with a repayment schedule worked out if necessary).

4. That Classis assist a qualified student in the amount of up to $10,000 (2026 Dollars) per year. Additional financial aid may be requested under extraordinary circumstances if necessary.

    a. When awards are made in years subsequent to 2026, the CPI Inflation Calculator of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm) shall be used to determine the maximum amount of support provided by Classis, using $10,000 in March of 2026 as the baseline.

5. That the Classical Treasurer disburse approved funds at the beginning of the academic year.

6. That Seminarian Training Internship grants (TIG) of up to $5,000 be available from the Classical Seminarian Fund (CSF) for the purpose of paying and housing seminary interns within our boundaries at the request of a member church. These TIG should be limited to men who are URCNA members training for ordained pastoral ministry in the URCNA.

Appendix 04. Church Planting Fund of Classis Eastern U.S.: Church Planting Internship Grant Guidelines

I. Internship Grant Program Description
    A. There is an ongoing need for the training and development of church planters in the URCNA.
    B. In order to support and encourage our churches in the development of new URCNA church planters, the Church Planting Internship Grant program will provide HALF of the budgeted cost of an intern dedicated to the work of

church planting, for the duration of up to one year.

C. Matching grants for church planting internships will be made available from the Classical Church Planting fund, up to the highest cumulative amount of either $50,000 per year, or 3% of available Classical Church Planting funds.
D. The maximum Internship grant amount per church will be $30,000 for a one-year internship, with shorter internships pro-rated at the amount of $600 per internship week.
E. Internship grant funds must be matched on a 1-to-1 basis from funds from the host church to pay expenses related to the support of church planting interns, including salary, transportation, housing, and health care.
F. It is anticipated that church planting activities will occupy a minimum of 2/3 of the work of the church planting intern (including activities that free up other pastoral staff for church planting work).

II. Application Guidelines

A. Applications for church planting internship grants shall include the following:
    1. A budget stating the total cost of the internship
    2. A statement that describes the church planting plan for the intern, and mentorship/training activities. This work could include research in potential church plants, core group and

contact development, evangelism in support of a new plant, etc.

3. A completed "Application for Church Planting Internship" form (see below)
4. Proposed dates of activity.

B. Application Deadline: Proposals for Church Planting Internships shall be made to classis and submitted by the materials deadline.

III. Reporting Requirements

A. Grant recipients shall provide a report to the Classical Committee for Home Missions at the conclusion of the grant period providing a narrative of the intern's activity, lessons learned, and future potential for the mission field. In order to support and encourage our churches in the development of new URCNA church planters, the Church Planting Internship Grant program will provide HALF of the budgeted cost of an intern dedicated to the work of church planting, for the duration of up to one year.

Board of Directors for the United Reformed Churches in North America (U.S.A.)
Report to Synod Calgary

Dear brothers,

The U.S. Board of Directors has held two Board meetings since Synod 2024. Throughout the last two years, additional meetings have occurred between the URCNA and OPC representatives to the Trinity Psalter Hymnal Joint Venture. The Management Committee created under the Joint Venture Agreement with Canada has also held meetings.

The Annual Reports mandated by the Michigan Department of Labor and Regulatory Affairs have been filed and are current, and the corporation remains in good standing with the State of Michigan.

The financial statements for the corporation were reviewed by the Board and distributed to the churches. The financial records and reporting for the calendar year 2024 were reviewed by an independent, credentialed accountant. Per the accountant's letter dated May 12, 2025, the items examined appeared to be in good order and materially accurate. Records for calendar year 2025 are still pending final review.

We are thankful for the continued work of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal Joint Venture (JV Board). That body continues to generate revenue which is periodically distributed to the federation as noted in the Treasurer's report. This year, Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen asked to step down from the JV Board, and URCNA-US Board affirmed the recommendation of the JV Board to appoint Rev. Brian Cochran as his replacement. We would like to offer a note of special thanks to Rev. Vander Meulen for his work on the committee since 1997.

The business of the Board has thankfully quieted back down over the last two years. We were able to reach settlement on our

litigation matter, securing a dismissal in November of 2024. There have been no new litigation matters that have arisen since that time. The only other notable business that has taken place is changing our method of accounting over to the accrual method, in alignment with best practices.

In accordance with the Bylaws adopted pursuant to the approval of new Articles and Bylaws by the last Synod, URCNA-US Board Members (other than the Treasurer) shall ordinarily serve no more than 3 consecutive 2-year terms. Board Member Donald Roth, who has served for the last 8 years, plans to step down from the Board at the end of his current term. Board members John Ehnis, Randy Groendyk, Michael Kiledjian, Mark Vander Pol, Dave Vander Meer and Ted van Essendelft are willing to serve another term.

Recommendations:

The U.S. Board of Directors respectfully recommends that Synod take the following action:

1. That Synod affirm the appointment of seven directors to the Board including the six current directors willing to continue for another term.
2. That Synod recommend another director to replace Donald Roth.
3. That Synod thank Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen for nearly thirty years of faithful service on the Trinity Psalter Hymnal JV Board.

As the Board of Directors, we remain grateful for the opportunity to serve the churches in this respect.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors,
Donald Roth, President

Board of Directors of the Canadian URCNA Corporation and Joint Venture Agereement
Report to Synod Calgary

To the delegates of Synod Calgary,

We are thankful for the opportunity to report on our work since the last convening of Synod. By way of reminder, the Canadian URCNA Corporation handles much of the administrative work of being a Charitable Organization in Canada, and the Board oversees this work, including working with our American counterparts through our Joint Venture Agreement (JVA).

The Board of the Canadian URCNA Corporation consists of: Rev. Joel Dykstra (President), Mr. Charlie Fluit (Vice-President), Mr. Cliffe Hodgkinson (Secretary), Mr. Daryl Van Dyke (Board Treasurer), and Mr. Jeff DeWalle.

Since Synod Escondido, we have continued in the regular work of overseeing the Corporation, including dealing with the proceeds from the Trinity Psalter Hymnal (which were distributed to the Canadian Classes). We reviewed the budget set by Synod and continued to develop operating budgets for 2025 and 2026. We have also overseen the work of the Synod Organizing Committee (SOC). We are thankful for their work, which we believe will be a benefit to the Federation.

There are several employees and subcontractors of the corporation, including the Foreign Missions Coordinator, the federation's Statistician, the Home Mission Clerk, and the Treasurer. We have continued to ensure that our employment of those serving in these positions is carried out in a compliant manner, including formalizing employment contracts and conducting employment reviews where applicable.

Since Synod Escondido, the transition of the Corporation Treasurer position has been completed, from Mrs. Pam Hessels, who served very capably in that capacity for many years, to Mr.

Johnathan Fennema. This transition has gone smoothly, and we are thankful for how Johnathan has taken up this work.

Another of our activities has been to move the federation's banking from the Meridian Credit Union to the BMO Bank. While this has taken some time and effort, it has enabled us to do more electronic banking and to improve our efficiency.

You may recall that in our past two reports we have noted that the URCNA was named in a lawsuit. We are thankful to report that we have been dropped from this suit and are in the final stages of completing things with the attorney.

As a Board, we are thankful for the opportunity to serve the churches, and it is our hope that as we administer these temporal matters, that the Lord's Kingdom would be built, and His Name praised.

Humbly submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors of the URCNA Corp. (Canada)
Rev. Joel Dykstra (President)
Mr. Cliffe Hodgkinson (Secretary)

Recommendations:

1. That the Synod appoint Mr. Charlie Fluit, Mr. Jeff DeWalle, Mr. Daryl Van Dyke, Mr. Cliffe Hodgkinson, and Rev. Joel Dykstra as Members to the Corporation (Canadian Corporation By-Laws, Article 10.01).
2. That the Synod approbate the work of the Board without endorsing every aspect of it.

URCNA Synodical Organizing Committee
Report to Synod Calgary 2026

I. Formation and Mandate

Synod Escondido 2024 established a standing Synodical Organizing Committee (SOC). Our committee was tasked with providing the logistical organization for our synod meetings. It was made a subcommittee of the URCNA JVA but would also work with the convening consistory for planning synod.

The SOC was given the following mandate to serve the churches of the federation in their meeting of synod by:

1. Securing a location for hosting synod.
    a. Consideration may be given to Christian organizations able to host synod (universities, conference centers, etc.).
    b. The location ought to take into consideration the availability of volunteers to assist in the hosting of synod.
2. Providing all the logistical elements necessary for the churches to fulfill their work at synod (accommodations, meals, audiovisual, etc.).
3. Reporting their work to the convening consistory and to the appropriate national corporation and making recommendations to synod.
4. Preparing and maintaining a manual for the organization of synod.

II. Membership

Synod appointed the following members of URCNA churches to the synodical organizing committee: Rev. Casey Freswick (convenor), Mrs. Pam Hessels, Mrs. Dawn Dirksen, and the JVA Treasurer, Johnathan Fennema. In order to facilitate good communication between the convening consistory and the SOC, our committee requested a member from the Lethbridge URC to attend all meetings as an ad-hoc member. The consistory

appointed Lloyd Van Eeden Petersman, who has been a valued addition to our committee.

These members were appointed to a term lasting from one synod to the next with the possibility of reappointment. In addition Synod Escondido stated that each subsequent synod will confirm reappointments or new appointments, recommendations may come from the committee itself or from the floor of synod, and the convening consistory may fill vacancies between synods, as needed.

III. Summary Report of our Work

Synod established our committee in response to an overture. Synod approved, "That Synod establish a standing synodical organizing committee" (Acts of Synod 2024, Article 100.1). We determined from this that our committee is named, "Synodical Organizing Committee". At the same time Synod approved that our committee "would be a subcommittee of the URCNA JVA (Joint Venture Agreement)" and report to both the convening consistory and the JVA. Synod also appointed our committee members and a convener. Synod followed the regulations regarding a standing committee in instituting our committee, and we have operated like a standing committee.

After the formation of our committee, we began our work. We were well aware that the SOC could not do all the work and were determined to work closely with Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge as the Synodical Interim Committee, which is the convening consistory, and her role as "host" church. We recognized clear distinct responsibilities of a convening consistory, the Synodical Interim Committee, the organizational responsibilities of the SOC, and the host activities of a local church.

As we continued our work it became clear that it was necessary to distinguish responsibilities between various entities involved in the logistics of a synod. The three key groups involved are a

synodical interim committee, a host church and the SOC. It would normally be assumed that a host church would be the same church as the synodical interim committee. But as with most synods, the hosting activities may well involve more members that just host church members.

Our committee has met monthly since July 2024. Our first concern was to determine the location for Synod 2026. We contacted the convening consistory, Trinity Reformed Church Lethbridge. They desired that synod meet at their facility. We also looked into other options. After a thorough analysis and discussion of these options, the committee determined that synod would be better served by using the facilities of The Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre. The SOC was convinced this was a better facility for the logistical work of Synod. First, the cost was reasonable. Second, the facility provides transportation to and from the airport for a small fee. Car rentals are not necessary. Third, a large room accommodating meetings around tables and an appropriate number of meeting rooms are available. The Lethbridge consistory acquiesced to our decision. Although synod will not meet in the Lethbridge area and recognizing that this location made it more difficult for "host" activities the SOC is appreciative of the way in which the SOC and Trinity URC have been able to work together to prepare and implement the logistical requirements of synod.

We sought to fulfill our mandate to report our work to the URCNA Joint Venture Committee and the Lethbridge Consistory by sending minutes of our monthly meetings to both. In addition, the JVA Treasurer, also a member of our committee, was tasked to respond to any questions the JVA had about our work. In order to keep the Lethbridge Consistory and church informed about our work, we asked Lloyd Van Eeden Petersman to report to them. This greatly benefited good reporting and communication between the SOC and SIC. Lloyd faithfully participated in our meetings and volunteered and accomplished many tasks on behalf of the committee.

Along with sending our minutes to the Lethbridge Consistory, Lloyd was able to report and explain our committee's actions as well as inform the committee about any items from the Lethbridge church.

The SOC worked on a manual for future convening consistories, host churches, and future committee work. We are grateful for the many previous churches that had already put together information that has been passed from one host church to another. However, there are significant differences in the areas of responsibility for the logistics of a synod given the fact that the SOC was established by Synod 2024.

IV. Recommendations to Synod

The Synod mandated the SOC to make recommendations to the next synod. Since the SOC is a new committee, we are making recommendations that recognize this reality. We are making recommendations that would formally establish the SOC as a standing committee of synod. As part of this we are making recommendations about our mandate, the timing of appointing convening consistories, and the membership of our committee. Second, the fact that the SOC exists impacts the approved Regulations for Synodical Procedure. These regulations can only be changed by synod and should be followed. Current regulations conflict with the decision of synod to establish the SOC. As part of our report, we submit recommendations to synod to harmonize the Regulations for Synodical Procedure and the existence of our committee. Third, we submit the manual for organizing a synod for approval. Fourth, it should be noted that we are not recommending any changes to the Church Order. After lengthy discussion we were convinced that the Church Order deals with the ecclesiastical matter of convening the time and place of a synod without going into the logistics of the specific facility and dates. Therefore, we encourage synod to approve the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: That Synod grant the privilege of the floor to committee members whenever matters related to the SOC are discussed.

Recommendation 2: That Synod declare the name of the standing committee on synodical logistics be: The Synodical Organizing Committee.

Recommendation 3: That Synod approve the following changes in Regulations for Synodical Procedure:

> **"Changes" is our proposal showing changes made in the following way: (**Removed: ~~strike through~~; Moved: ~~**bold underlined strike though**~~ to ***bold underlined;*** Added: **bold**)
>
> "**Recommended" is our proposal as it will look if all our recommendations are approved.**
>
> **Changes:**
> 1.4. A synod shall convene at least once every three years**.** **The** ~~at a~~ time**s** and place**s shall be** determined by ~~the~~ **a** previous synod. ~~Each~~ **A** synod shall authorize a consistory to convene the next synod ***(2+ years) and appoint another consistory to prepare for the subsequent synod (4+ years).*** The meetings shall be convened by a consistory of each of the classes in turn.
>
> **Recommended:**
> *1.4. A synod shall convene at least once every three years. The times and places shall be determined by a previous synod. A synod shall authorize a consistory to convene the next synod (2+ years) and appoint another consistory to prepare for the subsequent synod (4+ years). The meetings shall be convened by a consistory of each of the classes in turn.*

Changes:
1.5. The convening consistory shall have the duties of announcing the next synod to the consistories at least four months in advance, preparing the provisional agenda with the assistance of the stated clerk, ~~securing the facilities needed for the synod, arranging the lodging of the delegates,~~ recommending to synod the assignment of each delegate to an advisory committee on the basis of a completed questionnaire, and all other necessary items to facilitate the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the ~~synodical treasurer(s)~~ ***JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board***. The convening consistory shall give preference to experienced delegates to serve as chairmen and reporters of Advisory Committees and shall provide them with the material and the rules of procedure for their tasks.

Recommended
1.5. The convening consistory shall have the duties of announcing the next synod to the consistories at least four months in advance, preparing the provisional agenda with the assistance of the stated clerk, recommending to synod the assignment of each delegate to an advisory committee on the basis of a completed questionnaire, and all other necessary items to facilitate the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board. The convening consistory shall give preference to experienced delegates to serve as chairmen and reporters of Advisory Committees and shall provide them with the material and the rules of procedure for their tasks.

Changes
1.5.1 The ~~synodical~~ ***URCNA JVA*** treasurer will give a detailed financial statement to the ~~next convening consistory~~ **churches** by the end of the calendar year of synod, which shall then be reported to the following synod in the provisional agenda.

Recommended
1.5 The URCNA JVA Treasurer will give a detailed financial statement to the churches by the end of the calendar year of synod, which shall then be reported to the following synod in the provisional agenda.

1.5.1 The URCNA JVA Treasurer will maintain, keep, and distribute funds for the purpose of hosting the next synod.

Changes:
Modifying section 1.8 dealing with the SOC by adding 1.8 and 1.8.1 and changing existing 1.8 to 1.8.2 in the following way:

1.8**.2** ~~Provide~~ The SOC shall **maintain and update the URCNA Synodical Logistical Handbook** ~~handbook and other assistance to the next convening consistory~~ describing the responsibilities and logistics of **organizing**, convening and hosting a synod.

Recommended
1.8 The Synodical Organizing Committee shall have the duties of publicizing the location of the next synod to the consistories, securing the facilities needed for the synod, arranging the lodging of the delegates, and all other necessary items to facilitate the logistical needs of the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the URCNA JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board.

1.8.1 The SOC shall recommend to the synod for approval the location and dates of the following synod.

1.8.2 **The SOC shall maintain and update the URCNA Synodical Logistical Handbook describing the responsibilities and logistics of organizing, convening, and hosting a synod.**

Changes:
4.7.4. General Responsibilities:

f. Assist the Synodical Interim Committee / Convening Consistory **and Synodical Organizing Committee** in maintaining its pages, links, and documents on the website;

Recommended
4.7.4.f. Assist the Synodical Interim Committee / Convening Consistory and Synodical Organizing Committee in maintaining their pages, links, and documents on the website;

Grounds

1. These changes reflect the SOC's existence and mandate approved by Synod Escondido 2024.
2. These changes reflect the Synodically approved current practice of having the URCNA JVA Treasurer take all responsibilities that would have been given to a convening consistory-appointed synodical Treasurer (see the decision of synod Niagara regarding the URCNA JVA).
3. 1.4 – We recommend this because often large event centers are booked more than 2 years ahead of time. So designating a

location 4 or more years ahead of time would give the SOC and SIC plenty of time to evaluate facilities.

4. **1.8.1 – This new regulation would give Synod the ultimate authority to determine the following Synod's facility.**
5. 4.7.4.f – This regulation is about the Webmaster's responsibilities related to the logistics of Synod which now include the existence of the SOC.

Recommendation 4: If Synod approves the changes to the Regulations of Synod we recommend the following changes to Points 1 and 4 of the mandate of the SOC:

1. **Proposing** a **facility** and **date** for hosting **the next** Synod **to Synod for approval.**
    a. Consideration may be given to Christian organizations able to host synod (universities, conference centers, etc.).
    b. The **facility** ought to take into consideration the availability of volunteers to assist in the hosting of synod.

    Ground: Since the committee has time to find a facility before the next synod, they will be able to present such an option to synod. It is in keeping with good polity that synod be able to give the final determination for the specific when and where for its meeting.

4. ~~Preparing and m~~ Maintaining a manual for the organization of synod.

Recommendation 5: That Synod approves the following composition for the SOC.

1. Composition
    a. There shall be 8 members of the SOC.
    b. One member shall be the JVA Treasurer.

c. Two members shall be appointed by the convening consistory of the next synod.
d. Two members shall be appointed by the convening consistory of the synod after the next synod.
e. Consideration should be made to select members appointed by the convening consistory and synod that are gifted with organizational skills and are not necessarily members of the council.
f. Three members shall be appointed by synod following the normal regulations governing members at large members.

Ground: Communication between the SOC and convening consistories is essential. Having members from the churches of the convening consistories will facilitate good communication and coordination.

Recommendation 6: That Synod approves the URCNA Synodical Logistical Handbook (see Appendix 1 of our report). This handbook assumes that Synod approves the previous recommendations. The handbook will be modified by the SOC to be consistent with all synodically approved decisions.

Recommendation 7: That Synod appoints as at-large members of the SOC: Mr. Lloyd Van Eden Petersman, Mrs. Pam Hessels, and Mrs. Dawn Dirksen to serve on the SOC from the present to the next Synod.

Appendix 1

URCNA Synodical
Proposed Logistical Handbook
(This proposed Handbook assumes the recommendations of our report will be approved)

1. Scope and Purpose

This handbook provides structure and clarity for organizing the logistics of a synod of the URCNA. It identifies key tasks, responsibilities, timelines, and defines the relationship between the Convening Consistory, the Joint Venture Agreement Board (JVA), the URCNA Stated Clerk, the Synodical Organizing Committee (SOC), and the Host Church/Community.

Organizing a Synod

In accordance with the URCNA Church Order Article 28, "Each synod shall determine a time and place for the subsequent synod and shall authorize a Consistory to convene that synod. If many of the classes deem it necessary that a synod meet earlier than the regular time determined, the Consistory charged with convening the meeting shall determine when and where the meeting is to occur." The convening consistory shall fulfill all obligations related to the ecclesiastical work of synod.

The convening consistory is then responsible in the period before the next synod to take on the responsibility of preparing for the next synod as well as communicating with the consistories of the other churches in the federation of the pertinent details needed on a timely basis.

At the meeting of Synod Escondido 2024, a standing Synodical Organizing Committee (SOC) was organized. The SOC was tasked with providing logistical organization for our synod meetings.

The work of the Convening Consistory and the SOC are summarized in the Regulations for Synodical Procedure in the following articles:

> 1.4. A synod shall be convened at least once every three years. The times and places shall be determined by a previous synod. A synod shall authorize a consistory to convene the next future synod and appoint another consistory to prepare for the subsequent synod two rotations ahead before the synod is scheduled to meet. The meetings shall be convened by a consistory of each of the classes in turn.
>
> 1.5. The convening consistory shall have the duties of announcing the next synod to the consistories at least four months in advance, preparing the provisional agenda with the assistance of the Stated Clerk, recommending to synod the assignment of each delegate to an advisory committee on the basis of a completed questionnaire, and all other necessary items to facilitate the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board. The convening consistory shall give preference to experienced delegates to serve as chairmen and reporters of Advisory Committees and shall provide them with the material and the rules of procedure for their tasks.
>
> 1.6.1 The convening consistory shall call and conduct a prayer service to be held prior to the opening of synod which shall include singing, appropriate prayer, and an exhortation from Scripture. Delegates of synod are expected to attend this service, which shall also be open to the public. This prayer service does not constitute, and shall be distinguished from, an official worship service.

1.6.2 The time schedule for the sessions of synod shall be recommended by the convening consistory for adoption by the synod. The time schedule may be changed to facilitate the work of synod.

1.7.1 The URCNA JVA Treasurer will give a detailed financial statement to the churches by the end of the calendar year of synod, which shall then be reported to the following synod in the provisional agenda.

1.7.21 The URCNA JVA Treasurer will maintain, keep and distribute funds for the purpose of hosting the next synod.

1.8.1 The Synodical Organizing Committee shall have the duties of publicizing the location of the next synod to the consistories, securing the facilities needed for the synod, arranging the lodging of the delegates, and all other necessary items to facilitate the logistical needs of the synod. Expenses incurred in connection with these duties shall be reimbursed by the URCNA JVA Treasurer with the approval of the URCNA JVA Board.

1.8.2 The SOC shall recommend to the synod for approval the facility and dates of the following Synod.

In addition, the SOC was given the following mandate:

The SOC is to serve the churches of the federation in their meeting of synod by:

1. Proposing a facility and date for hosting the next synod to synod for approval.
    a. Consideration may be given to Christian organizations able to host synod (universities, conference centers, etc.).
    b. The facility ought to take into consideration the availability of volunteers to assist in the hosting of synod.

2. Providing all the logistical elements necessary for the churches to fulfill their work at synod (accommodations, meals, audiovisual, etc.).
3. Reporting their work to the convening consistory and to the appropriate national corporation and making recommendations to synod.
4. Preparing and maintaining a manual for the organization of synod.

There is recognition that with the growth of the URCNA, the task of hosting a synod can be onerous for many of the smaller churches within the federation. The SOC will operate as a standing committee with the responsibility to submit a report to synod including a review of the committee's mandate, a summary of the committee's activities, recommendations for synodical action, and a list of nominees required to fill vacancies.

In addition, the wide geography in which the churches are located can add logistical challenges to convene a meeting of synod in a place that is easily accessible. Because of this, there may be situations where the consistory that convenes the synod may be different than the church that hosts the synod. This decision is made by the convening consistory.

2. Convening Consistory

Primary Duties

- Interact with the SOC to determine the exact time and place of the synod to be held in connection with their convening consistory obligations.
- Serve as or appoint the host church. As mentioned above, the convening consistory church may also serve as the host church or, due to logistical or geographical needs, may appoint a sister URCNA congregation to serve as the host church.
- If the convening consistory does appoint a different host church, the convening consistory provides

oversight to ensure that the host church responsibilities are taken care of.
- Regularly communicate with and provide input to the SOC.
- Review and approve requests from exhibitors. (See section on exhibitors' procedure below.)
- Announce the next synod at least 6–9 months in advance.
- Establish agenda deadlines (12 weeks before synod).
- Approve the provisional agenda with the Stated Clerk.
- Establish advisory committees and assign delegates to the committees including chairmen and reporters.
- Prepare convening consistory report for synod.

Synod Timeline

Key milestones include:

- Registration opens (approx. 12 weeks before synod).
- Agenda distributed (approx. 8 weeks before synod).
- Committee reports due to Stated Clerk (check with clerk on due date).
- Advisory committee assignments sent after registration closes (approx. 4 weeks before synod).
- Prayer service and opening gavel (evening before first full day).

Advisory Committees

- The number of advisory committees varies from synod to synod.
- If there is more than one appeal, it is likely that there will be an advisory committee for each appeal.
- During registration delegates should give their three top preferences to the advisory committee they would like to serve on.

The following are examples of the advisory committees set up by the convening consistory at Synod Niagara and Synod Escondido (committee size in brackets):

Advisory Committee	Synod Niagara 2022	Synod Escondido 2024
1	Credentials & Reports (15)	Credentials & Reports (19)
2	Financial Matters (15)	Financial Matters (19)
3	Overtures (16)	Overtures (18)
4	Overtures (14)	Overtures (18)
5	Overtures (16)	Overtures (18)
6	Overtures (16)	Overtures + Report (18)
7	Missions (17)	Overtures (18)
8	Website Oversight & PRCC (15)	Missions (18)
9	CERCU (16)	Website Oversight & PRCC (17)
10	CECCA (16)	CERCU (19)
11	Trinity Psalter & Lit Forms (16)	CECCA (19)
12	Appeals (16)	Reports (18)

Worship & Daily Schedule

- Organize the Prayer Service, with the minister of the convening consistory typically delivering the message.
- Set the daily schedule including start and end time, devotions, music, and song selection.
- Schedule accompanist(s) for the singing portions of each day.
- Arrange group photo.

3. Synodical Organizing Committee (SOC)

Mandate & Composition

The mandate of the Synodical Organizing Committee as adopted by synod is as follows:

> To serve the churches of the federation in their meeting of synod by:
>
> 1. Proposing a facility and date for hosting the next synod to synod for approval.
>   a. Consideration may be given to Christian organizations able to host synod (universities, conference centers, etc.).
>   b. The facility ought to take into consideration the availability of volunteers to assist in the hosting of synod.
> 2. Providing all the logistical elements necessary for the churches to fulfill their work at synod (accommodations, meals, audiovisual, etc.).
> 3. Reporting their work to the relevant convening consistory and to the JVA Board and making recommendations to synod.
> 4. Preparing and maintaining a manual for the organization of synod.

Composition of Synodical Organizing Committee

1. There shall be 8 members of the SOC.
2. One member shall be the JVA Treasurer.
3. Two members shall be appointed by the convening consistory of the next synod.
4. Two members shall be appointed by the convening consistory of the synod after the next synod.
5. Three members shall be appointed by synod following the normal regulations governing members-at-large.

Consideration should be made to select members, appointed by the convening consistory and synod, who are gifted with organizational skills. Nominees do not necessarily need to be members of the council.

Responsibilities

Budget & Finance

- Review previous synod budgets and financial reports. The purpose is to benchmark various expense categories such as venue, lodging, meals, technology, etc.
- A final budget will be completed once all the various costs are known in order to determine the registration fees for participants.
- Route all funding through the JVA accounts, with oversight from the JVA Treasurer.
- Lodging and meals for fraternal delegates & invited observers should be built into the final budget to be covered by the registration fees.
- The final budget must include delegate registration fees, reduced fees for observers and spouses, fraternal delegate expenses (covered by URCNA), Synod Organizing Committee travel and related expenses, exhibitor fees, and reimbursable facility expenses.

Facilities & Lodging

- Select an accessible facility with adequate capacity (350 plenary, 12 breakout rooms holding 25+ people in each room with conference tables), dining space for all attendees and drop-in guests (300-350). On-site lodging is preferred.
- Piano, organ or keyboard used for singing.
- Additional small(er) conference rooms available for Synod officers (6 persons) and delegates (12 or so persons over the course of the week).
- Space should be secured for exhibitors who pay a fee for having a display space set aside for their

organization. (See section below for procedure for exhibitors' registration.)

- Secure lodging contracts with hotels or dormitories, ensuring group rates and on-site breakfast options. Some delegates will choose to stay together.
- The SOC will assign meeting rooms for the various committees, in cooperation with the facility, if necessary.
- Ensure sufficient restrooms are available in and around the facility, especially the plenary hall and committee meeting rooms.
- Ensure contracts account for guarantees, cancellation policies, and diverse delegate needs.
- Preferred hotel rates should be secured for Monday night through Friday night (i.e. Saturday morning checkout).
    - Give consideration as to the percentage of hotel rooms that will need to be guaranteed. Failure to meet that percentage will result in significant fees.
    - Provide a range of hotel rooms (economical to those with more services) when appropriate.
- Depending on the location, ensure that either the US or Canadian corporation secure liability insurance as required by the venue contract.

Fraternal Delegates & Observers

- Invitations are managed in consultation with CECCA and CERCU.
- Lodging and meal expenses are included in the synodical budget for each synod.
- Maintain historical attendance records for planning.

Registration for Exhibitors

- Convening consistory will take responsibility for receiving information, vetting organizations, and communicating the details to those that need to know.

- Organizations who wish to have a display table must register and make payment.
- A Google form should be set up with access link on the web page. The form should payment details in both US and CDN currency with directions to mail a check payment to the JVA Treasurer.
- Copies of completed forms should go to the convening consistory (via synod@urcna.org) and JVA Treasurer cdnurcna@gmail.com.
- The JVA Treasurer will periodically update the convening consistory of which registrations have been paid. Display attendees will register for exhibitor space but are not obligated to register for meals.
- The exhibitor fee is for the display space. Display attendees should register online for meals if they wish to eat at the event.

Meals & Catering

- Ensure that catered lunches and dinners, along with two daily coffee breaks, are provided.
- If possible, allow for the option to purchase additional meal tickets for exhibitors, host church member observers, etc.
- When possible, multiple self-service buffet lines should be available for meals to ensure quick turnaround.
- On-site breakfast options should be available, either included with lodging or at attendees' own expense.
- Possible welcome reception on registration day from 1pm-5pm (light snacks and beverages).
- Possible dessert receptions following the Prayer Service and Mission Night. Either purchased through venue catering or other arrangement by the host church.
- Use registration data to accommodate dietary restrictions.

Technology & AV

- Venue should provide robust Wi-Fi, some printing capacity, and electrical access.

- Printing may be provided by the venue through the contracted services or through the host church.
- Usually a printer/scanner has been provided for use by the officers. General use could be provided by the venue, if available.
- Power sources to charge laptops/tablets/devices should be available in the plenary hall, exhibitors' room, conference room(s), and committee breakout rooms. This basic service should be provided by the venue through contracted services. Possibly extra power strips could be provided through the host church.
- Ideally these things will be provided through the venue contract, then will be overseen by the Convening and/or Host Church.
- On-site tech support should be available, either provided through the venue contract or through a designated third party or volunteer(s).
- Equip plenary hall with multiple screens, livestreaming, and a sound system.
- Microphones at the head table for the officers (usually 2 to 3)
- Multiple microphones for delegates speaking at plenary sessions.
- Large screen(s) for the plenary attendees' viewing plus smaller screens for the officers at their table. This facilitates viewing live amendments to documents as delegates will be able to see and read the changes being proposed.
- Ensure breakout rooms support laptops and possibly projection, based on the needs of the committees.

Website Information, Updates, and Online Registration

- The SOC will appoint one member of the committee to serve as the website administrator. This individual will contact the URCNA Webmaster to request this access. This access is the "behind the curtain" side of the

website (https://URCNA.org/Manage) giving access to a number of functions including:
    - the ability to post to the "Synod Communications" system, which sends emails to all churches that have not turned it off,
    - the synod section of the URCNA Calendar to post events,
    - control advisory committee registrations, and
    - access to the "File Uploads" area, which is a set of folders with various graphics, documents, spreadsheets, and other files. (Caution is warranted that any changes made will generally be instantaneous and permanent.)
- The website host may be contacted for technical or functional questions – Service-Life Support Center at info@service-life.com or 920-755-0257.
- This synodical website has been established for the purpose of running each synod (facilitating online registrations, methods of payment, etc.).
- The SOC website administrator should be in regular contact with the Webmaster.
- Prior to online registration for synod, information regarding making reservations at the venue may be released via the website to encourage early room reservations.
- On-line registration setup will be completed by the SOC and JVA Treasurer in collaboration with the URCNA Webmaster and the website host.
- Past synod registration site pages should be reviewed for material to be gathered and information to be conveyed to registrants.
- Once the final registration deadlines and cost numbers are finalized, the information should be provided to the URCNA Webmaster to be programmed into the website registration portal.
- It should be noted that the expectation for the length of synod would begin with the Monday evening prayer

meeting to Friday evening, normally requiring travel on Monday and Saturday.

- Contacts for registrations and questions should be identified and communicated to the URCNA Webmaster by the JVA Treasurer. This includes who will receive the emails once registrants complete their registration (headcount, meal counts, dietary restrictions, etc.), as well as who will field questions regarding registration and/or synod details.
- Registration options should include delegate, fiduciary, fraternal delegates/ observers, and guests. It should also include options for full or part-time attendance.

Late Registrations or Changes

- For registrants who register past the deadline – the website is closed. The JVA Treasurer should be notified if any late registrants are identified. The JVA Treasurer should work with the Webmaster to arrange the registration.
- If a registered delegate can no longer attend – the JVA Treasurer should be informed which alternate will be taking their spot to ensure that the name change is communicated where necessary.
- If neither the registered or alternate delegate can attend – the JVA Treasurer will arrange for a refund if deadlines with the facility have not been passed and communicate with the Webmaster to have their name removed from documents and permissions.
- Report to the Stated Clerk and the Convening Consistory, if appropriate, for planning purposes.

Reporting

- Report regularly to the Convening Consistory and JVA board.
- Submit a final report to synod with mandate review, activity summary, recommendations, and nominations.
- Use required reporting formatting.

4. Host Church

Registration & Welcome

- Provide orientation materials (maps, schedules, lanyards, tech info, etc.).
- Receive updates from Convening Consistory regarding late or updated registrations.

Technology & AV

- Oversee on-site technology and AV details. See specifics under Section 3 SOC: Technology & AV.

Hospitality

- Plan Family/Women's Outing and other visitor events.
- Assist with receptions and social gatherings.
- Organize volunteer support for meals, luggage, and welcome tables.
- Distribute lanyards (color-coded by role).
- Have host personnel available to answer logistical questions of all types of attendees, give directions, provide help, etc.

Volunteers & Logistics

- Recruit volunteers for registration, ushering, greeters, tech, and hospitality.
- Provide signage, ballots, and printed materials.
- Provide assistance as needed with preparation of meeting rooms, exhibitor tables, and offices.

Transportation

- Arrange airport pickups for fraternal delegates when necessary.
- Provide on-site transport for elderly delegates if needed.
- Maintain emergency transportation availability.

Safety & Security

- Ensure medical/first aid coverage and emergency response. Provide volunteers if needed.
- Provide adequate on-site security for delegates and facilities.

5. Post-Synod

- Convening Consistory submits its post-synod feedback to SOC. Including logistical feedback from the host church, if applicable.
- SOC provides a closing report, including a financial report from JVA Treasurer, with recommendations to the next synod.

6. Appendices

A. Task Breakdown Table (aligned to sections above).
B. Sample Timeline
C. Fiduciary Positions and Contact Information
D. Synodical Terminology Glossary
E. Synthesized notes from previous committees (set up as archive, not included in submission to Synod).

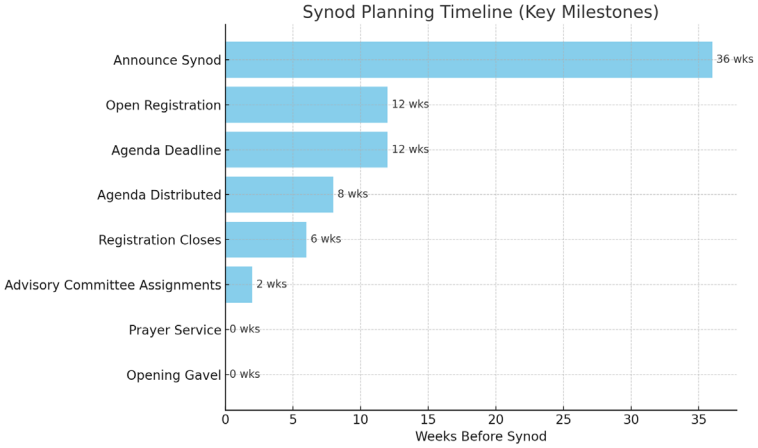
Appendix A – Task Breakdown Table

Task	Convening Consistory	SOC (incl. JVA Treasurer)	Host Church/ Group
Announce synod & dates	✓		
Prepare Agenda & Provisional Report	✓		
Appoint Advisory Committees	✓		
Plan Receptions (Prayer Service, Mission Night)	✓		Assist
Prepare Budgets & Registration Fees		✓	
Cooperate with JVA Board		✓	

Secure Facilities		✓	
Arrange Lodging		✓	
Arrange Meals & Catering		✓	
Technology & AV Setup	Assist	✓	Assist
Website Info, Online Registration Setup		✓	
Airport & Local Transportation		✓	Assist
Provide Orientation Materials (maps, schedules, lanyards)	✓		Assist
Volunteer Coordination	✓		Assist
Family/Women's Outing	✓		Assist
Emergency/First Aid & Security	✓		Assist
Final Reports to synod	✓	✓	

Appendix B – Visual Timeline

The following example chart from Synod Escondido 2024 illustrates the major milestones in planning for synod, showing key tasks and their timing in weeks before the synod convenes.



C: Fiduciary Positions

Canadian Treasurer: CdnURCNA@gmail.com
US Treasurer: john@luminx.co
JVA Treasurer: CdnURCNA@gmail.com

Stated Clerk: statedclerk@urcna.org
Webmaster: webmaster@urcna.org

D: Synodical Terminology Glossary.

- Advisory Committees: small group structures established at synod to study, provide guidance, and make recommendations to synod regarding a particular report

- CERCU: Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity

- CECCA: Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad

- Delegates: Members of the URCNA delegated to conduct the business of synod.

- Fraternal Delegate or Observer: A delegate from members of denominations with which the URCNA is in Phase Two ecclesiastical relations. They are given the privilege of the floor of synod. An observer is an individual invited to our synod by CERCU or CECCA from denominations with which the URCNA is not in Phase Two ecclesiastical relations. They do not have the privilege of the floor of synod unless granted special privilege to do so. Both fraternal delegates and observers are normally granted an opportunity to address synod and bring greetings.

- JVA/JVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Joint Venture Agreement, URCNA Canadian
  Board of Directors and the URCNA American Board of Directors: There are two Boards
  of Directors; one for each corporation (URCNA Canada and URCNA USA). Between the

two corporations there is a joint venture agreement (JVA). This is an agreement that the Canadian Board has with the US Board which allows money to be spent outside of Canada. The JVA Board oversees and approves the spending on joint ventures (operations) that the URCNA initiates and recommends at synod. The JVA Board of Directors is composed of members from the Canadian and US Board of Directors. The composition of the JVA board ensures that Canadian law is adhered to.

- Location of Synod: The classical and convening consistory's location for a future synod.

- Facility of Synod: The specific facility for the meetings, feedings, and sleepings of synod.

- Fiduciary: Individuals who work on behalf of the URCNA with a high level of trust and care. Examples would be the Stated Clerk, the Treasurers, and Statistician.

- NAPARC: North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council

- SIC: Synodical Interim Committee: The Convening Consistory is the SIC.

- Synodical Regulations: The rules approved by synod for the orderly organization and decision-making process of synod.

- Standing Committees: A permanent committee that is established by synod. This committee meets regularly to address matters mandated by synod.

Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA)
Report to Synod Calgary

Esteemed brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

It is once again our privilege, as the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA), to report to you on the activities of your committee since our report to Synod Escondido 2024.

Synod Escondido instructed committees to begin its report with a verbatim copy of its current synodical mandate. Furthermore, if any committee did not have a synodical mandate it was instructed to draft its own mandate and recommend it to the next synod for approval. We have been dutiful servants and have done what was asked of us. This is the mandate that we recommend to synod for approval.

Proposed Mandate

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA) is to initiate and maintain, on behalf of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), ecumenical relations with like-minded federations outside of North America. This is in partial fulfillment of Christ's prayer in John 17:20-23 and is consistent with our confessional standards (Belgic Confession Articles 27-29; Heidelberg Catechism Lord's 21, Q&A 54 and 55). CECCA, in maintaining ecumenical relationships, shall also assess the viability of preserving relationships with those who may be erring in doctrine or practice. CECCA will provide a written report of its activities and make necessary recommendations to each meeting of synod.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in CECCA shall consist of an elder or pastor appointed by each classis of the URCNA. Consideration should be given by the classis as to the ability of the proposed member to travel internationally and speak at broader assemblies. Consistories should be aware of the time commitment that may be required to be on CECCA. CECCA may, as need arises, recommend to Synod that members-at-large be appointed. The committee shall appoint a chairman and secretary.

RESPONSIBLITIES

1. CECCA shall meet at least twice a year to conduct its business, report on various contacts, assign representatives to foreign federations, correspond with new and existing contacts, and whatever else may arise consistent with the committee's purpose.

2. CECCA will maintain and fulfill membership responsibilities for the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) of which the URCNA is a member federation.

3. Because CECCA is responsible for contact with federations outside of North America, members of CECCA will be assigned regions of responsibility. CECCA has identified the following regions: Africa, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Europe, Middle-East, South and Central America.

4. As needs arise, CECCA will assist churches with whom we have an ecumenical relationship in teaching and theological training.

PROCEDURE

I. The first phase, Ecumenical Contact, will follow a period of initial exploration. Ecumenical Contact will focus on studying matters of general concern between the URCNA and the

"foreign" federation. This step will be implemented, where possible and desirable, by:

1. Exchange of official observers at major assemblies.

2. Consultation on issues of joint concern, including:
    a. authority and sufficiency of Scripture;
    b. creeds and confessions;
    c. formula of subscription to the confessions;
    d. significant factors in the two federations' history, theology, ecclesiology and stands on ethical issues;
    e. church order and polity;
    f. liturgy and liturgical forms;
    g. preaching, sacraments and discipline;
    h. theological education for ministers;
    i. Exchange of Minutes (Acts) of the broadest assemblies.
    j. Exchange of denominational Church Directories (Yearbooks);
    k. Exchange of the most recently published edition of the Confessional Standards
    l. Exchange of the most recently published edition of the (Book or Manual of) Church Order;
    m. Exchange of the most recently denominationally published editions of Psalters/Hymnals;
    n. Exchange of information regarding current ecumenical relations.

II. The second phase, Ecumenical Fellowship, will focus on the oneness of the URCNA with the "foreign" federation, even though we are separated by geographical boundaries. This step will be implemented according to Church Order Article 36, (in addition to the points listed under step one above) by:

1. Occasional pulpit fellowship (by local option);

2. Intercommunion, including ready reception of each other's members at the Lord's Supper—but not excluding suitable inquiries upon requested transfer of membership as regulated by each consistory (session);

3. The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity;

4. Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of one another;

5. Joint action in areas of common responsibility;

6. Agreement that, as changes in polity, doctrine or practice are instituted, the churches will inform each other—understanding that the adoption of substantial changes may jeopardize the established ecumenical relationship.

Report

Since our report to Synod Escondido, CECCA has met four times by way of conference calls and once in a face-to-face meeting.

Our report will:

1. focus on churches with which we are in Ecumenical Fellowship (Phase II)
2. focus on churches with which we are in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I);
3. focus on churches with which we are corresponding with a view to entering into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I);
4. conclude with a number of recommendations that require action by Synod.

I. Churches with whom we are in Ecumenical Fellowship

The Calvinist Reformed Church in Indonesia (GGRC-NTT)

The GGRC-NTT is a federation of churches comprised of 15 congregations spread out in different islands of Indonesia, including Timor, Sabu, Rote and Java. The GGRC was established as a federation in 1950. The federation is organized in two classes. It has a total membership of 1,608 members. Most of the pastors studied at the Reformed Theological Seminary on Sumba (about 45 minutes flying from West Timor). One pastor received his training at the Theological Seminary of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario. Elders and deacons and other church leaders are trained by local leaders via seminars. The GGRC has known the URCNA since 2001 and would love to receive their help in the training of church leaders.

We have had no contact with them since 2022.

The Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia (ERCLAT)

The ERCLAT consists of two congregations. The first congregation, the Riga Reformed Bible Church, was planted in 1990 by Pastor Alvis Sauka. Ten years later, a second congregation was planted in Riga. Recently, a third congregation was started in Pardaugavas.

According to the Pastors, there is no trace of a Christian culture or Reformed heritage in Latvia because of the communist legacy in the region. Ninety-nine percent of the member of the ERCLAT are first-generation Christians.

Church leaders and members embraced Reformed theology through the teaching received at Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary in Riga. Professors such as Mark Vanderhart, Cornelis Venema, Gerard Van Groningen, Hans Buyer, Simon

Kistemaker, Larry Sibley and more have been instrumental in mentoring the congregations.

Our last visit to Latvia was in February 2020 and at Synod Niagara Rev. Alvis Sauka addressed us.

We informed our brothers in May 2023 that the URCNA had decided to enter in Ecumenical Fellowship (Phase II) with them but have not yet received a response to our communication.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales (EPCEW)

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales (EPCEW) is a federation that was establish in 1996 with then 5 churches. The number of congregations within the EPCEW currently stand at 18 congregations. Four of their congregations are outside of the UK, one in Tranas, Sweden, one in Berlin, Germany, one in Villingen, Germany, and one in Zurich, Switzerland. Statistics for the beginning of 2026 show a total of just over 1031 baptised members and about 747 communicant members. A church plant was recently started in Oxford, which has some 114 people attending the morning services.

CECCA received an invitation in January 2025 to send a fraternal delegate to the EPCEW's, normally, biannual meeting where sister churches and other friends of the Presbytery come and share with them about the Lord's work in their respective denominations. We informed them that it was not possible for us to join them in their meeting.

The Free Church of Scotland Continuing (FCC)

The FCC was formed in 2000 but sees itself as a continuation of the Free Church of Scotland. Given this, they trace their history back to the Disruption of 1843 when, under the leadership of Thomas Chalmers, 450 ministers left the Church

of Scotland. Through the Church of Scotland, the FCC dates back to 1560 and the Reformation under John Knox.

The FCC is made up of six Presbyteries, four in Scotland, one in Europe, and one in the USA. They also have a mission field in Sri Lanka. In Scotland there are 25 congregations (and an additional one in Northern Ireland) and currently 17 active ministers in congregations. There are four congregations with six preaching stations in France, Spain, and Portugal, currently served by three ministers and one divinity student. There are eight congregations and one preaching station in the USA and a congregation in Alberta, Canada. The USA Presbytery has a mission and a church planter based in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. In total, there are seven ministers covering all these works in the USA Presbytery.

The Free Church is a member of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). While the URCNA has a different confessional background than the FCC, it is clear that we share the same like precious faith. Our practices may differ at points (no instruments, exclusive metrical Psalm singing), but our similarities are clear.

We were invited to address their General Assembly in May 2026 and Rev. John van Eyk has been delegated to do so.

The Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI-Nasional)

After the decision to enter Phase II (Ecumenical Fellowship) with the GGRI-Nasional was ratified, they were informed of our decision. We received an official response to our communication in June 2024.

The GGRI-Nasional is composed of three regional synods, namely, the GGRI in the province of East Nusa Tenggara (GGRI-NTT), the GGRI in the province of West Kalimantan (GGRI-KalBar), and the GGRI in the province of Papua (GGRI-Papua). Because of geographical distances and financial

limitations, the National Synod has not been effective although there are attempts to improve its effectiveness.

The only contact we have had with them in recent months is an email from their new Chairman of the Deputy for External Relations of the GGRI-NTT, Rev. Andi Shalom. They are planning to assign a National Deputy for Inter-Church relations at their upcoming National Synod in November. He wrote:

"One of the major challenges we currently face is the strong tendency among mainstream churches in Indonesia, particularly in East Nusa Tenggara, to compromise with cultural practices that are not in accordance with the teaching of God's Word. Liberal theology and highly contextual approaches to biblical interpretation are increasingly influential. Some churches have even begun reintroducing Roman Catholic traditions, such as the observance of Ash Wednesday, as well as ancestral customs that are inconsistent with biblical teaching.

"In this context, GGRI stands firmly in declaring its identity: rejecting superstition and cultural practices that contradict the truth of Scripture, and faithfully upholding pure doctrine. We strive to maintain our distinctive identity as a Reformed church that truly upholds Scripture as the sole standard of truth, rejecting unbiblical traditions, and faithfully fulfilling Christ's calling through evangelism and works of mercy."

We will continue to develop our relationship with these churches.

The Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ)

The RCNZ is a federation of churches established in 1953 by young Dutch immigrants of reformed persuasion who were unable to find a spiritual home within the more established (mainstream) churches in this country. From the beginning the denomination wanted to be a New Zealand rather than an immigrant church. English became the accepted and spoken

language of the church within a few years of its establishment. As a confessional church the Three Forms of Unity as well the Westminster Confession of Faith were accepted as its standards. Some initial tension was experienced in this area but, by asking office bearers to subscribe to the 'whole system of doctrine', a successful confessional basis has been achieved and maintained. There is therefore a merger of confessional traditions (Reformed and Presbyterian) evidenced in their congregations. The RCNZ remains a small denomination consisting of 3 presbyteries: Auckland – 6 congregations; Wellington – 8 congregations and one preaching place; South Island – 7 congregations and one preaching place (total of 21 churches). Their congregations are clustered mainly around the major population centers: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Hamilton, Hastings, Palmerston North, Nelson and Dunedin. They have 2339 communicant members and 1324 baptised members for a total membership of 3663. They are served by 18 ministers and 5 vicars.

We have been in Ecumenical Fellowship (Phase II) with this federation since 2010. In September 2024 Rev. Pete Van't Hoff attended as a fraternal delegate. You can find his report and address in Appendix 1.

The Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA)

The Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (GKSA) came into existence in 1859 and grew from the original five churches to 371 churches in 2026, with a total of 224 active ministers of the Word and 145 retired ministers. The churches are spread right across the RSA and also in Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. These churches are currently being served in approximately 15 languages. They have 52,342 communicant and 14,429 baptised members. The GKSA established its own theological school, founded in 1869 in Burgersdorp and operating since 1905 in Potchefstroom. The Theological School Potchefstroom (TSP) is staffed with 7 professors.

The GKSA operates from an efficient building complex that includes a well-equipped auditorium and the denomination's archives. Ecumenical ties have been established with churches in the USA, Scotland, Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, the Congo, Japan and Korea. The GKSA operates in accordance with Holy Scripture, the three Formularies of Unity and the Canons of Dordt.

Rev. Mark Vander Pol represented the URCNA at their Synod held in January 2026 and you can find his report and fraternal address in Appendix 2.

The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA)

After the decision to enter Phase II (Ecumenical Fellowship) with the PCEA was ratified, they were informed of our decision. We have not received an official response to our communication.

The PCEA is a federation of 10 congregations organized in three presbyteries. The congregations are spread from Brisbane in the north down to Geelong in Victoria. There is one congregation in Ulverstone, Tasmania. The PCEA does not have a seminary, but uses the colleges of the Presbyterian Church in Australia, which is complemented by reading, and essays set by their own Training of Ministry Committee to cover their own distinctive doctrines, history and practice. The PCEA has a membership of about 600 members served by seven inducted ministers and two active retired ministers. They have three vacant charges. It holds to the Westminster Standards and the Westminster Form of Presbyterian Church Government.

CECCA received an invitation to send a fraternal delegate to the PCEA's annual General Assembly in May 2025. CECCA decided to send a letter of fraternal greetings.

The United Reformed Churches in Congo (URCC)

The URCC is a federation of churches comprised of 189 churches, organized in ten regional synods, which are subdivided into 43 classes. In addition, there are 43 preaching stations with a view to church planting. The URC has 34 ordained pastors, 395 elders and 262 deacons. The total membership of the churches remains at approximately 14,000. The churches operate one Theological Seminary and nine Biblical Training Centers.

We have not had any correspondence with them for some time and will be reviewing our relationship with them.

II. Churches with whom we are in Ecumenical Contact

Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church (AEPC)

The Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church (AEPC) was founded in 1962. At the moment, it has 87 churches and 12 church plants spread out over seven presbyteries. 60 pastors, 58 elders, and six deacons serve the churches. The federation has a total of 9600 communicant members. The federation has a theological seminary and two Bible Colleges. The federation holds to the Westminster Standards and has a presbyterian form of church government. The AEPC is a member of the ICRC.

Since there has been no contact with the AEPC for some time, CECCA proposes that the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the AEPC at this time.

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA)

Post-World War II migrants established this denomination in 1951. Currently, the CRCA has an active membership of around 7513 in over fifty-one churches spread throughout Australia with 58 ministers. From exclusively Dutch

beginnings, the CRCA is now a culturally diverse group, reflecting the character of Australian society, and is seeking to proclaim the Christian message in a contemporary and relevant way. It is actively engaged in Christian missions both within Australia and abroad. The CRCA subscribes to the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Confession. The basic unit of the CRCA is the local church, which is governed by the local session as elected by the congregation. All sessions within a geographical area (typically on a statewide basis) meet every 3-4 months as a classis. Nationally, delegates meet every three years as Synod. The synod deals only with issues raised by a classis. The CRCA is a member of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC).

It is noted that their Synod 2022 appointed a study committee to consider a large number of theological, ecclesiological, pastoral and practical matters that arose from a discussion to amend the form of subscription to allow elders, deacons, and licensed preachers to be ordained to office while not holding to the doctrine of infant baptism. Synod 2024 maintained that credo-baptists were not permitted an exception to the confessional teaching on infant baptism. The same Synod affirmed that the elders shall examine baptised members who wish to become communicant members of the church.

It is encouraging to note how matters went with a rogue congregation that didn't just bring an overture to Synod to allow women to preach, but began the practice even before Synod had a chance to reject it. Their Synod instructed their Classis to work with them to bring about conformity to their synodical decisions (which only allow male communicant members to bring the Word). The net outcome has been that they left the denomination last year. Although they had hoped the congregation would repent of their individualism and respect the decisions of the church, the way the CRCA dealt with the matter is a reflection of their commitment to holding fast to what we, and they, see as important Biblical teaching.

After Synod 2022 acceded to CECCA's recommendation to enter Phase I (Ecumenical Contact) with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, they were informed of our decision. We were invited to send a representative to their Synod 2024 and Rev. Stephen Wetmore was delegated to attend and address their Synod. See report in Appendix 3.

CECCA proposes that the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the CRCA at this time.

Evangelical Reformed Church in India (ERC)

The Evangelical Reformed Church in India is a federation of churches comprised of 58 congregations spread out in different States of India, including a few fellowships in Nepal. The ERC was established as a federation on November 12, 2010. The federation is organized in five classes. It has a total membership of 1821 members. Most of the pastors studied at the Reformed Theological Institute in North India. One of them has been trained in Mid-America Reformed Seminary Dyer, IN USA. Elders and deacons and other church leaders are trained by the Mission of Peace-Making (MPM) *Teaching Learning Events* (TLEs). The ERC has been the result of many prayers and financial support of the URCNAs since 2004 under the leadership of Mission of Peace Making. The confessional basis of the ERC is in the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards. Presently the ERC has 48 ministers.

The URCNA entered into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the ERC at Synod Niagara. Brother Gerry Swets visited the Synod of the ERC in February 2023. CECCA proposes that the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the ERC at this time.

Free Church of Scotland (FCS)

The Free Church of Scotland traces its roots to the Disruption of 1843 and the struggle of the Scottish church to remain 'free'

from State interference. Under the leadership of the Free Church's first moderator, Thomas Chalmers, 450 ministers left the Church of Scotland. The denomination currently has over 100 congregations in Scotland, as well as one in London, plus sister churches founded by mission work in India, Peru, and South Africa. The Church has a full time seminary in the middle of Edinburgh for the training of its ministers and other Christian workers. The Free Church is a member of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) and has fellowship with many other Reformed churches throughout the world. The FCS stands firmly in the tradition which accepts the Bible as its supreme standard and the Westminster Confession as its subordinate standard. While the Free Church continues to prize its heritage and traditions, it also feels compelled to work creatively to bring the good news about Jesus to bear on each generation, convinced that the timeless message of the gospel speaks to all of life with up-to-the-minute relevance and power.

After Synod acceded to CECCA's recommendation to enter Phase I (Ecumenical Contact) with the Free Church of Scotland, they were informed of our decision. They welcomed the news and they look forward to mutual support and encouragement in the service of the Lord. Rev. John van Eyk was delegated to address their General Assembly in May 2026.

CECCA proposes that the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the FCS at this time.

Free Reformed Churches in Australia (FRCA)

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) are a federation of 16 congregations, 14 of which are in Western Australia, two in Tasmania and a home-congregation in Cairns. They have a membership of about 5,000 members. Their historical roots are in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Liberated (GKv) as a result of post-World-War II immigration. The churches subscribe to the Ecumenical Creeds

and the Three Forms of Unity. The FRCA terminated their sister church relationship with the GKv in 2018 because of increasing liberal trends and decisions in the GKv.

The URCNA entered into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the FRCA at Synod Niagara. Mr Gerry Swets attended their Synod in June 2024. See Appendix 4 for his report and fraternal address.

