

COUNCIL OF DELEGATES SUPPLEMENT

I. Polity matters

A. Director of Synodical Services

In March 2024 the director of Synodical Services, Rev. Scott DeVries, was diagnosed with an advanced stage of aggressive cancer. A plan was initially put in place for Scott to work in a reduced capacity and hire additional help as needed, which led to the Council of Delegates' approving Joel Vande Werken as a temporary associate director of Synodical Services from April 10 through August 31, 2024.

On April 27, 2024, Rev. Scott DeVries, passed away after a brief time in hospice care.

At the time of writing this COD Supplement report, a plan has not yet been fully worked out to fill this role permanently. A team of staff from the Office of General Secretary and CRCNA Human Resources, along with representation from the Council of Delegates, will continue to be involved in a new search process to fill this role.

B. Council of Delegates membership

Appointment of classical delegates (see Recommendations A-B)

The COD recommends that synod appoint Erik Kamp as the Classis Central Plains delegate to fill out the term of Thomas Wolthuis, to conclude June 30, 2025.

Erik Kamp serves as a pastor at First CRC of Oskaloosa, Iowa, and prior to that he served at Faith Community Fellowship in Mount Vernon, Washington.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Chris Pedersen as the Classis Chicago South delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2027.

Chris Pedersen serves as pastor at Faith CRC in Tinley Park, Illinois, and he previously served two other congregations. He has served as a CMLT leader, a CIC chair, and as a church visitor in two classes. He currently serves as board president of Love Inc. of Tinley Park. He graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary with a master of divinity degree and completed a doctor of ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Jae Young Kim as the Classis Hanmi delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2027.

Jae Young Kim is a professor of theology at International Theological Seminary. He has also served as the Korean program director and leader of Disciples Together (NPO). He has served on the reception committee of Classis Hanmi and is a member of Olympic Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, Calif.

The COD recommends that synod appoint David Spoelma as the Classis Holland delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2027.

David Spoelma is the pastor at The Foundation Church in Holland, Michigan, and is a licensed mental health counselor at Peace and Progress Counseling Services. He holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration, a master of divinity degree (Calvin Theological Seminary), and a master's degree in professional mental health counseling. He presently serves as a safe church coordinator in Classis Holland and has previously served as a synodical deputy and on the Classis Holland executive committee.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Robert Drenten as the Classis Iakota delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2027.

Robert Drenten is the pastor of Lebanon Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Center, Iowa. He has also served as pastor at First CRC, Os-kaloosa, Iowa; Bethel CRC, Sioux Center, Iowa; Prosper CRC, Falmouth, Michigan; and Immanuel CRC, Orange City, Iowa. He graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary with a master of divinity degree in 1988. Bob has served several terms on the Dordt University Board of Trustees and two terms on the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees. He has served as a board guest to the COD and is currently a member of the Judicial Code Committee. He also serves as chair of the Student Affairs Committee at CTS. Bob and his wife, Jan, have been blessed with four daughters, a son, and five grandchildren.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Eric Van Dyken as the Classis Minnkota delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2027.

Eric Van Dyken is a member of First CRC, Prinsburg, Minnesota, and is a zoning administrator. He has served four terms as elder, including service as clerk, vice president, and president of council. He currently serves as chair of the Vision Minnkota Committee, on multiple local and statewide professional committees, on the Abide Project Steering Committee and Education Committee, on the First CRC Global Missions Committee, and as a church visitor for Classis Minnkota.

The COD recommends that synod appoint Charles Adams as the Classis Wisconsin delegate to a first term, to conclude June 30, 2027.

Charles Adams has served as World Renew's U.S. guest delegate to the COD and is chair of the Judicial Code Review Team reporting to Synod 2024. A member of Calvin CRC, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, he is currently an emeritus member of World Renew's Board of Directors after having served several years as U.S. Board president. He has been a member of CR churches in five communities in four states. He has been a deacon delegate to synod from Classis Wisconsin, and he served six years on the Judicial Code Committee. He has also been involved in numerous committees at the classis and local church levels, including multiple

terms as deacon and a term as elder. He is also licensed to exhort by Classis Wisconsin and has practiced law for 31 years.

Note: The above nominees will be considered eligible for an additional term of three years, subject to the approval of classis and recommendation by the COD Governance Committee.

