

# **COUNCIL OF DELEGATES**



# COUNCIL OF DELEGATES REPORT

The Council of Delegates (COD) of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) began its service of interim governance on behalf of the CRC's annual synods after being appointed by Synod 2017. COD delegates represent the CRC's forty-nine classes. There are also currently six at-large members. The ministry matters addressed by the COD are divided among seven committees to process the material before it. These committees are the Governance, Finance, Synodical Services, Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, Resonate Global Mission, and Connections committees. There are also three advisory committees: the Banner Advisory Committee, the Bible Translations Committee, and the Dignity Team.

The COD presents the following report as a summary of its work in the interim between the synods of 2025 and 2026. The report is presented in five main sections:

- The *Introduction* provides background information on the COD's role and on foundational principles that guide its work for the CRCNA, such as prayer, spiritual discipline, and diversity efforts.
- *Membership matters* notes the current makeup of the COD, its officers, ministry boards, outgoing members, and nominees for open positions. Further information on nominees is available in the Boards and Committees section of the *Agenda for Synod 2026*.
- *Program matters* addresses work that relates to the ministry programs and personnel of the denomination, as well as program work that is beyond the scope of or in addition to material in the reports of the agencies, ministries, and institutions.
- *Polity matters* covers the work of the COD as the denomination's governance board in the interim of synod.
- *Financial matters* provides synod with important information about the fiscal health of the CRCNA so that the churches and members of the denomination can assess its stewardship of the resources God has provided.

## I. Introduction

### A. Role of the Council of Delegates

The Council of Delegates acts on behalf of synod in an interim, advisory, and convening role.

- **Interim role:** Church Order Article 33-b: ". . . Synod shall appoint the Council of Delegates . . . to act for them in matters which cannot await action by [synod itself and to] . . . submit all their actions to the next meeting of [synod] . . . for approval."
- **Advisory role:** Attend to such church-polity issues as need to be addressed and render such advice to study committees as it deems necessary or as requested of it between the meetings of synod.

- **Convening role:** Make arrangements related to the convening of synod in coordination with the convening church.

The COD met in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in October 2025 and online in February 2026 and submits its report here. The COD plans to meet again in Grand Rapids in May 2026, and the actions of that meeting will be reported in the Agenda Supplement. More information on the role and responsibilities of the Council of Delegates can be found at [crcna.org/welcome/governance/council-delegates](http://crcna.org/welcome/governance/council-delegates).

### *B. Prayer and spiritual discipline*

We rejoice that in recent years the Holy Spirit seems to be increasing the desire for prayer and other practices of spiritual discipline in the hearts of many CRCNA members and leaders. That desire was heard quite clearly in the many listening sessions leading up to the creation of the current ministry plan, and we see signs of it continuing to build throughout the denomination. The COD has attempted to incorporate prayer as a more intentional part of its governance practices, taking time throughout its meetings to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to recall the privilege of this “most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us” (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 116). In addition, there has been an increasing effort in recent years to incorporate prayer and worship into the deliberations of synod (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 803) as a reminder of the fact that we gather first of all because of the salvation we share in Christ, which provides the ground for the work we do as a church. We are grateful for the work of Jon Hoekema, denominational prayer shepherd, and others who support and encourage this vital work.

### *C. Staff transitions*

Shirley DeVries retired as chief administrative officer in January 2026 after 44 years of service to the denomination in various roles. The job description was reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of the Office of General Secretary and the denomination. A new position based on this update is titled *Director of Partnership Administration*, and, following a COD interview, this role was accepted by Roberta Vriesema, who began work in this position in November 2025.

Following the resignation of Shiao Chong as editor of *The Banner* in July 2025, and subsequent to a search by a hiring team of denominational staff and the chair of the Banner Advisory Committee, Rev. Lora Copley was appointed as interim *Banner* editor for a period not to exceed twelve months. A nominee for the permanent position of editor will be presented in the Council of Delegates Supplement report to synod.

ReFrame Ministries and Thrive are also in the process of hiring new directors. More information is available in these agencies’ respective reports to synod, and the COD plans to present new appointments for ratification in its supplemental report to synod.

## II. Membership matters

### A. Current membership

The members of the COD from the classes of the CRCNA are as follows: Wendy Werkman (Alberta North), Lee Himbeault (Alberta South/Saskatchewan), Jeff Dykema (Arizona), Hyung-Jun Kim (B.C. North-West), Andre VanRyk (B.C. South-East), John Jansen (California South), Mark VanDyke (Central California), Erik Kamp (Central Plains), Christian Pedersen (Chicago South), Rob Toornstra (Columbia), Joan DeVries (Eastern Canada), Jeanne Kallemeyn (Georgetown), Ronald Karelse (Grand Rapids North), Willem deVries (Grand Rapids South), Rachel Bouwkamp (Grandville), Thomas Byma (Greater Los Angeles), Joyce Jackson (Hackensack), Mike Bekendam (Hamilton), Jae Young Kim (Hanmi), Loren Veldhuizen (Heartland), David Spoelma (Holland), Roy Heerema (Hudson), Peter Meerveld (Huron), Robert Drenten (Iakota), Jill Feikema (Illiana), Jeff Blamer (Kalamazoo), Jonathan Kim (Ko-Am), Alex Snider (Lake Erie), William Krahnke (Lake Superior), Eric Van Dyken (Minnkota), Drew Sweetman (Muskegon), Janet deVries (Niagara), Bryan Dick (North Cascades), Herbert Schreur (Northcentral Iowa), Bonnie Zigterman (Northern Illinois), Jim Winkel (Northern Michigan), Phil Apoll (Ontario Southwest), Douglas Fakkema (Pacific Northwest), Ron VanAuken (Quinte), Tabitha Manuelito (Red Mesa), Mike Johnson (Rocky Mountain), Felix Fernandez (Southeast U.S.), Steven Hull (Thornapple Valley), Michael Irshad (Toronto), Chuck Adams (Wisconsin), Steve Bussis (Yellowstone), Lloyd Hemstreet (Zeeland).

Six at-large members currently serve the COD: Linda Van Sligtenhorst, Melissa VanDyk, Gregg Lawson, and Henry Eygenraam in Canada; and Michael Ten Haken and Christian Sebastia in the United States.

### B. Officers

1. COD officers: Michael L. Ten Haken, chair; Andre Van Ryk, vice chair; Peter Meerveld, secretary; Drew Sweetman, treasurer.
2. Ministry board officers
  - a. CRCNA Canada Ministry Board: Andre Van Ryk, president; Joan DeVries, vice president; Henry Eygenraam, treasurer; Peter Meerveld, secretary.
  - b. CRCNA U.S. Ministry Board: Michael L. Ten Haken, president; Jill Feikema, vice president; Christian Sebastia, secretary; Drew Sweetman, treasurer.
  - c. ReFrame Ministries Canada Ministry Board: Andre Van Ryk, president; Joan DeVries, vice president; Henry Eygenraam, treasurer; Peter Meerveld, secretary.
  - d. ReFrame Ministries U.S. Ministry Board: Michael L. Ten Haken, president; Jill Feikema, vice president; Christian Sebastia, secretary; Drew Sweetman, treasurer.

3. COD Executive Committee: Michael L. Ten Haken, chair; Andre VanRyk, vice chair; Peter Meerveld; Michael Irshad; Robert Toornstra; and Drew Sweetman. Zachary J. King, Joel Vande Werken, and Roberta Vriesema serve ex officio.

#### *C. Retiring members*

A number of COD members are concluding service in June 2026 after two terms, and several others have opted not to serve a second term or have resigned from the COD in the past year. A complete list will be printed in the Agenda Supplement, and synod will be invited to express its gratitude for their service.

#### *D. Nominations*

Synod 2025 directed that the boards and committees create rubrics that would clearly identify nominees as having appropriate qualifications for service in their roles, as well as having stated their “commitment to Jesus Christ and to the confessional standards of the CRCNA” (*Acts of Synod 2025*, pp. 675-76). This has created an opportunity for the Office of General Secretary to review the ways in which nominees are presented to synod. The Office of General Secretary has decided that, rather than listing nominees for appointment to the agency and institution boards in the various reports of those ministries, and with some appearing in the main *Agenda for Synod* and others in the Agenda Supplement, it will present a single, complete list of nominees in the Agenda Supplement each year. This process has been affirmed by the COD.

The Agenda Supplement will therefore include the list of all nominations for service on the COD, including first terms, interim appointments, and renewal for second terms. The Agenda Supplement will also contain the COD’s recommendations that synod appoint these nominees.

### **III. Program Matters**

#### *A. Ministry Plan and agency review*

Synod 1990 mandated the establishment of a denominational ministries plan which would be used as the basis for management of the planning, coordinating, and integrating of the work of all CRCNA ministries and agencies (*Acts of Synod 1990*, pp. 672-76, 680; *Acts of Synod 1991*, pp. 780-81). The most recent version of this ministry plan was approved by the COD in 2020 and later extended by synod through the year 2030 (*Acts of Synod 2024*, p. 911) and can be found at [crcna.org/OurJourney](http://crcna.org/OurJourney). The denomination, through the COD, its agencies, ministries, and institutions, continues to live into the four milestones of *Our Journey*: Prayer and Spiritual Practices, Every Generation, Unity and Diversity, and Share the Gospel. Behind these milestones continues to be a denomination-wide commitment to leadership development and renewal.

Synod 2025 adopted a schedule and process “for reviewing the implementation of the *Our Journey* ministry plan milestones in each ministry, agency,

and institution” (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 601), replacing earlier versions of this review process. In alignment with this decision, the director of partnership administration has been working with World Renew to coordinate their review for Synod 2026. World Renew gave an interim report to the Connections Committee of the COD at its January meeting, and a full report is expected to be included as part of the COD Supplement report to synod.

#### *B. Church Renewal*

At Synod 2023 the CRCNA prioritized church renewal (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 975-76), leading to the creation of the Gather initiative—a cross-agency effort tasked with listening to churches and classes for feedback (see *Acts of Synod 2025*, pp. 509-25). Based on information received through that series of events, CRCNA staff have been working to develop proposals for next steps to present to synod. Recommendations will be presented in the COD Supplement report to synod.

#### *C. Bible Translations Committee*

The Bible Translations Committee (BTC) was established as a standing committee of the COD by decision of Synod 2019 for the purpose of reviewing Bible translations for potential use in the CRCNA, per Church Order Articles 47 and 52-b (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 764). In keeping with the instructions of synod regarding committee composition, the following members currently serve on the BTC: William T. Koopmans (chair; CRC pastor representative), Susan Medendorp (English-language stylist), Benjamin Ribbens (theological faculty, Trinity Christian College), Gabriela Tijerina-Pike (theological faculty, Calvin Theological Seminary), Michael Williams (theological faculty emeritus, Calvin Theological Seminary), Wendy Werkman (COD liaison), and Joel Vande Werken (staff convener).

The BTC held its annual meeting on January 14, 2026. At that meeting, the BTC reviewed its mandate and the adopted criteria for conducting the work of evaluating translations, as well as taking note of the list of Bible translations currently approved by synod.

The BTC has not received any requests from the COD in the past year to conduct a review of any Bible translations, but the committee will continue to be available to serve the churches in this way should any requests arise.

#### *D. Denominational survey results*

At its October meeting the COD received a presentation on the results of the annual denominational survey. It was noted that 1,067 congregants completed the survey and that one-fifth of churches are invited to participate in the survey each year. The survey collects information on church health, diaconal ministry, *Our Journey 2025* milestones, church and financial involvement, and demographics about participating congregations. More information on the denominational survey and its results is available on the Network (see [network.crcna.org/topic/leadership/crcna-and-synod/2025-denominational-survey](https://network.crcna.org/topic/leadership/crcna-and-synod/2025-denominational-survey)).

### *E. Nicene Creed resources*

In response to an instruction by synod, the Office of General Secretary developed a list of curated resources related to the Nicene Creed, including worship service resources, to commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the creed (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 651). While the curated list is not exhaustive, it provides a starting point for churches interested in recognizing this milestone. The list of resources for use by local congregations is posted on the Network (see [network.crcna.org/topic/worship/creeds-and-confessions/resources-commemorate-1700th-anniversary-nicene-creed](http://network.crcna.org/topic/worship/creeds-and-confessions/resources-commemorate-1700th-anniversary-nicene-creed)). (See Recommendation C.)

### *F. Ministry Support Services and The Banner*

#### 1. Shared ministry services

The staff of Ministry Support Services (MSS) is responsible for *The Banner*, Faith Alive Christian Resources, and a number of professional services that support CRC ministries. These services include order and subscription processing, distribution, purchasing, design and web services, editorial services, translation, rights and permissions management, and marketing.

In the interest of consistent style, branding, and quality presentation, MSS has supported CRC communications staff in creating guides for Brand Standards and Editorial Style.

#### 2. *The Banner*

As the official magazine of the CRC, *The Banner* currently prints and distributes more than 60,000 copies of its paper version, and pageviews of its website ([thebanner.org](http://thebanner.org)) average about 80,000 per month. In addition, more than 16,000 people have signed up to receive the weekly *Banner Update* email newsletter. Our efforts on social media also help to ensure that *Banner* content is available to anyone in a variety of forms.

*The Banner* app is available for free download on iPhone and Android devices ([thebanner.org/App](http://thebanner.org/App)); monthly, the app receives more than 8,000 pageviews.

*The Banner's* editorial staff follows guidelines provided by Synod 2004 (*Acts of Synod 2004*, pp. 197-99) and in its synodical mandate, which was revised by Synod 2025 (*Acts of Synod 2025*, pp. 713-15). Staff have been diligently interpreting and applying the changes. The COD also follows the synodical mandate and provides editorial input into *The Banner's* work by means of a six-member *Banner Advisory Committee*. Three of the advisory committee members are COD members, and two are at-large members. The committee is currently chaired by Rev. Mark VanDyke.

*The Banner* is currently searching to hire a new editor in chief following the resignation of Shiao Chong. Rev. Lora Copley has been serving as interim editor of *The Banner* since December 2025.

*The Banner* continues to live into the COD's plan to reduce the magazine's allocation of ministry shares as a source of revenue, with FY2026-2027 being

the last year it will receive ministry shares (see *Acts of Synod 2024*, p. 624). Some changes as a result of this decision include fewer print issues (six in 2026, down from ten per year) and less content available online, although for some time *The Banner* has published more content online than in print.

### 3. Faith Alive Christian Resources

Synod 2013 approved the dissolution of the board of Faith Alive Christian Resources, the publishing imprint of the CRCNA, and transitioned critical functions of Faith Alive to MSS. We continue to sell and reprint resources that were already published, support the ongoing development of *Dwell* Sunday school curriculum and the Discover Your Bible series, and publish a small number of new titles as requested by our ministries. Sales of older products continue to decline. Thrive and MSS continue to pour energy into the *Dwell* curriculum, including further development of *Dwell Flex* (for smaller churches and multi-age contexts) and *Dwell Digital* (the online version of *Dwell* leader materials).

Christian Reformed congregations continue to receive a special “CRC discount” in comparison to what churches of other denominations pay. In addition, the CRC Digital Library allows anyone attending a Christian Reformed congregation free access to most Faith Alive titles online. These initiatives aim to help Christian Reformed churches make full use of resources that they helped to publish.

### 4. The Network

Over the past sixteen years the Network has become one of the CRC’s most-visited websites where people involved in their local church can connect—with each other and with denominational staff—about the practical aspects of doing church ministry. Although the half-time community manager now reports to the CRC Communications office, Ministry Support Services staff continue to be involved in the technical aspects of the website. The site receives over 50,000 pageviews per month, as people across the denomination read, ask questions, and share ideas with each other about their congregation’s ministries.

### 5. Mailing list policy

Synod was first presented with a request for a denominational mailing list in 1963, with formal adoption of a policy for managing this list adopted in 1975 (*Acts of Synod 1963*, p. 71; *Acts of Synod 1975*, pp. 85-86) and updated several times since then. Due to changes in the nature of communication, this policy has become obsolete. Staff members continue to be guided, however, by the principles formerly established by synod as they carry out their communications with churches and individuals. The COD recommends that synod discontinue the formal use of the denominational mailing list policy and assign this matter to the general secretary’s discretion for implementation (see Recommendation D).

### *G. Dignity Team review*

Synod 2025 reviewed the Dignity Team Charter and instructed the Council of Delegates to address concerns related to the scope of their role as a care provider and the roles of local assemblies as part of its previously mandated assessment of this initiative (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608; see also *Agenda for Synod 2021*, p. 67). The COD conducted a full review of the Dignity Team (see Appendix A) and its charter, providing a number of recommendations (see Recommendations E-I).

## **IV. Polity Matters**

### *A. Synod 2027*

#### 1. Convening church

Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.) has requested to serve as the convening church of Synod 2027 as they celebrate the 75th anniversary of their church founding (see Recommendation J). Synod 2027 will be held at Calvin University, in keeping with the Synod 2019 decision that the CRCNA's annual synod meetings take place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for three years in succession followed by a fourth-year meeting in a region elsewhere in North America where CRC congregations are clustered (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 813). Synod 2029 will be the next year outside of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and plans are under way for reserving a host site.

#### 2. Schedule

The Office of General Secretary has proposed a revised schedule for Synod 2027 that would change the meeting times of synod to run from Saturday through Saturday rather than from Thursday through Thursday. This proposal was suggested in response to requests to make synod more accessible to elders and deacons and to include changes to reduce daily workloads and demands on delegates during synod. The COD is recommending that synod approve the proposal that in-person convening begin at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 5, 2027, and that synod adjourn no later than Saturday, June 12, 2027, at noon (see Recommendation K).

### *B. Advisers to synod*

#### 1. Ethnic advisers and women advisers

In keeping with decisions of past synods, the Rules for Synodical Procedure mandates the involvement of advisers to serve synod as representative voices of groups within the CRCNA who may not be adequately represented in the delegations of the classes (see Rules for Synodical Procedure, III, B). In the case of ethnic advisers and women advisers, appointments are made on the basis of a rolling average of diversity presence at the previous three synods. Because the average representation at Synods 2023-2025 exceeded the required thresholds, no ethnic advisers or women advisers will be appointed to serve Synod 2026.

## 2. Young adult representatives

Since 2009 synod has welcomed the engagement of youth and young adults (18- to 26-year-olds) in the current issues faced by our denomination and has sought to raise up leadership within the church through the appointment of young adult representatives to participate in the deliberations of synod. These individuals bring a valuable and unique perspective to the issues we face as a denomination by listening, engaging delegates during advisory committee meetings, and offering input on matters that arise in plenary sessions.

The COD has appointed the following persons to serve as young adult representatives to synod. We express gratitude for their commitment and gracious willingness to serve the denomination in this way.

Kenneth Gonzalez	Kaitlyn Hofsink	Nathan van der Meer
Benjamin Haan**	Cruz Menchaca	Kyle Vannus*
Kyle Hoekema**	Samantha Teran*	Corey Viss

\*indicates second time serving

\*\*indicates alternates

### C. Synodical governance matters

#### 1. Church Order and Its Supplements

- a. The Council of Delegates, at its October 2025 meeting, requested that CRC staff recommend edits to the Church Order in light of updates approved by Synod 2025 to reflect the new agency name Thrive, as well as to note possible discrepancies between language in the Church Order Supplement and current practices in the CRCNA. The Office of General Secretary presented various updates to the Church Order Supplement to be recommended for approval by synod (see Recommendations L-M).
- b. Synod 2024 proposed changes to Church Order Article 24 and its Supplement with regard to commissioned pastors who have been formally released (*Acts of Synod 2024*, pp. 815-16). These changes were inadvertently overlooked in the Church Order updates presented to Synod 2025. The changes to Church Order Articles 24-e and 24-f and their supplements are therefore presented here for ratification (see Recommendation N).

#### 2. Rules for Synodical Procedure

Synod 2025 approved a review of the Rules for Synodical Procedure due to “shifts in the nature of study committees, the role of the convening church of synod, the duties of officers, and issues of consistency between the Rules for Synodical Procedure and other governance documents” (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608). The Office of General Secretary worked with a variety of leaders and experts for input on updates to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, including changes to the following: the role of parliamentarian, study committee report deadlines (Dec. 1 instead of Nov. 1), additional staff on the Program Committee, and that synod specify the membership and reporting

timeline for each committee it appoints to study a matter, rather than distinguishing between study committees and task forces (see *Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 827-29). The COD also recommends that the Judicial Code (in part) no longer be included in both the Rules for Synodical Procedure and the Church Order Supplement (Art. 30-c; see *Acts of Synod 1977*, p. 55) but rather in the Church Order Supplement only (see Appendix B and Recommendation O).

### 3. Limited Suspension

Following the Synod 2024 decision to place officebearers in churches not complying with synod's decisions about unchastity under limited suspension, the Office of General Secretary was instructed to develop resources to help classes and churches navigate toward repentance and restoration or toward disaffiliation. Classes were also to report their progress in biannual reports to the Office of General Secretary (*Acts of Synod 2024*, pp. 891-93). All classes have been alerted that resources are available at [crcna.org/limited-suspension](http://crcna.org/limited-suspension). While the process of limited suspension is still available as an approach to such situations, the COD recommends that synod declare the mandate to prioritize resources complete and to remove the requirement that classes report on the progress of conversations (see Recommendation P).

### 4. Resources to Support the Supervision and Release of Pastors

Synod 2024 instructed the Office of General Secretary to develop materials to guide churches and classes through issues related to the supervision and release of CRCNA pastors, especially those in noncongregational ministry, in light of recommendations from the task force reviewing Church Order Articles 12-17 (*Agenda for Synod 2024*, pp. 137-39). This task was completed in coordination with Thrive staff after synod ratified the proposed changes to Church Order Articles 12-17 (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 677-88). Many of the materials are now available on the denomination's website ([crcna.org](http://crcna.org)). In connection with this matter, we ask that synod approve related changes to the *Guide for Conducting Church Visiting*. (See Recommendations Q-R.)

### 5. Publications

#### a. Updating official publications

The Office of General Secretary is responsible for all official publications authorized by synod and the COD. In some cases, it is unclear whether synod has simply commissioned these documents or whether synod must approve the precise text of (as well as text updates to) these documents. To clarify this matter, the COD recommends that synod grant the general secretary authority in the future to update the introduction to the Church Order, as well as the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, the Journey Toward Ordination, the doctrinal and ethical position statements, the Affiliation Process and Procedure, the Guidelines for Handling Abuse Allegations against a Ministry Leader, and the Manual for Synodical Deputies, in keeping

with any changes in synodical regulations and to report those changes to synod for information rather than requesting synod's approval (see Recommendation S).

b. *Index of Synodical Decisions*

Synod 1956 assigned a committee “the task of preparing an adequate index of past synodical decisions, with ample cross-references.” It was also intended that, when the index was complete, “provision be made to bring the index up to date at [regular] intervals” (*Acts of Synod 1956*, pp. 18-19), a project that was indeed completed a number of times over the years (see *Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 696; [crcna.org/synodresources](http://crcna.org/synodresources), “Indices of Synodical Decisions”). With today's digital technology and powerful research tools, the ability to search through electronic copies of the *Agenda for Synod* and the *Acts of Synod* has become much simpler and easier than in past decades. We therefore recommend that synod note the suspension of the published index of synodical decisions, considering that the original intention of this mandate can be accomplished today in ways that make better use of staff time and financial resources (see Recommendation T).

c. *Yearbook*

The *Yearbook* serves as a denominational directory and as a resource for statistical information. Starting in 2016, the print *Yearbook* was made leaner, and much of what was included in previous annual editions became accessible online at [crcna.org/Yearbook](http://crcna.org/Yearbook). The online content is updated continuously as new information is received by the *Yearbook* office. A review is under way to consider the future of this print publication.

D. *Governance Handbook*

At its online meeting in February 2026, the COD received a number of updates to the COD Governance Handbook (see Appendix C), following a deep review by staff. Initially adopted in 2017, the COD Governance Handbook was significantly revised after the adoption of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT) report in 2021. A draft of the revised handbook was presented to Synod 2023 for information, with the recognition that the materials were still in draft form and would require additional updating due to continued implementation of a planned revision to the organizational concept and structure of the COD (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 633-34, 913, 982).

Subsequent to the 2023 draft presentation of the COD Governance Handbook, the COD made additional changes to portions of the document dealing with internal workings of the COD (see *Acts of Synod 2024*, p. 803; *Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 607). The Office of General Secretary had also begun work on updates to sections of the handbook dealing with the work of the ministry boards, and those updates were still largely incomplete in the 2023 draft. In

the midst of this process, however, it became clear that the introduction to the COD Governance Handbook required a clearer mandate for the work of the COD and that the entire handbook suffered from a lack of clarity about which portions needed synodical approval and which portions represented internal COD procedures.

It should also be noted that the handbook does not simply represent the operations of the COD but includes sections that address the functions of the ministry boards. This fact has contributed to a growing awareness within the COD that the handbook should more properly be named the “CRCNA Governance Handbook,” with the understanding that synod has limited authority over some sections of the handbook that address the organization and function of the legal entities governing the CRC ministries. The COD has adopted the proposed changes to the portions of the handbook under its authority (Section II), and the COD here recommends that synod approve proposed changes to the portions of the Governance Handbook over which synod has authority (see Recommendations U-X).

#### *E. Ministries Leadership Council Charter*

The Ministries Leadership Council (MLC), the gathering of senior leaders of CRCNA agencies and institutions, is going through a mandate update to clarify its accountability to the COD and to synod (*Acts of Synod 1990*, pp. 675-76; *Acts of Synod 1993*, p. 352). The MLC serves the COD by ensuring that the agencies, institutions, and ministries are following synodical mandates and directives and supporting the Ministry Plan. The MLC is accountable to the COD through the Synodical Services Committee. Zachary King, general secretary, also reports to the COD on behalf of the MLC. The updated charter is presented in Appendix D for information.