CECCA proposes that the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the FRCA.

Sudanese Reformed Church

The Sudanese Reformed Church (SRC) started as a small household fellowship in outskirts of Khartoum in 1992. This fellowship gave birth to three other household fellowships in Khartoum. By February 2005, these four fellowships were organized as a Christian denomination under the name 'Sudanese Reformed Church'. On October 31, 2005, the need for a governing body was discussed and a committee was formed. The governing body was formed with the purposes that it would provide leadership, would govern these churches and ensure that matters of doctrine and life, and growth (in faith as well as numbers) were and are grounded in the Reformed faith as taught by the Reformers (Luther and Calvin) and the Reformed confessions. A church order was adopted in the same year.

The URCNA entered into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the SRC at Synod Niagara. At our last Synod the Rev. Patrick Jok of the SRC addressed our body and asked if the URCNA would be willing to enter into a mentorship relationship with them. In our deliberations about the request it was noted that the great need in South Sudan is theological training. To that end, Revs. Richard Bout and John van Eyk have met several times with representatives from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

about providing some sort of theological training that will result in a diploma of sorts upon successful completion of the courses. If the political situation, which is somewhat tenuous, stabilises, and if the SRC accepts our offer, the theological training is expected to being later this year. In response to their request for mentoring, it was decided that we would look at that matter again after the theological training had commenced.

CECCA proposes that the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the SRC.

III. Churches with whom we are corresponding with a view to Ecumenical Contact

When Churches approach CECCA expressing a desire to enter into Ecumenical Fellowship with the URCNA, or, when CECCA approaches them with a view to Ecumenical Fellowship, we send them a form requesting information about their denomination. That form has been sent to the Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Churches (ARPC) Bangalore, India, the Pearl of Orient Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines, the Selbstandige Evangelishch-Reformierte Kirchen in Deustschland, and the Reformed Churches in Brazil.

Allow us to highlight conversations we have had with the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the RPCCEE since we are recommending that the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with both of these denominations.

Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA)

For the past number of months various members of CECCA have been in talks with representatives of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA). This denomination has experienced a number of changes since it began in 1901. In that year the various State Presbyterian Churches came together to form the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The Basis of Union was the

Declaratory Statement through which the Westminster Confession of Faith was to be read. Within the PCA at that time there were confessionalists, modernists, and cultural Presbyterians. In 1967 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (GAA) permitted the ordination of women as elders. This was followed in 1974 with permission for women to be ordained as ministers.

In 1977 about 70% of the denomination left to join the Uniting Church in Australia, a theologically liberal denomination. The 30% remaining were the more theologically conservative members and some cultural Presbyterians. Since that time there has been strategic and prayerful action to bring about reformation in the PCA and the Head of the Church has blessed their efforts. In 1991 a vote was taken to rescind the decision to allow for women ministers. The women who were already ordained or in the process of ordination were permitted to retain, or obtain, as the case may be, their credentials. In 1997 a decision of the GAA meant that no State Assembly was obligated to ordain women as elders. That meant that the question of whom may be ordained as elders became a State Assembly matter. Currently, of the six State Assemblies only one permits the ordination of women as elders although our conversations have indicated that that is about to change. The PCA declared homosexual practices to be sin in 1994.

The ongoing reformation of the church has also meant that the PCA is severing its relationships with theologically liberal denominations and organizations such as the Church of Scotland (2015) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (1982) and are seeking relationships with theologically conservative churches like the URCNA.

The PCA has around 26,000 members in 523 congregations served by 305 ministers. It has three theological colleges to train her men for ministry. The PCA is actively involved in world missions with more than 170 cross-cultural missionaries.

In our discussions with the PCA representatives it was noted how different our denominational/federational experiences have been. The URCNA departed a theologically compromised denomination and, under the blessing of God, established a biblical, Reformed federation. The PCA experienced the departure of their theological liberals, and the following years have been spent purging the denomination of theological liberalism, seeking to establish her as a biblically faithful, God-honouring, confessionally grounded, Reformed denomination. That process continues to this day.

CECCA was of the mind that it would be advantageous to our brothers in the PCA to come alongside them in their continuing efforts of reformation and establish Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with them, trusting that, in doing so, the URCNA would profit from the PCA. As noted in our proposed mandate, the first phase follows a period of initial exploration and will focus on studying matters of general concern through exchange of official observers at major assemblies and consultation on issues of joint concern. It is our desire that the Ecumenical Contact will be of mutual benefit to the glory of our Triune God.

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE)

Although the URCNA received visitors from the RPCCEE at Synod Nyack in 2012, there was no attempt to establish ecumenical relations with them until recently. In 2024 Rev. John van Eyk led a conference for their ministers in Sovata, Romania. In 2025 knowing that Rev. Greg Bylsma was going to spend a sabbatical in Eastern Europe and spend some time with brothers of the RPCCEE we asked him to investigate the RPCCEE and report on his findings (see his report in Appendix 5). The ministers of the RPCCEE, for the most part, grew up under Communist rule and a cultural Christianity before they were converted to Christ. They have zealously laboured in an increasingly secular context. Their passion is inspiring and their

determination to promote the gospel in their spheres is encouraging.

The history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE) goes back to the early 1990s when radical political changes happened in Eastern Europe. An American mission organization, Westminster Biblical Missions, came to Hungary and started a new Reformed theological Seminary – Karolyi Gaspar Institute of Theology and Missions (KGITM) – in Budapest. The seminary later relocated to Miskolc. Hungarian speaking students came from three countries – Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine — and completed their theological training in four years. The first seven students graduated in 1996 and started to lay down the foundations of a new Church after the historic and nominal Hungarian Reformed Church would not accept the graduates as ministers. This was primarily because of their seminary's strong theological convictions regarding the inerrancy and authority of Scriptures, reformed theology, the need for faithful membership in church, and biblical administration of the sacraments. These men rejected liberalism, ecumenical fellowship with the Catholic church and liberal churches, the office of bishops, and ordination of women for the ministry.

The RPCCEE subscribes to the 1789 American Revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the original versions of the Second Helvetic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS) in Grand Rapids, MI, decided to expand their accredited program in Europe and the RPCCEE restructured their seminary, Presbyterian Seminary in Budapest, to cooperate with PRTS to train their theological students. The RPCCEE is, since 2022, a member church of the International Conference of Reformed Churches and have sister relationships with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales, and the Evangelical Reformed Church of Ukraine.

In 2025 the RPCCEE sent CECCA information about their denomination. After perusing their denominational commitments regarding theology and polity, we propose that the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the RPCCEE.

IV. The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

The International Conference of Reformed Churches is a conference of Reformed Churches from around the world held once every four years. The first preliminary meeting was held in 1982 in the Netherlands with the Free Church of Scotland and the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated) taking leading roles. Subsequent meetings have been held in Scotland (1985), Canada (1989), The Netherlands (1993), South Korea (1997), the USA (2001), South Africa (2005), New Zealand (2009), Wales, United Kingdom (2013), Canada (2017), and Namibia (2022). The next conference will, the Lord willing, be held in South Korea in 2026 with the Kosin Presbyterian Church being the hosting federation.

The purpose of the conference is:

1. to express and promote the unity of faith that the member churches have in Christ;
2. to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the member churches;
3. to encourage cooperation among the member churches in the fulfillment of the missionary and other mandates;
4. to study the common problems and issues that confront the member churches and to aim for recommendations with respect to these matters;
5. to present a Reformed testimony to the world

The URCNA will be represented by Revs. Mark Vander Pol, Pete Van't Hoff, and John van Eyk. During the breaks in the

proceedings visits will be made with various federations who are in attendance.

VI. Recommendations

CECCA recommends to Synod Calgary that:

1. Synod grant the privilege of the floor to the following members of CECCA to answer Synod's questions regarding this report: Rev. Mark Vander Pol and Rev. John van Eyk (Secretary);

2. the proposed mandate be adopted as the mandate for CECCA;

3. the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Sudanese Reformed Church;

4. the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church (AEPC);

5. the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia (CRCA);

6. the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Evangelical Reformed Church in India;

7. the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Free Church of Scotland;

8. the URCNA remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Free Reformed Churches in Australia (FRCA);

9. the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with the Presbyterian Church of Australia;

10. the URCNA enter into Ecumenical Contact (Phase I) with Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe;

11. Synod approve $15,000 per annum for the work of CECCA.

Humbly submitted,

Rev. Richard Bout, member
Rev. Mark Vander Pol, member
Rev. Pete Van't Hoff, member
Rev. Kevin Hossink, member
Mr. Gerald Swets, member
Rev. Movses Janbazian, member
Rev. Wm. Jason Tuinstra, chairman
Rev. John van Eyk, secretary

Appendix 1

2024/09/19
Re: Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) Synod

Dear Brothers of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA),

By invitation of the RCNZ, one or two delegates of the URCNA were invited to attend the RCNZ Synod that took place from Sept. 7-13, 2024. I am thankful to have been delegated by CECCA, and was privileged to attend.

The RCNZ has 22 churches, 25 preaching places, 18 ministers, 125 elders, 78 deacons, 2,291 communicant and 1,288 baptised members (as of 1 February 2024).

Over all, the Synod was called, proceeded and concluded in peace. Among the discussions that took place, topics of corporate worship (by overture), and conversion therapy (by

report) were discussed. In my fraternal address to the body, an encouragement to receive the URCNA's Pastoral Advice on Digital Media and Worship, along with the pastoral advice on Human Sexuality, was given. Following the address, the RCNZ decided to continue on with our sister-church relationship and to send a delegate to our next synod taking place in June of 2026. Another point of interest is that our Trinity Psalter Hymnal was approved as a supplemental song book, that could be used in worship services of the RCNZ. Attached for reference, are the daily minutes.

Over all, it was wonderful to meet, and to spend time with, the saints of the RCNZ. I was warmly received and was also able to preach twice on Sunday the 15th in two of their vacant churches.

Humbly submitted,



Rev. Pete Van't Hoff
CECCA Member

Reformed Churches of New Zealand Synod – Fraternal Address

Dear Brothers in Christ of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand,

I bring you fraternal greetings on behalf of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA) of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). Hebrews 10:24-25 gives us the following:

> 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Surely these words have been preached from your pulpits and given to Christ's people as an encouragement for greater unity amongst us, perhaps even in light of the division that has been promoted by the devil even over these last few years. The application here is valuable for the local congregation, no doubt, but also, from sister federation to sister federation.

It is a joy to be amongst you. It took some planning to make this happen. Just to give you a little context, I am just over 6 weeks into a new calling from my home church of Grace Reformed Church of Dunnville Ontario Canada. That call came to me earlier this spring, and as an answer, after a winter of prayerful consideration in regards to a spirit of restlessness, that the Lord had given me to consider. Hindsight is so beautiful when the Holy Spirit is involved.

What came with the acceptance of this call was the uprooting (once again) of the family, a moving out of our home which had been our home since 2018 and the first real home for our youngest child, a sorting out of the specifics of the call with a new church, the finding of our new home, the complexities of the move and a settling into a new congregation anxious to receive us. With all of it, routine was the first to go, and is what we're most looking forward to now, in the coming fall. So when the invitation arrived at CECCA, right in the middle of all the chaos, I asked the committee members if I could come here, on the one hand, why not add one more thing to the chaos, but more so, to stir up amongst you, love and good works, not neglecting to meet together with you, as we see the Day drawing near.

What does one do when one goes to New Zealand, let alone, the southern Island, let alone Christchurch? A short google search will give us four places to consider. One could enjoy spectacular views of snow-capped mountains and Alpine scenery aboard the Christchurch Gonola Ride. One could experience the wonder of Antarctica at the Christchurch

Antarctic Centre. How about an encounter with New Zealand's unique flora and fauna at the Willowbank Wildlife Reserve? Or maybe, history is your thing, and Christchurch the place. Take the Tramway and explore the city's attractions and learn about its history. And if all that fails you, why not attend the Reformed Churches of New Zealand's Synod, meet together with your brothers, to stir up love and good works amongst you.

In preparation for such a trip, you can go online once again. You can read all about each place. You can Google-Map your way virtually, watching the Streetviews, as if you've already been there (although that might take some of the surprise of the unknown out of it (that can be good for some, no so good for others). You can get guide books and read through them and prepare yourself to receive the real-life reception of all those things you've been reading about, anticipating all such things. Or, you can take all the synodical reports given, read through them, rejoice in all the Christ-centred love and good works being pursued, both at home and abroad, present and reported on. You could read through the overtures to see what you've been thinking over. You can evaluate all such things and prepare an address for the world-wind trip, to which you have centred your energies upon. (Guess what I did.)

On all your fine work at this Synod, I certainly am unable to give a full summary on, but a couple of reports stood out to me, given the URCNA's most recent Synod that took place this passed June. For your Report 7, "Conversion Therapy Study Committee," and in light of how godless this world has become, particularly in regards to its sexual ethics, I commend to you, the URCNA's Pastoral Advice on Human Sexuality[1] reported on and received at our last June Synod. In regards to your Overture 1, to appoint a study committee to "provide guidance from the Scriptures and the confessions on what constitutes "corporate" in relation to the gathering of the church

[1]https://www.urcna.org///urcna/Pastoral%20Advice%20on%20Human%20Sexuality%202024%20REV%200824.pdf

in Corporate Worship…" I also heartily recommend our Pastoral Advice on Digital Media and Worship[2] also reported on and received at the same Synod. In reflection of both Overture 1 and Report 7, your wanting to seek clarity and in making your defense, we feel your joys and sorrows and we walk with you in them. In these things, we separate ourselves from the world, so fallen, but also seek to build the bond of unity together in Christ, all such things made worthy for the glory of God alone. Be assured also, that the decisions made here, we shall pay attention to. When broader bodies, in different places attack sin from every direction, the universal church of Jesus Christ is strengthened. May we all be strengthened together.

Finally, to reflect upon the section on your Report 8, the Interchurch Relations Committee report, to continue on with our sister-church relationship and to recommend that a delegate be sent to our next Synod, tentatively planned for June/July of 2026 I believe, we warmly receive the language and look forward to further unity and community with you, seeking Christ together as our Head.

Personally speaking, the RCNZ was first introduced to me, in the Holy Spirit's leading me to study for the ministry at Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS). While there, I met your polity and grew to appreciate it. While there, I met your men (one in particular), godly and caring, sharing the burden of his calling with me, and I with him, helping me through the rigors of what MARS's Master of Divinity Degree requires and expects of all those who challenge it. For you ministers of the word and sacrament, for you ruling elders, of the RCNZ, I am personally thankful for your godliness, CECCA is thankful, the URCNA is thankful. And so,

[2]https://www.urcna.org///urcna/Pastoral%20Advice%20on%20Digital%20Media%20and%20Worship%20-%20FINAL%20Rev%2008%2024.pdf

> 24 …let us consider how to [further] stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Now, this is the author of Hebrews speaking to people he knew and commending them to stick together, against the world, and for the glory of God. We are to proceed not in our own confidence, but in the confidence of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose earthly walk was found pleasing before His Father, whose earthly death has paid for our sins, in full, symbolized even by the veil of the Holy of Holies being torn in two, allowing entrance to the Holy of Holies, allowing a return of God's people before His holy throne of grace. This is what Jesus did for us. Let us now seek Him confidently and together. May you be blessed, as your zeal for Jesus, so clearly evident, has been a blessing to me, personally, as a member of CECCA and for the URCNA. Let not the world divide, and divide us further. The day is drawing near Brothers. Let me conclude with the familiar words of Paul to his Ephesian church plant (Eph. 4:4-6):

> 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

God bless you all!

Shall we pray? Father, what a joy it is to be here, on the other side of earth, and to find Jesus. What a joy it is to be amongst fellow members in the body of Jesus Christ, knowing the sacrifice of Jesus and in light of such, confidently pursuing Him, relying fully upon the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, working in us, what Jesus has won for us. May the valuable work taking place here, glorify You. As much time, planning and efforts have been employed by many, may the

work conclude well. May your church be blessed. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Appendix 2

Report of Fraternal Visit
Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA)
January 5-10, 2026
Potchefstroom, South Africa
Rev. Mark H. Vander Pol

My trip to the GKSA Synod 2026 began in Pretoria where I was housed Saturday night and was able to worship in an English-speaking church (GK Tshwane) on Sunday morning, also in attendance at the service was the foreign guest from the Igreja Presbyterian Church in Angola (IPA) Rev. Antonio Mussaqui. After the service both of us were taken to Potchefstroom which is where the Admin Bureau, Synod Hall, and Theological School of the GKSA are located.

On Monday morning I had breakfast with a number of other foreign delegates in preparation for the Synod to commence later that morning. The Synod began at 10:00am with devotions by one of their theological school professors on Matthew 5 followed by a couple of procedural matters that reminded many of the synod the mess that started their 2023 Synod (see Rev. Tuinstra's report from that synod). At odds were what to do with some elders who were not officially installed as elders when their credential was sent in but they were installed by the time of synod. A commission was tasked to figure out what to do with these credentials and that allowed the synod to continue its initial work of electing the Moderamen (the officers) which took the rest of the morning. After lunch the synod took up one of the two matters that were weighing over this synod, this first being what to do with churches that have ordained women elders or pastors contrary to a number of synodical decisions (the GKSA does allow for

women deacons). At their synod in 2023 a commission was tasked with answering this question and giving guidance for the churches. Unfortunately, the commission was divided and the Majority Report did not believe this was an "essential issue" and called for more patience and charity for those churches. In contrast, the Minority Report did believe this was an essential issue and suggested a timeline and process of "detaching" those churches from the GKSA if they continued to not comply to synodical decisions.

The Synod Hall is a large, tiered room with desks for each delegate with microphones. When there is time for discussion the Moderator would ask for speakers and they would raise a piece of yellow paper indicating they wanted to be put on the list to speak. At a certain point the Moderator looked at the side of the room where the foreign delegates were sitting and said, "We would like to hear from some of our foreign guests too." Therefore, I and four other delegates raised our papers! However, even though the rest of the afternoon was simply taken up with the discussion we would have to wait until the next day for our turn.

After dinner there was a worship service in the GK Potchefstroom die Bult church led by one of the emeritus professors who preached on John 21. After the service all the domestic and foreign delegates gave their addresses to the synod delegates and others present for the service (my address is attached). I, along with a number of my foreign colleagues, exhorted the synod to remain faithful to God's Word and to inform them how we have seen the issue of women in office play out in the past in our various contexts.

Synod reconvened early on Tuesday and after opening matters the list of speakers from the previous afternoon was resumed and it was encouraging that a number of speakers referenced the foreign delegates' speeches from the previous evening. When our turns finally came to speak, one of the brothers from the Netherlands (Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerken) had a

little bit of a mediating tone (he himself is against women in office, but his denomination is tolerant), but the other brothers that spoke (from Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, Reformed Churches of New Zealand, and Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland) were great, and I followed in their footsteps. After more discussion and questions there was an attempt to send this matter to a committee, but that was rejected. Very quickly it was determined that the body was ready to vote on the matter, and in a move that was surprising concerning our Regulations for Synodical Procedure, the Minority Report was going to be voted on first. If that were to pass, the GKSA would be (again) confirming a biblical stance on male leadership in the roles of minister and elder and on a trajectory to actively work at removing churches who continue to have women ordained in those offices.

Throughout the discussion the tone in the room seemed to be in favor of the Minority Report, but when the chairman asked for the vote *against* the report a good number of yellow papers were raised. However, when the request to vote in *approval* of the report a sea of yellow papers flooded the room, obviously and overwhelmingly approving the Minority report. The delegate from the CRC Australia turned around and had the biggest smile on his face and exclaimed, "This is so encouraging!" Over the next couple of days, a number of delegates came up to me and other foreign delegates and thanked us for our speeches Monday evening as well as from the floor. The reporter of the Minority report told me that the "foreign delegates made their arm long." For what it's worth, there seems to be a desire to reconsider the women in the office of deacon issue as well.

Even though at this point there was a great sigh of relief, it was only day two of a six-day synod! In the afternoon the synod began to take up the other important matter weighing on the body which concerns the theological education of the GKSA ministers (See Rev. Dr. Malan van Rhyn's address to us in

2024). This was a large and complicated matter that consumed the vast majority of the synod's remaining time and involved a few different commissions (essentially our advisory committees). At the end of the week the synod decided to allow for ministerial students to have a couple of options for their theological education under the direct oversight of the GKSA, instead of just one which had been the case for 150 years. Lord willing, at the next synod in three years there will be more clarity and ability to define a clear path forward.

One final note to report is that on Thursday morning the synod took up the ecumenical reports from their various ecumenical commissions. This wasn't necessarily an opportunity for the ecumenical guests to speak, but to hear what they thought of us! The reports on the URCNA and OPC were very short, and I commented on the floor that I hoped that was a good thing—and I was assured it most certainly was. That was reassuring given the situation we faced at Synod Escondido and the discussion surrounding the reception of a former GKSA church into our federation. That issue was raised and Dr. van Rhyn answered it very well and I agreed with him. These reports continued throughout the morning, and well into the afternoon. I commented to one of the delegates that given the items still unresolved on the agenda the synod took a lot time going through those ecumenical reports. He responded by saying that in the past the GKSA was much more isolated and over the years it has come to highly value ecumenical ties and gives a lot of time to those bonds.

It was a distinct pleasure to represent our churches at the GKSA Synod 2026, and it so encouraging to know that our presence and our relationship was appreciated.

In the service of Christ's Church
Rev. Mark H. Vander Pol

Address to the GKSA Synod 2026
United Reformed Churches in North America

Rev. Mark H. Vander Pol

Fathers and Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ –

It is my distinct pleasure to give you greetings from the United Reformed Churches in North America. My colleagues who have addressed you in the past have noted our history together as you were the first body outside of North America to request a relationship with us. We cherish this bond and the opportunities for our bodies to have representation at our respective synods as you did at ours in 2024, and I pray you will again in six months. We don't take any of this for granted and we hope you don't either.

Reading through your agenda it is obvious that there are issues which have weighed heavily on your churches the past three years and will during this meeting too. In many places I was encouraged, and in other places discouraged. As you probably know the federation of the URCNA was born out of very similar circumstances over Women in Ecclesial Office in the Christian Reformed Church of North America in the 1990s. Once that line is crossed more struggles could be in your future as worldly thinking and cultural issues will continue to come into your churches—our enemy is never satisfied until God's Word is abandoned at every turn. I am sure you will be reminded many times throughout this week from my fellow fraternal delegates to remain steadfast to the Word of God and to not, as Paul tells the Ephesian church, "…*[be like children] tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes*" (Eph 4:14). Over one hundred years ago J. Gresham Machen wrote, "*Christianity is founded upon the Bible. It bases upon the Bible both its thinking and its life. Liberalism (*we can say much of the modern church today*) on the other hand is founded upon the shifting emotions of sinful men."* [3]

[3] Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 79.

I have told my congregation on a number of occasions when it comes to the issue of women in office or the rise of false understandings of human sexuality or gender ideologies, that I simply want to remain firm on the clear reading of Scripture not some so-called "new exegesis." In the end I want to stand before God and hear him say "*Well done good and faithful servant,*" not "What did you do with my Word?" If this present evil age is celebrating what the church is doing with God's Word, that should arrest us in our tracks. We are the Reformed Church (we don't need to be ashamed of that) but we are also the church that is always in need of *being reformed* (passive voice) according to the Word of God. That is a very important distinction on how we see ourselves. Are we reforming according to the winds of this present evil age or are we being reformed according to the Word of God which never changes?

One of the goals of these addresses is to fraternally admonish and encourage our sister churches, but also to celebrate the good work that the Lord is doing half a world away. This year the URCNA will be celebrating its 30th anniversary, but in these last three decades I believe the Lord has blessed us with great unity, a love for the Gospel, a commitment to the Word and the confessions, and a desire to plant churches. We have, over the last few years, moved towards a classis focus on church planting by encouraging classes to form their own individual Committees on Home Missions and it is exciting to see the Lord bless those labors across the continent as churches are being planted.

I was excited to share with you the work of a colleague in preparing a catechism addressing a Biblical view of human sexuality, and I brought copies of that catechism with me, but it wasn't until I was on the plane that I got to page 178 of your agenda and I read that Chris Gordon's Catechism has already been printed here in English and translated into Afrikaans. Another great resource along those same lines is the report of our Study Committee on Human Sexuality presented to our 2024 Synod. That report very helpfully lays out Biblical and

Confessional statements on a variety of topics related to human sexuality; lists a number of affirmations and denials; gives answers to frequently asked questions; provides an extensive glossary of terms; and lists a number of recommend resources.

It was so encouraging to read in several places that the work of my small federation was being used by your churches in the issues you face. There is much in your work that I will be referencing and highlighting for our churches as well. May the Lord be praised by our work together.

If there is a prayer request for our churches, we are in need of ministers to be trained and called to our churches. In the coming decade we face many ministers emeritating and not enough to replace them. I know that is a concern with many of you too. May the Lord raise up men, but also preserve those ministers from the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In closing I give you these words from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 16, "*Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love*" (1 Cor. 16:13-14). Those aren't mutually exclusive charges, and I pray they are heeded this week. God is good and faithful, and praise his awesome name that he is!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the URCNA,
Rev. Mark H. Vander Pol
Foreign Delegate

Appendix 3

Report of the visit to Synod of Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) Held in Brisbane, May 19-24, 2024

Dear Brothers of CECCA,

At the invitation of the CRCA and appointment by CECCA, Rev. Wetmore attended the CRCA 2024 Synod held in Brisbane, Australia, for its entire duration, from May 19-24, as a Fraternal Delegate

1) I was warmly welcomed and enjoyed much fellowship with our CRCA brothers. I was graciously allowed time to fraternally address their Synod on behalf of URCNA and given the privilege of the floor.

2) I also networked and enjoyed fellowship with other Fraternal Delegates, many of whom we are in ecumenical relations with us: OPC, PCEA, RCNZ. (This produced immediate fruit. Prior communication with RCNZ had not been responded to, but I was seated next to the future Chairman of the RCNZ Synod, Rev. Noppers. We spent much time together, formed a friendship, and was invited to their Synod in September. I expressed my heartfelt desire to go or find someone from our committee -- provided approval from CECCA. This worked out marvelously and another committee member of CECCA will be going this September to RCNZ.)

3) I found the CRCA overall to be a strong and well-rounded Federation, very much in harmony with our own: their consistorial emphasis, parliamentary procedure and respect of the deliberative process, emphasis on Reformed education (they do not have their own Seminary, but make use of the RTC, Reformed Theological College -- *Seminary* is called *college* in Australia/New Zealand; RCNZ also makes use of this Seminary.), emphasis on missions, and they have a Reformed youth committee that resembles RYS.

4) Now I highlight areas to be aware of: The CRCA's longstanding discussions Children at the Lord's Supper continues. An overture came before Synod to strengthen uniform reformed practice among the churches, but

unfortunately it was voted down. This overture highlight the biblical/confessional requirements, that would support reformed restrictions for children attending Lord's Supper, including a public profession of faith. The overture also asked Synod to consult on this matter with churches in ecclesiastical relations, but that was also denied.

5) Related to the previous overture, Report 1 recommended there should only be only one category of membership. This created much debate and the recommendation *was* carried by a slim majority. However, since it did not meet the required 2/3 majority to change the church order it was considered lost. In the end there was only one change to the CRCA Church Order, in article 62, dealing with admission by profession of faith to communicant membership, to remove the requirement for a "public" profession of faith.

6) The previous Synodical mandate to study the question to change the Form of Subscription as a mechanism for allowing Credo Baptists to serve in the office of elder or deacon, or to be granted a preaching license, resulted in a Minority Report and a Majority Report. The Majority Report considered the confessional and biblical consequences of changing the current practise, highlighted Covenant Theology, pointed out that the differences in theology are far deeper than the single question of infant baptism, and addressed how it would impact broader Reformed Ecumenicity. The Majority Report carried by a vast majority, with synod voting to uphold full subscription for all elders and deacons. It is a matter of concern that mention was made that in some churches there already exists a diversity of views among the elders and ministers. A pastoral letter from a Synodical Committee is to be distributed among the churches regarding the expectation to abide by agreed decisions and positions.

7) Overture 5 asked synod to recognise that those preaching at church gatherings be determined by qualifications of

character, understanding of Scripture, and giftedness – *not gender*. This overture came from one Church that *does allow* women to preach and had the appearance of justifying their practice. All previous decisions of CRCA Synods have consistently opposed women preaching or in office. This overture was voted down by an overwhelming majority. It was, however, disappointing that there seemed little appetite to challenge this minister or church, which brought the overture. Nor was there anything close to rebuke to the minister or his classis on the floor of synod with regard to the scripture, confessions, and this clear error. In my private conversations concerning this matter, it was reassuring to find out that many classes had sent letters of rebuke and calling for repentance. Synod urged this congregation's classis, with the assistance of synodical visitors if required, to work with the particular church council towards the goal of bringing their practice into conformity with synodical decisions.

8) Now, as I reflected on Synod and my notes, I was overall pleased (maybe *relieved* is a more accurate word) by the actions that took place at the CRCA Synod. With regard to their debates -- of access of Children at the Lords's Supper, Credo Baptist Subscription, and the overture (of one church) to define giftedness of Preaching other than *gender* -- all of these were soundly and by a vast majority voted down. But these also generate concern for which we must watch this denomination in ecumenical relationship, and encourage them to stand firm in the Reformed Faith. It is my observation that they did not have the appetite to strongly correct those deviating from Scripture and the confessions. It may imply to an observer, that Scripture and the Confession are not clear on these subjects, or it's not that important. I do expect that these issues will continue to be brought up in the CRCA.

9) It is my prayer that the CRCA will remain biblically and confessionally reformed and our relationship with them will

grow, and the URCNA will be able to move to the second phase of Ecumenical Fellowship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Stephen Wetmore
CECCA Regional Coordinator of Australia and New Zealand
CECCA Delegate, Classis Eastern U.S.

Appendix 4

Report for Free Reformed Church Australia synod - Gerry Swets June 2024

The third week in June I flew to Perth in Western Australia. I attended the synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) as a delegate from the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA), through the CECCA committee.

The FRCA is just beginning to realize the advantages of having relationships with other churches. They have sister church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Church. The men who desire to study for ministry, attend the Canadian Reformed seminary in Hamilton Ontario. They also have developed a few other relationships but have been limited by their church order and the attitude of some of the "senior" members regarding exclusivity. Some of the agenda items of their synod were whether to build toward sister relationships with more than one Church per country(approved at synod), whether to develop a beginning level of relationships with a level of contact that would encourage starting to build on a relationship(approved), whether to enter into official relationship with URCNA (approved) and also the OPC(approved), whether to rejoin the ICRC(under further study). They are also assessing if they can begin their own seminary to eliminate sending their men to Canada to the seminary in Hamilton for 4 years (still under study).

The approval of those items was helped significantly when I shared with them the guidelines we use for our first level of Church Relations. This showed them the pathway to developing relationships officially. Their church order only had one level of relations with other churches, it was either sister church or nothing.

I was encouraged by the relationships I developed and renewing relationships I had developed on my previous visit. I had multiple men offer thanks for the URCNA, they have used our materials for missions and church planting opportunities. There also representatives from churches in Canada, Netherlands, Indonesia, Korea and New Zealand.

I also spent some time in Sydney where I was able to worship with the PCEA congregation on Sunday.

ADDRESS TO FRCA JUNE 2024

Greetings in the name of our risen and glorified Lord, Jesus Christ. It is through the Spirit, who has led us build His Church and led us into ecclesiastical fellowship with one another. Thus, it is good to be in your midst once again as a fraternal delegate to your synod and as a brother of the same household of faith.

Since 1996, the Lord has tremendously blessed the URCNA. We are a federation of 140 congregations spread throughout the United States and Canada with around 2/3 in the US. Our average church size is 181 souls, yet 44% of our congregations have less than 100 members. We consist of just over 25,000 souls. We have several church plants across North America that have not yet been organized as independent congregations. Outside of North America, we have foreign works in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Honduras, Philippines, Italy, and Romania. Many of our churches also engage in short-term mission projects organized on a local level.

We have a 2 phase policy on Churches Abroad. Our initial, Phase 1 is Ecumenical Contact where we study matters of mutual concern and exchange information and publications.

We are in Phase 1 with 6 churches. Phase 2 is Ecumenical Fellowship, where we focus on our oneness despite geographical boundaries. I would be happy to share the guidelines we use, and what is included in each of the Phases. We have 9 churches that we have moved to Phase 2, the Indonesian churches GGRC-NTT and GGRI-National, Evangelical Reformed Church in Latvia, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales, The Free Church of Scotland Continuing, The Reformed Churches in New Zealand, the Reformed Churches in South Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia and the United Reformed Churches in Congo.

In Lord's Day 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 55, we confess that we believe that, First as believers, all and everyone as members of Christ have communion with him and share in all his treasures and gifts, 2nd that everyone is duty-bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other members. This is how the United Reformed Churches in North America understand our Ecumenical Contact and Ecumenical Fellowship relationship with other Reformed churches throughout the world. Because we are united to Christ through faith vertically, we are also united to each other through faith horizontally. And we desire to come along side other Reformed churches and encourage them and have them encourage us as we continue the journey of faith together to the new heaven and new earth.

I would also like to congratulate you on producing the Australian Book of Praise, which was an issue that was discussed at Synod Bunbury; where I attended in 2018. I was notable to attend in 2021 because of covid. Covid had

a huge effect on our churches. It forced us to provide live feed for Sunday worship. We are still dealing with the effects of that, people not showing up for worship and viewing the live stream. Evil is all around us, the devil is working to destroy the church.

Our synod is also convening this week in Escondido California. At our last synod in Buffalo, New York, we formed a committee to deal with the question of virtual church and the increasing popularity of people attending church via a live stream and wrongly forgoing live attendance at worship services. Technology, as with most things, tends to bring both blessings and curses, but it also offers an opportunity to clarify our thinking on pressing issues. In other issues, will be hearing a committee report on Human sexuality, establishing guidelines regarding calling of candidates for ministry, and also continue to develop policies for foreign and home missions. With a view to clarify the "how and where" of planting and supporting new churches and missions. It also gives our US pastors an opportunity to know more about the Can Reformed church and meet some of the brothers. I am hoping it will strengthen our relationship and commitment to each other. We heard yesterday how many Reformed churches there are worldwide. It is astonishing to me as we look at our sphere of influence, it is miniscule. I would challenge you that we expand our view of the reformed churches worldwide. What is our mandate given in Acts 1:8 and Mark 16:15, Go into the world and preach the gospel. With partners and sister churches we can accomplish much, much more.

I also encourage you to be diligent, to hold fast to His Word. That you minister to those around you. Minister in love, the love we experience by the Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Your challenges may be significantly different than ours, but we still struggle every day, each of us. We ask that you pray for us as we continue to dedicate

ourselves to preaching the Christ-centered gospel, to administering the sacraments and conducting church discipline when necessary; to catechizing our youth and to educating our laity. We will pray for you as you do likewise.

I want to conclude by thanking you for your hospitality and for the opportunity to address you as a fellow-laborer in the cause of our Savior and King. I hope this brief address gives you a little glimpse into who we are as the United Reformed Churches of North America. My prayer is, and has been, that on this building block, the Lord might establish a lasting, enduring relationship that will support the advancement of His Church and His kingdom.

Your Brother in Christ, Gerry Swets
CECCA of URCNA

Appendix 5

Report on the Visit to the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches of Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE)

Written by Rev. Greg Bylsma, serving on behalf of CECCA

In the summer of 2025 my wife Charity and I had the privilege of serving in the RPCCEE during our summer sabbatical. The churches of the RPCCEE are located in Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine. Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine we did not enter or visit the churches there, but we were blessed to serve and preach in 5 different churches in Hungary and Romania during our 8 weeks of service in these countries.

Our interaction with these brothers, due to our sabbatical and time serving in the country, was somewhat atypical. We were not able to join them for an official synod meeting, but we took time to speak with representatives of the denomination while

also speaking alongside them at youth camps, co-leading Bible studies, attending and preaching in their worship services and spending time in their houses with fellowship over meals. We were exceptionally blessed throughout the time of our stay there, and rejoiced to see the beautiful faith and testimony of our brothers and sisters within this denomination.

Denominational History

Hungary embraced the truths of the Reformation very early in the history of the church. Already by 1520 the first Reformed church began in the country, and the Reformation took such strong hold of the nation that, for a time, Roman Catholicism was outlawed and all Roman Catholic churches closed. Unfortunately, liberalism and backsliding came upon the heels of reformation. By the mid 1600s a pastor openly denied the resurrection of Christ from the pulpit without being placed under church discipline. The Hungarian Reformed Church was, like in the Netherlands, closely intertwined with the government. Throughout its history there were times of revival and liberalism, and pockets in which both these forces thrived. Overall, however, the Hungarian Reformed Church has been weak in its faithfulness to Scripture off and on for centuries, with liberalism and traditionalism advancing significantly in the 20th century.

Following the World Wars, the nation of Hungary lost land to neighbouring countries as part of the censure they received for their role in the wars (Hungary unfortunately joined Hitler and killed roughly 600,000 Jews from their nation during WW2). After World War 2 Hungary, Romania and Ukraine came under communist rule. From roughly 1947 to 1989, freedom of religion, alongside many other freedoms, ceased to exist in many of these nations. The Reformed, State-endorsed denomination endorsed communism as did many other ‘Christian’ bodies. It is in this time that we read of the heroic stands of men like Romanian Richard Wurmbrand, and the work of Bible smuggling by men like Brother Andrew.

By God's grace, the Gospel and its power was not stopped despite the efforts of the communist dictatorship. Various churches and areas continued to experience revival, with one revival pertinent to the denominations history occurring in Transylvania, Romania when the pastor of a large Reformed church there was converted through the witness of a hotel desk clerk. This pastor began preaching the Scriptures as truth, with many coming to personal and vibrant faith in Christ. When communism fell in 1989, a pastor from the Bible Presbyterian Church in the US was sent to Budapest to begin a seminary and help strengthen the Reformed/Presbyterian church in this area after 40 years of communism. Many of the young men who came to faith in the Transylvanian revival, seeing the opportunity to have stronger training in the Scriptures than was previously available in their nation, went to Budapest to study under this man. After graduation, these men began preaching and working for revival in the Hungarian Reformed Church. Unfortunately the liberalism of the Hungarian Reformed Church was so entrenched that in the summer of 1998, the church's synod removed all men trained through the new 'Western' seminary in Budapest. The result of this disciplinary act was, in essence, the beginning of the RPCCEE.

Confessional Commitments and Government

The RPCCEE subscribes to the Heidelberg Catechism, the 2nd Helvetic Confession, the Westminster Confession and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. In light of their background, they have a strong emphasis upon Biblical authority and sufficiency. Office bearers take ordination vows to adhere to the confessional standards without exemptions.

While initial influence in this denomination came from the Bible Presbyterian Church, leadership within the church was able to recognize some of the legalistic tendencies that could be found in the BPC and came across in their teaching. As a result, the RPCCEE shifted away from the BPC and began to work

very closely with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. They based their Church Order upon that of the OPC, but in writing their own they also consulted with the URCNA and the International Presbyterian Church. We received visitors from this denomination to Synod Nyack in 2012.

The denomination has 2 Presbyteries. The first is comprised of the 4 churches located in Hungary and 8 churches/fellowships within Ukraine (all pastored by 2 pastors – these churches have been severely affected by the war). The second is comprised of 8-11 small churches and church plants within Romania. The churches meet yearly for their General Assembly (Synod).

The denomination is served by roughly 15 pastors. They are prayerfully moving forward with elder and deacon training, but their churches are weak in this regard. While their largest church is over 100 members, they do have a number of smaller churches and some churches do not yet have an elder and/or a deacon.

Theological Education

The RPCCEE maintained a small seminary in the north-eastern Hungarian city of Miskolc for a number of years, but has recently begun working together with both Puritan Reformed Seminary in Grand Rapids and Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in South Carolina to combine distance education with on hand discipleship of potential future pastors. They do not currently have any men from their denomination in seminary, but there are two hopefuls on their radar for the coming year and two from outside the denomination that are currently studying through them with these American seminaries.

Ecumenical Relations

The RPCCEE has similar stages to unity as does the URCNA and many denominations/federations in North America. They

are currently at “Stage 2” fellowship, the highest level of fellowship before complete organizational union, with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales, the GKSA in South Africa, and the Brazilian Presbyterian Church.

The RPCCEE accepted as a member of the International Council of Reformed Churches in 2022.

In unofficial contact, the RPCCEE has been blessed to have men from the URCNA serve among them, including Rev. Bill Boekestein, Rev. John van Eyk, and Rev. Greg Bylsma. They have also been blessed to have speakers like Rev. Ian Hamilton, Dr. Joel Beeke, Dr. Richard Philips, Dr. Joseph Pipa, Dr. Ian MacLeod and others. They utilize material from Ligonier Ministries, and one of their pastors (Rev. Peter Szabo) was invited to speak as part of the panel at a Ligonier conference in the United Kingdom.

For a small denomination, they have been well received and respected by the broader Reformed and Presbyterian community, for which we are thankful.

General and Personal Notes

I was deeply humbled to serve alongside the pastors of the RPCCEE this past summer. Their hospitality was remarkable. Their service for Christ and his kingdom was exceptionally self-sacrificial, and a model for myself and undoubtedly for others who could get to know them. While their churches vary in size, members gather with joy to praise the Lord each Lord’s Day and to attend the preaching of the Word. In general, the pastors are very well read theologically, and most pastors speak excellent English alongside Hungarian and perhaps one or two other languages. The churches are not all well off when viewed financially, but they have tremendous riches in Christ.

A few other pertinent notes:

- The churches sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in their worship services, generally using a traditional hymnbook
- Catechesis of the youth takes place, with discipleship and a personal response to the call of Christ being highly emphasized
- The churches have a strong history of testimonies; youth camps and times following worship are often punctuated by the opportunity to hear of God's work in an indivdiual's life
- They have a publishing ministry which translates and prints books in Hungarian – the first to be published was Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*

Respectfully Submitted,
Greg Bylsma

Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU)
Report to Synod Calgary

I. Introduction

Esteemed Brothers,

Our committee is privileged to serve the churches in our ecumenical opportunities and responsibilities according to the following mandate adopted by Synod Hudsonville 1999:

> *With a view toward complete church unity, the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity shall pursue and make recommendations regarding the establishment of ecumenical relations with those Reformed and Presbyterian federations selected by synod and in keeping with Article 36 of the Church Order. The Committee shall execute its task and carry out its mandate by following synod's Guidelines for Ecumenicity and Church Unity. The committee shall keep the churches regularly informed of its work and the progress made, and shall publish its reports to synod in the agenda.*
> *(1999 Acts, pages 17 & 49)*

From our early beginnings as a federation through today, the pursuit of genuine biblical and confessional ecumenicity has been an integral component of our identity as churches. Indeed, it is reflected in our name "United Reformed". For over two decades, we have been richly blessed (and have been a blessing) through our contact and growing fellowship with many confessionally faithful Reformed and Presbyterian bodies that share with us like and precious faith.

How are we doing in this pursuit?
Are we continuing to make progress toward further church unity?

The answer to these two questions depends on how we understand unity. We often speak of the goal of "organic unity" – for example, this term is used in NAPARC's purpose statement, which reads as follows:

> *Confessing Jesus Christ as only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches …. That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of the council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, council, and cooperate in various matters with one another* ***and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches*** *that are of like faith and practice. [emphasis added]*

But it is helpful and necessary for us all to clarify what we mean by this word "organic". According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word "organic" as it relates to change in a relationship refers to change that "happens or develops naturally over time, without being forced or planned by anyone." If we apply this to our mandate and mission, we would do well to distinguish between that church union which is "**organic**" and that which is "**organizational**".

Although this has not always been clear, it is a well-established distinction in connection with our ecumenical relations and pursuit of church unity. In an article titled, "The Ecumenical Imperative," Rev. Ralph Pontier writes repeatedly of "spiritual unity" and "organizational unity." For example, he writes:

> *The error of liberal ecumenical efforts is to seek* ***organizational*** *unity where there is no* ***spiritual*** *unity. However, where* ***spiritual*** *unity exists, evidenced by a good confession of faith, federations of true churches must always strive for the greatest degree of visible,*

> ***organizational*** *unity that providential circumstances allow. [emphasis added]*

Our sister churches have emphasized this distinction as well. For example, the Canadian and American Reformed Churches wrote the following to our Synod London 2010:

> *The Canadian Reformed Churches have always tried, with many shortcomings, to take the high priestly prayer of our Lord as recorded in John 17, with great seriousness. … Some people see this as being a reference to* ***spiritual*** *unity with little or no implications for* ***organizational****,* ***structural*** *or* ***visible*** *unity. We respectfully disagree and are convinced that while being* ***spiritual*** *in character, this unity should come to* ***concrete*** *expression as well. [emphasis added]*

What else can "spiritual unity" refer to, except for that unity which comes from our shared life in Christ, and is natural and dynamic in its character? This is a unity that cannot be forced upon us from the outside, but must come from within; a unity that cannot be planned by humans, but comes about as part of the eternal plan of God; a unity that is **organic**.

And what else can "structural", "visible", "concrete" unity refer to, except for that unity which is a result of two federations carefully working to bring their processes and practices in further alignment? This is a unity that requires much planning; a unity that is **organizational**.

Our committee's guidelines affirm this distinction implicitly, though not explicitly. The aspiration always before us is "complete church unity" and "integrated federative church unity." Within that, we recognize organic and organizational aspects when we say of the third and final phase of ecumenicity that it "is one of integration with the intent that the two federations, **being united in true faith**, [i.e., organic union] and where contiguous geography permits, shall proceed to

complete church unity, that is, ecclesiastical union [i.e., organizational union]."

As a committee, we strive for unity, asking God for his grace and his Spirit to operate so that, in the URCNA's relations with other churches, we would increasingly reflect the unity he calls us to as one body, worshipping one Lord, confessing one faith, united in one baptism through Jesus Christ, the Savior of all who believe. Does this require organizational unity? Perhaps not always. But certainly, the unity we enjoy in the truth within our own federation bears witness to our conviction that where such organizational expressions of unity are possible, it is good. In admitting the ongoing challenges of organizational unity, we are by no means shifting or limiting the focus of CERCU. Rather, we are refining our language with the hope that the added clarity will motivate us all and help us hone in on those activities that will bear most fruit in the practical pursuit of unity.

Our Savior prays to the end that our spiritual unity is manifested (see Foundational Principles of Church Government, number 10). We take organizational unity to be an application of this, a helpful way of bringing the unity for which Jesus prayed to more concrete expression, even as we already experience an organic unity with those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. In the end, we can simply say that God **has** brought us all together in Christ, he **will** bring us together in glory, and so we can work together **now**.

We seek to carry out this important work joyfully according to the following synodical guidelines:

GUIDELINES FOR ECUMENICITY AND CHURCH UNITY
United Reformed Churches in North America

Phase One - Corresponding Relations

The first phase of ecumenicity is one of exploration, with the intent that by correspondence and dialogue, mutual understanding and appreciation may develop in the following areas of the two federations' lives:

a. view and place of the Holy Scriptures
b. creeds and confessions
c. formula of subscription to the confessions
d. significant factors in the two federations' history,
1. theology, and ecclesiology
e. church order and polity
f. liturgy and liturgical forms
g. preaching, sacraments, and discipline
h. theological education for ministers

Ecumenical observers are to be invited to all broader assemblies with a regular exchange of the minutes of these assemblies and of other publications that may facilitate ecumenical relations.

Phase Two - Ecclesiastical Fellowship

The second phase of ecumenicity is one of recognition and is entered into only when the broadest assemblies of both federations agree this is desirable. The intent of this phase is to recognize and accept each other as true and faithful churches of the Lord Jesus, and in acknowledgment of the desirability of eventual integrated federative church unity, by establishing ecclesiastical fellowship entailing the following:

a. the churches shall assist each other as much as possible in the maintenance, defense, and promotion of Reformed doctrine, liturgy, church polity, and discipline
b. the churches shall consult each other when entering into ecumenical relations with other federations
c. the churches shall accept each other's certificates of membership, admitting such members to the Lord's Table
d. the churches shall open the pulpits to each other's ministers, observing the rules of the respective

churches
e. the churches shall consult each other before major changes to the confessions, church government, or liturgy are adopted
f. the churches shall invite and receive each other's ecclesiastical delegates who shall participate in the broader assemblies with an advisory voice

Entering this phase requires ratification by a majority of the consistories as required in Church Order, Art.36.

Phase Three - Church Union

The third phase of ecumenicity is one of integration with the intent that the two federations, being united in true faith, and where contiguous geography permits, shall proceed to complete church unity, that is, ecclesiastical union. This phase shall be accomplished in two steps:

Step A – Development of the Plan of Ecclesiastical Union
Having recognized and accepted each other as true and faithful churches, the federations shall make preparation for and a commitment to eventual, integrated federative church unity. They shall construct a plan of ecclesiastical union which shall outline the timing, coordination, and/or integration of the following:

a. the broader assemblies
b. the liturgies and liturgical forms
c. the translations of the Bible and the confessions
d. the song books for worship
e. the church polity and order
f. the missions abroad

Entering this step of Phase Three requires ratification by the consistories as required in Church Order, Art. 36.

Step B – Implementation of the Plan of Ecclesiastical Union
This final step shall only be taken when the broadest assemblies

of both federations give their endorsement and approval to a plan of ecclesiastical union. Entering this step of Phase Three requires ratification by a majority of the consistories as required in Church Order, Art. 36.

II. Committee Membership and Budget

a. Committee Membership and Terms

The classes are reminded of their continuing responsibility to appoint or reappoint classical representatives (and alternates) to CERCU in the manner the classes deem appropriate.

The committee is currently comprised of eight classical representatives, one per classis. These members are as follows:

Classical representatives:

Classis	**Delegate**	**Alternate**
1. Central US	Rev. Harold Miller	Rev. Dan Donovan
2. Eastern US	Elder Robert Schmor	Rev. Aaron Verhoef
3. Michigan	Rev. Casey Freswick	Rev. Jacob London
4. Ontario-East	Rev. Joel Dykstra	Rev. Martin Overgaauw
5. Pacific NW	Rev. Jason Vander Horst	Rev. Josh Feil
6. Southwest US	Rev. Daniel Ventura	Rev. Daniel Hyde
7. SW Ontario	Rev. Jeremy Veldman	Rev. Peter Vellenga
8. W Canada	Rev. James Roosma	Rev. Simon Lievaart

b. Budget

We are asking that the annual budget for CERCU be set at $12,000. The annual meeting of NAPARC each year is the primary place that CERCU meets and that is where the majority of our budget is spent. As a committee, we see the need to continue to have at least one face-to-face meeting each year. The importance of classical representation necessitates our

being a large committee. It is also essential to travel for the synods/GA's of other churches to continue our encouragement in unity. This year, we have the privilege of hosting the NAPARC meetings; we will be doing so in Oak Lawn, IL.

III. Reports on Churches in Ecumenical Relations

Your committee counts it a privilege to engage in ecumenical dialogue and seeks to promote greater unity among 12 synodically approved bodies of churches in North America. They are as follows:

Churches in Phase One – *Corresponding Relations*

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)
2. Free Reformed Churches (FRCNA)
3. Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)
4. Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)
5. Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Kosin (KPCA)
6. Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)
7. Presbyterian Reformed Church

Churches in Phase Two – *Ecclesiastical Fellowship*

1. Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)
2. Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)
3. Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)
4. Reformed Church of Quebec / L'Eglise reformee du Quebec (ERQ)
5. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)

At Synod Wyoming 2016 CERCU proposed "Guidelines for speeches of fraternal observers and delegates to our Synod" (Article 20.10 of the *Acts of Synod*) which was approved and immediately implemented. Those guidelines have served us well in past synods and, we trust, will continue to do so going forward.

A. Churches in Phase One – *Corresponding Relations*

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP)

The ARP was founded in Philadelphia in 1782. It was a combination of the American portions of two Scottish presbyteries that had previously left the Church of Scotland: The Associate Presbytery began in 1733 and the Reformed Presbytery in 1743. It owns Erskine College and Seminary. The churches no longer are required to practice exclusive psalmody, which was its heritage. In the last quarter of the 20th century, they threw off the influence of neoorthodoxy, which reached the height of its influence among them in the 1960's.

As of 2025, the ARP had 8 presbyteries with a total number of organized and unorganized churches at 270. Their total membership was 25,597, with 22,554 of those being communicant members. The ARP and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) continue in a process of growing closer to each other as denominations. They have expressed this in more urgent unity meetings and joint General Assemblies at Bonclarken, Flat Rock, NC, among other activities.

The ARP holds to the Westminster Confession of Faith as well as the Larger and Shorter Catechisms; there is a 1799 edition, particular to the ARP. In November 2015 they reported to NAPARC that in addition to these, their standards include "our recently revised Form of Government, our recently revised Directory of Public Worship, and our Book of Discipline, which is currently under revision." They are members of NAPARC, ICRC, and the World Reformed Fellowship. They are currently studying the issues of "Kinism" and "race realism," pernicious doctrines that are springing up within various denominations, including their own.

The number of presbyteries has declined, although not the overall membership. This is due to two reasons: first, there was a disciplinary matter that led to the dissolution of their largest and most historic presbytery. While we recognize the difficulty in such a decision, they are to be commended for their desire to uphold biblical and confessional fidelity. The other reason a presbytery left was for the establishment of a new ARP denomination in Canada. We pray that this body will flourish and find its place in the ecclesiastical landscape of faithful denominations in Canada.

The ARP has elevated our status to "Fraternal Relations," which is akin to our Phase 2. Lord willing, we are delighted to have a brother representing them at the current synod. We continue to explore Phase 1 topics with the ARP with a view to bringing a recommendation to Synod 2028 regarding moving forward in our relations.

2. Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)

The Free Reformed Churches of North America were established in 1921. As of October 2023, they had a total of 23 congregations with a total membership of 5,464. They hold to the Three Forms of Unity. Their churches are scattered across North America, mainly in Canada. The FRCNA emphasize their roots in the secession that occurred in the established Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands in 1834.

The FRCNA are the spiritual descendants of the churches in the Netherlands which did not join in the merger of 1892, which formed the GKN. They were then, and are today, particularly concerned about the influence of Abraham Kuyper, most specifically in relation to his view of presumptive regeneration in connection with baptism. Although they trace their roots to the Netherlands, they greatly value and appreciate the theology and preaching of the English and Scottish Puritans and those who followed in their footsteps especially the experimental and discriminating character of Puritan preaching, their emphasis on

the need for conversion, cultivating a close personal walk with the Lord, and eschewing worldliness. They work closely with the Heritage Reformed Churches in the operation of the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI.

A number of our own URC churches have developed very good working relationships with FRCNA congregations through connections with Christian schooling, conferences, ministries to migrant workers, as well as through mutual involvement with Word & Deed and in Redemption Prison Ministries.

In terms of further progression to Phase 2, we note challenges when it comes to our different degrees of openness regarding fellowship at the Lord's Table and our pulpits. Most FRCNA churches are content to keep the pulpit supply within their own circle of churches; if our ministers were permitted to preach in FRCNA pulpits, the process would involve their ecumenical committee, and may require a colloquium doctum with said committee. That being said, there have been instances where FRCNA and URCNA ministers have exchanged pulpits.

3. Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)

The HRC was established in 1993. Their synod meets annually with each of their 11 congregations sending a delegation. As of September 2024, they had a total membership of 2,262. They confess both the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards.

They operate the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, MI, which enrolls over 100 students from several different countries and church denominations. Apart from the main campus in Grand Rapids, Puritan Reformed has five global extension campuses for the ThM degree in Africa (Pretoria, South Africa), Asia (Taipei, Taiwan), Europe (London, United Kingdom), the Middle East (Cairo, Egypt) and South America (São José dos Campos, Brazil).

The HRC has five levels of fellowship, which are as follows:

Level 1: Informal Contact
Level 2: Formal Correspondence
Level 3: Limited Fellowship
Level 4: Full Fellowship
Level 5: Full Union

In 2013 the HRC voted to enter into their Level 2 with us which corresponds with our Phase One. As our discussions have continued under the blessing of God, our committees have mutually determined to bring forward recommendations to move to the next level/phase, respectively. This means that we would move into their Level 3, and we are recommending that we progress to Phase 2 with them (see Recommendation 3 below). In the following pages, we outline (1) their articulation and practice of ecumenical relations; (2) their extensive involvement in missions; (3) their recent ecumenical activity; (4) the results of our discussions with them concerning experiential and discriminatory preaching, including covenant membership and participation in the sacraments.

The HRC Document that categorizes their practice of ecumenical relations

FIVE LEVELS OF ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP (HRC)
June 2024

Introduction

The relationship of our churches to other denominations is regulated by Synod. Our churches, in order to manifest the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ, seek contact with other Reformed churches, which to the best of our knowledge, are churches that maintain an unreserved commitment to, and agreement with:

(1) the infallibility and inerrancy of Scriptures as the Word of God and
(2) the validity and relevance of our confessions.

The Interchurch/Church Correspondence Committee is the Synod liaison committee that interacts with other denominations and churches' committees and representatives. Often, and perhaps ideally, relationships develop and grow through local church contacts and interactions. At the same time, Synod permits this committee freely to explore and engage in broader interactions with other churches and denominations and requires the Committee to report back regularly to Synod regarding these meetings. The Committee does not need permission to initiate contacts but can seek out and/or respond to requests sent to it.

The first meetings with other churches and denominations would seek to determine the doctrinal position of the denomination or congregation and whether they uphold the Three Forms of Unity and/or the Westminster Standards. On-going meetings are encouraged between the Committee and the denominations with whom there is official ecclesiastical fellowship. One of the goals of these meetings is seeking whether to move to the next level of fellowship. When meaningful progress is being made, including mutual understanding, a common bond and commitment, and growing together, and the Committee believes that the time is right to move to the next level (generally, after being at a level for a minimum of two years), the Committee will recommend the change to the next Synod for its consideration and decision. All levels of fellowship and changes in levels must be approved by Synod.