C. Corporation officers and executive committee of the Council of Delegates

At its May meeting, the COD members from their respective corporations and the full Council of Delegates elected the following to serve as officers in 2024-2025:

1. CRCNA Canada Corporation/CRCNA Canada Ministry Board

President: Greta Luimes
Vice president: Andre Van Ryk
Treasurer: Henry Eygenraam
Secretary: Peter Meerveld

2. CRCNA U.S. Corporation/ CRCNA U.S. Ministry Board

President: Michael Ten Haken
Vice president: Jill Feikema
Secretary: Christian Sebastia
Treasurer: Drew Sweetman

3. ReFrame Ministries Canada Corporation

President: Greta Luimes
Vice president: Andre Van Ryk
Treasurer: Henry Eygenraam
Secretary: Peter Meerveld

4. ReFrame Ministries U.S. Corporation

President: Michael Ten Haken
Vice president: Jill Feikema
Secretary: Christian Sebastia
Treasurer: Drew Sweetman

5. Council of Delegates executive committee and officers

Chair: Michael TenHaken
Vice chair: Greta Luimes
Secretary: Henry Eygenraam
Treasurer: Christian Sebastia

D. COD right of comment on Overtures 1, 3, 4, 10, and 45

The Council of Delegates exercises its right of comment by endorsing the responses presented in Appendices D, E, F, G, and H regarding the following overtures:

- Overture 1: Amend the Council of Delegates Governance Handbook to Clarify Their Role in the Nomination Process; Classis Quinte (Appendix D)
- Overture 3: Recommend that Ministers' Pension Trustees Increase the Final Average Salary Calculation to 100 Percent of the Average Ministers' Compensation; Classis Niagara (Appendix F)
- Overture 4: Close the Pension Fund to New Members and Create a New Retirement Fund; Classis Muskegon (Appendix G)
- Overture 10: Suspend the Work of the Dignity Team; Council of the CRC of St. Joseph, Michigan (Appendix H)
- Overture 45: Appoint a Task Force to Shape a Gentle Pathway for Those Departing the CRCNA; Council of River Park CRC, Calgary, Alberta (Appendix E)

E. Synodical appointments

On behalf of synod, the COD has ratified the following classical appointments of synodical deputies and alternate synodical deputies*:

<i>Classis</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Term</i>
Central Plains	Brad Bierma	Michael Bentley	2027(2)
Grand Rapids			
North	Peter Byma	Henry Admiraal	2026(1)

*Terms of alternate synodical deputies run concurrent with those of the synodical deputies.

F. Judicial Code Committee

There are currently two vacancies on the Judicial Code Committee, one for a member ordained as minister of the Word and one for a nonordained member not trained in law. The COD planned to provide two other nominees in the COD Supplement report, but no names have come forward at this time. The COD anticipates two nominations at its October meeting for interim appointment and approval at Synod 2025.

G. Bible Translations Committee report

The Bible Translation Committee met on April 18, 2024, to review communications related to the "God Bless the USA Bible" and to evaluate the Easy-to-Read Version (ERV). The committee observed that while the "God Bless the USA Bible" includes an approved translation (KJV), the committee does not approve supplemental material such as study guides, commentary, or suggested applications within Bible versions. The committee will have a report on the ERV by the October 2024 meeting of the COD.

II. Program and finance matters

A. Judicial Code Review Team report

Synod 2019 initiated a plan to review the Judicial Code every five years (*Acts of Synod 2019*, p. 763). This was delayed in order to allow the Council of Delegates to complete a review of the appeal process, but a task force was formed in late 2022 and met twelve times to review the existing Judicial

Code line by line. The Judicial Code Review Team has submitted their report with recommendations for revision. The COD presents the report in Appendix A for approval by synod (see Recommendation C).

B. CRCNA statements on social, economic, or political matters

Synod 2023 instructed “the Office of General Secretary to report directly back to Synod 2024 on how the concerns noted in Overture 3 [Refocus Ecclesiological Communication; Classis Southeast U.S.] have been addressed—namely, specifying how and when the CRCNA organization comments and/or makes statements on social, economic, or political matters that synod has not previously specifically addressed” (*Acts of Synod 2023*, p. 926). The general secretary worked with staff from the communications department, Thrive, and the Canadian justice ministries to formulate the report, which was presented to the COD in February and is attached to this report as Appendix B (see Recommendation D).

C. Intercultural Ministries (Canada) report

Intercultural Ministries operates as a crucial national advisory committee in Canada. Collaborating closely with the senior leader for antiracism and intercultural conciliation, our mission is multifaceted. The COD has adopted the Intercultural Ministries report and includes it for information as Appendix C (see Recommendation E).

