



To: **Classis Stated Clerks and CRC Councils**

From: Colin P. Watson, Sr., Executive Director of the CRCNA

Date: February 26, 2021

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## *Highlights from meeting of Feb 17-19, 2021*

The Council of Delegates of the Christian Reformed Church in North America met via zoom conference call on February 17-19, 2021.

During this meeting, the Council:

- Made the decision, after extensive consideration, to cancel the meeting of Synod 2021(see [crcna.org/synod/faq](http://crcna.org/synod/faq) for more info). The Program Committee (officers of Synod 2019) will consider the *Agenda to Synod 2021*. All matters that cannot wait for Synod 2022 will be dealt with at a special meeting of the COD in June.
- Deferred consideration of the report from the Committee to Articulate a Foundation-Laying Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality until Synod 2022. Churches and classes are encouraged to use the "[Challenging Conversations](#)" toolkit as they consider this report in the coming year.
- Heard that there has been an [escalation in the number of offensive comments](#) and even threats towards persons of color and the staff of the Office of Social Justice. A time of lament and prayer took place, some specific next steps were identified, including a consultant to strategize ways to address the bullying and better support staff, and follow up with persons that have been identified as instigators of this type of abuse.
- Heard an oral report on the work of the Structure and Leadership Task Force (SALT). A final report and matrix is anticipated to be brought to the COD in May and will require presentation to the Canada Revenue Agency to ensure we are tax compliant.
- Accepted, with thanks, offers from Colin Watson, Sr., (executive director) and John Bolt (director of finance and administration) to delay their retirements until June 30, 2022, to allow time for a new structure to be decided and new leaders to be appointed.
- Heard reports from the executive director and the Canadian ministries director.
- Ratified Rev. Susan LaClear as the director of Candidacy and heard a bit about her background and call. Said a prayer of blessing for her.
- Welcomed Dr. Amanda Benckhuysen, the new director of Safe Church Ministry and Rev. Tim Rietkerk, the new director of Chaplaincy and Care Ministry. Heard a bit about their backgrounds and call. Said prayers of blessings for them.
- Heard a presentation from Dr. Neil Carlson, director of Calvin University's Center for Social Research, regarding an analysis of the past four years of the Denominational Survey results. This [year's survey](#) is now open and churches are encouraged to participate if they are part of this year's cohort.

- Spent time in a board development session offered by Dr. Debra Brown, founder, president, and CEO of Governance Solutions, Inc.
- Heard that Inspire (the biennial denominational conference) will be deferred until August 2022 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Heard an update on ministry shares reimagined, and commended the many CRC congregations for their continued significant generosity.
- Heard reports from the directors of Resonate Global Mission and ReFrame Ministries (formerly Back to God Ministries International). Endorsed an evaluation report about Global Mission outlining the importance of church planting, and that everyone in the CRC must begin to see themselves as a missionary. This report will be forwarded to synod for approval.
- Heard a brief report on missionary support raising and received minor changes to the missionary support program model.
- Endorsed the ReFrame Ministries foundational documents such as vision, mission, core values, and strategy.
- Took note of the annual report by Safe Church Ministry regarding safe church teams in the classes and churches, as well as updates on resources for culturally diverse churches, the diversity in denominational boards and staff, and on syncretism.
- Received a completed report from the Abuse of Power Ad Hoc team, which will be forwarded to synod for adoption.
- Heard an update on work with the Historical Committee to review their mandate and clarify their continued relationship with the funders of Heritage Hall.
- Approved revisions to the letters of call for commissioned pastors and ministers of the Word.
- Supported the executive director in declining a personal appeal of a decision of Synod 2019.
- Heard a report from the *Banner* advisory committee.
- Appointed various people to fill vacant roles on the Council of Delegates and Judicial Code Committee; and recommended to synod slates of nominees for the COD and the Judicial Code Committee.
- Appointed synodical deputies, alternate synodical deputies, and World Renew board delegates in the interim of synod.
- Spent significant time in prayer for the church, its leaders, our congregations, Classis Red Mesa, Indigenous people in Canada, and for unity as the body of Christ.

In addition to the meeting of the COD, this meeting also included the meeting of four corporate entities: CRCNA Canada, CRCNA U.S., ReFrame Canada, and ReFrame U.S. Highlights from these meetings include:

#### CRCNA Canada Corporation:

- Heard an update on the Canadian Restructuring Plan, but deferred adoption of recommendations until the work of SALT is complete.
- Heard reports from several staff members.

#### ReFrame Ministries Canada Corporation:

- Approved moving funds from one account to another.
- Received foundational documents, but deferred taking action until the May meeting.

#### CRCNA U.S. Corporation:

- Granted permission for the executive director to appoint a deputy with responsibility for U.S. ministry operations in lieu of replacing the vacant position of the Director of Ministries and Administration, effective until at least June 30, 2022.

ReFrame Ministries U.S. Corporation:

- Approved moving funds from one account to another.
- Endorsed foundational documents including mission, vision, core values, and strategy.

**For more information, please contact:**

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**Upcoming meeting dates:**

- May 5-7, 2021, virtual
- October 13-15, 2021, Minneapolis, MN
- February 16-18, 2022, in Lombard, IL
- May 4-6, 2022, in Minneapolis, MN
- October 12-14, 2022, in Lombard, IL