As noted below, we have five levels that eventually lead to full organizational union (Level 5).

1. Approved Communication
2. Formal Correspondence,
3. Formal Fellowship,
4. Complete Correspondence, and
5. Complete Fellowship.

A. Level 1: Approved Communication

1. This level begins with formal approval by the Synod that the committee continue its informal work with the denomination/congregation;

2. Representatives from each other's interchurch relations committees or other delegates meet to seek confirmation of the unreserved commitment to, and agreement with:

(1) the infallibility and inerrancy of Scriptures as the Word of God and
(2) the validity and relevance of our Confessions.

a. develop an appreciation of each other's history;
b. discuss what we have in common, and where we differ;
c. gauge the degree of doctrinal and spiritual affinity.

B. Level 2: Formal Correspondence

This level would include everything under Level 1 and the following:

1. Periodically inviting those at this level to attend and address our broadest assembly and anticipate them to do the same;

2. Copies of the official minutes, without confidential material, are sent to the other denomination/congregation's representatives with the understanding they in turn send us their minutes as well;

3. Cooperation is encouraged in areas such as: para-church mission and world relief organizations, and Christian education;

C. Level 3: Formal Fellowship

This level would include everything under Levels 1 and 2 and the following:

1. As per local church/consistory's policies and practices:
    a. Opening the Lord's Table to each other
    b. Opening the pulpit to each other's ministers.

2. Frequent attendance and addressing of each other's broadest assembly (visiting delegates attending our Synod may be asked for advice at discretion of the chairman).

3. Offering spiritual support consisting of:

    a. calling attention to each other's spiritual and ecclesiastical problems with mutual efforts toward scriptural solutions;
    b. warning each other of spiritual dangers which arise, and which spread and begin to dominate the church of Christ;
    c. correcting each other in love regarding any slackening in connection with the confession or practice of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

4. Cooperation in areas of common responsibility, for example:

    a. Offering material support and cooperation or consultation with regard to mission work, theological training, and such like

b. Develop a joint statement particularly on those doctrines on which there are divergent views in the Reformed church community for the purpose of gauging the extent of doctrinal unity.

D. Level 4: Complete Correspondence

This relationship would include everything under Levels 1-3 as well as:

1. The mutual acceptance of each other's (membership) attestations;

2. Calling each other's ministers (without any further examination);

3. Mutual consultation with each other regarding significant actions, such as the revision of the confession or of the Church Order; the creation, revision, or cancellation of a relationship of correspondence, etc.; Also, there may be modifications to this level to make it correspond with the other denomination/congregations' levels of relationship.

4. Ongoing and deepening cooperation in areas of common responsibility especially at the local levels and even at committee levels within the denomination

5. Adoption of a joint statement particularly on those doctrines on which there are divergent views in the Reformed church community for the purpose of showing the extent of doctrinal unity. Such adoption does not constitute the acceptance of an extra creedal or otherwise binding statement.

E. Level 5: Complete Fellowship

Full union means that a complete amalgamation of two federation of churches will/has taken place. Such amalgamation will only be proposed after:

1. both federations have functioned harmoniously and efficiently at Level 4 for a reasonable period of time;

2. have merged their various committees and denominational work together as much as possible;

In further preparation for complete fellowship, the federations will have previously agreed upon:

a. a set of doctrinal standards
b. a church order
c. an ecclesiastical structure (e.g., Classes, Regional Synods, Synods)
d. any additional issues.

The pathway to complete fellowship requires the Synods of both federations approving the proposed merger by a 2/3 majority.

CURRENT LEVELS OF ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP (HRC) June 2025

Denomination/Federation	Level	Latest Change
Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)	4	2014
Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCSC)	3	2010
United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA)	2	2013
Presbyterian Reformed Churches	2	2014
Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)	2	2019
Bible Presbyterian Churches (BPC)	2	2019
Orthodox Presbyterian Churches (OPC)	2	2020
Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)	2	2020

Bekennende Evangelische Reformierte Gemeinden (BERG)	2	2020
Southern Presbyterian Churches (SPC)	1	2007
Reformed Churches of the United States (RCUS)	1	2014
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches (ARPC)	1	2017
Korean American Presbyterian Churches (KAPC)	1	2017
Korean Presbyterian Churches in America (KPCA)	1	2017
Hersteld Hervormde Kerk (HHK)	1	2020
First Evangelical Church of Singapore (ECS)	1	2024

Involvement in Missions

The HRC have numerous ministry projects with other NAPARC churches. In the area of theological education, they cooperate with the FRCNA in the work of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS) in the USA, and the work of Mukhanyo Theological College (MTC) in South Africa. We are working with the HRC and the FRCNA in the Niagara region of Canada in the outreach ministry to migrant workers.

The HRC also has a mission work on the island of Sumba in Indonesia.
Reformation Heritage Books (RHB) is another fruitful mission endeavor led by the HRC, as their books sell around the world.

Two church plants currently in progress are in Kalamazoo, MI and Chilliwack, BC (an outreach to the Chinese population).

Recent Ecumenical Activities

PRTS partners with over 25 like-minded seminaries around the world.

In concert with our federation, as well as the FRCNA, RCNA, and CanRC, the HRC have set up the Fraser Valley Reformed Christian Counselling Society in British Columbia.

Recently, the HRC Synod approved and appointed a PRC

Steering Committee to investigate and implement a blended model Christian undergraduate college program (online with some on-site, in person opportunities). This could prove to be a great blessing for post-secondary students from NAPARC churches who are looking for a faithful school to serve their post-secondary needs.

The HRC and FRCNA have held ongoing discussions towards full federative union, and have put together a joint "Unity Committee" toward this end. The committee has 4 FRCNA & 4 HRC members and produces one report for both synods. This report is discussed during a joint session of both synods when concurrent synods are held (every second year). At the present time, they are pausing full federative unity talks to strengthen unity among the members (the "grass roots"), and are choosing to humbly celebrate and seek to enhance the many ways in which they are already exercising high levels of unity, examples of which include pulpit exchanges, pastors serving interchangeably, PRTS, and the progress made by the Unity Committee. This reminds us quite vividly of our history with the CanRC, in which we made similar progress and have since shifted similarly in focus.

The most recent HRC Synod approved a recommendation to support the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC) in their desire to join as a member church of NAPARC. As you will note elsewhere in this report, we are recommending the same to this body.

The HRC are working with the RPCNA to organize a consultation meeting on theological education.

We have joined with the HRC and others (FRCNA, RPCNA, and PRCA) to explore the possibilities of forming an advisory panel (a committee formed of delegated persons from NAPARC denominations) that could provide experienced and wise counsel on matters of sexual abuse within our churches, when requested or referred by a participating NAPARC church

federation.

Experiential Preaching, Membership in the Covenant, Participation in the Sacraments

We have met with our HRC counterparts at the NAPARC meetings each of the last few years and have experienced a great deal of warmth and affinity with one another. We continue to be encouraged by the outgoing and forward-looking emphasis of the HRC leaders; it is somewhat reflective of the reach PRTS is having in the world. We continue to encourage active engagement in opportunities for advancing this relationship at the consistorial level as well, and feel that taking the next step as federations will help further facilitate relationships at the local level. The opening of pulpits to one another is one important aspect of this (see Level 3 description, above).

In addition to the NAPARC meetings, we have met twice (Jan 2024 and Jan 2025) to discuss the topic of experiential and discriminatory preaching, and how this is similar and different among our churches (see Appendix A for the representative statement that served as a starting point for our discussions). As previously reported to Synod 2024, our committee members affirmed our basic agreement to the principles of experiential preaching as summarized in an article presented to the committee, while making it clear that the application or sermonic form of those principles may not look exactly the same from church to church. The HRC brothers noted that experiential preaching is more than just distinguishing between the saved and unsaved; it diagnoses the various spiritual conditions that are likely to be present and addresses them all, as the text encourages. We emphasized our common desire to avoid “experientialism” on the one hand, and a lack of experiential focus, on the other. We discussed the impact this experiential emphasis has on professions of faith and participation in the Lord’s Supper among the HRC. Although they are still culturally influenced by their history, major

changes in their practices were noted. All those professing their faith receive pastoral encouragement to come to the Table. We share a common desire to avoid “presumptive regeneration” views as well as “presumptive reprobation”; we baptize according to God’s promise, and consider our youth accordingly.

Historically, we have a common history in the Afscheiding of 1834. As we analyze some of our different emphases, it is fair to say that they identify more closely with this 1834 secession, whereas we are in many respects products of the 1886 Doleantie and the subsequent union in 1892, with more influence among us from such notable figures as Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck.

We have consistently come away from our conversations with a strong sense of the unity we share in the faith, and also in our Reformed expression of it. Where there are differences, our doctrine and practice are similarly rooted in the gospel, and we have no doubt that progressing in our ecumenical relations with one another will have a strengthening impact on our churches, to the glory of God.

4. Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC)

The KAPC was established in 1978. They are a primarily Korean speaking church which makes a pursuit of fuller union with them complicated. Their membership has risen since our last report. As of November 2024, they have 60,000 members in 650 congregations over 31 presbyteries. Most of their growth has taken place due to immigration to America. Their churches are located primarily in large urban centers. They hold a General Assembly annually.

We met with the KAPC at NAPARC 2025 and had an informative and warm meeting. We learned that they value Christian education enormously. They are a confessional and creedal denomination, and are most familiar with the

Heidelberg Catechism among the Three Forms of Unity. They have a Korean version of the Apostles' Creed that does not include the phrase "he descended into hell." The area of greatest divergence among us is church government. We discussed the nature and function of broader and higher authorities, and the nature of advice and adjudication. Although they are largely Korean, they do have some English congregations (for example, in California). The KAPC have multiple seminaries, like we do; this causes some divergence in doctrine and practice. They are currently struggling with low enrollment, and so are seeking ways to address the shortage.

5. Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Kosin (KPCA)

The KPCA was established in 1985 and, as of September 2025, have 119 churches. Interestingly, they count 301 men as ordained ministers within their midst, along with 166 ruling elders. No data on the number of deacons and members was available. They have active mission fields in many countries where Koreans have immigrated, including in the Amazon, China, Philippines, Japan, Cuba, Nepal, Uganda, Guatemala. Their general assembly meets every October.

This is a denomination which is even more connected to Korea than the KAPC. Their worship services are in Korean, and they have some cultural sensibilities that are distinctly Korean (a high degree of honor and submission to those more elderly is noticeable). Their delegates to NAPARC – who were younger men – spoke of how these cultural elements are a potential hurdle for the next generation, who desire English-speaking churches in a largely American cultural context. In fact, this generational difference is starting to show itself within the ranks of the ministers as well. We met with members of the KPCA at NAPARC for the first time this year, and look forward to future conversations where we might have opportunity to learn from one another and assist one another.

6. Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

The PCA was established in 1973 as a break off of the PCUSA over the issue of the inerrancy of scripture. It is the largest member church of NAPARC. As of Dec 2024, the PCA had over 400,000 members in 1,964 churches/mission works. They hold to the Westminster Standards. In addition to NAPARC, they are members of the National Association of Evangelicals and the World Reformed Fellowship.

The PCA has two levels of ecclesiastical relationships. They designate their entry level of relations as Corresponding Relations. Fraternal Relations is the more intense level of relations, one which they have with all NAPARC denominations or federations by virtue of membership in NAPARC. This means that short of the pursuit of a merger, from the perspective of the PCA we are already in their highest level of relations.

Given their size, the PCA also includes a breadth of doctrine and practice that the other NAPARC federations/denominations do not experience. At times, this is wonderful. At other times, this can be the cause of contention. There are questions as to whether or not the PCA is undergoing an “identity crisis.” This was acknowledged very openly by their delegation to NAPARC, given some of the issues and questions that have arisen in the past year. These include questions over ethnic diversity and acknowledgement within the church, the role of women in the church, and the adherence to established PCA polity and practice in some of the larger churches.

As a committee, we were extremely encouraged by the manner and content of the speech of the delegates to NAPARC. We also note the great blessing many PCA teachers have been to our federation, including the moderator of their 2025 General Assembly, Kevin DeYoung, whose books and podcasts are widely made use of in our midst. The Geneva Benefits group is an example of an organizational effort within the PCA that has

proven to be a great blessing for us.

Regarding study committees, one committee has been struck to explore revisions to The Directory of Public Worship. Another committee has been established to study "the relationship between Christian Nationalism, Ethno-Nationalism, and related teachings" and "write a report that gives pastoral guidance when addressing congregations, new members, and future officers of the PCA." We anticipate that the URCNA will benefit from this report upon its completion.

7. Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC)

The PresRC is the smallest group in NAPARC. It is an indigenous North American group of churches continuing historic Scottish Presbyterian orthodoxy in doctrine, worship, government, and discipline, on the basis of a conviction that these principles and practices are founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God. This body consists of 126 members in 6 congregations. They are committed to a strict adherence to "The Directory for the Publick Worship Of God" (1645) and exclusive psalmody. All of their churches have ministers, but most of their ministers are bi-vocational since their congregations are small and unable to fully support their pastors financially. There are 9 ruling elders spread across the 6 churches.

Their closest fraternal ties are with the HRC and the FRCNA, although the PresRC do not themselves have any categories of ecumenical relations; they simply work within the levels of their ecumenical partners.

In terms of mission work, they labor abroad in Liberia; here in North America, they are exploring a church plant in Maryland.

B. Churches in Phase Two – *Ecclesiastical Fellowship*

1. Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)

We have been in a Phase Two relationship with the Canadian Reformed churches since the ratification of the decision of Synod Escondido 2001. We thank God for this relationship and believe the Lord continues to use it for much mutual blessing between the churches of our respective federations.

The CanRC were established in 1950, and so 2025 marked their 75th anniversary. As of January 2025, the CanRC consisted of 77 congregations/mission works (69 organized congregations) and 20,385 members. Their current fields of foreign missionary labor are: Brazil, Indonesia, Asia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and West Timor. They also help with the "Reformational Study Centre" in South Africa. They continue to operate a federational seminary in Hamilton, ON. Several URC students have graduated from the Canadian Reformed Seminary in the past number of years. This has been a blessing to have a faithful seminary option in Canada.

The CanRC have recently revamped their categories and language of ecumenical relations significantly. Their committee is called CER (Committee for Ecumenical Relations), and they have three levels of relationships. They have Ecclesiastical Contact with 6 churches, and Ecclesiastical Fellowship with 15 churches. Among those in Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF), they distinguish between "A", which is "more intense", and "B", which is "less intense". There are 12 churches in EF A relationships, and 3 churches in EF B relationships.

In many places, our Phase Two relationship has borne the fruit of much greater spiritual unity with Canadian Reformed brothers and sisters and congregations in ways that could not have been imagined but a few decades ago. While we thank God for this, it must also be acknowledged that this is not an experience that has been shared by everyone. As the Canadian

Reformed Churches exist almost exclusively in Canada, lack of interaction with many of our churches in the US is a large factor. It has been freely admitted by some Americans that there does exist an American-centric mentality that tends not to think of Canadians. Be that as it may, it is not the only factor. Even within Canada, there remains skepticism among some churches of our respective federations, owing to a history of separation, antagonism, and isolation, and/or a conviction of incompatibility in terms of church government. The Canadian Reformed are perceived by some of us as being more hierarchical in polity. Generally, there doesn't appear to be enthusiasm among United Reformed Churches for beginning to function together under the Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO). Historically, church polity has been one of the three remaining areas of divergence among us; the other two are seminary education and the approved songs for worship.

However! The latest CanRC Synod approved a substantial change to their church order that is encouraging, from a URCNA perspective. Whereas until now local churches have agreed to sing only the songs approved by synod, now the local consistories will have the freedom to approve songs. This brings them in alignment with our practice, and should further encourage the bond of unity we share with one another.

From the draft version of the Acts of Synod Aldergrove 2025:
Recommendation 5.1
To amend CO Art. 55 to read:
The 150 Psalms of the Bible are foundational to the church's worship, and are to be sung frequently in the worship services. General Synod shall adopt metrical versions of the psalms and shall approve hymns for inclusion in a song book which shall, as a rule, have the principal place in the worship of the church. Consistory may also approve the singing of alternate settings of the psalms and additional hymns, provided they are in harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity.

As inter-church committee members at NAPARC, we agreed

(both URCNA and CanRC delegates) that the remaining matters of divergence between us are as follows:

(Historic) Differing Practice of Ecclesial Authority - Although in principle both the URCNA and the Canadian Reformed hold to a federational character of ecclesiology, the way that is actually practiced differs. Given its history in the CRC, the URCNA Church Order takes a more localized approach, emphasizing the authority of the local consistory, whereas the Canadian Reformed Church has a stronger sense of uniformity and accountability with the broader assemblies. Because both federations have operated under their current practices for some time, merging them is challenging.

Regional Differences (including the Bi-National Reality) – Geographically, the URCNA spans two countries. Both countries have regional and cultural differences, creating diversity even within our federation. The Canadian Reformed, on the other hand, is predominantly represented by Canadian churches. There is still work to do to learn to understand and respect the various regional and cultural differences among us, as we continue to cherish our organic (i.e., spiritual) unity and common Reformed heritage.

Stewardship & Timing - Both federations have invested considerable effort in pursuing full organizational (i.e., structural) unity, and, in the Lord's providence, that has not occurred on the timetable we had hoped. But yet the Lord has richly blessed these efforts in the growth and beauty of our organic unity and cooperative efforts for the Lord's kingdom. We continue to love, respect and honor each other and will work to embrace the organic unity we have in Christ. We pray that in the Lord's timing and way, a path toward organizational unity will be realized.

To reiterate: our committees both acknowledge how close we are to one another, as federations. We also see, however, that we remain in an indefinite pause. We know that any further

organizational unity will need to come from the bottom-up (i.e., church member experiences leading to consistory overtures to classis and then synod vs. committee recommendations). That being said, we as inter-church committee members expressed our mutual commitment to encourage the **organic** unity that is so clearly present among us, as members naturally interact and become intertwined with one another in the life of the kingdom.

Practical steps forward that we commend to the churches for their consideration include:

- a combined prayer map of Canadian Reformed and United Reformed mission workers
- a composite mission board (the Lighthouse Ministries board is a model)
- a combined church plant (there was such an attempt in Ontario already)
- a shared podcast (whether pastors or not, the most important part would be that it includes at least one URCNA person and one CanRC person)
    - could Abounding Grace Radio and Real Talk collaborate, as an example?
- shared office-bearer training (through *The Word and Spirit* institute in Canada, Karlo Janssen and John van Eyk have already done so once)
- continued meetings between the ecumenical committee members

We desire to reiterate once again how much we cherish the current degree of unity among us. We are committed to continual efforts in overcoming lack of information and interaction among our respective churches. Though we still have issues to work through, our federations have been mutually blessed by one another, and we anticipate this blessing to continue. Pulpit exchanges, sharing of schools, conferences, seminaries, youth camps, mission works, and church plants are all being blessed by the Lord. Such church unity is a gift of the Spirit. As we work and wait for the Lord, we are comforted in

knowing that there is only one, holy, catholic church.

2. Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

At our last synod, we erroneously reported that the RCUS began in 1746. In actuality, they were established in 1725 by German immigrants, meaning that they had opportunity to celebrate their tricentennial this past year, giving thanks to God for 300 years of his mercies to them. As of December 2024, the RCUS had a membership of 3,547 people over 47 churches and mission works.

In many places where RCUS and URCNA congregations exist side-by-side, we have good connection and mutually serve one another. We have enjoyed a Phase Two relationship with the RCUS since Synod Calgary 2004. The RCUS is a faithful federation which holds to the Three Forms of Unity. They operate a small seminary (Heidelberg Seminary) in Sioux Falls, SD. In our annual meetings at NAPARC, it has become clear that there is not a great desire of moving the relationship forward between our churches. The RCUS seem content to keep things the way that they are at this point.

In terms of ecumenical relations, the RCUS have two categories: Fraternal Relations and Corresponding Relations. They have Fraternal Relations with the following 7 federations/denominations:

In North America:

Canadian Reformed Churches; Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America; Orthodox Presbyterian Church; United Reformed Churches of North America

Abroad:

Reformed Fellowship Church of Kenya; Pearl of the Orient Covenant Reformed Church (Philippines); United Reformed Church in Congo

They have Corresponding Relations with the following 5 churches/federations:

In North America:
Heritage Reformed Churches; Restoration Bible Church of Baha, Mexico; Villas La Joya, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

Abroad:
Abundant Life Bible Church of Venezuela; Evangelical Reformed Church of Lahti, Finland

At our latest NAPARC meeting, we discussed a situation that involves both our churches; namely, that a congregation has left the RCUS and a pastor from the URC has left to serve this church. It was noted that the RCUS holds no ill will towards the URCNA in this case.

We encourage those classes and congregations in geographic proximity with RCUS classes and congregations to continue to promote and enhance the unity of faith we enjoy with this body through the exchange of fraternal delegates at broader assemblies, and in local engagement and encouragement of combined activities with RCUS churches as the Lord allows.

3. Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The OPC began by taking a stand against liberalism and modernism in the PCUSA in the 1930's, and continue to shine faithfully in the North American ecclesiastical scene. Their membership is now 33,566 members among 341 churches and mission works. We continue to be thankful for the OPC's strong emphasis in church planting and mission works.

We have been in Phase Two with the OPC since Synod Schererville 2007, and our relationship has continued to grow. We view them as an older sister who continues to teach us many valuable lessons. We continue to thank the Lord for the

blessing of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal which was produced in cooperation with the OPC.

When we met this year at NAPARC, we discussed church planting opportunities and ways we can cooperate more fully to ensure that we are respecting one another's areas and plans. We also discussed the need to be diligent in respecting one another's disciplinary actions when members, and even office-bearers, seek to transfer from one body to the other. The OPC informed us of their new General Secretary, Rev. Ben Hop, and we thanked each other for the service of men like Dr. Alan Strange and Rev. Richard Bout offer to both church bodies. The OPC requested that we remind our classis clerks to send out official invitations to our meetings, since this is indeed our desire.

We look forward to more fruit upon our ecumenical efforts with the OPC in the years to come. To that end we heartily encourage classes and congregations in geographic proximity with OPC presbyteries and congregations to continue the exchange of fraternal delegates, and to engage in other ecumenical activities that may be available. The OPC mentioned they are facing an 11% vacancy rate among pastors, and so we can be in prayer for them on this matter (and others as well).

4. Reformed Church of Quebec / L'Eglise reformee du Quebec (ERQ)

The Reformed Church of Quebec is the smallest denomination with which we have a Phase Two relationship. They have five congregations, with a total membership of approximately 275 communicant and baptized members. Three of these churches are without a pastor right now, although they do have two pastoral candidates. The ERQ was established in 1988 and it is the only Reformed denomination in the province of Quebec. All of their churches are French speaking.

The ERQ devotes significant energies to translating faithful and helpful books on Christian doctrine and practice from English into French. They cooperate on the "Reformation Study Centre" with the Owen Sound CanRC in the publishing of Reformed material. http://www.ressourceschretiennes.com/ publishes thousands of short articles which are easily searched, consulted, printed, and shared by pastors and believers in Quebec and throughout the French-speaking world. Articles for publication can be submitted, as well as funds for more translations. *Bannière réformée francophone* (BRF) https://farel.net/en/banniere-reformee-francophone/translates, publishes, and distributes Reformed books. NAPARC churches are welcome to recommend books for translation, send donations, and collaborate in book distribution to French missions. The *Reformation Study Bible* has been published in the French language, and at the launch event held in Montreal, more than 400 study Bibles were distributed to believers from numerous evangelical denominations.

Currently, the ERQ are laboring overseas in Senegal and Rwanda, French-speaking countries in Africa. Despite their limited funds, they provide diaconal support to a Christian school in Conakry, Guinea.

From a church political standpoint, the ERQ synod is reviewing and revising its church order, as well as developing guidelines for seminary training of future pastors. Unfortunately, they are also experiencing some tension among the leadership of the federation, which is a matter for prayer. A recent blessing among them was the semi-annual retreat held in October, which encouraged the members in their fellowship with one another.

There are many difficulties experienced in growing the church in Quebec. It is a highly secular province, with much complicated history due to the predominately Roman Catholic influence. These churches are small, in need of funds, in need of leaders, and in need of encouragement. The PCA has a missionary in Quebec through Mission to North America

(MNA). The OPC has an agreement with the ERQ to train pastors. What can we do to help them?

5. Reformed Presbyterian Church in North American (RPCNA)

The RPCNA has its roots in Scottish Presbyterianism. It was organized in North America in 1798. As of December 2024, the RPCNA had 6,906 members in 89 churches and mission works. They operate a theological school, the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, established in 1810. The seminary is committed to the inerrancy of Scripture and to the Reformed Faith as summarized in the Westminster Standards and in the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Their worship is characterized by exclusive psalmody and singing without musical accompaniment. The RPCNA owns and operates a liberal arts college, Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, which is now 171 years old.

We are in their Level 2 *Fraternal Relations* category. Their category 1, which is full intercommunion, is made up of three denominations overseas. The RPCNA continues to discuss greater unity with the ARPC, which we encourage. Exclusive Psalmody with no instrumentality seems to be the biggest hurdle in that process between those denominations.

Our discussions at NAPARC were healthy and warm. The RPCNA delegates were interested in our language of membership transfer and release, and feel it could bolster the language they currently employ in similar situations. We also discussed how best to prepare our members when they transfer from one of our churches to the other, given the differences we have about confessing creeds, singing hymns, and worshipping with instruments. There was encouragement for our people to be winsome in maintaining our unity in Christ even if they held some of these differences, and to maintain clear communication with one another's sessions/consistories.

The RPCNA has experienced some contention within their midst of late, and desire our prayers for continued unity and growth. They have several study committees busy at work, including: on abuse; on the biblical practice of women serving in the diaconate as well as the nature and purpose of ordination; on policies regarding congregations leaving the denomination; and on revising the book of church discipline. Concerning the question of women deacons, their synods continue to discuss the report of their Committee on Women Deacons. The Committee is proposing to amend their Testimony by removing the phrase, "Women as well as men may hold the office of deacon." This will be voted on in 2026. If adopted, this change would not disallow a congregation from having female deacons, but it would have the effect of no longer requiring it as something that must be confessed by RPCNA officers. Last, but not least, we can gratefully report that the RPCNA have adopted a motion commending the ARP's resolution against Kinism.

In those places in North America where our churches are in close proximity, there is a good and healthy relationship. We encourage congregations and classes to continue this process of unity on a grassroots level.

C. North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)

Since our last synod meeting, NAPARC has met each year with the exception of 2020. NAPARC consists of 13 member churches, and each of the other 12 churches are in either a Phase 1 or Phase 2 relationship with us.

The basis of NAPARC's fellowship is as follows:

> "Confessing Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches

> to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts, and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms." (NAPARC Constitution)

A large portion of the meeting consists of hearing reports from each of the member churches, after which there is opportunity for questions. These are edifying and informative updates.

As CERCU, we use the opportunity of NAPARC to meet in bilateral meeting with several other denominations. This past NAPARC meeting, we met with the ARP, CanRC, FRCNA, HRC, KAPC, KPCA, OPC, PCA, RCUS, and RPCNA. These meetings were fruitful and encouraging.

It is also of interest that over the last few years, there have been two denominations observing NAPARC. They are the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC) and the Protestant Reformed Church of America (PRCA). We have consistently met with their delegates as well. The PRCA is not yet ready to join NAPARC, due to the distinctives which they continue to hold. This is obviously somewhat uncomfortable, but yet we experience a brotherly and cooperative spirit nonetheless. Their presence and the conversation it allows for are important in order that we as churches may encourage each other to increasing faithfulness, and also to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The BPC is a different story. They are wanting to join NAPARC, and we would like to add our voice to those denominations that would sponsor their application for NAPARC membership. Their introduction is provided below.

CERCU continues to see NAPARC as a tremendous opportunity to show the catholicity of the church in North

America. The Lord is certainly blessing many of these relationships. Please visit the NAPARC website for further information: www.naparc.org.

D. The Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC)

For those who are not familiar, we hope and trust that what follows will be a helpful introduction to the BPC.

Location of Churches
The denomination comprises 28 churches – 27 in the United States and 1 church in Alberta, Canada. These churches are divided over four presbyteries: the Great Western Presbytery, the Eastern Presbytery, the Great Lakes Presbytery, and the Florida Presbytery. The highest governing body is the Synod. Their denominational website is www.bpc.org.

Purpose Statement
At their 51st General Synod in 1987, the BPC adopted the following statement of purpose:

Our Purpose as a Church

> Our Lord Jesus Christ gave purpose to this His Church by giving it a commission to go forth in His Name preaching the gospel, to evangelize the lost, while nurturing the saints -- making disciples of all nations, defending the faith. May we bring glory to God our Father by the effective achievement of this His mission for us.
>
> This His Church is fully committed to the system of reformed doctrine as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, along with the basic principles of Presbyterian Government.

Historical Development

Historically, the BPC is very similar to the OPC. The First General Synod was held in 1938 in Collingswood, New Jersey. The denomination was founded by members of the OPC who left over differences of conviction on three matters, after having together left the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America over the rise of modernism a couple years prior. They identify with the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity, and formally subscribe to the Westminster Standards. Famous early figures within the BPC include Carl McIntire and Francis Schaeffer.

These areas of difference with the OPC are: (1) Christian liberty as it relates to the drinking of alcohol; (2) allowance in the BPC for an historic premillennial eschatology; and (3) the role of independent agencies conducting the work of the church. These differences are less prevalent and relevant today, and the BPC is closer with the OPC than ever. It is reassuring to see where they stand today, as their delegates to NAPARC are unaware of any officers holding to dispensational views; this is by no means a mark of the BPC. They have also loosened their historical understanding of the need for abstinence, recognizing that this a matter of Christian liberty. Regarding the role of independent agencies, the BPC holds to the position that the work of the synod may be appropriately conducted by independent agencies. Their constitution does not demand that it be so, but that has been their traditional mode of operation.

On March 28, 2008, the South Atlantic Presbytery voted by a wide margin to disassociate from the Bible Presbyterian Synod, in opposition to formal relations recently established between the Synod and the OPC. The presbytery took the name Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church.

Church Polity and Mission Work

Although some have suggested they lean in a congregational direction, they are constitutionally Presbyterian (see https://bpc.org/our-beliefs). They have had some bad

experiences with broad, multi-denominational organizations in their past, and so they are cautious of anything that looks like hierarchical control, whether via a general synod/assembly, or an organization like NAPARC. Consequently, they do not have synod-controlled boards for missions and education, but annually approve independent agencies for mission work, as well as colleges and seminaries. You can read more about their mission work at www.pmumissions.org, which is the website for the Presbyterian Missionary Union, one of two mission agencies associated with the BPC, as well as at www.ibpfm.org, which is the website for The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, the other mission agency.

Theological Education

Their school of study is Western Reformed Seminary in Puyallup, WA. More information can be found at www.wrs.edu. This school is particularly noteworthy for its emphasis in Biblical Counseling, and could be a rich resource for our federation as well, given the great need for wise and faithful counselors within our churches. Rev. Tito Lyro has represented the BPC well at NAPARC, also on behalf of the school, and has indicated his willingness to lead seminars and officer training sessions in URCNA churches.

Desire for Ecumenicity and Current Contacts

The BPC value the ecumenical relations that NAPARC facilitates and fosters. They have frequent and healthy conversations with the OPC and the HRC, and there is a good relationship with much inter-connection between our church in Gig Harbor, WA and their church in Olympia, WA.

In addition to the comment about Dr. Lyro above, Dr. Kevin Backus, their primary NAPARC delegate, has spoken at URCNA conferences over the years and is well-acquainted with our federation.

They are actively pursuing membership in NAPARC. The HRC has already voted in the affirmative to sponsor them, and the

OPC's committee on ecumenicity is in the process of recommending that their general assembly do the same.

Worship Practices
We have discussed similarities and differences in our orders of worship (liturgy) at NAPARC, noticing that we are quite similar on all fronts. They do not have an official "order of worship," but there is a "tradition of worship" within the BPC that fits comfortably within our Church Order.

Categories of Ecumenical Relations
They have three levels of fraternal relationships. The first level is known as "ecclesiastical contact." The second level is "corresponding relations," and the third level is "ecclesiastical fellowship." The BPC's highest level of fellowship is the equivalent of our Phase Two.

E. The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA)

The early history of our federation stems from a departure of churches within the CRCNA, due to various doctrinal and practical deformation. Consequently, the current relationship is strained and complicated. Indeed, there is no formal ecumenical relationship. Nevertheless, many relationships remain at an informal level, whether due to close proximity of churches, or within our biological families, school communities, and other Christian networks.

In our July 2025 meeting, our committee discussed the possibility of making contact with the CRCNA. The suggestion was made to send a communication to their next synod, encouraging them in their recent efforts towards reformation within their body and exhorting them to press on going forward. This led to a discussion as to what extent the CRCNA is, in fact, reforming. As a summary of that conversation, we noted that although we are hoping to see continued reformation on various

matters, the idea would be to send an olive branch of sorts that serves as edification for our brothers, and further bolsters the cause of reformation in the CRC. In the meantime, we reviewed former correspondence between the URCNA and CRCNA, and we drafted an initial letter for our committee members to review and refine.

In our October 2025 meeting, we further discussed this matter, dealing with the draft that had been put before us. We had a robust back and forth discussion over what should be the content and tone of such a letter. The consensus was that the letter should edify and encourage where possible, but not be too exuberant given the ongoing concerns we have with the CRCNA. Some members desired to focus more narrowly on the human sexuality issue, while other members wanted to encourage what they see as an increasing awareness of and appreciation for the Reformed Confessions and Church Order. We agreed to revisit our draft letter with these comments in mind.

At our January 2026 meeting, it became apparent that we have two views represented among our committee. One viewpoint says that there is a significant and welcome shift taking place on multiple levels in the CRCNA, and an encouragement from us would be well-placed and well-received. The other viewpoint suggests that the CRCNA has devolved in the years that have elapsed since we left, and so although there have been more positive developments of late, they are coming back from quite an unorthodox place on certain issues, and so they still have a way to come. One member of our committee says he is still telling people in the CRCNA who want to be faithful to leave, while others are encouraging their friends in the CRCNA to work toward reformation.

The question was asked: is reformation a destination, or a direction? Undoubtedly, the CRCNA is not there yet, but they have put themselves on a good trajectory with multiple difficult decisions made in favor of more robustly biblical, confessional,

and church political positions.

Finally, we determined that we would be going beyond our mandate if we wrote a letter to the CRCNA without first asking Synod, since we have no formal relationship with them. And so, we are bringing a recommendation before you (see Recommendation 7).

IV. Recommendations

1. That Synod commend the classes for their faithfulness in appointing or reappointing classical representatives (and alternates) to CERCU in the manner the classes deem appropriate.

2. That Synod set the budget for CERCU at $12,000 US per annum.

3. That the URCNA enter into Phase Two "Ecclesiastical Fellowship" with the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) and make arrangements for ratification by the churches according to Church Order Article 36.

   Grounds:

   a. They are a federation of true churches of Christ confessing the same precious faith as we, in like Reformed understanding. The confessionally Reformed expression of the Christian faith lives among them in a vibrant and faithful manner, as indicated by the Phase One dialogue summarized in this report.
   b. The practice of experiential and discriminatory preaching that has historically been emphasized among the HRC is not an impediment to unity, but a common practice that we can appreciated and endorse. Although there are more and less helpful formulations and sermonic practices of

this, we both affirm a desire to avoid the opposite ditches of presumption and doubt.

c. A Phase Two relationship with the HRC will allow greater opportunity for iron to sharpen iron. Two areas where the HRC excel are their outward-facing mission endeavors and their strong organizational presence in PRTS and Reformation Heritage Books.
d. We have been in Level 2 (HRC) and Phase 1 (URCNA) for 13 years. In that time, the HRC has continued to develop balance in its discriminatory emphasis, and we have grown in our understanding and appreciation of one another.

4. That Synod take note of the overture approved within the PCA by the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley, complete with an invitation to NAPARC churches (see Appendix B), and accept this invitation, tasking our Stated Clerk to coordinate and communicate a suitable date for all willing URCNA congregations to join in the day of fasting and prayer so described.

Grounds:

a. The six points outlined in the PCA's resolution ("Whereas…") are valid and timely for our churches as well.
b. Participation in such a day of fasting and prayer, though encouraged, is voluntary.

5. That the URCNA enter into Phase One "Corresponding Relations" with the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC).

Grounds:

a. They are a denomination of true churches of Christ confessing the same precious faith as we, in like Reformed understanding. The confessionally Presbyterian expression of the

Christian faith lives among them in a vibrant and faithful manner.

b. Through establishing this formal relationship, we will be ideally positioned to further explore the topics listed in our Guidelines under Phase One, with the intent that by correspondence and dialogue, mutual understanding and appreciation may develop between our federation and their denomination.
c. We will be able to invite them to send a fraternal observer to our synods, further facilitating ecumenical relations.

6. That Synod take note of the BPC's desire to apply for membership in NAPARC and sponsor them to that end, appointing our Stated Clerk to write a communication on behalf of this Synod, in keeping with the regulations and expectations of NAPARC.

Ground:

a. This is a natural corollary of the previous recommendation, since the one facilitates and encourages the other.

7. That Synod task the CERCU to write a letter to the CRCNA, encouraging them in the signs of reformation that have taken place, and exhorting them to further reformation in areas where it ought to be pursued. [Or: …encouraging them in the direction of reformation."]

8. That Synod commend to the churches the suggested "practical steps forward" with the CanRC and encourage their implementation as worthy endeavors.

9. That Synod remind the churches of our mutual responsibility to engage one another in our ecumenical task through prayer, classical dialogue, local efforts, and expression of concerns.

10. That Synod approve the work of the committee.

Humbly submitted on behalf of CERCU,

Rev. Joel Dykstra, chairman
Rev. Jason Vander Horst, secretary

CERCU Appendix A

Reformed Experiential Christianity[4]

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

The mission of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (Puritan Reformed) is *to prepare students to serve Christ and His church through biblical, Reformed, experiential, and practical ministry*. Reformed experiential Christianity is the fruit of God's revealing His glory to people (Isa. 60:1) so that they are deeply aware of their sinfulness and His grace in Christ (Ezek. 16:62–63). It is the communion of God's people with God through Christ as they walk in the fear of the Lord (Ps. 25:4–14). As the Holy Spirit illuminates their hearts with God's glory, He conforms them into the image of Christ to live wholly and solely for Him (2 Cor. 3:18).

The Heidelberg Catechism (LD 1) states that each believer must "know" three things in true Christian experience: first, "how great my sins and miseries are," second, "how I may be delivered from all my sins and miseries," and third, "how I shall express my gratitude to God for such deliverance." This knowledge goes hand in hand with knowing the triune God as "my faithful Savior Jesus Christ," "my heavenly Father," and "His Holy Spirit," who "makes me sincerely willing and ready … to live unto Him."

Therefore, the faculty, staff, and students of Puritan Reformed must have a personal, experiential knowledge of God and His ways (John 17:3). We do not base our knowledge on experience but on the Holy Scriptures, God's inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16). The Word is inerrant truth from God (John 17:17), the seed of regeneration (1 Pet. 1:23), and the food of our souls (Jer.

[4] This appendix is the united expression of reformed experiential Christianity from Dr. Joel Beeke, Dr. Gerald Bilkes, and Dr. Adriaan Neele as approved by the seminary's board of trustees.

15:16). Our knowledge is experiential because the Holy Spirit applies the Word to the soul in personal experience (John 6:63). The Spirit enables believers to discern authentic Christian experience by the Word. We do not merely read and search the Bible. The Bible reads us and searches us (Heb. 4:12). God's Word brings us into His presence for judgment and salvation by grace alone.

The Puritan Reformed community—individually and corporately, to fulfill our mission, needs this threefold knowledge:

- *Misery in sin*: This must be a personal knowledge of sin, not only an intellectual assent but a confessed, experienced acquaintance of both one's actual sins and inward corruption. We must learn to say from the heart, "I am a sinner before God. I have sinned, not just against one or two of God's commandments but all of them. Have mercy on me, O God!" Such experience of the pervasiveness and heinousness of sin continues and deepens in believers after they receive grace. Sin does not reign in us, but it does remain in us (Rom. 7:17–18; Gal. 5:16). All our life long we must strive against sin, Satan, and this world in continuing godly sorrow and repentance.
- *Deliverance in Christ*: This must be a personal knowledge of Christ. We must know our poverty and His riches of grace. We must trust in God that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). This involves leaning and resting on Christ's complete and finished work of salvation. Experiential religion treasures every step Christ took to the cross, adores the resurrected and ascended Lord as He sits at God's right hand, and longs for His return.
- *Gratitude in love and obedience*: This, too, must be personal, a response of thanksgiving in prayer and good works of obedience to the commandments of

> our God and Savior. It must spring from a true conversion of the heart: "a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them" and "a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works" (Heidelberg Catechism, LD 33). Knowing the love of the triune God, communion with Him becomes our food and drink, our peace and joy.

In light of this threefold knowledge by which we commune with the Trinity, we resolve to pursue the following aims to cultivate Reformed experiential Christianity at PRTS:

1. *The Holy Scriptures*. We will strive by grace to base our class instruction on God's Word. Even in classes such as church history and historical theology where the Holy Scriptures are not the immediate object of our study, we will highlight how theologians of the past have proclaimed and interpreted the Bible for the sake of the church.

2. *Christ the Mediator*. We will strive by grace to center our classes on Christ. Without Christ, there is no saving knowledge of God. We will point to Christ as the living Word revealed in the written Word, the Lord of history, and the Mediator of all gifts and ministry.

3. *The Church of Jesus Christ*. Experiential Christianity is not individualistic but corporate under the public means of grace. We will expect that every member of the Puritan Reformed community be a member of a biblical church, attend its services regularly, partake of its sacraments, serve its ministries as able, and fellowship with other members. We will encourage a faithful observance of the Sabbath for rest and sacred worship.

4. *Preaching the Word*. Therefore, we will model experiential, *discriminatory*, applicational preaching in our churches and

Puritan Reformed chapels, strive to train experiential preachers in our homiletics program, and direct all our classes toward experiential application in order to prepare God's servants to preach and teach for godliness in the heart.

5. *Communal Prayer and Worship*. Since prayer is both an exercise of experiential holiness and a means to call upon the Lord to obtain grace, we will prioritize praying together with faculty, staff, and students. We will avoid making prayer into a mere formality to open meetings but will devote time to seeking God together. We will sing psalms to our God.

6. *Seminary Branding and Communications*. We will highlight the experiential dimension of Christianity (together with the biblical, confessional, and practical dimensions), as a distinctive feature of Puritan Reformed in its marketing, online presence, donor communications, and other ways we present ourselves to the public. We will stress that our approach to theological education engages more than the mind; it also refreshes the soul and stimulates a life of active obedience.

7. *Board of Trustees*. We will encourage the members of our board to cultivate their own experiential knowledge of God in fellowship with each other, and fellowship with the executive team, faculty, and staff. We will offer means to do so, such as reading and discussing experiential material and participating in annual board retreats.

8. *Professors.* Faculty should be hired based, in part, on demonstrated ability to appreciate, articulate, and model experiential godliness—but not at the expense of academic expertise and standing within the academic community. Renewal of annual contracts should involve each professor's proposal for how he will seek experiential growth for himself and his students. Faculty will be encouraged to cultivate collegial, brotherly relationships with each other to encourage each other spiritually.

9. *Staff.* Staff should be hired based, in part, on demonstrated ability to appreciate, articulate, and model experiential godliness—but not at the expense of vocational expertise. Renewal of annual contracts should involve each staff member's proposal for how he or she will seek experiential growth for him/herself and the Puritan Reformed community. Staff will be encouraged to cultivate collegial, brotherly/sisterly relationships with each other to encourage each other spiritually.

10. *Student Applications*. We will ask prospective students to articulate in their applications their recognition of the importance of a vital knowledge of God in Christ. We will direct the Admissions Committee to take into consideration the expressed desire of applicants to grow spiritually while at seminary.

11. *Class Lectures and Assignments*. Each lecture should open with a reading from the Holy Scriptures and begin and end with prayer. Lecture content should show a concern for experiential Christianity and be delivered in the same spirit. We will strive by grace to apply our classes to practical life. Christianity is not merely information to be learned, but a life to be lived by faith in Christ. Thus, our lectures will consist of instruction, but also confutation of error, exhortation and admonition to students, comfort and encouragement, calls for self-examination, and doxological exultation in the glory of God. Papers and exams should consistently ask student to address the experiential Christian life as well.

12. *Spiritual Formation*. The deans of students, in coordination with student mentors, will work to identify areas of weakness and pathways for spiritual growth for all students. Mentors will be encouraged to talk with mentees about spiritual growth, not just doctrine and ministry.

13. *Love for One Another*. We will strive by grace to teach our classes with sincere and earnest love. The Spirit of Christ is the

Spirit of love. Faculty and staff will strive by grace to show care and compassion for one another and for the students, knowing that without love a seminary is worth nothing. Even when recruiting new students, selling books, or raising funds, we will aim to minister to the souls of those with whom we have to do.

These things we resolve, by grace, to pursue as a seminary community. Yet, knowing that grace is always of God's initiative, we also take the posture of listening servant to see how our Lord will direct us through His Word. "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:9).

CERCU Appendix B

An Overture from the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley to the 53rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America:

Whereas, the urgent present need of the unconverted around us, and the persistent divisions and relative spiritual poverty of the church are a source of great grief to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, Christ told us that "the fields are white unto harvest" (John 4:35), and that "the harvest is plentiful" and commanded us to "pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest" to send more laborers (Matt. 9:38); and

Whereas, the Scriptures abundantly testify that our God delights to hear and answer the prayers of his people (Prov. 15:29; Ps. 17:6, 65:2,116:1; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 7:7; John 14:13-14; 1 John 5:14); and

Whereas, the Word of God clearly teaches the instrumentality of prayer in the fulfilment of the divine design (Romans 15:30; 2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19); and

Whereas, in Scripture, seasons of renewed blessing and gospel fruit have frequently followed the humble, repentant, united prayers of God's people (Num. 20:16; Judges 3:9, 4:3, 6:7,10:10; 2 Chron. 13:14; Ps. 107:6, 13,19, 28; Acts 1:14, 2:42, 4:24-31, 12:12-17, 13:1-3); and

Whereas, throughout church history the blessing of God has often followed the efforts of the church to unite in prayer for the revival of religion; therefore

Be it resolved that the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley overture the 53rd General Assembly to call upon the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America to appoint a time most convenient to them during the month of September, 2026, to observe a solemn day of fasting and prayer for the revival and renewal of the church.

On this day, presbyteries, congregations, RUF campus chapters, officers, and members of the Presbyterian Church in America shall be urged to humble themselves before the LORD, fast and pray, and seek his mercy in heartfelt repentance over ministerial sins, the sins of officers, members, and whole congregations. Earnest prayer should be made for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the blessing of heaven on the preached word, the conversion of the lost, the planting of faithful churches at home, and the success of the gospel in our communities, on college campuses, and on the mission field around the world.

Be it further resolved that presbyteries of the PCA be urged to hold a solemn convocation on the day appointed, at which the fast may conclude. This convocation shall include the praise of the triune God, the preaching of the Word, and a season of prayer for the concerns stated above.

Be it further resolved that the Moderator of the 53rd General Assembly be empowered to appoint one Teaching and one Ruling Elder to assist him in the preparation and dissemination

of guidance for the prayers of the PCA on this occasion.

Be it further resolved that the 53rd General Assembly invite the sister churches of NAPARC to join her during the month of September in seeking the mercy and favor of God in the revival and renewal of Christ's church in America; and that, as prudence and opportunity allow, presbyteries extend an invitation to like-minded evangelical churches in their regions to participate.

Report on Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC) to Synod 2026

Esteemed Brothers,

As the URCNA liaison to the PRCC, we present the following brief report.

I. Review of the Committee's Mandate

Synod 2014 adopted the following recommendations:

> *That Synod appoint the Consistory of Faith URC of Beecher, Illinois, to serve indefinitely without need of re-appointment as the URCNA liaison to the PRCC, and that Synod requests that this Consistory submit reports on the PRCC to future synods.*
>
> *That Synod authorize the Consistory of Faith URC of Beecher, Illinois, to send one or two observers to PRCC meetings occasionally, at URCNA expense, leaving it to the Consistory's discretion whether and when such observers will be sent. Costs should be set at $500 USD per annum.* (Acts of Synod Visalia 2014, pp. 27-28)

Synod 2024 adopted the following recommendation:

> *That Synod encourage the Consistory of Faith URC (Beecher, IL) to come with recommendations to the next Synod regarding the oversight of delegates to the PRCC.*

II. Summary of the Committee's Activities

Rev. Andrew Spriensma attended the virtual PRCC commissioner meetings on October 24, 2004 and October 23,

2025. He submitted a letter to the in-person PRCC commissioner meeting in February 18-19, 2025 and attended the February 17-18, 2026 meeting in person in Atlanta, Georgia. He has reviewed all minutes of aforementioned meetings. He also met with PRCC executive director, Dr. James Carter in November 2025 to discuss URCNA membership and seek recommendations for appointing commissioners to the PRCC. Communication between URCNA chaplains and perspective chaplains has also been maintained. We report our observations below.

III. Report on PRCC

A. The Mission of the PRCC (NO CHANGES)

The PRCC's Mission Statement declares,

> *The Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel is a ministry of member denominations dedicated to obeying Christ's Great Commission by providing men to serve as chaplains in military and civilian organizations. The Commission endorses and ecclesiastically supports ordained, qualified chaplains; approves chaplain candidates; and helps presbyteries and congregations in biblical ministry to military personnel and their families*.

The Commission is governed by representatives or *commissioners* from its five member denominations: ARPC, KAPC, OPC, PCA, and RPCNA. It is also the endorsing body for two associate member (non-voting) denominations: KPCA and URCNA. Membership in the PRCC is limited to NAPARC denominations.

Five lines of effort that summarize the PRCC daily work follows: *CATCH* new applicants who are considering a call to chaplaincy ministry, *CREDENTIAL* them properly so that they have ecclesiastical endorsement to serve in their field, provide

pastoral *CARE* to chaplains and their families, *COVER* them with spiritual and legal advice to proclaim Christ freely in a secular organization, and *CONNECT* chaplains with their home church congregations.

B. URCNA Chaplains Endorsed by the PRCC. (UPDATED)

The PRCC endorses a growing population of 333 military chaplains, chaplain candidates, and civilian chaplains from seven NAPARC denominations. URCNA chaplaincy has again seen incremental growth with the addition of our third minister who has received the call to chaplain ministry. Two additional ministers already serving as chaplains have sustained colloquium doctums in the URCNA this spring as well.

Rev. Roberto Rossi is a Navy Chaplain (active duty) and serves as the command chaplain of the USS STOUT DDG-55 (Guided Missile Destroyer). The ship's homeport is Norfolk, VA. The USS STOUT returned from a taxing deployment in June 2025, and the crew will be deployed again this Fall, which will require many underways leading up to deployment. Chaplain Rossi has the great privilege and joy of serving the Lord Jesus, bringing the message of hope and life in Christ, in both Word and deed, to over 300 sailors. He is under the oversight of Immanuel URC (DeMotte, IN) and can be contacted at rwrossi73@gmail.com.

Rev. Daniel Cortez completed his first Navy tour from April 2023 to April 2025 as Command Chaplain aboard USS *Sterett* (DDG-104) at Naval Base San Diego. Serving in a high-operational-tempo environment, he supported two deployments, multiple underways, and unit exercises, ministering to approximately 340 Sailors and to personnel within the USS *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Group throughout the Pacific. Following this sea tour, Rev. Cortez has been reassigned with his family to Navy Boot Camp or Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Illinois. There he ministers to

staff and recruits through counseling, divine services, ethics instruction, leadership advisement, and facilitation. Approximately 40,000 recruits graduate annually from RTC. His orders are there till May 2028 before potentially serving at the Coast Guard or Marine Corps where Navy Chaplains can serve as well. Rev. Cortez remains under the oversight of Christ URC (Santee, CA) and may be contacted at danielcortez@christurc.org.

Rev. Andrew Spriensma continues his service as a U.S. Army chaplain under the oversight of Faith URC (Beecher, IL). He is completing his third and final year of service at Schofield Barracks, HI. He served as the field artillery brigade chaplain in the 25th Infantry Division and then as the deputy garrison chaplain. He also served as the senior pastor of the Protestant service on main post chapel on Schofield Barracks. This summer, Chaplain Spriensma will be moving back to Fort Bragg, NC with his family to serve in the Special Operations Command. Chaplain Spriensma can be contacted at amspriensma@gmail.com.

Chaplain Matthew Crawford is currently assigned as the Battalion Chaplain for 1st Radio and 1st Intelligence Battalions at Camp Pendleton , CA. He currently has 1,200 Marines in his care. He sustained his Colloquium Doctum in Classis Southwest in March. He along with his wife Emily and their family attend Christ URC in Santee, CA. Previously he served on the USS GERMANTOWN and has deployed to Asia and South America. He is scheduled to deploy next year to the Philippines. He hopes to continue to serve Christ and His Church is this capacity.

Rev. Jim Sawtelle is a Civilian Chaplain serving as a full-time associate chaplain at Covenant Living Care and Rehab Center in Golden Valley, MN and a casual on-call chaplain for North Memorial Health Hospitals (Level 1 Trauma) in Robbinsdale and Maple Grove, MN. Chaplain Sawtelle's primary labors are in the Care and Rehab Center (a Skilled Nursing Facility)

where he supports 80-90 patients and residents in a Transitional Care Unit (TCU), elder care for Long Term Care (LTC), a Hospice and Palliative Care Unit and a Memory Care Unit. Duties also include supporting all staff members (approx 200), conducting Bible Studies, Mid-Week Chapel and Sunday Chapel services, provides spiritual and emotional assessments, serves as an ethics consultant and provides defusings for staff after critical care events. Sawtelle serves under the oversight of Redeemer Reformed Church (Golden Valley, MN). Sawtelle resides with his wife, Thelma, in Maple Grove, MN; they have four adult children and seven grandchildren.

C. PRCC Activity Updates

Religious Liberty Issues: PRCC reports that religious liberty instances where they have needed to intervene in defense of Reformed chaplains has been drastically reduced. The current climate has been favorable for chaplains to minister according to their faith and conscience and for this we are abundantly thankful.

Resources for the local churches: The PRCC has committed to the writing and publishing of various materials for the local church primarily regarding ministry to veterans. Booklets that address issues such as PTSD, moral injury, just war tradition, and church/state relations from a Reformed perspective are available in print or for download at: https://pcamna.org/chaplain-resources/

D. Dues and Costs

While 58% of the PRCC's operating budget is collected from offerings, gifts, and donations, the remaining portion of the budget is funded by collecting dues from both its individual endorsed chaplains and also from its member denominations. The PRCC commission voted to increase denominational contributions for the first time since 2014. The denominational contributions were currently set at $1000.00 USD for each

chaplain per year. This annual amount will increase over the next three years, as will the number of chaplains endorsed by the URCNA.

Year	Amount/ Chaplain	Number of Chaplains (as of January 1)	Total
2025	$1,000	2	$2,000
2026	$1,200	3	$3,600
2027	$1,400	~5	~$7,000
2028	$1,500	~5	~$7,500

An annual travel allowance of $1,500 is requested for two commissioners to attend the in-person PRCC meeting in Atlanta, GA.

D. Update Regarding Application for Full Membership

Following the decision of Synod 2024 to apply for full membership in the PRCC, the PRCC commissioners unanimously approved the URCNA's request at its annual meeting in February 2025. This decision was then sent to the member denominations for ratification at their perspective synods or general assemblies. The PCA, OPC, RPCNA, and ARP have all approved the URCNA memberships. The final ratification is needed from KAPC, which has included the matter in its agenda for their assembly meeting scheduled in May, 2026.

IV. Oversight of delegates to the PRCC

Background: The consistory of Faith URC has fulfilled the role of the URCNA liaison to the PRCC since 2007. This role was advisable while the only URCNA chaplain was under their care. In the past few years, chaplain ministries has grown in the URCNA with multiple consistories now overseeing ministers serving as chaplains. Synod Escondido 2024 adopted the following action:

That Synod encourage the Consistory of Faith URC (Beecher, IL) to come with recommendations to the next Synod regarding the oversight of delegates to the PRCC, with the following grounds:

a. There is now a second Consistory with a chaplain (Christ URC, Santee, CA). This suggests the value of broader involvement in the oversight role.
b. An oversight structure that provides greater continuity over time is desirable.
c. Broader involvement would allow for utilizing military experience and gifts from throughout the URCNA.

Discussion: Faith URC recommends a standing committee comprised of one elder and/or minister appointed from each consistory that serves as a calling church for a chaplain; as well as two at-large members appointed by Synod who possess direct military experience, close familiarity with military life, or other experience appropriately suited to chaplaincy oversight.

This recommendation satisfies the criteria given in the grounds for this action of Synod 2024, namely, broader participation of consistories with chaplain ministries, continuity, and the opportunity for broader involvement from across the URCNA.

By the end of 2026, the URCNA is projected to have five ministers and four consistories serving in chaplaincy ministries. The recommended structure includes all consistories in the committee to have both greater external communication with the PRCC as well as internal communication with other URCNA chaplaincy ministries. The provision for members at-large allows for office bearers with either experience or a heart for military service and other chaplaincy ministries to serve as well.

