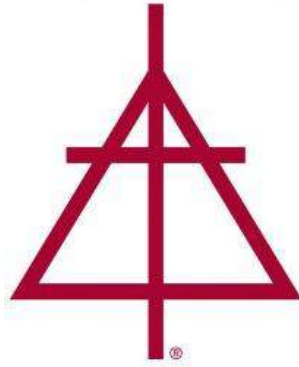


Agenda for the Classis Meeting of



Classis Alberta South and Saskatchewan
of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

October 23, 2026

Living Hope CRC, Medicine Hat, Alberta



Classis Alberta South and Saskatchewan of the Christian Reformed Church in North America

Agenda for the Classis Meeting

October 23, 2026

Living Hope CRC, Medicine Hat, Alberta

Vision Statement

Classis Alberta South and Saskatchewan is a regional group of Christian Reformed Churches dependent on the Holy Spirit, striving to function together as one body in Christ, share in worship, promote evangelism, diaconal ministries and nurture through mutual accountability.

Delegates please read the Covenant for Officebearers prior to the meeting and be ready to affirm it at the meeting. If you are a first time delegate we will ask for a signature as per Synod 2024

Chair: Rev. Kevin Vanderveen
Vice Chair: Rev. Brian Kuyper
Clerk: Yvonne Bosgra, Alternate State Clerk

Lodging: Please see the attached Accommodations Policy

Travel: Please see the attached Travel Policy

Delegates: Please read the Covenant of Officebearers prior to the meeting. First time delegates will be asked to sign at the meeting. Other delegates will be asked to stand to affirm.

Committee Appointments:

Credentials: Burdett CRC, Bethel Saskatoon

Overture and Communications:

Nominations:

8:30 am - Delegates arrive, register, sign Covenant of Officebearers and time of fellowship.

9:00 am - Classis is formally constituted in a time of worship

1. **Opening Devotions:**
2. **Welcome to delegates:**
3. **Classis is called to order:**
 - 3.1 Credentials and Roll Call: credentials will be confirmed and roll call conducted
 - 3.2 Classis is declared to be constituted
 - 3.3 First time delegates will be asked to sign the Covenant of Office Bearers
 - 3.4 Chair will read the Covenant of Office Bearers
 - 3.5 Delegates will affirm their subscription to the Covenant of Office Bearers by standing
 - 3.6 Any representative that is not willing to affirm the Covenant of Office Bearers will have the right to speak but not the privilege to vote
 - 3.7 Seating of Advisors
 - One ordained Minister or Commissioned Pastor leading the work of Classis (currently Indigenous Christian Fellowship of Regina) will be designated as an advisor to Classis (October 2008, item 6). Treasurer Peter Vandendool, Alternate Stated Clerk Yvonne Bosgra, Regional Pastor Rev. Martin Boardman
4. **Motion** to approve the agenda
5. **Classical Administrative Reports: Received for information unless noted otherwise.**
 - 5.1 **Classical Ministries Committee/Classical Interim Committee (CMC/CIC)**
 - 5.1.1 Summary of meetings attached

Motion: To change the frequency and the manner in which we hold Classis Meetings. Moving to one in person meeting at the end of October, possibly a 2 day meeting and two online, evening meetings in February and May.

Grounds: It is sometimes difficult for churches to get delegates to take time off of work, weather can impact ability to travel and the more remote churches spend extra time travelling to the meetings. These changes would save on costs to host meetings. Having a 2 day meeting would allow for more time to interact with each other in fellowship and development of relationships. Two shorter evening meetings would allow for business to be conducted quickly and efficiently. This would replace item B in the Rules and Procedures which currently states:
B. Classis shall ordinarily meet for one day on the 2nd Friday of March, and the last Friday of October, unless the Classical Interim Committee in advance of the meeting deems it necessary to meet for two days.

