

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**SYNOD ESCONDIDO 2024**  
**PRESS RELEASE – FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2024**

---

The final day of Synod Escondido began strong, with the assembly rising to sing with vigor Psalm 33. Rev. Gary Zekveld then read this Psalm, recalling the sure hope that is found by trusting our sovereign God and resting in His steadfast love. The brothers then spent a few moments in prayer.

The business of Synod began with refining the mandate and specifics of a synodical organizing committee, which was created on Thursday. This committee will be charged with securing a location for hosting synod, providing logistical elements necessary for synodical delegates, and preparing and maintaining a manual for the organizing of synod. This committee will report to the convening consistory of synod and to the national corporation of the URCNA in the nation where a given synod is held.

The assembly next turned its attention to the report of the URCNA Statistician, receiving her report and expressing appreciation for her faithful and excellent service to the churches. Synod reminded the churches to be diligent in submitting their statistical data annually and in responding promptly to the Statistician. The brothers also refined the categories of statistical information being collected from the churches.

Returning to some unfinished business from Thursday, Synod took up the remainder of an overture that requested numerous small changes to our Church Order, most aimed at improving the internal consistency of the language of the URCNA Church Order. Synod approved most of these, refining several points. These decisions, because they seek to change the Church Order, will need to be ratified by two-thirds of the consistories of the federation.

Further unfinished business followed, as Synod resumed consideration of a pair of overtures addressing the appeals process in the URCNA. Both overtures aimed to resolve a perceived conflict between a Church Order provision and a provision of one of its appendices, although they did so in contrary ways.

After lengthy deliberation, the assembly adopted a change which explicitly restricted appeals by individual church members. Under the newly adopted change to Appendix 7 of the Church Order and to the Regulations for Synodical Procedure, an individual would retain the right to appeal decisions of his own consistory, but he would not be permitted to appeal the decisions of a classis or synod. Should an individual believe that a decision of a broader assembly should be appealed, he would need to ask his consistory to pursue that appeal.

Additional changes specified how an appeal may be brought by a classis, as well as the circumstances under which delegates to a broader assembly who previously handled an appeal may participate in judging an appeal.

One of the last items of business for any Synod involves the adoption of a budget. This the delegates handled quickly, thanks for the efficient work of their advisory committee.

Prior to the delegates' final meal together, Rev. Paul Murphy briefly reminded them from 1 John 3:1 and other texts that God loves His people with the very love that He has for Jesus – amazing grace! Rev. Murphy then led the brothers in prayer and song.

After lunch, Rev. William Godfrey read Psalm 103, led in prayer, and called the assembly to sing praise to the Lord.

The assembly then moved into elections. Rev. Doug Barnes was elected to serve as Stated Clerk, and Rev. Mark Vander Pol as Alternate Stated Clerk. The assembly then recommended two men for service on the the U.S. Board of Directors, from whom the Board will select one member.

To fill the role of Home Mission Clerk – a position approved on Thursday – Synod appointed Mr. Paul Lawton.

Looking forward to the next synod, the assembly accepted the offer of Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge, AB, to serve as convening consistory for a synod to be held on June 8-12, 2026.

Led by one of its delegates, the assembly rose to express appreciation for the officers of Synod.

The chairman, Rev. Bradd Nymeyer, expressed hearty thanks for the work of the Convening Consistory of Escondido URC and the congregation itself, many of whom devoted extensive effort to making Synod run smoothly. He highlighted the long, faithful, and humble service of our outgoing Stated Clerk, Rev. Ralph Pontier, who has served the federation for eight years. He also expressed gratitude to his fellow officers of Synod Escondido, and also to the delegates, for their devoted work. The vice-chairman echoed the sentiments of the assembly in expressing heartfelt appreciation for Rev. Nymeyer in his faithful leadership.

Reading Psalm 90:17 – “Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!” – the chairman concluded Synod Escondido with prayer, calling the brothers to end their time together by rising to sing the Doxology.

To God be all the glory!