A broader and larger committee also enables the URCNA to fulfill its membership expectations to the PRCC in sending

delegates to serve as commissioners at the PRCC meetings, which meet in person for two days once a year in Atlanta, and then meet telephonically as well at least once a year. Each denomination is entitled to three Commission members for its first fifty thousand members or portion thereof. One additional Commission member may be added for each additional fifty thousand members or portion thereof. (The PCA generally has 7 commissioners.) While URCNA could send up to three delegates at their discretion, the mandate is at least one present, with a preference for two from a member denomination. The appointment and terms of commissioners is internal to member denominations.

The standing committee should also receive a clear scope of their mandate. The original mandate to Faith URC was to serve as a liaison between the PRCC and the URCNA. After several years operating under this mandate, we recommend that this communication be clarified to include the following:

1. Maintain communication with URCNA chaplains and their calling consistories.
2. Assist with updates to the URCNA missions website to include chaplaincy ministries.
3. Provide the churches with PRCC published resources and prayer requests from chaplains, such as the quarterly *Guardian* prayer calendar.
4. Establish PRCC policy in concert with the other member denominations.
5. Report on the decisions and work of the PRCC and trends within chaplaincy ministries to calling consistories and synod.

The Consistory of Faith United Reformed Church respectfully submits the following recommendations:

V. Recommendations

1. That Synod set the budget for the PRCC at $9,000 USD per annum to cover projected denominational

contributions and the travel costs of attending Commission meetings

2. That Don Sampson, associate director for the PRCC, be given the privilege to briefly address synod on behalf of our chaplains and the PRCC during missions night or on the synod floor.

3. That Synod establish a **standing committee** to oversee the URCNA's participation in the Presbyterian and Reformed Chaplain Commission (PRCC), thereby relieving the Consistory of Faith United Reformed Church (Beecher, Illinois) of this responsibility, and that:
    1. The standing committee be composed of:
        a. One elder and/or minister appointed from each consistory that serves as a calling church for a chaplain; and
        b. Two at-large members appointed by Synod who possess chaplaincy experience, close familiarity with military life or medical settings, or other experience appropriately suited to chaplaincy oversight.
    2. Delegates to PRCC meetings be selected from and by the standing committee and attend meetings either in person or virtually, as circumstances require.
    3. The standing committee meets virtually at least once a year in conjunction with PRCC-related meetings.
    4. The standing committee maintains communication with chaplains, provide churches with updates and prayer requests regarding URCNA chaplaincy ministries, and provide a report of its work to the calling consistories prior to submitting a report to future Synods.

Grounds

a. The existence of multiple calling consistories within the URCNA demonstrates the appropriateness of broader ecclesiastical participation in the oversight of chaplaincy work.
b. A standing committee provides greater continuity over time than oversight vested in a single consistory, particularly as consistories experience changes in office bearers.
c. Broader involvement allows the URCNA to utilize chaplaincy experience and gifts distributed throughout the federation, consistent with the grounds adopted by Synod Escondido 2024.
d. The specialized nature of chaplaincy warrants the inclusion of those with experience and aptitude relevant to this ministry to provide support and advisement to chaplains and consistories.
e. Direct involvement of calling consistories promotes accountability, communication, and mutual encouragement in the support of chaplains.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Andrew Spriensma
For the Consistory of Faith URC (Beecher, IL)

URCNA Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions
Report to Synod Calgary 2026

I. Introduction

The work of missions is intimately and intrinsically tied to our love for the Lord and our recognition of his glory and worth among the nations. The Psalms plead with God that the nations might praise him (Ps. 67:3-5). The risen Christ, on the basis of his exaltation and rule, sends the church to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:18-19). The Holy Spirit, as promised by the Father (Lk. 24:49), remains with us forever so that we may be witnesses to Christ and so that our witness may bear eternal fruit to his name (Acts 1:8, 1 Cor. 3:7, James 1:18). Our labours to bring others to Christ and make God's name known in the world are a response to God's goodness. God's glory motivates missions, and his power and grace both sustain the effort and bring the fruit.

Part of the work of the URCNA Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions is to help the URCNA better and more faithfully engage in this work of mission, particularly when it comes to sending missionaries and missionary helpers to the foreign field. We strive to aid in this not only by working with churches in carrying out missions responsibly and faithfully, but also to help local churches in providing experience and manpower for faithful continuance in mission over the years. We also strive to bring URCNA churches to participate in this great work of God in missions, even if they are not directly sending a foreign missionary to the field. We seek to fan into flame, by God's grace, an awareness of God's glory that may lead to more URCNA members rising up to serve God in foreign fields for his glory and their joy in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As part of our efforts, we want to remind the churches of the ways in which we seek to serve, and encourage all our URCNA churches to take advantage of our services as much as they are

able. We know that we do not need to be involved for God to work for his glory and spread his kingdom on the foreign field, but we serve on this committee because we rejoice in being part of that great world-wide work of God, and we hope to share in that joy and help spread it to others so that the URCNA, as a federation, grows more in appreciating the beauty of God's glory and in supporting the work of his church around the world.

To that end, our report will include the following:

- A list of active areas where you can utilize URCNA resources to strengthen your church in understanding and supporting the work of Christ in URCNA mission works
- Ideas for how to help stimulate among our members an awe at the glory of God that leads to a missional heart and practical service
- A very brief update on our foreign mission works
- A report of the work of our foreign missions coordinator, pastor Richard Bout
- Some recommendations for Synod to aid in our ongoing labours. Please note that revisions for *The URCNA Foreign Missions Manual* are found in Appendix 1.

II. Mandate

The mandate of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions is, "To provide counsel to the federation, classes, consistories, and mission works in starting, strengthening and at times closing foreign mission fields." (Niagara, 97.8). The committee is composed of 1 classical rep per classis, 2 members-at-large appointed by Synod and the URCNA Foreign Missions Coordinator (Niagara 97.9). The mandate is further outlined in Article 97.10 as follows:

a. To continue the regular work of the previous Synodical Missions Committee by serving the federation through

the development of policies, and the promotion of training and resources for foreign missions.

b. To serve the federation by giving counsel to consistories that seek to open or close a foreign field.
c. To receive and publish the reports, goals, and concerns of the various foreign fields to the churches of the federation in order to encourage and facilitate greater unity throughout the federation in prayer and in the use of resources (e.g. manpower, money, etc.). This will help us achieve our goal of establishing and/or strengthening foreign federations composed of faithful Reformed churches.
d. To help all consistories to become involved in foreign missions by providing expertise, counsel and coordination in the expansion of current fields.
e. To aid in the investigation and planning of new foreign fields, where applicable.
f. To work with consistories through "field committees" that will determine the particular posts that are to be occupied on foreign fields, and to communicate throughout the federation where there is need for more missionaries.
g. To aid in developing potential missionaries by connecting interested individuals with current missionaries (and with calling consistories, where necessary) for short-term service abroad.
h. To work with young people who are interested in foreign missions by organizing internships, cross-cultural missions training, and medium to long-term mission trips.
i. To give counsel to the classes of the federation when advice is sought by a Consistory for the sending of missionaries to or removing them from foreign fields.

The churches of the URCNA, through its Synod, also voted to create field committees, "To integrate resources and personnel in the URCNA for the supervision of particular foreign mission

fields." (97.11) The mandate for field committees is outlined in Article 97.13 as well as Article 101.

The Foreign Missions Coordinator has the following specific tasks (Art. 101.17)

1. To visit missionaries and their fields from time to time, as directed by the SCFM, for the purpose of counseling them concerning their work, and promoting such understanding and harmonious cooperation between the workers of the various posts as shall secure the harmony and advancement of the work. He shall provide to the overseeing consistories timely and thorough reports of all such visits.
2. As time allows, to visit potential fields or current fields for longer periods of time in order to assist missionaries, or to investigate new fields.
3. To assist the SCFM in all their work.
4. To serve as an advisory member on the various field committees.
5. To visit as many classical meetings and congregations as occasion may require, or as the SCFM may advise and his other duties will permit. The purpose of these visits shall be to enlighten our people on the subject of missions in all its branches, to stimulate prayer for missions, and to encourage participation in the work of missions.
6. To promote and organize mission festivals and conferences, and to present the cause of missions upon these occasions.
7. To promote giving, by individuals and congregations, and publish financial needs of foreign mission works to the churches.
8. To provide the SCFM with bi-monthly reports of his work.
9. To work together with the Synodical Committee on Home Missions as necessary.

10. To edit and publish (together with the Synodical Committee on Home Missions) The Trumpet, and to distribute other missionary newsletters and information.
11. To maintain (together with the SCHM) the URCNA Missions website.

III. Membership

The Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions is composed of the following members:

Rev. Harry Bout (Classis Ontario-East)
Rev. Richard Bout (Foreign Missions Coordinator)
Rev. Greg Bylsma (Classis Southwest Ontario, Chairman)
Rev. Casey Freswick (Classis Michigan, Clerk)
Elder Steve Howerzyl (Classis Southwest U.S.)
Elder Duane Konynenbelt (Classis Western Canada)
Rev. Jacob Meadows (Classis Pacific Northwest)
Elder Harold Meinders (Classis Central U.S.)
Rev. Sam Perez (Classis Eastern U.S., Vice-All)
Rev. Steve Poelman (Member-At-Large)
Elder Al Rumph (Member-At-Large)

IV. Current Avenues for Promoting the Glory of God and the Mission of the Church

The Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions wants to remind the churches of some great avenues to help stir churches to pray for missions, serve in missions, and thank God for his work among URCNA missions.

1. Weekly Prayer Items for Church Bulletins

Together with the Synodical Committee on Home Missions, we publish weekly prayer items for churches to remember in prayer during corporate worship on Sundays. We highly recommend that the churches utilize these prayer requests, draw them to the

attention of members, and pray for our mission works as URCNA churches. This simple practice helps members grow in awareness of the ongoing work of the Spirit among his people and the world. It has led to opportunities for church members to drop in and visit church plants or mission works as they travel, and is a great blessing for the works themselves (although we may not know the fulness of how God utilizes our prayers in this life). Churches that practice this often include this as part of the focus for the afternoon congregational prayer, but it can be used in many ways within the churches. For more information or to get these prayer requests, please contact Rev. Richard Bout at urcnamissions@gmail.com

2. Prayer Maps

Prayer maps are printed and distributed to the churches on a bi-annual basis. They help church members see where our missionaries are, both within North America and around the world. They include short introductions and pictures of the missionaries, and are very helpful for encouraging prayer within family worship. It is a special blessing to see pictures and areas of service when we pray, both for young and old alike! Please encourage families and individuals within your churches to make this a part of their family/personal prayer time – it has a side benefit of helping to form good habits of prayer for church members!

3. The URCNA Missions & Pastors Conference

One of the great blessings for fellowship and encouragement within the URCNA is the bi-annual URCNA Missions and Pastors Conference. This conference is held on alternating years to Synod at the beautiful Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, North Carolina. Everything about this conference is a blessing – great accommodations, a semi-southern location to help us get over the winter blues, and a family friendly time that seeks to plan the conference around potential spring break seasons. The conference is open to all members of the URCNA,

and we have been blessed to welcome (often with their families) pastors, church members, and missionaries through the years. The conference is small and intimate, with opportunities to get to know missionaries and church planters personally while sitting under good Biblical teaching in a family friendly, relaxing atmosphere. One of the blessings of this conference is the lasting relationships formed between church members and our missionaries that extend for years after meetings at this conference; it is especially meaningful when our children meet them, remember their smiling faces as much more than names, and then continue to pray for their work for years to come!

If you've never attended or advertised this conference in your church, please strongly consider doing so; the benefit is immense!

For past talks, go to YouTube and search "URCNA Missions." We've been blessed with some great speakers, and whether you missed the conference or want to hear a talk again, we have it available for easy access.

4. The Trumpet

The Trumpet is a monthly publication from Home and Foreign Missions that gives a brief update on URCNA mission works and opportunities for service. It is a single page, colourful and attractive page that we encourage churches to print and distribute in their church mailboxes, and we strongly encourage these to be printed for distribution! We all know what it's like to get "one more email." Something tangible often makes it home, and the pictures included can grab the eyes of children and give them something exciting to talk about. If your church isn't able to help fund printing these, we would be happy to provide some assistance as we are able within our budget. The Trumpet is available online at www.urcnamissions.org (click TRUMPET in the top right). To be added to the mailing list to receive the

digital copy on a monthly basis you can contact us at urcnamissions@gmail.com

5. Cross Cultural Missions Training (CCMT)

How do you become a missionary? While the path can be different for each person God might call, one of the old slogans spoke of, “A summer, a year, a career.” The idea is that people rarely jumped right into missions as a career. Often, an interest in promoting God’s glory began with a month or two commitment to serve during a summer, and that may have grown to a year long period of service before, Lord willing, growing to a full time focus.

The Cross Cultural Missions Training program is an opportunity for young adults, young couples and seminary students aged 18-30 to spend four weeks during a summer in an intensive program of both education and service. Hosted in Latin America (ordinarily in Mexico), participants fly in and spend two weeks getting classes on missions, cultural training and even some language helps from experienced URCNA and NAPARC missionaries who stay with the team for a week (or even two) at a time. After the two weeks of education (with some service in the evenings), the youth break up into teams that serve in various areas of ministry on the mission field working alongside missionaries. Service areas have included music ministries, working at orphanages, camps and outreaches and more.

The program is led by our Foreign Missions Coordinator and runs yearly from mid-May to mid-June. It is open to all who are interested, and has attracted attendees from seminaries, colleges, and the work force. Families are allowed to join in as well, with opportunities for married couples and young children to still be involved.

Have you heard of and advertised for CCMT in your church? This is a great avenue for helping members grow in grace and

service, and reports from attendees have been overwhelmingly positive. Spending time in close quarters with other Christians, godly pastors and missionaries, and serving others is just a beautiful formula for growth in Christian character. We would strongly encourage the churches to take full advantage of this program by advertising it and, DV, joining in as they are able! For more information and materials to help in advertising, please check our webpage at www.urcnamissions.org and click the "CCMT" link at the top. You can also visit the website at www.ccmtmissions.com or can contact Pastor Richard Bout at urcnamissions@gmail.com

6. Website and YouTube

Did you know we have a website? www.urcnamissions.org is a website that accesses material from both Home Missions and Foreign Missions within the URCNA. Under the foreign tab (or go to www.urcnamissions.org/foreign) you can find brief biographies and pictures of all our foreign missionaries. You can also find helpful documents to grow your church in mission faithfulness.

URCNA Missions also has a 'channel' on YouTube where you can see talks from past Missions Conferences, introductions and prayer videos for some of our missionaries, and see a CCMT advertising video (or show it to your church after the service – its only 90 seconds long!). Please feel free to advertise these talks for church members!

7. The URCNA Foreign Missions Manual

At Synod Wyoming (2016), Synod approved the URCNA Foreign Missions Manual as, "Helpful guidelines to assist consistories, missionaries and church planters in the day to day activity of foreign missions" (Acts of Synod Wyoming, Art. 64.11). Part of our report to Synod 2026 is to include an updated version of this manual, incorporating new developments in missionary cooperation approved by Synod

Niagara 2022. Regardless of whether the new revisions are adopted, this is a great manual for helping your church consider the nuts and bolts of sending or supporting a missionary on the field! It can be found at www.urcnamissions.org/foreign Just scroll down and click "Foreign Missions Manual." Lord willing, the new updates will be available shortly after Synod.

8. Field Committees

One of the most exciting aspects of our work as the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions is when we work alongside sending churches (or churches interested in becoming sending churches) to help send and support our missionaries on the field. When the foreign missions committee and local churches cooperate in foreign missions, we do so through Field Committees. These committees were approved and encouraged by Synod Niagara 2022 as a great model for supporting foreign missions in the URCNA. They help local Consistories (or mission committees from local churches – some churches include deacons, etc.) by providing a team based setting where lessons learned from URCNA missionaries and the URCNA Foreign Missions Coordinator can be shared for more effective and wise service on the foreign field. Of course not all sending churches are required to utilize our involvement, but the benefit of experience and joy in cooperation is real for both sides. Field Committees can also include members from other churches interested in the mission, and as we grow our fields to include multiple missionaries or missionary helpers, the Field Committee can incorporate members from different sending churches who will all work alongside the missionaries to pray for and help the mission on the field.

If your church would like our involvement to consider and investigate a potential future mission or to help in overseeing and encouraging an existing mission, we are happy to help however the local church may so desire. But please do not let mission passion and zeal fade because of workload or the struggles that are an inevitable part of church and mission life.

Recognize the burden gets lighter when more hands are put to the task, and that sometimes a little missions experience can go a long way! While only God gives the growth, a multitude of counsellors has always been a wise way forward.

To seek any foreign missions advice from us as a committee, please contact our clerk Rev. Casey Freswick at revfres@icloud.com or our Foreign Mission Coordinator Rev. Richard Bout at urcnamissions@gmail.com

9. Field Exploration/Missionary Preparation

The Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions is at the service of the churches to help local consistories investigate potential fields for sending missionaries. Should your consistory be considering sending a missionary to a new field, please feel free to utilize the experience of this team and the resources of the federation to share the workload and costs of investigating and starting a new work.

Similarly, as churches we all want to see those heading to foreign fields equipped as much as possible to bring God's word effectively within another culture. As beneficial as seminary education is, very few seminaries provide training regarding cultural awareness and sensitivity for the foreign field. This lack of preparation can lead to unintentional but damaging interactions which create unnecessary stumbling blocks to the gospel. Before sending missionaries or missionary helpers to a country which has different, unwritten rules of cultural behaviour than ours, please reach out to us for help in how we can best equip our "goers" to understand and reach the individuals within the culture God is calling them to serve.

10. Other Missions Agencies

While not part of or under the jurisdiction of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, we recognize the ongoing partnership of URCNA churches with some excellent agencies

that help in promoting responsible missions around the world. While many can be listed, we would draw special attention to:

a. Word and Deed: URCNA churches have helped and supported this NAPARC mission organization ever since its North American beginnings in 1994. This ministry continues to maintain excellent missional and Biblical standards, providing word and deed care through partnership with faithful churches around the world. Churches can learn more at www.wordanddeed.org

b. Reformed Mission Services: Reformed Mission Services is a URCNA ministry overseen by the Trinity URC of Visalia. They help promote short term mission trips both overseas and within North America for youth and adults, as well as diaconal support in times of national crisis (and more). Their labors have been much appreciated by many within our churches. To learn more visit www.rms.org

V. Summary of Foreign Mission Works

1. Costa Rica Report - San Jose

The year 2024 marked two significant milestones in the Lord's work in Central and South America. Pastor Bill and Aletha Green completed 40 years of faithful missionary service, and CLIR (the Fellowship of Reformed Churches in Latin America) celebrated its 30th anniversary. Both occasions were commemorated in September 2024 during the General Assembly, with churches represented from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and Puerto Rico.

The work in Costa Rica includes the Reformed Churches, CLIR, the Christian school (CECRE), and the Farel Seminary. The Reformed Churches are organized under the *Presbiterio*

Nacional de la Iglesia Presbiteriana y Reformada de Costa Rica (PNIPRC), which consists of four established congregations along with several church plants. By God's grace, growth continues at a steady pace.

CLIR exists to unite churches of like mind in the Reformed faith and to equip them to proclaim the gospel and defend the church against heresy and worldly influences. Its work includes translating and publishing more than 200 book titles, hosting approximately 35 conferences each year, and producing a biannual theological journal. CLIR also maintains an active social media presence, including a YouTube channel with roughly 3,000 subscribers. The ministry is funded largely through donations from the URCNA and serves as a representative of the URCNA to Presbyterian and Reformed churches throughout Latin America.

CECRE, the Christian School governed by a board made up of members from the local churches, continues to play a vital role in preparing the next generation in a Christian worldview. Like many schools in Costa Rica, it has been affected by declining national enrollment. Support from individuals and churches in North America helps provide tuition assistance and cover operating expenses. The importance of this school for the long-term health and stability of the churches cannot be overstated.

Pastor Green is sent and overseen by the Bethany URC of Wyoming, MI. It has been a blessing for us to cooperate with the churches in this work through a field committee.

2. <u>Ecuador – Quito</u>

Rev. Pablo and Verenisse Landázuri were called to serve in Ecuador in 2014 and are overseen by the consistory of Covenant Reformed Church (URCNA), Pella, Iowa. Luz de Vida and its church plants belong to the Reformed Churches of Ecuador (IRE), a classis currently composed of two organized congregations: Luz de Vida Reformed Church and La Gracia

Reformed Church. The work in Ecuador is a very active work that has been experiencing significant blessing from the Lord.

- Luz de Vida Reformed Church (Quito) Rev. Landázuri serves as pastor. Average Lord's Day attendance is approximately 140. The congregation has reached facility capacity and is exploring expansion options.
- Quito South Church Plant This mission work is under the supervision of Luz de Vida and is pastored by Rev. Ronald Cagua. His wife is Daniela. Attendance remains strong, with approximately 40 in the morning service. Two individuals are preparing for membership.
- Tumbaco Church Plant. This work is supervised by Luz de Vida and is pastored by Rev. Jean Carlos Morán, who was ordained in early 2025. Attendance has recently grown, with approximately 40 present at the morning service.
- Cuenca Church Plant. Also supervised by Luz de Vida, Elder José Cabrera, an SRA student, exhorts regularly. Attendance averages 35.
- La Gracia Church & Ibarra Mission La Gracia Church, an established congregation outside Rev. Landázuri's direct pastoral charge, has joined the IRE under the same church order but is presently without a pastor. SRA student and Luz de Vida licensed exhorter Jorge de Sousa regularly leads worship there. The Ibarra Mission functions under the supervision of La Gracia Church.

The kingdom in Ecuador has also been blessed through a faithful, national seminary, El Seminario Reformado de las Américas (SRA). The seminary currently has 24 students enrolled. Two men graduated in early 2025 (Rev. Morán and Rev. Cagua) and were subsequently examined by Classis and ordained to the ministry. Mr. Jorge de Sousa, a Luz de Vida student, is expected to graduate in April 2026. The seminary is administered and supervised by City Seminary of Sacramento, California, a ministry of the RCUS.

We are grateful to receive regular updates on this mission through their sending church.

3. France – Reformed Faith and Life

Rev. Eric Kayayan is called to serve in Reformed Faith and Life, under the oversight of Oak Glen URC (Lansing, IL.). RFL is a media ministry of Reformed convictions in the French language located in Saumur, France. It uses radio programs, literature, podcasts, videos and articles posted on social media to proclaim the Gospel through the French world. Transition plans are underway for another man to come on board and work alongside Rev. Kayayan and to take up this work in the future.

RFL also has an Armenian wing (Christians for Armenia) which ministers to Christians in the country of Armenia. Presently they are involved in the translation of the Old and New Testaments into the Armenian language.

4. Italy – Perugia

Rev. Andrea Ferrari and his wife Cristina continue to serve in the spiritually needy area of Perugia, Italy. There are very few faithful evangelical churches in the city of over 160,000 people. Sunday services continue to draw people from different nationalities. Bible studies and outreach are a regular part of the work. Although the work has been difficult in recent years, by God's grace there is a regular group meeting each Sunday.

In early November 2025, we were invited to form a field committee to reorient the work and give more help with evangelism. The focus will be a bustling area near the university where they hope to rent an outreach space on a street busy with foot traffic. The new fellowship space will soon be made ready with appropriate furnishings, and Rev. Ferrari, his wife Cristina, and other members are looking forward to

making themselves available for evangelism, counseling and building relationships.

Rev. Ferrari is overseen and sent by the Christ URC of Santee, CA.

5. Italy – Milan

Philadelphia Reformed Church in Milan, served by Rev. Michael Brown and his wife Janie, has continued to experience the blessing of the Lord. The church continues to grow, slowly but consistently. Several new families are attending, and new members have recently been added.

- The Milan church recently had the joy of hosting a gathering of twenty-three ministers and elders representing ten confessional Reformed and Presbyterian churches from across Italy. They gathered for the purpose of hearing God's Word, prayer, singing, and discussing how they might move forward together in the formation of Italy's first Reformed denomination. It was a deeply encouraging time of unity, humility, and shared commitment to the historic Reformed faith. During the meeting, two committees were established, each consisting of five men. One committee will study matters of liturgy and worship, and the other will focus on polity and church order.
- After two years of prayer and seeking the Lord, the church will ordain another elder. *Chiesa Riformata Filadelfia* will soon have three elders, three deacons, and one minister serving the church.
- On Saturday, October 25, the church hosted their sixth Annual Milan Conference on Reformed Theology. The theme was: "We Believe: Why the Nicene Creed Still Matters", with over 100 people attending.

Pastor Brown is overseen and sent by the Escondido URC of Escondido, CA. We are blessed to be in regular contact with our former URCNA Missions Committee chairman, Rev. Brown!

6. Mexico- Tepic

Rev. Matt & Anne-Marie Van Dyken continue to serve in Eternal Life Church in Tepic, Nayarit. The church has been blessed by numerical and spiritual growth over the last two years. They continue with their regular activities of weekly home Bible studies, woman's studies, and men's discipleship classes. *Vida Eterna* is working with two other Reformed churches in the city and have joint activities on a regular basis. Each year they hold a joint youth camp on the coast of the state of Nayarit.

- In 2027 the Van Dykens plan to come off the field and repatriate back in Canada.
- A Mexican pastor who has been in ministry 16 years is preparing for his colloquium doctum in June of 2026. Lord willing, he will become the pastor of Eternal Life Reformed Church. It is a great blessing to see God's growth upon this work to the degree that a gifted and competent man from the area can be preparing for ordination.

Rev. Van Dyken is sent and overseen by the Hope Reformed Church (URC) of Brampton, Ontario. We have been blessed to work alongside these brothers through a field committee, and are exploring the potential of starting another work in Mexico in the coming years.

7. Romania - Bucharest

Rev. Mihai Corcea continues to serve as a missionary in Romania's capital, planting the *Evangelical Reformed Church of Bucharest*. Through preaching, teaching, and social media

resources, Rev. Corcea's work seeks to promote a Reformed understanding of the Christian faith amid spiritual darkness shaped by Eastern Orthodox superstition, decades of communism, and more recent European secularism.

- The church has seen growth over the last two years and has new people regularly visiting the services on Sundays. The foreign population in Bucharest has greatly increased in the last couple of years, reaching almost 10%, and many of the visitors to the church are new to the country.
- In addition to the work in Bucharest, Rev. Corcea continues to travel once a month to Transylvania to meet with the core group there. About ten adults attend those meetings regularly and most of them are making steady progress in their understanding of Reformed doctrine.

Rev. Corcea is sent and overseen by the Christ URC of Santee, CA. We are thankful for ongoing contact with this church and mission.

8. Turkey – Izmir

The year 2025 was a period of significant transition, growth, and spiritual activity for the Coskun family (Pastor Cagdas and Gulden) and their church in Turkey. Despite challenges such as the loss of their longtime meeting place, health concerns, and the departure of some believers, the church experienced encouraging developments in evangelism, publishing, ecumenical engagement, and communal worship. Throughout the year, the theme of God's sovereignty and faithfulness remained central, providing hope and direction.

After nearly 15 years in an eighth-floor business center, the church's meeting place was demolished in mid-2025 due to infrastructure damage from Turkey's earthquake. The congregation temporarily rented an Anglican Church building

in the downtown core. This brought a significant increase in exposure, resulting in 15 or more new visitors each week. Their Easter Service saw over 150 guests, each receiving a New Testament and gospel materials. Christmas also was a great opportunity, with over 200 guests, 50 of whom were unable to fit inside the building. New Testaments were distributed, and the gospel was clearly preached. Eight new believers were baptized in May, 2025. Two more were baptized in the summer after completing classes. New baptism classes began with 10 candidates in September. In addition, there is ongoing translation work on Calvin's Institutes and conferences where all protestant churches (estimated to be about 225) in Turkey are invited.

The mission in Turkey was able to purchase a building in February which will be used for Sunday School, evangelism, conferences, and office space for the pastors. Pastor Cagdas is sent and overseen by the Walker URC of Grand Rapids, MI. We are blessed to cooperate in this work through a field committee.

9. Ecuador Diaconal Mission - Quininde

Josh and Michelle Vogel labored in Quininde, Ecuador as diaconal missionaries sent and overseen by the Covenant Christian Church of Wyoming, ON. While being very grateful for their service on that field and knowing that God uses all things to build his church and sow seeds for the gospel, the Vogels experienced some challenges on the field that led to their return to Ontario last year. We pray that the Lord will bless them in their new area of service while also continuing to build Christ's church in the Quininde area.

10. Miami International Seminary (MINTS)

This educational branch of foreign missions continue to help in training up church members and pastoral candidates in numerous areas of the world, with a particular focus upon Spanish speaking countries. Although MINTS is an

independent organization with its own oversight and structure, we are blessed to have numerous URCNA pastors serving in missions through this organization, including: Rev. Melvin (and Jane) Dotinga, sent by the Lynden URC of Lynden, WA, Rev. Cornelius (and Sandy) Hegeman, sent by the Trinity Reformed Church (URC) of Cape Coral, FL, and Rev. Eric (and Carla) Pennings, sent by the Covenant Reformed Church (URC) of Toronto, ON.

VI. Foreign Missions Coordinator Report

Missions Coordinator Report – March 12th, 2026

As I begin my report this year, we face a great deal of uncertainty among the nations in the world. How wonderful to know we serve a sovereign God who is controlling and shaping the course of this world. As Psalm 145 so clearly teaches, "The Lord preserves those who love Him, but all the wicked he will destroy." (vs.20) As Saviour and as Judge, He is trustworthy. Until that Day when He returns, his servants will bring His transforming Word to the nations. "My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord." (vs.21)

By God's grace, in my work over the last two years I have been sustained and blessed. I have seen God's continued work in our missions around the world and have greatly enjoyed working with our missionaries, fellow builders in His kingdom. Over the last two years we have seen spiritual growth in many of our fields and there is much reason to give thanks. Here is a summary of my work:

1) Regularly Scheduled Activities

i. Communication with URCNA churches. I regularly receive emails and calls from congregations and consistories concerning the needs, financial needs, and opportunities for missions throughout the world.

ii. Publication of the Trumpet – Monthly Newsletter of the URCNA (with the HMC).
iii. URCNA monthly prayer requests for URCNA bulletins
iv. Financial needs letter – sent two times each year.
v. Prayer Map
vi. Foreign Missions Webpage.
vii. URCNA Missions Conference (every two years).

2) Contact with Foreign Missionaries

I have regular communication with all our foreign missionaries and have regular zoom calls/prayer times with them.

- Eric Kayayan – (Zoom meetings & prayer)
- Andrea Ferrari (Zoom meetings & prayer)
- Mike Brown (Zoom meetings & prayer).
- Matt Van Dyken (Zoom meetings & prayer).
- Bill Green – (Zoom meetings & prayer).
- Pablo Landazuri (occasional Zoom meeting & prayer).
- Mihai Corcea (Zoom meeting & prayer).
- Cagdas Coskun (Zoom meeting & prayer).
- Melvin Dotinga (MINTS)
- Eric Pennings (MINTS)
- Neal Hegeman (MINTS)

3) Cross-Cultural Missions Training (CCMT)

For the last three years we have held the month-long Cross-Cultural Missions Training in central Mexico. We have been blessed to have an average of 18 young people each year and have seen God's hand of blessing on the program. The CCMT is designed to teach young adults how to cross cultures with the gospel and to give them the skills to share their faith in their home context.

We have been preparing for our fourth CCMT in May/June 2026. We once again will have Rev. Paul and Julie Murphy,

Rev. Matt and Anne-Marie Van Dyken, Rev. Ken Anema, and other missionaries taking part. My wife Angela and I, lead, mentor, and facilitate this project. Presently there is some uncertainty of whether CCMT can be held this year because of cartel violence in central Mexico.

United Reformed Missions Association has once again been a great partner in helping finance this project.

4) Meetings with Field Committees/Sending Churches

Since Synod Niagara and the adoption of the new model of foreign missions, I have seen a greater cooperation and coordination in our works. In most of our missions we now have a field committee, with members from both sending churches and the missions committee. I serve as a non-voting advisor to those committees. It has been a joy to work together in helping and overseeing our mission works. We pray that God would grant us the ability to work together well and accomplish much in His name.

5) Potential New Mission Works

i. Colima, Mexico. An investigative visit was made to Colima in January of this year to consider beginning a new mission work - by reps from Hope (Brampton) and Living Water (Brantford) URCNA and the FMC. There is an open door for a work to be begun in that area.

ii. Liberia, Africa. I have been invited by reps from the Presbyterian Reformed Church to assist in teaching of pastors in April 2026. We have been asked to consider sending a missionary to that area on a full-time basis.

6) Committee/Inter-church Meetings

- ICRC World Missions Consultation (chair)
- CECCA (member)
- United Reformed Missions Association (advisor)
- Word & Deed (advisor)
- Reformed Seminary of the Americas (board of visitors)
- Come Over and Help (COAH)
- Helping Internationals (HI)
- Radius International
- OPC Foreign Missions
- MARS & Canadian Reformed Seminary
- Children of Hope (Canadian Reformed Mission in Mexico)

7) Contact with Home missionaries.

I continue to help/meet with several of our home missionaries and church-planters and preach in their mission works:

- Niagara Falls – Rev. Rich Bultje
- Toronto Covenant – Rev. Jose Ramirez
- Poconos – Rev. Rich Kuiken
- St Catharines, ON – Rev. Thabet Megaly
- Spanish Migrant Work Niagara – Wilf Bout

8) Local International Work

I continue to be involved with mission work in our community of Brantford, ON. My wife and I along with other couples in our church are working especially with Latin and African people who have immigrated to Canada. Our monthly international service is translated into both Spanish and Swahili. I also lead a discipleship Bible study for families interested in joining the church. We also have translation through Kaleo (a Christian live translation service) in all of Living Water morning worship services.

9) Speaking & Preaching

I preach regularly in area URC churches and missions as I am able. On occasion I also accept invitations to speak in local churches or seminaries.

10) Mission Coordinator Trips

2024

i. Ecuador – September – Visit to Josh and Michelle Vogel
ii. Indiana - October 4-7th – Speaking in a Divine Hope woman's Conference in a Woman's Prison in IN.
iii. Philadelphia - October 15th-17th – NAPARC Missions meetings
iv. Mexico - November 6th-13th – Speaking in Mexico at conference for Can Ref – Children of Hope

2025

i. Louisville - January 1-4 CROSS Conference
ii. Hamilton – January 9&10 – Speak at Canadian Reformed Conference
iii. Chicago – January 29th-31st Taught missions classes at MARS
iv. Mexico – February 7th-17th- Investigative trip to Guadalajara/Colima
v. Flat Rock, NC – March 15th-21st - URCNA Missions Conference (organizer)
vi. New York – April 4th&5th - NAPARC Regional Conference – Speaker
vii. California – May 1st-3rd - Oversight visit regarding Perugia
viii. Mexico – May 17th – June 14th CCMT
ix. Philadelphia – September 16th-19th NAPARC Missions Meetings
x. Chicago – October 1-4 CECCA meetings & MARS Missions Conference

xi. Saumur, France & Perugia, Italy – October 27th-Nov. 12th – Visit to Eric Kayayan & Andrea Ferrari
xii. Florida – December 13th-15th Visit to OPC church plant – Eric Watkins
xiii. Louisville, KY – December 31 – January 3 - CROSS Conference

2026

i. Brantford – January 19th & 20th – FMC Face to Face Meeting
ii. Mexico – Puerto Vallarta - January 21st-30 – Investigative trip.
iii. Florida - February 19-21 MARS consultation meeting – Center for Missions & Evangelism

VII. Recommendations to Synod

Recommendation #1: That synod grant an opportunity for Rev. Richard Bout to give a verbal report in person on the floor of Synod 2026.

Recommendation #2: That synod approve the work of the Foreign Missions Coordinator with hearty thanks.

Ground:

1. Rev. Richard Bout continues to serve the cause of Christ through URCNA foreign missions in an exemplary capacity. His advice is frequently sought and appreciated, and his heart for seeing missionaries raised up and sent out has been a catalyst through which many have given a more serious consideration of the importance of foreign missions and God's potential calling upon their lives in that regard.

Recommendation #3: That synod keep the annual budget of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions at $14,500 USD.

Ground:

1. This amount has been sufficient over the last 2 years for our work.

Recommendation #4: That synod adopt the updated foreign missions manual, *The URCNA Foreign Missions Manual,* as helpful guidelines to assist consistories, missionaries and church planters in the day to day activity of foreign missions. (Please note: Primary changes of content are found in Sections I.A, II, and the end of III.C.1)

Grounds:

1. The original *URCNA Foreign Missions Manual* was adopted by Synod Wyoming, 2016, with the same wording noted in this recommendation (see Article 64.11 of the Acts of Synod Wyoming).
2. Synod Niagara 2022 made some significant changes to the recommended structure of foreign missions, and these new changes have been incorporated into the updated document.
3. The document has not been significantly revised or changed beyond the updates required based on the decisions of Synod Niagara 2022.

Recommendation #5: That synod give the privilege of the floor to non-delegate SCFM members Rev. Casey Freswick and Rev. Richard Bout while foreign missions are being discussed.

Recommendation #6: That synod note that our Foreign Missions Coordinator will continue to receive the cost-of-living increase as determined at Synod Wyoming 2016.

URCNA Foreign Missions Manual

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I. *Principles of Foreign Missions for the URCNA*[5]

Introduction

In the Great Commission, the risen Lord Jesus calls the apostles, and through them his whole church, to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28.18-20). Ever since, the church has confronted man's post-fall plight by seeking to equip all of God's people to participate in the church's mission to the world, and by sending missionaries to preach the gospel to the unconverted. This great task belongs to the church today as much as ever, and it must involve every local congregation.

Without involvement in foreign missions, the local congregation will become disconnected from the body of Christ that exists throughout the world; but then that congregation can even become uninterested in the lost souls that surround it. By contrast, the more meaningful contact our churches have with the unconverted and with churches of other countries, the better we will understand the gospel's power.

The Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions (SCFM) prays that the Lord of the church will use this manual for foreign missions to help URCNA congregations and missionaries more effectively to fulfill the task that the Lord has given us. As a federation, we must share the conviction that greater preparedness for missions will result from a wise plan and sound principles. What follows are those foundational principles that should guide us in foreign missions.

[5] See the URCNA study committee report, *Biblical and Confessional View of Missions* (Acts of Synod 2001, pp. 101-114); the Church Order of the URCNA, sixth edition (2007), Article 47; "Fulfilling the Great Commission: A Shared Strategy in URCNA Missions" (Acts of Synod 2012, pp. 516-526); *How to Plant a Reformed Church. The Church Planting Manual of the United Reformed Churches in North America*, 2015 edition (Acts of Synod, 2014, pp. 359-423); Synod Niagara 2022 Article 101.16.

A. The Need to Work Together

Our Reformed churches recognize that the best way for us to walk together in practice is for us to have agreement in our principles (Amos 3.3). For this reason, we have agreed to order our ecclesiastical relations and activities on the basis of clearly defined biblical and confessional commitments (see the introduction to the Church Order of the URCNA). But this has not always been applied to the arena of foreign missions. For the sake of more effective and responsible work in foreign missions, the churches of our federation have adopted a shared strategy for our cooperation.

In the work of foreign missions, a federation of churches could hardly conduct itself "decently and in good order" (1 Cor. 14.40) if it were unable to answer some very basic and important questions. What is the church's mission? Who are its missionaries? Who should oversee missionaries? How should they be prepared for their work? But there are also more nuanced questions that a well-ordered church must ask (and answer) in a unified way. Are there regions of the world in which our combined efforts might be most effective? Are there particular forms of mission work in which our churches could participate more productively than in others?

Our churches have agreed to "make every effort to unify all of our resources (gifts, talents, and finances) as one united federation in order to bring the gospel from our homes and churches to the nations of the world."[6] To this end Synod Niagara 2022 adopted a missions model incorporating elements not only from all past foreign missions decisions of the URCNA but also from lessons learned in the successes and failures of sister churches and our own history.

While the calling consistory retains exclusive oversight of missionaries, the federational mission structure—using field

[6] *Acts of Synod Nyack 2012*, pp. 516-517.

committees, a Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions (SCFM), and Classical advice—makes development of mission fields a shared responsibility. Voluntary cooperation helps:

- Provide practical accountability to sending consistories
- Guard against mistakes and neglect when workload becomes overwhelming
- Encourage humility and teamwork in line with Scripture
- Prioritize strengthening existing fields before opening new ones so the federation is not spread too thin, and
- Better promote the cause of Christ to the nations.

This structure also enables the federation to apply prior Synodical commitments more consistently and to research and develop fields responsibly.

Practically, the SCFM and field committees will create an infrastructure for hands-on work, shared knowledge, and prayer, encouraging one another and promoting mutual support among sending churches, missionaries, and denominational representatives. By improving training (e.g., Cross Cultural Missions Training), clarifying required care, and widening on-ramps for service, this approach should make long-term missionary service more attractive and sustainable, reduce losses of qualified men to other NAPARC denominations, and produce greater readiness, faithfulness, and joy in foreign missions—for the benefit of our missionaries, churches, and ultimately God's glory.

B. The Priority of Strengthening Current Fields

In keeping with our Lord's command, the churches of our federation desire to make disciples of people from all nations. But the massive scope of that mission will not excuse the practice of multiplying foreign fields in such a way that many are rendered weak and vulnerable. Our foreign mission works may abound far and wide, but then our federation can easily find itself spread too thin. With a united concern for our

missionaries and their families, for the congregations that they serve, and for the effectiveness and longevity of all our foreign works, our federation must keep its focus on strengthening current fields before spreading to new ones.

Missionaries rarely worked alone in the apostolic period. It seems that the Lord was pleased in most cases to establish his gospel through the testimony of two witnesses (Luke 10.1ff; Acts 13.2ff); but he was also pleased in most cases to spread his church not by means of isolated missionaries but rather through the labor of missionary teams (evident throughout the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul). Our federation should strive to approximate the pattern of missionary labor that we find in the New Testament by guarding against the isolation of any missionary on a foreign field. With more cooperation among our own churches, and with more effort to work (where possible) with national churches abroad, we will be able to ensure that our foreign missionaries have co-laborers who can visit them, aid them, and even relieve them when necessary.

C. Biblical Contextualization on the Foreign Field

1. Avoid Paternalism:

   In many countries the very presence of a foreign missionary will have a significant impact on a national people. Missionaries must be very careful not to lord it over those to whom they minister (Matt. 20.25-28), and must continually strive to become all things to all people (1 Cor. 9.22). A missionary will render his ministry ineffective unless he diligently assumes the humble posture of a learner before a national people.[7] Our goal on the

[7] Cf. Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor…and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), 109-113.

foreign field is not to reproduce a North American church.[8]

2. Avoid Dependency:

   Dependency occurs when the missionary and his sending church engage in a ministry that aims to take care of all the financial needs of the nationals, encouraging their perpetual dependence on their caretakers. Our foreign mission works must strive from the start to develop responsible national congregations that will not be perpetually dependent on the missionary or his sending church for their sustenance, governance, and propagation.[9]

3. Promote a Word and Deed Ministry:

   Many so-called ministries have abandoned the gospel in exchange for social rehabilitation. We must not, however, make the opposite mistake of teaching the gospel while showing little interest in the temporal needs of the listeners (cf. Luke 4.18f; James 2.14-17). Our foreign missions must seek to emulate the wholistic ministry of our Lord, whose mercy went out to sinners in all of their spiritual and physical brokenness.

D. The Training of National Men

[8] See J.H. Bavink, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960). "Too frequently we have failed to see that the education we give and our whole attitude toward life is to a strong degree propaganda for Western culture, with its extremely dangerous elements. Therefore, one of the requirements of every missionary is that he must be critical of his own life and of the culture which he always carries with him even though he may be unaware of it" (107).

[9] Peter Beyerhaus,*The Responsible Church and Foreign Missions* (l964).

Our goal in foreign missions is the establishment of national churches that have the resources and responsibility not only to maintain and govern their own ministry, but also to spread that ministry elsewhere through the planting of other churches. To that end, it is important that national men who are interested in pursuing the ministry of the Word be directed to Biblical and theological education that will help to prepare them for ministry. Ideally, these men could obtain a sound theological education in their home country, either at a faithfully Reformed seminary or by means of extension courses; this would allow them to remain involved in their local congregation where their gifts would continue to develop. Where a sound theological education cannot be obtained at home, this education should be sought through a foreign seminary (in North America or elsewhere), though particular challenges are often attached to this scenario.[10]

E. Conclusion

It is the Lord Jesus, our only Head, who gathers, defends and preserves for himself the one, holy, catholic church. Since he is primarily doing this great work through the church's execution of the Great Commission, may the Holy Spirit further equip the URCNA in all its missionary activity be faithful to the Lord and to his Word.

II. *Structure of Foreign Missions*

The New Testament clearly shows that in various ways the churches partnered with each other to advance the spread of the gospel throughout the world. The Philippian church gave financially to the support of Paul's missionary work (Phil. 4.14-18); the Colossian church sent ministry associates to aid the

[10] See the online article by Douglas R. Rutt, "Hiring National Missionaries: A Good Idea?" (http://www.lutheranmissiology.org/Hiring%20National%20missionaries.pdf)

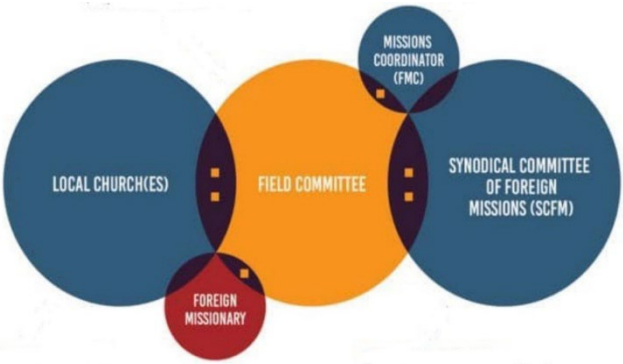
apostle (Col. 4.9, 12). There was a great deal of missionary traffic between the churches of the first century. Such cooperation was vital to the spread of the apostolic church, and it is something we must strive to imitate.

The work of foreign missions is a complex undertaking. It is often very difficult for a calling Consistory to provide a mission work with meaningful and effective oversight from afar. The Lord does not guarantee the "success" of any mission work, but since he directs us to seek safety in a multitude of counselors (Prov. 11.14), Consistories must avoid the practice of making uninformed, unilateral decisions. The wise course would be for a Consistory to seek counsel from others, not only before sending a man to a foreign field, but also throughout the duration of his work.

Counsel may come from various quarters, but our federation has also established the SCFM and has appointed the FMC for this very purpose: to counsel and aid Consistories that are engaging in foreign missions. If the federation is to maintain a common strategy in our missionary endeavors, the committee and coordinator should be involved throughout the process. For the sake of unified efforts in foreign missions, sending churches and missionaries should consult with the-SCFM and/or FMC.

a. when investigating and visiting a potential field;
b. when considering candidates who might serve as missionaries;
c. when making long-term plans for an existing work;
d. when addressing problems on the field;
e. when there are special financial needs;
f. when considering the closing of a work;
g. when planning for a work to federate with other churches.

This flow chart illustrates the structure of URCNA missions and the relationship between the local church, the SCFM and the field committee.



A. Local Church – A Consistory's[11] Call, Oversight and Support of the Missionary

It is the local, Consistory/Council that has the authority to call and send ordained missionaries.[12] However, when calling a missionary to a field the local Consistory shall seek the advice of classis before sending a foreign missionary to a field or removing a foreign missionary from a field.[13] The Consistory also oversees the faithful discharge of the ordained missionary's office.[14] The Council supervises the missionary and the mission work. The calling congregation supports and encourages their missionary and family. The possession of such authority and service, however, does not mean that every Consistory is adequately equipped to engage in foreign missions. Therefore, it is important to seek education and training for foreign missions well in advance of sending a man to the field, and to seek counsel from the SCFM and FMC for their input. Additional specific responsibilities of the sending Consistory/Council are as follows:

[11] The URCNA church order shows a discrepancy on calling and oversight, cf. articles 6, 7 and 47
[12] URCNA Church Order Articles 6, 7, and 47
[13] URCNA Church Order Articles 47
[14] URCNA Church Order Articles 14

The local consistory has exclusive authority:

a. To call and send missionaries, and to deploy and recall missionary helpers, and to oversee their life and doctrine.
b. To aid the mission work in the spiritual care of its people, as is necessary and appropriate, and to regulate worship services.
c. To direct the mission it has established and supervises

Every sending consistory should:

a. Have two qualified church representatives actively serving on a field committee;
b. Acquire a thorough knowledge of that field with which they are involved;
c. Maintain regular contact with the missionary and his family for ongoing faithfulness in overseeing the missionary's life and doctrine and in regulating the worship services;
d. Have a representative visit the missionary at least once every two years;
e. Ensure adequate financial support for the missionary (or long-term missionary helper) and his (her) family where applicable." [15]

B. The Field Committee

A *field committee* is organized by one or more consistories who have missionaries on a field.[16] It is made up of members from the calling church(s), members of the SCFM, the missions coordinator and the missionary himself. Together they assist with the day-to-day support and oversight of the mission and the missionary.

[15] Acts of Synod Niagara 2022, Article 101.14, pp 107
[16] *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 101.11, pp. 106

Synod approved the following role of field committees:[17]

a. To meet regularly for the mutual encouragement, accountability, and prayer support of the particular foreign field.
b. To assist the field by means of helping in establishing priorities; setting a budget for mission expenses beyond the salary and care of missionaries or missionary helpers and their families; and beyond the budgets of indigenous churches, encouraging mission zeal on the field; encouraging zeal in sending congregations through regular communication; growing the mission by determining particular posts that could be occupied on the field, and recommending these posts to the churches; helping with the stabilization of the field in the event of retirements or furloughs; giving help in times of crisis; determining the suitability of prospective candidates who are being considered for work on the mission.
c. To encourage broader support for the mission by facilitating communication among the consistories, the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions, the classes, and the mission field.
d. To visit the field by means of delegation, in cooperation with sending churches, at least once every two years.
e. To provide counsel to the classes of the federation:
    i. when they seek advice about sending new missionaries.
    ii. when they seek advice about removing missionaries from foreign fields.
    iii. when there are inter-personal tensions on the field.
f. To work directly with office bearers on the field so that their perspectives and opinions are carefully considered. With time, the local leadership will take

[17] *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 97.13, pp 103

more responsibility for the direction and decisions made on the field.

g. To respect the decision of overseeing Consistories that decline to take part in field committees.

Consistories have the final authority related to the composition of field committees. However, the following composition has been encouraged by Synod:[18]

a. Two to three office bearers (active or inactive) from each sending church ~~with~~ that has missionaries or long-term missionary helpers on a particular field.
b. Two representatives of the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions.
c. Any missionaries and long-term (two years and over) missionary helpers on the field.
d. The Missions Coordinator (or Foreign Missions Coordinator) as an advisory/non- voting member.

C. Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions (SCFM)

Synod appointed a SCFM to provide counsel to the federation, classes, consistories, and mission works in starting, strengthening, and at times closing foreign mission fields.[19]

Synod approved the following mandate for the SCFM:[20]

a. To serve the federation through the development of policies, and the promotion of training and resources for foreign missions.
b. To serve the federation by giving counsel to consistories that seek to open or close a foreign field.
c. To receive and publish the reports, goals, and concerns of the various foreign fields to the churches of the federation in order to encourage and facilitate greater unity throughout the federation in prayer and in the use

[18] *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 101.12, pp. 106
[19] *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 97.8, pp. 99
[20] *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 97.10, pp. 99

of resources (e.g. manpower, money, etc.). This will help us achieve our goal of establishing and/or strengthening foreign federations composed of faithful Reformed churches.

d. To help all consistories to become involved in foreign missions by providing expertise, counsel, and coordination in the expansion of current fields.
e. To aid in the investigation and planning of new foreign fields, where applicable.
f. To work with consistories through "field committees" that will determine the particular posts that are to be occupied on foreign fields, and to communicate throughout the federation where there is need for more missionaries.
g. To aid in developing potential missionaries by connecting interested individuals with current missionaries (and with calling consistories, where necessary) for short-term service abroad.
h. To work with young people who are interested in foreign missions by organizing internships, cross-cultural missions training, and medium- to long-term mission trips.
i. To give counsel to the classes of the federation when advice is sought by a consistory for the sending of missionaries to or removing them from foreign fields.

Synod composed the SCFM in the following manner:[21]

a. One representative appointed by each Classis,
b. two at-large members appointed by Synod,
c. and the Foreign Missions Coordinator.

All committee members should have experience in foreign missions, the desire to work closely with a team, and the ability and willingness to travel.[22]

[21] *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 97.9, pp. 99
[22] *Acts of Synod Niagara 2022*, Article 97.17, pp. 112

Missionaries - Those Who Are Sent to the Foreign Field

1. Ordained Missionaries:

   While there are diverse ways for our churches to be involved in foreign missions, our federation is especially committed to sending out ordained missionaries whose focus is the making and growing of disciples through the ministry of the Word and sacraments.[23] Ordained missionaries are sent out on a long-term basis and funded by the churches of the federation.

2. Missionary Helpers:

   It is appropriate in many instances, and sometimes necessary, for elders, deacons, and non-ordained people to assist ordained missionaries on the foreign field. Missionary helpers might be sent to serve in such roles as teachers, doctors/nurses, evangelists, Bible translators, etc.[24] We therefore need to encourage all our church members to consider how they might use their gifts to serve the Lord in reaching the nations.
   - Missionary helpers should be considered for service only with the agreement of the ordained missionary on the field.
   - They will work under the direction of the field committee and in close cooperation with the missionary on the field. Their life and doctrine remain under their Consistory.
   - They are responsible to raise their own financial support, under the supervision of their local consistory.

[23] Church Order of the URCNA, Article 47: "The church's missionary task is to preach the Word of God to the unconverted. When this task is to be performed beyond the field of an organized church, it is to be carried out by ministers of the Word set apart to this labor…"

[24] *Biblical and Confessional View of Missions* (Acts of Synod 2001, pp. 105-106).

- The calling consistories of missionary helpers should be incorporated into field committees.

III. *Five Phases in Foreign Missions*

A. Phase One – Exploration of the Prospective Mission Field

Responding to every foreign opportunity by sending missionaries would not help our federation to develop a shared strategy for greater effectiveness and long-term sustainability in our missionary endeavors. The SCFM and FMC have been tasked in helping explore posts in possible foreign mission fields and recommending these works to the churches. Consistories that desire to be active in foreign missions, and that seek greater cooperation in their efforts, can choose to oversee these potential foreign posts in consultation with the SCFM. While we have been given a mission to the whole world, the reality is that certain fields are fallow, others are infertile (currently, at least), some are very fertile, and then a few are ripe for harvest. A Consistory/Council will want an intimate knowledge of any particular field or post (the country as a whole, as well as the smaller regions) before considering potential candidates for the ministry. Ideally, Consistories will partner with the SCFM in the identification of the right foreign field, in the deeper investigation of that field, and in the implementation of a specific strategy for reaching that field. This groundwork will put a Consistory in a good position to seek advice from the classis AS THEY send, supervise and support a foreign missionary. Such cooperation with others will result in greater effectiveness and longevity.

B. Phase Two – Preparing the Missionary and His Family for the Foreign Field

1. <u>Searching for the Right Missionary to Send</u>:

Once a Consistory has taken the steps necessary to gain an intimate knowledge of a particular mission post (e.g. by visiting the location, and by consulting with those who have already served there), it will begin searching for the right man for the job. He must not only have the spiritual maturity that is required for ordained ministry but also be suited for laboring in the foreign field. In order to determine a man's competence and suitability for a particular work, the Consistory needs to engage in a thorough interview process, including careful examination of all references.

2. Training the Missionary before He Is Sent:[25]

In order to be prepared for labor in foreign missions and in a particular field, a minister of the Word will need more specific training than he could have received through a typical seminary education. In addition to providing the man with an adequate wage, the sending Consistory will also need to underwrite the expenses that accrue on account of the following steps of preparation:[26]

a. *General Training for Foreign Missions:*
New missionaries should be sent to one of the various institutions that provide intensive education and training that will help to prepare them for ministry in foreign missions.

b. *Training in a Specific Language*:
When necessary, significant time and money must be invested in learning the primary language that is spoken on the field. It can take a year of intensive study to gain the most basic facility in a new language; it may

[25] The following material applies to missionaries whose origin and/or language is not the same as that of the people whom they serve.
[26] If the missionary has a wife and children, the Consistory will also need to see to their preparation.

take another year or so of immersion in the language to gain the fluency needed for ministry among its native speakers.

c. *Cultural Training:*
In order to serve profitably in a foreign context, missionaries must have thorough knowledge of that culture in which they hope to labor. In many cases, such knowledge can be acquired only through a course of education that is focused on that culture, and through a course of training for life within it. Cultural education and training will help the missionary not only to avoid making many embarrassing or offensive cultural blunders among the foreign people which he plans to serve, but also to grow in his love for that people and in his ability to communicate God's truth to them more effectively. A good deal of cultural training must take place before the missionary is sent; but for its completion, the missionary may need to visit the foreign field for a season of culture immersion. Of course, even after beginning their service among a foreign people, a missionary and his family will want to continue growing in their knowledge of the people whom they serve.

d. *Orientation:*
The reality of living on the mission field is often very different from what is initially imagined. Therefore, before sending a man, the Consistory must ensure that he receives a thorough orientation pertaining to the particular location in which he will labor (unless he is already intimately familiar with it). If possible, the Consistory and their missionary should also consult with others who have experience in that country. In some cases, it will be necessary for the man to make an introductory visit to the field. Of course, the Consistory will also have to work through numerous practical matters with the missionary and his family

before sending them (e.g. housing, transportation, immigration, health insurance, education of children).

e. *On-Field Training:*
A pioneering missionary (one who goes to a place to begin a work from the ground up) may not have the privilege of much on-field training; in which case he may find Christian fellowship among missionaries from other Evangelical or Reformed denominations. But for those new missionaries who are seeking to join a team that is already in existence it is important to have sufficient time after arrival during which they may become acclimated to their new surroundings. Of course, before beginning his labors, the new missionary will also need a sufficient period of time to move his family and get them settled in a foreign country. Ideally, he would have very limited, if any, involvement in the daily workings of the mission for at least a year, followed by a gradual transition into the ministry. This allows for a missionary to understand and grow familiar with the context in which he will labor. Ideally, new missionaries would have two to three years of overlap with senior missionaries.