D. Global Vision Team report

After a cluster of Venezuelan congregations joined Classis California South in 2022 (see thebanner.org/news/2022/10/venezuelan-churches-affiliate-through-california-classis), the Council of Delegates instructed the general secretary to gather a group “to study the integration of international churches into the composition of the CRC” (see *Agenda for Synod 2024*, pp. 32-33). The general secretary assembled a binational team of globally experienced and connected CRC leaders to make up the Global Vision Team (GVT), which was mandated to develop a conceptual framework for a global Christian Reformed Church and to submit a report to the COD. The GVT submitted their report with recommendations to the COD for approval at Synod 2024. The report with recommendations is included as Appendix L (see Recommendation F).

E. Bivocational pastors

The Office of General Secretary, along with Thrive, has created a number of resources for bivocational pastors, including a sample exit interview template and sample well-being check-ins, in response to the assignment from Synod 2023 to support bivocational ministry. Thrive continues to connect with bivocational pastors, regional pastors, and the Candidacy Office to develop resources. Further resources are expected to be released in fall 2024.

F. Ecclesiastical marriage

Synod 2023 instructed the Office of General Secretary to disseminate the report of the Ecclesiastical Marriage Task Force and a letter of warning to pastors and councils “regarding the potential legal ramifications of solemnizing an ecclesiastical marriage” (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 961-62). The report and letter were distributed in spring and are available in English, Korean, and Spanish.

G. Day of Justice

Synod 2017 designated the third Sunday of August as the Annual Day of Justice (*Acts of Synod 2017*, p. 631). The Office of Social Justice (OSJ) had taken the lead on this annual event, in conjunction with World Renew and the Centre for Public Dialogue (Canada). The work of OSJ is now carried on through Thrive, the new agency housing nine congregational ministries. The COD recommends that synod celebrate six years of observance of the Day of Justice and recognize its continued expression in ongoing venues (see Recommendation G).

H. Code of Conduct

Synod 2023 mandated the Office of General Secretary to oversee the development of materials to orient ministry leaders to the newly approved Code of Conduct (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 993-94). Thrive staff members continue to develop resources and materials to introduce ministry leaders to the expectations established by the Code of Conduct. These resources are expected to be released in fall 2024.

I. Finance matters

1. Ministry shares

Synod 2023 directed the Office of General Secretary and the Council of Delegates to continue the Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined (*Acts of Synod 2023*, pp. 987-88). The COD shares the report in Appendix I as its response and recommends the following (see Recommendation H).

- a. Provide a clear and basic compelling message about the ministry-share program to all the churches, recognizing that ministry shares are experienced differently on each side of the U.S.-Canada border.
- b. That synod consider this plan as completing the task assigned by Synod 2023 regarding the continued Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined.

Grounds:

- 1) This is an iterative process. Our messaging will be evaluated at least annually, and changes will be based on data collected through future surveys, conversations, and church-giving records. Staff on all levels are aware of the importance of the ministry-share program. The results are reported to the Council of Delegates on a regular basis.

- 2) This recommendation meets the following objectives:
 - acknowledging that ministry shares are experienced differently on each side of the U.S.-Canada border
 - maintaining the same basic messaging in both countries
 - avoiding unnecessary complexity
 - 3) This is a change in “presentation” rather than a fundamental change to the ministry-share program. As a result, this change can be implemented without making changes to the Church Order and therefore can begin in fall 2024 without a need to seek further approval from synod with this task.
 - 4) All major tasks outlined in the synodical directives are completed.
2. Clergy couples and pension benefits

Synod 2023 instructed the Office of General Secretary to “work with the pension boards, in consultation with clergy couples, to find a just and equitable solution that recognizes the ordination of both spouses who are ministers of the Word” (*Acts of Synod 2023*, p. 967). The COD shares the report in Appendix J as its response and recommends that the response be considered the completion of the task assigned (see Recommendation I).
 3. Short-term illness insurance

Synod 2022 instructed “the executive director to curate Human Resources-related best practices and templates including short-term disability options for congregational staff” and to “study possible denominational and classical benevolence funds for congregations facing short-term disability needs” (*Acts of Synod 2022*, p. 847). Due to changes in structure and staffing, this task was given to the Office of General Secretary and delayed a year. The COD shares the report on these matters as information in Appendix K and recommends that this response be considered the completion of the tasks assigned (see Recommendation J).
 4. Ministers’ pensions
 - a. The COD informs synod that it has approved the three-year final average salary to be used to determine retirement benefits beginning in 2025, noting the church and participant assessment amounts for 2025.
 - b. As part of its annual tasks related to pensions, the COD recently discovered that Church Order Supplement, Article 15 is unclear and misleading. The following changes have been proposed (indicated by ~~striketrough~~ and underline; see Recommendation K):