#### *F. Task Force to Reduce Governance Costs*

The Council of Delegates, at its February 2025 meeting, approved the creation of a COD task force to consider ways to reduce governance costs, fund synod, and use time wisely. The task force is made up of members from the COD Finance Committee and the Synodical Services Committee, along with relevant staff. The task force report is included in Appendix E (see Recommendations Y-Z).

### **V. Financial Matters**

#### *A. Consolidated financial statements*

The condensed financial statements of the agencies, institutions, and ministries of the CRCNA are shared for information in Appendix F. Additional financial information will be included in the Council of Delegates Supplement report to synod.

#### *B. Salary disclosure*

At the directive of synod (*Acts of Synod 1983*, pp. 701-2), the COD reports the following salaries for senior CRCNA staff in the Office of General Secretary, ReFrame Ministries, Resonate Global Mission, and *The Banner*:

<i>Job level</i>	<i># of positions</i>	<i># below target</i>	<i># at target</i>
E1	1	1	0
E2	4	3	1
E3	5	5	0

The current salary administration system reflects decisions made initially by Synod 2014 and subsequently updated by the COD (*Acts of Synod 2014*, pp. 436, 552; *Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 29). Salary ranges for the current fiscal year are as follows (unchanged from 2024):

*2025-2026 Salary Grade and Range Structure*

<i>Level</i>	<i>U.S. Range</i>		<i>Canadian Range</i>	
	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Target</i>
E1	\$163,294	\$204,117		
E2	\$147,361	\$184,201	\$141,762	\$177,202
E3	\$124,881	\$156,103	\$124,220	\$155,275
H	\$105,833	\$132,290	\$106,471	\$133,089
I	\$89,688	\$112,110	\$91,258	\$114,073
J	\$76,007	\$95,008	\$78,219	\$97,774
K	\$64,413	\$80,516	\$67,043	\$83,804
L	\$54,587	\$68,233	\$57,464	\$71,830
M	\$46,260	\$57,825	\$49,253	\$61,567
N	\$39,204	\$49,004	\$42,216	\$52,770
O	\$33,224	\$41,530	\$36,184	\$45,230

*C. Employee benefit programs*

Oversight of the denomination’s nonretirement employee benefit programs is provided by the Council of Delegates, in coordination with the Canadian Pension Trustees and the U.S. Pension Trustees. Information on these programs is available in the Pensions and Insurance report to synod.

*D. Offering schedule*

Each year synod is asked to approve a schedule for one or more above-ministry-share offerings for the ministries of the denomination and a quarterly offering for World Renew in lieu of ministry-share support. These offerings go directly to support the work of the agencies (see Recommendation AA).

**VI. Recommendations**

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Michael L. Ten Haken, chair of the Council of Delegates; Andre Van Ryk, vice chair of the Council of Delegates; Zachary J. King, general secretary; and members of the executive staff as needed when matters pertaining to the Council of Delegates, ReFrame Ministries, Resonate Global Mission, Thrive, or other ministries of the CRCNA are discussed.

B. That synod grant all requests for privilege of the floor by the COD, agencies, ministries, educational institutions, standing committees, and study committees of synod contained within the reports to Synod 2026.

C. That synod take note of the fulfillment of synod's instruction to provide curated resources related to the Nicene Creed, including worship service resources, to commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the creed (III, E).

D. That synod discontinue the formal use of the denominational mailing list policy and assign this matter to the general secretary's discretion for implementation in keeping with the principles expressed in past directives regarding the sharing of contact information for individual members within the CRCNA (III, F, 5).

*Grounds:*

1. Changes in the nature of communication, as well as in the collaboration among CRCNA agencies, have rendered this policy obsolete since it was first developed and even last updated, and synod no longer needs to be directly involved in managing such a policy.
2. The mailing list policy requires revision regardless of its official status because of changes in charitable law in several jurisdictions in which the CRC operates.

E. That synod thank those who have served on the Dignity Team and affirm its work by extending its mandate for another five years, with a particular goal during that time for the Dignity Team to identify ways of strengthening the work of church assemblies and their functionaries to respond more effectively to issues of abuse and systemic hurt which the Dignity Team was formed to address (III, G and Appendix A).

*Grounds:*

1. There is a continued need for this kind of a structure within our system, where victims of abuse and systemic hurt can simply be heard in a pastoral way.
2. This approach recognizes the proper role of the assemblies to provide leadership in bringing healing to situations of abuse and systemic hurt. Although some assemblies do this well, other assemblies are uncertain about how best to address these issues. This review period gives the assemblies time to take greater responsibility for these matters so that the work of the Dignity Team may be assumed by these assemblies.
3. The Dignity Team can be a resource for training and support of church assemblies in practices such as restorative justice and reconciliation.

F. That synod commission another review of the Dignity Team beginning in the fall of 2029, and reporting to Synod 2031, to continue the discussion about issues identified in this report and especially the work of equipping

assemblies for more faithful ministry, as well as other matters related to the team's charter (III, G and Appendix A).

*Grounds:*

1. This provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the Dignity Team in equipping the church assemblies to address situations of acute pastoral care and deep hurt.
2. Regular review of denominational structures is an important part of the stewardship of our collective resources.

G. That synod approve the following changes to the charter of the Dignity Team (with additions indicated by underline and deletions by ~~strike-through~~) (III, G and Appendix A):

*Changes to section f. Team Procedure:*

- 2) Meeting locations: Meetings will ordinarily be held virtually. Once a year, ~~in conjunction with the fall COD meeting,~~ an in-person meeting of the Dignity Team may be held to welcome new members, build relationships together, and meet with parties whose case(s) would especially benefit from meeting in person. In special circumstances, at the approval of the general secretary or the director of ecclesiastical governance *where cost is involved*, other in-person meetings may be held.
- 3) While recognizing the value of a "nimble" approach, the team will also keep in mind the appropriate role of consistories and church assemblies (Church Order, Art. 25-b, 78-81) and will attempt to work with these bodies when possible to bring about resolution to cooperatively ensure a faithful application of biblical principles (cf. Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1-2). Where there is a disagreement about the appropriateness of the Dignity Team's involvement, a concerned assembly may bring the matter to the assembly next in line.

*Grounds:*

1. The instruction to meet in conjunction with a specific COD meeting is overly specific.
2. The added subpoint recognizes the Dignity Team's understanding of its role relative to the authority of the church assemblies and responds to concerns expressed about this relationship (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608).

H. That synod remind all our church assemblies, committees, and boards of the principles of responsible use of authority that ought to shape our ministry and actions, especially as they relate to shaping a culture of dignity and respect, and to take greater responsibility for these matters so that the work of the Dignity Team may increasingly be assumed by these assemblies (III, G and Appendix A).

*Grounds:*

1. The assemblies are the rightful place for such leadership in the denomination, as embodied in the ideals for godly use of authority identified in our Covenant for Officebearers and our Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders.
2. Where these biblical ideals truly shape our ministry, the need for additional bodies which duplicate the functions of other denominational groups is reduced.

I. That synod receive for information the COD's instruction regarding the Dignity Team's funding, and dismiss the Dignity Team review team with thanks, noting that issues related to terms of service, reporting structure, recordkeeping, relationship to the assemblies, and funding have been addressed as instructed by previous synods (III, G and Appendix A).

J. That synod approve Cascade Fellowship CRC (Grand Rapids, Mich.) as the convening church of Synod 2027 (IV, A, 1).

K. That synod approve the following meeting schedule for Synod 2027: convene for the initial in-person session at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 5, 2027, and adjourn no later than Saturday, June 12, 2027, at noon (IV, A, 2).

*Grounds:*

1. This schedule allows delegates to reduce the amount of time away from work and family.
2. These adjustments provide a definite conclusion to the time available for advisory committee meetings, as well as a recess for delegates to reflect on these committees' recommendations to synod, thus helping to facilitate the deliberative process at synod.

L. That synod approve the following updates to the Church Order Supplement (IV, C, 1, a). (Additions are indicated by underline, and deletions are indicated by ~~strikethrough~~.)

1. Supplement, Article 8

*[sections A-D unchanged]*

*E. Calling Ministers Ordained Outside of the Christian Reformed Church in North America*

1. *[unchanged]*
2. A minister ordained outside of the CRCNA desiring to be declared eligible for a call to a Christian Reformed church shall make application to the Candidacy Committee, which shall work with the candidate and the classis to ensure that~~Once the application has been filed, the procedures prescribed by the Candidacy Committee~~ synod in the Journey Toward Ordination document shall be followed.
3. A council shall not nominate a minister ordained outside of the CRCNA for a call without the approval of its classis and

~~the Candidacy Committee. Key elements of the discussion are to involve the “need” criteria included previously in Church Order Supplement, Article 8, E, 4, and now presented in the Journey Toward Ordination document in the section on Article 8. Synod directs all parties to take specific and special note of the requirement to establish a “need” when calling ministers ordained outside the CRCNA or in declaring ministers ordained outside the CRCNA eligible for call in the Christian Reformed Church at their own request. Once the council, pastor, classis, and Candidacy Committee all agree to the proposed call, the affiliation process and procedures prescribed by synod in the Journey Toward Ordination document shall be followed.~~

4. [*unchanged*]
5. [*unchanged*]

#### F. Determination of Need

- ~~1. Synod directs the Candidacy Committee to take specific and special note of the “need” factor when requested to give their advice to the councils and/or classes in the calling of ministers ordained outside of the CRCNA and in declaring ministers ordained outside of the CRCNA available for call in the Christian Reformed Church at their own request.~~
- ~~2. Synod calls all parties concerned to review the criteria for “need” offered in the Journey Toward Ordination document (section III, C, 1).~~

*[Section G will become section F but will not otherwise be changed.]*

#### *Grounds:*

- a. The inclusion of specific documents by name in the Supplement makes it appear that the administrative procedures shared in those documents have the same authority as synodical regulations, and that can foster confusion if and when the names of such documents may change.
- b. Although Supplement, Article 8, E was originally authorized as a “revised supplement to Article 8,” synod’s intention was sufficiently unclear that this text was included in the Supplement as an additional item alongside previously existing instructions to synodical deputies regarding the “need” criteria (*Acts of Synod 1984*, pp. 641-42; see *Acts of Synod 1979*, p. 74). As the responsibility for approving the “need” criteria has shifted in recent years to the Candidacy Committee, Section F of the Supplement has become largely redundant.
- c. The Candidacy Committee has been consulted on this proposal and is in agreement with it.

## 2. Supplement, Article 30-a

### A. *Appeal by a Member (Appellant) from a Decision or Action of a Council (Respondent)*

1. *[unchanged]*
2. *[unchanged]*
3. *Appeal Process in Situations of Abuse That Are Appealed to Classis*  
*[first paragraph unchanged]*

*Orientation and Training.* Before handling an appeal involving abuse allegations against a church leader ~~that have been taken up by an advisory panel process~~, classis delegates will participate in a 60-minute safe church orientation and training from Thrive on due process, abuse awareness, and response.

*[remainder of this supplement unchanged]*

*Ground:* This process has been changed so that our current practice with regard to safe church training during appeals processes is more general. Training is no longer limited to situations in which the advisory panel process has been formally invoked.

## 3. Supplement, Article 30-c

*Note:* The entire Judicial Code document appears in the Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c, and sections 8-9 of the Judicial Code (in a different form) appear in the Rules for Synodical Procedure. The text in the Church Order Supplement should be amended to harmonize the two versions, as reflected below. Pursuant to a full review of the Rules for Synodical Procedure, the COD is also recommending the removal of the Judicial Code text from that document (see section IV, C, 2 of this report, Appendix B, and Recommendation N below).

*Sections 1-7 [unchanged]*

*Section 8: The Judicial Code Committee of Synod*

- a. Original hearings and appellate hearings before synod shall be referred to a Judicial Code Committee appointed by synod. This committee meets between synods as frequently as its business requires and presents its recommendations to synod in writing. ~~Although there are some separate regulations regarding this committee in the Rules for Synodical Procedure,~~ Except as noted here, the committee largely functions as a normal advisory committee of synod.

- b. *[unchanged]*

*Section 9: Hearing and Appeal Procedures before the Synod Acting in Its Judicial Capacity*

*[subsections a-d unchanged]*

- e. Individual delegates to synod shall not have the privilege of addressing the Judicial Code Committee as is normally permitted with other advisory committees.

*[current subsection e becomes subsection f but text is unchanged]*

- g. During synodical discussions, the committee shall be represented by up to two spokespersons who will have the privilege of the floor. These spokespersons shall have precedence over every other speaker and shall not be limited as to the number and length of their speeches.
- fh. Upon receipt of the written report or prior to, both the complainant and respondent may request the opportunity to address synod. The Judicial Code Committee shall make a recommendation to the officers of synod as soon as possible based on ensuring due process (Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c, section 2, g) and on the benefit synod would derive from such an address, and communicate the decision immediately to both parties (even if only one has made such a request).
- i. If synod permits the complainant or respondent to address synod, after the reporter provides the recommendation(s) of the Judicial Code Committee (and if there are majority and minority reports/recommendations, after both have been presented), the complainant and/or respondent shall be given opportunity for summarizing their positions, not unlike provided in the hearing (Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c, section 5, a, vii), except that no opportunity for rebuttal will be allowed. Addresses shall be no more than five (5) minutes. If both parties have requested to address synod, the complainant shall be given no more than five (5) minutes to address synod first, and then the respondent shall be given no more than five (5) minutes to address synod. The Judicial Code Committee chair or the general secretary shall be responsible for providing these instructions to each party, stressing that the function of addressing synod is to provide their personal summaries to synod, not to retry the case. After addressing synod, neither party may provide additional comments to synod, nor may synod ask for either or both parties to return to the speaker's podium for further questions, comments, or discussion.
- gj. The Judicial Code Committee may provide the officers of synod appropriate written advice on Judicial Code matters.
- hk. Synod may dispose of a judicial matter in one of the following ways:
  - i) by deciding the matter;
  - ii) by deferring it to one of its committees for settlement or reconciliation;

- iii) by remanding it with advice to the appropriate classis or council; ~~or~~
- iv) by referring the matter back to the Judicial Code Committee for a rehearing before the initial hearing body; or
- iv) by conducting its own original judicial or appeal hearing.
- il. Unless synod conducts its own original judicial or appeal hearing, synod shall give deference to the factual findings made by the Judicial Code Committee. Synod should accept the findings of fact as presented by the Judicial Code Committee unless synod conducts its own original judicial or appeal hearing because it is persuaded that
  - i) one or more parties were not given the opportunity by the hearing body to present important and relevant evidence, or
  - ii) after the Judicial Code Committee hearing, new evidence which is important and relevant has been discovered by one or more parties.
- jm. If synod conducts its own judicial or appeal hearing, it shall follow Judicial Code procedures set forth herein.
- n. Procedure for requesting rehearing under sections k through m above
  - i) Any party who seeks to have synod conduct its own hearing or refer the matter back for a rehearing should submit such request in writing to the general secretary for distribution to the delegates of synod with a copy to the Judicial Code Committee. The writing should include a summary of the evidence which that party was not allowed to present at the evidentiary hearing and a short statement of how this opportunity was denied, or the statement should include a summary of the newly discovered evidence and an explanation of why it was not discovered earlier.
  - ii) All parties and the Judicial Code Committee representative(s) should be allowed a very brief time to address synod on such request.
- o. When recommendations involve interpretations and applications of governing principles, such as the Church Order, to the facts involved in the matter, synod should allow the parties and representatives of the Judicial Code Committee a reasonable amount of time, set by the president of synod upon recommendation of the Judicial Code Committee, to argue for or against such interpretations and applications.

*Grounds:*

- a. This harmonizing update reduces potential for misunderstanding or confusion among differing versions of the Judicial Code,

the full text of which is presented in the Supplement, Church Order Article 30-c.

- b. The Judicial Code Committee has been notified of this proposal and has registered no objection to the changes.

4. Supplement, Article 52-b

- *[first paragraph unchanged]*
- **Liturgical forms, songs, and elements of worship** approved by synod are contained in the latest edition (currently 1987) of the denomination's hymnal *Psalter Hymnal*. Forms, subsequent revisions of forms that are synodically approved, and other such resources are made available on the denomination's website (crcna.org) under "Synod Resources."
- Synodical guidelines pertaining to the **adaptation of liturgical forms** are found in the *Acts of Synod 1994*, pages 493-94, and in the *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*.
- Materials on the **principles of, elements of, and guidelines for worship and music** are found in the "Introduction to the Psalms, Bible Songs, and Hymns" contained in the latest edition (currently 1987) of the denomination's *Psalter Hymnal*, pages 11-13; in the *Acts of Synod 1997*, pages 664-68.; and in the 1997 Committee to Study Worship Report available on the denomination's website (crcna.org) under "Synod Resources."

*Ground:* The locations and availability of these materials have changed over time, so the most reliable way to indicate their location is to point to decisions of synod rather than to specific documents or other named resources.

M. That synod remove the following portions of the Church Order Supplement (IV, C, 1, a).

1. Supplement, Article 32-d, section D

~~*D. Model General Operating Bylaw Number 1 for Churches in Canada*~~  
A model bylaw for churches in Canada has been prepared and approved by synod. A copy may be obtained from the Office of General Secretary or from the CRC website—[cna.org](http://cna.org) and search "Bylaw Canada."

*Ground:* The model bylaw approved by synod (*Acts of Synod 2009*, p. 596) has been rendered obsolete in recent years by Canadian federal legislation and some provincial legislation.

2. Supplement, Article 38-c

~~Synod 2016 endorsed a revised Affiliation Process and Procedure for congregations that desire to affiliate with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The process and procedure document for such affiliation as described in the Candidacy Committee's "Journey~~

~~Toward Ordination” document is included in the “Manual for Synodical Deputies” and has been provided for every stated clerk of classis.~~

*Ground:* The location of these materials and the names of various documents is subject to change over time, and a Supplement that merely points to the potential location of synodical regulations is unnecessary.

N. That synod ratify the following changes proposed by Synod 2024 to Church Order Articles 24-e and 24-f and their supplements (IV, C, 1, b).

*Article 24*

*[The following new Article 24-e and its supplement are proposed. The current Article 24-e will become Article 24-f, and the current Supplement, Article 24-e will become Supplement, Article 24-f.]*

e. A former commissioned pastor who was released from office must receive approval of the classis by which such action was taken in order to be reexamined for commissioned-pastor ordination by the classis of the calling church.

— Cf. Supplement, Article 24-e

Supplement, Article 24-e

In the following cases, the former classis shall also conduct an interview that examines the circumstances surrounding the release and the renewed desire to serve in ministry:

- if the commissioned pastor was released to enter a nonministerial vocation or to serve in ministry outside the denomination
- if a substantial amount of time has passed since the individual served as a commissioned pastor
- if the former classis deems further conversation with the individual helpful or necessary to their discernment regarding approval
- if there are reasons for release other than the pursuit of another call

Upon approval of the former classis, followed by approval of the position with synodical deputy concurrence, the individual shall complete any additional candidacy requirements not in place when last ordained; then, after a successful examination in the classis of the calling church, the individual may be reordained.

Note: Synodical deputy approval is not stipulated in the proposed reentry process for commissioned pastors because the synodical deputies are tasked only to weigh in on the appropriateness of the job description for commissioned pastor, not to assess the individual’s qualifications for ministry, which are evaluated at a classis level only.

O. That synod adopt the revised Rules for Synodical Procedure as presented in Appendix B, noting that these changes effectively alter earlier synodical decisions for the reasons indicated there (IV, C, 2):

1. That synod no longer be served by a parliamentarian appointed each year (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 810).
  2. That the deadline for distribution of study committee reports be December 1 rather than November 1 (see *Acts of Synod 1989*, p. 444).
  3. That the director of ecclesiastical governance be added to the Program Committee, revising the earlier decision that the general secretary be the only denominational staff member on that committee (see *Acts of Synod 1994*, p. 433).
  4. That synod clarify the nature of the Program Committee report in keeping with recent practice regarding its use as a confidential document prior to its consideration by synod. This change would protect the deliberative nature of synod in line with concerns about pressure on delegates in the forms of outside lobbying and social media (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 811, 816).
  5. That synod no longer distinguish between study committees and task forces but, rather, specify the nature of each study committee membership and timeline (see *Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 827-29).
  6. That the text of the Judicial Code that currently appears in the Rules for Synodical Procedure be removed. The complete Judicial Code is included in the Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c (see *Acts of Synod 1977*, p. 55).
- P. That synod declare complete the Office of General Secretary mandate to prioritize resources to help classes and churches navigate the process of limited suspension (*Acts of Synod 2024*, p. 892), and that synod remove the requirement that classes report on the progress of such conversations (IV, C, 3.).
- Ground:* Continuing to maintain the practice of “limited suspension” beyond the time frames set out by Synod 2024 would needlessly complicate the procedures of discipline available in the existing categories of suspension and deposition.
- Q. That synod note the work done by the Office of General Secretary (in coordination with Thrive) to develop materials to guide churches and classes through issues related to the supervision and release of CRCNA pastors, as noted in recommendations from the task force reviewing Church Order Articles 12-17 (*Agenda for Synod 2024*, pp. 137-39), and acknowledge these tasks as complete (IV, C, 4).
- R. That synod approve the addition of the following paragraph to section III, G of the *Guide for Conducting Church Visiting* to help identify the church visitors’ role in situations where conflict is present (IV, C, 4).
- G. When conflict is present, Church Order Article 42-b urges that churches call on the church visitors “whenever serious challenges arise that would benefit from their advice.” While church visitors do not have the authority to require that councils take certain courses of action, they

should recognize the importance of providing wise advice and supportive guidance for councils walking through a season of crisis. Likewise, churches should recognize the value and importance of having the wisdom and guidance available to them through the church visitors, as they address serious challenges.

*Grounds:*

1. Such a resource makes clear that church visitors have a mandate to identify and work through conflict between churches and pastors (see *Agenda for Synod 2024*, p. 138).
2. The text of the *Guide for Conducting Church Visiting* has prior synodical approval (*Acts of Synod 2000*, p. 633).

S. That synod grant the general secretary authority in the future to update the introduction to the Church Order, as well as the Commissioned Pastor Handbook, the Journey Toward Ordination, the doctrinal and ethical position statements, the Affiliation Process and Procedure, the Guidelines for Handling Abuse Allegations against a Ministry Leader, and the Manual for Synodical Deputies, in keeping with any changes in synodical regulations and to report those changes to synod for information rather than requesting synod's approval (IV, C, 5, a).

*Grounds:*

1. There is not a regular process for updating these materials, which means that the materials can become outdated and sometimes even in conflict with current synodical regulations. (A current example is the lack of references to the Code of Conduct in the *Guide for Conducting Church Visiting*.)
2. Some of these documents have been presented in the past in a form that suggests that synodical approval is required for the entire text of the document (see *Agenda for Synod 2006*, pp. 318-61; *Acts of Synod 2010*, pp. 912-15; *Agenda for Synod 2019*, pp. 267-305).
3. These materials are collections of and applications of synodical regulations, not the regulations themselves. Synod still retains final authority over such regulations and has the right to instruct denominational staff and the minor assemblies should it believe that the collections of material or advice given in staff documents conflicts with the intention of synodical regulations.

T. That synod note the suspension of the published index of synodical decisions, considering that, due to technological advances, the original intention of the mandate to make synodical decisions readily available (*Acts of Synod 1956*, pp. 18-19; *Acts of Synod 1995*, p. 696) can be accomplished today in ways that make better use of staff time and financial resources (IV, C, 5, b).

U. That synod adopt the name "CRC Governance Handbook," replacing the title of the current Council of Delegates Governance Handbook, and recognize the distinction between portions under the authority of synod

and aspects of the handbook that describe the work of the ministry boards or that of the COD itself (IV, D).

*Grounds:*

1. The COD Governance Handbook was previously adopted in its entirety by synod (*Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 641).
2. The Governance Handbook contains significant elements concerning the operation of the ministry boards, which are technically distinct from the work of the COD (see *Acts of Synod 2022*, pp. 926-31).

V. That synod adopt proposed changes to the portions of the Governance Handbook that represent synod's mandate to the Council of Delegates (chap. 1, II, B) in keeping with Church Order Article 33-b, and other portions requiring synod's approval as indicated in Appendix C; and that synod acknowledge those portions of the mandate that reflect the legal and organizational structure of the ministry boards and related organizations (chap. 1, II, C and D) (IV, D).

*Grounds:*

1. This builds on the work done in the 2017 edition of the Governance Handbook by incorporating material from the mandate given by synod to the CRC's Board of Trustees (*Acts of Synod 1996*, pp. 536, 620-33), which has been done in practice but has never been formally incorporated into a mandate for the COD.
2. Church Order requires that committees of the assemblies (such as the COD) "shall be given well-defined mandates and shall submit all their actions to the next meeting of the assembly for approval" (Art. 33-b).
3. This clarifies the status of materials related to the COD Governance Handbook that were presented in draft form (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 633-634, 913, 982), with multiple revisions approved by synod (see *Acts of Synod 2024*, p. 803; *Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 607), though not formally adopted with the handbook in its entirety.
4. Although not all portions of the CRC Governance Manual are directly tied to synodical regulation (and some functions are restricted by national laws), ministry board members and the entire denomination would benefit from synod's formal acknowledgment of the primary responsibilities and work of a ministry board.