C. Phase 3 – Establishing an Entrance Strategy

Since the URCNA is a federation composed of churches that aim to assist one another in our mission to the world, our Consistories should generally not plan to begin isolated foreign mission works. Instead, when determining where to work in the world, it would be appropriate for a Consistory to consider where our federation or another is already working, if those active missions could be fortified by the addition of another missionary, or if weary missionaries should be relieved of their service. This teamwork mentality is essential to the longevity of faithful Reformed missions in all foreign fields.

1. Prioritize Partnership with Missionaries from Other Denominations (where possible):

   When exploring the potential of a prospective mission field, it would be wise to seek partnership with any biblically sound churches and missionaries that are already working in that field. In many cases, their experience will provide them with a much better sense than we could have with regard to the assets and needs of that particular field. Our churches should seek to work with groups that are compatible with the Reformed faith that we confess and practice. Where possible calling consistories should attempt to set up field committees incorporating other denominations. This would be particularly true where we have established ecclesiastical relations with other federations and denominations, as outline in NAPARC's comity agreement.

2. Prioritize Partnership with National Reformed Denominations (where possible):

   The vastness of the mission field, as well as the scarcity of biblical and Reformed witness throughout the world, should compel our federation to form partnerships with sound Reformed denominations that are already established in foreign nations. Why would we work to establish a new Reformed church or federation where one already exists? Unless we want to create an ecclesiastical rivalry, the URCNA must consult with any faithful Reformed denomination or church of another country where we hope to labor.

3. Prioritize Partnership with Other URCNA Churches and Missionaries:

   As a consistory and missionary explore a prospective field, they should consider whether laboring in that place would be in keeping with the overall strategy of working together

in our mission endeavors. Each new mission work will either strengthen or weaken the current labors of the federation. If we are to avoid "flash-in-the-pan" mission works that will dilute our limited resources, our Consistories need to know that there is sufficiently broad support throughout the federation for the sustaining of a mission work for many years to come. In consideration of such matters, Consistories ought to consult with the SCFM and the FMC, which have been established in large part to help facilitate greater cooperation among the churches of the federation.

4. Prioritize Long-term Sustainability, While Tending to Short-term Goals:

   Failure to count the cost of ministry abroad can result in doing a great disservice to the cause of the Gospel. Since foreign mission works usually take many years to be firmly established, it is vital that Consistories and their missionaries plan for long-term engagement with any particular field. While a strategy must be determined with a view to the long-term sustainability of the mission, short-term goals must also be made in service to that long-term vision. The Consistory and their missionary should make one-year, two-year, and five-year plans which are then periodically reviewed in order to see that goals are being accomplished.

5. Determine Times of Service in a Mission Field:

   While a Consistory would not typically set an end date for the service of their missionary before his service begins, it is important to determine the length of his terms of service between furloughs. The scheduling of terms and furloughs will be tentative, and adjustments will be made along the way. But for the health and endurance of the missionary, of

his family, and of the mission work itself, a Consistory must remain committed to a basic plan for service terms.[27]

D. Phase 4 – Establishing a Mission Church

What is the initial task for the missionary on the foreign field? There will be some cases in which a Consistory sends a missionary to a foreign field that has no Reformed church, perhaps where there is no faithful Gospel witness at all. In such a context, the missionary's initial task will be to spread the Gospel to people in that particular locale with the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ, and eventually establishing them as a congregation with his blessing – the following points begin with such a situation in view. There will be other cases, however, in which a consistory sends a missionary to a foreign post where he will serve as pastor for a group of Christians who already gather regularly for worship and fellowship (perhaps they were previously served by another URCNA missionary) – the third point below begins to address this situation. Of course, there will also be cases where a Consistory sends a missionary to serve a mission work that is overseen by a different Reformed denomination (national or otherwise). In such a context, the missionary will need to follow the guidelines of that denomination to which he is loaned for service on the foreign field.

1. <u>Initiating Discipleship by Evangelizing the Unconverted</u>:

   To whatever degree he might be employed in other work, the ordained missionary's primary calling will be to serve continually as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, spreading the Gospel to as many of his neighbors as possible,

[27] In its manual for foreign missions, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church stipulates that single missionaries have a term of three years, and that married missionaries have terms of four to six years. See section 4.8 of the *Manual of the Committee on Foreign Missions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, p. 31.

prayerfully seeking for God to change hearts and bring sinners to a true faith in the Savior. This primary evangelistic task will require the missionary to develop meaningful relationships with the people around him, as he publicly and privately seizes every opportunity to share the truth of Christ.

While he may initially cast a wide net, involving himself in a variety of activities across a broad area, the missionary will likely need to narrow his focus to a particular community (ideally, the one in which he lives). This will allow the man to love and serve people around him in tangible ways, providing him with opportunities to more naturally and effectively testify about Christ. The missionary's hospitality will be a vital component in his ministry, as it will allow him to bring people into his home where a meal can be shared and the Gospel can be discussed in a personal manner. Eventually, Bible studies will take place in his home, and then also in the homes of those he is evangelizing.

2. Making Disciples through Profession of Faith & Baptism:

Through God's gracious blessing upon the missionary's evangelistic work, sinners will come to faith in Christ. While new converts may readily claim to believe in private, it will be important for the missionary to encourage them to profess their faith publicly (Luke 12.8-9; 1 Tim. 6.12). To prepare them, the missionary will want to take converts through an essential outline of the Christian faith – context will largely determine the degree to which he uses the Reformed confessions. He will also need to make it clear that making public profession of faith requires new converts to make solemn vows before God and His people, the congregation to which they are joined by means of professing faith (these vows made on the mission field should not substantially differ from the vows of church

membership that are made in any established congregation in North America).

If new believers have not already received a valid Christian baptism, their official inclusion into the church through profession of faith must be attended by their receiving the covenant sign (Matt. 28.19; Acts 10.44-48; 16.30-34). Consistories should therefore send missionaries to the foreign field with the working assumption that this ordained servant is going to baptize people before a local congregation is established. In fact, the baptism of those first professing believers and their children should constitute the beginning of a new congregation that also includes the missionary and his family.

Once new converts have received adequate instruction, a ceremony should be planned for professions and baptisms to take place in the presence of the missionary, his family, and other believers. Where it is safe and feasible, numerous other people should be invited to witness the joyous occasion to the praise of God. The significance of these professions and baptisms should be explained through the reading and exposition of Scripture, and God's blessing on the new church members should be sought in prayer.

3. <u>Growing Disciples through the Ordinary Means of Grace</u>:

Sinners are saved in order to become true worshipers of God (1 Pet. 2.9); but public worship is also the context in which disciples grow more mature and fruitful through the ministry of the Word and sacraments (Heb. 10.19-25), those ordinary means that God has appointed for the working of His saving and sanctifying grace. In North America, a core group of people may meet as a Bible study for a year or two before a worship service takes place. On the foreign field, however, the missionary will usually want to begin holding worship services as soon as a few converts form a fledgling

congregation (even though it would lack a body of elders).

Throughout his ministry, the ordained missionary will need to continue going from house to house (Acts 20.20) in order to care for believers and their families, and to train them in family worship. But since he is seeking to establish a core group of Christians as a congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ, his early instruction for the people should give careful consideration to the subject of public worship – its nature and purposes; the basic elements; the proper conduct of the people; the leading of the pastor. When the initial core group of disciples is ready, the missionary should bring them together for the public worship of God (ideally, in a centralized location on the Lord's Day). If their simple service is to approximate what we find in Acts 2.42, it will include the reading and preaching of the Word, prayer and song, and the regular administration of the Lord's Supper, as approved by the missionary's Consistory. Private modes of discipleship and worship should always continue, but the communal discipleship that occurs in public worship through the ordinary means of grace will be used by God to grow the saints in their love for God and for each other. The following four points should be considered in connection with gathering the mission's initial members.

a. The Location of the Gathering for Study and/or Worship:

   The missionary's home may serve well as a meeting place for a group Bible study, and initially it might also be adequate for public worship services. But with God's blessing, the core group will eventually outgrow the missionary's home (and any other private residence) so that it will be necessary to look for a larger facility. If the fledgling church is to be accessible to the greatest number of people, not just conveniently located for those initial participants, it is important to

find a building in the most central location possible; and it would be ideal for the church building to be very visible to the surrounding community, as long as such visibility is legal and safe. Of course, the missionary will also have to take account of the affordability and suitability of the facility (its size, safety, availability).

b. The Ultimate Goal of Gathering as a Core Group:

The missionary will need to make it clear to those whom he serves that his goal is not to plant among them a church belonging to the URCNA, or even to duplicate that federation on foreign soil. Rather, he must clarify that his ultimate goal is to glorify God by making and growing Christian disciples who might be established one day as a healthy congregation with its own ordained leadership. If that mission is accomplished through God's gracious blessing upon his Word, this new congregation will in turn seek to advance God's Kingdom further by spreading the Gospel to others and planting churches that will belong to a national Reformed federation of churches – a federation with which the URCNA could have fraternal relations. Finite and fallen men are not sufficient for such a task. Therefore, the members of the mission must steadfastly continue in prayer that God would richly bless the ministry of the Word so that the saints are equipped to share the Gospel with others, and to adorn it with godly lives.

c. The Course of Biblical Instruction:

The missionary must be rigorously committed to using God's Word to edify professing believers and their children so that they would grow more mature in their Christian faith and demonstrate that growth in their love for one another and for those outside the church. Key in the discipleship of new converts is

grounding them firmly in the Gospel and training them to rely daily upon God's grace in Christ through Bible study and prayer. The saints will also need to be given a Christian worldview that is rooted in the general flow of redemptive history (creation, fall, redemption, consummation). While the Scriptures must have the highest priority, the Reformed confessions should also be carefully implemented in the discipleship of the core group, which must gradually be taught what it will mean for them to be a confessional church (studying a basic church order would also be important in this connection). It will also be vital for the missionary to regularly confront the falsehood of the other religions and ideologies that pervade in that place; to expose the national customs and sensibilities that are antithetical to Christianity; and to warn the people of the deceptive power of sins that they face each day. Disciples of Christ must be trained not only to know the truth about Christ but also to observe all that He commanded (Matt. 28.20).

d. Publicizing the Core Group Gathering for Study or Worship:

In countries where it is not legal or safe to publicize a Christian gathering, the missionary will have to spread the word very carefully and privately. However, in countries where it is both legal and safe to advertise a Christian gathering, the missionary will want to use every available means to inform as many people as possible that at a certain time and place the Word of God is going to be proclaimed to all who wish to come. The mission work should seek to use the following means of advertisement: local TV and radio; social media and an internet site for the church; printed fliers that can be posted in public places; postcards that can be mailed to surrounding residences. Bible conferences can also be a very helpful means of getting

the word out that a new church is being established in the area. But of course word of mouth remains the most effective means of bringing the truth to people, and eventually bringing people into the church where they will hear more of the truth.

e. Always Evangelizing and Training in Evangelism:

For this reason, the missionary must continually practice personal evangelism, and should take every opportunity to invite his neighbors to gather with the core group for Bible study or for the worship of God. Since he must be an example to the rest of the saints, they should see him reaching out to others, and they should be able to join him in the work so that he can give them hands-on training in evangelizing their neighbors. He will also want to encourage the members of the core group to do all they can to let their friends, family and neighbors know about the ministry of the mission work. It will be vital for the establishment of a healthy church that the disciples get caught up in God's mission of bringing His saving truth in Christ to lost sinners (Phil. 2.14-16; 1 Thes. 1.6-10; 1 Pet. 2.9-12).

4. Assessing the Spiritual Maturity of the Core Group:

As the missionary engages continually in teaching and training, he must also try to gauge that the disciples are in fact growing in some concrete ways. The saints should demonstrate a love for God's Word and a firm knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness (Phil. 1.9-11; Col. 1.9-10; Titus 2.11-14). Godliness will be especially evident in their active love for one another (Rom. 12.9-13; Gal. 6.10; Phil. 2.1-4; Col. 1.4). The authenticity of their piety will be clear from their regular attendance to the means of grace (Heb. 10.25), their practice of continual prayer (Eph. 6.18; Col. 4.2f), their desire to evangelize the unbelieving (Col.

4.5f; 1 Pet. 3.15f); their willingness in giving financially for the support of the Gospel ministry (Gal. 6.6; Phil. 4.15ff); their cheerfulness in giving financially for the relief of the poor among them (1 Cor. 16.1f; 2 Cor. 8-9); and their practice of discipleship in the home (Eph. 6.4). Eventually, the maturity of the saints should also be evident in men who may one day serve as ordained leaders in the church (Acts 14.23; 1 Tim. 3.1-13; Titus 1.5-9).

Training National Leaders for the Mission:

If the mission work is ever to organize as a particular congregation, it will need to have mature men who will serve as the church's national leaders for years to come. While it is wrong to ordain a recent convert (1 Tim. 3.6; 5.22), it is never too soon for the missionary to begin praying and looking for men who exhibit something of that spiritual maturity and gifting that pertain to ordained service – godly men who in their words and deeds manifestly love God, his Word, his people, and those who are still perishing in sin. It may take many years to find and train a national man who can serve as minister of the Word and sacraments; but within the first few years of the mission work, the missionary should be able to train at least a couple men to serve as elders or deacons.

It is often necessary for the missionary to form a mission "steering committee" that will assist him in various practical matters (upkeep of the meeting facility; transportation of members; planning/execution of fellowship and outreach events; collection and distribution of financial gifts; service projects to church members and to their neighbors). The missionary will naturally look for competent men who will cheerfully serve in this capacity; but of course, such service will also provide the missionary an opportunity to test these men. If they serve faithfully, they may begin at least to demonstrate, both to the

missionary and to the rest of the saints, that they are called by God to serve as elders or deacons in the church.

When he believes that he has possibly identified such men, the missionary should not only encourage them to aspire to the noble calling of ordained service (1 Tim. 3.1), but also begin to mentor these men well beyond the regular discipleship he provides for others. In addition to the testing, they will receive as members of the steering committee and by various other means, they should also be given a thorough education in the Bible, Reformed confessions, ecclesiology (the offices of the church in particular), and the care of souls. Their growth in knowledge and spiritual maturity should be evident in their speech and should bear fruit in their loving outreach to people both within and outside of the church.

E. Phase 5 – Developing an Exit Strategy

When is a mission work completed? This question is usually not easy to answer because each mission field is unique, and the circumstances can vary greatly. There is quite often a tension between leaving too early and staying too long. Nevertheless, a mission work is essentially ready for its missionary to leave when it has organized as a congregation with its own national leadership, and it has integrated into a national Reformed denomination. This should be our end-goal for our foreign church-plants.

There may be, however, extenuating circumstances when the missionary may have to come off the field before the mission church has organized. In consultation with the SCFM, the sending church is responsible to determine what they will do to replace a man if the urgent need arises. (This is why working in teams is essential; team members can possibly step in for a time to cover in the absence of a fellow missionary.) If a missionary foresees his need to come off the field ahead of time, he should communicate this in a timely fashion so that his church can

begin the process of looking for another man to replace him. Unforeseeable circumstances would be sickness, family emergencies, or real threats to his person or family. Foreseeable circumstances would include family needs, a call to another work, or retirement.

Another possible scenario is that, after working in a place for a time, there is little visible fruit in the mission work. The missionary, his team, and the sending church should regularly evaluate the viability of the work. This is not to be a matter of impatience or unbelief, but rather a careful consideration of whether we are wisely and effectively using the time and resources that the Lord has granted. The SCFM and the FMC should also be consulted in a question such as this, since a decision to close a work affects the federation as a whole. If a decision is made to close a work, the missionary could then entertain a call to another place of service within the federation. The advice of classis must be sought before removing a missionary from the field.

Policies regarding exit strategies should be agreed upon by all parties before the missionary embarks on his task and should include financial planning and provision for handling the logistics of a returning missionary family. (See Part E of General Guidelines for Foreign Missions, below)

IV. *General Guidelines for Foreign Missions*

A. Guidelines for Furloughs

Sending Councils need to give careful consideration to the matter of furloughs – scheduled, mandatory breaks that the missionary will have from the field so that he and his family can return home, (particularly, to their sending church). Traditionally, returning home for a furlough or home-assignment has been considered a normal and necessary part of a missionary endeavor. It is generally recommended that a missionary have a furlough of six to twelve months for every

three or four years of service on the field (or one to two months for each year of service). The reasons for furloughs are as follows:

- to give the missionary and his family a break from the field so that they may get some rest and refreshment, and reconnect with their culture;
- to help the missionary and his family remain connected to their extended family, friends, and supporting churches;
- to provide the missionary's children with an opportunity to benefit from socialization in their native culture, and/or to pursue education;
- to provide opportunity to the sending church to evaluate the work that has been done on the field, and to make plans for the future;
- to provide the missionary with various opportunities throughout the federation to share the expertise he has gained through his labors;
- to provide an opportunity for any medical or other major personal matters to be addressed while at home;
- to allow time for the missionary to gain further professional development.

It is important for a clear understanding regarding furlough to be achieved between the missionary and his Council. For a missionary working alone in a country, finding a replacement during his absence could be so difficult that his Council will decide to grant a furlough only when possible and absolutely necessary. In any event, it is essential that the work on the field not be left unattended while the missionary is called home. For the sake of providing missionaries with regular and profitable furloughs, the following are recommended:

1. that the overseeing Consistory and field committee work with its missionary to determine a practicable plan and policy regarding furloughs;
2. that the overseeing Consistory and field committee take care of the missionary's practical needs while he is on furlough (travel, housing, transportation, etc.);

3. that the overseeing Consistory and field committee assist the missionary in structuring his time away from the field (e.g. scheduling visits and presentations to be made to churches);
4. that the missionary be encouraged to take courses that would help him in his own spiritual growth and in his labor on the mission field;
5. that the spiritual and educational needs of missionary's wife and children be properly addressed during their furlough;
6. that the overseeing Council and missionary use the furlough in part to evaluate the mission work, and to make specific plans for the coming term.

B. Guidelines for Compensation

Well in advance of sending their missionary and his family to the foreign field, the following matters must be carefully investigated and determined.

1. Salary: Cost of living varies greatly depending on the place of service.
2. Vacation: Four weeks of vacation, plus time for travel to and from the field.
3. Missions Conference
4. Housing Allowance
5. Vehicle Allowance
6. Healthcare & Life Insurance
7. Mission Expenses: rent for the church; utilities; diaconal causes; travel; etc.
8. Passport/Visa (other legal papers): consult with an immigration lawyer.
9. Immunization: which is needed for the particular geographical region.
10. Medical Examination: a complete physical with the doctor’s written clearance.

C. Guidelines for Working Relations with Other Missionaries

Due to our sinful nature and Satan's efforts to ruin the church, it is important that neighboring missionaries have an understanding of one another which will help them to maintain a loving and fruitful working relationship.

1. Guarding against Conflict: Carefully defined roles and a proper understanding of authority structures will go a long way in helping missionaries to guard against conflict while working together on the same field. Specific responsibilities as to what is expected from each person should be laid out. At all times we must strive to maintain peace without sacrificing principle.

2. Confronting Wrongdoing: If the conduct or teaching of a missionary on the field is contrary to Scripture, fellow missionaries are under obligation to confront the offender for the sake of his own soul, and to inform the overseeing body for sake of the mission. When it is necessary to admonish a brother or sister, the confrontation should take place only after much prayer and careful consideration so that Satan will not be able to work division and disruption (Gal. 6.1-5; Eph. 4.26-27). All parties are obligated to follow the steps for discipline laid out in Matt. 18 and outlined in the Church Order.

3. Working with Minors and with the Opposite Gender: Special care must be given to avoiding even the appearance of evil. The missionary should not counsel or have Bible studies alone with women, nor should his wife counsel men alone. They should also be careful about how they minister to children and young people. It is wise in general for people of opposite gender to meet only in visible, public places.

D. Guidelines for Crisis Situations

1. War or Civil Disruption: Extreme caution should be taken not to become involved in the politics of the country, but it is important at the start to register with one's consulate or embassy in the host country. If a serious political or legal disruption arises, the missionary should be in contact with his embassy, and carefully heed its advice in all things lawful.

2. Kidnapping and extortion: It is the general practice of most churches and mission~~s~~ organizations not to pay a ransom to those who kidnap someone in the missionary family. Consistories should consult with the FMC for specific directives that are available for dealing with a case of kidnapping.

3. Sudden death: In the event of a death on the field, the family and church should be notified immediately, representatives from both should be flown to the field, and the life insurance company should be contacted. There must also be a decision made as to the place of burial. It is important that these matters are specifically addressed before the missionary is sent.

E. Guidelines for Preparing Young People for Mission Work

As we seek to be faithful to the Great Commission by sending laborers into the harvest, it is essential that we properly prepare our men for service on the foreign field. The following guidelines for this preparation are given with church planters in mind. However, men and women sent to serve in other capacities will also benefit from giving attention to applicable sections.

1. Church Youth:

At the level of the local church it is important that we foster among the youth an interest and involvement in missions and evangelism. When our children and young people experience the joy of serving the Lord at home, they will likely consider the possibility of serving the Lord on the mission field. We can foster more missions interest and involvement among the youth by:

- developing church ministries where young people can serve, and gain hands-on experience that will help them develop their gifts;
- maintaining a pulpit ministry that emphasizes the importance of evangelizing the lost, and being involved in missions;
- educating the church youth about God's use of missionaries throughout history for the expansion of his church;
- educating about the federation's missions, and making every effort to have missionaries visit our churches and homes for personal interaction;
- organizing short-term mission trips so that the youth can experience what
  God is doing, and even participate (see "Guidelines for Short-Term Mission Teams," below).

2. Seminary Students:

Men who sense the Lord calling them to preach and teach on the mission field need to maintain that focus with the help of their home church and seminary. This can be accomplished by:

- choosing a study track that focuses on missions and a foreign language;
- taking internships on the mission field during summer months;
- involving the student in a mentoring relationship with a missionary;

- exploring a specific mission field, and making tentative plans for service at some point after graduation (this is not premature, as it can take years to build a team on a particular field).

In order to be able to consider the possibility of serving on the foreign field, the seminary student interested in foreign missions must have the full support of his wife; moreover, she must be given a good measure of encouragement and education during these years. Wives of seminary students should in some way be involved not only in correspondence with their home church and mentor but also in relevant seminary course work.

F. Guidelines for Short Term Missions Training

1. STM teams should be organized at the request of the missionary and/or the calling church to meet a specific need on the field.

2. Potential team members should be those who have shown godly character, and who are recommended by their Consistory. Prior to their applying to a team, their commitment to evangelism should have been demonstrated through their activity in their home church.

3. In order to avoid giving offense on the foreign field, prior to their departure team members should learn some key words and phrases in the foreign language which will help them communicate about essentials; they should also be instructed about some basic cultural norms.

4. It is important that, prior to departure, team members check with the missionary concerning the use of alcohol and tobacco on the field.

5. Individuals desiring to participate in a STM trip should be expected to pay a large percentage of the cost of the trip, and possibly fund-raising for the rest.

6. The STM team and missionary must determine in advance the specific objectives and a clear plan of activities that will allow them most profitably to coordinate their work.

7. Upon arrival on the field, proper time should be given to orientation; a time of debriefing should take place at the conclusion of the trip.

8. For work teams, care must be exercised not to take away work opportunities from local people. Ideally, foreign and local workers should work together. This helps the national church to take responsibility for the project.

9. Training of leadership and delegation of responsibilities should be done prior to departure.

10. STM teams will typically focus on helping youth to witness in the culture they are visiting; but it is important for the young people to be encouraged to carry on their service and witness back in their home church.

11. STM teams should be prepared to give a presentation of their experience in their home church upon their return so that the entire church can benefit from the experience.

Acronyms

CCMT.....Cross Cultural Missions Training
FMC.....Foreign Missions Coordinator
FMM.....Foreign Missions Manual
ICRC.....International Conference of Reformed Churches
NAPARC .....North America Presbyterian and Reformed Counsel
SCFM .....Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions
SCHM.....Synodical Committee on Home Missions
STM.....Short Term Missions
URCNA .....United Reformed Churches in North America

Synodical Committee on Home Missions
Report to Synod Calgary 2026

1. INTRODUCTION & MANDATE

The Synodical Committee on Home Missions gives thanks to the Lord for his faithfulness in building his Church. Since Synod Escondido 2024, the United Reformed churches have continued the work of proclaiming the gospel, supporting existing mission works, and exploring new opportunities for outreach and church planting.

Synod Niagara 2022 established a Synodical Committee on Home Missions composed of one representative from each classis for the purpose of promoting church planting resources, communication, and support in the federation. The SCHM was given the following mandate:

(1) Composition of Committee – a representative from each classis (it might be ideal for each classis representative also to be serving on a Classical Committee on Home Missions).

(2) Work of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions –
   a. Meet four times each year (most meetings conducted remotely);
   b. Report to synod regarding the committee's work and the state of church planting;
   c. Report to each classis by means of classis representative serving the committee;
   d. Maintain a website for posting news, resources, etc.;
   e. Promote resources for evangelism, disciple-making, and church planting;
   f. Promote tools for consistories/classes to use for evaluation of church planters/plants;

g. Identify training and developmental programs for home missions;
h. When requested, advise Classical Committees on Home Missions;
i. Annually inform the federation of the varying financial needs of church plants.

(Acts of Synod Niagara, Article 95.5)

Synod Niagara 2022 also directed the SCHM to work on the following, as necessary, with the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions and/or the Foreign Missions Coordinator:

- publishing the *Trumpet* and distributing other missionary newsletters/information;
- maintaining the website for URCNA missions;
- developing/maintaining onramps to mission work (e.g. internships) that will help the federation to recruit seminarians.

(Acts of Synod Niagara, Article 101.17)

2. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

What follows is a summary of the work of the Synodical Committee on Home Missions since Synod Escondido 2024.

(2.1) Meetings of the SCHM

The committee met eight times during the term: six by video conference and two in person (each over two days). These in-person sessions allowed for extended discussion on the state of home missions, collaboration with other committees, and progress in fulfilling the committee's mandate.

- Video conference meetings
    - September 12, 2024
    - December 5, 2024
    - February 6, 2025
    - May 8, 2025
    - July 2, 2025

    - September 3, 2025
    - December 10, 2025
    - January 21, 2026
    - March 6, 2026
- In-person meetings
    - October 9-10, 2024
    - October 1-2, 2025

(2.2) Website, Communications, and Coordination

The SCHM mandate directs us to maintain a website providing news and resources for our home missionaries, and it has been a top priority of our committee since Synod Escondido to ensure that our website is a trustworthy, up-to-date resource for the latest information on our home missionaries. The home missions section of the website (urcnamissions.org/na-missions) received substantial updates in 2025. We have worked together with the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions and our vendor, Faith Inc., to redesign key features. The redesign included a new interactive map with improved functionality, standardized missionary profiles with photos and consistent formatting, and a reorganized navigation menu.

Please note that the Second Edition of *How to Plant a Reformed Church* no longer contains the appended bibliography, "Recommended Resources for the Church Planter." The SCHM determined that the federation would be better served with an online resource page that could be annotated and regularly updated. We encourage you to visit this new section of urcnamissions.org and explore the resources we have included there. Over the coming years we plan to expand this page, and commend additional media resources in addition to books and articles, such as podcasts, video, and study tools that will assist both church planters and congregations in the work of evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

Our Home Missions Clerk, Paul Lawton, is tasked with maintaining the information on this page to ensure that it is

accurate and up to date. Our goal is to ensure that the federation has a single location to find contact information, photographs, social media handles, and brief descriptions of our home missions works. For any inquiries or corrections, we encourage visitors to use the prominent "Contact SCHM Clerk" button, which will generate an email to his dedicated address, HomeMissionsClerk@urcna.org. These improvements have made the website more usable, visually consistent, and accessible for consistories, members, and supporters throughout the URCNA. We welcome your feedback and encourage your assistance in helping us keep the information accurate.

(2.3) Publication of the Church Planting Manual, How to Plant a Reformed Church

In 2025 a revised, second edition of our church planting manual, *How to Plant a Reformed Church,* was completed and published through Reformed Fellowship. Three hundred copies of the manual were formatted and printed at a cost of $2,500 USD (*Acts of Synod Escondido,* Article 35). The book is available for purchase online at https://reformedfellowship.net/ in both hard copy and ebook format.

We are delighted to report that demand for this manual has been high and the first 300 copies quickly sold out. Using funds remaining in our committee budget, a second printing of 1,000 copies was ordered at a much lower cost of approximately $2,000 USD. In the future, the SCHM will use its committee budget to ensure that *How to Plant a Reformed Church* remains in print.

The book is also available for free at www.urcnamissions.org in both PDF and ePUB formats.

(2.4) Partnerships and External Engagements

The SCHM continues to cooperate with the Synodical Committee on Foreign Missions (SCFM) for the monthly

publication of *The Trumpet* newsletter. These two synodical committees now share the same website platform to present the unified mission work of the URCNA.

Ongoing contact with the Center for Mission and Evangelism (CME) at Mid-America Reformed Seminary has strengthened communication about internship opportunities and the training of future church planters. Rev. Bill Pols currently serves as a liaison between the SCHM and the CME since he is a member of the committee and of the board of the seminary. Members of the committee also participated in the 2025 CME Conference, which provided opportunities not only to connect with seminary faculty, students, and alumni involved in mission work but also to develop contacts and to promote the cause of URCNA home missions.

For the last two years the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has graciously opened slots for two of our home missionaries to participate in their summer training for church planters. In the summer of 2025 Rev. Ben Davenport and Rev. Eric Heida participated.

(2.5) Budget and Administration

Synod Escondido set an annual budget for the committee of $13,000 (*Acts of Synod Escondido,* Article 35). Over the last two years, (2024 and 2025), the SCHM has spent $13,931 USD total in its activities, with an additional $2,000 thus far in 2026 for printing. The vast majority of this budget has been consumed by committee travel for an annual in person gathering.

The committee recommends reducing its annual budget to $10,000. We believe that we will be able to maintain our current level of activity at this level of funding.

(2.6) Home Missions Clerk

One very positive development since the last meeting of synod was the onboarding of our new Home Missions Clerk, Paul Lawton, who serves as an elder at Salem URC of Bowmanville, ON. Mr. Lawton has been of great service to the committee, and enabled us to be far more effective in our labors over the last two years. The Clerk's primary areas of service are the following:

- *Communication and coordination with the Classical Committees on Home Missions (CCHMs).* The clerk corresponds regularly with the classical committees to gather updates on church plants and mission works, request information, and ensure the SCHM has an accurate picture of home missions activity across the federation. This has drastically improved the accuracy and efficacy of the information we provide to the federation.

- *Maintaining and developing resources*. This includes working with Faith Inc. on updates to the home missions section of the URCNA missions website, maintaining accurate profiles of church planters and works, and helping compile recommended resources for churches and church planters. The clerk has been particularly helpful in coordinating the printing and distribution of *How to Plant a Reformed Church* with Reformed Fellowship.

- *Prayer and communication*. In coordination with Rev. Richard Bout, our Clerk established a regular home/foreign missions rotation for *The Trumpet*. He solicits and organizes the updates used in both periodicals so that the churches can stay informed and pray for our church planting efforts. Note that anyone can view our archives and sign up to receive *The*

Trumpet in your email inbox at www.urcnamissions.org/trumpet.

- *Supporting committee work*. This important work includes drafting correspondence, tracking action items, helping coordinate projects such as the church planting manual and website resources, and assisting with the preparation of the SCHM synodical report. The Clerk also serves as our recorder, taking and distributing minutes and agendas, scheduling meetings, etc.

- *Synod-related coordination*. The Clerk assists with producing the synodical report and coordinates elements such as the home missions portion of the synod missions evening.

His current term concludes at the end of Synod 2026. The committee recommends that he be reappointed to continue in this role for the next synodical term.

The committee would also like to recommend an increase in the hourly rate of remuneration for the Home Missions Clerk position. The original overture to create and this position foresaw a more administrative or secretarial role for the clerk, and set the compensation accordingly at $25 USD per hour. However, in evaluating the final job description and the nature of the work assigned to our home missions clerk, we feel that an increase of his hourly rate of compensation is in order. We propose to remunerate him at a higher rate of $75 USD per hour, but with the same annual maximum $12,500 USD. Though this will reduce the clerk's maximum annual hours to 250, or roughly 5 hours per week, we believe that this is more realistic and entirely sufficient for the work he is doing for the federation.

3. THE STATE OF HOME MISSIONS

Since Synod Escondido 2024, the following developments have occurred in the URCNA's home missions labors:

(3.1) New Developments in Church Planting

New Church Plants Launched

- Goodyear, Arizona (Phoenix URC, Phoenix, AZ)
- Redmond, Oregon (Immanuel's Reformed Church, Salem, OR)
- Mexicali, Baja California (Christ Reformed Church, Anaheim, CA)
- Pelham, Ontario (Wellandport URC, Wellandport, ON)

Church Plants Organized

- Armstrong, British Columbia
- Pelham, Ontario
- Covenant Chinese Reformed Church, Anaheim, CA

Church Plants Discontinued

By God's grace, no plants have closed in the last two years.

(3.2) Current Home Missions Works and CCHM Activities

In this section we provide a table of current home mission works for each classis, as well as a brief update of the activities of each Classical Committee on Home Missions (CCHM), provided by the classical representative on our committee.

Central U.S.		
Church Plants		
Rev. Ben Davenport	Sioux Falls, SD	Christ Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Exceptional Works		
Rev. Elijiah Anderson	Misiones Iowa	Cornerstone URC, Sanborn, IA
Rev. Andrew Spriensma	U.S. Army Chaplain	Faith URC, Beecher, IL
Rev. Nathan Brummel	Divine Hope Seminary	Immanuel URC, Demotte, IN
Rev. Ken Anema	Divine Hope Seminary	Immanuel URC, Demotte, IN
Rev. Roberto Rossi	U.S. Navy Chaplain	Immanuel URC, Demotte, IN

In 2012 a "Church Planting Advisory Committee" was established to help unite the churches of Classis Central in missions, both at home and abroad. Early in 2023, following Synod Niagara, CPAC became the Classical Committee on Home Missions (CCHM), which currently has seven members. Meeting monthly via teleconference, this committee aims not only to promote the cause of evangelism and church planting throughout classis but also to assist consistories that are engaged in church planting. Currently, the Consistory of Cornerstone URC of Sanborn, IA, oversees Rev. Elijah Anderson in his outreach to the Latino people of northwest Iowa and his planting efforts at Reformada Iglesia de Cristo; the Consistory of Christ Reformed Church of Sioux Falls, SD, is overseeing Rev. Ben Davenport in his church planting work at Providence Reformed Church of Sioux Falls (daughter church). Classis Central US gives financial support to its church plants by means of its "Classis Home Missions Fund." (*Rev. Jody Lucero*)

Eastern U.S.		
Church Plants		
Rev. Austin Reifel	Indianapolis, IN	Zeltenreich URC, New Holland, PA
Rev. Collin Welch	Madison, IN	Ascension Reformed Church, Cincinnati, OH
Rev. Brandon Burks	Bellevue, KY	Ascension Reformed Church, Cincinnati, OH
Exceptional Works		
Rev. Paul Murphy	Evangelist in New York and CCHM Coordinator	Messiah's Reformed Church, New York, NY

Classis Eastern U.S. (CEUS) has had a church planting committee since 2008. In the wake of Synod Niagara, this committee was renamed the Classical Committee on Home Missions (CCHM) to match synodical guidance. The committee currently has six members, including two elders and four ministers, and is regularly joined by two additional ministers ex officio: our part-time Church Planting Coordinator (Rev. Paul T. Murphy) and our SCHM representative (Rev. Dr. Brian Lee). Our Coordinator seeks to visit seminary campuses in our classis to recruit potential church planters and also meets with parties that may be interested in church planting in the URCNA. The members of the committee are selected by classis and serve three-year terms.

CEUS has given its CCHM the oversight of a Church Planting Fund (CPF) that was initially established from a donation resulting from the sale of the property of the former Franklin Lakes Reformed Bible Fellowship. The CCHM has helped

CEUS develop guidelines for developmental year funding, a standard four-year schedule for new church plants, as well as funding for church planting internships. The stated goal of the fund is to continue in perpetuity, and it is the desire of CEUS to grow the fund so that it can sustain a target of maintaining five church plants at any given time, typically launching one church plant each year.

In addition to the current works listed above, CEUS CCHM has been awarded a grant to plant a church in Rockland County, NY. Funds held in trust from the sale of a former church property have been provided for the planting of a new church in this county, and we are currently doing preliminary work and determining which church in our classis will be able to oversee this work. Please pray for the Spirit to grant wisdom and guidance, and for this long term project to bear fruit.

The CEUS CCHM recently produced two short films for the purpose of promoting its work. *Why Plant a United Reformed Church? (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hqnn044KxkA)* is outward facing and designed to encourage seminarians or core groups to consider planting in CEUS. *Why Support Church Planting in Classis Eastern U.S.? (www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tmrCZFwtwk)* is targeted toward the membership of our churches and other donors, from whom we are seeking financial support for our work. (*Rev. Dr. Brian Lee)*

Michigan

(No active plants or exceptional works)

Classis Michigan Mission/Church Plant Committee (CMMCPC) continues to meet a few times each year, discussing various matters related to its mandate. Most of the work in the last couple years has involved researching the feasibility of church plants to the north as well as east of Grand

Rapids. We are working with local churches/consistories that will oversee these plants and help facilitate finding core families and possibly calling planters. (*Josh Nijenhuis*)

Pacific Northwest		
Church Plants		
Rev. Nollie Malabuyo	Big Springs, CA	Trinity URC, Visalia, CA
vacant	Redmond, OR	Immanuel's Reformed Church of Salem, Salem, OR

Classis Pacific Northwest U.S. (CPNW) formed a Church Planting Committee in March 2018, and in the spring of 2023 the committee was renamed the Classical Committee on Home Missions (CCHM) to align with synodical recommendations (Acts of Synod 2022, Art. 95.2-3). The committee currently has seven members, consisting of five ministers and two elders. The members of the committee are selected by classis and serve three-year terms.

The CCHM of CPNW meets monthly via internet calls and in person at least once a year. The Committee has built a website for those interested in planting within our classis as well as updating the churches of classis concerning its church plants (https://pnwchurchplanting.org). The website directs interested parties to our chairman, who then adds these requests to our agenda for discussion and vetting. If the committee feels the request has merit and worth pursuing, the information is then passed on either to an individual church or to classis more generally. CCHM has created a church planter assessment form, and it is in the final stages of being approved for a consistory's use in finding a man suitable for a call to church planting. CCHM also interviews potential church planters and passes this

information on to local consistories (and JVCs) who may use it in their process of calling a man. CPNW has established a Church-Planting Fund that supports church plants and may provide partial funding for internships for men seeking to become church planters/missionaries. Finally, CCHM assigns members as liaisons for current church plants who are tasked with reaching out to gather prayer requests and bring requests for advice to the committee. (*Rev. Jared Beaird*)

Southwest U.S.		
Church Plants		
Rev. Jason Ryce	Colorado Springs, CO	Escondido URC, Escondido, CA
Rev. Gavin Poe	Goodyear, AZ	Phoenix URC, Phoenix, AZ
Rev. Jared Pine	Mexicali, Baja California	Christ Reformed Church, Anaheim, CA
Rev. Dr. Lee Irons	Santa Clarita, CA	First URC, Chino, CA
Rev. Adam Kaloostian	Ventura, CA	Pasadena URC, Pasadena, CA
Exceptional Works		
Rev. Daniel Cortez	U.S. Air Force Reserves Chaplain	Christ URC, Santee, CA
Rev. Taylor Kern & Rev. Daniel Ventura	Bilingual Ministry, Ontario, CA	Ontario URC, Ontario, CA

The Classis Southwest Church Planting Advisory Committee (CPAC) was established in 2020. Our mandate approved by Southwest Classis includes, that “The Church Planting

Advisory Committee shall exist to advise proactively and reactively, encourage, assist, and support the councils and consistories of classis in planting URCNA churches within its geographical bounds." Furthermore, our committee is to interact with the Synodical Committee on Home Missions.

Our committee is made up of three elders and three ministers. We meet over zoom at least three times per year seeking to fulfill our mandate and honor Christ by thinking strategically about the best ways to bring the Gospel to the Southwest. The churches of Southwest Classis receive a hard copy of our newsletter once a quarter. The newsletter features updates from each church plant (there are five currently) as well as an article about the theology of church planting. The newsletter and information about church planting in the Southwest appears on our website: www.churchplantingswus.com.

A key component to the propagation of church plants is our church planting fund. Our church plants may request funds from our committee via our Classical Financial Aid Request form (CFAR) forty-five days prior to the agenda deadline for Classis. Once the CFAR is approved by our committee, classis must approve the request after which the funds are distributed. Our committee has the discretionary ability to disburse up to $5,000 between classis meetings if needed, funds permitting. We are grateful to God that the churches of Classis Southwest have been faithful to provide the necessary funds for each request. (*Rev. Tom Morrison*)

Ontario-East		
Church Plants		
Rev. Richard Bultje	Niagara Falls, ON	Wellandport URC, Wellandport, ON

Rev. Eric Heida	Brampton, ON	Hope Reformed Church, Brampton, ON
Exceptional Works		
Rev. Thabet Megaly	St. Catherines, ON	Trinity URC, St. Catherines, ON
Rev. Brian Zegers	Ajax, ON	Salem URC, Bowmanville, ON

Classis Ontario-East has established its own Classical Committee on Home Missions at the encouragement of Synod Niagara 2022. This committee is composed of three appointed men, the classical representative of the synodical committee, the church planters and pastors engaged in extraordinary mission works. They meet face-to-face quarterly and have been working diligently on cultivating a vision for church planting in the region. Presently, the classis includes the Niagara region, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and everything north and east of the GTA including the Maritime provinces. Recent discussions include the realization that there is much opportunity for church planting in the GTA, such as in Peterborough.

In Niagara Falls, the River of Life Church plant has been functioning since 2012 (thirteen years), a joint venture ministry overseen by the Wellandport URC with support of the Dunnville, Jordan and St. Catharines URCs. The work continues to go well under the leadership of church planter Pastor Richard Bultje. The work is looking for a man to come alongside Pastor Bultje. In the city of Brampton (part of the GTA) the Hope Reformed Church has recently called Pastor Eric Heida who is serving as evangelist and church planter. There is also a Spanish plant, *Vida Nueva*, being planted by Pastor Jose Ramirez, a friend of the federation living in Toronto whose ministerial credentials are with the Reformed Churches of El Salvador. Rev. Thabet Megaly, of the *Pathway of Peace* Ministry out of Trinity, St. Catharines is assisting the

Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church of Hamilton in what may become an Arabic speaking church plant in Hamilton, ON.

Two other longtime church plant works continue within the bounds of our classis in the GTA, though overseen by churches in the neighboring Classis Southwestern Ontario. The New Horizon URC plant in Scarborough, the work of Pastor Mitch Persaud is overseen by Zion URC of Sheffield. The Hope Centre of Brampton (East), the ministry of Pastor Tony Zekveld, is overseen by the Covenant Christian Church (URC) of Wyoming, ON. (*Rev. John Bouwers*)

Southwestern Ontario		
Church Plants		
Rev. Mitchell Persaud	Scarborough, ON	Zion URC, Sheffield, ON
Rev. Tony Zekveld	Brampton, ON	Covenant Christian Church, Wyoming, ON
vacant	Mitchell, ON	Bethel URC, Woodstock, ON

The Classis SWO Home Missions Committee was established in 2023 at the encouragement of Synod Niagara 2022. Since then, Classis SWO had three ministerial breakdowns which have impeded the committee's ability to function. In light of our need for improved ministerial training and vetting, the committee made its first attempt at suggesting a model for funding internships in the classis in the spring of 2026. The discussion led to helpful encouragement for how to proceed in the future. Until our Lord blesses us with more ministers, our committee is by necessity forced to be less active in church planting. Classis Southwestern Ontario suffers from the lowest ordained minister to members count in the URCNA (2025

URCNA: one minister for 121 members, Classis SWO: one minister for 186 members). (*Rev. Steven Williamson*)

Western Canada		
Exceptional Works		
Rev. Mitch Ramkissoon	Redemption Prison Ministries	Redeemer URC, Lacombe, AB

With thanks to God, we anticipate that our church plant in Armstrong will be organized as a self-governing church prior to Synod Calgary 2026. Rev. Scottie Wright was installed to serve as its first minister in November of 2025. Classis Western Canada approved its admission into the URC at its fall meeting, to be ratified at this synod, the Lord willing.

Our desire and aim as a classis and as the Classical Home Missions Committee is that our vision and efforts at church planting will increase. In this connection, the committee is in the process of establishing a classical church planting fund. Classis Western Canada has a number of small congregations, which face many of the same challenges as church plants, including financial needs. Three of these congregations depend on considerable annual support from our classical needy church fund. We are grateful for the persevering commitment of these small churches and the commitment of classis to support them. We are also thankful that three of five pulpit vacancies have been filled with new ministers in the past year. (*Rev. Bill Pols*)

(3.3) Continued Consideration for Classical Home Missionary Position

In its report to Synod Escondido 2024, the SCHM encouraged classes to give thought to the development of a new position, the Classical Home Missionary (CHM), modeled loosely after the Regional Home Missionary position that exists in many OPC Presbyteries. We argued at that time:

> A man in such a position would serve his classis by (1) investigating new fields; (2) gathering and building core groups; (3) training churches of a classis in evangelism and outreach; and (4) helping core groups and new plants to identify church planters, and to progress toward organization… It is our belief that Classical Home Missionaries might be necessary to enable classes to be truly proactive in church planting. (*Acts of Synod Escondido*, p. 460)

Synod responded by urging the churches "to give prayerful consideration to the development of classical home missionaries and submit feedback to the SCHM regarding the position" (*Acts of Synod Escondido*, Article 35.7). The SCHM has not received any feedback on this matter since 2024, and it is our recommendation that the churches continue to give consideration to this proposal.

At this time, we are aware of one classis that employs a Church Planting Coordinator on a part-time basis, namely Rev. Paul T. Murphy in CEUS. Rev. Murphy was emeritated in 2023 from the position of Pastor at Messiah's Reformed Fellowship, and is currently called by this church as an evangelist, in which role he is seeking to develop core groups for church plants in each of the boroughs of New York City. Rev. Murphy's work as Church Planting Coordinator for the CCHM includes visiting churches to encourage and train them in the work of evangelism and missions, conducting outreach to regional seminaries about church planting opportunities in CEUS, and serving as an initial point of contact for interested core groups.

Rev. Murphy has also been engaged in preliminary exploration of church planting opportunities in Rockland County, NY. The CCHM of CEUS has been awarded a grant to pursue church planting activities there, and Rev. Murphy is helping to identify an overseeing consistory and advise them on the work.

We are encouraged by the work of Rev. Murphy and continue to encourage the churches to explore ways in which their CCHMs may be made more effective.

(3.4) Home Missions in Historical Perspective: Growth Over the Last Decade

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the URCNA's founding this year, our committee has found it useful to reflect on the state of church of our home missions and church planting efforts from a historical perspective. In 2012, Synod Nyack established the federation's first synodical Missions Committee. In 2022, Synod Niagara dissolved the synodical Missions Committee and replaced it with two distinct committees, one each for home missions (SCHM) and foreign missions (SCFM). At Synod Niagara we also adopted clear guidance encouraging each classis in the federation to create its own Classical Committee on Home Missions (CCHM), guidance that is clearly reflected in the preceding summaries of classical activity.

Table 1: Church Planting in the URCNA, 10 Year Comparison[28]

[28] This table shows changes in churches, membership, and church plant activity in the URCNA over the last ten years, by classis. The statistics are drawn from the 2015 and 2025 URCNA directories, using the directory data on church plant status. Note that our annual directories are accurate as of December 31 of the stated year, while this report reflects more recent developments of church organizations. Slight discrepancies in data may arise.

Classis	2015			2025		
	Churches	Souls	Plants	Churches	Souls	Plants
Central	20	3,866	1	20	3,977	1
Eastern	13	1,831	2	18	1,934	3
Michigan	12	3,544	0	13	3,172	0
Pacific Northwest	20	3,456	0	25	3,485	1
Southwest	14	2,589	3	17	2,712	5
United States	**79**	**15,286**	**6**	**93**	**15,280**	**10**
Ontario-East	12	2,829	0	14	3089	1
Southwestern Ontario	11	2,585	1	13	3177	3
Western Canada	17	3,574	0	20	4488	1
Canada	**40**	**8,988**	**1**	**47**	**10,754**	**5**

Total	**119**	**24,274**	**7**	**140**	**26,034**	**15**

We praise God for this growth in focused and organized attention to the work of missions, both at the classical and synodical levels. Committee meetings are not to be confused with missionary labor, and increased bureaucracy does not necessarily result in church planting health. But we do believe that the record of the last ten years shows that this focused attention to strategy and resources has borne real fruit of additional missionary labor, better oversight and care for our missionaries, and gospel harvest. Table 1, "Church Planting in the URCNA, 10 Year Comparison," demonstrates the growth of our federation. We have 21 new churches – from 119 to 140 – representing an increase of 18%.[29] We have an even more rapid growth in the number of current church plants underway, from 7 to 15, a 115% increase! Over this ten year period church membership has increased by 7%, and every classis has seen an increase of membership, with the exception of Classis Michigan (-10%). As a result, overall U.S. church membership has remained flat, while Canadian churches have seen membership growth of 20%.

(3.5) Home Missions in Broader Perspective: Growth and Decline Over Twenty Years

One of our committee members recently reviewed membership trends over the last twenty years, from 2005 to 2025, further demonstrating the importance of church planting and home missions to the URCNA's growth.[30] Over the last twenty years,

[29] To be more precise, there are in fact more than 21 new churches, as some church plants have closed or congregations have left the federation. However, out of this increase of 21 churches, the vast majority have been church plants, with only four confirmed as Article 32 transfers.

[30] Brian Lee, "Accidental Church Planters," forthcoming chapter in Cornel Venema volume celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the

URCNA membership has grown by 29%, which compares favorably to sister NAPARC churches such as the OPC (19%) or PCA (21%). But that growth has not come from the 90 churches that made up the federation in 2005. The membership of those 90 churches has in fact shrunk by 4%. Church plants, however, and other new churches have added 33% to our membership. Therefore, we can conclude that apart from the work of home missions, our federation would be in decline.[31] In 2005, there were 90 churches in the URCNA, today there are 140. Twenty-three church plants have organized since 2005, and another 18 plants are currently under way. Broadly speaking, 41 of the 50 new churches in the URCNA are church plants, while other growth in churches has come from congregations affiliating with the federation via Church Order Article 32 (home missions should in our opinion embrace the work of adding new churches via Article 32).

This dynamic, however, looks quite different in the United States and Canada. U.S. "legacy" churches – churches in existence in 2005 – have shrunk by 11%, or 1,500 members. In contrast, Canadian legacy churches have exhibited steady growth of 9% over this same period, or 649 members. So while the combined result for the entire federation is a decline of 4% among our legacy churches, this obscures opposite trendlines north and south of the border.

URCNA. See Appendix II to this chapter, "Planting and Growing: The URCNA by the Numbers, 2005 - 2025."

[31] The method for this comparison was to take the 90 churches in the 2005 directory and compare them with these *same* 90 churches in 2025 directory (currently in draft form). We acknowledge that there is a certain degree of imprecision in this comparison. The same 90 churches don't exist, as some churches in the 2005 directory have closed or left the URCNA, so this is a comparison in the aggregate. Likewise, as previously noted, reported membership could be affected by changes in policy at synod in 2018 that may have an impact upon the rigor with which church rolls are maintained.

There is also significant variation within classes. This analysis is a little more difficult to calculate, since two new classes have been formed since 2005. (For the purposes of this comparison, churches have been re-aggregated in their 2005 classes.) Yet we can still see the diverging trends of diverse regions of the URCNA, apparent in the following table:

Table 2: URCNA Membership Growth by Classis: Legacy Churches vs. All Churches

Classis	2005 Member-ship, "Legacy" Churches	2025 Member-ship, "Legacy" Churches	Percent Change	2025 Member-ship, All Churches	Percent Change
Central U.S.	3,348	2,931	-12%	3,977	19%
Eastern U.S.	1,590	1,266	-20%	1,934	22%
Michigan	3,675	3,141	-15%	3,180	-13%
Southwest U.S.[32]	4,482	4,257	-5%	6,197	38%
Southern Ontario[33]	3,966	4,434	12%	6,266	58%
Western Canada	3,201	3,382	6%	4,488	40%
TOTAL	**20,262**	**19,411**	**-4%**	**26,042**	**29%**

We wish to draw your attention to Classis Eastern U.S. (CEUS) in this table, perhaps the starkest example of the impact of church planting on our federation. The smallest classis in our federation, CEUS has also seen the steepest decline of its legacy churches, a total of 20% membership decline over the last 20 years for the 9 churches that existed in 2005. However, CEUS has doubled its number of churches over the last twenty

[32] This row aggregates Classis Pacific Northwest and Classis Southwest.
[33] This row aggregates Classis Southwestern Ontario and Classis Ontario-East.

years, from 9 to 18.[34] When you include these new churches, total classis membership has grown by 22%. By God's gracious provision, he has used the existence of a church planting fund and an active church planting committee to transform a declining classis into a growing one.

This twenty year comparison was born of a curiosity to explore the rate of growth of the URCNA over the last twenty years, with and without the growth brought about by our faithful church planting activities. This analysis has shown a striking result: The URCNA's significant growth has obscured a troubling trend. On the whole, our legacy churches are in membership decline, and this decline is focused on our U.S. churches. This is a sobering reality. It may also be a warning to our Canadian churches about what the future holds, should U.S. cultural trends migrate north of the border.
Membership growth is not the be all and end all of the church. Churches can grow in many ways: spiritually, evangelistically, and numerically, among others. However, declining membership is never a sustainable trend. It is a warning sign that circumstances have changed, and absent some change of behavior, are likely to continue on trend.

We should be encouraged that the Lord has seen fit to bless the URCNA with growth as fruit of our church planting efforts. We should continue to seek the harvest where the Lord is providing the blessing. In this way, even churches undergoing a season of decline are bearing fruit by supporting the sending of missionaries to the harvest. Church planting and home missions is the future of the URCNA, and this is more urgently the case in the United States, where our legacy churches are in decline. In the following section we outline three specific areas where

[34] Eight of these nine new churches were church plants: Bellevue, KY; Cincinnati, OH; East Stroudsburg, PA; Indianapolis, IN; Jersey City, NJ; Madison, IN; New Holland, PA; Washington, DC. One was an Article 32 church, Carbondale, PA.

every URCNA church can grow and contribute to this essential work of our federation.

4. PURSUING GREATER FAITHFULNESS IN HOME MISSIONS

The current state of home missions in the URCNA presents both sobering realities about the state of our churches and encouraging evidence of how the Lord has been pleased to bless us with growth. We should be encouraged that our efforts in the area of home missions have borne fruit. Guided by both the Great Commission and practical wisdom, the SCHM believes we should continue to seek ways not only to increase our focus on and attention to church planting but also adopt something like a church planting mentality throughout all our congregations. We believe there is much progress yet to be made.

Three primary areas of focus have been at the forefront of our committee discussions:

1. We must develop a healthy culture of evangelism in all of our churches.
2. All of our churches must seek to engage in the work of church planting.
3. We must all support the training and preparation of the laborers the Lord supplies.

As noted above in our report, the work of missions is critical to the future of our federation. Apart from church planting, we are a church in decline. We must attend, therefore, to the needs of our mission in order to pursue godly growth, both spiritual and numerical.

(4.1) Developing A Culture of Evangelism in the URCNA

The committee has spent considerable time discussing the importance of developing a healthier "culture of evangelism" in our churches.[35] Such a culture is far more than the outreach plans and occasional efforts of office-bearers and missions/evangelism committees. In a healthy culture of evangelism, the whole congregation is motivated by the gospel it believes and cherishes to reach out to the lost and to make more disciples of Jesus Christ. This culture develops only when church leaders continually keep the mission before the congregation so that it shapes the entire ministry. In such a culture, we would expect our people to grow to be more committed to loving their neighbors and more ready to welcome and enfold new people into our churches.

Since the COVID pandemic many of our congregations have seen an increase of visitors from a variety of backgrounds. A culture of evangelism leads us not only to see God's hand at work here but also to seize the opportunity so that our members warmly greet visitors, help them to feel welcome, and plan for their return. Our church members should not assume that visitors are from sister churches, that they are Reformed, or even that they are Christians. For some visitors, it is a huge step to enter the doors of a church. Our members should help them to find a seat and to follow the order of service. Visitors are far more likely to return when we attend to them in these small but significant ways.

Moreover, in a culture of evangelism a good deal of informal discipleship will take place because the ordained church leaders are not the only ones who share with others the riches of Christ and of the Christian life – other church members are able and eager to share gospel riches with others, whether in small group settings or on an individual basis. When God blesses our churches with new converts, we gain a new appreciation of

[35] This concept is developed helpfully in the small book by J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 2014).

what we possess through years of spiritual nurture. A culture of evangelism encourages and creates opportunities for these riches to be shared.