Guidelines for Churches Whose Ministers Receive Salary Support from Other Employment

1. The church is responsible for a total compensation package proportionate to the time spent in ministry to the church (forty-eight hours equals full time). The compensation package shall ordinarily be based on synodically stated minimum salary, fringe benefits, and housing costs.
2. Since the compensation package includes a percentage allowance for health insurance, the minister is expected to secure adequate health insurance for the minister and the minister's family.
3. The value of the parsonage provided by the congregation may be used for part or all of the compensation package.
4. ~~The minister shall receive pension credits in the Ministers' Pension Fund proportionate to the percentage of time devoted to the duties of the church.~~ Eligibility for full pension credit may be secured for ministers who work at least 20 hours per week as long as a ~~if~~ full contribution to the Ministers' Pension Plan is made.
5. The nature and amount of time of the task(s) other than ministry shall be specified. The average amount of time expended upon the total of the ministerial and nonministerial tasks shall not exceed sixty hours per week.

(Acts of Synod 1987, p. 572)

(Amended Acts of Synod 2024, p.)

5. *The Banner* and ministry shares

The COD informs synod that it instructed *The Banner* to become self-sustaining through revenue and fundraising, not including support through ministry share, beginning with the fiscal year starting July 1, 2027. To achieve that goal, *The Banner* has been asked to reduce its reliance on ministry-share contribution over the next three fiscal years.

III. Recommendations

- A. That synod by way of the ballot elect Erik Kamp (Central Plains) to fill out the term of Thomas Wolthuis on the Council of Delegates (COD Supplement section I, B).
- B. That synod by way of the ballot elect Chris Pederson (Chicago South), Jae Young Kim (Hanmi), David Spoelma (Holland), Robert Drenten (Iakota), Erik Van Dyken (Minnkota), Douglas Fakkema (Pacific Northwest), and Charles Adams (Wisconsin) to a first term on the Council of Delegates (COD Supplement section I, B).
- C. That synod receive the report of the Judicial Code Review Team and its recommendations for adoption and dismissal of the task force with gratitude for their work (COD Supplement section II, A; Appendix A).

- D. That synod receive for information the report on CRCNA statements on social, economic, or political matters in response to the task assigned by Synod 2023 regarding Overture 3: Refocus Ecclesiological Communication (COD Supplement section II, B; Appendix B).
- E. That synod receive for information the Intercultural Ministries (Canada) report (COD Supplement section II, C; Appendix C).
- F. That synod receive the report of the Global Vision Team and its recommendations for adoption (COD Supplement section II, D; Appendix L).
- G. That Synod 2024 celebrate six years of observance of the Day of Justice and recognize its continued expression in ongoing venues (COD Supplement section II, G).
- H. That synod receive the report of the COD on the continued Review of Ministry Shares Reimagined and its recommendations for adoption (COD Supplement II, I, 1; Appendix I).
- I. That synod receive for information the report of the COD regarding clergy couples and pension benefits in response to the instruction of Synod 2023 (COD Supplement II, I, 2; Appendix J).
- J. That synod receive for information the report of the COD regarding short-term illness insurance in response to the instructions of Synod 2022 (COD Supplement II, I, 3; Appendix K).
- K. That synod adopt the following proposed changes (indicated by ~~strike through~~ and underline) to Church Order Supplement, Article 15 (COD Supplement II, I, 4, b):

Guidelines for Churches Whose Ministers Receive Salary Support from Other Employment

1. The church is responsible for a total compensation package proportionate to the time spent in ministry to the church (forty-eight hours equals full time). The compensation package shall ordinarily be based on synodically stated minimum salary, fringe benefits, and housing costs.
2. Since the compensation package includes a percentage allowance for health insurance, the minister is expected to secure adequate health insurance for the minister and the minister's family.
3. The value of the parsonage provided by the congregation may be used for part or all of the compensation package.
4. ~~The minister shall receive pension credits in the Ministers' Pension Fund proportionate to the percentage of time devoted to the duties of the church.~~ Eligibility for full pension credit may be secured for ministers who work at least 20 hours per week as long as a ~~if~~ full contribution to the Ministers' Pension Plan is made.

5. The nature and amount of time of the task(s) other than ministry shall be specified. The average amount of time expended upon the total of the ministerial and nonministerial tasks shall not exceed sixty hours per week.

(Acts of Synod 1987, p. 572)
(Amended Acts of Synod 2024, p.)

Council of Delegates of the
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Michael L. Ten Haken, chair