W. That synod note for information the list of changes adopted by the COD in the portions of the Governance Handbook under its authority (see [Appendix C](#) and section IV, D of this report).

X. That synod note that the section of the CRC Governance Handbook relating to the organization and function of the ministry boards is still under development and will be presented to synod for information upon completion (IV, D).

Y. That synod, in light of recommendations from the COD Task Force to Reduce Governance Costs (Appendix E), establish a one-year task force, working in close coordination with the classes, to review the current classis structure and make recommendations to Synod 2027 for classis consolidations and/or overall restructuring. This task force should consist of at least nine members, including someone from each of the six classical regions, classis leaders, someone with extensive synodical experience, someone with experience in organizational leadership, someone with a legal and/or financial background, a member of the COD Synodical Services Committee, and appropriate CRCNA staff while also honoring the diversity of the denomination (age, gender, ethnicity) (IV, F).

*Grounds:*

1. At this point in the life of our denomination, classis restructuring is necessary; however, it will require an additional task force to work through how that restructuring should take place.
2. Reducing the number of classes will result in additional cost savings due to the reduction in the number of delegates to synod and the COD.
3. Many classes are currently struggling to fill important roles and to engage in new ministry opportunities. Having fewer classes would increase the pool of resources (people and financial) for those roles and ministries, such as church planting and leadership development.
4. Having fewer classes would reduce the staff time needed for interacting with the classes, allowing time to focus on other denominational priorities.
5. Synod has previously utilized such a committee to manage the process of redistricting the classes (*Acts of Synod 1936*, pp. 37-38; *Acts of Synod 1937*, pp. 64, 104-5).

Z. That synod meet on a biennial basis after 2027, and that synod direct the COD to provide specific recommendations to Synod 2027 about the changes to the candidacy process, the process for approving key denominational leadership, and other matters that are currently handled by synod annually (IV, F). This will require the following change to Church Order Article 46-a (with additions indicated by underline and deletions by ~~striketrough~~):

Synod shall meet ~~annually~~ biennially, at a time and place determined by the previous synod. Each synod shall designate a church to convene the following synod.

*Grounds:*

1. This change would result in significant cost savings.
2. This change would allow for additional time to work on assigned tasks and for churches/classes to absorb/process synodical decisions.

3. The annual work of synod will still need to be processed. The specifics of how to do that are beyond the scope of the present task force and can be best addressed by the COD.

AA. That synod, in addition to approving the requests for special offerings contained in the Resonate Global Mission and World Renew reports, recommend that the churches receive one or more offerings for the following denominational agencies, institutions, and ministries: Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, Canadian Justice Ministries, ReFrame Ministries, and Thrive (V, D).

Council of Delegates of the  
Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Michael L. Ten Haken, chair

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## APPENDIX A

### Dignity Team Review

#### I. Background and methodology

The Council of Delegates, at its special meeting in lieu of Synod 2021, approved the purpose and composition of the Dignity Team as a group tasked with offering a pastoral response to abuse-of-power situations within the CRCNA (*Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council of Delegates 2021*, pp. 636-37; see *Agenda for Synod 2021*, pp. 63-71). Within the original resolutions adopted by the COD (and affirmed by synod; see *Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 932) was the instruction that “after three years, the COD would conduct a 360-degree evaluation, including some contact with users of this team, to determine its effectiveness and whether it is still needed. Continuation would depend on that assessment” (*Agenda for Synod 2021*, p. 67). This review, which has been delayed somewhat due to some initial hurdles in beginning the Dignity Team’s operation, is intended to fulfill synod’s instruction.

Because synod did not mandate a specific pattern for the review, this team decided to use the present methodology for evaluating the agencies, institutions, and ministries of the CRCNA (see *Agenda for Synod 2025*, pp. 453-56) as a template for the conversation about the Dignity Team’s effectiveness. The review was conducted by a panel consisting of two COD members (Rob Toornstra and Wendy Werkman), one non-COD member of the Dignity Team (Carel Geleynse), one representative from Thrive (Julia Rathbun), and one staff member from the Office of General Secretary (Joel Vande Werken). Roberta Vriesema was also part of this process in her role as director of partnership administration. Due to issues of confidentiality with persons who had approached the Dignity Team for support, it was not possible to conduct a true 360-degree evaluation, but the review team attempted to take into account the impacts of the Dignity Team on the people it served.

The review team met four times online during December 2025 and January 2026, including one meeting with the full Dignity Team, aiming to fulfill the request for an evaluation about the need to continue the work of this team as well as to address specific issues identified by synod about the ways in which this team would do its work.

## **II. General ministry evaluation**

As part of the evaluation process for ministry effectiveness, synod has suggested that an assessment involve a review of the synodical mandate for a particular ministry, of the range of the team's activities in light of the CRC's ministry milestones, and of metrics that can be helpful indicators of the team's progress (*Agenda for Synod 2025*, p. 454). This section of the report will briefly address these matters before making a preliminary recommendation about the value of the Dignity Team's continued work.

### *A. Review of synodical mandate*

The Dignity Team's mandate is summarized most clearly in its charter, approved by the COD and presented to Synod 2025: "to offer direction that ultimately encourages, builds up, and transforms the life of those persons who approach the Dignity Team because they feel they have been victimized by abuse of power in the CRCNA" (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 466). It is the review team's assessment that this statement accurately reflects the Dignity Team's work.

### *B. Range of Dignity Team activities and coordination*

The Dignity Team normally meets monthly via Zoom, and once a year in person (though not necessarily in conjunction with the fall COD meeting as the team's charter indicates). It often deals with cases involving abuse of power arising from a wide variety of original concerns. In some situations, the team finds itself addressing historic wrongs that for one reason or another have come to the surface again now. Most of the time, claimants have exhausted other ecclesiastical avenues and come to the Dignity Team as a last resort. The team sees itself first of all as a listening body, willing to acknowledge pain and hurt and only then to suggest potential avenues for resolution. They use the word "nimble" to describe their work (note its use in the Dignity Team Charter, *Acts of Synod 2025* p. 466), recognizing that the body has very limited formal authority but that their existence grants them the opportunity to speak to the official structures of the denomination in ways that advocate for persons who have been hurt.

The Dignity Team sees itself primarily as a kind of "ombudsman" whose role is to investigate concerns about systemic injustices and to suggest potential solutions to the persons who are affected. Its value, thus far, has been in its ability to stand somewhat outside the official systems and to speak to that system while simultaneously seeking to affirm the systemic goals of godly conduct that the CRC has affirmed. Often people who have been hurt by the church or its leaders are exhausted, feel abandoned by leaders and

members who are supposed to represent Christ to them, and lack the energy to carry their claims forward in any other setting. The Dignity Team provides a way of being heard and validated, though its work sometimes comes too late to bring about resolutions that reflect the expectations of the claimants.

#### *C. Measurement of ministry impact*

The Dignity Team recognizes that its work overlaps, in some ways, with that of other CRC structures: Thrive, the Judicial Code Committee, church visitors, official church discipline, and the various appeals procedures of Church Order Article 30. Where Dignity Team cases would be better served by those structures, the group seeks to direct claimants to those resources while continuing to provide pastoral support. But the Dignity Team notes that its cases are often ones that do not naturally fall within the system, where the primary need is to help a claimant feel heard and supported. Because the CRC's formal procedures often require a great deal of energy and knowledge in order to navigate concerns and overcome institutional inertia, claimants who come to the Dignity Team have felt unheard and unsupported.

While it is difficult to identify the precise impact of the Dignity Team's work, for many claimants the very existence of the Dignity Team as a place to be heard represents a significant part of God's healing work. Over the three years of its existence, the Dignity Team has received about three to four cases per year. Though it has seen only a small number of "resolutions" in the sense that we might pray for, the Dignity Team recognizes that the nature of pastoral care is that healing often takes a long time and that God's "resolution" for wrong does not always fit neatly into our expectations.

#### *D. Initial assessment*

The review team recognizes that the Dignity Team represents an "experiment" within our systems (to use the Dignity Team's own assessment of its work), created to address "cases that should not be ignored but may not warrant attention in one of the formal complaint channels" (see *Agenda for Synod 2021*, pp. 65-66). As such, it is still finding its place within the broad CRC complex of systems. At the same time, we recognize that a number of secular employers are also recognizing the potential for informal mechanisms to resolve disputes, developing groups similar to the Dignity Team. None of this *requires* that the CRC have a structure (even one intended to operate "nimble" and "informally") such as the Dignity Team, but the fact that others have seen value in such a device does speak to the matter of whether we continue the work of this team.

Synod 2025 instructed the COD to address concerns about "the scope of [the team's] role as a care provider" and about the "roles of local assemblies (applying Matthew 18 principles) in pastoral engagement" (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608). This instruction is relevant at this time, because it ties directly

into the consideration of whether the CRC continues this “experiment” for the long term. We already have mechanisms in place in our polity to handle admonition, discipline, and dispute resolution (see Church Order, Art. 30, 78-84, and their supplements). The Dignity Team recognizes this tension and has reiterated its desire that its work not be used as a replacement for the work of church assemblies. In fact, the Dignity Team has at times redirected cases to the church assemblies when it felt it was being asked to serve as an alternative decision-making body.

The review team recognizes that synod raises a valid concern, one that demands more reflection (see below, III, C). But we do not believe that this concern alone serves as a sufficient reason not to continue the Dignity Team’s work. In many ways, the existence of the Dignity Team stems from the difference between the ideal ways our formal systems ought to function and the actual ways in which they do function. Even in the church, our systems sometimes reflect the reality of sin. The Dignity Team has a role to play in identifying ways in which our systems *have* at times failed to reflect God’s design for his people in the church, and to help in finding ways for those systems to function better in this regard. Recognizing that this is an ongoing process, the review team has concluded that continuing the Dignity Team’s mandate for another five years would be appropriate while also maintaining the intention of trying to build denominational capacity for resolving long-standing hurts.

### **III. Particular requests from synod**

Having decided a general course of action, the review team also notes several specific issues that synod would like addressed if the work of the Dignity Team should continue.

#### *A. Limited terms of service*

Initial discussions about the Dignity Team recognized a need to address the “merits of . . . limited terms of service” (*Agenda for Synod 2021*, p. 67). The initial proposal for the Dignity Team envisioned three members; the COD then went on to appoint five members (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 935; compare *Agenda for Synod 2021*, p. 64), later establishing three-year renewable terms of service and adding a COD liaison (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 467). The members are appointed by the COD. The review team believes that the membership structure envisioned in the 2025 charter serves the denomination well and encourages both adequate continuity and turnover on the Dignity Team.

#### *B. Reporting structure of this team*

Initially it was envisioned that the Dignity Team would be “accountable to the COD” and make any reports and recommendations to the COD (*Agenda for Synod 2021*, pp. 64, 67); however, the COD also approved the placement of the Dignity Team “as reporting to the director of [Thrive]” (*Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council of Delegates 2021*, p. 636) while later suggesting that the team report “to the COD (through the Executive Committee) and to

synod” (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 467). These multiple references have caused some confusion (see *Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 471). The matter of recordkeeping has also come up at times over the years of the Dignity Team’s existence (*Agenda for Synod 2021*, p. 62; *Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 467). As a group dealing with sensitive issues, the Dignity Team does not share its records with the COD, synod, or other agencies but does maintain confidential files in ways consistent with denominational policies.

The review committee notes that the present structure, which is reflected in the charter presented to Synod 2025, seems to work reasonably well. This reporting structure gives the Dignity Team the ability to speak to the COD when necessary while also ensuring that the group has the ability to submit an annual report to synod. While the Dignity Team recognizes the importance of a good working relationship with Thrive staff, neither the Dignity Team nor Thrive believes it would be beneficial to merge the Dignity Team into the operations of an official denominational agency. Thus there are no changes recommended to the current charter in this regard.

### *C. Relationship with church assemblies*

Synod requested that the review team address concerns about the potential for the Dignity Team to serve as a replacement for the legitimate work of local assemblies (see *Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608). As noted above (in section II, D), this is a valid concern shared by the Dignity Team itself. The review team here joins the Dignity Team in affirming the legitimate authority of the church assemblies, and we encourage its continued desire to affirm the work of those structures in the eyes of the church. These mechanisms reflect our confessional convictions that formal discipline exists as a necessary part of church life, that God’s Spirit uses such processes at times to bring about repentance and restoration that might not occur otherwise, and that the assemblies of the church are the legitimate authorities ordained by God to oversee such processes (Belgic Confession, Art. 32; Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 85).

However, we also recognize that formal systems are not always the most appropriate place to begin. Our polity notes that mutual admonition is a responsibility first of all of the *members* of the church, not just its assemblies (Church Order, Art. 79). Synod has also observed in the past that informal structures may at times facilitate repentance and restoration in ways that might not be possible if the concerns were first addressed through the steps of formal discipline; in fact, in some cultures and contexts these informal structures are far more effective (see *Agenda for Synod 1991*, pp. 263-85; *Agenda for Synod 2005*, pp. 529-65; Church Order, Art. 65). Such an approach is not opposed to biblical principles; in fact, they represent an important application of Jesus’ instruction to “take one or two others” who might be able to help bring about reconciliation between brothers and sisters in Christ (Matt. 18:16).

The Dignity Team has stated that it has no desire to replace the role of church assemblies. At the same time, we observe that any structure, even an informal one, could be perceived on occasion as applying inappropriate influence in a given situation. This tension is inherent in the very existence of the Dignity Team, and its members operate with that tension well in mind. Where overlaps exist between their work and that of other church structures, the Dignity Team's desire is not to replace the ecclesiastical authorities or second-guess them but to enable them as much as possible to do their work. When structures such as church visitors, regional pastors, safe church teams, and other functionaries are serving faithfully in keeping with our vision for a godly Christian community, the need for an outside group such as the Dignity Team is diminished. We therefore affirm the Dignity Team's stated desire to direct cases to formal ecclesiastical bodies for resolution whenever possible. At the same time, we encourage the Dignity Team to continue looking for ways to enable our systems to faithfully minister, serve, and promote just resolutions where church members have been sinned against. We also encourage our church assemblies to increase their capacities to respond well in this work. The review team has suggested a minor addition to the Dignity Team's mandate to reaffirm this goal.

#### *D. Financial viability*

Finally, because the Dignity Team is a new ministry initiative, it is subject to the instruction of Synod 2016 that requires a plan for funding or sustaining the ministry, either within the confines of current denominational budgets or through an alternative funding source (*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 858-59). Currently the Dignity Team is operating as a special project beyond the normal budget of the CRC with annual expenditures of somewhat less than \$10,000 (USD). In order to provide sustainability for this resource, the review team recommends that the Dignity Team be given a line in the budget for the Office of General Secretary.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

As noted above in our preliminary assessment, the review team recognizes that the Dignity Team is a relatively new group within the CRC and thus has a kind of "experimental" quality to it. While recognizing that in many ways it overlaps other functions of church life for which we already have formal structures (classis functionaries, Judicial Code Committee, Thrive, and other denominational staff), we also recognize the value of a kind of "ombudsman" that is in touch with denominational systems yet with a "nimble" quality that enables it pastorally to serve people who have been hurt by that system. Our ultimate desire would be to enable those systems to function more fully as instruments of Spirit-led discernment and response to the effects of sin and injustice that exist, sadly enough, even in Christ's church.

For this reason, the review team recommends that the Dignity Team be continued for another five years, with a particular focus on having the team

help to develop capacity in our denominational systems to address issues of dignity and respect. The review team also recommends another review in five years, with an instruction to the Office of General Secretary to begin the review process well ahead of the due date to allow for robust discussion of the issues identified in this review.

The review team is thankful for the time and effort invested by the Dignity Team in seeking to heal deep hurts in the name of Christ. Although no system will completely enable the church to care for one another perfectly this side of heaven, the Dignity Team represents an important effort by the CRCNA to live out its commitment to carry out its ministry in ways that reflect God's bestowal of dignity on all members of the church. We believe this mission remains a valuable contribution, and we pray for God's blessings on the work that is done in this regard.

## **V. Recommendations**

A. That synod thank those who have served on the Dignity Team and affirm its work by extending its mandate for another five years, with a particular goal during that time for the Dignity Team to identify ways of strengthening the work of church assemblies and their functionaries to respond more effectively to issues of abuse and systemic hurt which the Dignity Team was formed to address.

### *Grounds:*

1. There is a continued need for this kind of a structure within our system, where victims of abuse and systemic hurt can simply be heard in a pastoral way.
2. This approach recognizes the proper role of the assemblies to provide leadership in bringing healing to situations of abuse and systemic hurt. Although some assemblies do this well, other assemblies are uncertain about how best to address these issues. This review period gives the assemblies time to take greater responsibility for these matters so that the work of the Dignity Team may be assumed by these assemblies.
3. The Dignity Team can be a resource for training and support of church assemblies in practices such as restorative justice and reconciliation.

B. That synod commission another review of the Dignity Team beginning in the fall of 2029, and reporting to Synod 2031, to continue the discussion about issues identified in this report and especially the work of equipping assemblies for more faithful ministry, as well as other matters related to the team's charter.

### *Grounds:*

1. This provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the Dignity Team in equipping the church assemblies to address situations of acute pastoral care and deep hurt.

2. Regular review of denominational structures is an important part of the stewardship of our collective resources.
- C. That synod approve the following changes to the charter of the Dignity Team (with additions indicated by underline and deletions by ~~striketrough~~):

*Changes to section f. Team Procedure:*

- 2) Meeting locations: Meetings will ordinarily be held virtually. Once a year, ~~in conjunction with the fall COD meeting,~~ an in-person meeting of the Dignity Team may be held to welcome new members, build relationships together, and meet with parties whose case(s) would especially benefit from meeting in person. In special circumstances, at the approval of the general secretary or the director of ecclesiastical governance *where cost is involved*, other in-person meetings may be held.
- 3) While recognizing the value of a “nimble” approach, the team will also keep in mind the appropriate role of consistories and church assemblies (Church Order, Art. 25-b, 78-81) and will attempt to work with these bodies when possible to bring about resolution to cooperatively ensure a faithful application of biblical principles (cf. Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1-2). Where there is a disagreement about the appropriateness of the Dignity Team’s involvement, a concerned assembly may bring the matter to the assembly next in line.

*Grounds:*

1. The instruction to meet in conjunction with a specific COD meeting is overly specific.
2. The added subpoint recognizes the Dignity Team’s understanding of its role relative to the authority of the church assemblies and responds to concerns expressed about this relationship (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608).

D. That synod note the COD’s instruction to the Office of General Secretary to include the Dignity Team’s operations in the denominational budget in keeping with the funding principles identified by synod (*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 858-59).

E. That synod remind all our church assemblies, committees, and boards of the principles of responsible use of authority that ought to shape our ministry and actions, especially as they relate to shaping a culture of dignity and respect, and to take greater responsibility for these matters so that the work of the Dignity Team may increasingly be assumed by these assemblies.

*Grounds:*

1. The assemblies are the rightful place for such leadership in the denomination, as embodied in the ideals for godly use of authority identified in our Covenant for Officebearers and our Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders.

2. Where these biblical ideals truly shape our ministry, the need for additional bodies which duplicate the functions of other denominational groups is reduced.
- F. That synod dismiss the review team with thanks, noting that issues related to terms of service, reporting structure, recordkeeping, relationship to the assemblies, and funding have been addressed as instructed by previous synods.

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## APPENDIX B

### Proposed Changes to the Rules for Synodical Procedure

#### I. Introduction

Synod 2025 approved a review of the Rules for Synodical Procedure with regard to “shifts in the nature of study committees, the role of the convening church of synod, the duties of officers, and issues of consistency between the Rules for Synodical Procedure and other governance documents” (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608).

The Office of General Secretary conducted this review in the summer and fall of 2025, inviting COD members to provide further input as well. A number of changes have been proposed to the document, including the following:

- Elimination of the expectation that synod provide opportunity for ministry-related learning (Introduction, A, 2, c)
- Clearer explanation of the role of the convening church and the process for electing officers (II, B)
- Updated description of the work of the clerks of synod (III, C)
- Reorganization of the material related to advisers to synod (IV, B)
- Removal of the parliamentarian position (IV, B, 2, h)
- Reordering of the material related to matters legally before synod (former section VI), including the adjustment of deadlines for the submission of study reports
- Clarification of the status of the Program Committee report (former section VII, A, 5)
- Updated description of the work of the advisory committees (former section VII, B)
- New procedures for the appointment and work of study committees (former section VII, D)
- Removal of the Judicial Code from the Rules for Synodical Procedure (former section VII, F)
- The removal of various references to past synodical decisions supporting particular rules

Some of the above updates propose a shift in practices previously mandated by synod. Thus, adoption of the revised Rules for Synodical Procedure as currently proposed would, in effect, also revise some existing instructions of synod, as noted below with grounds for revision:

A. The appointment of a parliamentarian each year is no longer needed at synod (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 810).

*Grounds:*

1. Changes at Calvin Theological Seminary have resulted in there no longer being a “faculty adviser for church polity,” requiring additional time and expense from what was originally envisioned in the annual appointment of a parliamentarian.
2. Although past parliamentarians have provided helpful advice on procedural matters, such a role is not strictly necessary “to assist synod in doing its work efficiently” (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 810).
3. Since 2019, when the parliamentarian position was first adopted, other staff roles in the Office of General Secretary have taken on some of the responsibilities initially covered by the parliamentarian.

B. The deadline for distribution of study committee reports would shift to December 1 from November 1, revising the decision of Synod 1989 (*Acts of Synod 1989*, p. 444)

*Ground:* A later deadline would give study committees more time to complete their work without significantly affecting the opportunity of churches to comment on such materials. The distribution date was December 1 prior to 1989, and advances in digital communication make it easier to forward study committee reports to the churches today than in previous years.

C. The director of ecclesiastical governance would be added to the Program Committee, revising the decision of Synod 1994, which appointed only the general secretary to this role (*Acts of Synod 1994*, p. 433).

*Ground:* The director of ecclesiastical governance plays a vital role in formulating the agenda for synod, and this work would be enhanced by the official addition of this role to the Program Committee.

D. The nature of the Program Committee report would be clarified in keeping with the practice regarding its use in recent years as a confidential document prior to its consideration by synod.

*Ground:* In keeping with concerns expressed by Synod 2019 about pressure on delegates in the forms of outside lobbying (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 816) and social media (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 811), such a step would help to protect the deliberative nature of synod.

E. Rules distinguishing the work of task forces and study committees would be significantly changed, revising the work of Synod 2016 (*Acts of Synod 2016*, pp. 827-29).

*Ground:* Recent synods have taken an increasingly flexible approach to the appointment of study committees, task forces, teams, and staff consultations, rendering these rules difficult to apply. This change would allow synod greater latitude in determining the composition and rules under which the groups it commissions to study a certain subject ought to function, as was the case in our earlier history as a denomination.

F. The Judicial Code (reproduced there in part) would be removed from the Rules for Synodical Procedure, revising the decision of Synod 1977 to include it there as well as in the Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c (*Acts of Synod 1977*, p. 55).

*Ground:* This change would reduce the potential for duplication or conflict with the full version of the Judicial Code provided in the Supplement, Church Order Article 30-c.

## II. Proposed changes

The proposed changes are reflected in the document presented below (with additions indicated by underline and deletions indicated by ~~striketrough~~).

## Rules for Synodical Procedure

### I. Introduction

A. *Synod: What It Is and What It Does*

What is synod?

[*unchanged*]

What does synod do?

[*unchanged*]

[*section 1 unchanged*]

2. Secondary functions of synod include the following:

- a. Conduct orientation for all delegates and advisers.
- b. Provide a denomination-wide context for worship, celebration, and fellowship.
- c. ~~Create opportunities for ministry-related learning via seminars, workshops, and discussion groups.~~
- cd. Occasionally make known, via letters or other forms of communication, the denomination's position on current issues or affairs.

(*Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 807-808)

### II. Conducting Synod—Convening Through Adjourning

A. Synod shall convene virtually two weeks prior to the in-person meetings and be constituted as prescribed by the Church Order, Articles 45 and 46, ~~and the decisions of Synods 2000 and 2019~~. The virtual convening session will include a condensed time of worship and the election of officers.

- B. Each synod shall designate a convening church ~~whose duty it shall be to announce the next succeeding synod in the official publications of the church, three months before the date of meeting.~~ with the following duties:
1. Provide a president pro tem, the minister (or counselor in the event of a vacancy), to do the following:
    - a. call synod to order
    - b. conduct the opening devotions
    - c. declare synod to be in session, provided that a quorum (i.e. two-thirds of the membership) is present
    - d. facilitate the election of officers
      - i) The officers of synod shall be chosen from a slate of nominees by the delegates from their own number, by ballot, in the following order: president, vice president, first clerk, and second clerk. Whoever receives a majority of the valid votes cast shall be elected.
      - ii) At each step in the election process the number of votes shall be read, and synod shall decide which numbers shall be included on the next ballot. After that decision has been made, the names corresponding to the numbers shall be read in alphabetical order.
    - e. Introduce the newly elected officers
  2. Plan and lead the opening worship service of synod with support from the Office of General Secretary and other denominational agencies.
  3. Plan and lead the Sunday Synodical Worship Service with support from the Office of General Secretary and other denominational agencies. This should use local congregations as much as possible in the planning and implementation of the service, reflecting our diversity. This service will include communion and an offering for denominational ministries Ministry Shares and will be held at a location determined by the Office of General Secretary dependent on the location of synod for any given year.
- C. ~~The Sunday Synodical Worship Service shall be planned by the Synod Worship Planning Committee, using local congregations as much as possible in the planning and implementation of the service, adhering to previously adopted guidelines (e.g., including communion, reflecting our diversity, etc.). All members of synod are expected to attend this worship service.~~
- (Amended Acts of Synod 2019, p. 803)*
- D. ~~The minister of the convening church (or in the event of a vacancy, its counselor) shall officiate as president pro tem. The duties shall be:~~
1. ~~On the appointed day, and at the appointed time and place, the president pro tem shall call synod to order, and conduct the opening devotions.~~

~~2.—Thereafter the president pro tem shall call for the prescribed credentials of the delegates. Provided that a quorum, i.e., two-thirds of the membership, is present, the synodical assembly shall be declared to have opened.~~

~~3.—The officers of synod shall be chosen from a slate of nominees by the delegates from their own number, by ballot, in the following order: president, vice president, first clerk, and second clerk. Whoever receives a majority of the valid votes cast shall be elected.~~

~~At each step in the election process the number of votes shall be read, and synod shall decide which numbers shall be included on the next ballot. After that decision has been made, the names corresponding to the numbers shall be read in alphabetical order.~~

~~4.—The president pro tem shall thereupon introduce the president and the other officers to the assembly.~~

~~EC.~~ While synod is in session, its members may not leave the assembly without permission from the chair; neither is it permissible for any member to withdraw from the assembly and return home without the consent of officers.