When the local church has a healthy culture of evangelism the most important kind of witnessing takes place through the words and deeds of the members, not primarily through evangelistic programs, however valuable those might be. Instead, witnessing regularly and naturally happens in the daily lives of church members who shine as lights in the world of their existing relationships at work, at play, and in the neighborhood.

This may all sound abstract and somewhat unattainable for many of our churches. However, the Synodical Committee on Home Missions believes that there are many small, concrete steps our churches can take to help cultivate this growth. In that spirit we offer the following practical suggestions for promoting a culture of evangelism in our churches. We hope that these ideas will give some helpful direction to consistories and evangelism committees in our churches.

- Pastors must preach the gospel in a robust way each week for the nourishment of believers and for the salvation of the lost. This will train members in evangelism and give them confidence that they can bring unbelievers to public worship to hear the gospel.

- Train leaders to give some evangelistic shape to the entire ministry of the church. The SCHM strongly recommends the excellent little book *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* by J. Mack Stiles.

- Provide church members with gospel tracts, church information cards, and other literature that they can easily share with others (see for example "Resources for Changing Lives" produced by the Christian Counselling and Educational Foundation). The SCHM offers many

other suggestions at the "Resources" page of www.urcnamissions.org.

- Design fellowship events, Bible studies and small group meetings to be hospitable gatherings to which church members can invite visitors and other non-members.

- Maintain regular prayer meetings which give attention to love of neighbor, evangelism, and making disciples of Christ, etc. A strong commitment to meet regularly is more important than the frequency or size of such meetings.

- Give the congregation regular opportunities for training in evangelism and apologetics. For example, groups could view and discuss recorded sessions from previous URCNA Missions Conferences (www.youtube.com/@urcnamissions) or from the annual conferences of the Center for Mission & Evangelism (look for the conference playlist at www.youtube.com/@MidAmericaReformedSeminary).

- Train members for loving engagement with neighbors (see *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon; *The Gospel Comes with a House Key* by Rosaria Butterfield).

- Provide some format for new members and converts to share their testimony with the congregation. This can be a tremendous encouragement, an exercise in evangelism, and a great way to motivate our people to share the gospel

(4.2) Engaging in the Work of Church Planting

It is within a healthy culture of evangelism that our churches will become much more active and ambitious in faithful church planting efforts. In this section of our report we would like to

remind our churches that we reject the false dichotomy between "maintenance churches" and "mission churches." Each and every church in our federation must embrace its missionary calling, and recognize the many ways in which it is directly connected to our mission of planting churches.

Every church in our federation has a role to play in the Lord's work of raising up missionaries. Elsewhere in this report, the committee has noted the number of current vacancies in United Reformed pulpits. It is a sobering consideration that a shortage of ministers has made efforts at church planting appear unrealistic in parts of our federation. Along with our prayers, practical measures are being considered and implemented to address this shortage; but cultivating a culture of evangelism in our congregations is not unrelated to this concern. Such a culture leads our people to embrace God's calling for each believer to use his or her gifts for God's glory and for the advancement of his kingdom in all of their other callings. It will lead our adults to encourage the children and young people to develop a faithful witness and to consider training in missions. Church leaders should be regularly challenging young men to ask the Lord, "What would you have me do?" With God's blessing, more of them will hear his missionary call, and will respond, "Here I am, Lord. Send me."

A church planting mentality should always inform how our churches handle the problem of outgrowing their current worship facility. It is common for churches to weigh whether they should invest in expanding their current facility, or perhaps move to a new, larger worship facility. A healthy culture of evangelism will lead our church councils to fully explore church planting opportunities in such circumstances. Planting a daughter church is a powerful way to reinvigorate both the sending church and those who are sent, as the November 2025 *Trumpet* article about Pelham URC illustrates so powerfully.[36]

[36] See November 2025 *Trumpet* newsletter, available in our archives at www.urcnamissions.org/trumpet .

Tim Keller argued that "the vigorous, continual planting of new churches is the single most crucial strategy for (1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in a city [or region] and (2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of existing churches."[37] This insight challenges the false dilemma often posed between "maintenance" churches and "missions" churches. Since Christ's church is itself the mission, when we engage in that mission the church is strengthened and renewed. And God's word clearly presses this vision upon us. Pentecost (Acts 2), the scattering of believers through persecution (Acts 8), and the advance of Paul's missionary work even while he is in chains (Acts 13-28) remind us that God spreads his people in order to spread his gospel. This is why the apostle Paul wrote, "I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named" (Romans 15:20f).

We believe that we must pray and labor for an intensified commitment to church planting among us for the following reasons:

- Christ commands it, and promises, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

- The Great Commission assumes it. Disciples are gathered into Christ's visible church through baptism (Matthew 28:18–20).

[37] Tim Keller, "Why Plant Churches" (January 1, 2002), accessed online at the website of Redeemer City to City redeemercitytocity.com/articles-stories/why-plant-churches. Referencing this article should not be viewed as an endorsement of Redeemer City to City. The SCHM acknowledges that Tim Keller and Redeemer City to City church planting network employ many strategies that we do not believe to be consistent with our confessionally reformed understanding of church planting. However, this article contains much faithful biblical wisdom.

- The apostolic pattern demonstrates it. Paul preached the gospel, gathered believers, and appointed elders in newly planted churches (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

- True discipleship requires it. Believers must belong to a worshiping and shepherded community (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5).

- Countless lost souls need it. Like Paul in Corinth, we must speak and not remain silent, trusting that the Lord has many people yet to gather (Acts 18:10). We have not reached a saturation point of Reformed churches in our land.

- Our own renewal depends on it. Lest we lose our first love (Rev. 2:4), self-examination must turn us to the Lord Jesus for the rekindling of evangelistic zeal among us.

- New churches tend to reach the lost most effectively, since new believers typically maintain close relationships with unbelievers.

- Church planting strengthens the sending church because seeing the gospel bear fruit encourages faith and renews hope in believers.

(4.3) Supporting Education and Internships for Harvest Labor

The SCHM believes that work of Home Missions in the URCNA is currently characterized by a lack of manpower. This is not a novel insight. It is a perennial one ever since the Lord himself instructed us, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38). As a committee, we have prayed for more laborers, and we have also prayed that the Lord would give us wisdom in how we might

raise up and mobilize more laborers for the great task of fulfilling the Great Commission.

As of March 2026, the pastoral openings on the URCNA website lists 18 vacancies (www.urcna.org/pastoral_openings). We are thankful to our Lord for raising up a number of candidates for ministry more recently. However, the needs in Canada remain particularly elevated. Of 46 churches, 10 are vacant, 2 are searching for a second pastor, and 10 ministers are within 10 years of retirement. That means that, before we even consider the need to send more men to the mission field, 22% of our Canadian pulpits are vacant, with additional positions still open and soon to open up. Over the last few years our Canadian churches have been averaging a loss of one minister per year due to burnout and one per year due to retirement. We pray the first reason for losses will cease, but losing one minister per year to retirement is to be anticipated. There are currently fewer vacant pulpits in the U.S. (eight, or 9% of the total), but similar concerns loom about retirement.[38]

The Lord urges us to pray for laborers, and prayer is certainly the first and most important recourse. Yet our prayers do not prohibit us from taking action to address a problem – indeed, they should encourage us to do so. The SCHM believes that there are two areas in which the URCNA should consider taking action to help address the manpower shortage in our home missions fields, namely, by providing more financial support for our seminary students, and by encouraging and financially supporting internships.

Financial Support for Seminary Students

We believe that increased funding for seminarians at the regional or classical level is a crucial area of investment. This

[38] See the March 5, 2025 article by Brian Lee, "Pastoral Openings in the URCNA," published online at the Heidelblog, https://heidelblog.net/2025/03/pastoral-openings-in-the-urcna/ .

action promises to increase our qualified pool of ministerial candidates significantly and help address the problem of empty pulpits and manpower shortages. Two models for accomplishing this have come to our attention, the classical seminarian fund of CEUS and the Canadian Seminary Bursary Fund – we believe that both deserve further consideration and support throughout the federation, as well as adoption in other places.

Reformed churches have traditionally invested heavily in theological education both at the institutional level by establishing theological seminaries and at the individual level by supporting seminarians. Since its founding approximately thirty years ago, the URCNA has somewhat passively adopted an independent seminary model, which is a change from our prior practice in the CRCNA. While we had good reasons for going this route, it entailed many unintended consequences that need to be recognized. One consequence is less overall institutional funding for seminaries that serve our federation. While we have continued to support individual seminarians, this has most frequently occurred at the local congregational level. When a congregation sends one of its sons off to seminary, it is not uncommon for the student to receive financial support.

As a foundational principle, the theological training of candidates for ministry benefits all the churches of the federation, not just the sending church. It does not make sense for there to be a diversity of support based on the sending church's resources. Ideally, all qualified seminary students pursuing ministry in the federation would have access to similar levels of support, not merely the level of support their sending church can afford. Likewise, it does not make sense for the burden of seminary education to fall disproportionately on the churches from whom the Lord calls young men. All churches equally benefit from a robust supply of well-qualified ministerial candidates, and we should all joyfully share the financial burden of their preparation.

Corporate assistance for seminary education provides a clearly articulated policy of support for theological education that serves as a public statement of our commitment to a well-educated ministry. It also addresses the reality that many – perhaps a majority – of the ministers entering the URCNA no longer come from our own churches. By publicly stating our support for seminarians, we may encourage the many recently-reformed and unaffiliated seminarians to seek out ministry opportunities in the URCNA. Since our consistories provide strong oversight of our seminarians in concert with this financial assistance, we should not fear offering significant financial incentives to pursuing ministry in our federation. Seminarians are asked to make many sacrifices, and those willing to endure the grueling demands of our high candidacy standards should be assisted to the fullest degree possible.

The Canadian Seminary Bursary Fund is one mechanism that has been developed to address this need, and its structure could be replicated in the U.S. without much difficulty. One Canadian church oversees the bursary program through a committee staffed by two classical representatives from the three Canadian classes, along with two continuing members from the overseeing church that provide for leadership continuity. The bursary runs efficiently with meetings taking place online a few times a year. Classis representatives keep the committee connected to the churches. Reports to classis highlight the fund's income, disbursements and students being supported. Future reports will include testimonies of students being supported in order to make known the blessed impact of these gifts.

The committee's work has been a joy in part because of how the Canadian churches have enthusiastically supported it. Over half of all Canadian churches now regularly and generously contribute. As a result, gifts of up to $18,000 CAD are passed on to Canadian seminary students. The Lord willing, in 2026-

2027 up to $25,000 CAD may be given to our most needy students.

Other positive results of the Canada-wide program – it puts before the churches via bulletin announcements the need for men to enter the ministry; it offers a tangible way of supporting men studying at seminary; it plants a seed in other men to consider seminary. The practice of highlighting the needs and the assistance being offered is bearing fruit. Six students were supported in the first year of this fund's existence, nine in the second, and likely ten in the third!

An alternative to the Canadian Seminary Bursary Fund is the classical model that has been employed by Classis Eastern US for many years. Prior to 2013, CEUS support for seminarians was *ad hoc,* with requests being brought to the floor of classis and supported out of the classical general fund. In 2013, CEUS formalized this process by adopting an appendix to their Rules of Procedure. Currently, qualified seminary students receive support in the amount of $10,000 per year. (*In a separate Communication to this synod, CEUS has provided additional background and model appendices for adoption by other classes*.)

The SCHM urges the churches to give due consideration to the need of supporting seminarians in a more regular, organized, and sustainable way. The URCNA has rightly articulated and maintained a very high standard for a "thoroughly Reformed theological education." But since our founding thirty years ago the seminary landscape has changed considerably – men are being drawn to lower cost seminaries that provide a lower quality of education. This is likely a factor that contributes to the shrinking pool of candidates. We believe that it is important for us to back up our standards with the necessary financial investment to maintain them. Since the training of young men for ministry is a task of the churches in common, no church should be alone or unduly burdened in carrying out the task. Supporting our young men in seminary also entails the blessing

of reducing the education debt that they bring into their ministerial callings.

Encouraging and Supporting Internships

One crucial area of discussion has been how pastoral internships could be used by the URCNA to increase the amount of manpower we are able to dedicate to the work of home missions. It is our considered view that the URCNA should be seeking ways to encourage more internships, particularly more long-term internships, in our churches. A crucial ingredient, we believe, is financial support for internships at the classical level. By training men for ministry, internships benefit the entire federation and advance our faithfulness in our mission calling (CO Article 47). We assist one another in the support of our missionaries – it follows that we should also assist one another in the preparation of our missionaries, which we can do through internships.

How do internships support the work of home missions?

- Pastoral vacancies hinder the work of mission. Some of our classes have determined that it would be imprudent to send men onto the mission field at a time when too many pulpits are vacant. But supporting more men on the pathway to ministry will result in our filling more pulpits in established churches and in mission works.

- Many of our pastoral vacancies and shortages have been created by ministerial burnout and moral failure, which are due in part to insufficient training and vetting. We believe that internships will help vet and prepare men in such a manner that greater resiliency can be expected of those entering the ministry.

- Reformed seminaries are filled with young men who are new to the Reformed faith and often lack denominational affiliation. Indeed, a very large percentage of the 61 church plants in the history of the URCNA have been planted by converts to the Reformed faith. These seminarians are choosing from among multiple good options within NAPARC, and a key factor in their selection process is whether or not the denomination has opportunities for a career in ministry and has sufficient onramps to full-time ministry (e.g. training, mentorship, internships). Increasing internship opportunities in the URCNA will help us attract, assess, and retain more gifted men.

- Internships, especially year-long internships, provide additional manpower to the local church, enabling additional labor in potential mission fields. While summer internships also increase manpower, it is often the case that the mentoring pastor's workload is increased by the task of mentoring and oversight. However, longer term internships can boost capacity and provide a needed surge for the work of mission. Over the course of six months or a year, an intern can help lead Bible studies and fill a pulpit, providing the opportunity for exploratory efforts in nearby fields.

Given our positive view on internships, we wish to draw attention to the good work being done by the Center for Missions & Evangelism at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. The CME has identified internships in mission settings to be a crucial ingredient in helping to prepare seminarians both for the work of evangelism in the local church and for serving as missionaries on the home and foreign fields. CME recognizes that developing this internship program requires thoughtful cultivation both of mentoring missionaries and of funding streams to provide necessary resources. We are encouraged to note that URCNA churches have partnered with the CME by

hosting their interns, and we encourage churches to explore and invest in this program.

Over the past two years, the SCHM has held its in-person meeting in Munster, Indiana, in conjunction with the CME fall conference – during the conferences we have hosted lunchtime sessions promoting awareness about church planting in the URCNA. In 2025 we invited CME Director Dr. Eric Watkins to meet with the committee so that we could learn more about the work of the CME. We are committed to maintaining these connections which will help us to make progress in preparing men for missionary service in our churches.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS TO SYNOD

1. That synod receive this report for information.

2. That synod thank the churches for their continued prayers and support of home missions, and encourage the churches prayerfully to consider how they might more actively participate in the work of home missions.

3. That synod humbly acknowledge, in light of this report, that the federation generally lacks a healthy culture of evangelism, and therefore direct the consistories prayerfully to explore ways in which they can lead the congregations to reform in this regard.

4. That synod encourage consistories and classes to make regular use of *How to Plant a Reformed Church* (2nd ed.) and the resources listed at urcnamissions.org.

5. That synod commend the work of the Canadian Seminary Bursary Fund and encourage the churches to consider whether similar regional or classical initiatives might help strengthen support for seminarians.

Grounds:

a. Current pastoral vacancies as well as upcoming retirements compel us actively to encourage men to consider the ministry and to support them in it.
b. The bursary is an efficient model God has used to mobilize churches to assist other churches in caring for their students.
c. Our catechism teaches us that the Fourth Commandment requires that "gospel ministry and schools for it be maintained."

6. That synod urge the churches to explore ways to expand the use of internships in our churches and provide greater financial support for them.

Grounds:

a. *Acts of Synod Niagara 95.3(2)d* mandate Classis Home Mission Committees work with overseeing consistories and church plants to provide internships for identifying/training church planters (which could entail the maintenance of a classical fund that will cover or offset internship costs that most churches cannot handle).
b. Many of our pastoral vacancies have been created by ministerial burnout and moral failure, which are due in part to insufficient training and vetting.
c. Internships, especially year-long internships, provide additional manpower to the local church, enabling additional labor in potential mission fields.
d. Increasing internship opportunities in the URCNA will help us attract, assess, and retain more gifted men.

7. That synod continue to urge the churches to give prayerful consideration to the development of Classical Home Missionaries, and submit feedback to the SCHM regarding the position.

   Grounds:

   a. Praying about, and working at, this challenge will allow the churches to gain wisdom as to whether and how the development of Classical Home Missionaries can serve the cause of home missions in our respective classical regions.
   b. The churches' feedback to the SCHM will aid the committee as it seeks wisdom for the best way to encourage development at the classical level.

8. That synod set the SCHM budget for the following years at $10,000 USD per annum, a $3,000 reduction from 2024.

   Ground:

   a. Over the last two years, the committee's spending was under budget, and even accounting for inflation, the committee's current level of activity can be supported with a lower budget.

9. That synod reappoint Mr. Paul Lawton as Home Missions Clerk for the next synodical term.

10. That synod set the remuneration rate for the Home Missions Clerk at $75 (USD) per hour, with the existing annual maximum ($12,500) unchanged.

    Grounds:

    a. Original compensation was set in anticipation of a more secretarial and administrative role.

b. Upon review of the final job description adopted by synod, our committee feels a higher rate of pay is in order.
c. Higher hourly rate of pay is supported by precedent of other URC functionaries.

Humbly submitted in service of Christ and His Kingdom,

Rev. Jared Beaird (Pacific Northwest)
Rev. John Bouwers, chairman (Ontario-East)
Rev. Dr. Brian Lee (Eastern U.S.)
Rev. Jody Lucero (Central U.S.)
Rev. Tom Morrison (Southwest U.S.)
Josh Nijenhuis (Michigan)
Rev. Bill Pols (Western Canada)
Rev. Steve Williamson (Southwest Ontario)
Paul Lawton (Home Missions Clerk)

Standing Committee on Appeals
Report to Synod Calgary 2026

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Synod Wheaton 2018 appointed the Standing Committee on Appeals and gave it the following mandate:

> a. *To receive and review appeals submitted to synod, in advance of synod, in order to organize, summarize, and index relevant documents and data.*
>
> b. *To assist the convening consistory of synod concerning the admissibility of appeal submissions.*
>
> c. *To make recommendations to the relevant synodical advisory committee concerning the proper and timely handling of particular appeals, without making recommendation concerning the disposition of the appeal* (Acts of Synod 2018, Article 64, p. 44).

Our committee is currently comprised of representatives from each classis, three ministers and five elders: Rev. Joel Dykstra, Rev. Jeffrey Karel, Mr. Eric Luth, Mr. Henry Nagtegaal, Rev. Justin Nobel, Mr. Nick Sealy, Mr. Steven Tjapkes, and Mr. Mark Van Der Molen.

Given that our original chairman Rev. Tuininga and secretary Rev. William Godfrey are no longer appointed to the committee, we selected new officers: Rev. Joel Dykstra as Chairman and Mr. Mark Van Der Molen as Secretary.

We have received two (2) appeals for review. Our committee will give advice to the convening consistory concerning both appeals' admissibility and prepare a report to be given to the

Advisory Committee assigned to advise Synod on any admissible appeal.

The appeals process is certainly an important safeguard for justice within our federation. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide recommendations and advice to assist in the proper adjudication of appeals.

In His service,

Rev. Joel Dykstra , Chairman
Mark Van Der Molen, Secretary

Building Loan Fund Study Committee
Report to Synod Calgary 2026

REPORT CONTENTS

1. Mandate and Composition of the Study Committee
2. The Committee's Work and Approach to Its Mandate
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    - 7.1. Biblical and Theological Background
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    - 7.3. Memorandum RE: OPCLF's Proposed Affiliation with the United Reformed Churches in North America
      (Note: This Memorandum was prepared by counsel for OPCLF and solely for OPCLF's benefit. URCNA's interests are not represented in any manner in connection with the Memorandum)

1. Mandate and Composition of the Study Committee

At its meeting in June, 2024, Synod Escondido adopted the following recommendation:

> *That Synod accede to Overture 10 with its grounds to establish a Building Loan Fund Study Committee (Regulations 5.3.3). The mandate for this committee is as follows:*
>
> ***Building Loan Fund Study Committee Mandate**:*

To investigate the feasibility of establishing a building loan fund for use in our federation. This investigation should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. *The matter of compliance with Canadian and American law and best practices, and including whether separate funds would need to be established for those churches that are on either side of the border;*
2. *The OPC Loan Fund as a possible model and the willingness of their board to assist us in the process;*
3. *Models that are already in use among fellow NAPARC denominations, as well as considering existing structures, organizations and models that other churches and nonprofits currently use.*
4. *Partnering with an existing institution to establish and manage such a fund;*
5. *What application and reporting procedures are employed to the utilizing of these funds;*
6. *How such a fund(s) might be overseen in a manner that is consistent with our polity;*
7. *How resources might be raised in order to make the fund(s) viable for church use;*
8. *What functionaries or other personnel might need to be appointed, hired, or tasked to manage the logistics.*

***Grounds**:*

a. *As our culture becomes increasingly hostile toward historic Christianity, it is wise for us to support one another in the acquisition of church properties. We cannot rely on the world to do this. Lending institutions are already wary of churches.*
b. *Our church planting works, even those that are organized, are rarely in a position of financial strength so that they could purchase a building in cash. A building loan fund would help such churches*

become brick and mortar institutions and continue to expand their ministry of the gospel.

c. *Exploring investment opportunities for this fund could produce interest within our own federation for many of our church members, especially those who are uncomfortable with such investment options like the stock market.*
d. *The board of the OPC Loan Fund has offered us its assistance in establishing a fund.*
e. *Over its 40+ years, the OPC Loan Fund has never had a congregation miss a single payment. At the very least, this suggests that church buildings are a net benefit when loans are extended in wisdom.*
f. *This approach keeps church funds within the Church. As Reformed Christians, we are encouraged to support one-another.*
g. *A central fund does not require centralized authority. Synod could determine that objective criteria be met before a church is eligible to receive funds, e.g., the concurring advice of one's classis.*

(Acts of Synod Escondido, Article 98)

Synod appointed 6 members to the study committee from the United States and Canada:

U.S.: Rev. Dr. Brian Lee, Mark Van Der Molen, Douglas Hoogerhyde

Canada: Rev. Hank Van Der Woerd, Rev. Henry Van Olst, Charlie Fluit

(Acts of Synod Escondido, Article 98)

Synod also adopted the following motions regarding the budget, reporting deadline, and functionaries of the committee:

That Synod approve $7500 USD per annum for this committee.

That Synod instruct this study committee to bring its recommendations to the next Synod.

To appoint Rev. Dr. Lee as the chairman and Mark Van Der Molen as the reporter of the committee.

(Acts of Synod Escondido, Article 98)

2. The Committee's Work and Approach to its Mandate

In order to fulfill the mandate of Synod Escondido, the full Committee deliberated in a total of twelve Zoom meetings, supported by additional subcommittee meetings. The initial meetings were devoted to discussing our mandate and assigning our investigative work between the U.S and Canadian members of the Committee. Committee Chairman also conducted numerous phone calls and correspondence with Mark Stumpff, the Manager for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church Loan Fund (OPCLF).

Early on in its deliberations, the committee considered whether to address biblical and theological principles related to operating a loan fund. Though the committee mandate did not direct the committee to conduct such a study, we felt that the feasibility of a loan fund was contingent upon it being in keeping with the scriptural and confessional foundations of our federation. We were also well aware that there have been a diversity of opinions on the morality of charging interest in the history of the christian church, even within the Reformed tradition. Indeed, the OPCLF has faced these questions in the past. We determined that it would be of value if we spent some time reflecting on this matter. We present here a brief summary of our results merely as an appendix to our report (see Appendix 1 below, "Biblical and Theological Reflections on Lending, Borrowing, and Interest").

This is explicitly not presented as a formal finding of this committee, nor as an official URCNA position, nor as pastoral advice.

The Canadian members investigated the availability of investment and fund options in Canada and the feasibility of a cross-border US/Canada fund in light of Canada's regulatory restrictions on the movement of funds in and out of Canada. It became readily apparent in our investigation that a federation wide fund serving both Canada and the United States was not feasible. If the federation were to pursue a URCNA Building Loan Fund, separate Canadian and United States funds and structures would need to be put in place. Given the current investment and loan fund options available to our Canadian churches as explained in more detail in our report, the committee is making no recommendation concerning establishing a separate Canadian URCNA building loan fund.

On the U.S. side, the committee focused its attention to investigating a cooperative relationship with the already existing Orthodox Presbyterian Church Loan Fund (OPCLF) as required in our mandate. We invited Mr. Mark Stumpff, the Loan Fund Manager, to our meeting to explain the operation of their fund. We communicated regularly with Mr. Stumpff and we learned that for the OPCLF to offer a fund for URCNA use would require structural adjustments to their governing documents. From our committee budget, we approved funding a legal analysis on feasibility of such an affiliation. That legal analysis highlighted the changes required by the OPCLF which likely would require formal approval by the OPC General Assembly. Because we could not receive any such formal approval/disapproval from the OPC prior to our reporting deadline, our committee recommendations focus on continuing the work of this committee for further discussions with the OPCLF as well as exploring other potential funding options that may be available for the U.S. churches.

The feasibility of a loan fund depends in part upon the demand for church financing in the federation and willingness of URCNA members and churches to participate in a fund. We therefore conducted a survey of church councils to gauge the level of demand and interest in such a fund among our churches. We include survey findings as an appendix to our report (see Appendix 2: "Building Loan Fund Survey Results"). The committee circulated a survey to the churches via the Stated Clerk in June of 2025. 75 responses were submitted between June 21, 2025 and September 30, 2025, representing 54% of URCNA churches. We are grateful for the participation of the churches in this survey.

Committee representatives also attended the Denominational Investors and Loan Administrators (DILA) Conference in 2024 and 2025, at the suggestion of Mr. Stumpff at OPCLF. DILA is an informal fellowship which meets to help maximize the effectiveness of not-for-profit entities organized to provide loans to various affiliated churches and related religious organizations within their denomination by providing networking opportunities and educational resources. It provides a noncompetitive forum and an open environment to learn about best practices in this industry. Rev. Dr. Lee attended DILA in 2024 (Charleston, SC), and Rev. Hank Van Der Woerd attended DILA in 2025 (Bellevue, WA). Conference attendance was a very helpful way for the committee to learn about how church extension funds operate and practical challenges entailed.

3. Canadian Report

3.1. Executive Summary

This report analyzes the regulatory and financial environment in Canada to determine viable funding strategies for church-based initiatives for both lending and investment. The options range from conservative savings and loans, often between parties known to each other, to sophisticated trustee-administered

mortgages on a larger scale with the involvement of professional organizations. Our existing URC culture trends toward private investments and loans with known parties. If larger scale operations are desired, due to the complex, provincial-based regulatory requirements, a new, independent synodical loan fund would need to exceed approximately $25 million in assets to be administratively and economically viable. Based on the survey results, the Canadian churches are unlikely to reach this scale for many years, so it is not considered a viable option. Alternatively, there are existing faith-based organizations who are readily available for lending and investment opportunities. Church organizations are encouraged to consult licensed advisors to ensure compliance and sustainability.

3.2. The Canadian Regulatory Context

In Canada, the financial landscape governing both lending and investment activities is primarily regulated by provincial laws. These regulations seek to ensure that all parties involved in lending or investing are properly licensed and adhere to prescribed standards of practice.

Key licensing requirements:

- **Exempt Market Dealers (EMDs)**: Regulate investment activities and ensure that investment vehicles are compliant with financial laws and regulations, and to protect prospective investors in these types of transactions.
- **Mortgage Brokers**: Regulate the issuance and management of mortgages and loans, providing oversight in the borrowing / lending process.

The regulatory environment requires the involvement of licensed financial services bodies to handle transactions, ensuring both borrowers and investors are properly vetted. Compliance and administrative costs associated with both investment and lending options often require significant scale to be considered economically viable. We did not find any church-based funds in

Canada, such as the American OPC fund, whom we could partner with. One faith-based corporation which has reached this scale and is open to working with the URC is Capstone Asset Management (Langley, British Columbia). They currently handle the investment and lending functions for several faith-based organizations, including the CRC Extension Fund and the Christian Stewardship Services fund.

3.3. Presently Available Financing Options

Several financing strategies are currently available to churches. Each of the following options has its own set of benefits, challenges, and regulatory requirements. The specific needs of the initiative, its funding capabilities, and associated legal issues must be considered in order to choose the best option.

3.3.1. Save for Cash Purchase

This traditional and conservative approach involves accumulating the necessary funds over time to make an outright purchase without the need for external debt. The key characteristics of this approach include:

- **Benefits:** No interest payments or debt servicing costs; full ownership and control from the outset.
- **Drawbacks:** Requires patience, risk of missed opportunity due to insufficient savings, increased opportunity cost from inflationary pressures on land and construction, and potential ongoing rental costs during the saving phase.

This approach is well-suited for initiatives that prioritize long-term stability and wish to avoid external financial debt obligations.

3.3.2. Unsecured or Secured Promissory Notes

Promissory notes are debt instruments where a borrower agrees to repay a lender a specified sum at a future date. These may be

solicited from the local membership, or from other congregations or individuals, possibly by way of Reformed periodicals or other communication options (where legal). There are basically two types of promissory notes:

- **Unsecured Promissory Notes**: These notes are based on the borrower's credit worthiness and are not backed by collateral. They tend to be easier to execute but pose higher risks for the lender, as there is no asset to claim in the event of default.
- **Secured Promissory Notes**: These notes are backed by collateral, such as real estate or other assets. In the event of borrower default, the lender has the right to claim the collateral. This reduces the risk for the lender and can potentially offer the borrower a lower interest rate.
- **Drawbacks**: Promissory note investors and borrowers may face issues at the time of redemption if there is an inability to repay by the borrower. Alternatively, the borrower may have the ability to repay, but the lender does not wish this to occur.

Promissory notes are generally a straightforward financing option but should be used cautiously, based on the credit risk of the borrower.

3.3.3. Mortgage

A mortgage loan secured by real estate offers another potential and standard.

- **Single or Multiple Investor Mortgage**: One or more investors or lenders provide the loan. The mortgage is secured by the property. This offers simplicity in negotiations, and can be an excellent option to secure a larger sum from a single party who is willing to take on the risk.
- **Drawbacks**: Require regular servicing of principal and interest payments, which may place strain on cash flow.

Additionally, foreclosure in the event of default can damage reputational standing within the community.

3.3.4. Mortgage via Trustee (Tax-Advantaged Accounts)

This innovative and tax-efficient option uses a third-party trustee to facilitate a mortgage transaction using investors' tax-advantaged accounts such as Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) and Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs).

Key aspects of this option include:

- **Tax Efficiency**: Funds invested in RRSPs or TFSAs remain in tax-sheltered accounts, as interest payments made on the mortgage are directed back into these accounts, preserving their tax-advantaged status.
- **Congregational Engagement**: Allows congregants or interested parties to participate in the financing of the initiative while maintaining their retirement savings or other financial goals.
- **Complexity**: The use of tax-advantaged accounts for lending requires careful administration and legal oversight to ensure compliance with tax laws and regulations.
- **Drawbacks**: Setting up and administering trustee-based mortgages can be costly and time-consuming, involving significant legal, regulatory, and trustee fees. This approach also requires a high level of sophistication from both the borrower and investors, which may limit accessibility for some congregants. In addition, restrictions on withdrawals from RRSPs and TFSAs may reduce flexibility if investors wish to access their funds sooner.

This option provides an avenue for churches to secure financing while engaging their members and supporting their long-term financial planning.

3.3.5. Capital Campaign

A capital raising campaign for a building fund is a strategic effort to secure significant financial contributions for the construction, renovation, or expansion of a physical facility. This type of campaign moves beyond standard annual fundraising by setting a specific, ambitious financial goal and a clear timeline. It typically involves a multi-phase approach, beginning with a "quiet phase" where major gifts are solicited from key stakeholders, followed by a public launch to engage the wider community. The campaign's messaging focuses on a compelling vision for the new space, highlighting how the building will enable the organization to expand its mission and serve the community more effectively. Success hinges on a strong case for support, volunteer leadership, and a clear plan for donor recognition, ensuring contributors see the tangible impact of their investment and feel a sense of ownership in the project's success.

3.4. Conclusion

The Committee concludes that a separate Canadian URC fund is not a viable alternative at this time. Other financing options available for funding are diverse and require careful consideration of both regulatory requirements and the specific needs of the initiative. In any event, it is essential to navigate the regulatory landscape to ensure regulatory compliance and mitigate risks.

Churches are presently able to access existing faith-based lenders such as the CRC Extension Fund and Christian Stewardship Services (via its administrator Capstone Asset Management), who indicate their willingness to assist. Alternatively, Christian Credit Union, located in Edmonton, has also been active in this space.

Church organizations are encouraged to consult with licensed financial institutions and advisors to select the most suitable financing strategy. Long-term debt acquisition requires wisdom

and careful planning, with a view towards future growth, available finances, and congregational capacity, ensuring that any financial decision aligns with the church's long-term mission.

The Committee therefore concludes that our mandate has been fulfilled in regard to the Canadian churches of the federation.

4. United States Report

4.1. The feasibility and need for a loan fund among United States churches

Our Committee mandate is to "investigate the feasibility of establishing a building loan fund for use in our federation." Synod anticipated that this investigation would necessarily be bifurcated between the United States and Canada, as reflected by the committee makeup of three Canadians and three Americans. Clearly, this is driven in large part by differences in banking regulations and laws north and south of the border, as stated in our mandate. The Canadian portion of our report addresses some of these regulations from the Canadian perspective.

Another reason the feasibility differs between the U.S. and Canada is the existence of the OPCLF in the United States. Our mandate directed us to explore the OPCLF as a possible model and potential partner in establishing a fund, and this fund only operates in the lower 48 states. Obviously, it is far more feasible to establish a fund with the assistance of a pre-existing partner than to develop one from scratch. We will describe our efforts with the OPCLF in greater detail below.

The survey conducted by the BLFSC demonstrated strong support for a loan fund in the federation.[39] While property

39. See Appendix 2 for survey results. There were 75 total responses to the survey, representing 54% of URCNA churches. 68% of responses

ownership doesn't make sense for every congregation, an overwhelming majority of survey respondents (88%) believe it is highly valuable for a church to own their property. 74% of churches in the survey consider the existence of a loan fund to be highly valuable for the federation. Support for the loan fund stems both from its beneficial value for church plants, but also of general benefit to the URCNA.

The survey revealed slightly stronger support for the loan fund among U.S. churches. Ranking the value of a loan fund on a scale of 1 - 5, U.S. churches had a modestly higher mean rating of 3.98 U.S. vs. 3.75 Canadian. However, the percentage of churches ranking the value a 5 out of 5 was significantly higher in the U.S. (36% vs. 21%). Both U.S. and Canadian churches value property ownership highly, but U.S. scores slightly higher (61% vs. 54% giving it the highest score of 5, and a slightly higher mean).

The stronger support for a loan fund in the U.S. correlates with a stronger sense of need. U.S. churches indicated a significantly higher likelihood that church plants would need funds in the future, 4.22 U.S. vs. 3.66 Canadian, and 57% of U.S. churches indicated their highest rating for this likelihood (vs. 33% in Canada). There is also a modestly higher rating for their likelihood of needing funds for expansion or improvement of current properties. Higher levels of support and need generally translated to modestly higher levels of anticipated participation, with U.S. church councils rating interest at 2.88 U.S. vs. 2.52 Canadian. Twice as many Canadian church councils said it was "not at all likely" they would invest (35% vs. 16%). The same trends were indicated in terms of likelihood of individual members participating as investors in such a fund, with three times as many Canadian churches indicating it was "not at all likely" that any individuals would participate (23% vs. 6%).

were from U.S. churches, and 31% from Canada, which closely approximates the breakdown of churches (66% are in the U.S., 34% in Canada).

These differences between the U.S. and Canada likely reflect a few differences in the culture and context of our Canadian churches. According to the 2025 URCNA Directory, our 47 Canadian churches tend to be larger (229 souls per church on average) than their 93 U.S. counterparts (164 souls), and congregational financial resources typically correlate with congregation size. Committee members have observed that there exists a strong culture within Canadian congregations to privately arrange financial gifts and or loans to support capital projects. Another difference is that U.S. churches have seen a higher number of church plants in recent years, and thus there is a higher perceived need for funds for procuring properties for these new churches. While membership in Canadian churches has grown faster over the last 20 years (50% vs. 17%), less of this growth has come from planting new churches. Canada has 28% more churches over the last 20 years, while the U.S. has 37% more churches.

The BLFSC therefore finds it reasonable to conclude that a loan fund is more desirable among the U.S. churches, more needful, and more likely to find a community of willing investors. Furthermore, there is a much greater feasibility for establishing a loan fund giving the potential of a partner in the OPCLF.[40]

4.2. Partnership with the OPCLF as the preferred path for the URCNA

The BLFSC was encouraged by its mandate to investigate the OPCLF as a possible model for the URC and to ascertain their

40. Late in the drafting of this report the committee learned of the Semble platform for incorporating supporter investments into loans for nonprofits (*www.semble.com*), which is being used in the capital campaign of Peace URC in Vancouver, WA. We spoke with the leadership of Peace URC about this platform. They acknowledged that while Semble was a useful tool for their particular, time-sensitive needs, it would have been their preference to use a URCNA loan fund had such a fund been in existence. They also cited significant tradeoffs for using the Semble platform, including the fee structure.

willingness to assist us in the process. The OPCLF was established in 1993, and over the last thirty years has assisted at least 50% of OPC churches in some way. It is legally autonomous and separately incorporated from the OPC, though it operates under the supervision of the OPC Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (CHMCE). Over the course of its existence, the OPCLF has never had a church default on a loan. The fund currently is able to receive investments from 31 states, though it can make loans to churches in all 50 states. It cannot accept investments from or lend to Canadian churches.

Mr. Mark Stumpff, OPC Loan Fund Manager, joined us for our second meeting, on October 1, 2024. In this meeting Stumpf conveyed that OPCLF desires to be helpful to the URCNA as it explores the feasibility of a building loan fund, and is open to continued conversations and to providing counsel drawn from OPCLF's experience.

One early lesson of our conversations with Mr. Stumpff is the relative complexity of the loan fund's operation. The OPCLF operates as a "church extension fund," which must make annual regulatory filings in each state in which it operates, and is subject to strict legal guidelines. Over the course of its existence, the OPCLF has gradually expanded the scope of its operations from a handful of states to 31, with the administrative assistance of personnel in the OPC headquarters in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. It has gradually developed both the practical knowledge and expertise as well as the professional relationships (legal counsel and accounting services) to operate a complex fund efficiently and effectively. The committee further explored the complexity of operating a loan fund by sending a representative to the annual conference of DILA, the Denominational Investors and Lenders Association in both 2024 and 2025 (Rev. Dr. Brian Lee and Rev. Hank Van Der Woerd).

While it would be possible for the URCNA to develop its own loan fund modeled on the OPCLF, we do not at this time recommend such an undertaking. The current OPCLF is the fruit

of sustained effort by a *presbyterian* church that possesses a robust central administrative apparatus, with a history and a polity that naturally supports it. We believe that the logistics, expertise, and administrative culture of the URCNA, even operating with advice and assistance from the OPCLF, would struggle to recreate their effort. We believe it is far more prudent at this juncture to further explore ways in which we can develop a loan fund through a cooperative relationship with OPCLF. It is important to note that any formal cooperative arrangement would require OPCLF to undertake significant further analysis, capacity assessment, and appropriate approvals, and OPCLF is not in a position at present to commit to such an arrangement.

Given the complexity of managing a loan fund and the OPCLF Board's expertise and willingness to assist the URCNA, we have determined that seeking the assistance of the OPCLF was the preferred path to establishing a URCNA loan fund. It was determined that the OPCLF would need legal counsel to provide guidance on any relationship with the URCNA, and at the BLFSC meeting of April 29, 2025 we agreed to pay for a legal feasibility study. This memorandum on a proposed affiliation of the OPCLF and URCNA ("Memorandum") was delivered on December 16, 2025, and is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

4.3. The Path Forward with the OPCLF

The Memorandum explored the feasibility of the URCNA contracting with the OPCLF to engage their services in creating and running a loan fund for the URCNA and its members, which was initially viewed as one of the simplest and easiest scenarios to execute. To summarize the Memorandum in the briefest terms, it argued that even attaining a modest degree of cooperative labor would require both OPCLF and URCNA to invest a significant degree of effort. The Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws of OPCLF clearly establish the nonprofit corporation for the benefit of the OPC and its members alone. They would most certainly need to be altered for any cooperative relationship to be established. The manner of securing the nonprofit status of the

OPCLF (currently via its relationship with the OPC) would also need to be addressed. A significant Management Agreement would need to be negotiated and agreed upon.

Two things immediately became obvious to our committee: First, that the scope of this negotiation and undertaking was beyond the current mandate of our committee and the time and resources allotted to it. Second, that it would be imperative for the OPCLF (and perhaps the OPC CHMCE and/or General Assembly) to have a clear understanding of the URCNA's serious desire to enter into any cooperative agreement *before* it would be wise for them to invest the requisite effort required to explore this relationship further.

At this point in time, the OPCLF Board has not taken any formal action indicating their interest in pursuing an affiliation with the URCNA, nor has any other OPC body. The first opportunity they will have to review the legal memorandum outlining the feasibility of affiliation with the URCNA will be at their meeting in March of 2026. We believe it is important that the URCNA act first in expressing its desire to pursue such a relationship. This would give our brothers in the OPC a clearly stated request for further engagement and lay the groundwork for future discussions between our committee and the OPCLF. It therefore seemed a prudent stage of our investigation to return to Synod and seek a clear affirmation of the URCNA's desire to invest further in exploring an affiliation with the OPCLF. We believe that such an affiliation may indeed be fruitful and beneficial to the work of the U.S. churches of the federation, and that further exploration of its potential is merited, and our recommendations seek to receive Synod's guidance on that matter.

5. Conclusions

5.1. A Continuing Mandate and Reconstituted Membership

Our research to date has established that there remains a substantial amount of work for the BLFSC to do with regard to exploring a potential affiliation between the URCNA and the OPCLF. Should Synod affirm their continued desire to pursue such an affiliation, it will be necessary to maintain the BLFSC to carry on this work. However, given the completion of the committee's work with respect to our Canadian churches, we believe it would be wise to reconstitute the membership of the committee. As our Canadian brothers believe they have fulfilled their portion of the mandate, we would recommend that Synod consider receiving their portion of this report and dismissing them with thanks.

Given that the future work of the BLFSC will be focused almost exclusively on the U.S. churches in the federation, Synod should appoint additional members to the committee from the United States. In addition to the new focus of our work, Mr. Mark Van Der Molen is requesting release from committee service due to significant professional time commitments in the coming year. In appointing new committee members, Synod may wish to consider including representation from every U.S. Classis to reflect regional diversity and interests, as it has done for study committees in the past. Additionally, given the legal and corporate nature of many of the matters entailed in affiliation with the OPCLF, we would suggest at least one member of the committee be a current member of the U.S. Board of Directors to expedite coordination with that body.

We believe our current mandate is sufficient for the work remaining. However, we do believe that it would be helpful at this time for synod to formally affirm a preliminary desire to pursue affiliation with the OPCLF, thereby giving the OPC a clear understanding of our intent and desire at this time. Any affiliation between the OPCLF and the URCNA will require a significant investment in time and effort, which both parties should expend only with a clear understanding of the URCNA's desire for this goal. By mutually affirming this preliminary desire, our two ecclesiastical bodies may invest the necessary

effort to explore whether such an affiliation is ultimately both feasible and advisable for us to enter into.

5.2 Postscript RE: Polity Considerations

It is not common for Synod to engage in matters that only directly affect a portion of our churches, though decisions pertaining exclusively to the U.S. or Canadian Boards may provide the best analogy. Even though the continued work of the BLFSC would be overwhelmingly for the benefit and use of the U.S. churches alone, we do feel that it is of paramount importance that the *whole of Synod* speak strongly and clearly to the question of whether it is desirable for the URCNA to pursue a U.S. loan fund, and furthermore to pursue it by engaging constructively with the OPCLF. We affirm that there is wisdom in many counselors and that all of the churches of the federation can help the federation deliberate a prudent path forward.

6. Recommendations

We humbly submit the following recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the "Canadian Report" section of this report (Section 3) and judge it as having fulfilled the committee's mandate with regard to the Canadian context, recommending it to the Canadian churches for guidance when seeking funding solutions for the construction or purchase of ecclesiastical space.

   Ground:
   a. The Committee's mandate and membership anticipated that its work would be bifurcated between Canada and the United States.

2. That Synod thank the Canadian members of the committee for their service and dismiss them.

3. That Synod reaffirm the mandate of the BLFSC with respect to URCNA churches in the United States.

   Ground:

   a. The Committee has not yet been able to complete this portion of its mandate, and requires more time to assess the willingness and ability of OPCLF to affiliate with the URCNA in this matter.

4. That Synod affirm its preliminary desire to further pursue a formal, cooperative relationship between the Board of Directors for the United Reformed Churches in North America (U.S.A.) and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church Loan Fund (OPCLF), for the purposes of establishing a Building Loan Fund for the benefit of URCNA churches in the United States.

   Grounds:

   a. Further work toward affiliation between the URCNA and OPCLF depends upon a clear and formal statement from our Synod of the desirability of this goal.
   b. Any affiliation between the OPCLF and the URCNA will require a significant investment in time and effort, which both parties should expend only with a clear understanding of the URCNA's desire for this goal.
   c. Expressing a desire to further pursue an affiliation does not commit Synod to such an affiliation in fact. It provides a sufficient foundation for future labors while reserving final approval to a future Synod in the light of additional information.

5. That Synod re-appoint Rev. Dr. Brian Lee (chairman) and Douglas Hoogerhyde to the committee, and also

appoint additional U.S. members to facilitate the completion of its work.

7. Appendices:

7.1. Biblical and Theological Reflections on Lending, Borrowing, and Interest

7.2. Building Loan Fund Survey Results

7.3. Memorandum RE: OPCLF's Proposed Affiliation with the United Reformed Churches in North America

Note: This Memorandum was prepared by counsel for OPCLF and solely for OPCLF's benefit. URCNA's interests are not represented in any manner in connection with the Memorandum.

Appendix 1:
Biblical and Theological Reflections on Lending, Borrowing, and Interest

In this appendix to our report we would like to briefly consider the biblical and theological arguments in favor and against lending, borrowing, and charging interest. In the history of the Christian church, this has been a complicated and deeply conflicted subject, and a thorough treatment of this topic is beyond the scope of our report.

It is important to remember that participation in a loan fund would be voluntary for both churches and individuals. The purpose of this section is merely to demonstrate that establishing a loan fund for the use of our churches doesn't violate the clear teaching of Scripture. Christian liberty would allow individuals or churches to participate in the fund to the extent they desire.

Lending and Interest in the Bible

Lending is explicitly commended in the Bible as a way of expressing generosity. "It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice" (Psalm 112:5). However, the charging of interest on a loan was recognized as a practice that could be abused and turned into a form of oppression, especially for the poor. Thus, the poor are explicitly protected by the Mosaic civil law: "If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him" (Ex 22:25; cf. Lev 25:35-37)

Reformed exegetes, beginning with Calvin, have noted that in each case, the prohibition against charging interest comes with a qualification, specifying that interest may not be charged *when lending to the poor*. Calvin's classic statement of this argument from his commentary on Exodus 22:25 runs as follows:

> But [one] may object, that we must abide by God's judgment, when He generally prohibits all usury [i.e., interest] to His

> people. I reply, that the question is only as to the poor, and consequently, if we have to do with the rich, that usury [interest] is freely permitted; because the Lawgiver, in alluding to one thing, seems not to condemn another, concerning which He is silent.[1]

In other words, by specifying that interest may not be charged when lending to the poor, these texts suggest that it *may be charged when lending to those who are not poor*. The Old Testament civil law does not therefore forbid the charging of interest in all circumstances. Indeed, Deuteronomy makes this distinction explicit when it permits charging foreigners interest:

> You shall not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest. *You may charge a foreigner interest*, but you may not charge your brother interest, that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. (Deut 23:19-20)[2]

There is no prohibition against charging interest in the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ teaches us to "Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you" (Matt. 5:42). In Luke's rendering, Christ goes further in advocating for charitable gifts as opposed to loans, "But love your enemies, and do

1. John Calvin and Charles William Bingham, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, vol. 3 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 131–132. Calvin's comments on prohibitions against interest in the Psalms and Prophets offer a similar perspective, and in his comments on Psalm 15:5 he concludes that civil law of Israel no longer applies directly to the New Testament church

2. Emphasis added. The word translated "foreigner" in Deuteronomy 23:20 may better be translated as a "foreign merchant," suggesting that the text affirms the charging of interest in a commercial setting, while warning against its use in the case of benevolence for the needy. Klaus Issler, "Lending and Interest in the OT: Examining Three Interpretations to Explain the Deuteronomy 23:19-20 Distinction in Light of the Historical Usury Debate," JETS 59/4 (2016): 761-789.

good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great" (Luke 6:35). Clearly, giving a gift to a brother in need is morally commendable, but this does not mean that making a timely loan is not commendable as well.

In the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30, cf. Luke 19:11-27), the Master rebukes the wicked servant for not earning interest with his money: "You ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest" (Matt. 25:27). While the words of the "Master" in a parable do not convey the same weight as the direct instruction of Christ, the parable clearly assumes the existence of bankers who pay, and therefore charge, interest, and implicitly commends the use of these institutions. This commendatory teaching is the only explicit mention of lending with interest in the New Testament.

There is one additional New Testament passage that is sometimes cited as teaching believers to avoid all forms of debt and borrowing, Romans 13:7-8: "Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. *Owe no one anything*, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."

Most exegetes agree that this passage reflects figurative language intended to compel believers to keep their word and to value the love of neighbor as the highest fulfillment of the law. John Murray comments, "this cannot be taken to mean that we may never incur financial obligations," and Douglas Moo adds "This command does not forbid a Christian from ever incurring a debt (e.g., to buy a house or a car); it rather demands that Christians repay any debts they do incur promptly and in accordance with the terms of the contract."

The Heidelberg Catechism aptly summarizes the Reformed view on interest in its teaching on the Eighth Commandment in Question 110. The catechism teaches that in addition to "outright theft and robbery," the eighth commandment also prohibits "*excessive* interest," implying that charging reasonable interest does not violate God's moral law. The

prohibition of "usury" in the Westminster Larger Catechism similarly has in view excessive interest.

In conclusion, the scriptures commend those who lend generously (Psalm 112). While the Old Testament warns against the abuse of credit in the case of the poor and needy, it does not prohibit lending, borrowing, nor the charging of interest in an absolute sense. Deuteronomy clearly affirms charging interest in a foreign and commercial setting. The prohibition of charging the poor Israelite interest demonstrates the importance of benevolence within the household of faith, as well as a clear understanding of the dangers of credit and its propensity for abuse.

Pledges or Security in the Bible

Another objection to lending may be raised based upon legal texts that address the taking of pledges, as well as wisdom literature that warns of giving pledges. Mortgages or loans made for the purchase or construction of a building are "securitized" debt. The property is securitized, or pledged, to be taken if payments cannot be made.

The two primary laws concerning pledges clearly affirm their use in general, while restricting their abusive application to those who are unable to provide a pledge without doing harm. "If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate" (Exodus 22:26-27, cf. Deuteronomy 24:6, 10-13, 17). These texts clearly presume that loans may be made and pledges may be given ("When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort… if he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge… You shall restore to him the pledge as the sun sets.").

It is important to note that these legal restrictions on taking pledges are all found in the context of abuses of the poor. The target of these laws is the demanding of excessive or punitive pledges, items which are necessities for the poor persons from whom they are taken. These establish in principle that loans may be made for commercial purposes

to those with means to provide security. The law is seeking to protect the poor and oppressed who are all too often abused by financial systems and moneylenders.

While the Law warns against unjust or oppressive taking of pledges, Proverbs in many places warns about the foolish *giving* of pledges. One class of such folly appears to be taking on debt you cannot afford to pay back:

> *Be not one of those who give pledges,*
> *who put up security for debts.*
> *If you have nothing with which to pay,*
> *why should your bed be taken from under you?*
> Proverbs 22:26-27

Clearly, the abuse of credit is not unique to our age. There is nothing new under the sun.

Another class of folly appears to be the giving of pledges or security for strangers or neighbors, essentially counter-signing for the debts of others: "Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure (Proverbs 11:15, cf. 6:1, 5; 17:18)

These passages warn both lenders and borrowers against engaging in risky and abusive lending practices. As the Westminster Larger Catechism puts it, the eighth commandment requires us to "avoid *unnecessary* lawsuits, and suretyship" (141). In issuing these warnings, the scripture does not prohibit the proper use of such financial measures, but in fact establishes it.

Financing Sacred Spaces in the Old Testament and New

In Exodus 25-26, we read how God's people were commanded to make freewill offerings for the construction of the Tabernacle. These contributions were so abundant that Moses had more than enough for the work, and indeed had to restrain the people from bringing more. This Old Testament example demonstrates the generosity of God's people flowing from gratitude, and provides a biblical model for the

New Testament church as we seek to purchase or construct sacred spaces for the purpose of public worship. One may ask, however, whether this model is prescriptive for the New Testament church?

While utilizing freewill offerings may be the first and best recourse for purchasing worship space, it should be noted the uniqueness of the circumstances surrounding the construction of the tabernacle, and recognize that many elements will necessarily be absent from the New Testament context. First, the Israelites were enriched by plunder from the Egyptians, which the Lord provided. Second, the entire nation of nearly a million persons were contributing to the construction of a single structure. Third, when Solomon's Temple was constructed, freewill offerings were not the primary source of resources. Rather, Kings David and Solomon gave richly from the royal treasury of a theocratic nation.

Freewill offerings once again play a key role in the construction of the second temple and its services (Ezra 1:4, 2:68-69, 3:5-7, 8:28). But these offerings are requested not only from the remnant living in Jerusalem, but from a proclamation made by Cyrus throughout the realm. The Jewish people throughout the realm are required by the civil government to support the work in Jerusalem. This indeed provides a lesson for the church today, as individuals spread far across the land may lend support to structures in other places. Yet once again the circumstances and needs differ to a significant degree from the New Testament church.

As the church in the New Testament moves out from Jerusalem and away from the Temple, we do not see any instructions to build a centralized place of worship. The church clearly is gathering both in public places and private homes and assembly halls as they are able, and clearly these are provided by the generosity of God's people. The principle of freewill offerings for all other needs of the community (Acts 2:45) is clearly established, and it is reasonable to extend this principle to the provision of worship space. Yet explicit instruction on this matter is lacking.

It should be noted as well that worship space in the New Testament serves a fundamentally different purpose than the Tabernacle and Temple, which were centralized cult sites for the nation. The model for the church is the synagogue, and the gathering of all God's people weekly to receive the means of grace, not the priestly offering of sacrifices and gathering of a representative few for daily prayers. Local New Testament churches need to provide for the worship needs of a local community of hundreds or at most thousands of believers, not in excess of a million. To limit the New Testament church to the methods employed by Old Testament Israel would require us to draw conclusions far beyond that which the text and context of Scripture allow.

The Old Testament provides multiple examples of freewill offerings providing the material needs for the construction of the tabernacle and temple. Clearly, these examples set an ideal pattern for New Testament saints to emulate. However, it should be noted that both theologically and practically, these structures played a different role in the history of redemption and the communal worship of God's people. There is no scriptural basis for restricting the New Testament church from availing itself of other means of supporting congregations in the construction and purchase of church property.

Conclusion

This biblical and theological review has demonstrated that establishing a church loan fund for the construction and purchase of church property does not violate the clear teaching of Scripture. Old Testament prohibitions on the charging of interest for loans are focused on protecting the poor and needy, and warnings against foolish use of sureties and pledges provide lasting warnings against the abuses of credit and debt. Yet Reformed exegetes, as well as our catechisms, have interpreted these civil laws and wisdom warnings as pertaining to excessive abuses, not proper use of these financial instruments.

Furthermore, on the basis of Scripture and prudential concerns, we strongly encourage the use of freewill offerings as the first and best mechanism for the purchase and construction of church property.

However, a loan fund that facilitates the construction or purchase of sister congregations' property aligns with the biblical mandate to manifest love for one another and extend the mission of the church. Provided the fund operates with justice and equity, taking care to avoid any hint of oppression or "excessive interest" (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 110), it stands as a faithful and prudent mechanism to support the federation's growth. The establishment of this fund is a matter of practical wisdom and inter-congregational support, grounded in the liberty granted by Scripture for the proper and non-abusive use of credit.

Appendix 2:
Building Loan Fund Survey Results

The committee circulated a survey to the churches via the Stated Clerk in June of 2025. 75 responses were submitted between June 21, 2025 and September 30, 2025. The committee is grateful to the many churches that participated in the survey.

Note that all numerical responses scaled from 1-5 move from “less” (1, on the left) to “more” (5, on the right).

The following analysis of the survey data was prepared with the assistance of Google Gemini.

Key Takeaways

1. **Strong Support and Perceived Value for a URCNA Building Loan Fund**
    - A significant majority of churches (74.3%) consider the existence of a URCNA Building Loan Fund to be highly valuable (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) for the overall mission of the federation.
    - The primary motivations for interest in the fund are its general benefit to the URCNA (47 responses), support for future church plants (46 responses), and serving as a potential borrower for property purchase or expansion (36 responses).
    - This indicates a collective recognition of the fund's potential to strengthen the federation and facilitate growth.

