



August 22, 2024

Dear classes of the Christian Reformed Church:

Greetings in Christ's name.

Life with Christ requires us to embrace the divergent: dying to sin and rising with Christ, giving up our lives to receive them, and sowing seed in parched ground while trusting in harvest. The latter is the controlling image of Psalm 126, a psalm that encourages us to put down roots in the Lord despite being in very dry places. The psalmist pleads, *"Restore our fortunes, Lord, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy."* Today, many of our congregations are flourishing, and we see evidence of God sowing seeds all around us. At the same time, as a denomination we find ourselves face to face with a challenging and painful moment as some of our congregations consider disaffiliating. Even in this time of potential separation, we know that our God plants seeds and makes the desert bloom into joyful witness to his faithfulness.

I want to share a few notes regarding Synod 2024. First, please encourage your classis and its churches to carefully review the *Synod 2024 Frequently-Asked-Question* document posted at crcna.org/Synod2024FAQ. This document provides a helpful and factual guide to synod's deliberations in a time when there are many voices speaking about those decisions. Included in the FAQ introduction is a short video sharing a vision for the future of the CRCNA in light of these decisions.

Secondly, the Office of General Secretary will be sharing information with classis clerks about the impact of synodical disciplinary decisions on the CRCNA classes through letters and meetings this fall and winter. Thrive, the CRCNA's denominational ministry agency, and the Office of General Secretary, will also be making many resources available to support classes and congregations throughout the fall.

Thirdly and finally, I want to encourage all our classes to participate in the *Gather* initiative. *Gather* is a series of events in 2024 and 2025 intended to inspire, encourage and bring together CRC leaders from across North America. This is an intentional effort at renewal. At each event, five classes will come together to celebrate how God is moving in our communities and our churches. We'll pray and worship, share our stories and challenges, and discern where God is leading us in our mission. Each classis will be represented by 15 members and leaders from its churches.

Rev. Zachary King, Ph.D.
General Secretary
616-224-0832
general-secretary@crcna.org

1700 28th Street SE
Grand Rapids MI 49508-1407
616-241-1691

3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD I
Burlington ON L7R 3Y8
905-336-2920

crcna.org

Thanks to generous support from several sponsors, all the costs of *Gather* are fully covered (including travel to the beautiful hub cities across North America where the events will take place). When all ten *Gather* events are complete, CRCNA leadership will present a comprehensive report of how God is renewing CRC congregations. More information about *Gather* can be found at www.crcna.org/gather.

As I said in my address to Synod 2024 and subsequent communications, God is planting seeds in Christian Reformed Church--not because we are wise, faithful, or worthy. But rather because *God is in the seed planting business!* As Psalm 126 reminds us, sometimes we have to pass through some dry moments to recognize what God is doing. Let's walk with God in gentleness and grace, and be prepared to be surprised along the way.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zachary King', written in a cursive style.

Zachary King
General Secretary