~~FD.~~ Synod shall adjourn no later than midafternoon on the fourth day of plenary sessions. Unfinished business can be deferred to the agenda of the following synod or to the Council of Delegates if necessary.

*(Acts of Synod 2019, pp. 803)*

~~GE.~~ Synod begins each morning with a time of worship planned by denominational staff and a committee of delegates appointed by the program committee of synod, with the exception of the final day when synod concludes with worship. The Synod Worship Planning Committee will be composed of a diverse group of staff, delegates and advisers to synod and make use of the gifts of synod's attendees as much as possible to carry out worship.

*(Acts of Synod 2019, pp. 803)*

~~HE.~~ Prayer is central to worship and shall be an intentional feature of synod's work sessions.

*(Acts of Synod 2019, pp. 803)*

~~IG.~~ Synod should be intentional about providing opportunity for purposeful dialogue. ~~Synod 2019 listed a number of ways that healthy dialogue at synod can be promoted.~~

*(Acts of Synod 2019, pp. 808)*

H. The synod news office will prepare reports of synodical activities and decisions for the benefit of the churches and members of the Christian Reformed Church.

### III. Duties of Officers

The officers of synod work together to lead the delegates through each session of synod, making decisions with regard to order and decorum.

Together the officers will determine the following:

1. length of speeches and visibility of the time clock
2. whether a session of synod is open or closed to the public
3. when synod enters executive and strict executive sessions
4. appointment of a Minutes Review Committee
5. appointment of the Sergeant at Arms

*[sections A-B unchanged]*

#### C. *The First Clerk and Second Clerk*

1. The first clerk shall each day call the roll immediately after the opening devotions.
2. The clerk shall ~~keep an exact record of the synodical proceedings~~ daily review the record of each session of synod with the Minutes Review Committee as assigned by the officers of synod. This record shall contain:
  - a. Opening and closing of sessions and roll call;
  - b. All main motions whether carried or defeated; all appeals whether sustained or not sustained;
  - c. All reports of advisory committees and all decisions of synod;
  - d. The names of ecumenical delegates and others who address synod;
  - e. Any document, any phase of discussion on the floor of synod, or any address that synod by a majority vote decides to insert into the minutes.
3. The record shall not contain:
  - a. Any rejected motion except when it is a main motion;
  - b. Any motion that is withdrawn;
  - c. Any disclosure of names in cases where such disclosure is judged to be potentially damaging to their reputation.
- ~~4. The clerks will be responsible to monitor the speaker queue, voting platform, new motions and amended motions, and the communication of the results to the president of synod. The minutes of each day will be examined and proofread by a small committee appointed by the officers of synod. The edited and proofread minutes will be posted in a public place where they can be read by delegates, and copies will be made available to delegates upon request.~~
5. The clerks will be responsible to communicate between synod staff and the president of synod regarding daily schedule and announcements for the body of synod.

6. The second clerk shall serve in the absence of the first clerk. The second clerk shall also render all possible assistance to the first clerk as circumstances may require.

#### **IV. Duties of Nondelegated Synodical Functionaries**

*[section A unchanged]*

##### *B. Advisers to Synod*

~~Synod 2014 acknowledged the importance of advisers in the work of synod and affirmed the intent to select all future faculty advisers from a pool of qualified personnel. The primary criteria for the selection of all faculty advisers shall be their knowledge and expertise as it pertains to the issues on the agenda of a particular synod. In the case of ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives, the pool of selection will, at least in part, depend on recommendations received from the churches and classes.~~

*(Acts of Synod 2014, p. 537; 2015, p. 673)*

##### 1. Classifications of Advisers to Synod

- a. Up to seven faculty advisers, but no less than five, shall be selected from among the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary. The primary criteria for the selection of all faculty advisers shall be their knowledge and expertise as it pertains to the issues on the agenda of a particular synod. The following general appointment procedures shall be followed:
  - 1) The general secretary shall, in consultation with the Program Committee of synod, at the earliest possible date determine the theological expertise that will be needed for any given year, and in consultation with the administration of Calvin Theological Seminary, select faculty members with the particular expertise needed for that year. The administration of Calvin Theological Seminary shall, in consultation with the general secretary of the CRCNA, identify the faculty members available to serve as advisers to synod in a particular year, depending on the needs of synod and the expertise of the faculty members.
  - 2) Advisers shall be assigned to an advisory committee by the Program Committee of synod as proposed by the general secretary.
  - 3) The parameter of service of the adviser, in advisory committee or plenary session, is to be in keeping with the general regulations of synod.
- b. Ethnic advisers are representative voices of ethnic minority communities in the membership of the CRC that are not adequately represented in the delegations by the classes.

- c. Women advisers provide gender diversity to the assembly and enrich the work of synod. Up to seven such women nonvoting advisers may be appointed, per the rules adopted by synod.
- d. Young adult representatives are representative voices of the young adult membership (ages 18-26) within the CRC that are not represented in the delegations by the classes.
- e. Staff consultants are members of the executive staff of the denomination serving in association with the Office of General Secretary and designated by the general secretary, in consultation with the Program Committee of synod, to serve the assembly of synod. The following general procedures shall be followed:
  - 1) Procedural advice for all matters on synod's agenda shall be the responsibility of the general secretary or his/her designee.
  - 2) When the general secretary assigns a staff consultant to serve an advisory committee, then a faculty adviser may not need to be assigned to the same advisory committee.
  - 3) The parameter of service of the staff consultant is restricted to the particular area of their expertise. This provision shall apply to both serving in the advisory committee and in the plenary sessions of synod.
- f. Agency and institution board representatives: Normally the agency/institution board presidents, the agency directors, and the presidents of the educational institutions shall have the privilege of access to the advisory committee of synod that deals with the report of the agency or institution they represent. In addition, they shall be granted the privilege of the floor at the plenary session of synod when their respective report is discussed. The presidents of Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin University are designated as advisers to synod with respect to issues that affect their respective institutions.
- g. Council of Delegates of the CRCNA (COD) representation shall consist of the chair of the COD, at least one other member of the COD Executive Committee (ensuring representation from both Canada and the United States), the general secretary of the CRCNA, and such other members of the denominational executive staff as are needed to serve synod and its advisory committees. They shall have the privilege of meeting with the advisory committees that address Council of Delegates agenda matters as well as the privilege of the floor when Council of Delegates matters are addressed in plenary session.
- h. Ecumenical delegates from churches in communion shall be given the privilege of the floor, with the right to speak on matters before synod, and shall also be given the privilege of visiting meetings of advisory committees with the consent of the chair of the committee.

2. Appointments of Ethnic and Women Advisers and Young Adult Representatives
  - a. The Council of Delegates shall appoint the ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives each year at its February meeting. Nominations for these adviser positions shall be gathered by the general secretary from suggestions offered by the churches.
  - b. Ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives shall be members in good standing within the Christian Reformed Church with demonstrated leadership capabilities within their church communities.
  - c. The voices of ethnic minority members and women in the CRCNA will be supplemented by the appointment of up to seven nonvoting advisers from that group when the average number of delegates from that group in the previous three years is fewer than twenty-five. When advisers are appointed, in no instance shall a particular group have fewer than two advisers.
  - d. Up to seven Young Adult Representatives may be appointed each year with an attempt made to appoint some advisers (up to three) who are able to serve a second time. This means that there will be some experienced advisers and some new advisers at each synod.
  - e. Expenses for travel, lodging, and meals will be paid by synod.
  - f. In keeping with the practice of some classes, remuneration (at a rate set by the general secretary from time to time) will be available for ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives who are financially disadvantaged through service to synod.
3. Regulations for Advisers to Synod
  - a. Advisers shall observe and honor the conditions of their appointment.
  - b. Advisers shall normally be present for the duration of synod's meetings.
  - c. Advisers shall normally have access only to the advisory committee to which they are assigned by the program committee. A request to speak to, or be present at, another advisory committee is to be processed through, and approval is at the discretion of, the chair and reporter of that advisory committee.
  - d. Faculty advisers shall participate in synod's deliberations in plenary session to give advice and theological expertise.
  - e. Ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives may participate in synod's deliberations in plenary session, representing the voice of their advisory group to the issue being addressed.

- ~~f. Advisers may, within the normal rotation of discussion, speak to issues brought to the plenary sessions of synod by the advisory committees but must do so in an advisory capacity and as a service to the delegates of synod in their deliberations.~~
- ~~g. Advisers are not allowed to vote in the advisory committees they serve nor in plenary sessions of synod.~~
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  - ~~a. Advisers shall observe and honor the conditions of their appointment.~~
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  - ~~d. Faculty advisers shall participate in synod's deliberations in plenary session to give advice and theological expertise.~~
  - ~~e. Ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives may participate in synod's deliberations in plenary session, representing the voice of their advisory group to the issue being addressed.~~
  - ~~f. Advisers may, within the normal rotation of discussion, speak to issues brought to the plenary sessions of synod by the advisory committees but must do so in an advisory capacity and as a service to the delegates of synod in their deliberations.~~
  - ~~g. Advisers are not allowed to vote in the advisory committees they serve nor in plenary sessions of synod.~~
- (Acts of Synod 2014, pp. 539-40; 2015, p. 673)*
- ~~h. General Considerations for Ethnic and Women Advisers and Young Adult Representatives~~
  - ~~1) An attempt will be made to appoint some advisers (up to three) who are able to serve two-year terms. This means that there will be some experienced advisers and some new advisers at each synod.~~
  - ~~2) Expenses for travel, lodging, and meals will be paid by synod.~~
  - ~~3) In keeping with the practice of some classes, remuneration (at a rate set by the general secretary from time to time) will be available for ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives who are financially disadvantaged through service to synod.~~
- ~~i. Qualification of Ethnic and Women Advisers and Young Adult Representatives~~

~~Ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives shall be members in good standing within the Christian Reformed Church with demonstrated leadership capabilities within their church communities.~~

~~j.—Appointment of Ethnic and Women Advisers and Young Adult Representatives~~

~~The Council of Delegates shall appoint the ethnic and women advisers and young adult representatives each year at its February meeting. Nominations for these adviser positions shall be gathered by the general secretary from suggestions offered by the churches.~~

~~2.—Classifications of Advisers to Synod~~

~~a.—Faculty advisers shall be selected from among the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary. The following general appointment procedures shall be followed:~~

- ~~1) The general secretary shall, in consultation with the Program Committee of synod, at the earliest possible date determine the theological expertise that will be needed for any given year, and in consultation with the administration of Calvin Theological Seminary, select faculty members with the particular expertise needed for that year. The administration of Calvin Theological Seminary shall, in consultation with the general secretary of the CRCNA, identify the faculty members available to serve as advisers to synod in a particular year, depending on the needs of synod and the expertise of the faculty members. The number of faculty advisers shall ordinarily not be fewer than five.~~
- ~~2) Advisers shall be assigned to an advisory committee by the Program Committee of synod as proposed by the general secretary.~~
- ~~3) The parameter of service of the adviser, in advisory committee or plenary session, is to be in keeping with the general regulations of synod.~~

~~b.—Ethnic advisers are representative voices of ethnic minority communities in the membership of the CRC that are not adequately represented in the delegations by the classes. Up to seven such ethnic minority nonvoting advisers may be appointed, subject to the selection rules as adopted by Synod 2005. The number of seven (or proportion of) such persons shall be appointed as long as the total number of ethnic minority delegates is less than twenty five persons. The number of ethnic minority advisers appointed shall be less than seven if the number of voting delegates from ethnic minority origin exceeds eighteen delegates. However, in no instance shall the appointment of ethnic minority advisers be less than two. In order to provide for an~~

appropriate notification timeline for those appointed to serve, the number of ethnic minority advisers to be appointed shall be based on a previous three-year rolling average of diversity presence at synod.

1) ~~Advisers shall be assigned to an advisory committee as proposed by the general secretary and approved by the Program Committee of synod.~~

2) ~~The parameter of service of the adviser, in advisory committee or plenary session, is to be in keeping with the general regulations of synod.~~

e. ~~Women advisers provide gender diversity to the assembly and enrich the work of synod. Up to seven such women nonvoting advisers may be appointed, per the following selection rules as instructed by Synod 2015. The number of seven (or proportion of) such advisers shall be appointed as long as the total number of women delegates is less than twenty-five persons. The number of women advisers appointed shall be less than seven if the number of women voting delegates exceeds eighteen delegates. However, in no instance shall the appointment of women advisers be less than two. In order to provide for an appropriate notification timeline for those appointed to serve, the number of women advisers to be appointed shall be based on a previous three-year rolling average of women delegated to synod.~~

1) ~~Advisers shall be assigned to an advisory committee as proposed by the general secretary and approved by the Program Committee of synod.~~

2) ~~The parameter of service of the adviser, in advisory committee or plenary session, is to be in keeping with the general regulations of synod.~~

d. ~~Young adult representatives are representative voices of the young adult membership (ages 18-26) within the CRC that are not represented in the delegations by the classes. Appointment of these representatives to synod is made according to the guidelines previously adopted by synod.~~

1) ~~Young adult representatives shall be assigned to an advisory committee as proposed by the general secretary and approved by the Program Committee of synod.~~

2) ~~The parameter of service of the young adult representative, in advisory committee or plenary session, is to be in keeping with the general regulations of synod.~~

e. ~~Staff consultants are members of the executive staff of the denomination serving in association with the office of general secretary and designated by the general secretary, in consultation with the Program Committee of synod, to serve the assembly of synod. The following general procedures shall be followed:~~

- 1) ~~Procedural advice for all matters on synod's agenda shall be the responsibility of the general secretary or his/her designee.~~
  - 2) ~~When the general secretary assigns a staff consultant to serve an advisory committee, then a faculty adviser may not need to be assigned to the same advisory committee.~~
  - 3) ~~The parameter of service of the staff consultant is restricted to the particular area of their expertise. This provision shall apply to both serving in the advisory committee and in the plenary sessions of synod.~~
- f. ~~*Agency and institution board representatives:* Normally the agency/institution board presidents, the agency directors, and the presidents of the educational institutions shall have the privilege of access to the advisory committee of synod that deals with the report of the agency or institution they represent. In addition, they shall be granted the privilege of the floor at the plenary session of synod when their respective report is discussed. The presidents of Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin University are designated as advisers to synod with respect to issues that affect their respective institutions.~~
- g. ~~*Council of Delegates of the CRCNA (COD) representation* shall consist of the chair of the COD, at least one other member of the COD Executive Committee (ensuring representation from both Canada and the United States), the general secretary of the CRCNA, and such other members of the denominational executive staff as are needed to serve synod and its advisory committees. They shall have the privilege of meeting with the advisory committees that address Council of Delegates agenda matters as well as the privilege of the floor when Council of Delegates matters are addressed in plenary session.~~
- h. ~~A *parliamentarian* shall be appointed each year by the Program Committee of synod in advance of synod. The duties of the parliamentarian shall serve synod by advising the president with regard to appropriate procedure related to Church Order and the Rules for Synodical Procedure, responding to procedural challenges from the floor, and serving with the officers of synod when complicated procedural processes arise. The person appointed should have demonstrated expertise in Church Order and meeting management, should be stationed in close proximity to the officers and other staff on the floor of synod, would have the right to challenge the chair related to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, and would provide training to the officers upon their election as well as in the moment advice. This position could be filled by the faculty adviser for church polity. There is no limit to the number of one year appointments the parliamentarian may serve.~~

*(Acts of Synod 2014, pp. 537-39, 576; 2015, p. 673; 2017, p. 641; 2019, p. 810)*

## **~~V. Ecumenical Delegates And Reporters Of Church Periodicals~~**

~~A. Ecumenical delegates from churches in communion shall be given the privilege of the floor, with the right to speak on matters before synod, and shall also be given the privilege of visiting meetings of advisory committees with the consent of the chairman of the committee.~~

*(Acts of Synod 1975, p. 39)*

~~B. The task of the synodical news office is to prepare reports of synodical activities and decisions for the benefit of the churches and members of the Christian Reformed Church.~~

## **VI. Matters Legally Before Synod**

### *A. Definitions*

#### **1. Appeal**

~~An appeal is a procedure by which a decision or action of an assembly, board, agency, or committee is brought to the appropriate assembly for review in the light of existing policies and standards of the church.~~

#### **2. Communication**

~~A communication is a document presenting information, ideas, thoughts, opinions, complaints, or objections for consideration of the assemblies. A communication is distinguished from an overture in that an overture proposes specific action, and a communication does not. One type of communication is a protest, which expresses a complaint or objection to a decision or course of action followed by an assembly. An assembly is not required to take any action with respect to a communication.~~

#### **3. Overture**

~~An overture is a formal written proposal sent to an assembly requesting adoption or amendment of a policy or other legislative action by the assembly.~~

#### **4. Report**

~~A report is a document of a board, committee, or agency of an assembly indicating the work performed in response to assembly mandates and presenting recommendations for assembly action.~~

*AB. Following is a list of matters legally before synod.*

#### **1. Gravamina**

~~(For guidelines and regulations see Church Order Supplement, Article 5.)~~

#### **12. Reports**

A report is either:

a. a document of a board, standing committee, or agency indicating the work performed in response to assembly mandates and presenting recommendations for assembly action.

b. rReports of a committees or, including boards, appointed by a previous synods.

### 23. Overtures and Communications to Synod

a. A communication is a document presenting information, ideas, thoughts, opinions, complaints, or objections for consideration of the assemblies. A communication is distinguished from an overture in that an overture proposes specific action, and a communication does not. One type of communication is a protest, which expresses a complaint or objection to a decision or course of action followed by an assembly. An assembly is not required to take any action with respect to a communication.

b. An overture is a formal written proposal sent to an assembly requesting adoption or amendment of a policy or other legislative action by the assembly.

ca. Overtures and communications are legally before synod when sent from a classis (whether originated by or adopted by a classis) or from an assembly organized according to Article 44-b of the Church Order.

*(Acts of Synod 1993, p. 574)*

db. Overtures and communications which have failed to gain adoption of a council and/or classis may also be judged as legally before synod when ~~but which~~ an individual or council desires to submit them for synod's consideration:

- 1) Overtures and communications from a council (whether originated by or adopted by council) which have been submitted to classis but not adopted by classis as its own.
- 2) Overtures and communications of an individual which have been submitted to council and classis but which have not been adopted by either council or classis.
- 3) Overtures and communications of an individual which were submitted to council, adopted by council as its own, and submitted to classis by council, but which classis has not adopted as its own, which council has not submitted to synod, and which the initiating individual submits to synod.

ee. Assemblies and members should refrain from overtures, appeals, or communications which are repetitious or mere expressions of agreement or disagreement with matters already on the agenda of synod.

The general secretary is authorized to omit such items from the published *Agenda*. In such cases they shall merely be listed and accepted as communications. The senders shall be notified, and their materials shall be given to one of the advisory committees of synod to be received as information. Matters received as information will not ordinarily be mentioned in advisory committee reports or the *Acts of Synod*.

#### 34. Appeals in Which the Judicial Code Has Not Been Invoked

An appeal is a procedure by which a decision or action of an assembly, board, agency, or committee is brought to the appropriate assembly for review in the light of existing policies and standards of the church.

(For procedural rules governing appeals, see Supplement, Article 30-a-30-b, Part B.)

#### ~~5. Appeals and Other Matters Properly Presented to Synod under the Provisions of the Judicial Code~~

~~(See Supplement, Article 30-c for the Judicial Code.)~~

#### ~~6. Application for Candidacy by Persons Not Recommended by the Candidacy Committee~~

~~(For the applicable procedural rules see Supplement, Article 30-b, Part A.)~~

#### 4. Gravamina

(For guidelines and regulations see Church Order Supplement, Article 5.)

*[sections 7-8 become sections 5-6 — unchanged]*

#### 79. The Published *Agenda* and Study Committee Reports

Study committee reports shall be filed with the general secretary on or before ~~September~~ November 15, and the general secretary shall distribute them to the churches no later than ~~November~~ December 1. The *Agenda* shall be published not later than early April. It shall include reports of standing, study, and special committees; overtures of classes, councils, or individuals; published appeals; notices of nonpublished appeals; a list of communications; the names of the delegates; and pertinent announcements, with the understanding, however, that the Council of Delegates, upon recommendation of the general secretary, may, for good cause, determine not to print an item or to print an abbreviated version. If an abbreviated version is published, the entire item shall be forwarded to the appropriate advisory committee of synod. Items not published shall be listed in the *Agenda*. All such material shall be in the hands of the general secretary not later than the following deadlines: ~~September~~ November 15 for study committee reports; February 15 for the reports of standing committees and authorized representatives; ten days after conclusion of board meetings for board reports, but not later than March 1; and March 15 for overtures and appeals.

*[sections 10-13 become sections 8-11 — unchanged]*

### **VII. Synodical Committees**

#### A. *Program Committee*

##### 1. Members

- a. The Program Committee shall be composed of the officers of the previous synod, the general secretary of the Christian Reformed Church, and the director of ecclesiastical governance.

- b. In case of a vacancy on this committee, the Council of Delegates shall appoint another member.

*[sections 2-3 unchanged]*

4. Information on Delegates

- a. The stated clerk of every classis shall forward an information sheet on each synodical delegate to the general secretary of the Christian Reformed Church before March 15. Synod encourages suggestions, including biographical information, for those delegates qualified and willing to serve as an officer of synod.
- b. These information sheets shall give answer to the following questions:

For the minister delegates—

- 1) To which previous synod(s) were you delegated, if any?
- 2) ~~At such synod(s), on which committee(s) did you serve?~~
- 23) Of what denominational boards, standing committees, classical and/or local committees, or study committees are you or have you been a member?
- 4) ~~Of what classical and/or local committees are you or have you been a member?~~
- 35) What are your areas of special interest in the work of synod?
- 46) What other data do you wish to submit that will aid in being assigned to an advisory committee of synod?

For the elder and deacon delegates—

- 1) The same questions as listed for minister delegates.
- 2) What is your present occupation?
- 3) What have been your previous occupations, if any?

5. Report of the Program Committee

- a. A confidential written report of the Program Committee shall be distributed to all synodical delegates, staff consultants, advisers to synod, agency and educational institution representatives, the COD chair and vice chair, and the editor of *The Banner* before May 2515.
- b. This report shall be submitted for possible change and adoption as one of the initial items of synodical business.

*(Acts of Synod 1970, pp. 56-57; Acts of Synod 1972, p. 14)*

B. *The Advisory Committees*

1. *Status* of these committees. Advisory committees (except for the Judicial Code Committee) serve only for the duration of synod, following the adoption of the Program Committee Report, for the purpose of facilitat-

ing the work of synod. The advisory committees shall summarize matters before them and formulate recommendations with respect to these matters.

2. *Organization and rules* governing these committees:
  - a. ~~The person first named at the appointment of the committee shall be its chairperson, and the one named second its reporter. The Program Committee will designate the chair and reporter for each committee. An alternate chairperson and an alternate reporter will be appointed named for each committee to fill the role if the assigned chair or reporter is elected to serve as an officer, except the Judicial Code Committee.~~
  - b. The chairperson shall call the committee together, preside at its meetings, and see that it functions properly.
  - c. ~~As a closed meeting,~~ Delegates and advisers shall follow guidelines to avoid inappropriate use of social media contact with nondelegates during advisory committee meetings, because such use might compromise the transparency and integrity of the deliberative process.

*(Acts of Synod 2019, pp. 811-12)*
  - d. Any member of synod may appear before any committee for the purpose of speaking to the committee about any matter referred to it at the discretion of the chair. This includes any staff consultant, adviser, delegate, or other such person named in the Program Committee Report.

*[sections e-i unchanged]*

3. Recess of Synod for Study  
After the advisory committees have been appointed, synod may recess at specified times to enable these committees to perform their work.

#### C. Judicial Code Committee

Original hearings and appellate hearings before synod shall be referred to a Judicial Code Committee appointed by synod. This committee meets between synods as frequently as its business requires and presents its recommendations to synod in writing, operating under the procedures of the Judicial Code adopted by synod (cf. Supplement, Church Order Art. 30-c). The committee largely functions as a normal advisory committee of synod.

#### *DE. Special Committees*

Besides the advisory committees, ~~each synod has~~should have special committees appointed by the president that serve during the synodical sessions.