2. **High Value Placed on Property Ownership and Demonstrated Need for Financing**
    - An overwhelming 88% of respondents believe it is highly valuable (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) for a local congregation to own property versus renting.
    - A majority of churches (53 out of 75) have previously sought financing for church purchase or building projects.

- Among those who sought financing, a significant portion (23 out of 50 respondents) found it 'Not at all difficult' (rated 1 out of 5) to secure funds, while some experienced moderate difficulty (11 rated 2, 9 rated 3).
- This highlights a foundational belief in the importance of property ownership and a demonstrated, though not always difficult, need for financial support in the past.

3. **Significant Future Funding Needs and Moderate Investment Likelihood**
   - A substantial number of churches anticipate future funding needs.
   - 41 churches indicated they are 'Not at all likely' (rated 1 out of 5) to need funds for a property purchase in the next five years, while 11 rated it 'Extremely likely' (rated 5 out of 5).
   - 28 churches rated 'Not at all likely' (rated 1 out of 5) for expansion or improvement in the next five years, with 13 rating it 'Extremely likely' (rated 5 out of 5).
   - A majority (35 out of 70 respondents) believe it is 'Extremely likely' (rated 5 out of 5) that a church plant in their classis will need funds for a property purchase in the next ten years.

4. **Regarding investment in a URCNA Building Loan Fund:**
   - Church councils show a moderate likelihood of investing, with the highest response (28 out of 73 respondents) being 'Neither likely nor unlikely' (rated 3 out of 5).
   - Individual members also show a moderate likelihood, with the highest response (33 out of 71 respondents) being 'Neither likely nor unlikely' (rated 3 out of 5).
   - These findings suggest a clear demand for future funding, particularly for church plants, and a moderate but present potential for internal investment from both church councils and individual members.

The analysis indicates a strong foundation for the establishment of a URCNA Building Loan Fund, driven by the perceived value of property ownership, past financing experiences, and anticipated future needs.

While investment likelihood from within the church councils and individual members is moderate, it represents a potential source of capital that could be further encouraged.

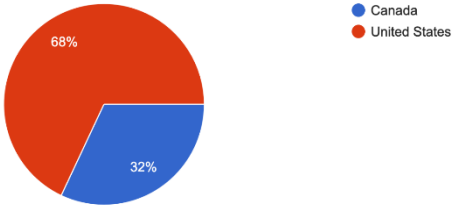
Full survey results follow.

Building Loan Fund Survey Results

(Survey administered via Google forms. Tables and charts generated by Google forms)

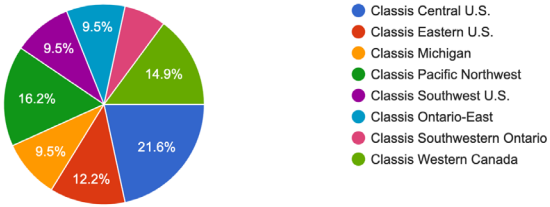
1. What country is your church located in?

75 responses



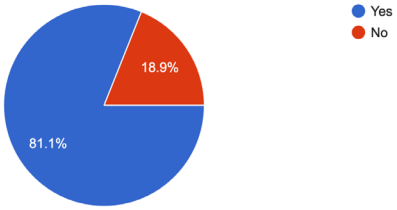
2. What Classis is your church located in?

74 responses



3. Does your church own the property in which it regularly worships?

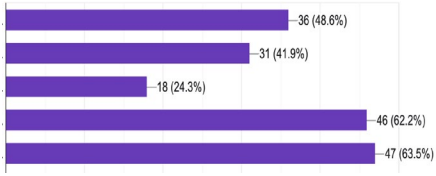
74 responses



4. Why might your church be interested in the establishment of a URCNA Building Loan Fund? (You may check multiple boxes.)

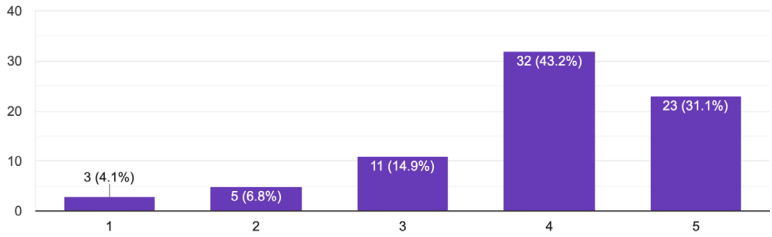
74 responses

Potential BORROWER
Potential INVESTOR
Unlikely to borrow or invest
For future church plants
General benefit of URCNA



5. How valuable do you think the existence of a URCNA Building Loan Fund would be for the overall mission of the federation?

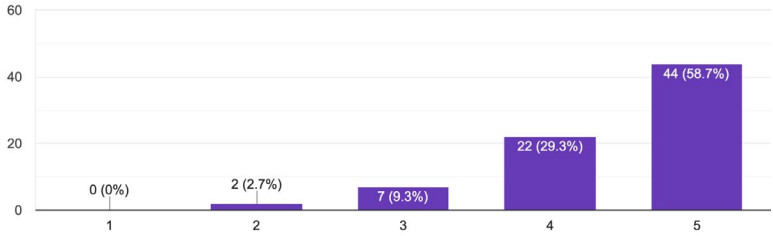
74 responses



- US Churches 3.98
- Canadian Churches 3.75

6. In general, how valuable do you think it is for a local congregation to own property, versus renting?

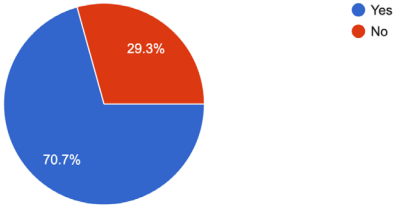
75 responses



- US Churches 4.47
- Canadian Churches 4.38

7. Has your church sought financing for a church purchase or building project in the past?

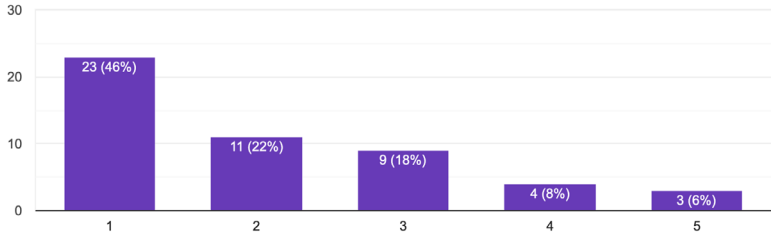
75 responses



- US Churches 69% “Yes”
- Canadian Churches 75% “Yes”

8. If your church has sought financing in the past, how difficult was it to secure the necessary funds? (skip if this doesn't apply to you)

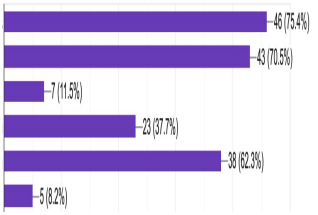
50 responses



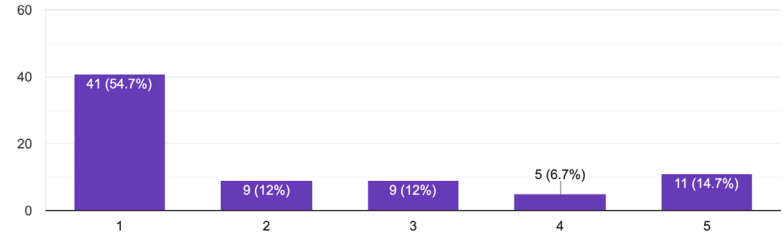
- US Churches 2.03
- Canadian Churches 2.13

9. What sources of funding has your church used in the past for property purchases or building projects? (check all that apply)
61 responses

Savings
Capital Campaign w/ local members
Capital Campaign w/ URCNA churches
Private Loan
Commercial bank loan
Loan from sister church

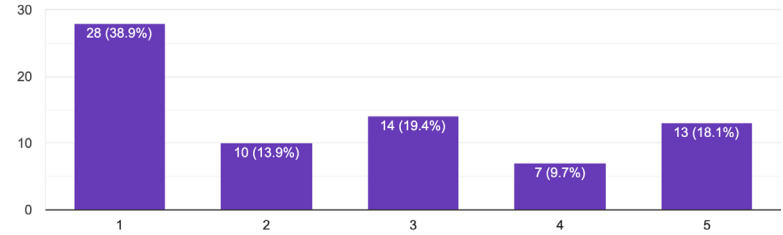


10. Is your church likely to need funds for the PURCHASE of a property in the next five years?
75 responses



- US Churches 2.00
- Canadian Churches 2.46

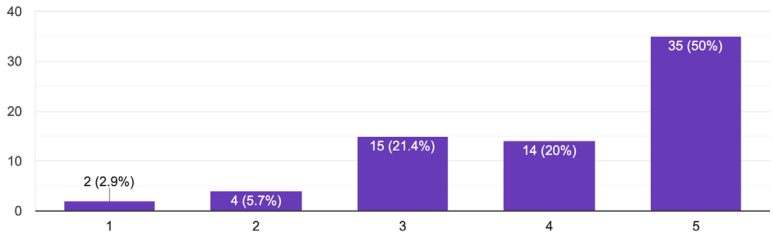
11. Is your church likely to need funds for the EXPANSION or IMPROVEMENT of a property in the next five years?
72 responses



- US Churches 2.59
- Canadian Churches 2.43

12. Is a CHURCH PLANT in your classis likely to need funds for the PURCHASE of a property in the next ten years?

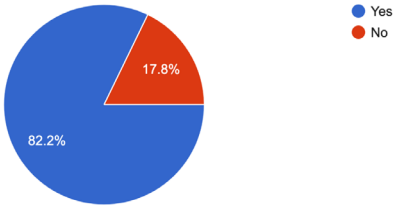
70 responses



- US Churches 4.22
- Canadian Churches 3.76

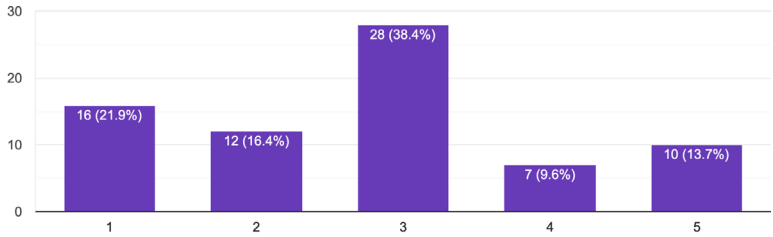
13. Does your church currently maintain financial reserves in an interest bearing account, separate from its operating funds?

73 responses



14. How likely would your CHURCH COUNCIL be to invest a portion of its reserves in a URCNA building loan fund? (For example, NAPARC Church F...s, earning an interest rate of approximately 4-5%)

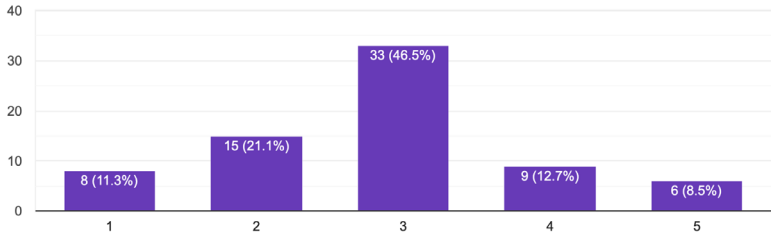
73 responses



- US Churches 2.88
- Canadian Churches 2.52

15. How likely is it that INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS of your church would invest in a URCNA Building Loan Fund? (For example, NAPARC Church Fund X cu..., earning an interest rate of approximately 4-5%)

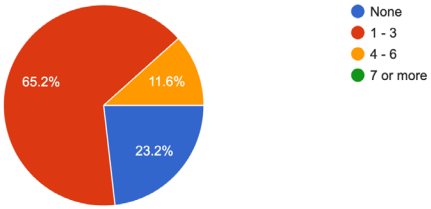
71 responses



- US Churches 2.96
- Canadian Churches 2.64

16. How many INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS of your church council (Pastors, Elders, Deacons) would be likely to invest in a URCNA loan fund? (For example...rs, earning an interest rate of approximately 4-5%)

69 responses



Appendix 3:
Memorandum RE:
OPCLF's Proposed Affiliation with the United Reformed Churches in North America

Note:This Memorandum was prepared by counsel for OPCLF and solely for OPCLF's benefit. URCNA's interests are not represented in any manner in connection with the Memorandum.

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curbow

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

To: Orthodox Presbyterian Church Loan Fund, Inc. ("**OPCLF**")

From: curbow LLC

Re: **OPCLF's Proposed Affiliation with the United Reformed Churches in North America**

The purpose of this Memorandum is to respond to OPCLF's request that we review and provide feasibility considerations regarding OPCLF affiliating through contract with the United Reformed Churches in North America (the "**URCNA**") or a to-be-formed URCNA affiliated church extension fund (the "**URCNA CEF**") that is formed for the purpose of supporting the URCNA and its related churches (collectively, the "**Proposed Affiliation**")

Please note that we have prepared this Memorandum as legal counsel to, and for the benefit of, OPCLF. While we understand that URCNA will be provided a copy of this Memorandum, the contents of this Memorandum are only for informational purposes, shall not be relied upon as a legal opinion, and nothing herein shall or shall be deemed to constitute legal advice or services to URCNA or otherwise construed to create an attorney client relationship between curbow LLC and the URCNA.

After you have had a chance to review this Memorandum, we would be happy to discuss this with you in further detail.

Baseline Assumptions

1. Based on prior discussions with the OPCLF Executive

Director, we have limited our feasibility analysis to scenario number 3 set forth in the potential scenarios set forth on Exhibit A hereto (the "**Scenario Exhibit**"), which outlines the framework of the Proposed Affiliation. More specifically, we have assumed that the Proposed Affiliation would involve the following:

a. Negotiation and execution of a management agreement governing and outlining the Proposed Affiliation, including OPCLF's provision of day-to-day management and administration services related to the URCNA in exchange for a management fee payable by the URCNA CEF to OPCLF.

b. The URCNA CEF would establish and organize as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation.

c. All day-to-day administrative activities related to the URCNA CEF to be carried out by OPCLF staff and personnel.URCNA CEF corporate governance would be managed by a board of directors consisting of members appointed/elected by the URCNA and/or OPC denominations.

2. We have assumed for purposes of this Memorandum that no other scenarios set forth on the Scenario Exhibit are being considered for the time being.

3. While we understand the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the URCNA are very similar in nature with respect to their beliefs and doctrinal principles, and vary with respect to their polity principles, we have assumed for purposes of this Memorandum that the OPC and URCNA are regarded as separate religious denominations.

Feasibility Observations

- Prior to entering into the Proposed Affiliation, OPCLF will

need to consider amending both its Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws to expand the scope of OPCLF's purpose to include activities or services encompassing the Proposed Affiliation. Failure to do so could result in any act or action by OPCLF being deemed void or voidable by the concept of "ultra vires." Based on Article XI of OPCLF's Certificate of Incorporation and Articles XI and XII of OPCLF's Bylaws, any amendment to the provisions of OPCLF's Certificate of Incorporation which expands the scope of OPCLF's purpose would require the approval of a majority of the board of directors of OPCLF and the concurrence of The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc.

- If OPCLF changes its purpose in its Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws, OPCLF may need to coordinate with OPC the filing of an annual update to the OPC 501(c)(3) group exemption letter to notify the IRS of the applicable change to OPCLF's purpose and operations (which would be expanded via amendment as noted in the bullet above). Alternatively, to the extent that OPCLF and/or the OPC do not desire to file such annual update, or if it is determined after further research (or by the IRS after such filing) that the proposed amendments to OPCLF's Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws would cause OPCLF to fall outside of the OPC 501(c)(3) group exemption letter, OPCLF could consider separately establishing its own federal tax exemption by filing a Form 1023 with the IRS, which would come at additional legal and operational cost.

  The continued status of OPCLF as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity is of utmost importance in order for OPCLF to continue its church extension fund operations. Failure to be federally tax exempt would bring OPCLF's securities function to a halt.

- The fees charged by OPCLF in connection with the Proposed Affiliation may constitute unrelated business income under the Internal Revenue Code and, therefore, OPCLF may be

subject to federal income tax thereon. While we are happy to conduct additional research on the topic, we strongly suggest that OPCLF explore the issue further with its auditor, McKonly & Asbury, before determining whether to proceed with the Proposed Affiliation.

- Both OPCLF and URCNA will need to negotiate the Management Agreement while considering various administrative and operational items set forth in Section 5 of this Memorandum.

- OPCLF will need to consider various securities implications set forth in Section 6(a) of this Memorandum, including, amending its offering circular (which we would suggest be coordinated with OPCLF's annual securities filings) and revising its financial statements and/or audit report as deemed necessary by OPCLF's auditor, McKonly & Asbury.

- URCNA will need to consider various organizational, operational and securities laws implications as set forth in Section 6(b) of this Memorandum in connection with forming and organizing the URCNA CEF as a church extension fund, including engaging its own securities and audit advisors.

Background

1. *OPCLF's Stated Purpose Under its Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws*

   OPCLF's Certificate of Incorporation, as amended (the "**Certificate**"), provides the following stated purpose in ARTICLE III:

   > The Corporation is a nonprofit organization organized and operated exclusively for religious, educational or charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 … **and solely for the benefit of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and its member**

> **churches and boards,** and its purposes include, without limitation, **acting for the benefit of, and assisting in the financing of capital improvements for organized churches and other instrumentalities in such denomination and for churches supported by The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc.** and further, shall include, without limitation, **borrowing funds from financial institutions, individuals, churches, agencies, and other organizations created to support the purpose of such denomination;** and further shall include, without limitation, **issuing securities and other evidences of indebtedness in order to acquire funds in furtherance of the Corporation's purposes**; provided, however, that … the Corporation shall not have the power to carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provision of any future federal tax code, or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provision of any future federal tax code.

Certificate, Art. III (emphasis added). Additionally, the Certificate provides in ARTICLE VIII that:

> The affairs and business of the Corporation shall be managed and conducted by the Board of Directors, **subject to the review and approval of The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc.**

Certificate, Art. VIII (emphasis added). Relatedly, the Certificate provides in ARTICLE XI that:

> In furtherance and not in limitation of the powers conferred upon the Board of Directors by law, a majority of the whole Board of Directors shall have the power to make, adopt, alter,

> or repeal, from time to time, the Bylaws of the Corporation; **provided, however, that provisions of the Bylaws relating to the following may not be amended without the prior concurrence of The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc.:**
>
> (i) **the organization and management of the Corporation;**
> (ii) the election, number, tenure and classes of directors;
> (iii) ex officio board members;
> (iv) qualifications and removal of directors; and
> (v) **amendments to Bylaws.**

Certificate, Art. XI (emphasis added). Relatedly, Article II of OPCLF's Bylaws, last amended September 11, 2019 (the "**Bylaws**"), provide as follows:

> The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors subject to the review and approval of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc. (the "Committee"), to which it shall report at least annually.

Bylaws, Art. II. Article XII of OPCLF's Bylaws provide that:

> **These Bylaws may be altered, amended,** or repealed and new bylaws may be adopted **by a majority of the directors present at any regular meeting or at any special meeting,** provided notice of the proposed amendment or amendments has been given to the directors in writing at least fifteen days prior to such meeting. **Amendments to Article II; Article III, Section 1, 2, 3, and 4; and Article XII shall require the concurrence of the Committee, and such an amendment must have been proposed by majority vote of the Board at a previous meeting.**

Bylaws, Art. XII.

2. OPCLF's Tax Exempt Status

By letter originally dated October 21, 1968, as reconfirmed by letter dated January 12, 1999 (collectively, the (the "**501(c)(3) Letter**"), the IRS determined that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (f/k/a The Trustees of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) (the "**OPC**") and its "subordinates" are exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (the "**Code**").[1] The 501(c)(3) Letter specifically states that "**your organization and its subordinates are not required to file federal income tax returns unless subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code**" . . . and that OPC must annually submit, within 90 days before the end of the OPC fiscal year a "**statement describing any changes during the year in the purposes, character, or method of operation of your organization's subordinates.**"

It is our understanding that OPCLF was included as a "subordinate" of the OPC pursuant to an annual, separate letter application that OPC would have filed in connection with the formation of OPCLF, and, therefore, OPCLF would be exempt from federal tax as part of the group exemption applicable to OPC and its affiliated churches and organizations which qualify as subordinates under the 501(c)(3) Letter.[2]

1. We note that OPCLF is not listed on IRS Publication 78 (Cumulative List of Organizations), while OPC does appear as follows: "(237001990 | The Orthodox Presbyterian Church | Willow Grove | PA | United States | GROUP)."
2. While we have not seen a copy of the supplemented 501(c)(3) Letter which specifically enumerated OPCLF as a subordinate of OPC, we would note that the IRS has previously indicated that churches are not required to file annual updates notifying the IRS of changes in the composition of the group subordinates, meaning that a failure to file an annual update which expressly included OPCLF in the OPC's group tax exemption may not automatically mean that OPCLF is not included as exempt under the 501(c)(3) Letter. See IRS Publication 4573, available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4573.pdf. ("Are there any special rules for churches? With limited exceptions, churches are subject to the same general requirements on group rulings as other

3. OPCLF's Offering Circular

OPCLF annually offers and sells promissory notes to eligible investors (the "**Securities Offering**") under and pursuant to the OPCLF offering circular in effect from time to time (the "**OC**"), which OC is a requirement to comply with state and federal securities laws and regulations. In addition to its Certificate and Bylaws, the OC describes OPCLF's purpose and scope of activities in a few OC references. In particular, OPCLF's OC provides:

> [OPCLF] is affiliated with, and was organized **solely for the benefit of,** the [Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc.] and the members, churches and committees of the [OPC].
> . . .
> The **primary purpose of [OPCLF] is to act for the benefit of, and assist in**, **providing financing capital for** the construction, remodeling, refinancing, or purchase of church buildings and other projects for **OPC churches and other instrumentalities of the OPC.**

OC (April 28, 2025), p. 1.

Feasibility Observations

1. Whether the Proposed Affiliation requires OPCLF to amend its Certificate and Bylaws to expand its purpose to avoid application of "Ultra Vires" under corporate law principles

Generally, an act of a corporation is "ultra vires" when the corporation acts beyond the scope of the powers and purposes

organizations. However, churches are not required to file annual updates notifying the IRS of changes in the composition of the group.). Moreover, given OPCLF's connection and oversight within the OPC, we'd note that OPCLF may also qualify as an "integrated auxiliary" of the OPC, which would automatically establish OPCLF's tax exempt status. See IRS Publication 1828, available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1828.pdf.

provided to it by its charter document or the laws authorizing its formation. In essence, ultra vires is intended to prohibit a corporation from doing what it is not authorized to do. Historically, ultra vires acts performed by a corporation are generally void or voidable, though the concept of ultra vires is rarely examined given that a corporation can amend its charter documents to avoid acting outside the scope of its authority. Nonetheless, the consequences of having a corporation's contracts or agreements invalidated through the application of ultra vires warrants attention so as to avoid risk of ultra vires.

In current form, OPCLF's Certificate and Bylaws provide generally that OPCLF exists for the sole benefit of OPC, including organized OPC churches, other instrumentalities of OPC and for churches supported by the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc. (the "**Committee**"). Given that the scope of OPCLF's purpose is limited to the sole benefit of supporting the OPC and its related churches and instrumentalities, including those of the Committee, any act by OPCLF extending beyond such scope, including entering into a contractual arrangement with, and otherwise providing ongoing service and support to the URCNA through the Proposed Affiliation, would arguably risk being void or voidable based on the concept of ultra vires. Accordingly, prior to entering into the Proposed Affiliation OPCLF should strongly consider amending both its Certificate and Bylaws to expand the scope of OPCLF's purpose to include activities or services encompassing the Proposed Affiliation. Based on Article XI of OPCLF's Certificate and Articles XI and XII of OPCLF's Bylaws, any amendment to the provisions of OPCLF's Certificate which expands the scope of OPCLF's purpose would require the concurrence of the Committee and approval of a majority of the board of directors of OPCLF.

2. *Whether the Proposed Affiliation requires OPC to notify the IRS that OPCLF has changed its "purposes, character or method of operation"*

As noted above, the 501(c)(3) Letter under which OPCLF (and

other OPC subordinates) is tax exempt states that OPC must, within 90 days after the close of its annual accounting period, send certain information to the IRS. One such item is a "statement describing any changes during the year in the purposes, character or method of operation of [OPC]'s subordinates." The source of this statement is IRS Revenue Procedure 80-27,[3] which provides that in order to maintain a group tax exemption letter, the central organization (i.e., OPC) must submit annually to the IRS, among other things, "[i]nformation regarding all changes in the purposes, character, or method of operation of subordinates included in the group exemption letter." Rev. Proc. 80-27, 1980-1 C.B. 677 (1980).

This requirement is consistent with the general requirement that the subordinate entity be under the central organization's "general supervision or control" and the overall theme that there be conformity between the central organization and its subordinates. *See* Rev. Proc. 80-27, Sec. 4. Upon receipt of the annual submission, the applicable IRS district director may require additional information to determine whether the conditions for continued exemption are being met. Both the central organization and each of its subordinates are obligated to respond to such requests.

While we note that there is IRS commentary indicating that churches may not be required to file annual updates regarding the composition of subordinates in a group exemption letter, it is general best practices to make the requisite annual updates to ensure continued tax exemption of the subordinates within the group exemption. *See* IRS Publication 4573, available at

3. The IRS, via Notice 2020-36, proposed a revenue procedure that sets forth updated procedures under which recognition of exemption from federal income tax for organizations described in Section 501(c) of the Code may be obtained on a group basis for subordinate organizations affiliated with and under the general supervision or control of a central organization which obtains a group exemption. The proposed changes haven't been implemented yet, but the following provides a helpful summary: https://taxnews.ey.com/news/2020-1256-after-40-years-irs-updates-and-modifies-group-exemption-program-with-proposed- revenue-procedure).

https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs- pdf/p4573.pdf.

Accordingly, assuming that the OPCLF board of directors and the Committee authorize amending OPCLF's Certificate and Bylaws in connection with the Proposed Affiliation (as discussed in Feasibility Observation #1 above), OPCLF will need to consider coordinating with OPC the filing of an annual update to the 501(c)(3) Letter which notifies the IRS of the applicable change to OPCLF's purpose and operations. Alternatively, to the extent that OPCLF and/or the OPC do not desire to file such annual update, or if it is determined after further research or by the IRS after such filing that the proposed amendments to OPCLF's Certificate and Bylaws would cause OPCLF to fall outside of the 501(c)(3) Exemption Letter, OPCLF could consider separately establishing its own exempt status by the filing of a Form 1023 with the IRS, which would come at additional legal and operational cost.

We would note that the IRS states on its website that "[i]f an organization is unsure about whether a proposed change in its purposes or activities is consistent with its status as an exempt organization or as a public charity, it may want to request a private letter ruling." see https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-reporting-changes-to-irs.

3. *Whether the Proposed Affiliation Could Jeopardize OPCLF's Tax Exempt Status*

One important consideration in assessing the Proposed Affiliation includes whether the Proposed Affiliation would generally jeopardize OPCLF's tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. The starting point for this analysis is Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, which requires tax-exempt organizations to be:

> **organized and operated exclusively for religious**, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, or educational **purposes**, . . . no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any

> private shareholder or individual, no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation . . . , and which does not participate in, or intervene in . . . , any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) (emphasis added). Thus, to maintain its tax-exempt status, OPCLF must carefully observe the technical requirements of Section 501(c)(3) as follows:

(a) Have one or more exempt purposes;
(b) Be **organized** exclusively for exempt purposes;
(c) Be **operated** exclusively for exempt purposes;
(d) Ensure that no net earnings or assets inure to the benefit of any private person;
(e) Do not engage in the support of or opposition to candidates for public office; and
(f) Do not devote a substantial part of activities to attempting to influence legislation.

For purposes of this memorandum, we focus only on item (c), above, as the Proposed Affiliation is a proposed operational change for OPCLF.[4]

4. Based on the OPCLF's current structure and operations, items (d) through (f) above do not appear to be at issue and will therefore not be addressed. With respect to items (a) and (b) above, an organization satisfies these tests only if its governing document limits its purposes to the one or more exempt purposes within the scope of Section 501(c)(3) and does not "expressly empower the organization to engage, otherwise than as an insubstantial part of its activities, in activities which in themselves are not in furtherance of one or more exempt purposes." 26 C.F.R. § 1.501(c)(3)-1(b). OPCLF's Certificate makes clear that the purposes for which it was formed are "exclusively for religious, educational or charitable purposes . . . and solely for the benefit of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and its member churches and boards, and its purposes include, without limitation, acting for the benefit of, and assisting in the financing of capital improvements for organized churches and other instrumentalities in such denomination and for churches supported by The

The requirement that the organization be operated exclusively for exempt purposes is a bit deceptive. While the statute uses the word "exclusively," IRS regulations make clear that it is sufficient to be operated primarily for exempt purposes and that an "insubstantial part" of the organization's activities may be devoted to nonexempt purposes. 26 C.F.R. § 1.501(c)(3)-1(c)(1) ("An organization will be regarded as operated exclusively for one or more exempt purposes only if it engages primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of such exempt purposes specified in section 501(c)(3). An organization will not be so regarded if more than an insubstantial part of its activities is not in furtherance of an exempt purpose."). The taxpayer has the burden to demonstrate that it is entitled to tax-exempt status pursuant to section 501(c)(3). Church By Mail, Inc. v. Comm'r, 765 F.2d 1387, 1391 (9th Cir. 1985).

In order to establish that it meets the operational test, an organization must prove that it is operated for a public purpose rather than for the benefit of private interests, such as those of the creator or his family, shareholders, or designated individuals. Treas. Reg. § 1.501(c)(3)–1(d)(1)(ii). The presence of a single non-exempt purpose, if substantial in nature, will destroy the exemption. Better Business Bureau v. United States, 326 U.S. 279 (1945).

The purpose and objective to which the income of the organization is devoted is the ultimate test in determining whether it is operated exclusively for an exempt purpose. Church By Mail, Inc. v. Comm'r, 765 F.2d 1387, 1392 (9th Cir. 1985) ("In short, the purpose and objective to which the income of the Church is devoted is the ultimate test in determining whether it is operated exclusively for an exempt purpose.")

Here, we would assume that the Proposed Affiliation will result in management fees payable to OPCLF in exchange for OPCLF

Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Inc.".

providing day to day management services to URCNA. While OPCLF would be receiving new management fees under the Proposed Affiliation, doing so would appear to still support an exempt purpose (i.e., religious), because the URCNA and/or its future church extension fund subsidiary or affiliate is or would also be nonprofit religious organizations.[5] Additionally, if, as suggested above, OPCLF amends its Certificate and Bylaws to expand its purpose to encompass the Proposed Affiliation, then OPCLF would be directly supporting and fulfilling, on an exclusive basis, its organizational purpose.

4. *Whether Management Fees Received by OPCLF under the Proposed Affiliation would be subject to Unrelated Business Income Tax*

If a federal tax exempt organization carries on commercial type activities that generate income, and such activities are not related to its exempt purpose (aside from the organization's need for income), such income may be subject to federal income tax on such activities. The following factors must be considered in determining whether a tax exempt organization has unrelated business income ("**UBI**") which is subject to tax:

a. The income must be from **trade or business.** Generally speaking, a trade or business is any activity that is carried on for the production of income, whether selling goods or performing services.

b. The business must be **regularly carried on**. Generally, a business is considered regularly carried on if it is done on a recurring basis in the same manner as a commercial activity of a for-profit company.

c. The trade or business **is not substantially related** to the

5. For purposes of this analysis, we have assumed that any subsidiary or affiliate of URCNA formed as a church extension fund would be a nonprofit organization exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3).

exempt purpose of the organization. Said another way, the activity does not substantially contribute to accomplishing the purposes of the organization.

See 26 U.S.C. § 512, 513.

While the Proposed Affiliation would appear to satisfy items (a) and (b) above, given that OPCLF would be regularly carrying on the day-to-day operations of the URCNA church extension fund and would be compensated for such services, it would appear that the Proposed Affiliation would, in fact, be substantially related to the exempt purpose of OPCLF (i.e., religious) and furthermore, assuming OPCLF amends its Certificate and Bylaws to expand the scope of its purpose to include the Proposed Affiliation (as considered above), proceeding with the Proposed Affiliation would arguably be fulfilling one of the new exempt purposes of OPCLF (namely, supporting the URCNA). Accordingly, it would appear that OPCLF could avoid UBI.

That said, analysis on the applicability of UBI is outside of the scope of this Memorandum and we would suggest that OPCLF explore the issue further with its auditor, McKonly & Asbury, before determining whether to proceed with the Proposed Affiliation.

5. *Operational Structure of the Proposed Affiliation*

One of the more important considerations in determining whether to enter into the Proposed Affiliation includes OPCLF and the URCNA CEF entering into a management agreement (the "**Management Agreement**") through which OPCLF will manage the day-to-day operations of the URCNA CEF. From an operational perspective, the following items will need to be determined or considered in entering into the Management Agreement:

a. The term of the Management Agreement (i.e., how long the parties agree to be bound by the contract).
b. Finalizing a list of enumerated services to be provided by

OPCLF to the URCNA CEF.

c. Enumerating duties and responsibilities of OPCLF and URCNA CEF.
d. The scope of authority that OPCLF will have in carrying out the management services (i.e., what can OPCLF personnel do without URCNA approval or authorization and what would require URCNA approval or authorization?).
e. Determining what personnel and/or staff of OPCLF will oversee and carry out the services provided to URCNA.
f. Whether OPCLF staff/personnel in their current state have the capacity to take on the proposed management services or whether new OPCLF staff/personnel will need to be hired to do so.
g. The amount, calculation and payment recurrence of the management fee payable to OPCLF by URCNA.
h. Whether the URCNA CEF will be governed by a board of directors that includes only URCNA appointees or whether it will also include OPC or OPCLF appointees and determination of who those board members will be.
i. Determining what officer(s), if any, of URCNA (eg., president/executive director/manager) will oversee and carry out any obligations or responsibilities of URCNA under the Management Agreement.
j. How will the URCNA CEF be initially funded? Will the URCNA (or another organization) provide a loan or gift for initial source of funding for the church extension fund operations?
k. Limitation of liability of OPCLF and the terms of indemnification to OPCLF by URCNA for specified liabilities and/or losses.
l. Various securities-related considerations noted in Section 6 below.

6. *Securities Implications of the Proposed Affiliation*

a. <u>OPCLF</u>

In addition to revising its Certificate and Bylaws, as noted

above, OPCLF, as an ongoing issuer of nonprofit church extension fund securities would need to revise its offering circular to include, at a minimum, the following disclosure items related to the Proposed Affiliation: (i) any amendment to OPCLF's purpose, (ii) a narrative description of the Proposed Affiliation and the underlying Management Agreement, (iii) any disclosures, revisions or amendments deemed necessary to include in OPCLF's audit report as determined by OPCLF's auditor, McKonly & Asbury.

Additionally, one important item for OPCLF to consider is the nature and extent of any anticipated impact to OPCLF's operation as a church extension fund. That is, because OPCLF relies primarily on the ongoing sale and renewal of its debt securities to operate as a church extension fund, the OPCLF board of directors will need to consider whether there will be any denominational or investor backlash or objection to the Proposed Affiliation which could materially impact the ongoing operations of OPCLF.

Moreover, the issuance of securities is a highly regulated activity. In connection with carrying out its duties under the Management Agreement described in Section 5 above, we would recommend that Proposed Affiliation be structured so that OPCLF is not responsible for securities laws compliance or related liabilities with respect to any URCNA CEF securities offering. While we expect that OPCLF would generally be responsible for administrative and day-to-day operations of the URCNA CEF, OPCLF should ensure that its services under the Management Agreement does not open up to liabilities related to URCNA CEF's issuance of securities or any related compliance. Ultimately, we would suggest that the management of URCNA (i.e., board of directors and any URCNA CEF officers and sales agents) should be responsible for such liabilities and securities law compliance.

b. URCNA

In connection with forming and organizing the URCNA CEF, we assume that URCNA CEF will be operated as a church extension fund (similar to OPCLF) which offers nonprofit debt

securities to proposed investors, the proceeds of which would primarily finance or refinance the purchase, construction or improvement of URCNA church property and/or buildings or related capital expenditures or the operational needs of various affiliated churches and related religious organizations. In establishing the URCNA CEF, the URCNA will need to consider the following, among other things:

1. Engaging separate legal counsel for the following formation and organizational items:
    a. Determining appropriate jurisdiction for organization of the URCNA CEF;
    b. Filing of articles/certificate of incorporation;
    c. Determining the appropriate scope of URCNA CEF's charitable purposes;
    d. Drafting and adopting bylaws;
    e. Obtaining an EIN;
    f. Establishing 501(c)(3) tax exemption, including consideration as to whether the URCNA CEF will obtain its own tax exemption through the filing of a Form 1023 application or whether the URCNA CEF could be exempt under a URCNA group exemption (to the extent such group exemption exists);
    g. Review, draft and oversee initial funding to the URCNA CEF to functionally operate as a church extension fund within applicable regulator parameters; and
    h. Review and oversight of the Management Agreement with URNCA

2. Engaging securities counsel to assist with the following:
    a. Determining the appropriate debt instrument to offer to investors in connection with a URCNA CEF securities offering;
    b. Determining the geographic scope, dollar amount, eligible investors of URCNA CEF's offering;
    c. Registration and/or exemption from state and federal securities laws with respect to the issuance URCNA CEF securities, including, as applicable, registration and/or

exemption with respect to securities offerings, salespersons and agents, and issuer- dealers and broker-dealers;

d. Determining who at URCNA CEF will responsible to sell the URCNA CEF securities;
e. Drafting a disclosure document and all related ancillary offering documents needed to comply with applicable securities laws and regulations;[6]
f. Review of investment policies and procedures to comply with applicable securities laws;

3. Engaging a CPA/audit firm to advise on any future audits that may be required in connection with URCNA CEF's securities offering and ensuring URCNA CEF complies with various financial covenants and ratios required of nonprofit church extension funds; and

4. Consideration as to whether there will be any URCNA denominational or investor backlash or objection to the Proposed Affiliation which could materially impact the future operations of URCNA CEF.

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6. Notably, most church extension funds are obligated to or otherwise voluntarily comply with the Statement of Policy Regarding Church Extension Fund Securities of the North American Securities Administrators Association first adopted in 1994 and last amended in 2004 the ("NASAA SOP").

EXHIBIT A SCENARIO EXHIBIT

Orthodox Presbyterian Church Loan Fund, Inc.

Potential Scenarios for a URCNA/OPC Partnership

(prepared by OPCLF for the October 1, 2024, introductory meeting)

NOTE that this has been reformatted for the printed edition of the Acts of Synod Calgary 2024.

OPCLF – Current Setup

- Lending in all 50 states (and Puerto Rico).
- *Lending is limited to OP borrowers.*
- Investments available in 31 states (see list at opclf.org).
- Investments offered to a limited class of investors, mainly consisting of OP individuals, churches, and presbyteries.
- Limited class language would allow for URCNA investors, in many states, to invest with OPCLF if they so desired.

1. OPCLF as Resource to URCNA

- OPCLF's Manager and Board act as resources to the URCNA as it considers whether to start its own Fund.
- E.g., Offering Circular/Prospectus, state regulatory considerations, lending and investment P&P, etc.

2. New Investment Options within OPCLF

- No new corporation.
- OPCLF adjusts its corporate structure to allow for URCNA lending.
- Separate funds for investors to elect:
  1. OPC lending
  2. OPC/URCNA lending
  3. URCNA lending
- OPCLF management and oversight remains largely the same, with consideration given to how funds #2 and #3 receive URCNA oversight. (*Note: OPC corporation, so legal*

analysis needed here.)

- Administrative fee to OPCLF.

3. New Fund – OPCLF Manages

- No change to OPCLF corporate documents/setup.
- New URCNA corporation formed.
- URCNA outsources administration/management to OPCLF.
- URCNA oversight to determine policies and procedures regarding investments and loans to take on one of several forms.
    1. Outsource oversight to **OPCLF board**.
    2. Create **joint oversight board between URCNA/OPC** (e.g., 6-member board; 3 OP & 3 URC).
    3. **URCNA board**
- Administrative fee to OPCLF.

4. New Fund – URCNA Manages

- Same as option #1, with OPCLF's Manager and Board acting as ongoing resources to the URCNA from brainstorming through established fund.

Trinity Psalter Hymnal Joint Venture Board
Report to URCNA Synod Calgary
June 8-12, 2026

In August 2017, the U.S. Board of Directors of the United Reformed Churches in North America entered into a formal Joint Venture Agreement with the OPC's Committee on Christian Education (CCE) which has guided the process of producing and distributing the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* (*TPH*) in both printed and digital formats.

Current members of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Joint Venture Board (TPHJVB) are URCNA representatives Rev. Christopher Folkerts (president), Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen, and Mr. Gary Veldink; and OPC representatives Mr. Joel Pearce (vice-president), Rev. Dr. Alan Strange, and Mr. David Winslow (secretary). Mr. Sanjay Patel (OPC) serves the board as the Manager, overseeing the many administrative details associated with this project, for which he receives a modest honorarium.

1. Printing and Sales

The total sales for 2025 was $212,971 (the result of 7,346 Pew TPH, 279 Accompanist TPH, 93 leather TPH, and 150 digital TPH sales). Cumulative sales since 2018 have surpassed $2.75 million, of which $195,000 has come from digital and app sales.

The top four purchasing groups of TPH products in 2025 were:

Individuals	- $62,030
PCA churches	- $49,903
OPC churches	- $32,799
URC churches	- $20,612

The JVB approved returning $50,000 to each partner federation (OPC & URC) in 2025 and has now returned a total of $560,000 to each partner.

It is the JVB's goal to maintain reserve funds in the amount of $150,000 for future printings, royalties, maintaining the website, and other projects associated with the psalter hymnal. As of 12/31/2025, the JVB had cash assets of $179,218. In addition, there were substantial assets in printed copies (about 8,800) in storage, worth $61,160.00

Currently JVB has a standing offer of 35% off on the purchase of the first 50 pew editions, accompanist print editions, as well as the digital editions for new church plants in our two federations. The psalter hymnal must be purchased through GCP and must request the discount at the time of purchase. Please contact Mr. Sanjay Patel at jvbmanager@gmail.com with further questions.

The JVB continues to be thankful for the distribution services provided by Great Commission Publications (GCP) and the accounting service provided by the OPC staff at their Willow Grove, PA offices.

2. Digital

The TPH website, trinitypsalterhymnal.org is fully developed and serving us well. It includes a full searchable song collection and streaming capability of most non-copyrighted tunes. Feedback related to the TPH comes primarily through the website and is fielded by Mr. Patel. Inquiries include copyright questions and permissions, app feedback, and encouragements.

Three digital editions – the Locked PDF edition, Unlocked PDF edition, and Projection edition – are available for sale via GCP.

The Locked PDF edition is meant for personal use on a computer or tablet and is read-only.

Included in the purchase of the Unlocked PDF are reproduction permissions for all OPC/URCNA copyrighted songs. Third-party copyrights still require permissions from copyright administrators.

The Trinity Psalter Hymnal mobile apps for the Apple iOS and Android OS have proven to be a valuable resource for planning worship, learning new songs, and singing along in family devotions. They feature the full text and music of the songbook, as well as tune recordings and are searchable. In 2025, 1,130 Apple iOS apps were downloaded, while 419 Android apps were downloaded.

3. Guitar Chords

The TPH JVB has explored what avenues might prove feasible for making guitar chords available other than in the printed editions of the TPH. The board recently approved working with Dr. Scott Finch, Professor of Music at Covenant College (and former member of the URCNA Psalter Hymnal Committee) to produce an even mix of 50 psalms and hymn selections in digital lead sheet arrangements that include guitar chords for the TPH. The plan is to make this first set of arrangements available in the coming year on our website and to limit the selections to those copyrighted by the OPC/URCNA or in public domain.

4. Choral Recordings

Trinity Psalter Hymnal Album 1, featuring 20 Psalm recordings, has been streaming on various online platforms since September 2024. The total number of Spotify and Apple Music streams through December 2025 was 196,000. The JVB is not seeking a financial return on this investment, so these recordings are being distributed as inexpensively as possible.

Trinity Psalter Hymnal Album 2, featuring an additional 20 choral recordings, began production in early 2025 and is expected to be released in mid-2026.

5. Large Print and Braille

Digital, text only Large Print and Braille editions (Microsoft Word format, for digital Braille converter devices) are available for those with vision impairment. They are available free of charge (by request only) to churches that have purchased pew editions of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*. Those interested should contact Danny Olinger at danny.olinger@opc.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Christopher Folkerts (President)
Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen
Mr. Gary Veldink

Website Oversight Committee
Report to Synod Calgary 2026

The Website Oversight Committee (WOC) is a synodical standing committee overseeing and maintaining our federation's websites. Each classis appoints a representative to serve on this committee. The committee oversees the federation's Webmaster, Gary Fisher. The committee has experienced some changes in membership as appointed by the classes, particularly with the change in chairman from Bruce Vrieling to Josh Nijenhuis.

Over the past four years the committee has pursued Synod Niagara 2022 - Article 51 requirements for website improvements but has not fulfilled the "entirely redevelop" part. We have tackled the low-hanging fruit to meet current needs. The committee will be focusing on developing a new website to fulfill the long term needs of the federation over the next couple of years, specifically with updating the forms that are used on the "back end."

Current Website Status
The website has seen more usage over the past few years, and the committee hopes that it is fulfilling the needs of the churches. We have finished the list of possible short-term changes and fixes that were requested of us from the past Synods.

Logo
In approving a redesign of the website, Synod Niagara 2022 mandated (article 51) that "Branding (fonts, logos, images) must be consistent across all pages." According to that directive, a logo is now being used with the website. However, developing guidelines for branding seem to be beyond the competencies of the WOC. Additionally, the Webmaster has received inquiries about using the logo elsewhere, but granting such permission seems to be beyond the purview of the WOC. It would be good for synod to address these matters.

Mandate Suggestion

Synod Escondido 2024 (article 74) voted to require each committee, in its report to each synod, to begin its report with a verbatim copy of its current synodical mandate. If a committee does not have a mandate, that committee is to draft a mandate and recommend it to the next synod for approval. Since the WOC does not have a mandate, we propose the following mandate for approval:

> The WOC is responsible for the production and maintenance of the URCNA websites (except for the missions website). This includes the messaging, design, and function of all aspects of the websites. This also includes the oversight of the work of the federation's Webmaster.

Future Website Upgrades/Planning

- Produce a whole new website/platform using open source tools/libraries.
- Modern mobile support.
- Modern support for media; Video, pictures, audio, and document management.
- Embedded Forms and Prayers.
- Modern Authentication/Permissions to support multiple users per Church.

Budget

- No significant changes in our hosting fees.
- Development fees will remain roughly the same with the majority of development being done by committee members and other volunteers.
- Increase in Webmaster's labor; the amount of work that the Webmaster does to keep things running in a timely manner and support/help desk warrants an increase along with inflationary numbers. Comparable rates in the industry are much higher. Also we will be requiring a higher level of feedback and interaction during new development for his years of knowledge and experience.

Webmaster Report

See Appendix A at the end of this report.

Recommendations from the Website Oversight Committee to Synod 2026

- Recommendation #1:
  - That Synod approve the mandate of the committee as proposed.

- Recommendation #2:
  - That Synod thank Bruce Vrieling for his many years of faithful service as the chairman of the WOC.

- Recommendation #3:
  - That Synod thank Gary Fisher for his faithful service in the position of Webmaster for the federation and re-appoint him until the next Synod.

- Recommendation #4:
  - That Synod increase the annual honorarium paid to Gary Fisher by $1,500 USD; from $6,000 USD to $7,500 USD starting in 2027.

- Recommendation #5:
  - That Synod approve the annual hosting costs of $3,100 USD and the annual development costs of $2,500 USD.

- Recommendation #6:
  - That Synod approve the logo for use on the website.

United Reformed Churches
IN NORTH AMERICA

- Recommendation #7:
    - That Synod note that developing branding guidelines are beyond the WOC, yet it would be good for branding guidelines to be developed.

- Recommendation #8:
    - That Synod note that approving a logo for the federation is beyond the purview of the WOC, yet it would be good to have a logo for the federation.

Respectfully submitted,

[Website Oversight Committee]

Mr. Josh Nijenhuis (Classis Michigan) - Chairman
Rev. Talman Wagenmaker (Classis Michigan [Alternate]) - Secretary
Mr. Gary Fisher (URCNA Webmaster)
Mr. Micah Van Maanen (Classis Central US)
Mr. Andre Alves (Classis Eastern US)
Mr. Bruce Vrieling (Classis Ontario-East)
Mr. Tim Feijer (Classis Southwest Ontario)
Rev. Chuck Tedrick (Classis Southwest US)
Rev. John Kistler (Classis Pacific Northwest)
Mr. Jonathan Hall (Classis Western Canada)

APPENDIX A: **Webmaster's Report to Synod Calgary 2026**

Esteemed Fathers and Brothers;

In accordance with the relevant section of the current "Regulations for Synodical Procedure" and bearing in mind the requirements and duties enumerated over the years since this task was first described, I humbly offer this Report, "including website analytics and other technical statistics showing the usefulness of the website." [Regulations 4.7.4.n]

To facilitate your evaluation of the work, I have organized this Report in roughly the order used within the Regulations to define the tasks with which you have entrusted me.

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable direction and assistance given to me by the Website Oversight Committee [WOC], which has always been and continues to be responsive to my requests for guidance, and diligent in relaying website-related questions which arise in their classes. Current WOC Chairman Josh Nijenhuis' and former chair Bruce Vrieling's leadership and the wise counsel of the Classis Representatives have benefitted the website, and the URCNA, many times; this is by no means a "one-man job."

I must also express my gratitude for the URCNA Statistician, and for Mrs. Jody Luth's excellent grasp of that position. The Statistician and I are in regular communication as she utilizes the website, we work together on some of the unique requirements of our Federation Directory, and Mrs. Luth continues to suggest enhancements we have subsequently implemented.

A great deal of work was accomplished over the past two years in redesigning the URCNA.org website. This involved multiple meetings with website developers and development companies to accommodate the varied requirements of good aesthetic design, ease of use, and technical capabilities. After many hours of meetings, testing, and a few false starts, the WOC approved the current design, which has now been online and in use for a number of months. Some adjustments have been made in response to suggestions or requests from the

churches, but the redesigned site has drawn positive comments from both within and outside the Federation and appears to have contributed to the significant increase in visitors received from North America and elsewhere, as noted later in this report.

My General Responsibilities, as described in the Regulations, begin with day-to-day operation of the Federation website, and to this usually routine task I devote at least the first and last hour of my day, checking first each morning for help requests (lost passwords, etc.), new documents, event listings and Ministerial News items in need of approval, emails from both within and outside the URCNA, reports from the hosting company, and a general check of site functions, keeping a list of issues which will require further processing or follow-up. I attend to these at the time, throughout the day, or during my evening "rounds," and confront any remaining or continuing tasks on Saturday. I also carry a laptop with me when traveling so that I can perform my duties year-round.

The bulk of requests for my assistance come by email, but my cell number is posted on the site; I typically receive several relevant calls a month. It is my practice, whenever possible, to address phone requests immediately, while the person in need of assistance is still engaged in the task which prompted the call. However, because such calls may come when the caller is away from the office and unable to complete the task at hand, email requests are still best for most contacts; nevertheless, when it is requested or the best course of action, I will phone the requestor.

I remain available to the Clerk of each Classis and the Chairman or Clerk of each standing committee to confirm their information and provide assistance. Each classis and standing committee, and other committees or groups upon request, has administrative and editing access to multiple custom areas of the website, including webpages (e.g. URCNA.org/EasternUS for Classis Eastern US, URCNA.org/WesternCanada for Classis Western Canada, etc.), private forums, the Federation Calendar, and more. Some of these resources are underutilized but are readily available, and I can of course be called upon to help. Even brief reports from each classis

help sister churches and fellow members know how to pray and for what; to “Rejoice with those who rejoice, [and] weep with those who weep;” and to see the United Reformed Churches as truly united, not just related. I hope to see these better used in the future, and they are included in the planning for proposed website improvements as well.

I humbly confess that my communications to the Classes by way of our Classis Representatives, who also comprise the Website Oversight Committee, have sometimes fallen short, as I occasionally learned of the agenda cutoff for a given classis meeting only days in advance. At the request of the WOC, Classis Reports will now be submitted twice a year, in July and December, to precede the agenda cutoffs for Spring and Autumn Classis meetings.

Finally, I have worked particularly closely over the past months with the Synodical Organizing Committee in preparing for Synod Calgary 2026, and I am happy to report that the significant work done since the decision was made to host our own Synod website has borne fruit in that the website preparations for Synod Calgary 2026 has required less work (as of this writing) than in the past. Although many details change from Synod to Synod, the basic structure is strong.

To the extent such documentation could be obtained, records from past Synods, particularly planning and working documents, have been collected and securely stored on the Federation website for use by future Synodical Organizing and Interim Committees, at their discretion, for the organization and planning of future meetings of Synod, and for historical purposes, so that the collective wisdom of previous Synod planners can benefit those who follow.

I have prepared and attached three pages below offering statistics, analytics and observations I believe will be helpful in evaluating both the website and my efforts.

Serving the church in this position, while occasionally taxing, remains a joy and a blessing, and I thank the Synod, our churches, and above all our God for granting me the opportunity to utilize the gifts granted

to me in this way. It is my fervent hope that I will be found a profitable servant.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Fisher
URCNA Webmaster

Website Utilization

Website utilization continues to grow, not only from within but outside the Federation as well. A map of countries from which URCNA.org receives visitors includes every habitable continent. After only Canada and the United States, the largest number of website visitors come to us from China, Singapore, and the U.K., with all visitor numbers significantly higher than in the past. In the map below, darker shades of blue indicate higher numbers; besides North America, Europe and Asia, we now see significant interest from much of Africa and most of South America.

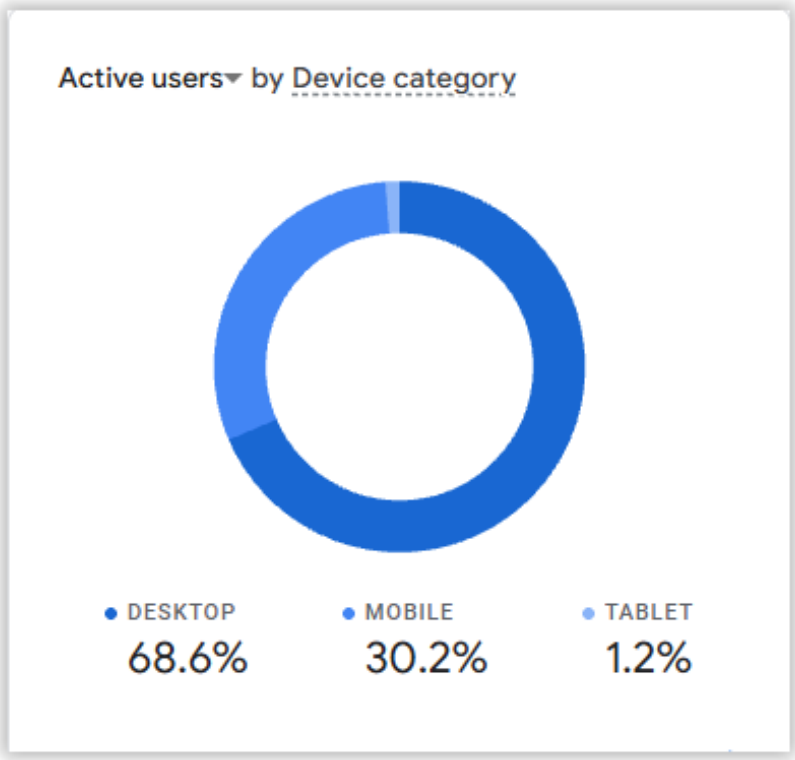


Our most-visited pages are the Church Locator and Ministerial News features, followed by our doctrinal sections ("What We Believe," "Three Forms of Unity," "Creeds and Confessions") and the public calendar and "About Us & Our History." We receive a significant number of visitors through links on the NAPARC website and through the "Find a Church" section on Rosaria Butterfield's web pages. Bethel URC Calgary is the most prolific source of referrals within the URCNA; these three sources are surpassed only by public search engines.

How Users Reach URCNA.org

In the early years of the Federation website, both computer and communications technology in widespread use were quite limited in comparison to now. Computers could display only limited colors, display resolution was often barely capable of presenting readable text, and pages took much longer to load, especially if high-quality photos or graphics were being used, largely due to slow internet connections. For most of us, those restrictions have passed into history, and highly interactive websites with engaging graphics, animation, and advanced control technology are common and popular.

Nevertheless, both among our membership and especially in light of our potential impact around the world, as seen above, we work to maintain a careful balance between aesthetics and usability, keeping the website attractive as a visible aspect of the URCNA, yet still accessible to users who might be using older devices and slower – perhaps even dial-up – internet connections.
Here is how people at home and abroad view and use the URCNA website.

