



To: **Classis Stated Clerks and CRC Councils**

From: Colin P. Watson, Sr., Executive Director of the CRCNA

Date: October 22, 2021

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Highlights from meeting of Oct. 13-15, 2021

The Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met via zoom conference call on October 13-15, 2021.

During this meeting, the Council:

- Ratified the appointments of several people to two search teams: one looking for a General Secretary, and the other for a Chief Administrative Officer. It is hoped that the nominees for both will be brought to Synod 2022.
- Adopted a report from the Program Committee (officers of Synod 2019) regarding changes to Synod 2022 to help manage the weighty agenda. Caution is voiced about having advisory committees meet virtually in advance of synod, so this will only be done for initial introductions and providing some background information.
- Adopted a new vaccination guideline policy that stipulates, in order to gather safely, everyone present at COD or synod meetings is expected to be fully (double) vaccinated or be able to provide a negative COVID test, completed within 72 hours of the event start. Those who are unvaccinated will also need to provide an exemption form to the office of the executive director. Additional measures, such as social distancing and masking, may also be required depending on local guidelines at the time of the event.
- Created a board designated fund in the amount of \$1.5 million USD to provide funding for investigations, legal costs, counseling and support for survivors of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse related to the current or former ministry of Resonate Global Mission.
- Ratified the appointment of Ms. Lindsay Wieland Capel as the director of Disability Concerns.
- Affirmed a delay in hiring a new director for the offices of Social Justice and Race Relations.
- Adopted a communication to Synod 2022 regarding Neland Avenue CRC's decision to ordain a deacon living in a same-sex marriage.
- Discussed which congregations should be invited to serve as convening churches for Synods 2023 and 2024. Church of the Servant (Grand Rapids, Mich.) will be asked to convene Synod 2023. Synod 2024 will be discussed further since renovations at Dordt University will prevent synod from being held on the campus.
- Heard an update on work to develop a forum for voices of the LGBTQ+ community to be heard by delegates to synod. A more robust recommendation will be brought to the COD in February.
- Heard an update on work to improve the appeal process. A more comprehensive report will be provided to the COD in February.

- Heard an update on the implementation of recommendations to prevent the abuse of power, including a Code of Conduct for ministry leaders to sign, prevention of abuse of power training for all new candidates for minister of the Word, and the first steps of forming a Dignity Team.
- Endorsed a report from the Culture of Civility Task Force and directed staff to implement its recommendations.
- Took note of several tactical actions that could be used to reduce overall spending. More concrete plans will be brought back to the February COD meeting.
- Endorsed budget assumptions and a planning schedule for preparing ministry budgets for the 2023 fiscal year.
- Heard an update on Inspire 2022 and approved a new schedule for the event to be held biennially going forward starting in 2024.
- Were led in a diversity engagement session by members of the Race Relations and Centre for Public Dialogue staff.
- Spent time in prayer and devotion, including a time led by some of the staff heading up a year of prayer for the CRCNA in the lead up to Synod 2022.
- Heard updates from the executive director, acting Canadian ministries director, director of Resonate Global Mission, and director of ReFrame Ministries.
- Received updates from *The Banner* editor, director of Synodical Services, director of Communications & Marketing, the director of the offices of Social Justice and Race Relations.
- Received a summary report from the 2021 Denominational Survey, and a benchmark report on *Our Journey 2025*.
- Expressed appreciation to Charles Kim for his many years of service in ethnic ministries and as a liaison with Korean churches and ministries. He has resigned from Resonate Global Mission and will now be serving outside of the CRCNA with the Grace and Mercy Foundation.
- Appointed two delegates to assess audited and reviewed financial statements and report back to the February COD meeting.
- Appointed an interim COD member from Classis Ontario Southwest.
- Approved the addition of two Canadian at-large delegates to the COD to help ensure greater binational representation on all COD committees.
- Approved three interim synodical deputy and alternate synodical deputy appointments.
- Heard that the Judicial Code Committee is searching for an ordained minister of the Word and a non-ordained person with no legal training.

In addition to the meeting of the COD, this meeting also included the meeting of four corporate entities: CRCNA Canada, CRCNA U.S., ReFrame Ministries Canada, and ReFrame Ministries U.S. Highlights from these meetings include:

CRCNA Canada Corporation:

- Received a contextualized ministry plan for 2021-2022.
- Updated the mandate and purpose for Indigenous Ministries and created a full-time position for this ministry.
- Appointed seven people to a new national advisory committee for antiracism and intercultural conciliation.
- Decided to spend time in self-reflection with an executive search firm before beginning a search process for a new Canadian executive director.
- Welcomed new members.
- Appointed auditors.

ReFrame Ministries Canada Corporation:

- Welcomed new members.
- Appointed auditors.

CRCNA U.S. Corporation:

- Amalgamated the Raise Up Ministries Board into the CRCNA U.S. Corporation.
- Defeated a motion regarding changing how ministry shares are allocated.
- Appointed a new member to the Reformed Benefits Association Board.
- Approved housing allowances for ordained staff in the U.S.
- Set aside \$1.5 million as a fund for survivors of abuse.
- Appointed an auditor.

ReFrame Ministries U.S. Corporation:

- Addressed legal matters, including the appointment of auditors.

For more information, please contact:

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Upcoming meeting dates:

- February 16-18, 2022, in Lombard, IL (possibly virtually)
- May 4-6, 2022, in Minneapolis, MN
- October 12-14, 2022, in Lombard, IL
- February 15-17, 2023, virtually
- May 3-5, 2023, in Minneapolis, MN
- October 11-13, 2023 in Toronto, ON