

Winter Classis Letter - 2022

We continue to progress through the Greek alphabet and perhaps Omicron will be surpassed by a new letter as you are reading this. Yet we have confidence that the Alpha and Omega has us, the Christian Reformed Church and the ministries we undertake, in His hands and He will provide us with everything we stand in need of. Our hope remains that the day to day challenges that each local ministry faces are manageable and each of you are given strength and wisdom to navigate.

Work continues on setting the Agenda for Synod 2022, a hefty agenda spanning two years of absence. The Human Sexuality Report is due to take centre stage with a plethora of overtures having already been received and more expected. In addition, a forum is being developed that would allow LGBTQ voices to be heard by the delegates to Synod 2022. As of this date, Synod is expected to meet in person in Grand Rapids, with study committees meeting virtually in advance.

The Structure and Leadership Team (SALT) report and recommendations are also on the agenda of Synod 2022 and continue to be advanced in the interim. A key element is new and expanded Joint Ministry Agreements which are being created with a goal of clearly articulating the parameters under which joint Canada and USA ministries are conducted and funded. Recruitment for the General Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer are also in full swing.

Additional detail on these matters and other initiatives impacting the CRC in Canada are listed below.

Canadian Restructuring: the [SALT report and recommendations](#) includes two recommendations specific to Canada and several others which might be deemed “bi-national” in nature, all of which are significant to the future of the CRC in Canada. Underlying all of the recommendations are foundational and systemic issues which need to be addressed if we are to truly advance and be unified as a bi-national church, to thrive contextually in our distinct national context and to ensure appropriate compliance with Canadian regulations. Efforts thus far have been focussed on the practical matters of joint ministry agreements and search processes with little consideration of the foundational and relational aspects. The operational energy, relational challenges and personal toll exacted by this matter is considerable.

As of this date, plans are underway for a Canadian catalytic conversation to which a number of delegates would be invited from each of the classes in Canada. The purpose would be to understand and discuss the Structure and Leadership Team (SALT) report and ultimately to discern what pathway may be best for the future of the CRC in Canada and Canadian contextual ministry.

Essentially, we've wrestled with issues concerning Canada's place and role in the broader CRCNA context since the inception of the CRC in Canada. It is time for a fitting and lasting resolution.

Hearts Exchanged: [Hearts Exchanged](#) is a learning and action journey designed to equip members of the CRC to engage with Indigenous people as neighbours and fellow image-bearers. The first Hearts Exchanged began in a cross-cultural forum in 2000. After twenty years of lying fallow, it was re-birthed in 2020. Today, we are in "phase two," which includes groups (cohorts) in every region across Canada (15 groups, 250 participants). Eventually, we will land in "phase three" at the CRCNA's Canadian national gathering in 2023. Learn more about Hearts Exchanged 2.0 in this [quick five minute video](#).

Canadian National Gathering: Hearts Exchanged will be the centrepiece of the next Canadian National Gathering - which has been tentatively scheduled for 2023. Details to follow.

Centre for Public Dialogue: The [Centre for Public Dialogue](#) continues to focus on three main issues: Indigenous justice, climate change, and refugee justice. Mike Hogeterp mhogeterp@crcn.org is your key contact.

Anti-Racism and Diversity: Pablo Kim Sun has assumed the role of Senior Leader for Anti-Racism and Inter-cultural Conciliation for the CRC in Canada. Pablo will be supported by a diverse advisory team which has been established to counsel this effort. Pablo can be reached at pkimsun@crcna.org.

Human Sexuality Report: The Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality Report ([summary](#)) includes a recommendation to encourage the churches to make use of the [Challenging Conversations Toolkit](#). The toolkit is a resource meant to help small groups in your church listen deeply to the report and to one another as you consider what's next. A good number of Canadian churches have already made use of this valuable resource.



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Provision is also being made that would create an effective space for LGBTQ believers to share their perspectives on the recommendations that are coming to Synod 2022 as part of the Human Sexuality Report.

Ministry Shares: We are beginning our budgeting process for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. An important part of this process is the pledges that we are receiving from the local church with the assistance of classes. Your pledge amounts received before January 31 will help us work through the planning processes. Please reach out to Peter Elgersma, pelgersma@crcna.org for further information.

Bridge App: Use of the [Bridge App](#) continues to grow, particularly the GIVE function. What sets this app apart from other smartphone apps geared toward churches is that The Bridge App aims to be relational, missional and local in a distinctively CRC way and with the emphasis on the local congregation. Almost \$4 million in donations were facilitated for local congregations through the Bridge App in 2021.

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