



Dear Leaders of CRCNA classes:

Greetings in Christ's name. We pray that you are experiencing God's grace at the beginning of this new ministry year.

Sixty-six years after the destruction of Jerusalem, the prophet Haggai received a message from the Lord for Zerubbabel (the grandson of King Jehoachin) and Joshua, son of Jozadak (the high priest). These two exilic leaders had been called by God to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and renew the worship of the Lord, but sixteen years had passed, and in the face of intractable opposition and dwindling resources, building was at a standstill.

The Lord's message was simple: "'But now be strong, Zerubbabel,' declares the Lord. 'Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the Lord, 'and work. For I am with you'" (Haggai 2:4). The Lord had called them to this task and he would provide. The people only needed to work. Four years later the Second Temple was completed and dedicated to the Lord.

After a difficult period of COVID and three years of difficult conversations around sexuality, God is calling our congregations and classes to a time of rebuilding and renewal. Though we face challenges, God's message to us is the same: Be strong and work.

Synod 2025 was focused on the theme of, "Journeying with Jesus" on the path of renewal. As you seek to be strong, and to continue the journey with Jesus in your work, please take a few minutes to consider some of these important steps coming out of Synod 2025.

Next Steps on the Journey of Renewal

Synod 2025 received a summary of the results ([Acts of Synod 2025, p.509](#)) of the [Gather Initiative](#), a series of ten gatherings of members and leaders from all 49 of our CRCNA classes (633 CRC leaders and members in total) that took place in 2024 and 2025. These events taught us many things about what God is already doing to renew the church. Synod encouraged classes and congregations to commit themselves to intentional prayer for the renewal of the CRCNA in 2025-2026. Resources to equip your classis in engaging with the results will be coming to you this month.

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The Spirit's work of renewal begins with the heart, and we will be providing prayer and worship resources that classes and congregations can use this ministry year. Secondly, Synod 2025 requested that classes reflect on the results of Gather and share your feedback with denominational staff. This feedback will be invaluable in developing the "comprehensive unified strategy and plan" that we trust God to use to renew our congregations (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 975-976). The final result will come to Synod 2026 for endorsement and dissemination.

Renewal in Church Planting

As part of its church renewal conversation, Synod 2025 spent time discussing church planting. We rejoice in God's provision of increased numbers of church plants in the CRCNA, especially among our immigrant leaders. Synod celebrated this positive development and declared, "Church planting is a key strategy in building the health and vitality of our denomination."

However, synod also acknowledged some changes. Church planting has always been a collaborative ministry partnership between a calling church (or churches), the classis, and Resonate Global Mission, our denominational mission agency. While this continues to be true, synod recognized that each partner has specific roles to play in this relationship. Resonate Global Mission supports church planting through recruitment, training, and advocacy for planters. Financial support for specific church plants, however, must come from the local calling churches and classes.

Synod 2025 encouraged classes to connect with Resonate on church planting, reach out to church planters to learn if they have adequate support, and develop (or strengthen) a church planting strategy in partnership with Resonate. In classes with few church plant opportunities, people may wish to extend financial support to other classes where there is greater need.

Synod also instructed the Office of General Secretary to coordinate with all classes and agencies "to develop a vision, plan, strategy and financial proposal for church planting for the CRCNA for the next decade" and report back to Synod 2026. The plan will specify the numbers of plants, the leadership development strategy, and the material resources needed.

Brothers and sisters, this calling to renew and rebuild the CRC through church planting is a large and consequential task, not unlike that of Zerubbabel and Joshua. Resonate Global Mission staff will be reaching out to classes this fall to share some important next steps. In the meantime, please review this synodical instruction and join us in prayer for this work.

We want to conclude with a few brief notes.

- The Office of General Secretary has made a helpful [FAQ document](#) containing a summary of synodical decisions. The *Acts of Synod 2025* has been published since the end of July, 2025.

- Synod 2025 made several relatively minor adjustments to Church Order Art. 5 Supplement and to the practice of affirming the Covenant for Officebearers at classis. More details can be found in the [FAQ](#).
- Synod received two taskforce reports this year (see Agenda for Synod 2025), one on assisted suicide and one on virtual churches. You can read a summary of these reports and recommendations in the [FAQ](#). The assisted suicide report includes helpful pastoral advice. The virtual church report encourages churches to network with other congregations and classes as they experiment with this type of ministry.
- Be on the lookout for an email from the Office of General Secretary requesting information about any congregations in your classis that may be involved in church planting, leadership training, and affiliation with churches outside of North America. This is part of the work of our Global Vision Implementation Team coming from Synod 2024.

May God bless you with strength and wisdom as he renews your classis and congregations,



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General Secretary



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