1. ~~A Hospitality Committee, appointed by the president, which shall attend to the proper reception of ecumenical delegates. It can advise synod, and synod must decide whether the representatives of various organizations should be received on the floor of synod.~~

2.—Special committees appointed by the president that serve during the synodical sessions.

E. *Study Committees and Task Forces Rules for Appointments to Boards and Committees*

1.—All study committees and task forces shall be appointed by synod from a nomination made by the advisory committee which drafted the mandate, with the advice of the officers of synod. Delegates to synod will be given opportunity to suggest nominees to the advisory committee, but no new nominees will be accepted from the floor when a committee is recommended. The reporter of the advisory committee shall present the nominations on the floor of synod. If additional time is necessary to complete the appointment of a study committee, a two-week extension will be granted and responsibility to do so will be entrusted to the officers of synod, the chair and reporter of the advisory committee, and one additional person chosen by the advisory committee from among its members.

The advisory committee shall recommend to synod the scope of the mandate and include in their recommendation one of the following designations:

a.—Synodical study committee

A study committee typically includes a broad representation of the churches in its membership, has a membership of 9–12 persons, is appointed by synod per the above rules, is mandated to conduct a broad study of the matter in question, reports to synod three years after being appointed, may report to synod in the interim if instructed, and presents its final report by September 15 for distribution to the churches by November 1 preceding the synod to which it is scheduled to report. Reports submitted to synod that are longer than ten pages shall include an executive summary.

b.—Synodical task force

A synodical task force is typically more limited in membership and mandate, has a membership of 7–10 persons, is appointed by synod per the above rules, has a more specific mandate limited in scope, often reports to synod two or three years after being appointed, and may report to synod in the interim if instructed. Synod should indicate whether the mandate is considered to be substantial, requiring the task force to submit its final report by September 15 for distribution to the churches by November 1 preceding the synod to which it is scheduled to report, or whether a February 15 deadline is sufficient for inclusion in the Agenda for Synod. Reports submitted to synod that are longer than ten pages shall include an executive summary.

By way of exception to these rules, synod may mandate a task force to report through the Council of Delegates to synod, particularly if

the matter in question involves the ministries of the CRCNA and if reporting through the COD will help the work of the task force by providing frequent input/feedback. The Council of Delegates may offer comment (such as agreement with a report) or may serve synod with advice by way of its report to synod with regard to the recommendations of a synodical study committee or task force if any matters reported by such committee or task force relate to programmatic ministry matters falling under the mandate of the COD.

Synod shall limit its agenda in any given year to include no more than two major study reports so that fuller and more thoughtful discussion can take place.

*(Acts of Synod 1979, p. 15; 1980, p. 21; 1997, p. 634; 2014, p. 540; 2016, pp. 827-28; 2017, p. 641; 2019, p. 803)*

1. When appointing committees to conduct a study of a matter in question, synod should specify the scope of the mandate assigned to the committee, the future synod to which the committee should report, the time frame in which the final report should be distributed to the churches, the number of members assigned to the committee, and any specific parameters for membership on the study committee. For matters requiring a broad study, a membership of 9-12 persons and a mandate of three years is often appropriate; groups studying a subject which is more limited in scope may have a membership of 7-10 persons and could report within two years.
2. All study committees shall be appointed from a nomination made by the advisory committee which drafted the mandate, with the advice of the officers of synod, and shall as much as possible reflect a broad representation of the churches. Delegates to synod will be given opportunity to suggest nominees to the advisory committee, but no new nominees will be accepted from the floor when a committee is recommended. The reporter of the advisory committee shall present the nominations on the floor of synod for information only, not to be recorded in the minutes.
3. Responsibility to complete the appointment of a study committee will ordinarily be entrusted to the officers of synod, the chair and reporter of the advisory committee, and one additional person chosen by the advisory committee from among its members. Study committee appointments shall be completed within one month of the closing of synod and reported as an appendix to the *Acts of Synod*.
4. All study committee reports shall be submitted as soon as possible in order to allow time for consideration by the churches. In no case shall a study report be submitted later than January 15 preceding the synod to which it is scheduled to report. Reports submitted to synod that are longer than ten pages shall include an executive summary.
5. These committees have the right of elucidating and defending their reports on the floor of synod. The spokespersons of these committees shall

have the same privileges during the discussion as the chair and reporters of the advisory committees.

6. With respect to the reports submitted to synod that are given into the hands of advisory committees, the recommendations of these synodical committees shall have precedence if the recommendations of the advisory committee are substantially different.

#### F. Board and Committee Membership

12. All board and committee members shall be elected from nominations presented to synod. Boards and committees in which vacancies must be filled shall normally present a slate of multiple nominees for election to membership for a first term, with the exception of COD classical nominees. Boards and committees present a single nominee (the incumbent) for a second term. Some boards, as determined by their articles of incorporation or bylaws, may present a member for a third term (i.e., Board of Pensions).

~~(Acts of Synod 1976, p. 16; updated in Acts of Synod 1998, pp. 406-407; 2015, p. 633; 2017, pp. 640-41)~~

23. All standing boards and committees of synod, as well as stated clerks of classes, shall present their nominations to the general secretary immediately after the meeting at which nominations are made.

~~(Acts of Synod 1979, p. 16)~~

34. Nominations of officers, functionaries, synodical deputies, boards, and standing committees shall be compiled through the office of general secretary.

~~(Acts of Synod 1979, p. 15)~~

45. The president of synod shall call on the general secretary to present all ballots, nominations, and other matters pertaining to appointments to the floor of synod, with the exception of the appointments of study committees (cf. point 1 above).

#### 56. Rules for Eligibility and Term of Office

- a. A person whose work is regulated by a board shall not be delegated to that particular board.

~~(Acts of Synod 1966, p. 87)~~

- b. Synodical board and committee members who have served two three-year terms shall not be eligible for reelection except when a specific exemption to this rule has been approved by synod.
- c. The terms of office for representatives to denominational boards and committees begin and terminate on July 1 of the year of appointment or termination.

~~(Acts of Synod 1972, p. 14; amended Acts of Synod 1996, p. 536)~~

- d. In the case of an unexpected vacancy on the Council of Delegates, the COD may appoint an interim delegate—in consultation with the

classis for the classical delegates—until appointment of a new classical or at-large delegate can be made by the next synod. When a new denominational board delegate is nominated and subsequently elected by synod to replace a delegate who is unable to complete their term (e.g., due to illness, moving from the region), the new delegate shall ordinarily fill out the remaining term(s) of the previous delegate.

*(Acts of Synod 2017, p. 641)*

*E. Rules for Committees Appointed by Previous Synods*

~~These committees include those appointed to study and to report concerning matters that concern the whole denomination, to carry out certain resolutions of past synods, or to supervise the missionary, educational, journalistic, or benevolent activities of the denomination.~~

- ~~1. These committees have the right of elucidating and defending their reports on the floor of synod. The spokesperson of these committees shall have the same privileges during the discussion as the chair and reporters of the advisory committees.~~
- ~~2. With respect to the reports submitted to synod that are given into the hands of advisory committees, the recommendations of these synodical committees shall have precedence if the recommendations of the advisory committee are substantially different.~~

*F. Judicial Code Committee of Synod*

~~1. Mandate~~

~~Original hearings and appellate hearings before synod shall be referred to a Judicial Code Committee appointed by synod. This committee meets between synods as frequently as its business requires and presents its recommendations to synod in writing. The committee largely functions as a normal advisory committee of synod.~~

~~2. Membership~~

~~The Judicial Code Committee shall be composed of twelve (12) members and shall reflect the diversity of the denomination. Each year four (4) persons shall be elected for terms of three (3) years. At least one (1) of these four (4) persons shall be a minister of the Word or a commissioned pastor; at least one (1) shall be a person trained in the law; at least one (1) shall not be a minister of the Word or a commissioned pastor nor one trained in the law. Synod shall elect members from nominations presented by the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA. The Judicial Code Committee may recommend nominees to the Council of Delegates. The terms of members shall commence July 1 following their election by synod. In the event of a vacancy on the committee because of resignation or death, the Council of Delegates shall appoint a person to fill the balance of that term. Members may be reelected but shall not serve more than six consecutive years. A former~~

member who has been off the committee for two or more years shall be eligible for election to the committee as a new member. The Judicial Code Committee shall select a chairperson and reporter from among its membership. Any member of the Judicial Code Committee advising a given synod may be, but need not be, a delegate to that synod.

### 3. ~~Hearing and Appeal Procedures before the Synod Acting in Its Judicial Capacity~~

- a. ~~Written charges filed with synod shall be referred to the Judicial Code Committee by the general secretary of the CRC to conduct an original hearing according to the procedures of the Judicial Code.~~
- b. ~~Claims of appeal from decisions of classis following a judicial hearing shall also be referred to the Judicial Code Committee by the general secretary of the CRC to conduct an appeal hearing according to the procedures of the Judicial Code.~~
- c. ~~Written charges brought against an agency, board, or committee of synod and any other matters requiring formal adjudication that synod undertakes shall also be referred by the general secretary of the CRC to the Judicial Code Committee for conducting a judicial hearing according to the procedures of the Judicial Code.~~
- d. ~~Claims of appeal filed with synod following an appeal hearing before classis shall also be referred to the Judicial Code Committee by the general secretary of the CRC. The Judicial Code Committee shall review the claim of appeal and make a recommendation to the Council of Delegates whether the application has sufficient merit to warrant further review. No further appeal proceedings shall be conducted unless the Council of Delegates approves. If approved, the Judicial Code Committee shall conduct an appeal hearing according to the procedures of the Judicial Code.~~
- e. ~~Individual delegates to synod shall not have the privilege of addressing the Judicial Code Committee as is normally permitted with other advisory committees.~~
- f. ~~The Judicial Code Committee shall present its findings of fact and recommendations, along with grounds for its recommendations to synod in writing, and they shall be openly discussed in a plenary session of synod. These written findings of fact and recommendations shall omit any disclosure of names in cases where such disclosure is judged to be potentially damaging to their reputation.~~
- g. ~~During synodical discussions, the committee shall be represented by up to two spokespersons who will have the privilege of the floor. These spokespersons shall have precedence over every other speaker and shall not be limited as to the number and length of their speeches.~~

- ~~h.—Either party to the dispute may request the opportunity to address synod. Such request shall be made through the Judicial Code Committee, which shall make recommendations concerning the request to synod.~~
- ~~i.—If synod permits the complainant or respondent to address synod, after the reporter provides the recommendation(s) of the Judicial Code Committee (and if there are majority and minority reports/ recommendations, after both have been presented), the complainant and/or respondent shall be given opportunity for summarizing their positions, not unlike provided in the hearing (Church Order Supplement, Article 30-c, section 5, a, vii), except that no opportunity for rebuttal will be allowed. Addresses shall be no more than five (5) minutes. If both parties have requested to address synod, the complainant shall be given no more than five (5) minutes to address synod first, and then the respondent shall be given no more than five (5) minutes to address synod. The Judicial Code Committee chair or the general secretary shall be responsible for providing these instructions to each party, stressing that the function of addressing synod is to provide their personal summaries to synod, not to retry the case. After addressing synod, neither party may provide additional comments to synod, nor may synod ask for either or both parties to return to the speaker's podium for further questions, comments, or discussion.~~
- ~~j.—The Judicial Code Committee may provide the officers of synod appropriate written advice on Judicial Code matters.~~
- ~~k.—Synod may dispose of a judicial matter in one of the following ways:
  - ~~1) by deciding the matter;~~
  - ~~2) by deferring it to one of its committees for settlement or reconciliation;~~
  - ~~3) by remanding it with advice to the appropriate classis or council;~~
  - ~~or~~
  - ~~4) by conducting its own original judicial or appeal hearing.~~~~
- ~~l.—Synod should accept the findings of fact as presented by the Judicial Code Committee unless synod is persuaded that
  - ~~1) One or more parties were not given the opportunity by the hearing body to present important and relevant evidence,~~
  - ~~or~~
  - ~~2) After the Judicial Code Committee hearing, new evidence which is important and relevant has been discovered by one or more parties.~~~~
- ~~m.—If synod conducts its own judicial or appeal hearing, it shall follow Judicial Code procedures set forth herein.~~

- ~~n. Synod may decide to refer the matter back to the Judicial Code Committee for a rehearing before the initial hearing body.~~
- ~~o. Procedure for requesting rehearing under sections k through m above~~
- ~~1) Any party who seeks to have synod conduct its own hearing or refer the matter back for a rehearing should submit such request in writing to the general secretary for distribution to the delegates of synod with a copy to the Judicial Code Committee. The writing should include a summary of the evidence which that party was not allowed to present at the evidentiary hearing and a short statement of how this opportunity was denied, or the statement should include a summary of the newly discovered evidence and an explanation of why it was not discovered earlier.~~
  - ~~2) All parties and the Judicial Code Committee representative(s) should be allowed a very brief time to address synod on such request.~~
- ~~p. When recommendations involve interpretations and applications of governing principles, such as the Church Order, to the facts involved in the matter, synod should allow the parties and representatives of the Judicial Code Committee a reasonable amount of time, set by the president of synod upon recommendation of the Judicial Code Committee, to argue for or against such interpretations and applications.~~
- ~~(Acts of Synod 1993, pp. 500-501, Acts of Synod 2014, p. 569, Amended Acts of Synod 2019, p. 718)~~
- ~~Note: For a complete description of Judicial Code of Rights and Procedures, see Church Order Supplement, Article 30 c.~~

### VIII. Pension Matters at Synod

~~That~~ synod shall defer action on overtures, minority reports, recommendations of advisory committees, and motions from the floor of synod that involve substantive matters concerning the denomination's retirement plans, or any recommendation that is at variance with a recommendation made by the Pension Trustees or is independent of any action recommended by them, until advised by the U.S. and Canadian Pension Trustees. The same is requested for actions that may be initiated by synod's advisory committee on finance or by any other of synod's advisory committees that is at variance with recommendations made by the pension trustees or is independent of any action recommended by them. Advice to synod will be in the form of a memorandum or other materials directed to synod's advisory committee on finance, which is the committee normally designated for processing matters related to the denomination's benefit plans.

~~(Acts of Synod 2004, pp. 623-24)~~

### **VIII~~X~~. Rules of Order**

Our ecclesiastical assemblies “shall transact ecclesiastical matters only, and shall deal with them in an ecclesiastical manner,” as Article 28 of our Church Order stipulates. Our synods should therefore be allowed some measure of freedom in discussion and action. However, agreed-upon general rules of order serve a good purpose and are to be observed, as contained in this document, particularly in the following section regarding Rules of Order.

*(Acts of Synod 2019, p. 804)*

*[sections A-D unchanged]*

#### *E. Objection to a Ruling of the President*

If any member is not satisfied with the ruling of the president, the matter is referred to synod for decision (sometimes referred to as “a challenge to the chair”). An objection to a ruling of the chair must be seconded in order to be considered and debated. The person presiding at the time of the challenge shall relinquish the chair until the body votes whether to sustain the ruling in question.

*(Acts of Synod 2019, p. 805)*

*[sections F-M unchanged]*

### **~~N~~.IX. Changes to the Rules for Synodical Procedure**

These Rules for Synodical Procedure may be suspended, amended, revised, or abrogated by a majority vote of synod.

### **Public Declaration of Agreement with the Beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church in North America**

*[unchanged]*

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **Governance Handbook Updates**

#### **I. Background**

At its online meeting in February 2026, the COD received a number of updates to the COD Governance Handbook following a deep review by staff. Initially adopted in 2017 (*Acts of Synod 2017*, pp. 640-41), the COD Governance Handbook was significantly revised after the adoption of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT) report in 2021. A draft of the revised handbook was presented to Synod 2023 for information, with the recognition that the materials were still in draft form and would require additional updating due to continued implementation of a planned revision to the organizational concept and structure of the COD (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 633-34, 913, 982).

The Governance Handbook has several distinct portions. The first chapter contains synod's mandate for the Council of Delegates in its role as synod's interim committee (Church Order Art. 33-b), as well as a summary of the work to be done by the ministry boards in their role overseeing the legal operations of the CRCNA in the United States and Canada. Synod is asked here to approve the proposed changes to the portions of the Governance Handbook in Chapter 1 over which it has authority.

The second chapter of the Governance Handbook contains the rules of procedure for the meetings of the COD, as well as its committee charters. While synod should have the expectation that all of the operations of the COD and of the CRC organizations conform to synodical directives, the distinction between governance and management (cf. *Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 564; *Agenda for Synod 2017*, pp. 45-46) suggests that it is more appropriate to simply note the existence of some of these procedural documents rather than to require formal approval of such items. The proposed revisions to the Governance Handbook reflect this philosophy. Thus, with exceptions as noted below, changes made to Chapter 2 will be reported to synod for information rather than for approval.

It should also be noted that the Governance Handbook does not simply represent the operations of the COD but that it also contains sections addressing the functions of the ministry boards. This is an area of growing awareness within the COD, as of the past few years. Thus the handbook would more properly be titled "The CRC Governance Handbook," with the understanding that synod has only the most limited authority over some sections of the handbook that address the organization and function of the legal entities governing the CRC ministries. These sections of the handbook are still under development.

Because Chapter 1 has been largely rewritten, it is presented here in its updated version only. For anyone who would like to compare editions, the current version of the Governance Handbook is available on the Council of Delegates page of the CRCNA website: [crcna.org/welcome/governance/council-delegates](http://crcna.org/welcome/governance/council-delegates).

## **II. Summary of Changes**

Briefly, here is a summary of the changes to Chapter 1:

- replaced current structure of this chapter (which discussed "mandate," "synodical governance," "organizational governance," "synodical governance," and "CRC organizations") with a simplified structure that addresses the work of the COD, the ministry boards, and the relationship to the CRC ministry organizations
- provided more explanation on the distinction between the COD and the ministry boards (chapter 1, II, A)

- offered a more specific summary of the tasks assigned to the COD by synod, drawing on the current Introduction, section IV of the Governance Handbook, and the language of the former Board of Trustees mandate (see *Acts of Synod 1996*, pp. 625-33)
- added a new summary of the responsibilities of the ministry boards with regard to organizational governance, drawn in part from the existing bylaws of the two national boards (*Acts of Synod 2017*, pp. 473-82, 503-12)
- replaced the sections on CRC organizations with a new description of the ministry organizations in relationship to the COD

In the future, changes to Chapter 1, Section II, B of the Governance Handbook will be submitted to synod for approval, and changes to Chapter 1, Section II, C-D will be processed through the ministry boards and reported to synod for information as a reflection of the corporate and legal structure of the denominational institutions.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Purpose and mandate

*Note:* This section of the Governance Handbook is synodically approved.

#### I. Introduction

##### 1. Preface

The COD Governance Handbook was created when the CRCNA Council of Delegates replaced the CRCNA Board of Trustees in 2017. The handbook has undergone a number of changes as the denomination has shifted its leadership structure. This handbook is intended to be a dynamic document, adapting to the changing needs of the denomination. Some portions of this handbook include materials explicitly adopted by synod; those are either noted or highlighted in grey.

##### 2. CRCNA vision and mission

###### a. Our vision

The Christian Reformed Church is a diverse family of healthy congregations, assemblies, and ministries expressing the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide.

###### b. Our mission

As people called by God,  
 we gather to praise God, listen to him, and respond.  
 We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ.  
 We love and care for one another as God's people.  
 We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus.  
 We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.

### 3. CRCNA Ministry Plan

#### Milestones

In our journey with God, with each other, with our neighbors, and for mission, we desire to be congregations/communities that do the following:

- Cultivate practices of prayer and spiritual discipline, transforming our lives and communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Listen to the voices of every generation, shaping us for ministry together.
- Grow in diversity and unity by seeking justice, reconciliation, and welcome, sharing our faith as we build relationships with and honor the cultures of our neighbors and newcomers.
- Share the gospel, live it missionally, and plant new churches in our neighborhoods as we discover how to connect with our local and global ministry contexts.

## II. Purpose of the COD and the ministry boards

### *A. Introduction*

The Governance Handbook is designed to be a resource for the members of the Council of Delegates (COD) and of the Canada and U.S. ministry boards. The individuals who fill these roles have a synodical mandate (as COD members) to serve in the interim of the CRCNA synod. As members of a ministry board, these individuals serve as the CRCNA legal governing authority in their respective countries of Canada and the United States. In most cases the same individuals will serve both a COD role and a ministry board role. This handbook will cover the distinct work of both the COD (Section 2) and that of the ministry boards (Section 3).

The function of the members of these groups is noted at two separate places in the Church Order:

“Each classis shall appoint a classical interim committee, and synod shall appoint the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA, to act for them in matters which cannot await action by the assemblies themselves. Such committees shall be given well-defined mandates and shall submit all their actions to the next meeting of the assembly for approval” (Church Order Art. 33-b).

“Synod shall regulate the work of denominational ministries by way of the Governance Handbook and decisions of the Council of Delegates of the CRCNA” (Church Order Art. 77).

This “regulation” of denominational ministries carried out by the COD focuses on the synodical mandates of the various CRCNA organizations; operational questions are addressed by the ministry boards or by denominational staff. This Governance Handbook contains information about the governance processes for both types of work, sometimes described by the terms “synodical governance” (for the COD) and “organizational governance” (for the ministry boards). It is, therefore, a living document. Changes

made to the handbook will be processed through the COD or appropriate Ministry Board and sent to synod for approval, when needed.

*B. Mandate and purpose of the COD as the interim committee of synod*

As an ecclesiastical body, the Council of Delegates provides synodical governance by means of the authority delegated to it by synod and its synodically elected membership. The COD's authority as an ecclesiastical body has two dimensions: (1) the COD acts on behalf of synod while synod is not in session, and (2) the COD acts on matters assigned to it by synod.

1. Acting on behalf of synod

a. Interim role

Church Order Article 33-b: “. . . Synod shall appoint the Council of Delegates . . . to act for them in matters which cannot await action by [synod itself and to] . . . submit all their actions to the next meeting of [synod] . . . for approval.”

b. Advisory role

Attend to such church-polity issues as need to be addressed and render such advice to study committees as it deems necessary or as requested of it between the meetings of synod.

c. Convening role

Through the Office of General Secretary and in keeping with the Rules for Synodical Procedure, oversee arrangements related to the convening of synod.

2. Matters assigned to the COD

These matters primarily include the following regular tasks:

a. Synodical mandates and decisions of synod

Ensure the respective ministry and educational organizations are living into the synodical mandates and other directives by synod. Work with staff to regularly review the mandates to ensure they are current and beneficial to the churches as the ministry priorities are implemented.

b. Ministry priorities, strategy, and goals

Ensure the ministry and educational organizations' strategy and goals are aligned with the CRCNA ministry priorities, in cooperation with the Ministries Leadership Council (MLC).

c. Relative to other entities/boards

Cooperate with the educational institutions affiliated with the denomination and World Renew as well as other CRCNA boards toward integrating the respective missions of those institutions and functions into the denominational ministry priorities.

d. Leadership and organizational culture

Ensure the selection, support, and succession of governance and organizational leadership as outlined in COD procedures and organizational

bylaws, and that the mission and values of the CRCNA shape its organizational culture.

e. Hearing appeals

Adjudicate appeals placed before it by the agencies, committees, and educational institutions as provided in Church Order Article 30 and its supplements.

3. Revisions/updates

The Council of Delegates has the authority to revise and update applicable portions of the handbook and associated policies as it seeks to carry out its synodical governance responsibilities. The mandate and the other sections of the handbook requiring direct synodical approval should be regularly reviewed by the COD in consultation with synod and updated as necessary.

4. Annual report to synod

Provide an annual report to synod that addresses the following topics:

- a. *Membership matters* notes the current makeup of the COD, its officers, ministry boards, outgoing members, and nominees for open positions.
- b. *Program matters* addresses work that relates to the ministry programs and personnel of the denomination, as well as program work that is beyond the scope of or in addition to material in the reports of the agencies, ministries, and institutions.
- c. *Polity matters* covers the work of the COD as the denomination's governance board in the interim of synod.
- d. *Financial matters* provides synod with important information about the fiscal health of the CRCNA ministry corporations and its related institutions so that the churches and members of the denomination can assess its stewardship of the resources God has provided.

*C. Mandate and purpose of the ministry boards with regard to organizational governance*

The responsibility for organizational governance is delegated to the CRCNA ministry and educational organizations located in Canada and the U.S. (see *Agenda for Synod 2015*, pp. 375-76; *Agenda for Synod 2021*, pp. 519-40). This mandate reflects the legal documents governing the various ministry organizations. Changes to these responsibilities are made by the ministry boards in collaboration with synod and are presented to synod for information.

1. Legal responsibilities of ministry boards

Ministry boards have legal responsibilities and ministry governance responsibilities in each country to set and ensure organizational direction, to ensure adequate resources to carry out ministry, and to oversee the health of the organization.

The ministry boards' legal role with regard to the CRCNA organizations includes the following tasks as outlined in the boards' Articles of Incorporation and Ecclesiastical Mandate Letters, all of which reflect the instructions of synod:

- a. To manage the affairs of each national office as a registered charity, in keeping with the mission and vision adopted by synod.
- b. To develop, contextualize, implement, and evaluate the CRCNA ministry priorities to ensure that the ministry priorities are appropriately carried out by the agencies and institutions working in that country.
- c. To develop and manage, in conjunction with denominational staff, the Joint Ministry Agreements that facilitate the relationship between the national offices of the CRCNA.
- d. To exercise general oversight and authority in the manner provided in the governing documents of the respective national corporations, providing appropriate financial management and advancement policies as well as supervision of the board's chief executive officer.

