To: **Classis Huron**

From: **Peter Meerveld**

 **Classical (Huron) Delegate to the CRCNA Council of Delegates**

***Summary of ‘Council of Delegates’ Meetings and ‘Canada Ministry Corporation’ Meetings***

**For those of you new to Classis**, the *Council of Delegates* (COD) is the ecclesiastical board of the CRCNA that acts on behalf of Synod in matters which cannot await action by Synod itself. It also acts on matters assigned to it by Synod. COD members wear two hats: ecclesiastical oversight and organizational oversight. Ecclesiastical oversight and governance are the influences exercised by church bodies such as CRC councils, classes, and synod to shape our beliefs, values, and ministry commitments according to Scripture, our creeds and confessions, and the Spirit's leading. In Canada we have one delegate per classis and 6 at-large directors. The Office of the General Secretary and two Executive Directors (U.S. and Canada) manage the work of the COD.

**If you are interested in representing your classis or Canada as a delegate**, please contact Peter Meerveld (peter.meerveld@sympatico.ca) or the Classis’ stated Clerk, Fred Versteen. You do not have to be a pastor or office bearer, to be appointed as a delegate. You don’t need a specific skill set…only be member in good standing, have an interest in leadership and a heart for our church community here in North America and beyond.

COD delegates also have the privilege of sitting as a director on the Canada Ministry Board of the CRCNA As such each director of the Board performs all the requirements of a federally regulated charity in Canada and is responsible for providing oversight for denominational ministries across Canada.

**Fall 2024 Highlights (October 16-18 Meeting)**

**Council of Delegates:**

Since the denominational office in the U.S. has been sold, the Council held their meeting at Cascade Fellowship CRC in Grand Rapids. During the meeting, the COD spent time in prayer, received reports, held discussions, and made decisions as follows:

* Interviewed and appointed Rev. Joel Vande Werken as the director of ecclesiastical governance. Joel has been in the position since mid-November.
* Zachary King, our general secretary, has much on his plate. The General Secretary Office has been running over capacity with task forces, teams and projects. Their work included a review and refresh of ‘Our Journey’ (our denomination’s ministry plan), CRCNA agency support for ethnic minority churches and work with the Global Vision implementation team.
* Concerning the Global Vision team, a framework has been developed that strengthens connections between the CRCNA and international churches. The team is responsible for conversing with CRCNA-affiliated churches outside North America and interested international denominational partners to develop a *CRC Global Ecclesiastical body*). Classes are being asked to periodically share challenges and opportunities related to this effort with the Office of General Secretary
* Our chief administrative officer, Shirley DeVries, talked about the hire of a new director of Information Technology, metrics review of ***Our Journey***, a commitment to better communication about the pension plan especially those of ethnic minorities, and a review of church giving.
* Church giving is down by 4% compared to the same time in 2023
* Six churches so far have made a statement to disaffiliate. It will take approximately 24-36 months to realize the impact of this on ministries and operations
* Renovations are underway at the new ‘Ministry Support Centre’ at 300 East Beltline NE, Grand Rapids to replace the recently sold denominational office. Net profit from the sale will be put in a fund for ongoing maintenance of the new building.
* Took note of the work of the Virtual Church Team and the direction they are taking as they

 prepare a report to Synod 2025.

* Approved a charter for the Dignity Team and agreed to review this charter regularly
* Approved an updated version of the *Policy for Reduction of Program and Staff*
* Received a report from the *Banner* editor and adopted a change to the advertising guidelines
* Heard from the Bible Translations Committee - Susan Medendorp to the committee

 as an English Language Stylist. A report on the Easy-to-Read version will be available shortly

* Provisionally approved Joan DeVries for COD (Classis Eastern Canada) membership for recommendation to Synod 2025

# Canada Ministry Board Meeting:

* Received report from the transitional executive director (Al Postma), including updates on Resonate, Thrive, Canadian justice ministries, and Canadian Indigenous ministries
* **The Board established a** Canadian Board governance committee. They are currently preparing policies for the Board and managing the succession of Canadian delegates
* The Chair of the Board has regular conversations with Towards a CRC Canada group.

**Spring 2025 Highlights (February 5-7 Meeting)**

**Council of Delegates:**

* COD discussed a ‘draft’ policy regarding prospective COD delegates and their commitment to the creeds and belief of the CRCNA. It is recommended that the existing policy be brought in line with direction of Synod 2024 so as to ensure consistency between the Covenant of Agreement that office bearers sign and what COD delegates are expected to sign.
* Article 15 of the Church Order Supplement – Guideline for Proper Support for Pastors (Compensation and Pensions) was approved
* Report from the Secretary-General

Synod has given a clear mandate for CRCNA staff members to empower and support the planting, affiliation, and growth of ethnic minority congregations in the CRC. In working with leaders, it was found that:

* 1. Our ethnic minority leaders and churches are increasingly satisfied with denominational services.
	2. There is a critical need for ethnic minority leaders to receive training and support for navigating CRCNA ecclesiastical governance and the Church Order.
	3. Classis is the key pathway to seeing more ethnic minority leaders represented at synod
	4. In the CRC, there is diversity within diversity. As an example, there are major differences between first generation immigrants/their children and new immigrant groups
	5. There is a real need for community between ethnic minority churches themselves and between predominantly Caucasian congregations and ethnic minority churches.