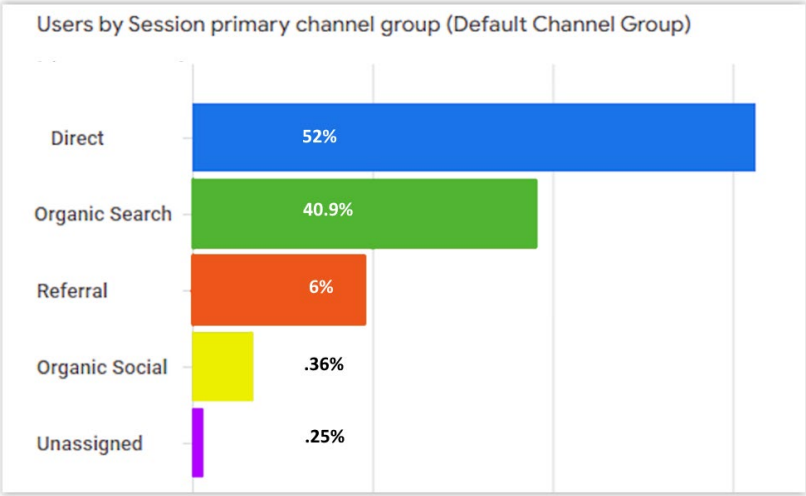


Over the past year the majority of our users have employed desktop/laptop computers to interact with URCNA.org; this is an increase from past years and may indicate more serious use of the site in contrast to casual users employing cell phones ("Mobile"). I continue to work closely with our hosting provider to optimize the presentation of URCNA.org on mobile devices, since these still comprise almost a third of our audience. Tablet usage continues to fall.

How Visitors Find URCNA.org

Unlike buildings, books and brochures, a website, no matter how attractive or useful, cannot gain the interest of passers-by. With over a billion[1] websites currently vying for attention on the internet, website

usage depends entirely on referrals of one sort or another. It is essential to get and keep a website's URL ("address") before any intended audience, or they will simply not know about it.



The chart above shows that half of our users simply type "URCNA.org" to reach us; these are people who either already know of us, or who have obtained our "address" from a bulletin, a business card, or other source. Many of our visitors find us through Google, Bing, and other search engines. One key to this is a concept called SEO, Search Engine Optimization, which is a method of informing search engines of important keywords and categories, and of ensuring that content for which users might search is presented and organized in ways "friendly" to the search sites. Virtually every public page on URCNA.org has SEO facilities, and when a page is added, edited, or examined in my periodic checks of the site, I also check and, if necessary, update SEO.

The remaining categories are those who follow a link, either from another website, such as those of URCNA churches, or from social media, including Facebook, YouTube, etc. Most of our churches display a link on their own websites leading to URCNA.org, though a few still do not.

Addresses from Fraternal Delegates and Observers

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the privilege of addressing this court and for the warmth of hospitality that you have shown me. On Behalf of the ARP Inter-Church Relations Committee, I'd like to commend you before your peers for humbly and skillfully moderating the proceeding so NAPARC last Fall. You have been a blessing to us.

Fathers and brothers of the United Reformed Churches in North America, on behalf of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod, which too is meeting this very day in the mountains of North Carolina, we greet you in the name of Him who is not ashamed to call us His brethren, we greet you in Jesus name!

I am uniquely acquainted with both of our traditions. I was baptized in a Christian Reformed Church in January of 1977 and my father was ordained to the office of elder the following year. I literally grew up, peering through the glass into an imposing consistory room, watching what dad was doing. There was that long, varnished meeting table where the august men seemed to me, to be so serious in their long conversations and tobacco smoke, but I also got the sense the the seriousness of their task, because of their reverence and their long seasons of prayer.

Once, when I was about five years old, so say, 1982, I was acting up in worship, my father picked me up, took me straight to the consistory room, which smelled of old books and tobacco, he exposed my bottom and swiftly spanked me, and then, gently explained to me the seriousness of gathering in public worship before the LORD in Zion. I had a crash course in the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the church, in my first formal visit to that consistory room.

Fast forward to 2022 and by a crooked path, I found myself called to uphold the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the church, in a presbyterial court of the ARP. Doctrine, worship and discipline, under the oversight of august men, reverently, prayerfully … some of us, the true dominies I suppose, still enjoying our tobacco!

With that personal background, I'd like to frame the history portion of this address from the perspective of the parallel and similar identities of the tradition I was born into, and the one our LORD has led me into today. Though I may look like a Frisian, I am a Scots-Irish by adoption!

In the most general sense, we share the biblical principles of the doctrine taught in faithful adherence to the Reformed confession, the purity of worship led by the Spirit of Christ, through word, sacrament, prayer, and sung Psalmody, and the discipline exercised by august men in the three tiers of the courts of Christ's Apostolical church.

Historically though, there is even more similarity. Two bodies of pious confessionalists, who each had to secede from the fraternal twins of anti-nominanism and neo-nomianism in state churches which had become corrupted. The ARP are the august men of the Marrow controversy in Scotland, and the URC the continuance of the august men of the Aufcheiding and Doleantie in the Netherlands.

Within a generation, those reverend Reformed believers from both traditions found themselves in a new world, in America, both, earnestly committed to preserving the doctrine, worship, and government of the Reformation in their former lands, and both quite successful at that maintenance, well into the twentieth century.

Who could have foreseen the rapidity with which the culture in North America would erode the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Reformed church in the twentieth-century? As

it turns out, one of my heroes did, a professor at the theological school in Grand Rapids which would become Calvin Theological Seminary, the dogmatical Chair, Rev. Foppe ten Hoor who knew that though there would certainly be cultural assimilations among the serious Reformed people in the new world, the real risk was that they were vulnerable to having their theology and practice, "Americanized." He made that statement in a speech at the theological school in 1901, and in the ensuing decades, both the heirs of the Aufscheiding, and the heirs of the Marrow men, began to buffeted by the fierce winds of 20th century culture. Radio gave way to motion pictures, and then to television, the Synod of the CRC attempted to withstand Americanization with statements on worldly amusements over the course of twenty years. The ARPs were experiencing similar struggles. By the 1960s, women's liberation and the sexual revolution was just getting underway, the churches in both traditions were not unaffected. Contemporary worship entered, almost suddenly in the late 80s. The colleges and seminaries, were even undermining the doctrine of Scripture in a number of ways in favor of neo-orthodoxy, or scientific, and sociological schemas. The pulpits were weakened. There were significant fights.

Fast forward to today. Purely because of the covenant love and loyalty of the LORD, these two serious Reformed churches are still standing. The LORD did it in different ways, for the sons of the Marrow men He did it by purging neo-othodoxy from the college and seminary, by withstanding feminist usurpation of the teaching and ruling offices, and, even the 1972 compromise to allow women deacons is dying out among us. For the heirs of deCock, van Raalte, and ten Hoor, the LORD saw fit for a continuing church to emerge in 1996 and to guard the Reformed faith and practice since.

We have much in common in our commitments to doctrine, worship, and government, even in our origins and our providential preservations. In the ARP we are still seeing intrusions of Federal Vision residue and paedocommunion,

particularly in Louisiana where ARP churches were founded amidst the implosion of the former Louisiana Presbytery of the PCA. We still occasionally have people sympathetic to paedocommunion approach our churches, so when a minister or elder asks me for resources, the first thing I forward to them is the URCNA study report on the Federal Vision.

We are both facing this strange and dark online phenomenon afflicting young men today online. So-called, "Christian race realism," Anti-semitism, white nationalism, kinism, even Naziism.

This week at the ARP Synod we have presented a substantial document on these issues, documenting the main figures, the terms, the forums, and most of all, the gross violations of the moral law of God Most High, His Word, the doctrine we confess in our respective confessional systems. The two page summary passed and the bulk of the document was referred back to committee to assemble an even better glossary of terms, and to more thoroughly exegete the notions of "race, tribe, and nation" in the scriptures which these heretics and schismatics distort.

We are extremely grateful for you, we pray for you, we rely on you, and offer ourselves to you, 'til we all attain to that perfect and beautiful unity when our Blessed hope appears.

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen

2. Canadian Reformed Churches

On behalf of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches I bring you greetings in Christ.

> Psalm 133
> 1 Behold, how good and pleasant it is
> when brothers dwell in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!
3 It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore.

When I think of our unity as CanRC and URCNA, I used to think first of John 17 and Eph 4 and the imperatives there. "Be one". "Be eager to maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". What's different about Ps 133: it has no imperative.

Psalm 133 is praise for the gift of unity which flows from the head, Christ, down to us, granted as a blessing at the Lord's command. ... I highlight this because all the attention to organizational federational unity between CanRC and URC (how to bring this about) could really overlook how this good and pleasant this gift of God is, right now. ... I noticed in your CERCU report, references to "the unity we enjoy in truth". We, as in brothers of the URCNA, dwelling in unity. You know it, many of you have pointed this out to the body that what we have is awesome. How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity. This federation is God's gift. As CanRC, we envy you in how your synod is a family get-together (with all the usual/necessary family squabbles). It's God's gift to be this close in fellowship among one another.

Let me reflect on our CanRC relationship with you. The Lord has been bringing us closer together as churches, it's becoming more evident ever since we've had a indefinite pause on formal unity talks (not because of our commitment and effort; not because of top down implementation of plans for organizational unity) but as a gift. We're being drawn together because it's God's gift flowing down from Christ.

Psalm 133 shows us Aaron in OT high priestly garments. With the anointing oil setting him apart in righteousness and holiness, consecrated by the Spirit's oil. It flows freely, down excessively if it reaches beard and collar surely it flows upon the ephod, two shoulder stones engraved with names of all the sons the priest is responsible for, and then flows to the breastplate to all the individual gemstones naming those close to the highpriest's heart. Picture our High Priest, Jesus Christ, his anointing, his righteousness and holiness flowing down to his body, the church. How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity of identity, pointing to Christ our Head, and in him in the Righteous Holy One, brothers dwell in unity. The Spirit's gift.

And then there's the dew of Hermon. Far off droplets. But to arid land in Israel, picture what the hint of moisture from far off, flowing by a downward breeze does for life itself on Zion. Water is the gift of life from above to be revived and fruitful.

Ps 133 has only one command to think of: (not "dwell in unity" but) the command of blessing, God saying, let there be blessing, let there be "life for evermore!"

I want to use this moment to rejoice in this gift, recognizing this gift in order to praise God. Why else, except by God's grace flowing upon us in Christ, do we look forward to being together. What we have is special. I love coming to Synod. We have CanRC delegates eager for this. We love worshiping God together. Just as you are brothers in one family, enjoying this, so we are your brothers. We love you. Yeah, as family we offend, we hurt, we assume things. But after a little tiff, we know we belong together. How good and pleasant it is.

As family, in Christ, we have shared things with you, we have been vulnerable with you. Last time, in Escondido, we asked you to pray for the CanRCs about our need to work together, to trust each other, love each other. And as brothers in the same close family you brought us before in God in prayer. And I

want to share with you how God has used your love and prayers to bless us abundantly. A year ago, we had our Synod Aldergrove, and I've heard it went well. The diversity within the CanRCs was present there. And so was the gift flowing from God of brothers dwelling in unity.

Synod Aldergrove, you would have seen in the CERCU report, gave us flexibility for different categories of ecumenical relations. Not only levels, but categories of EF that reflect less intense relationships are okay; not everything has to aim for full federative unity. Pulpits have more flexibility, also, more freedom locally to permit other Reformed pastors to preach.

Synod Aldergrove changed our Church Order about psalms and hymns. "Psalms shall be foundational." There is new freedom now, for CanRCs to go beyond our Book of Praise in worship. Let me say, this might be helpful in removing perceived barriers between us, but please remember us, your brothers, in prayer. In the CanRC, not all of us are excited with this newfound freedom.

I will share an anecdote, but please listen graciousl and charitably. As we reviewed our own synod decisions in our Council, a brother says, "If we don't all use the Book of Praise, agreeing on all the psalms and hymns together in worship, what do we even we have in common? What makes us a federation, if we don't all use the same Psalms and Hymns in worship?" Please, listen to my brother. He is family, at home. What is home, but where we can be ourselves, familiar as family? What unites us, if not the Book of Praise that's dear to many of us? I know the answer. It's supposed to be Christ. You'll say, three forms of unity. But we're being surprised by freedom. Concerns with what others might do with that freedom. We are surprised by a new responsibility, consistories and councils are having to do what you may be used to, governing local choices. Please pray for us, that God will command his blessing, unity, and life forevermore. Also think about us, what we are going though, in order to think about what makes you at home here among

yourselves. What makes for familiar turf? What unsettles you as URCNA, if you were to give up or invite in? Isn't it the anointing oil of our new identity in Christ what makes you brothers? Isn't it the life-giving dew of Hermon; the fruitful moisture of God's Word and Spirit that makes us brothers?

Brothers, we're family. What we struggle with is not just how we came to be separately as denominations, doing and saying hurtful things years ago, that makes moving closer together difficult. But we're family, and that means in OUR day too, we are still doing things carelessly, offending each other, accidently, or rudely, assuming familiarity. But afterward, we always come back together closer because it is God's gift this gift that brothers dwell together in unity. It is Christ alone who unites us in his anointing. How good and how pleasant this is.

Thank you.

3. Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales

Fathers and brethren,

Due to the distance, time and costs, we are not able to send a delegate to this year's Synod of the URCNA. Hence our greetings in the form of this letter.

Warmest greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, our risen Lord!

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England & Wales (EPCEW) is thankful for the fraternal relationship we have with the URCNA. Two years ago, I had the privilege to attend your synod, and we convey our heartfelt fraternal greetings by means of this letter. It was such a great encouragement to attend your Synod in Escondido. It was especially encouraging to hear and see how you have dealt with matters on the Synod, in a warm-

hearted manner, showing a great love for each other, recognising that you are all brothers in Christ.

The number of congregations in EPCEW currently stand at eighteen congregations. Despite our struggles in the last four years, which resulted in 4 congregations leaving the denomination, the LORD is faithful to us. Just over a year ago, a new congregation in Villingen-Schwenningen in Germany joined the denomination, and we were able to install three new elders this year in various churches. The congregation in Villingen- Schwenningen is in the South of Germany and close to the congregation in Zurich, which is a real sign of blessing from our Lord. The latest church plant is in Lublin Poland, starting services Lord Willing in September 2026.

Statistics for the beginning of 2026 show a total of 1031 baptised members, with 747 communicant members.

The Lord has blessed us as a denomination to be able to set men apart as church planters and ministers, we pray that more men would be found to plant more churches in England and Wales, and even in Europe.

We are blessed in licensing 4 men to preach, or transferring their credentials to ECPEW in the last 18 months (one again in June), and several mean coming under care to study for the ministry, despised being small. The Lord is at work in building his church, and we are witnessing this. Our men study at a number of different seminaries, such as UNION or LTS, but also at the Westminster Seminary UK, which will be based in Oxford from this summer.

In EPCEW there are three congregation without a pastor at the moment, and we appreciate your prayers that the Lord will give wisdom to the elders in those churches and provide for these congregation a new shepherd to lead and care for the flock.

Many other congregations have known the blessing of God and are increasing in numbers. We do covet your prayers for the congregations that are struggling, but foremost that the work of our hands will be fruitful, and that labourers will be found to work in God's vineyard. England and Wales are barren country, in fact more of Europe is, and there is a great need for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to be proclaimed. Please pray for this great need.

We continue to pray that God will bless and prosper the work of your hands, and that next year we may be able to send a delegate in person to your Synod. In the meantime, I look forward to having fellowship with some brothers from the URCNA at the upcoming ICRC in Seoul in October this year.

Brethren, we send you our warmest brotherly greetings in Christ.

On behalf of the Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales.

Yours in Christ,
Dr. Falco Drijfhout
Clerk, EPCEW

4. Evangelical Reformed Church in India

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we gather for the 2026 Synod, Evangelical Reformed Church (ERC) does so with hearts filled with gratitude to our faithful and sovereign God. Looking back over the past two years, we are reminded of the Lord's abundant mercy and blessing upon His Church.

Truly, we can testify with the Psalmist, "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Psalm 126:3

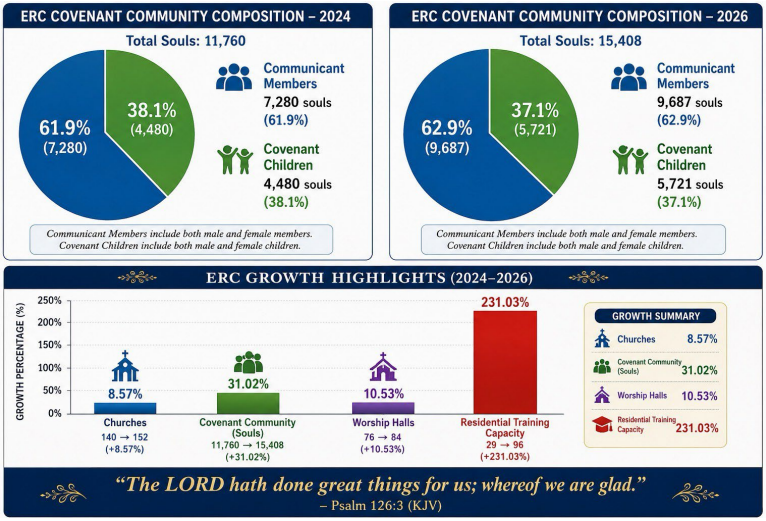
With grateful hearts for this invitation, ERC acknowledges the abundant blessings of our covenant-keeping God upon the ERC during the period 2024–2026. The Lord has continued to build His Church, strengthen His people, and expand the ministry entrusted to us.

By God's grace, the number of churches increased from 140 to 152, reflecting the continued advance of the gospel and the establishment of new congregations. Our covenant community grew from 11,760 to 15,408 souls, an increase of 3,648 souls, including 2,407 new communicant members and 1,241 additional covenant children.

The Lord has also enabled the Church to strengthen its ministry infrastructure. The number of church worship halls increased from 76 to 84, providing additional places for God's people to gather for worship, fellowship, and discipleship.

Furthermore, God's blessing upon theological education has been especially evident. In 2024, ERC operated one Reformed Theological Institute with a residential capacity of 29 students. In 2026, the Lord graciously provided a new campus and the University of Excellence, increasing residential training capacity to 96 students. This significant development strengthens the Church's commitment to preparing faithful ministers, missionaries, and Christian leaders for future generations.

As we reflect on these blessings, we confess that all glory belongs to God alone. The growth we celebrate is not the result of human effort but the gracious work of our sovereign Lord, who continues to gather, preserve, and increase His Church in accordance with His promises. Here is a chart; please take a look.



We assure you of our prayers and request that you pray for us. Please come to the ERC Synod in November 2027, which will be held at the University of Excellence in Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra, India.

Sincerely yours in the service of the Lord,
Rev. Anupkumar Arun Hiwale
Moderator ERC 2026-2028

5. Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia

Dear brothers and sisters at the United Reformed Church in North America,
We at Evangelical Reformed church of Latvia and the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary send greetings on the occasion of the important assembly of your church!

Thank you for the warm invitation to the synod which we received, but this time we were unable to attend. We will certainly make efforts to come at the next opportunity.

We want to convey how important the fellowship and partnership is to us, as even right now, Rev. Mark Vanderheart is teaching the Greek class for the new students at our seminary. We are thankful for recent teaching and preaching by him, and Dr. Daniel Ragusa as well as others who have helped to build this mission training center in the past.

We look forward to Dr. Cornel Venema's and Dr. Fritz Harm's classes this Fall and also want to express appreciation for how over the years we have benefited from their preaching at our churches.

May Lord bless the ministry of your denomination, and our continuing partnership in the Gospel,

Alvis Sauka, on behalf of Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia

6. Free Reformed Churches of Australia

Dear Brothers,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a privilege to be here. As you conduct your business, I'm grateful to see your love for the LORD and his Word and your warmth in dealing with one another. It's also been a joy to hear your devotions encouraging us to focus our attention on the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the invitation to extend greetings to you and for your hospitality. On a personal level, it's also a joy to be in your midst to catch up with some old friends I got to know during time I served in the CanRC in Northern BC and Southern Alberta.

Thank you for your kindness in reaching out to our churches back in 2014 and for continuing to send delegates to our synod. We warmly received br. Gerald Swets at our synod. At our last synod, we gratefully accepted your offer of Ecclesiastical Contact Phase 1 Relationship.

A bit about us. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia are relatively new to Australia. Our background started with post war Dutch Reformed immigrants. We are relatively small: five and a half thousand members spread across 19 churches, mostly in Western Australia and Tasmania. By God's grace we are growing by about one congregation every other year. Most of that growth happens by daughter churches splitting off from mother churches, although we do have one church plant on the East Coast. One of the challenges we face in planting churches further afield is that our members have been very diligent in establishing Reformed schools. As a result, it's difficult for parents to move to a new area if it means that their children can't attend one of our Reformed schools.

We are continental Reformed Churches. Together with you we subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity and an updated version of the Church Order of Dort. Our version of the church order is quite similar to yours, although it seems that you invest more authority in local consistories to make decisions whereas we do more things together as a federation of churches. Many of you are familiar with the Canadian Reformed Churches. In many ways we share a similar history with them and our DNA is quite similar to theirs. We have a strong relationship with them where we use a similar Book of Praise, we support and send our students to the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary and we have a fair number of members moving back and forth between us.

We are grateful to the LORD that he continues to raise up faithful men and for the gift of being able to preach and teach God's word in freedom in our country. By God's grace, this year we are sending 6 men to seminary. The LORD is very kind

to us even though we don't deserve it. At the same time, we face significant challenges. We need to continue to rely on the LORD to rescue us from our sins and give us love and unity for one another in our churches. Also Australian society is marked by a love of self and a love of pleasure. Since we live in a highly materialistic, secular culture, it is a challenge to keep our eyes fixed on the majesty of the LORD, his grace in Christ and the eternal glory in store for us. In the past years, different states have passed or are considering laws which make it illegal to counsel people against pursuing a homosexual or a transgender lifestyle. We are also facing laws that prohibit our schools from limiting our hiring practices to those who share our faith and ethos. Despite these challenges we trust that our Lord Jesus will continue to use his power and authority to gather his church in our nation. He is a great King.

But none of this is new to you. It seems your churches are being challenged in similar ways. We were grateful to read your helpful pastoral advice regarding human sexuality. With your permission, we recently published that in our church magazine for the benefit of our consistories and congregations. You address some of the hard topics in a faithful way that provides excellent guidance in a culture that has lost its way.

If you want to get to know us, then you should know that one other item that is dear to our hearts is pursuing and supporting mission work in our area. For many decades now together with the RCNZ and the CanRC we have been busy planting churches in Papua New Guinea. By God's grace, this work is being blessed and these churches are growing in numbers and spiritual maturity. We have also been busy in Indonesia for many years. We are also thankful to be allowed to support the mission work in another large country, the Philippines and East Timor. Please pray for us that God would allow the hope of the gospel to continue to spread in our area of the world.

We are also thankful to God for the relationships he gives us with other faithful churches. We currently have a sister church

relationship (which you could call Ecclesiastical Fellowship) with the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa, the First Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, the Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea, and the Reformed Churches of Indonesia. We are currently pursuing a relationship with the newly formed church in the Netherlands, the GK (Gereformeerde Kerken). God is very kind in giving us relationships with these churches, that we may also learn from them. At the same time, as a small federation of churches we are trying to find a way forward in pursuing relationships with other churches overseas that will be both meaningful and manageable. The result is that we are having discussions among ourselves about with whom we should pursue a relationship and how to manage that in a way that honours our Lord.

We are grateful for the contact we've had with you over the years. We are on the opposite side of the world, so it's limited. But in the past years, we have invited a number of your members to our churches. A few of our young people have gotten married to some of your folks. We're grateful for the willingness of a few of your ministers and other speakers who have come over to preach and teach in our churches. Some of you have assisted some of our students in their internships at the CRTS. We also appreciate your work in supporting the churches in the Philippines over the years.

I'd like to finish off reflecting with you on God's encouragement in Ephesians 1. The Lord first reminds us of the riches we have in Christ. We have been chosen in Christ. In Christ we have been adopted into the family of God. In Christ, we have redemption from sin. Christ has given us the promise of a glorious inheritance and he's also given his Spirit as a deposit assuring us that we will share in this inheritance. It is our prayer for you that God would continue to fill you with a Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you might know him better and that you may know the hope to which he has called

you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the Saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Thank you.

On behalf of the Inter-church Relations Committee of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

Rev. Dirk Poppe

7. Free Reformed Churches of North America

It is a privilege to bring you greetings on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of North America. While our denominations navigate the complexities of the 21st century in different vessels, we recognize that we sail by the same Compass and under the same Captain.

We thank God for the continued warm relations between our federations – a bond forged not just in shared history, but in a shared, unyielding commitment to the Three Forms of Unity and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Points of Shared Encouragement

Based on our recent synodical reflections and the specific areas of mutual concern, we wish to highlight the following:

- Confessional Fidelity in a Secular Age: We commend the URCNA for yoru steadfastness. In a culture that views "truth" as a fluid concept. your commitment to the objective truth of Scripture and our Reformed confessions remains a source of encouragement to us.
- The Work of Theological Education: We continue to value our cooperation in the training of the next generation of under-shepherds. Our shared interest in institutions like Puritan Reformed Theological

Seminary ensures that the pulpits of tomorrow will remain rooted in the "old paths" that lead to eternal life.

- Joint Efforts in Missions: We rejoice in the instances where our congregations and mission boards have found common ground. Whether in domestic church planting or foreign fields, the harvest is plentiful, and we are grateful to labor alongside brothers who preach the same Gospel of sovereign grace.
- The Path Toward Unity: We acknowledge the ongoing discussions regarding our ecclesiastical relationship. While the wheels of church order sometimes grind slowly, we pray that our dialogue remains characterized by the "meekness of wisdom," seeking a unity that is not merely organizational, but organic and Spirit-led.

Additional Noteworthy Points

1. We are thankful for the Lord's preserving mercy for our churches for another year. We continue to be concerned about a shortage of pastors. Currently we have a student entering his final year of studies and engaging in a year long internship, and with our Synod meeting this week, the acceptance of another student. We realize shortage of ministers is not unique to us (the URC struggles with the same, as do other Reformed denominations), and so we pray for the Lord to provide for His church.

2. Some of our churches located close to some of your churches enjoy good harmony and fellowship in Christian mission and works of mercy (e.g., Word & Deed, Migrant ministries). In some of our congregations there have been some pulpit exchanges. Our committees continue to meet at NAPARC, and we appreciate the opportunity for open conversation on how to work together and grow together.

3. As FRCNA we have been dismayed to see the breakdown of our mother/sister church, the CGK in the Netherlands. We have been trying to learn the lessons coming out of this sad and sobering history, and we are seeking to support and encourage the faithful consistory and congregations seeking to re-establish a CGK-continuing, as it is called. We ask for your prayers for them and for us in this matter.

4. Like you as URCNA, so we in the FRCNA are affected and challenged by the times in which we live, and seeking to be faithful churches, bright lights in the darkness all around us. We pray for you as churches to be strong in the Lord, even as we pray that for ourselves, taking comfort and encouragement from the words of Jesus in John 16:33, for example.

A Word of Brotherly Exhortation

As we look toward the future, we are reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians: "Stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel." The challenges of our day – be they internal pressures toward pragmatism or external pressures toward conformity – require a "holy stubbornness." We pray that the URCNA remains a "city on a hill," unashamed of the Doctrines of Grace and devoted to the simple, ordinary means of Grace.

In Closing

We wish you a fruitful and Christ-centered meeting. May your deliberations be marked by the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, and may you return to your respective charges refreshed for the work of the ministry.

In the service of our Sovereign King,
The Fraternal Delegates of the Free Reformed Churches of North America

8. Heritage Reformed Congregations

Dear URCNA brothers,

As Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) and HRC Church Correspondence Committee, we extend our sincere thanks for your kind invitation to send delegates to your upcoming synod meeting in Calgary on June 8-12, 2026. We are grateful for the spirit of fellowship and unity in Christ we experience with you and that your invitation reflects. Unfortunately, our HRC Synod is being held the same week in Jordan, Ontario, the Lord willing, and we will not be able to send representatives on the date you have scheduled. In the past we have genuinely appreciated meeting and fellowshipping with you on such occasions, and it is with disappointment that we inform you that we are not able to send a delegate to meet with you this year.

We are most pleased to inform you that we (HRC Church Correspondence Committee) are forwarding a point to our June 2026 Synod requesting approval to move from Level 2 to Level 3 Ecclesiastical Fellowship with you. We have deeply appreciated our meetings with your representatives at NAPARC and follow-up sessions to discuss matters such as experiential and discriminatory preaching, place of our children in God's covenant and how to view them, etc. We believe that these discussions have been mutually edifying and have helped us to better understand and grew in trust for each other.

Even though we cannot attend your Synod in person this year, we want to assure you of our continued prayers for your federation as you gather to deliberate the matters entrusted to you. These are days in which the church faces significant cultural pressure and increasing opposition to the truth of God's Word. Yet we take comfort in knowing that the Lord Himself preserves His church. As the psalmist reminds us, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Our confidence rests not in our own strength, but in the

unchanging faithfulness and almighty power of the One who has promised to build His church and instructed us, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mt. 28:20).

We encourage you to remain steadfast, holding fast to the Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God. The apostle Paul’s exhortation is as timely now as ever: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). May the Holy Spirit grant you wisdom, unity, and clarity as you seek to honour Christ in all your decisions.

Though we cannot be with you in person, we are united with you in the hope of the gospel and in the calling to be faithful witnesses of Christ in a challenging time. May the Lord bless your meeting richly and cause all your work to be done for the glory of His name, edification of His people, and advancement of His kingdom in this world.

With Christian love and respect,
On behalf of the Heritage Reformed Congregations,
The Church Correspondence Committee

9. Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Dear fathers and brothers of the United Reformed Churches of North America, it gives me great joy and I count it a very great honor to give fraternal greetings to you on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

This Synod has been a great blessing and I have thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship and observing the labors for the kingdom of God and the glory of Jesus Christ that you are engaged in.

Despite being a pastor and church planter in the OPC, I have a long connection with the Reformed Church. When I was a very young child my family and I were members of the Maranatha

Christian Reformed Church in Cambridge, Ontario. From 1978 to 1981 our pastor was Rev Harry Bout, the father of the URCNA Missions Coordinator Rev. Richard Bout. After Rev. Bout moved from the Cambridge church his replacement was not an orthodox man committed to the authority of Scripture and soon after my late father led our family out of the CRC. This occurred in the mid 1980s. We became founding members of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church, a small denomination which largely joined the URCNA in August of 2008. Some of the brothers here today were ministers in the OCRC.

The URCNA has been a particular blessing to me personally over the years. Despite never being a member of a URC congregation, I have worshiped in URC congregations and during my seminary years I was given wonderful opportunities to preach in at least 5 URC congregations in Ontario. I will always be thankful for the warm invitations I received, the counsel I was given, and the opportunities I was afforded to bring God's word while I was still learning.

The OPC and the URC have a long and blessed history of working together for the glory of Jesus Christ. The Trinity Psalter Hymnal, now in its 8th printing, is a wonderful example of this. Another such example, is in foreign missions were we co-labor together in Uganda and we hope that this expands to other mission fields as well. On a local level, pulpit exchanges, ministerials, pastoral training courses, conferences, and fellowship between congregations of our two denominations is a constant blessing where our congregations are in close proximity.

This year's OPC General Assembly was held from June 3 to June 9, 2026. The OPC is in its 90th year as a denomination.

The OPC has known growth this past year by the grace of our God. At the end of 2025 OPC membership stood at 33,941 showing an increase of about 400 members. Active home

missions works increased from 41 to 43 in 2025. During this time 9 mission works became established congregations and so this means that 11 new mission works began in the OPC this past year. We are thankful and praise the Lord for this.

At this year's assembly, Rev Benjamin Hop took up the role of General Secretary of the OPC Foreign Missions Committee after many years of faithful service by Rev. Doug Clawson who retired.

The OPC is currently undergoing a review of our Book of Church order which will be reported on in 2027. A committee is working at updating the confessional standards, including using a different version of Scripture than the King James Version, which is also due to be reported back to the General Assembly in 2027.

There are resources produced by the OPC that I would like to take the opportunity to make you aware of for your blessing, and particularly podcasts. The Ruling Elder Podcast and the Reformed Deacon Podcast are designed to assist elders and deacons in growing in and fulfilling their offices. The Ruling Elder Podcast is in its 4th season and the Reformed Deacon Podcast is in its 5th season and are accessible on the opc.org website.

We have spoken about the blessings of shared labors and fellowship together as churches. But our two denominations also share the challenges that we face here in the North American context.

One such challenge that we share is the shortage of ministers. About a year ago Dr. Brian Lee wrote a very helpful article attracting attention to the vacant URC congregations, which I believe totalled 22 at the time. By God's grace, the list has shrunk and I believe that there are 16 pastoral openings in the URC.

Well, the list of vacant OP congregations is not small either, totaling 31 congregations. These statistics do not include the shortage of foreign missionaries in the OPC. In our 2026 General Assembly a day of prayer and fasting has been called for September 13, 2026 to plead with the Lord to raise up and equip men for the ministry at home and abroad. Dear brothers, we ask that you pray for us as we pray for you concerning the need for qualified gospel ministers and missionaries.

Finally, another issue facing the NAPARC churches is the dangerous error of Race Realism and Kinism. There is a growing number of young men who have taken up this grievous and divisive error. My own congregation has a young man who holds to these views. As a session, we adopted the same statement you are considering. Our action led to 1) a clear declaration of our position against racism in our congregation, and 2) it ensured that the several mixed ethnic families in our congregation know without doubt that they are loved, supported, and protected by their church leaders.

This past Monday, the OPC General Assembly adopted the statement that you will continue to deliberate today, as well as established two study committees examining Christian Nationalism and racism. The statement we adopted is the same statement adopted by the ARP, the PCA, and RPCNA denominations. Fathers and brothers in the URC, you have a very important voice in this matter. You are loved and respected by the OPC and the other NAPARC members and we are awaiting your response. I ask that you stand with us against this grievous and Satanic attack on the purity and unity of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our prayer as the OPC is for the Lord to continue to build up his church here in North America and throughout the world and that he would continue to enable us to have a strong relationship together as sisters congregations. Together we partner for the growth of his kingdom and the spread of the

gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless us as we serve him for his glory together.

Thank you.
John Nymann, All Saints OPC
Member of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations

10. Reformed Churches in Indonesia

Greetings in the name of our blessed Saviour.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your kind invitation to attend the upcoming Synod meetings scheduled for June 8–12, 2026, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. We confirm that your letter has been received with appreciation.

However, due to financial limitations and the current situation in the Middle East, we regret to inform you that we are unable to send a delegation to represent GGRI at this time.

Nevertheless, we remain united in spirit and will uphold the Synod in our prayers. We pray that the meetings may proceed smoothly and that all delegates will be richly endowed with wisdom by the Triune God.

May the Lord bless your preparations and the proceedings abundantly.

Yours sincerely,
Rev Andi.

11. Reformed Churches of New Zealand

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou kātoa. Nga mihi nui ki a kotou mo tenei wahi korero.

Greetings to everyone. Thank you all for the opportunity to speak at this Synod.

I bring you warm greetings from your sister churches and from your brothers and sisters in Christ in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

As our brother kindly mentioned, my name is David Stares, and I serve as the pastor of the Reformed Church of Masterton, who send you their greetings as well. Now, I understand that my remarks will come with some disappointment. No doubt when you invited a representative from the RCNZ to your synod, you were hoping for a born and bred, salt of the earth Kiwi, with an accent to match. Instead, you just got a Canadian.

I am delighted to be able to be here to address you all. A bit about me, I was born in what is now Trinity URC, baptised by Rev. Calvin Tuininga. I was trained and catechised by my father in ministry, Rev. Al Bezuyen. I served internships at Escondio URC under Rev. Steve Donovan and Chris Gordon, Zion URC in Sheffield under Rev. Cristo Heiberg, and Oceanside URC under Rev. Danny Hyde. The URC is my mother church, and for that reason it's my pleasure to represent the Reformed Churches of New Zealand here at this synod.

So, who are the Reformed Churches of New Zealand?

For those who may not be familiar with our churches: the Reformed Churches of New Zealand began in 1953 with just three congregations. We are founded on the Three Forms of Unity—the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort—and we later adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith as well.

Today, we are 22 instituted churches (soon to be 23), along with several church plants, totalling around 3,600 professing and baptized members.

I am here not just to bring greetings, but to communicate just how precious our relationship with you is.

Our relationship with you is long, we had our eye on a relationship with you in the late 90s. We were advised to wait because a merger between the URC and CanRC was imminent, so we did. Finally, our relationship began in earnest in 2004, when Rev. Jim Klazinga attended your synod, here, in Calgary. Over the years your synods have been attended by Revs. Peter Kloosterman and Daniel Wilson, and Leo deVos, and for our part we were blessed to receive Rev. Van't Hoff at our most recent Synod in Christchurch.

In addition to being precious, our relationship with the URCNA is richly beneficial for us.

Many of our pastors have grown up in your churches and have studied under the tutelage of professors you called, and seminaries you support, myself included. Over just the last few years we have been blessed by the ordination of men like Rev. Nathanael Rademaker, Rev. Peter Yoo, Rev. Jae Kim, and many others, men trained and mentored in your seminaries and churches.

At the moment we have a current student, Geoff Doyle studying at MARS and thanks to Redeemer URC in Indiana for hosting Geoff and the family during the semester, and now Christ Reformed Church in Nampa for hosting them over this summer.

While we do have a few vacancies, the trend in our churches is to not be dependent on importing ministers from North America, but to grow them from within, and by God's grace this is happening. Thank you for your help in training these men.

That said, if any ministers would like to take a sabbatical in New Zealand, of if any Emeritus ministers would like a serving

holiday, our vacant churches would be very grateful to support you for even a short-term pulpit supply. Please do reach out to me.

But the benefits of our relationship extend beyond the pulpit.

For a variety of reasons, it's not uncommon to find members of your churches among us, and vice versa. In these cases, we see one of the most tangible blessings of a sister-church relationship: that families and consistories can have confidence knowing that their loved ones are being shepherded in a faithful church one the other side of the globe. A comfort shared when our members come to you and yours come to us.

We wanted to express our gratitude for your labours as churches. It is our policy, as churches, to hold in high regard at the work and study done in our sister churches. We are blessed by statements and study committee reports from years past on important issues. Please know in all the work you do this week, that our churches, both corporately and individually, often benefit from and cite the work that you do.

Our churches have most recently benefited from the work done on the Trinity Psalter Hymnal. At our last Synod our churches adopted, in addition to our own unique Psalter Hymnal, your Trinity Psalter Hymnal as an approved songbook in our churches.

We sorrow with you over the necessity of Overtures 6&7. Without commenting on the particularities of the form or content of the overtures, we are grieved with you to hear how racism has reared its wicked head in some Reformed circles in the form of Kinism, race realism and other erroneous views. We heartily agree with seeking to stamp it out with Biblical clarity.

Please note also that such views spread not by word of mouth, but through podcasts, online communities and social media algorithms. These things don’t take 13 hours to fly from here to

our shores, but arrive at the speed of the internet. We expect that the work you do to decry these things will ripple in beneficial ways to your sister churches on the other side of the world.

As we look to the matters before you at Synod, both small and great, please know that we have been praying for this gathering.

Colossians 3 says, “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

Though you are not uniform in opinion, you are one, may you depart this Synod in unity, having one Father, one Lord, and one Spirit.

Our relationship with you is dear to us, our love for you is firm, and we are thankful to work hand in hand with you to fulfil his great commission for the world.

Rev. David Stares

12. Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA)

Dear brothers in Christ.

I would like to greet you with the words of the Apostle Paul to the churches in Galatia.

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”
(Galatians 1:3-5)

Paul emphasizes in his letters that believers are called to unity, which is grounded in truth and love (verse 15). We pray that our unity with you will also be continued on these principles.

Our history with the United Reformed Churches runs deep. We are grateful for the longstanding connection between our churches. Since the inception of the GKSA in 1859, there has been a close correspondence. I enjoy delving through our archives, and I found several letters between North American and South African brothers who came from the 1834 secession in the Netherlands. Also, there was an exchange of Synod Acts and Ecclesiastical magazines. As early as the 1880s, they discussed joint Bible distribution, At that time, the Reformed Churches from three continents, Europe, America and Africa, made a public declaration against Free Masonry. We appreciate the ecumenical efforts our churches engaged in together throughout the 20th century. For example, our Churches, with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, held the first ecumenical Synod in Grand Rapids in 1946.

The Reformed Churches in South Africa comprise approximately 70,000 members and 370 congregations. We face several challenges, including secularization, emigration, political uncertainty, declining membership, and internal divisions.

Despite these difficulties, we remain grateful for the Lord's blessings and are committed to serving Him with joy and gratitude. We have renewed our dedication to evangelism, church planting, and church growth, and we pray that the Lord will open doors and grant us the wisdom to fulfil His work as He desires.

One of our primary challenges lies in the training of pastors. For the past 120 years, the Potchefstroom Theological School has been dedicated to training ministers at the university located

in Potchefstroom, which is now known as Northwest University.

Northwest University announced in 2023 that it would terminate our agreement at the end of 2026. In response, Synod 2023 directed our board of trustees to transfer the training of ministers to the Reformed Theological Academy,a newly founded Theological Seminary, which opened its doors at the beginning of 2023. The RTA partnered with the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in the USA to provide students with an accredited Master's degree. At this moment we have multiple students enrolled for their first and second years of studies at the RTA.

Our 2026 synod also opened the door for students to study at Mukhanyo Theological College. Many pastors will retire over the next 10 years, and therefore, there is a great need for ministers in our church.

The need for pastors in our church community is significant. We have numerous congregations, particularly in rural areas, that currently have no minister. Many of these churches struggle to call pastors due to the economic challenges in their regions. This situation presents a great opportunity for missionary work. We encourage churches with initiatives in Africa to reach out and engage in dialogue with us. It is essential for us that the Scriptures are presented clearly, especially within the framework of Traditional African Religion.

During our last synod at the beginning of this year, our churches made a decision regarding congregations that have not aligned with our mutual decisions based on God's Word. This concerns our stance on women serving in the office of elders. Over the past few years, we have engaged in thorough discussions on this topic through multiple overtures, grievances, and appeals, and have consistently reaffirmed, by God's Word, that women cannot serve in these offices. Despite this, a couple

of churches have continued to confirm and install women in the office of elder. We have called upon these churches repeatedly to repent and adhere to Christ's teachings. While some, thankfully, have responded to this call, others have not. Consequently, the synod of 2026 has determined that churches that persist in disobedience to Christ will be given an additional year to rectify their situation. If no action is taken, the relevant classes, regional synod, or general synod will declare that these churches have detached themselves from the RCSA. In our study reports that led to this decision, we relied on your amended Church Order Article 29.

In this regard, we are thankful to our fraternal brothers who spoke on this issue at our synod and provided us with valuable guidance from God's Word. From the URC, we were glad to have Mark van der Poll among us. We are also thankful to our Lord for providing us, in the GKSA, with a young generation of Ministers who are true to Scripture and Reformed in their Hermeneutics and in their discussion of the controversial issues of our times.

During our synod in 2026, we expressed our gratitude for the ecumenical fellowship with your churches. We are thankful for sharing a common doctrine, service, and discipline. We as the Reformed Churches in South Africa aim to be a confessional church, holding on to the truth of the gospel and we pray that this will be the basis for our unity in Christ. We pray that Christ will lead you as his church in your synod and churches.

I would like to close our message with the passage from Jude verses 24,25 –

"Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."

On behalf of the Reformed Churches in South Africa.

Your brother in Christ,
Gerben Meijer (VDM)

13. Reformed Church in the United States

Esteemed fathers and brothers of the United Reformed Churches,

It is with joy that I bring to your assembly the greetings from your brethren of the Reformed Church in the United States. How precious it is to enjoy the sweet fellowship of believers, members of one church, redeemed through the blood of our precious Savior Jesus Christ.

As the Holy Spirit through His servant David so beautifully speaks in the 133rd Psalm:

> *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing -- Life forevermore*.

I was encouraged as I perused the many pages of your docket It is evident that you are committed to conducting the ministry of the church in an honest, respectful, honorable and workmanlike manner. You stand as a beautiful example of the faithful work of the church. Thank you.

The RCUS is, as our name suggests, a denomination within a single border, and you have congregations across North America; and yet we really only have a few points of direct overlap. I am encouraged that in those points of "rubbing

shoulders", we are able to do so as friends and co-laborers, and not as competitors. As only one small example, I am encouraged that the URC congregations in NW Iowa and Sioux Falls, are quick to invite RCUS pastors to fill the pulpit, and occasional joint worship services. This is a beautiful example of the unity of the church, and I pray that this unity can flourish wherever our congregations have opportunity to encourage one another.

Next week, the RCUS congregation in Menno, SD will be hosting a TASC event, at which there will be a mingling of URC and RCUS young people and sponsors. We believe that examples such as this will continue to grow our churches in our mutual calling to serve the body of Christ.

2025 was a big year for the RCUS, as we celebrated 300 years of God's faithfulness. In celebration of this milestone, the RCUS held an accelerated synod, and added a family conference in Rapid City, SD, with special events at Mt. Rushmore.

This year was back to regular business with our synod being convened just a few weeks ago in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. This was an encouraging synod, as we conducted the regular business of the church. I was heartened to see a renewed emphasis on planting new churches and careful fostering of the growth of existing church plants. One evening we enjoyed a useful panel discussion on home missions. May God build His church!

One item of potential interest to you is the 2025 formation of a "Special Committee for Constitutional Review". Thus far, this committee has only made recommendations for updates to our "Standing Rules" and "Rules of Order". If and when any recommendations are brought forth concerning our actual constitution, we will be certain to bring any changes to the attention of our fraternal federations and denominations, such as the URCNA.

I commend this body for careful attention to detail and for the orderly manner in which business is conducted. You have a large docket for the business to which God has called you- the care and nurture of His church. It has been particularly informative to sit in on your Advisory Committee meetings; this is truly where the heavy lifting is conducted. I was encouraged to witness the sober-minded, and loving manner in which weighty issues were discussed in brotherly love. As such, we will keep you in prayer, and seek to be an encouragement to you as you faithfully conduct and conclude your business.

We are encouraged to see that you, as are so many of our NAPARC brethren, dealing directly with the offensive and ungodly sin of racism as it raises its ugly head under the guise of a twisted theology. We can learn much from our fraternal churches; and look forward to seeing any final disposition of the matter.

As many of you know, the RCUS holds fast to a strict understanding of the days of creation; as such, it is with interest that we watch the deliberation concerning the topic of animal death before the fall. We are thankful to witness the careful, thoughtful, prayerful manner in which you struggle with one of the implications of the fall.

As we have been keeping you in prayer, we do ask that you keep us in prayer. Pray for clear direction as we seek to move forward in a God glorifying manner. One item which we are wrestling with is to find a mechanism that fits our polity whereby we as a synod can make decisions which are binding upon the churches, and yet do not rise to a confessional status; as such I am paying close attention to your “Pastoral Advice” and Doctrinal Affirmation” categories. Also, as so many denominations/federations are experiencing a shortage of Ministers, please pray that the Lord would raise up well trained, faithful pastors for the churches.

Thank you for the wonderful hospitality which you have shown; you are very gracious to your guests, and we pray that we can likewise reflect our appreciation for you all as we enjoy the presence of your delegates at our upcoming synod meetings.

May God continue to bless this convening of Synod Calgary 2026, as you labor faithfully for our glorious Lord.

In Christ,
Travis Grassmid,
For the Reformed Church in the United States.

14. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and North America

Dear Brothers and Fathers of the United Reformed Churches in North America!

I bring you warm fraternal greetings from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE). Ours is a young denomination, founded in 1998. We subscribe to the Westminster Standards, the Heidelberg Catechism and Second Helvetic Confession, which allows us to draw on both the Continental and the English-speaking Reformed tradition. We have fifteen ministers pastoring sixteen churches in Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine.

The **differences** between our churches are easy to spot. You are in North America, we in Europe. You speak English whereas we're working mostly among ethnic Hungarians. Your church has more than 150 congregations and 200 pastors whereas we have 16 congregations and 15 pastors. Yet, besides the obvious differences, we have some deep similarities.

We share a similar **historical** background. You separated from the CRC, whereas we separated from the mainline Hungarian Reformed Church due to the same doctrinal disagreements

regarding the inerrancy of Scriptures, the ordination of women and nominal membership. You did this in 1996, we two years later in 1998.

After 30 years, we give thanks to the same God. Your churches have grown in number and size. In our case, we did not have churches, but in 1998 we started 12 church plants from scratch. We faced opposition, the indifference of the secular, postmodern society. We faced the economic hardships and poverty in our countries. But our Lord was good and provided for us. After 30 years we have 15 ministers working in full time. Some of our churches are struggling, but we also have self-supporting, self-governing congregations. We were able to launch a small publishing house and translate some of the best Reformed titles into the Hungarian language. We even have a small seminary to train the next generation of pastors.

Interestingly, the Lord intertwined **our past few years**, as well. We have had numerous visits from the pastors of your church. Pastor Bill Boekestein taught at our Pastors' Conference, just like Rev. Dick Moes, and Rev. John van Eyk. When the war in Ukraine started you helped us. Rev. Richard bought came and visited our churches and brought words of encouragement in a needy time. This helped us to minister among Ukrainian refugees that arrived in Hungary by the tens and hundreds of thousands. Our churches in Miskolc and Budapest became a short-time haven for the refugees of whom many were professing Christians. Our churches in Ukraine through the servant-hearted ministry of the pastors, elders, and members helped the poorest and most neglected in that part of Ukraine. And last year, Rev. Bylsma devoted the better half of his sabbatical to minister among our churches. For these and many more help, we are thoroughly thankful to you.

Yet, I would like to speak about **the future**, as well. Let me ask you: does Europe need the gospel? No Christian would answer this question in the negative. But *how much* does Europe need the gospel? If you look at the data from Joshua Project, you will

find that the proportion of evangelical population in Europe is very low: France (1.3%), Italy (1.7%), Germany (2%). But if you consider the countries of Eastern Europe, you will find that the need is even greater. Poland (0.3%), Czech Republic (0.7%), Hungary (3%) or Bulgaria (2%) are mostly below the 2 percent threshold when countries are deemed to lack sufficient base to evangelize their own culture. Compare it with the average evangelical population of Africa (15.8%), South America (18.9%), or even Asia (3.1%) and it becomes even clearer how desperately Eastern Europe needs the gospel.

And this is an area we can minister together. Your commitment to missions is seen by the many missionaries you sent worldwide--also to the countries of Europe. We commend you and are thoroughly thankful for your missionary zeal.

We are living times when our Western culture creaks, and the clouds never seemed darker. Yet, in the night the light shines even brighter. And we see that the gospel is advancing in new areas. Just to speak about my closer home. In Europe, we see confessional Reformed churches planted in Italy, Poland, Albania, Moldova, Ukraine, where Reformation had no or very little history. We know faithful ministers working tirelessly in Switzerland, Germany, and France – once cradle and home of Reformation but where the gospel light almost died out.

Two years ago, we started to organize a conference, called *Reformed Colloquium* to gather confessional, Reformed church planters in Europe. In April this year, we had 150 attendants from 27 European countries. There is new spark and fire – because our Lord is the King of Kings, the sovereign Ruler of history and universe and his church will march forward, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. This is happening in front of our eyes. Our right response should be worship. The planting of churches and progress in mission is not natural – this is supernatural. It flows from the love of our God toward the world. This is my hope that our churches can work together toward this end in the future.

Brothers, thank you, and may our great God, the King of kings and Lord of lords bless you richly, and establish you in every good work and word (2Thes. 2:16-17).

15. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Grace and peace to you brothers in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. I, Bruce Backensto bring you greetings from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. I have mentioned on other occasions how much I appreciate being a fraternal delegate to the Synod of the URCNA because of your devotions and the singing of Psalms.

We had the privilege of hosting the 2025 meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council, which was the 50th anniversary of the Council's existence. As brother DeBoer commented, we commend your chairman, Joel Dykstra for how well he moderated that meeting. You are blessed with a gifted chairman. We invited two special speakers. Dr. David Whitla, Professor of Church History in our seminary, preached from Ephesians 4:1-16 at the Tuesday evening devotional service, calling us to pursue the unity of the church through our union with Christ. Then Dr. Chad Van Dixhoorn gave a special address on Wednesday evening on the theme, Reformation in North America, reflecting on what it means for reformation to come to North America, and to be expressed by the commitments of NAPARC. You can watch the entire celebration https://tinyurl.com/NAPARK50th.

The RPCNA enjoys a global communion with RPCs in Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, and Scotland. We have missions in several sensitive countries. One such field has five Presbyteries, 66 congregations, 49 mission churches, 54 teaching elders, 198 elders, 500 deacons, 5506 communicant members, 1,346 baptized members, with some 1,200 adherents = roughly 8,000 saints. There is a seminary in one of those

Presbyteries patterned after our own Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh and another seminary which is continuation of one run by our home missionary.

Over the last 20 years we have had deliberate emphasis on outreach and church planting. This has resulted in our surpassing our goal of having 100 congregations in 2020. We have now dipped down again after sending congregations to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada. Pray for renewal of that level of congregations.

With many new, young congregations we also have, on average, smaller congregations, each needing elders, both teaching and ruling. This demographic of smaller congregations may be a sign of the times and of things to come. Whatever the case, it highlights the need in every age for pastors and elders to serve the flock of Christ. Pray for men to desire the office of elder, which the apostle Paul tells Timothy is a good thing (1 Timothy 3:1).

We have been seeking to become more intentional about closer fellowship with the Associate Presbyterian Church. We are praying that we will be able to hold a concurrent Synod and a second invitation to the ARP conference ground in Bonclarken, NC.

As you certainly are aware, the RPCNA does elect and ordain women to the office of deacon. We hold the position on exegetical reasons, not social or liberal pressure. We have held the practice over a century. Since we receive questions about this practice, over the past two years the Synod has been considering this commitment and how to hold it. A study committee gave notice at our 2025 Synod meeting their intention is to propose removing it from our Testimony – effectively removing it from the law and order of the church to which officers are to affirm. If adopted, it would remove the practice, but would not wholly remove the practice, but would

alleviate the conscience of some who are asked to vow their agreement to a practice they do not hold.

The Presbytery in which I serve, the Presbytery of the Alleghenies, conducted an ecclesiastical trial accusing Sam Ketcham of violations of the 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 9th commandments due to his belief in, and propagation of Kinism (racism and white supremacy). He was (resoundingly) found guilty on four counts and was subsequently deposed and excommunicated. He has appealed his conviction to Synod 2026 (which meets next Tuesday, 16 June through Friday, 19 June on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, IN.

We are a denomination with Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA and the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. Sadly, because of the times we no longer have the Reformed Presbyterian Home, also in Pittsburgh, PA.

Given the 50th Anniversary of NAPARC spent time discussing how to hold out the vision of organic unity, it is appropriate to remember this TOGETHER. As you might imagine/realize, the work of unity is difficult, but not without hope. Interchurch Committee member, Johnathan Kruis writes this –

> *Organic, organizational, ecclesiastical church unity has been compared to a Gordian knot. We feel that when we gather as NAPARC unity is difficult. What is possible? How do we get there? How do we logistically pull it off?*
>
> *The Gordian knot. The more you tug to loosen it, the tighter it seems to get. But in at least one legend of the Gordian knot do you remember it was solved? Alexander the Great cut it in half with a sword. With a sword.*
>
> *Brothers, we have a sword sharp enough to pierce disunity. It is by the patient, enduring Scripture, and by patient encouragement of God that harmony and like-mindedness*

is being produced (Romans 15:6). This is how we strive for the unity and purity of the church.

So, we return from NAPARC each year, holding out hope. Hope that we would be one by God's grace and work. Our time together encourages us once again to share the vision that from the bottom up, and the "top down" as the Sword pierces division and discerns our hearts, we would be encouraged to hope and harmony. That we would decrease and Christ would increase.

I leave you with these words from the Bible:

Psalm 31:5 *Into Your hand I commit my spirit, You have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.*

May we begin each day with this prayer.

Colossians 3:23-24 *And whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*

16. Reformed Presbyterian Church in Congo

Esteemed brother and father delegates,

Greetings in the Mighty Name·of our·unique Lord and·Savior Jesus·Christ as at this URCNA Synod. These hearty greetings come to you from your brothers and sisters from ***the United Refonned Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,*** **URCC** in the DRC, your sister Church.

While I was·busy·getting·ready·my·papers for the·Canada Visa to participate in your Synod, there was a health restriction to the D R Congo people to travel to canada because of the Ebola Virus. Only our Mighty God knows why that happens at this very moment.

Nevertheless, we are happy for the blessing we·get in the·proclamation·of our Lord God's Word, Sacrament administration, and Church ' discipline in the URCC in our country.

The Word of God is proclaimed and taught in our local Churches and at the Theological Seminary: ***Institut Superieur Reforme de Theologie de Mbujimayi, ISRT***. This seminary became a solution to all the difficulties of sending the URCC theological·students abroad with all the bursary and Study Visa problems. However, we need your assistance to come or send talented people to come over and train our students at the ISRT in Mbujimayi. We lacked trained pastors in·past: thirty pastors for 181 local churches in the area where roads give problems to reach far off local churches. The URCC has now sixty pastors for 177 congregations. We need·your prayers for churches and pastors. We need also theological books that facilitate the students' training and good infrastructures to learn in.

Please pray our Lord for the D R Congo to have peace, to put an end to Ebola Virus, and for the economic and political stability.

In the end, I inform you that the United Reformed Churche in the Congo will hold her General Synod in August 3-8, 2026 in Kananga, Kasai Central Province, in the heart of the DR Congo. We need your supportive prayers for peace, unity and witness.

Let the Holy Spirit that comes from the Father and Son guide you while you labor during this Synod for the Glory·of God. Dear esteemed·brother URCNA delegates, and fraternal delegates, thank you all.

Rev. Kabongo Kalala Malebongo Athanase

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