## 2. Ministry boards' responsibilities for organizational health

The ministry boards attend to the organizational health of the CRC organizations as they function in each country. This includes the following responsibilities, depending on the particular ministry board:

### a. Canada Ministry Board (CMB)

The CMB supports the work of the Canada Ministry Office as it provides administrative and ministry oversight and support services that build a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and effectiveness with ministry organizations, agencies, and partners as they serve CRC congregations in Canada. This organization oversees the Canada Ministry Office (including the unique national work of Canadian Justice Ministries) and jointly oversees Thrive and Resonate Global Mission alongside the U.S. Ministry Organization.

### b. ReFrame Ministries Canada

The directors of the Canadian Ministry Board are also appointed as the membership of the ReFrame Canada Corporation, where the executive committee of the Canadian Ministry Board is appointed as the directors of the ReFrame Canada Corporation.

### c. U.S. Ministry Board (USMB)

The USMB supports the work of the U.S. Ministry Office as it provides administrative and ministry oversight and support services that build a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and effectiveness with ministry organizations, agencies, and partners as they serve CRC congregations in the United States. This organization oversees the U.S. Ministry Office (including the unique national work of the Reformed Benefits Association, the CRC Loan Fund, and the Delaware Investment Corporation)

and jointly oversees Thrive and Resonate Global Mission alongside the Canada Ministry Organization.

d. ReFrame Ministries U.S.

The membership of the U.S. ReFrame Board is the same as the membership of the U.S. Ministry Organization boards.

The ministry boards cultivate a culture of partnership between the CRCNA national offices as well as among churches and classes, agencies, committees, and educational institutions as they collectively carry out the mission identified by synod.

*D. Additional CRC ministry organizations*

The COD provides synodical governance and support, and the ministry and educational boards provide organizational governance and support. In addition, the CRCNA includes ministry organizations whose work is not governed directly by the COD, although certain aspects of that work may be done in collaboration with the COD, depending on organizational by-laws or synodical regulations. The following section describes the relationship as currently established in those bylaws and regulations, and any changes will be reported to the COD and synod for information.

1. Office of General Secretary

The Office of General Secretary (OGS) provides ecclesiastical and organizational leadership and support in Canada and the United States that promotes a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and partnership throughout the CRCNA organization. This work is done in close collaboration with, but exists beyond the scope of, the COD. Specific responsibilities are delineated as follows:

- a. The COD directly regulates OGS for the following work: Support for the Council of Delegates and its ministry committees (Thrive, Resonate, and ReFrame committees) as well as its advisory committees (Bible Translations Committee, *Banner* advisory team, Dignity Team, and Diaspora and Ethnic Ministry advisory team).
- b. The COD regulates the following OGS tasks to the extent that the work falls within the COD's mandate or tasks assigned by synod: Support for ecclesiastical governance exercised through the church's assemblies (synod, classis, and council) and any study committees appointed by synod. This work is regulated by the COD to the extent that it falls within the COD mandate or tasks assigned by synod.
- c. The following work of OGS ordinarily falls outside the scope of the COD: Support for the standing committees and other CRC organizations: Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, Candidacy Committee, CRC Loan Fund, Historical Committee, Judicial Code Committee, and Ministers' Pension Funds.

## 2. Connected organizations

The following connected organizations have their own synodical mandates and boards and are not responsible to the COD. They participate in the COD system as part of the Connections Committee in order to promote a culture of cooperation and partnership across the entire family of CRC organizations.

- a. Calvin University  
Calvin University is organizationally governed by the Calvin University Board of Trustees.
- b. Calvin Theological Seminary  
Calvin Theological Seminary is organizationally governed by the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.
- c. World Renew  
World Renew is organizationally governed by the World Renew Canada Board and the World Renew U.S. Board.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Council of Delegates

*Note:* This portion of the Governance Handbook reflects internal operations of the COD, which reflect the general practices of the CRCNA based on its Church Order and synodical regulations. While synod will be notified when changes are made to this section, the changes will ordinarily not be reported in detail unless they are substantial or reflect a fundamental shift in philosophy or approach from that previously approved by synod. Exceptions to this general practice, as noted in the document text, are found in the following places:

- Chapter 2, I, I, 1-3: Rules regarding appointment of members
- Chapter 2, I, L, 1: Member qualifications
- Chapter 2, H, 1: *Banner* Advisory Committee Charter
- Chapter 2, H, 2: Bible Translations Committee Charter
- Chapter 2, H, 3: Dignity Team Charter

Changes to the above sections will be presented to synod for approval. All other changes will be approved by the COD and reported to synod for information. In the past year, the following updates were adopted to Chapter 2 of the Governance Handbook by the COD:

- I, B, 5 (formerly 1, II, 5): Added the expectation that chair and vice chair would ordinarily represent Canada and the U.S. as a general requirement for all committees, and removed this specific language from individual committee charters
- I, H (formerly 1, VIII): Added a requirement of quorum for conducting business

- I, I (formerly 1, IX-XIII): Rearranged order of materials related to membership:

<i>Topic</i>	<i>New section</i>	<i>Former Section</i>
Membership	I	XII
COD officers	J	X
Staff attendance	K	IX
Office of General Secretary	K, 3	XI

- (Former section 1, VIII): Removed duplicate note about the expectation that COD decisions are binding on all its members
- (Former section 1, IX): Removed numbers of members for each section because these are already reported in membership matrix chart
- I, I, 3 C (formerly 1, IX, 3): Changed terminology of “organizational guests” to “board guests” and removed reference to Governance Policy 2.1
- I, K, 3 (formerly 1, IX, 3): Added “coordinator of synodical operations” to required OGS staff in attendance
- I, K, 4 (formerly 1, XI): Retitled “educational institutions” to “connected organizations” and moved World Renew from “ministry agency” to the “connected organization” category
- (former section XII, 3): Removed part of historical footnote about organizational board guests
- I, L (formerly 1, XIII): Added a note indicating that COD member appointment procedures may not be changed without synodical approval
- I, L, 1, b (formerly 1, XIII, A, 2): Revised requirement for agreement with COD membership policies in light of changes to the COD nominations and personal reservations procedures
- (former section 1, XII, 6): Removed membership matrix (duplicated in II, E)
- II, A, 5: Added a subsection noting the potential for appointment of ad hoc committees of the COD
- (former section 2, II, 5): Removed description of appointment process for committee membership, since structures are different for U.S. and Canada ministry boards
- II, B, 5: Added statement (formerly found in each individual charter; see former sections 2, B, 3, c; 2, C, 3, c; 2, D, 3, b) about expectation that chairs and vice chairs should represent the U.S. and Canada, but shifted this expectation to be one that be done “ordinarily”
- II, C (formerly 2, III): Changed terminology of “organizational guests” to “board guests” and reference to Governance Policy 2.1
- II, F, 1, 3, e (formerly 2, VI, A, 3, e): Changed language of “exceptions” to “personal reservations” in keeping with decisions of COD and Synod 2025 related to alignment with COD Statement of Agreement

- II, F, 1, f (formerly 2, VI, A, 6): Updated list of policy documents for which the Executive Committee is responsible to reflect a distinction between formal policies and procedural advice documents
- II, F, 2, b, 2 (2, VI, B, 2, b): Allowed chairs of ministry board Governance Committees “or designees” to serve on the COD Governance Committee
- II, F, 3, b, 2 (formerly 2, VI, C, 2, b): Allowed chairs of ministry board Finance Committees “or designees” to serve on the COD Finance Committee
- II, F, 3, d, 5, a (formerly 2, VI, C, 4, e): Edited list of CRC organizations for which the Finance Committee has oversight of fiscal sustainability to include others besides the Pension Funds and Loan Fund
- II, F, 4, b, 1 (formerly 2, VI, D, 2, a): Updated membership of Synodical Services Committee from “4-6 members” to “at least four”
- II, G, 1, f (formerly 2, VII, A, 6): Adjusted general expectations for ministry committees related to the financial oversight and organizational governance matters reported to synod each year, in keeping with current practice. The list of items to be included in each report was then removed from each individual ministry charter (see former sections VII, B, 4, f; VII, C, 4, f; VII, D, 4, f).
- II, G, 5, a (formerly 2, VII, E, 1): Removed lengthy footnotes noting the history of the Connections Committee and summarized the history in the “purpose” instead
- II, G, 5, b, 1 (formerly 2, VII, E, 2, a): Changed membership of Connections Committee from “at least 3-6 members” to “at least three members” of the COD
- II, G, 5, d, 6 (formerly 2, VI, E, 4, f): Adjusted wording on right of comment from Connections Committee agencies to clarify that COD approval is not needed for the connected institutions to submit such documents to synod

**Ministries Leadership Council Charter**

Revised Fall 2025

**I. Purpose and Mandate**

The Ministries Leadership Council (MLC) is a collaborative binational table of the senior leaders of the ministry boards and synodically mandated agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). The MLC is gathered to advance the ecclesial vision, mission, values, and objectives of the Christian Reformed Church as expressed in the Ministry Plan (approved by synod and the Council of Delegates). The MLC guides the work of the synodically mandated agencies and educational institutions based on synodical and COD directives that facilitate collaborative and integrated ministry with and on behalf of the CRC congregations and classes (see *Acts of Synod 2022*, pp. 725-26).

Key responsibilities of the Ministries Leadership Council are as follows:

- A. Developing and overseeing the implementation of the CRCNA Ministry Plan on behalf of the Council of Delegates (COD), ensuring that MLC decisions and those of the individual CRCNA ministries are in alignment with the plan.
- B. Clarifying responsibilities and strategies of the agencies and institutions with regard to synodical directives about the major issues facing our congregations and classes. Often this will take the shape of a response to synodical directives requesting joint actions of CRCNA agencies and institutions on behalf of CRC congregations, classes, and synod.
- C. Nurturing a culture among our agencies and institutions that is responsive to our churches, classes, and synod and is collaborative, communicative, and trust filled.

*Note:* A separate group, the Administrative Leadership Council, is a forum of administrative and operations leaders from the CRCNA institutions and agencies in Canada and the United States who are tasked with designing and implementing policy that advances a culture of administrative cooperation, collaboration, and partnership.

**II. Convener**

- A. The Ministries Leadership Council is hosted by the Office of General Secretary and is accountable to the Synodical Services Committee of the Council of Delegates through the general secretary.
- B. The general secretary shall chair the Ministries Leadership Council, and the director of partnership administration shall serve as vice chair.
- C. The Office of General Secretary will manage the process of agenda setting and the council logistics.
- D. The Office of General Secretary will manage the Ministries Leadership Council Charter.

### **III. Membership of the Ministries Leadership Council**

- A. The general secretary and director of partnership administration
- B. The senior leaders of the synodically mandated agencies of the CRCNA: Thrive, ReFrame Ministries, Resonate Global Mission, and World Renew
- C. The senior leaders of the educational institutions of the CRCNA (or their designees): Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary
- D. Executive leaders of the CRCNA offices in the U.S. and Canada
- E. The CRCNA director of communications and marketing
- F. Guests: At the invitation of the MLC chair and vice chair, other CRCNA staff or visitors may be asked to participate to offer necessary perspectives and feedback.

### **IV. Accountability**

The MLC is accountable to the COD through the Office of General Secretary. The general secretary (or a designee) provides oversight for all of the ministries of the CRC on behalf of the COD. If a member of the MLC is persuaded that a principle is compromised by an MLC decision, the COD may be consulted, and its decision shall be final and binding on all concerned. The Ministry Plan facilitation and any updates to the MLC Charter are done in consultation with the COD's Synodical Services Committee.

### **V. Values**

The MLC has defined a set of core and behavioral values to guide collaboration between ministries, agencies, and institutions.

- A. Core Values (How we do it): Relational Service (3 John 5-8), Diversity (Galatians 3:26-29), Growth (Romans 12:2), Lived-out Faith (1 Corinthians 3:10-16)
- B. Behavioral Values (What we do): Integrity (1 Chronicles 29:17), Servant Leadership (1 Peter 2:9), Excellence (Daniel 6:3-4), Sustainability (Ecclesiastes 5:13-15), Collaboration (Psalm 133), Communication (Proverbs 15:1-4), Celebration (Philippians 4:4-9)

### **VI. Meetings**

The MLC meets ten times per year (omitting June and August). Several meetings per year will focus on the Ministry Plan strategy and objectives and will include all of the MLC members noted above. The other meetings will focus on themes or topics of special importance to the collaborative ministry of the agencies, institutions, and ministries, including synodical directives.

### **VII. Subteams**

To sustain the integration and collaboration necessary for its work, the MLC may appoint subteams. One such subteam is the Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Team, which will do the following:

- A. According to the appropriate synodical cycle, the Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Team will be delegated to create or revise the Ministry Plan and its metrics with the feedback of governance, staff, local church, and classis leaders.
- B. During the implementation cycle, the Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Team guides the agencies, institutions, and ministries of the CRCNA to integrate the ministry plan into the fabric of their strategic planning and reporting in view of their synodical mandates.
- C. The Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Team coordinates with the CRCNA agencies, institutions, and ministries to provide stories and data about the Ministry Plan to congregations and classes.

The membership of the Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Team will include members who work directly with CRCNA congregations on Ministry Plan matters. The mandate of the Ministry Plan Development and Implementation Team is kept on file in the Office of General Secretary.

### **VIII. Communication**

- A. All agenda materials shall be submitted to the Office of General Secretary no later than one week prior to the scheduled meeting date.
- B. The meeting agenda shall be distributed to the members not less than three working days prior to the scheduled meeting date.
- C. Every decision of the MLC shall be entered into an official record by way of minutes. The minutes of the MLC meeting shall be approved at the next scheduled meeting of the MLC. The official records of the MLC will be kept by the Office of General Secretary, which will also prepare and distribute the agenda for the MLC meetings.
- D. All minutes of the MLC are public unless specifically stated otherwise. Minutes will normally be distributed to members of the MLC and made available to COD members. Highlights from the meetings will also be produced and will be shared with staff, the COD, and members of the administration who do not serve on the MLC.
- E. The MLC will receive a copy of the minutes of all official staff meetings and team meetings where decisions are made that have an impact on the achievement of the Ministry Plan of the Christian Reformed Church, on other denominational ministries (e.g., service costs, programs), and/or on the ability of an agency or department to implement their own mandate.

## **COD Task Force to Review Governance Costs**

### **I. Introduction**

The Council of Delegates, at its February 2025 meeting, approved the creation of a task force to consider ways to reduce governance costs, fund synod, and use time wisely. The task force is made up of members from the COD Finance and Synodical Services committees and relevant staff. COD members on the task force are Henry Eygenraam, Drew Sweetman (chair), Janet deVries, Andre VanRyk, Tom Byma (reporter), Mike Koetje, Phil Apoll, and Rob Toornstra. Staff members supporting the task force are Brian Van Doeselaar, Joel Vande Werken, Shirley DeVries, and Ashley Medendorp. The task force submitted an interim report to the COD for their May 2025 meeting, and the COD included it in their report to Synod 2025 for information. The task force met two times following synod to finalize the report and to submit it to a special virtual session of the COD on September 4, 2025.

### **II. Background**

The impulse for the creation of this task force was the current decline in ministry-share revenue and the desire for good stewardship of the denomination's time and financial resources. As was shared in the interim report to synod (*Acts of Synod 2025*, pp. 474-78), the task force looked at the big-picture costs of synod, both the programming and staffing costs. The biggest costs associated with synod are those that are clearly connected with the in-person meetings (travel, lodging, rental space, meals, etc.), which amounted to about \$250,000 USD for 2025. However, with the administration costs mandated by synod (staff salaries, programs, "hidden costs" such as travel insurance and site visits, the work of the synodical deputies, operations of the COD, and the development of denominational materials), the total cost of governance is closer to \$3,200,000 USD per year.

This report focuses primarily on the costs of synod itself; however, the task force is aware that governance costs can be reduced by focusing on other areas as well. In fact, the Office of General Secretary has already begun taking such steps—for example, shifting from print to digital materials, reviewing ways to reduce the costs of COD meetings, decreasing the number of standing committee meetings, and so on—where those steps do not require a significant shift in the philosophy of our governance systems. These changes have resulted in savings of more than \$50,000 USD already. More such changes will likely be proposed with regard to the assignment of Synod 2025 to review the Rules for Synodical Procedure (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 608) and to report with recommendations to Synod 2026. Thus the items in this report will focus largely on costs related to synod and the COD, because those areas have the biggest impact on denominational expenses and are tied most closely to philosophical and theological commitments with regard to Reformed governance.

In its interim report, the task force presented a number of possibilities for moving forward, including holding a virtual synod, reducing the number of classes, moving synod to an off-site location in an airport-hub city, direct-billing classes a fee for governance, converting to a two-tiered ministry share system, and reducing the operational side of the Office of General Secretary. Through polls of the COD and conversations with delegates at synod, the task force heard various opinions from around the denomination on areas in which costs might be reduced. It was obvious to the task force that attendees at synod and members of the COD agree that changes need to be made in order to reduce costs and fund governance; however, there was some hesitancy at the COD level to make too many changes at once. It should also be recognized that our governance expenses are not simply “overhead” but are part of the *ministry* we share as a denomination. Matters such as mutual accountability and support are part of our theological commitment to one another as Reformed Christians. We do our “business” as a church through councils (Belgic Confession, Art. 30), and we hold our minor assemblies accountable to one another through major assemblies. Thus there will inherently be a financial cost associated with being part of a church body that shares such commitments—and there will be relational and theological costs connected with any proposals that reduce the financial obligations of those commitments.

Members of the task force worked with staff to further review the proposed steps forward. This included identifying some of the Office of General Secretary functions and what the impact of changes would be on costs, churches, and staff as well as on the people who would need to decide about those changes. For example, the impact of changing our annual synod to a biennial gathering would reduce costs by a minimum of \$500,000 USD per year (travel, lodging, facilities, and staff time for the week of synod). The impact on churches and staff would include longer wait times to address key issues and would likely lead to larger synodical agendas with more intensity. This change would also mean that staff would have longer periods of time to work through the decisions and assignments of synod and would need to prepare for fewer logistics because synod would meet every other year. This would also require a change to Church Order (Art. 46-a), so a decision by one synod would need to be approved by the next synod after the churches had adequate time to review the change. The task force also looked at the potential impacts of reducing the number of classes, reducing the number of delegates to synod, eliminating the parliamentary, reducing the requirement of synodical deputy concurrence from three to two, and direct-billing classes for governance costs.

### **III. Historical Data**

As part of researching ways to move forward, the task force recognized that it would also be important to look at previous synodical decisions related to these matters. Most notable among synod’s decisions were the change to a one-week synod in 1996 (*Acts of Synod 1996*, pp. 239-42), the transition from

the Board of Trustees to the Council of Delegates in 2015-2017, and the outcome of the Synod Review Task Force that reported to Synod 2019 (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 801-17). Other significant changes throughout the years have had to do with the way synod and its interim committee functions.

There is also historical information pertaining to classes, including the number of classes, the number of churches per classis, and the geographical size of a classis. Church Order Article 39 indicates that “a classis shall consist of a group of neighboring churches.” There are exceptions to this principle, however, as in the cases of Classis Ko-Am, Classis Hanmi, and Classis Minnkota. Regarding size, Van Dellen and Monsma in *The Church Order Commentary* reported that in 1937, Classis Hackensack had 6 churches, while the largest classis at the time, Orange City, had 31. Today, we see 7 churches in Classis Yellowstone and 35 in Central California. Van Dellen and Monsma also reported that in 1603, the synod of Harderwyk in the Netherlands recommended 10 churches as a minimum number for a classis. Today, the average number of churches per classis is about 20. The CRCNA currently has 49 classes and 787 organized churches. Bringing the number of classes down to 40 would allow for approximately 20 churches per classis, not including church plants that are not yet organized.

The membership number per classis also varies greatly and can be difficult to use as a measure because churches report membership numbers inconsistently. For example, some churches report all of their attenders, not only their professing members. The *Yearbook* office of the CRCNA can only report the numbers as received from the churches. The 2025 *Yearbook* reports the following:

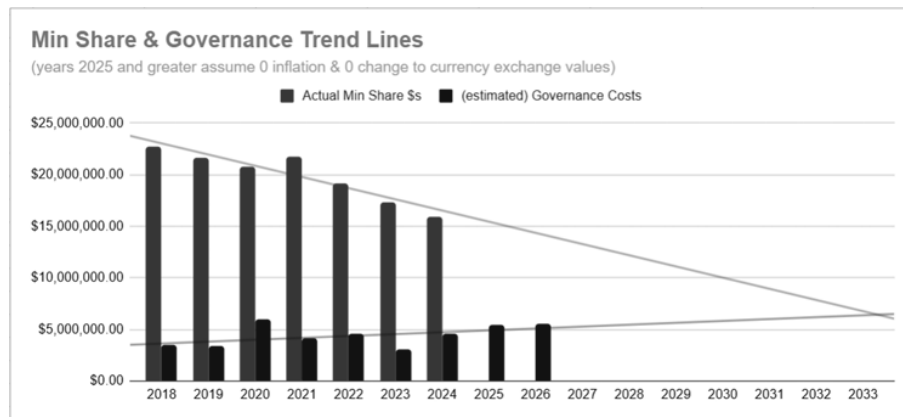
- Total of 49 classes with an average of 20 churches and an average of 2,760 professing members
- Classis Arizona: 9 churches; 330 professing members
- Classis Alberta North: 31 churches; 5,100 professing members
- Classis Rocky Mountain: 36 churches; 2,137 professing members
- Classis Central Plains: 21 churches; 3,896 professing members

In the past, ministry-share rates have been approved by synod and have had the following ranges:

Year	Total Professing Members (Org. Churches)	Ministry Share Rates per Member (USD)	Ministry Shares Received (USD)	Avg. Received Per Member
2025	135,648	N/A	\$10,470,000	\$77.18
2015	175,687	\$336.12	\$17,382,796	\$98.94
2011	181,222	\$307.53	\$17,662,684	\$97.46
2005	186,661	\$266.09	\$24,549,644	\$131.52
2000	183,516	\$237.46	\$20,267,000	\$110.44
1996	187,051	\$227.53	\$23,298,000	\$124.55

Using the above data, we can see that the average giving per member has dropped significantly within the past ten years. However, due to inflation

and the increased demand on synod, the COD, and the Office of General Secretary, governance costs have continued to increase. The chart below, reported by the chief administrative officer at the May 2025 COD meeting, shows the latest projected rates of ministry shares and governance costs. Currently ministry shares fund services that our congregations rely on, such as funding for theological education, classis and congregational support (safe church, disability, consultation, critical training), mission and media ministry, and so on—in addition to governance costs. However, the chart indicates that by 2033, ministry shares will no longer cover governance costs, not to mention the critical support our congregations and classes require.



Given the above data and the historical context of ministry shares provided in the interim report, it is clear that change must happen, both to reduce costs and to increase giving, in order for the governance work of the denomination to continue. The governance of the church requires synod to happen, but synod cannot happen if the costs are not covered.

#### IV. Proposals Discussed

As noted in the chief administrative officer’s report to the May COD meeting, God is faithful and calls us to act. The way we respond to God’s call will determine how the denomination can move forward in light of the preceding data. The task force looked closely at a number of proposals, which are described below. The task force also rejected a number of proposals because it seemed they would have either too little a financial impact or too great a relational impact. Some of those proposals included the following:

- holding virtual synods
- holding synod at a major airport-hub city
- requiring classes to plan travel and to cover costs for delegates to attend COD and synod meetings
- holding two virtual COD meetings and one in-person COD meeting

Here follow the proposals that the task force considered in detail:

*A. Hold synod every other year*

Holding synod every other year would provide a number of opportunities and challenges. As briefly mentioned earlier, there would be a large cost savings to the annual expense of synod, including the costs of transportation, food/lodging, and materials preparation. There would also be time to work on synodically assigned tasks throughout the two years between synods, extending deadlines for staff and volunteers to submit work. Staff would be able to plan for two years, based on synodical assignments, rather than reassigning other work after receiving new synodical assignments, as is the current reality. On the other hand, the agendas for biennial synods would likely be more weighty and challenging to manage.

In addition, a number of essential annual functions of synod would also need to be processed in a different manner, or perhaps a reevaluation of the necessity of the annual functions would be in order. A biennial synod would affect the approvals of candidates for minister of the Word, synodically appointed positions (such as general secretary and seminary faculty), board nominations, budgets, and pension matters.

One way to handle these concerns would be to assign them to the COD as the interim committee of synod. COD members are chosen by their classes and approved by synod in order to do the work of synod that cannot wait until the next synod convenes. If we moved to a biennial synod model, the list of agenda items for the COD to address would increase for the May meeting prior to synod. This challenge might possibly be resolved, however, by relieving the COD of annual deadlines for the *Agenda for Synod* materials, as noted in the following table.

<b>Annual synod task</b>	<b>Possible solution for biennial synod</b>
Consent agenda items	Approved by COD at its May meeting or just reviewed every other year
Synodical deputy reports	Approved by COD at its May meeting or just approved every other year
Candidates for minister of the Word	Options: 1. Approved by COD at its May meeting; this would be closer to the candidates' graduation time, so maybe more candidates could participate. 2. Handled by the classes 3. Candidacy Committee declares candidates.
Denominational board voting/appointments; thanking retiring board/committee members	Options for appointment: 1. Appoint each nominee to a two-year term with up to two renewals (total of 6 years).