Motion: to approve the work of the CMC/CIC
 - 5.2 **Classis Stated Clerk report:** report attached

Motion: to approve the work of the Classis Stated Clerk
 - 5.3 **Classical Treasurer's Report:** Peter VandenDool
 - 5.3.1 Presentation of 2027 Budget – attached

Motion: to approve 2027 Budget

Motion: to approve the work of the Treasurer
- 5.4 **Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT):** Rev. Gerhardt Venter reporting

- 5.5 **Classical Safe Church Coordinator:** Judy Heim, report attached
- 5.6 **Faith Formation:** Chris Vandenberg, no report
- 5.7 **Medicine Hat College:** Rev. George Koopmans
- 5.8 **Regional Pastor:** Rev. Martin Boardman, report and prayer guide attached
- 5.9 **Classical Prayer Coordinator:** no report
- 5.10 **Church Visitor Team:** Verbal and written report

- 6. **Reports from Advisory Committees:**
 - 6.1 **Credentials Committee:**
 - 6.2 **Overtures Committee**
 - 6.3 **Nominations Committee:**

- 7. **Motions:**
 - 7.1 **Motion:** Recognizing his years of service and giving thanks to God for his good work Classis ABSS grants Harry Valstar the title of Commissioned Pastor Emeritus.
Grounds: I (Harry) am requesting that I be granted the title of Commissioned Pastor Emeritus. When I retired from ministry in the River Park CRC, that option was not available to me. I have continued to minister as a Commissioned Pastor Emeritus after retirement,unaware that my status had changed. Since my retirement, Commissioned Pastors have had their retirement status recognized and I would like to be granted that privilege as well. I trust that the Lord will continue to give me the strength and ability to share His Word according to His will and Purpose for me.
 - 7.2 **Motion:** Classis ABSS appreciates the years of service of Charles Krooger, Minister of the Word Emeritus and recognizes his decision to release his ministerial credentials in the CRCNA.
 - 7.3 **Motion:** Classis ABSS appreciates the years of service of Pieter Hendriks, Minister of the Word Emeritus and recognizes his decision to release his ministerial credentials in the CRCNA.

- 8. **Classis discussion on ongoing shared ministry:** Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen leading

- 9. **License to Exhort Examination of Craig Abernathy, Sonlight Regina**
 - 9.1 **Biblical/Theological portion:**
 - 9.2 **Sermon Evaluation:**

- 10. **Denominational Agencies/Visitors Reports:**
 - 10.1 **Council of Delegates (COD):** Lee Himbeault reporting
 - 10.2 **Word Renew:** Glenn Minnesma reporting, report attached
 - 10.3 **Resonate Global Mission:** Church planting FAQ, report attached
 - 10.4 **CRCNA:** report and video attached from General Secretary
 - 10.5 **Canadian Executive Director:**
 - 10.6 **Diaconal Ministries Canada:** report attached
 - 10.7 **Indigenous Christian Fellowship:**
 - 10.8 **Ministry to Seafarers:** report attached
 - 10.9 **Calvin University:**
 - 10.10 **Calvin Seminary:**

10.11 Kings University:

10.12 Redeemer University: report attached

10.13 Thrive: report attached x2

11. Closing:

11.1 Remarks from the chair and vice chair:

11.2 Motion: to adjourn

11.3 Closing prayer and doxology:

12. Spring 2027 Classis Meeting: March 5, 2027 location Maranatha CRC, Calgary

Churches of Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan

Church	Pastor(s)
Bethel CRC (Saskatoon)	Vacant – (Elder Jimmy Jo)
Brooks CRC	Rev. Paul Droogers <i>Credentials: Rev. Martin Boardman, Rev Jake Corvers*</i>
Burdett CRC	Rev. Rick Roeda <i>Credentials: Rev. J. Cameron Fraser*</i>
Covenant CRC (Calgary)	Rev. Matt Vanden Heuvel
Emmanuel CRC (Calgary)	Rev. Caleb Horjus <i>Credentials: Rev. Dan Meyer, Rev. Case Vink*; Rev. Pieter L. Hendriks*, Rev. Martin Mobach*; Rev. Ed Jager*</i>
Granum CRC	Rev. Henry Veldboom <i>Credentials: Rev. Leon Johnston.</i>
High River CRC	Vacant <i>Credentials: Rev. Derek Van Dalen</i>
Iron Springs CRC	Vacant: (Elder Brian Cor)
Maranatha CRC (Calgary)	Vacant:
Maranatha CRC (Lethbridge)	Rev. Daniel Meinema <i>Credentials: Rev. James D. Zondervan*, Rev. Andrew Joosse*</i>
Living Hope Church (Medicine Hat)	Rev. Kevin VanderVeen <i>Credentials: Rev George Koopmans</i>
Nobleford CRC	Rev. Gary Van Leeuwen <i>Credentials: Rev. Frank Lanting*, Rev. Thomas Albaugh*</i>
Sonlight CRC (Regina)	Rev. Gerhard Ventner <i>Credentials: Rev. Charles Krooger*</i>
Taber First CRC	Rev. Brian Kuyper

- Denotes Pastor Emeritus

Covenant for Officebearers in the CRCNA

We, [the undersigned], believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, which proclaims the good news of God's creation and redemption through Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the authority of God's Word, we submit to it in all matters of life and faith.

