

## Fall Classis Letter - 2021

Strange days and uncharted waters. We continue to find ourselves in the midst of a pronounced time of uncertainty. The COVID pandemic continues to be of considerable impact on the daily life and rhythm of the church. Christian Reformed churches across the country are determining when and how they will reopen and reengage for in-person worship and what ministry programs will look like for the Fall. There is much to consider and many perspectives and voices weighing in. Wisdom and strength to you as you continue to journey through these uncharted waters.

Denominationally, Synod has not met for two years. This extended hiatus has meant that the Human Sexuality Report continues to receive much worthwhile and necessary conversation. If you have not already done so, please consider utilizing the Challenging Conversations Toolkit in engaging this significant subject matter.

The Council of Delegates (COD) and its companion corporations have been engaged in significant structure and leadership discussion over the past year and a half which culminated in the Structure and Leadership Team (SALT) report and recommendations which was approved at the May meeting of the COD. A steering committee and multiple implementation teams will be working in earnest in the coming year.

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. The operational energy, relational challenges and personal toll of yet another iteration of this matter is considerable.

**Hearts Exchanged:** [Hearts Exchanged](#) is a learning and action journey designed to equip Reformed Christians to engage with Indigenous people as neighbours and fellow image bearers. Do you want to grow in your reconciliation journey in a robust and appreciative way? Hearts Exchanged is now recruiting participants from across Canada to join other Reformed Christians in this learning and action journey. Learn more 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 some time between May and August 2023. Details to follow.

**Centre for Public Dialogue:** The [Centre for Public Dialogue](#) will continue its focus on three main issues: Indigenous Justice, Climate Change, and Refugee Justice. Mike Hogeterp [mhogeterp@crcn.org](mailto:mhogeterp@crcn.org) is your key contact.

**Anti-Racism and Diversity:** We are excited to welcome Pablo Kim Sun as Senior Leader for Anti-Racism and Inter-cultural Conciliation for the CRC in Canada. Pablo is beginning his work by assembling a diverse advisory team to counsel and establish this effort. Pablo can be reached at [pkimsun@crcna.org](mailto: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 curriculum prepared by Pastor Church Resources (PCR), in conjunction with members of the committee, to help small groups study and discuss aspects of the committee’s report which may be controversial.” The [Challenging Conversations 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 church have already made use of this valuable resource.

**Ministry Shares:** As the denominational ministries have wrapped up another fiscal year ending June 30, we acknowledge the generous and faithful support of the churches in the form of ministry shares and above ministry share offerings. Year two of [Ministry Shares Re-Imagined](#) is due to roll out shortly. There will be a lot of specific communication in the coming weeks.

**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.

**Classis Ontario Southwest –** We have a new classis in Canada, sort of. Classis Chatham has changed their name to [Classis Ontario Southwest](#) to better reflect the region in which its churches are located.

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