	2. Appoint each nominee to one four-year term with a two-year renewal (total of 6 years). Thanking retiring members could be on similar cycles.
IRS declaration for housing allowance	Approved by U.S. Ministry Board
Standing committee reports	Published and made available to the churches Recommendations processed only in the years in which synod meets
Review of financial statements	Approved by U.S. Ministry Board and Canada Ministry Board (or full COD) – May meeting Reviewed every other year at synod
Agency reports	Two per synod
Time-sensitive overtures or appeals	Would require careful planning; exceptional cases could be handled by the COD
Appointment of senior-level staff for whom synodical approval is required (e.g., general secretary and seminary faculty)	Could make use of longer interim appointments
Ministry plan review	Currently on five-year rotation basis; would need to adjust to either a four- or six-year basis

Having biennial synods would not be new to the CRC. Synod met every other year between 1884 and 1936, at which point the decision was made to hold synod annually due to the volume of work and the principle that frequent meetings are helpful (*Acts of Synod 1936*, pp. 38-39). The matter of biennial synods was considered again in the 1950s, in conjunction with proposals to implement regional synods that could potentially relieve the need for an annual general synod. Discussions about matters such as candidate examinations were part of those considerations (see *Acts of Synod 1960*, pp. 342, 363). However, since synod decided against the regional synod proposal in 1960, there has been no further discussion about the frequency of synod meetings.

It is also worth noting that some other denominations have adopted similar patterns. The Reformed Church in America adopted a recommendation in 2025 that its general synod meet in person every three years. The United Reformed Churches in North America meet every other year. So while meeting less than every year would be a change for us and would be somewhat unusual among Reformed and Presbyterian bodies, it is not totally unknown.

*B. Create a classis-level assessment to cover costs associated with COD and synod*  
While historically the denomination has used a per-member ministry share (or quota), it may be more appropriate for the denomination to use a per classis, or per church, quota to cover some governance costs. Recognizing that the total travel, food, and lodging costs associated with COD and synod meetings are around \$600,000 (USD), each classis would in this scenario be required to contribute \$12,000 annually. This amount would be adjusted every two years.

The task force discussed further implications of this type of assessment, including what could happen if a classis didn't remain current in its payments. Members of the task force looked into the RCA model of assessments, noting that their Book of Church Order (I, 1, 1, a) indicates that a classis must be current in their payments to have delegates seated at synod. This could require a change to Church Order Article 45 as suggested below (though such a change could be handled through synodical regulations as well). Suggested additions are indicated by underline, as follows:

*Article 45*

Synod is the assembly representing the churches of all classes.

a. Each classis shall ordinarily delegate one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one other officebearer to synod. A classis may send no more than two delegates bearing the same office.

b. Each classis must be current in their assessment before its delegates may be seated at synod.

If there is a reduction in classes and a corresponding reduction in governance costs, the assessment per classis could be gradually reduced.

As with other proposals in this report, it should be noted that this kind of assessment is not new to the CRC. Prior to 1939, the CRC operated on a two-tier system of contributions to shared ministry programs. It was understood that all churches were obligated to provide certain amounts, and relief from those expenses needed to be specifically granted by synod and the classes. Other expenses were understood to be voluntary contributions that churches made once their other obligations were met. However, some argued that the distinction between the "assessments" and other contributions was artificial and that this undermined the shared ministry we undertook together (*Agenda for Synod 1936*, pp. 19-22; see the historical summary in *Acts of Synod 1989*, pp. 386-89). Our shift to a ministry-share system based entirely on voluntary contributions (*Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 789-90) represents a further shift in our understanding away from the "assessments" model, so this recommendation would need to take into account the reasons for this shift. On the other hand, the fact that we see Ministers' Pension Fund contributions as an assessment indicates that we already make some exceptions to a "voluntary contribution" approach to all expenses related to governance and ministry.

The strength of such a system is that it would make classes and congregations more aware of the financial costs of participating in the governance systems that provide the structure for our shared ministry and common witness to Christ in the world. One concern with this approach is that it could simply shift giving from ministry share contributions to governance assessments without truly providing additional financial resources for denominational ministry. Many North American denominations have transitioned to a per-congregation (or per-classis) assessment for certain denominational services such as governance. Despite such assessments being required, these denominations have not achieved uniform success in congregations' and regional bodies' paying these assessments. Finally, while instituting these assessments, synod would need to discern how to respond to classes facing financial hardship that would prevent full payment of governance assessments.

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, the median amount given per classis was approximately \$300,000 USD. Nine classes, however (all in the U.S.), contributed less than \$100,000 USD in ministry shares. While this figure does not include above-ministry-share amounts, and while much of the shared ministry we do as a denomination can be distributed on a per-member basis, this figure serves as a reminder that the governance system (in which our systems allocate authority on a per-classis basis) requires approximately \$60,000-80,000 USD per year. Thus classes that are contributing less than \$100,000 USD are covering only the basic functions that support classes and congregational life.

After discussing all of these factors extensively, the task force concluded that, at least for now, a mandatory assessment and a Church Order change would not be necessary. While recognizing both the urgent financial situation and the need for classes and churches to plan and budget for such an assessment, the task force concluded that a better way to start this process would be to encourage the classes to consider payments to the denomination to help offset some of the synod and COD meeting costs. Classes could also consider covering the costs of their delegates; however, those costs are not equal for all classes, so some consideration should be given to classes with higher costs and/or fewer resources.

*C. Reduce the number of synodical delegates from four to three per classis*

In order to temporarily reduce governance costs as other cost reductions and restructuring are completed, the task force discussed reducing the number of synodical delegates from four to three per classis. This would create approximately \$125,000 in savings annually, which would be reflected in classical assessment relief, if approved. These savings would be reflected in synod costs only and would not be reflected in the governance costs including staff time and COD costs.

In this scenario concerns were noted regarding the diversity of delegates with regard to ethnicity, gender, office, and age.

From the 1890s, when synod first transitioned to classical representation, until 1936, each classis was represented by three elders and three ministers. When synod decided to meet annually, a reduction in the number of delegates was also adopted (*Acts of Synod 1936*, p. 39). Various synods since that time have discussed reducing the number of delegates, including by half, by changing from four to three, or by adopting a system of proportional representation based on membership. In general, synod has expressed concern about further reductions in the number of delegates, noting that “it is a recognized principle of Reformed polity that as many as possible attend the major ecclesiastical assemblies” (*Acts of Synod 1936*, p. 38). This principle was quoted when later synods considered reducing the number of delegates as well, noting also that “in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom” (*Acts of Synod 1953*, p. 97 [cf. Prov. 11:14]; see also *Acts of Synod 1963*, pp. 55-56).

These previous synodical discussions were primarily in response to concerns about finances, but they also had to do with proposals about the adoption of regional synods (*Agenda for Synod 1952*, p. 170; *Agenda for Synod 1957*, p. 296), the delegation of deacons to synod (*Acts of Synod 1967*, pp. 91-94, 232-55; *Agenda for Synod 1971*, p. 641), and delegation proportional to the size of the classis (*Agenda for Synod 1934*, pp. 319-20; *Agenda for Synod 1987*, pp. 443-44). Along with concerns about diversity, there have historically been concerns about the amount of work given to a synod and concerns that having fewer delegates could make the workload heavier for those delegates.

Instead of focusing on the number of delegates per classis, it may be more beneficial to suggest a number of delegates that would be appropriate for synod and to give space for each classis to delegate the appropriate number of delegates. For example, if synod decides that the most effective number of delegates is 150, the 49 classes would each be allowed three delegates. If there were 30 classes, each classis would have five delegates.

Any change to the delegation for synod would require a change to Church Order Article 45. The task force considered two different options: one that would reduce the number of delegates per classis, and another that would apportion a set number of delegates among the classes. One of these options could be adopted by way of Church Order changes as suggested below (with additions indicated by underline and deletions by ~~striketrough~~):

*Article 45*

(Option 1)

Synod is the assembly representing the churches of all classes. Each classis shall ordinarily delegate one minister, one elder, and one deacon, ~~and one other officebearer~~ to synod. A classis may send no more than two delegates bearing the same office.

(Option 2)

Synod is the assembly representing the churches of all classes. Synod

shall ordinarily be made up of 150 delegates, equally representing the classes. Each classis shall ordinarily delegate ~~one~~ ministers, ~~one~~ elders, and ~~one~~ deacons, and ~~one other officebearer~~ to synod. A classis may send no more than two delegates bearing the same office.

After extensive discussion, the task force concluded that perhaps the best way to reduce the number of delegates at synod was to adopt neither of these prescriptions, but to depend on a more organic process of reducing the number of classes. Given the number of smaller classes and churches disaffiliating recently, reducing the number of delegates per classis might turn out be only a temporary solution that would need to change if classes had to be reorganized anyway. The task force therefore will not recommend reducing the number of delegates to synod.

#### *D. Reduce the number of classes*

While the idea of redistricting and reducing classes was already part of this task force's discussion, Synod 2025 instructed the Office of General Secretary (OGS) to "engage with" classes in response to a communication from Classis Grand Rapids East, noting the progress of conversations with congregations from neighboring classes as part of a potential realignment of classes in the city of Grand Rapids. Synod asked the OGS to coordinate those discussions with the work of this COD task force, prioritizing ministry effectiveness and classical health (*Acts of Synod 2025*, p. 654).

This proposal led to significant discussion within the task force, including whether synod had the authority to reduce the number of classes or if such a change had to originate from the classes themselves. Church Order Article 39 states that "the organization of a new classis and the redistricting of classes require the approval of synod," but this does not specify whether synod can mandate the organization or reorganization of a classis. After receiving a number of overtures about revising Church Order Article 39, Synod 1996 adopted a motion to "remind the churches that any request for transfer to another classis may include grounds that go beyond the sole matter of geographic proximity and that synod is at liberty to consider such grounds in its disposition of the request" (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p. 561). While this decision was largely based on discussions about theological affinity with regard to women in ecclesiastical office, it does not offer any indication that synod may or may not reorganize classes. However, synod does need to approve the transfer of any church to another classis.

Nonetheless, a proposal to reduce the number of classes would not be entirely new to the CRC. Synod 1936 appointed a committee to review the districting of the classes, with the understanding that this be done "in full cooperation and consultation with the classes involved" (*Acts of Synod 1936*, pp. 37-38). The next year's synod reported on the extensive communication involved in this conversation and incorporated these responses into its decisions (see reports in the *Agenda for Synod 1937*, pp. 136-50, and in the *Acts of*

*Synod 1937*, pp. 236-49; decisions are reported in the *Acts of Synod 1937*, pp. 64, 104-5).

Along with the discussion about authority in the reorganization and reduction of classes, the task force considered suggestions on what the optimum number of classes might be, ranging from 12 to 45. Given historical data on the number of classes as well as the workload that would be required to continue the governance work of the denomination, it seemed that 12 would be too low a number and that 45 would still be too high to make a reducing impact on costs. Some factors that could come into play could be the financial impacts of having fewer delegates to both synod and the COD—and those impacts would be significantly more than the costs of travel, food, and lodging for synod and COD meetings. Reducing the number of classes, for example, would also reduce the time and financial costs of staff visiting classes, processing classis minutes, and following up on classis matters. In reviewing the number of vacancies across boards and committees at present, along with vacancies in classis positions (synodical deputies, regional pastors, church counselors, etc.) it becomes clear that reducing the number of classes and increasing the number of members within a classis could also provide a larger pool of individuals to fill these spots.

Each classis currently has the opportunity to send four delegates to synod each year. In 2023, Church Order Article 45 was revised so that in connection with ordinarily sending “one minister, one elder, one deacon, and one other officebearer to synod,” each classis may now “send no more than two delegates bearing the same office.” One of the grounds for this change indicated that this was in response to some classes’ having difficulty in sending a full delegation (*Acts of Synod 2023*, p. 1031). It is too early to tell if this change will have a significant impact on the ability for all classes to send a full delegation to synod. For sake of comparison over the past decade, however, the following statistics show the percentages of classes that have been able to send four delegates to synod (ranging from 69% to 89%) since 2015. The remaining classes had 1-3 delegates.

- 2025 - 69%
- 2024 - 87%
- 2023 - 81%
- 2022 - 80%
- 2019 - 71%
- 2018 - 80%
- 2017 - 77%
- 2016 - 87%
- 2015 - 89%

The task force observed that it would be difficult to name a specific reduction in the number of classes, but noted that the reduction would need to be significant and done in consultation with the current classes. Such a reduc-

tion could provide cost savings in the expenses related to synod (the current estimate is that a classis delegation to synod and to the COD costs approximately \$10,000-12,000 per classis each year). A reduction in the number of classes could also help to make classis ministry more sustainable. For example, in addition to lowering the costs of denominational expenses, a reduction in the number of classes might result in the consolidation of funding and increased resources for classis initiatives such as church planting, development and support of ministry leaders, and a larger pool of volunteers to staff classis functionary positions. Conversely, reducing the number of classes could result in greater travel expenses. Further, intangible outcomes would likely include the required changes and adaptations in the cultures of classes to accommodate new member churches.

## **V. Concluding Observations**

This task force recognizes that the changes discussed above would represent significant shifts in the way the CRCNA conducts its assemblies. As noted earlier in this report, we want to approach such shifts with a measure of caution. Governance is not something different from ministry; it *is* ministry in the sense that it is the place where our decisions about ministry are made, our priorities are set, our officebearers dialogue in order to seek the calling God has set before us as a denomination. In our governance systems we decide what kinds of character qualities we would hold up in those who give leadership to the CRCNA. We set the theological priorities that shape the way we together live out the gospel. We engage in processes to hold one another accountable in life and doctrine. Even where these processes are done imperfectly, they are vital to our shared witness as a church. Just as we believe that God works through the investment of time, treasure, and talent that is given to the work of discernment in a local council, so also we believe that the same kind of discernment takes place when officebearers gather to do the work of classis and synod, when the Council of Delegates meets to consider the work of denominational ministries, and when the synodical deputies and staff support the discernment processes of the assemblies. These systems and assemblies give our work a vibrancy and a level of accountability and mutual discernment that we could not achieve if our polity were congregational. Any shift in our current structure will have relational costs that are not easy to quantify.

Yet this task force also wants to convey to synod the urgency of our current situation. We cannot function in an environment of consistently declining ministry shares. If we do not look carefully at the financial expenses of our current practices related to governance (and especially to the operation of synod), we will face increasing pressure on our resources for other areas of ministry. We have already seen the impact of those pressures on our funding model for church planting (see *Acts of Synod 2025*, pp. 461-65). The churches' willingness to finance the operations of our denominational life affect our ability to do ministry of all kinds, and faithfulness in our present

moment demands that we discern where God's Spirit may be leading through the financial challenges we currently face.

But this also highlights another important theme that this task force would like to share with synod. This present moment is one of opportunity, not just challenge. As a result of our present financial challenges, we have opportunity to think through the priorities we believe God would have us embrace as a denomination. We have opportunity to consider what values would guide our governance so that we provide resources to give adequate space to the present diversity of the CRC, and how to appropriately balance systems of governance with the work of agencies and churches to carry out the work we have prioritized through our governance conversations. We believe that the recommendations below provide a balanced approach: directing sufficient resources to the work of synod (both the formal gathering and the implementation of its decisions through the work of the COD, staff, synodical deputies, and more) while also freeing up financial resources so that other ministries of denominational life can receive greater support. It is our prayer that God would be honored, and the church built up, as we seek to be faithful stewards of the time, treasure, and talents God has given us.

## **VI. Recommendations**

A. That the COD recommend that synod meet on a biennial basis (every two years) beginning in 2027 and that synod direct the Council of Delegates to provide specific recommendations to Synod 2027 about the changes to the candidacy process, the process for approving key denominational leadership, and other matters that are currently handled by synod annually. This will require the following change to Church Order Article 46-a (with additions indicated by underline and deletions by ~~striketrough~~):

- a. Synod shall meet annually~~annually~~biennially, at a time and place determined by the previous synod. Each synod shall designate a church to convene the following synod.

### *Grounds:*

1. This change would result in significant cost savings.
2. This change would allow for additional time to work on assigned tasks and for churches/classes to absorb/process synodical decisions.
3. The work of synod will still need to be processed. The specifics of how to do that are beyond the scope of the present task force and can best be addressed by the COD.

B. That the COD draw attention to the operational costs of synod and COD meetings (transportation, food, lodging, venue) and that the COD encourage classes to consider payments to the denomination to help offset those costs. (*Note: the average annual cost per classis for these expenses is estimated to be \$12,000.*)

*Grounds:*

1. While many denominational ministries receive “above ministry share” gifts, governance costs are not typically included in those gifts (and perhaps should not be, so as to avoid the appearance of improper influence).
2. A classis-level investment has the potential to provide both financial relief to the denomination and increased ownership and interest in the governance systems of the CRCNA.

C. That the COD recommend that synod establish a one-year task force, working in close coordination with the classes, to review the current classis structure and make recommendations to Synod 2027 for classis consolidations and/or overall restructuring. This task force should be made up of at least nine members, including someone from each of the six classical regions, classis leaders, someone with extensive synodical experience, someone with experience in organizational leadership, someone with a legal and/or financial background, a member of the COD Synodical Services Committee, and appropriate CRCNA staff while also honoring the diversity of the denomination (age, gender, ethnicity).

*Grounds:*

1. At this point in the life of our denomination, classis restructuring is necessary; however, it will require an additional task force to work through how that restructuring should take place.
2. Reducing the number of classes will result in additional cost savings due to the reduction in the number of delegates to synod and the COD.
3. Many classes are currently struggling to fill important roles and to engage in new ministry opportunities. Having fewer classes would increase the pool of resources (people and financial) for those roles and for ministries, such as church planting and leadership development.
4. Having fewer classes would reduce the staff time needed for interacting with the classes, allowing time to focus on other denominational priorities.
5. Synod has previously utilized such a committee to manage the process of redistricting the classes (*Acts of Synod 1936*, pp. 37-38; *Acts of Synod 1937*, pp. 64, 104-5).

D. That the COD dismiss the task force with thanks for their work.

COD Task Force to Review Governance Costs

Drew Sweetman, chair  
Tom Byma, reporter

**ADDENDUM A**  
**Synod 2024 Costs**

	<i>Total Cost (USD)</i>
Space Rental	\$22,530.34
Breakfast	\$19,932.37
Lunch	\$23,630.30
Dinner	\$26,217.95
Breaks	\$17,021.75
Lodging	\$37,343.67
Sound Crew	\$13,692.59
<u>Live Stream</u>	<u>\$2,150.00</u>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$153,518.88</b>

**1 Week Salaries\***

	<i>Total Cost (USD)</i>
IT salaries (2 weeks)	\$49,950
Advancement	\$2,471
Banner	\$9,150
Thrive	\$3,292
HR	\$2,483
ReFrame	\$4,105
Resonate	\$3,659
<u>Additional Admin.</u>	<u>\$1,737</u>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$76,846</b>

\*These are additional costs charged to other ministries not included in the budget for synod. This represents the labor costs for these people to be at synod. It also means they are not working on their ministry programs during this time.

Staff at synod	31
Days	9
<u>Avg. cost per day</u>	<u>\$975.34</u>
Total staff costs:	\$272,119.86

Average number of delegates and staff	275
Average cost per delegate for event	\$558.25

**ADDENDUM B**  
**2024 COD Costs**

	All Entities		OGS-US		OGS-CAN	
	Year to Date		Year to Date		Year to Date	
	06/30/2024		06/30/2024		06/30/2024	
	YTD Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	Budget
Expenditures						
Program Expenses						
Conferences, Conventions, and Meetings						
83100 - Board Meetings	788.45	0	788.45	0	0	0
83200 - Conference/Training	10.78	0	10.78	0	0	0
Total Conferences, Conventions, and Meetings	799.23	0	799.23	0	0	0
Printing and Publications						
84210 - Publications/Printed Materials	20.97	0	20.97	0	0	0
Total Printing and Publications	20.97	0	20.97	0	0	0
Travel Expenses						
83500 - Airfare	27,825.67	114,767.83	18,165.12	99,999.96	9,660.55	14,767.87
83510 - Lodging	32,118.07	0	31,791.90	0	326.17	0
83520 - Ground Transportation	11,734.56	0	6,481.68	0	5,252.88	0
83530 - Mileage	2,118.47	0	1,123.46	0	995.01	0
83540 - Travel/Nontravel Meals	11,642.66	0	11,141.39	0	501.27	0
83550 - Sundry Travel Costs	76.6	0	0	0	76.6	0
Total Travel Expenses	85,516.03	114,767.83	68,703.55	99,999.96	16,812.48	14,767.87
Postage and Delivery						
84200 - Postage/Shipping	694.7	0	457.32	0	237.38	0
Total Postage and Delivery	694.7	0	457.32	0	237.38	0
Insurance						
84170 - Business Insurance	50.7	0	50.7	0	0	0
Total Insurance	50.7	0	50.7	0	0	0
Office Supplies						

84180 - Supplies	1,114.38	0	1,114.38	0	0	0
Total Office Supplies	1,114.38	0	1,114.38	0	0	0
Telecommunication						
81280 - Phone Cost/Allowance	51.02	0	0	0	51.02	0
Total Telecommunication	51.02	0	0	0	51.02	0
Occupancy						
81240 – Rentals	350	0	350	0	0	0
Total Occupancy	350	0	350	0	0	0
Cost Share U.S./Canada						
84990 - CA/U.S. Cost Sharing	-6.43	-180.08	-4,002.52	-11,622.96	3,996.09	11,442.88
Cost Share U.S./Canada	-6.43	-180.08	-4,002.52	-11,622.96	3,996.09	11,442.88
Total Program Expenses	88,590.60	114,587.75	67,493.63	88,377.00	21,096.97	26,210.75
Total Expenditures	88,590.60	114,587.75	67,493.63	88,377.00	21,096.97	26,210.75
Total Revenues over Expenditures	-88,590.60	-114,587.75	-67,493.63	-88,377.00	-21,096.97	-26,210.75

## ADDENDUM C

### Yearbook 2025 Statistics

Classis	Congregations	Organized Congregations	Emerging Congregations	Multi-site Congregations	Average Sunday Attendance	Total Families	Professing Members Under 18	Total Professing Members	Non-Professing Members	Total Members
Alberta North	30	27	3		4207	2453	58	5118	2991	8109
Alberta South/Saskatchewan	18	17	1		1878	963	14	2322	1047	3369
Arizona	9	5	4		827	126	9	279	51	330
Atlantic Northeast	23	18	5		1662	973	37	1920	428	2348
B.C. North-West	21	16	2	3	3138	1092	69	2418	813	3231
B.C. South-East	23	20	3		3658	1555	31	3504	1200	4704

California South	18	12	6		2663	1287	164	2290	439	2729
Central California	35	27	8		4846	1740	147	4524	1587	6111
Central Plains	21	20	1		2817	1316	82	2855	1041	3896
Chicago South	16	15	1		2231	1240	121	2820	931	3751
Columbia	16	13	3		1191	538	41	1155	358	1513
Eastern Canada	19	19	0		1744	940	44	2079	849	2928
Georgetown	18	17	1		4108	2053	102	4778	1676	6454
Grand Rapids East	21	17	2	2	4466	2175	186	4711	1782	6493
Grand Rapids North	18	17	1		1973	1169	98	2458	644	3102
Grand Rapids South	18	15	3		4173	2210	131	4916	1580	6496
Grandville	17	15	2		3847	2201	86	4598	1658	6256
Greater Los Angeles	32	26	6		5484	2501	416	3279	2025	5304
Hackensack	26	19	7		2071	806	103	1620	360	1980
Hamilton	15	14	1		2467	1395	33	3451	1285	4736
Hanmi	24	12	12		1846	726	125	1122	236	1358
Heartland	22	20	1	1	3539	1432	108	3471	1397	4868
Holland	31	26	5		5301	2732	135	6141	1972	8113
Hudson	25	15	10		1521	678	96	1504	372	1876
Huron	22	21	1		3776	2004	22	4409	2016	6425
Iakota	20	19	1		5208	2132	48	4867	2400	7267
Illiana	18	18	0		3237	2150	129	3841	1366	5207
Kalamazoo	12	11	1		1663	721	89	1809	553	2362
Ko-Am	22	16	6		736	365	60	611	93	704
Lake Erie	16	14	2		1629	690	115	1810	410	2220
Lake Superior	25	22	3		2838	1553	78	3431	1255	4686

Minnkota	17	17	0		2619	1114	80	2693	931	3624
Muskegon	19	16	3		2557	1466	36	3022	768	3790
Niagara	14	11	3		2388	1357	0	2652	1044	3696
North Cascades	10	8	2		1584	619	57	1573	491	2064
Northcentral Iowa	12	11	1		706	404	43	943	231	1174
Northern Illinois	16	14	2		1666	1011	77	2159	811	2970
Northern Michigan	14	12	2		1591	798	51	1969	644	2613
Ontario Southwest	28	25	2	1	4301	1877	32	4628	1789	6417
Pacific Northwest	29	21	8		1829	731	30	1669	413	2082
Quinte	19	18	1		2629	1502	43	3383	1149	4532
Red Mesa	21	18	3		817	469	98	1110	470	1580
Rocky Mountain	36	20	16		2075	741	80	1751	386	2137
Southeast U.S.	21	10	6	5	2591	474	109	2010	461	2471
Thornapple Valley	13	11	1	1	2407	1247	128	2571	742	3313
Toronto	20	19	1		2196	1230	35	2968	575	3543
Wisconsin	16	15	1		2561	1104	160	2620	1035	3655
Yellowstone	7	6	1		872	309	36	826	279	1105
Zeeland	17	16	1		2712	1260	70	2990	1028	4018
Total	980	811	156	13	128846	61629	4142	135648	48062	183710

## **Condensed Financial Statements of the Agencies, Institutions, and Ministries**

Each year, synod provides delegates with a number of financial documents. These documents fall into three main groups and reflect the instructions of previous synods (cf. *Acts of Synod 1998*, pp. 439-40): the prior fiscal year-end balance sheets and income statements for each agency and institution are found in this appendix; the investment allocations as well as the budgets for the upcoming fiscal year will be presented in the Agenda Supplement. These materials are provided primarily for synod's information in order to maintain transparency about our use of the financial resources God has entrusted to the CRCNA.