We affirm three creeds—the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith. In doing so, we confess our faith in unity with followers of Jesus Christ throughout all ages and among all nations.

We also affirm three confessions—the [Belgic Confession](#), the [Heidelberg Catechism](#), and the [Canons of Dort](#)—as historic Reformed expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God. These confessions continue to define the way we understand Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ.

Grateful for these expressions of faith, we promise to be formed and governed by them. We heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.

Along with these historic creeds and confessions, we also recognize the witness of *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony* as a current Reformed expression of the Christian faith that forms and guides us in our present context.

We also promise to present or receive confessional difficulties in a spirit of love and fellowship with our brothers and sisters as together we seek a fuller understanding of the gospel. Should we come to believe that a teaching in the confessional documents is not the teaching of God's Word, we will communicate our views to the church, according to the procedures prescribed by the Church Order and its supplements. If the church asks, we will give a full explanation of our views. Further, we promise to submit to the church's judgment and authority.

We honor this covenant for the well-being of the church to the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2026 TRAVEL POLICY

When travel is required for Classis business, the onus is on the individual to make a cost effective and practical choice when considering transportation.

The following options are available;

1. Personal Vehicle: With shorter trips, using your own vehicle is generally the best option. Classis pays mileage as established annually by the CRA. 2025 rates are \$0.72/km for the first 5000 km and \$0.66/km thereafter. (Rates are reviewed annually)
2. Carpooling: When possible and as with your personal vehicle, carpooling is often a logical, convenient and cost effective option. CRA rate apply
3. Car Rental: On longer trips (over 300km return) a car rental is best. Some rental firms will drop the vehicle at your home or pick you up. Review your insurance for proper coverage.
4. Bus Charter: At times the Classis will arrange for a bus charter to accommodate a larger number of travellers. When a charter is made available, the Classis will only pay mileage to and from the point of bus origin or stopover. Again the carpooling guideline applies.
5. Air Travel: When distances are excessive, such as for our churches in Saskatchewan, air travel is both a time saver with an often reasonable costs when considering the distance.

If there are questions as to what may or may not be reimbursed, contact the Classis Treasurer for preapproval at:

treasurer@classisabss.ca

2026 ACCOMODATIONS POLICY

When accommodations are required for Classis business, the policy of the Classis is to rent single room accommodations. It is expected the individual will make a cost effective and practical choice.

The Classis Interim Committee will ordinarily make accommodation arrangements when multiple rooms are required for a Classis meeting. When this is the case, details will be made available in advance of the meeting.

The following options are available;

1. Hotels. Single hotel rooms are the preferred choice of Classis
2. Shared hotel room Both parties must agree to shared accommodations. This is an acceptable option.
3. You are free to arrange your own accommodations at your own expense.

Classis Alberta South And Saskatchewan

2026 EXPENSE VOUCHER

c/o Peter Vanden Dool
Box 576
Picture Butte, AB T0K1V0
treasurer@classisabss.c

Date:

Church & Person:

Cheque Made out to:

Address:

City / Town:

Postal Code:

Details of Expense:

Expenses:	Travel:	KM's @	0.73	\$	-
	Other:			\$	-
				\$	-
				\$	-
		GST		\$	-
	(* KM rate effective Jan 1 '26)		Total Expenses:	\$	-

Please attach receipts when possible

Signed:

Paid by Cheque #

Expense Approval:

Summary of CIC/CMC Work

Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan

Report for Fall 2026 Classis Meeting

The past few months have been busy for the CIC in particular as they have needed to plan 2 extra Classis meetings to deal with items that have arisen. The CIC consists of Gary Van Leeuwen, Chair; Gys Vandropol, Vice Chair; Peter Vanden Dool, Treasurer ExOfficio and Judy Heim, Stated Clerk.

