



June 13, 2016

Dear National Gathering Participant,

I want to thank you personally for your attendance at the Canadian Gathering 2016: "Keeping in Step with the Spirit".

As you know, the purposes of the gathering were threefold: sharing our stories, sharing our priorities, and imagining our shared future. After taking some time to reflect on the events of the weekend, the general atmosphere of the event, and your responses to our post-event survey, I firmly believe that God truly blessed us with the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit at the event. I am deeply encouraged by the feedback we have received and continue to receive about the event. But this message is not intended as self-congratulations or an invitation to rest on our laurels as a denomination: there is much joyous work to be done.

### **Sharing the Event**

Most of our Gathering participants have expressed an interest in helping to share their experience of the Gathering with their church families, councils and classes. We encourage you to do so. We do not want to dictate how you present your experience of the Gathering, but we do offer some suggestions, ideas and resources you can use as you prepare.

### **Presenting to Council/Your Congregation**

If you are willing to share the event with your council or your congregation, start by requesting time on council's agenda, at the beginning or end of a service, or at your next congregational meeting.

We have created a commemorative video of the event, which you can view here: [www.crcna.org/canadian-gathering](http://www.crcna.org/canadian-gathering). The video is intended to provide a very general sense of the tone and proceedings of the event. We recommend you start by showing the video. Then spend a few minutes talking about your own experience at the event.

Here are some suggested talking points you might choose to focus on. Just cover those you are most passionate about:

- The general hopeful and collaborative tone of the event and the flavour of partnership and servanthood
- The power of taking risks and telling stories
- What other effective ministries happening in other local churches across Canada in the CRC can teach us
- The challenges offered by our speakers and your response:
  - to engage and include those on the margins of society
  - to exegete our neighbourhoods (learning more about the culture and needs of those around us)
  - to better understand and explore the richness of heritage of our First Nations people
- The strong and enthusiastic participation and engagement of young adults at the event
- The need to both honour our reformed heritage, roots and identity while being sensitive to all cultures
- A shift in ministry focus from inside the church (internal engagement) to outside (community engagement)
- The vibrant and reformed (if sometimes loud) worship
- Your understanding of Our Journey 2020 (the CRC ministry plan) and its relevance for your church
- The desire of the denomination and its ministries and partner ministries to support your ministry
- The resources you learned about that are available to you and your local church

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In addition to telling your own story of your experience at the Gathering, we also ask that you ask Classis to do the following:

- Continue to pray for continued renewal and relevance for our denomination, particularly in helping to carry out Christ's mission
- Visit [crcna.org/Canada](http://crcna.org/Canada) to learn more about the ministries and resources that can help with local ministry
- Learn more about the CRC's "Our Journey 2020" ministry plan and begin to explore how the priorities of the plan -
- Community, Discipleship, Leadership, Identity and Collaboration -- can be implemented and applied in your local context

### **Presenting to Classis**

If you are willing to present the event to your classis, you may wish to approach other classis attendees to work with you and consolidate your efforts. You will need to contact the stated clerk of your classis as soon as possible to request space on the agenda at your next classis meeting. We recommend 20 minutes for presentation with 10 minutes for discussion, and we are working on a PowerPoint presentation that you will be able to customize for your own use as well as a report that you can distribute.

It is my intention to follow up many of your presentations with a time of focus around the ministry plan as it engages Canadian congregations while I visit at least half the classes in the fall.

### **Our Next Steps**


We will let you know as soon as the resources for presenting to your classis are available. In the meantime, we have begun and will continue to post resources about the weekend event at <https://www.crcna.org/gatherings/canadian-gathering-2016>. Please visit that page where you will currently find the following items:

- The Canadian Gathering 2016 Video
- Articles about the Gathering that were posted in *The Banner*, *Christian Courier*, and on The Network
- Video files of the keynote addresses
- Audio files of the proceedings

### **In Closing...**

I, and other servant leaders of the denomination and its ministries, attended the Gathering with a posture of listening and discernment. As we sort through your feedback, session notes, and our own memories of the weekend, we continue to listen and discern. We encourage you to do the same. My commitment as the Canadian Ministries Director, and the shared commitment of my co-directors at the CRCNA, is to continue to talk with churches at the local and Classis levels to explore how we can serve you in your contextual mission and ministry. We will continue to connect you with resources and ministry partners that can help toward that end. It is our prayer that God will use our collective memory of this event as a catalyst for deeper engagement in ministry and further collaboration, both within our denomination and ecumenically.

Yours in Christ,



Darren Roorda  
Canadian Ministries Director