In addition, an audited financial report as of June 30 is made available on the CRCNA website each year ([crcna.org/welcome/governance/financial-statements](http://crcna.org/welcome/governance/financial-statements)).

The advisory committee addressing finance and administration matters at synod operates under a specific mandate (see *Agenda for Synod 2025*, pp. 92-93), which will be provided to the advisory committee members to guide their review of these documents.

This appendix contains the following documents:

- Balance Sheets (labeled "Schedule 1") for the CRCNA, ReFrame Ministries, World Renew, the CRC Loan Fund U.S., Calvin Theological Seminary, Calvin University, Ministers Pension Plan (along with their accompanying Special Assistance Funds)
- Income Statements (labeled "Schedule 2") for CRCNA entities

Please note that, per the decisions of Synods 2015, 2017, and 2023, which combined the operations of Resonate Global Mission, Thrive, and the Office of General Secretary into the general CRCNA operations, the financial statements include financial information for all three of those entities in a single document (*Acts of Synod 2015*, p. 680; *Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 621; *Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 956-57).

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
Agency: CRC (Resonate, Office of General Secretary, Thrive, Ministry Boards, Canadian Ministries)  
Balance Sheet (000s) as of June 30

	Fiscal 23-24		Fiscal 24-25	
	Can Dollars Actual	US Dollars Actual	Can Dollars Actual	US Dollars Actual
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash	\$ 11,191	\$ 4,428	\$ 8,162	\$ 12,537
Investments	\$ 31,629	\$ 21,116	\$ 34,203	\$ 22,980
Other	2,538	8,258	2,465	7,436
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 45,358</b>	<b>\$ 33,802</b>	<b>\$ 44,830</b>	<b>\$ 42,953</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Trade Payables	\$ 1,355	\$ 1,050	\$ 1,221	\$ 1,168
Other Payables	\$ 35,437	\$ 9,990	\$ 31,492	\$ 11,771
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ 36,792</b>	<b>\$ 11,040</b>	<b>\$ 32,713</b>	<b>\$ 12,939</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Donor Designated	\$ -	\$ 11,602	\$ -	\$ 11,155
Unrestricted	\$ 8,566	\$ 11,160	\$ 12,117	\$ 18,859
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 8,566</b>	<b>\$ 22,762</b>	<b>\$ 12,117</b>	<b>\$ 30,014</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 45,358</b>	<b>\$ 33,802</b>	<b>\$ 44,830</b>	<b>\$ 42,953</b>
Exchange Rate CAN/US	1.33567		1.4017	
Exchange Rate US/CAN	0.7371		0.7134	

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
Agency: ReFrame Ministries  
Balance Sheet (000s) as of June 30

	Fiscal 23-24		Fiscal 24-25	
	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollar Actual	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollar Actual
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash	\$ 2,336	\$ 1,751	\$ 2,330	\$ 694
Investments	\$ -	\$ 10,219	\$ -	\$ 11,338
Other	\$ 54	\$ 965	\$ 124	\$ 1,353
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 2,390</b>	<b>\$ 12,935</b>	<b>\$ 2,454</b>	<b>\$ 13,385</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Trade Payables	\$ 60	\$ 128	\$ 101	\$ 6
Other Payables	\$ -	\$ 393	\$ -	\$ 358
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ 60</b>	<b>\$ 521</b>	<b>\$ 101</b>	<b>\$ 364</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Donor Designated	\$ -	\$ 1,906	\$ -	\$ 2,136
Unrestricted	\$ 2,330	\$ 10,508	\$ 2,353	\$ 10,885
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,330</b>	<b>\$12,414</b>	<b>2,353</b>	<b>13,021</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 2,390</b>	<b>\$ 12,935</b>	<b>\$ 2,454</b>	<b>\$ 13,385</b>
Exchange Rate CAN/US	1.3567		1.4017	
Exchange Rate US/CAN	0.7371		0.7134	

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: World Renew**  
**Balance Sheet (000s) as of June 30**

	Fiscal 23-24		Fiscal 24-25	
	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollars	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollars Actual
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash	\$ 10,319	\$ 3,811	\$ 5,655	\$ 1,142
Investments	\$ -	\$ 14,599	\$ 100	\$ 14,579
CFGB* Investments	\$ 7,833	\$ -	\$ 8,367	\$ -
Other	\$ 4,461	\$ 14,372	\$ 7,106	\$ 13,449
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 22,613</b>	<b>\$ 32,782</b>	<b>\$ 21,228</b>	<b>\$ 29,170</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Trade Payables	\$ 1,214	\$ 949	\$ 1,498	\$ 571
Other Payables	\$ 4,070	\$ 3,764	\$ 3,803	\$ 3,699
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ 5,284</b>	<b>\$ 4,713</b>	<b>\$ 5,301</b>	<b>\$ 4,270</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Donor Designated	\$ -	\$ 13,659	\$ -	\$ 14,511
CFGB*	\$ 7,833	\$ -	\$ 8,367	\$ -
Unrestricted	\$ 9,496	\$ 14,409	\$ 7,560	\$ 10,389
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 17,329</b>	<b>\$ 28,068</b>	<b>\$ 15,927</b>	<b>\$ 24,900</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 22,613</b>	<b>\$ 32,781</b>	<b>\$ 21,228</b>	<b>\$ 29,170</b>

\* Canadian Foodgrains Bank Association Inc.

Exchange Rate CAN/US	1.3567	1.4017
Exchange Rate US/CAN	0.7371	0.7134

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Loan Fund**  
**Balance Sheet (000s) as of June 30**

	Fiscal 23-24	Fiscal 24-25
	US Dollars Actual	US Dollars Actual
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 1,503	\$ 1,737
Investments	\$ 4,193	\$ 3,286
Other	\$ 10,015	\$ 10,214
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 15,711</b>	<b>\$ 15,237</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Trade Payables	\$ 40	\$ 20
Other Payables	\$ 9,426	\$ 8,842
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ 9,466</b>	<b>\$ 8,862</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Board Designated	\$ 650	\$ 650
Unrestricted	\$ 5,595	\$ 5,725
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 6,245</b>	<b>\$ 6,375</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 15,711</b>	<b>\$ 15,237</b>

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Calvin Theological Seminary**  
**Balance Sheet (000s) as of June 30**

	Fiscal 23-24 US Dollars Actual	Fiscal 24-25 US Dollars Actual
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 549	\$ 690
Investments	\$ 73,760	\$ 70,239
Other	\$ 18,330	\$ 30,321
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 92,639</b>	<b>\$ 101,250</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Trade Payables	\$ 1,497	\$ 4,432
Other Payables	\$ 1,501	\$ 1,046
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ 2,998</b>	<b>\$ 5,478</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Donor Designated	\$ 62,412	\$ 69,314
Unrestricted	\$ 27,229	\$ 26,458
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 89,641</b>	<b>\$ 95,772</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 92,639</b>	<b>\$ 101,250</b>

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Calvin University**  
**Balance Sheet (000s) as of June 30**

	Fiscal 23-24 US Dollar Actual	Fiscal 24-25 US Dollar Actual
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 19,367	\$ 21,961
Investments	\$ 347,070	\$ 327,510
Other	\$ 254,479	\$ 263,065
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 620,916</b>	<b>\$ 612,536</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Trade Payables	\$ 10,948	\$ 3,729
Other Payables	\$ 114,712	\$ 107,881
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ 125,660</b>	<b>\$ 111,610</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Donor Designated	\$ 322,497	\$ 311,354
Unrestricted	\$ 172,759	\$ 189,572
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 495,256</b>	<b>\$ 500,926</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 620,916</b>	<b>\$ 612,536</b>

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Ministers Pension Plan**  
**Balance Sheet (000s) Calendar Year December 31**

	Cal Year 2024		Cal Year 2025	
	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollar Actual	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollar Actual
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash	\$ 359	\$ 4,541	\$ 468	\$ 8,785
Investments	\$ 94,835	\$ 122,685	\$ 97,719	\$ 123,032
Other	\$ 53	\$ 193	\$ (219)	\$ 547
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 95,247</b>	<b>\$ 127,419</b>	<b>\$ 97,968</b>	<b>\$ 132,364</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Trade Payables	\$ 89	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ -
Other Payables	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ 89</b>	<b>\$ 26</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Donor Designated	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Unrestricted	\$ 95,158	\$ 127,393	\$ 97,968	\$ 132,364
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 95,158</b>	<b>\$ 127,393</b>	<b>\$ 97,968</b>	<b>\$ 132,364</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 95,247</b>	<b>\$ 127,419</b>	<b>\$ 97,968</b>	<b>\$ 132,364</b>

**Schedule 1**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Special Assistance Fund**  
**Balance Sheet (000s) Calendar Year December 31**

	Cal Year 2024		Cal Year 2025	
	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollar Actual	Can Dollar Actual	US Dollar Actual
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash	\$ 1,893	\$ 85	\$ 2,598	\$ 71
Investments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ (1,506)	\$ -	\$ 182	\$ 10
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 387</b>	<b>\$ 85</b>	<b>\$ 2,780</b>	<b>\$ 81</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Trade Payables	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Payables	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Payables</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Donor Designated	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Unrestricted	\$ 387	\$ 85	\$ 2,780	\$ 81
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 387</b>	<b>\$ 85</b>	<b>\$ 2,780</b>	<b>\$ 81</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 387</b>	<b>\$ 85</b>	<b>\$ 2,780</b>	<b>\$ 81</b>

**Schedule 2**

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**

**Agency: CRC (Resonate, Office of General Secretary, Thrive, Ministry Boards, Canadian Ministries)**

**Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year ending June 30th (000's)**

	Fiscal Year		Fiscal Year	
	24-25 Actual		25-26 Budget	
	Can Dollars	US Dollars	Can Dollars	US Dollars
<b>Income</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Ministry Shares	\$5,102	\$8,340	\$5,500	\$8,325
Above Ministry Shares	\$3,882	\$14,797	\$4,061	\$13,482
Grant Income	\$41	\$4,465	\$108	\$132
Investment Income	\$3,343	\$1,517	\$126	\$0
Qualified Donees	\$1,048	\$0	\$0	\$0
Product Revenue	\$125	\$881	\$100	\$703
Advertising Revenue	\$30	\$211	\$8	\$275
Other Revenue	\$2,983	\$4,852	\$186	\$939
Service Allocations	\$3,713	\$693	\$2,435	\$4,879
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$20,267</b>	<b>\$35,756</b>	<b>\$12,524</b>	<b>\$28,735</b>

**Schedule 2**

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**

**Agency: CRC (Resonate, Office of General Secretary, Thrive, Ministry Boards, Canadian Ministries)**

**Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year ending June 30th (000's)**

	Fiscal Year		Fiscal Year	
	24-25 Actual		25-26 Budget	
	Can Dollars	US Dollars	Can Dollars	US Dollars
<b>Expense</b>				
OGS Admin	-\$4	\$855	\$343	\$677
OGS Synodical Services	\$103	\$218	\$205	\$406
OGS Synodical Deputies	\$9	\$20	\$14	\$27
OGS Annual Synod Meeting	\$111	\$252	\$212	\$419
OGS Ecumenical Relations	\$22	\$48	\$36	\$70
OGS Historical Committee	\$26	\$58	\$39	\$78
OGS Judicial Committee	\$0	\$0	\$3	\$6
OGS Stated Clerks gathering	\$14	\$30	\$1	\$2
OGS Study Committees	\$3	\$7	\$8	\$16
OGS Ministry Plan	\$0	\$0	\$2	\$4
OGS Yearbook	\$18	\$37	\$33	\$65
OGS COD	\$28	\$62	\$33	\$65
OGS Candidacy	\$78	\$167	\$94	\$185
OGS Communication	\$104	\$229	\$136	\$269
OGS Banner	\$365	\$780	\$51	\$896
OGS Grants	\$7	\$1,742	\$0	\$0
<b>OGS Expense Subtotal</b>	<b>\$884</b>	<b>\$4,505</b>	<b>\$1,210</b>	<b>\$3,185</b>
TH Admin	\$263	\$7	\$23	\$925
TH Connect	\$2	\$238	\$160	\$312
TH Engage	\$226	\$478	\$260	\$505
TH Equip	\$230	\$476	\$353	\$684
TH Operations	\$179	\$353	\$208	\$403
TH-Grants	\$2	\$528	\$157	\$748
<b>TH Expense Subtotal</b>	<b>\$902</b>	<b>\$2,080</b>	<b>\$1,161</b>	<b>\$3,577</b>
RG Admin	\$870	\$712	\$665	\$1,717
RG Asia	\$239	\$1,070	\$92	\$1,394
RG Eastern & Southern Africa	\$239	\$1,047	\$183	\$1,212
RG Europe	\$135	\$656	\$130	\$970
RG Global Mission Core Team	\$1,128	\$4,048	\$510	\$3,828
RG Latin America	\$428	\$1,634	\$0	\$1,811
RG Middle East	\$80	\$339	\$109	\$298
RG North American Engagement Team	\$674	\$1,177	\$680	\$1,470
RG Program Team	\$951	\$2,774	\$620	\$1,702
RG West Africa	\$175	\$777	\$0	\$792
<b>RG Expense Subtotal</b>	<b>\$4,919</b>	<b>\$14,234</b>	<b>\$2,989</b>	<b>\$15,194</b>

**Schedule 2**

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**

**Agency: CRC (Resonate, Office of General Secretary, Thrive, Ministry Boards, Canadian Ministries)**

**Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year ending June 30th (000's)**

	Fiscal Year		Fiscal Year	
	24-25 Actual		25-26 Budget	
	Can Dollars	US Dollars	Can Dollars	US Dollars
MB Canadian Ministries	\$1,456	\$0	\$1,598	\$0
MB Race Relations	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
MB Faith Alive	\$194	\$485	\$110	\$624
MB Libros DeSafio	\$0	\$48	\$0	\$0
MB Calvin Seminary	\$732	\$0	\$400	\$0
MB Calvin University	\$27	\$0	\$0	\$0
MB Other Organization	\$116	\$4	\$0	\$0
MB World Renew	\$1,591	\$0	\$0	\$0
MB Cash Management	\$1,460	\$0	\$0	\$0
MB CGI	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Mgt & Gnrl Building	\$367	\$372	\$327	\$176
Mgt & Gnrl Finance	\$874	\$1,401	\$900	\$1,498
Mgt & Gnrl Gift Entry	\$187	\$124	\$187	\$171
Mgt & Gnrl Human Resources	\$214	\$576	\$214	\$802
Mgt & Gnrl Information Technology	\$741	\$1,008	\$578	\$1,313
Mgt & Gnrl Risk	\$0	\$83	\$0	\$92
Mgt & Gnrl Payroll	\$96	\$74	\$117	\$106
Mgt & Gnrl Ministry Support Services	\$317	\$501	\$166	\$716
Mgt & Gnrl Admin	\$588	\$1,197	\$591	\$419
RG Advancement	\$344	\$863	\$626	\$457
RG Advancement Communications	\$262	\$625	\$0	\$893
MB Advancement	\$662	\$324	\$460	\$519
MB Advancement - Communications	\$100	\$0	\$121	\$0
<b>MB Expense Subtotal</b>	<b>\$10,328</b>	<b>\$7,685</b>	<b>\$6,395</b>	<b>\$7,786</b>
<b>CRC Total Expense</b>	<b>\$17,033</b>	<b>\$28,504</b>	<b>\$11,755</b>	<b>\$29,742</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>\$3,234</b>	<b>\$7,252</b>	<b>\$769</b>	<b>-\$1,007</b>
Program %	64%	75%	64%	76%
Mgt & General %	28%	19%	26%	18%
Fund Raising %	8%	6%	10%	6%
OGS= Office of General Secretary				
TH= Thrive				
RG= Resonate Global				
MB= Ministry Boards				
Exchange Rate CAN/US	1.33567		1.4017	
Exchange Rate US/CAN	0.7371		0.7134	

**Schedule 2**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: ReFrame Ministries**  
**Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year ending June 30th (000's)**

	Fiscal Year 24-25		Fiscal Year 25-26	
	Can Dollars	US Dollars	Can Dollars	US Dollars
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
<b>Income</b>				
Ministry Shares	\$448	\$743	\$398	\$570
Above Ministry Shares	\$1,767	\$3,753	\$1,817	\$2,456
Grant Income	\$0	\$556	\$0	\$0
Investment Income	\$0	\$832	\$30	\$498
Products Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Revenue	\$65	\$324	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,280</b>	<b>\$6,208</b>	<b>\$2,245.00</b>	<b>\$3,524.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Today Devotional	\$158	\$354	\$218	\$423
Church Juice	\$108	\$109	\$2	\$4
Groundwork	\$50	\$113	\$64	\$124
Family Fire	\$39	\$109	\$2	\$4
Think Christian	\$51	\$116	\$2	\$4
Kids Corner	\$43	\$96	\$61	\$119
Prayer Ministry	\$37	\$83	\$52	\$101
English	\$301	\$674	\$422	\$821
Korean Expenditures	\$8	\$18	\$9	\$18
Arabic Expenditures	\$27	\$59	\$9	\$53
Chinese Expenditures	\$245	\$552	\$267	\$493
French Expenditures	\$38	\$85	\$35	\$93
Hindi Expenditures	\$44	\$100	\$52	\$101
Indonesian Expenditures	\$63	\$141	\$74	\$143
Japanese Expenditure	\$145	\$327	\$177	\$344
Portuguese Expenditures	\$156	\$350	\$180	\$349
Russian Expenditures	\$95	\$214	\$0	\$0
Spanish Expenditures	\$74	\$167	\$81	\$158
Mgt & General	\$189	\$921	\$177	\$846
Advancement	\$364	\$742	\$277	\$608
Advancement Communications	\$82	\$251	\$100	\$413
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$2,317</b>	<b>\$5,581</b>	<b>\$2,261</b>	<b>\$5,219</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>-\$37</b>	<b>\$627</b>	<b>-\$16</b>	<b>-\$1,695</b>
Program %	73%	66%	75%	64%
Mgt & General %	8%	17%	8%	16%
Fund Raising %	19%	18%	17%	20%
Exchange Rate CAN/US	1.3567		1.4017	
Exchange Rate US/CAN	0.7371		0.7134	

**Schedule 2**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: World Renew**  
**Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year ending June 30th (000's)**

	Fiscal Year 24-25		Fiscal Year 25-26	
	Can Dollars Actual	US Dollars Actual	Can Dollars Budget	US Dollars Budget
<b>Income</b>				
Ministry Shares	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Above Ministry Shares	\$8,002	\$12,113	\$9,982	\$14,535
Disaster Relief	\$5,685	\$3,936	\$5,000	\$1,400
Grant Income	\$8,894	\$2,680	\$15,620	\$108
Investment Income	\$442	\$1,736	\$428	\$1,500
Investment Income	\$0	\$0		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$23,023</b>	<b>\$20,465</b>	<b>\$31,030</b>	<b>\$17,543</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Disaster Relief	\$1,962	\$5,160	\$4,306	\$2,508
Overseas Development	\$6,353	\$11,367	\$11,213	\$10,956
Education & Justice	\$1,307	\$2,062	\$553	\$400
CFGB*	\$10,645	\$0	\$5,761	\$0
Administration	\$2,372	\$2,598	\$1,996	\$3,609
Advancement Communications	\$1,786	\$2,802	\$3,373	\$3,861
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$24,425</b>	<b>\$23,989</b>	<b>\$27,202</b>	<b>\$21,334</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>-\$1,402</b>	<b>-\$3,524</b>	<b>\$3,828</b>	<b>-\$3,791</b>
Program %	83%	77%	80.26%	64.99%
Mgt & General %	10%	11%	7.34%	16.92%
Fund Rasing %	7%	12%	12.40%	18.10%

\* Canadian Foodgrains Bank Association Inc.

Exchange Rate CAN/US	1.3567	1.4017
Exchange Rate US/CAN	0.7371	0.7134

**Schedule 2**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Loan Fund**  
**Operating Budget (000s)**

	Fiscal 24-25	Fiscal 25-26
	US Dollars Actual	US Dollars Budget
<b>Income</b>		
Ministry Share	\$ -	\$ -
Loan Interest Income	\$ 530	\$ 520
Investment Income	\$ 210	\$ 50
Grants/Miscellaneous	\$ 1	\$ 65
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 741</b>	<b>\$ 635</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Interest Expense	\$ 357	\$ 230
Mgt & General	\$ 208	\$ 356
Advancement	\$ 47	\$ 41
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 612</b>	<b>\$ 627</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>\$ 129</b>	<b>\$ 8</b>
Program %	58%	37%
Mgt & General %	34%	57%
Fund Rasing %	8%	7%

Schedule 2

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**

**Agency: Calvin Theological Seminary**

**Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year ending June 30th (000's)**

	Fiscal Year 24-25 US Dollars Actual	Fiscal Year 25-26 US Dollars Budget
<b>Income</b>		
Ministry Shares	\$ 992	\$ 800
Above Ministry Shares	\$ 7,718	\$ 7,000
Net Tuition	\$ 885	\$ 850
Grant Income	\$ -	\$ -
Auxiliary Activities	\$ 637	\$ 700
Endowment Earnings	\$ 2,506	\$ 2,230
Other Revenue	\$ 351	\$ 100
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 13,089</b>	<b>\$ 11,680</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Instruction	\$ 3,736	\$ 3,750
Academic Support	\$ -	\$ -
Student Services	\$ 3,186	\$ 3,100
Auxiliary Activities	\$ 1,026	\$ 850
Mgt & General	\$ 2,303	\$ 2,400
Advancement	\$ 980	\$ 950
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 11,231</b>	<b>\$ 11,050</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>\$ 1,858</b>	<b>\$ 630</b>
Program %	71%	70%
Mgt & General %	21%	22%
Fund Rasing %	9%	9%

**Schedule 2**

**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**

**Agency: Calvin University**

**Statement of Activities: Fiscal Year ending June 30th (000's)**

	<b>Fiscal Year 24-25 US Dollars Actual</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 25-26 US Dollars Budget*</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Ministry Shares	\$ 487	\$ 350
Above Ministry Shares	\$ 13,074	\$ 3,627
Net Tuition	\$ 49,943	\$ 81,066
Grant Income	\$ 4,056	\$ 12,372
Auxiliary Activities	\$ 22,669	\$ -
Endowment Earnings	\$ 14,810	\$ -
Investment Income	\$ 4,100	\$ -
Other Revenue	\$ 7,238	\$ -
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 116,377</b>	<b>\$ 97,415</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Instruction	\$ 47,773	\$ 79,271
Research	\$ 2,270	\$ -
Public Service	\$ 13,850	\$ -
Academic Support	\$ 11,335	\$ -
Student Services	\$ 28,333	\$ -
Auxiliary Activities	\$ 19,873	\$ 7,811
Mgt & General	\$ 10,264	\$ 7,387
Advancement	\$ 3,537	\$ 2,946
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 137,235</b>	<b>\$ 97,415</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>\$ (20,858)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
Program %	90%	89%
Mgt & General %	7%	8%
Fund Rasing %	3%	3%

\* Annual Budget is created for General Fund activities only.

24-25 Fiscal year is actuals for all of Calvin's funds

**Schedule 2**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Ministers Pension Plan**  
**Statement of Activities: (000's) as of December 31**

	Cal Year 2024		Cal Year 2025	
	Can Dollar	US Dollar	Can Dollar	US Dollar
	Actual		Actual	
<b>Income</b>				
Employer Contributions	\$ 883	\$ 4,498	\$ 491	\$ 2,039
Participant Contributions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Investment Earnings	\$ 22,542	\$ 38,155	\$ 6,031	\$ 20,254
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$ 23,425</b>	<b>\$ 42,653</b>	<b>\$ 6,522</b>	<b>\$ 22,293</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Distributions	\$ 5,355	\$ 11,427	\$ 1,791	\$ 5,782
Mgt & General	\$ 760	\$ 1,442	\$ 460	\$ 675
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$6,115</b>	<b>\$12,869</b>	<b>\$ 2,251</b>	<b>\$ 6,457</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>\$17,310</b>	<b>\$29,784</b>	<b>\$ 4,271</b>	<b>\$ 15,836</b>
Program %	88%	89%	80%	90%
Mgt & General %	12%	11%	20%	10%
Fund Raising %	0%	0%	0%	0%

**Schedule 2**  
**THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**Agency: Special Assistance Fund**  
**Statement of Activities: (000's) as of December 31**

	Cal Year 2024		Cal Year 2,025	
	Can Dollar	US Dollar	Can Dollar	US Dollar
	Actual		Actual	
<b>Income</b>				
Ministry Shares	\$0	\$2	\$0	\$4
Employer Contributions	\$1,893	\$0	\$1,442	\$0
Foreign Exchange	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$77
Investment Earnings	\$46	\$3	\$26	\$1
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,939</b>	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$1,468</b>	<b>\$82</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Distributions*	\$1,830	\$121	\$329	\$22
Management & General	\$0	\$2	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,830</b>	<b>\$123</b>	<b>\$329</b>	<b>\$22</b>
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>\$109</b>	<b>-\$118</b>	<b>\$1,139</b>	<b>\$60</b>

\* 2024 Includes distributions back to CRC Canada for prior years support of 703,000