CIC met on March 25 (in person), June 11 (virtually), July 14 (in person), August 11 (virtually along with the Chair of Classis Contracta and Fall Classis). The CMC met on September 10 (hybrid in person and virtual) to review agenda for the October 23 Fall Classis. In addition, there have been numerous email conversations and discussions.

CIC has worked on the planning of the April 13 Special classis meeting, September 10 Classis Contracta and the October 23 Fall Classis meeting. Including securing the location and Synodical Deputies as required and assigning Pastors to be examiners for the Classical examination of Caleb Horjus of Emmanuel and the License to Exhort for Craig Abernathy of Sonlight Regina.

The Chair (Gary Van Leeuwen) and Stated Clerk (Judy Heim) attended an online meeting hosted by denominational leaders along with several other representatives of Classes in the denomination who might be experiencing challenges due to the large geographic area of their Classis.

The Chair and Vice Chair, Gary Van Leeuwen and Gys Vandropol could be stepping down from their roles, and we are looking for nominations for the Fall Classis meeting. They are willing to stay on until the March, 2027 meeting or beyond to help with transition.

Stated Clerk Report
Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan
Fall Classis Meeting
October 23, 2026

I want to thank you for your patience and understanding as I become more familiar with this role. Since the last report I have:

- met with your Alternate Clerk, Yvonne Bosgra several times to share information and set things for her success to take over (as she is doing for the Fall meeting) in the event I cannot attend. She is very capable in the role and I am thankful for her willingness to step in.
- met with the CIC/CMC on March 25, June 11, July 14 and August 11 and September 10 to arrange and organize the additional Classis meetings in April and September along with the regular meeting in October. These meetings were in person and online.
- attended Stated Clerk meeting (online) on July 22 with the other stated clerks in the CRCNA.
- attended a meeting (online) with denominational leaders and other Classes to discuss the challenges and options for Classis that are spread out geographically. This was an encouraging and enlightening meeting as it was good to hear of how other Classis are navigating the financial and technological challenges with distance sometimes making connections and shared ministries difficult. There were also valuable ideas shared in how many Classis are making their situations successful.
- worked with the various participants in the examination process of Caleb Horjus.
- arranged the Synodical Deputies for the examination.
- worked with the churches hosting the Classis Contracta and Fall Classis meetings.
- secured the location for the Spring 2027 Classis meeting, Maranatha Calgary.
- prepared a 6 month Classical Pulpit Supply schedule
- cleaned up both the Alberta and Saskatchewan Marriage Officiant Lists
- updated the list of Pastors who have their credentials in churches in our Classis
- replied to numerous emails and contacts

Classis Ministry Shares 2027 Proposed Budget

2027

ITEM

2027 PROPOSED BUDGET

1534 Professing Members

2026 BUDGET

1744 Professing Members

Per Member	2026 REQUESTED
13.04	20,000.00
3.75	750.00
	5,000.00
	-
5.25	8,050.00
21.97	20,000.00
	1,500.00
	1,000.00
	1,000.00
	1,200.00
	2,000.00
	7,000.00
12.71	7,000.00
	7,500.00
	5,000.00
\$ 56.71	\$ 87,000.00

Per Member	2025
11.47	20,000.00
2.69	750.00
	3,950.00
	-
	-
5.91	10,300.00
18.18	20,000.00
	1,500.00
	1,000.00
	1,000.00
	1,200.00
	2,000.00
	5,000.00
11.04	7,000.00
	7,250.00
	5,000.00
\$ 49.28	\$ 85,950.00

1	Campus Ministry
	Medicine Hat Campus Ministry
2	Denomination
	Stated Clerks Gathering (January)
	National Gathering (Spring)
	CRC events (CMLT, Pastor conferences...)
3	CMLT
	Student Support
4	Classis Expenses
	Classis Meetings - March & October
	Classis Committee Expenses
	Classis Miscellaneous Expenses
	Classis insurance
	Safe Church Coordinator
	Regional Pastor
	Church Visitors
5	Honorariums
	Regional Pastor
	Classis Clerk
	Classis Treasurer
Total Classical Expense:	