Office of General Secretary will develop a proposal to add an additional committee to the Council of Delegates that would function as a connection point for identified ethnic minority leaders of CRC to build community amongst themselves and Caucasian churches and to share their feedback about the ecclesiastical structures of the CRCNA including the Church Order.

* Elaine May reported on the ‘Gather’ events across the continent. There are 4 remaining Gather events this spring. If you haven’t been part of a Gather event, there are still spots available at the Des Moines, Iowa (Gather event) on April 28-30. Contact Elaine at emay@crcna.org if you’re interested.
* Shirley DeVries (CEO) will be retiring next January (2026). Her report included:
	1. Revenue from pledging and collections are down – by almost $ 1 million (about 10%).
	2. It is proposed to pull together a committee that considers the feasibility of having a virtual Synod every other year to assist in cost savings.
	3. COD created a task force consisting of members of the Synodical Services Committee, the Finance Committee, and appropriate staff to consider ways to reduce governance costs, fund synod, and use time wisely. This task force will produce an interim report for the May 2025 COD meeting.
* Greg Elzinga, newly (permanent) appointed President of Calvin University gave a presentation on the status of the University including its blessings and some of the challenges it faces. Enrolment is up from last year. The University has started a UCAA football team supported by a newly built football stadium.
* In 2024, Resonate had 47 career missionaries serving in 26 countries and 83 partner missionaries serving in 36 countries. 381 CRCNA churches supported these missionaries.
* 1,242 people worldwide made a decision to follow Jesus
* 20 new churches started
* 152 local gospel workers were mobilized in international contexts
* 4,300 participants/volunteers were involved in leadership training in a variety of areas

 Resonate like other Ministries is exploring how to more effectively manage their budget
 considering decrease funding.

**Canada Ministry Board Meeting:**

* Classis **Quinte is proposing an Ecclesiastical gathering of Canadian churches Update**

The Canadian Ministry Board and the denominational office supports this initiative and will assist where possible. All Classes will receive correspondence requesting their involvement.

* **Stories & Strategies Event**

This event was hosted on Saturday, January 25, 2025; a recording was provided for those unable to attend. The conversation were rich encouraging

* **Towards CRC Canada**

Greta provided updates on the CMB conversations with Towards CRC Canada.

* **Canadian National Gathering**

 The board noted the proposed dates in 2026 and will make a final decision at
 the May 2025 meeting.

**Keeping up with CRC News in Canada:**

**1. ‘The Postma Post’** – Please subscribe to a new bi-weekly newsletter from the

 Canadian Executive Director. [The Postma Post | Canada | Christian Reformed Church](https://www.crcna.org/canada/postma-post)

2. **Canadian Justice Ministries** – Please subscribe to a new monthly newsletter

 with stories from ***Canadian Indigenous Ministry*** ( [Indigenous Ministry | Indigenous Ministry |
 Christian Reformed Church](https://www.crcna.org/indigenous) ), ***Intercultural Ministry (***  [Intercultural Ministry | Intercultural Ministry |
Christian Reformed Church](https://www.crcna.org/intercultural) ) and the ***Centre for Public Dialogue*** ( [Public Dialogue | Public Dialogue |
 ChristianReformed Church](https://www.crcna.org/PublicDialogue) ). This newsletter will also include stories from our churches across
 Canada.

3. **Canada Ministry Website** - visit for regular updates related to governance, upcoming

 events and Canadian ministries ( [Governance | Canada | Christian Reformed Church](https://www.crcna.org/canada/governance) )

4. **Facebook and/or Instagram** Profiles – become a follower of

i. Christian Reformed Church in North America (Facebook/Instagram)

ii. The Banner Magazine

iii. Resonate Global Mission

iv. ReFrame Ministries

5. ***Diaconal Ministries Canada*** - [Diaconal Ministries Canada – Transforming communities in Christ](https://diaconalministries.com/)

6. CRCNA Website - under ‘Resources’ - Subscribe to regular email updates like

 ***CRC Communications*** and ***CRC Network (*** [CRC News Weekly Email | Christian Reformed Church](https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/crc-news-weekly-email) )

**Upcoming:**

Next COD Meeting - May 7-9, 2025

Synod 2025 will be held at Redeemer University