

## Spring Classis Letter - 2022

As Spring arrives in various degrees across Canada and COVID restrictions are being lifted, we find ourselves in yet another liminal space. Many churches are experiencing a tentative return to in-person worship and resumption of various ministry and discipleship programs. I'm sensing that a priority is to be very relational; reconnecting with our members, reaching out and checking in, letting them know that they are cared for, and inviting and encouraging them to re-engage at a pace and level that they are comfortable with. I encourage us to also be attentive to our pastors and church leaders and recognize the need for their care and encouragement as they have been largely carrying the ball these past two years; discerning, adapting, pivoting, balancing and in many instances addressing and diffusing a variety of tensions. May we be exemplary in gentleness and kindness for others and with ourselves.

Preparations are well underway for Synod 2022. Synod is expected to meet in person in Grand Rapids, June 9 - 16, with several advance sessions (being held virtually) devoted to prayer, the convening session and advisory committees ([Synod 2022 Schedule](#)). As was the case at the winter classis meetings, the Human Sexuality Report is the principal item to be addressed. Please be in prayer with me for Synod.

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. Rev. Dr. Zachary King is being presented as the [General Secretary](#) nominee. It is expected that the Chief Administrative Officer and the Transitional Executive Director for Canada will also be identified in advance of Synod.

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

**Canadian Restructuring:** I acknowledge with much appreciation, the interest and participation of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada in these ongoing conversations about the future of the CRC in Canada. The Canadian Catalytic Conversation, January 29, 2022, attended by four delegates from each Classis in Canada was a pivotal event. Follow-up discussion at the winter classis meetings resulted in several overtures to Synod with respect to the [Structure and Leadership Taskforce \(SALT\) report and recommendations](#). And the conversation continues.

The Board of the CRCNA Canada will meet in a workshop on April 9 to consider the troubled history associated with the Canadian Ministry Director position, board dynamics and the ongoing relationship of the CRCNA Canada Board/Council of Delegates to the CRC in Canada.

A proposal based on the extensive consultation and work of the Canadian Restructuring Team in 2020 which also responds to the SALT recommendation to “establish the Canadian office” is to be presented to the CRCNA Canada Board in May. And the hiring of a Transitional Executive Director for Canada is expected in the next several weeks. It is intended that these efforts will set the stage for a transitional period during which healing and restoration can take place, conversation can continue, and a more definitive plan can be developed. The premise is that the denominational structure and ministry of the CRC in Canada would be relational, relevant and reciprocal with the local church.

**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. We are approaching the end of phase two, which includes groups (cohorts) in every region across Canada (15 groups, 250 participants). Participants are being deeply impacted. We anticipate hosting another round of cohorts in the Fall of 2022. Eventually, we will land in phase three at the CRC 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 - save the date - May 25 - 28, 2023. Planning is under way for this significant and exciting event, to be held in Ottawa.

**Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation:** The role of the Senior Leader for Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation is being expanded in order to lead and guide this Canadian ministry priority and the CRC's commitment to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action. This leader will work with the Canadian Indigenous Ministry Committee and our three Indigenous ministry centres in Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg to invigorate our CRC response and propel the CRC in Canada on a journey of reconciliation.

**Ministry Shares:** We are so appreciative of the ongoing support of the CRC in Canada for denominational ministry, as exemplified by ministry share contributions and designated ministry offerings. Many of these ministries exist to serve the local church ([Congregational Ministries](#), [Calvin Theological Seminary](#)). Other denominational ministries serve as an



expression of the local church to the world around us ([ReFrame Ministries](#), [Resonate Global Mission](#)). Your pledges for 2023 serve as an encouragement and reminder that we are in mission together (relational), that ministry services to and for the local church need to be relevant, and that together the relationship and ministry is reciprocal in nature.

**Bridge App:** Use of the [Bridge App](#) continues to grow, particularly the GIVE function. The Bridge App aims to be relational, missional and local in a distinctively CRC way with the emphasis on the local congregation. Over \$4.3 million in donations were facilitated for local congregations through the Bridge App in 2021.

[Denominational Resources](#): The denomination has a wealth of resources including regional staff who are available to encourage, advise, and support the local church in its ministry and mission.

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