2027 PROPOSED BUDGET BASED ON 2026 STATISTICS

BUDGET

\$ 87,000.00

PER MEMBER

\$ 56.71

CHURCH & LOCATION		TOTAL	LESS - INACTIVE	NET	AMOUNT
		PROFESSING MEMBERS	PROFESSING MEMBERS	PROFESSING MEMBERS	
1	Brooks	93	33	60	\$ 3,402.87
2	Burdett	29	6	23	\$ 1,304.43
3	Covenant	115	38	77	\$ 4,367.01
4	Emmanuel	169	0	169	\$ 9,584.75
5	Granum	158	68	90	\$ 5,104.30
6	High River	86	26	60	\$ 3,402.87
7	Iron Springs	170	15	155	\$ 8,790.74
9	Maranatha (Calgary)	40	13	27	\$ 1,531.29
10	Maranatha (Lethbridge)	206	12	194	\$ 11,002.61
11	Medicine Hat	122	31	91	\$ 5,161.02
12	Nobleford	273	7	266	\$ 15,086.05
13	Regina Sonlight	42	9	33	\$ 1,871.58
15	Saskatoon Bethel	65	0	65	\$ 3,686.44
16	Taber	243	19	224	\$ 12,704.04
		1811	277	1534	\$ 87,000.00

Safe Church Coordinator Report
Classis Southern Alberta/Saskatchewan
October 2026 Classis

Greetings to the churches of Classis ABSS!

This will probably be my shortest report to you since I took on this role.

The Canada Classis Safe Church coordinators used to meet every few months to share ideas, concerns, and encouragement but these meetings haven't happened in the past few years. Although there continues to be support offered as needed. I found these meetings very beneficial as there were some veteran Safe Church coordinators available to give guidance and suggestions. There was also much encouragement and support offered to each other. I hope there will be more connections made in the future.

One of the recurring asks we receive is about training. Most Safe Church Ministries have got the policy and police check forms under control but struggle with training leaders and volunteers. There is a video available for church councils on responding to abuse which could be helpful to view. This video is found in The Network section of the CRCNA website and is linked here ['Responding to Abuse' Safe Church Video Training for Councils | CRC Network \(crcna.org\)](#)

Fall is usually a time of programs and committees starting up again for the year. That is a great opportunity for churches to review their Safe Church policies and procedures and make sure everyone is up to date and knowledgeable. I encourage you all to do this to avoid any potential lapses.

As always, I am available for any questions at the Safe Church email safechurch@classisabss.ca or to come out to your location to provide assistance or training

Your support, prayers and encouragement are appreciated.

Classis Alberta South and Saskatchewan
Regional Pastors Report

Rev. Martin Boardman

The work of a pastor is multifaceted and, at times, complex, with various challenges and opportunities. To meet these challenges, pastors must have access to a regional pastor, whose role is to provide that support.

The regional pastor builds relationships with pastors in the classis and provides pastoral support amid the complex challenges of today's ministry.

Since our last classis meeting, I have had the opportunity to meet with several pastors in person and have additional visits planned. The nature of our conversations is, of course, confidential, so the names are not listed. I pray regularly for the pastors, their families, and their ministry.

Prayer is the most effective way to support pastors and their work. Attached is a prayer guide featuring Biblical prayers for pastors.



10 Prayers to Pray for Your Pastor

One of the greatest gifts a congregation can give its pastor is faithful, consistent prayer.

1. A Deep Relationship with Jesus | *John 15:4-5*

Lord Jesus, draw our pastor close to You. Renew their love for You, strengthen their prayer life, and let every part of ministry flow from abiding in Your presence.

2. Wisdom and Discernment | *James 1:5*

Father, give our pastor wisdom from above. Bring clarity to difficult decisions, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and courage to follow Your direction.

3. Protection from Spiritual Attack | *Ephesians 6:10-18*

Lord, guard our pastor's mind, relationships, reputation, and ministry. Expose deception and temptation, and strengthen them to stand firmly in Christ.

4. Their Marriage and Family | *Joshua 24:15*

Father, bless our pastor's home. Protect family relationships from ministry pressures and give them healthy boundaries, meaningful time together, joy, and peace.

5. Strength and Good Health | *Isaiah 40:31*

Lord, renew our pastor's strength. Protect them from exhaustion and burnout, and help them maintain healthy rhythms of rest, work, sleep, and recreation.

6. Bold and Faithful Preaching | *2 Timothy 4:2*

Holy Spirit, anoint our pastor to prepare and proclaim Your Word with biblical faithfulness, clarity, courage, and compassion. Use it to transform lives.

7. A Shepherd's Heart | *1 Peter 5:2-3*

Jesus, give our pastor Your heart for people - compassion for the hurting, patience in difficulty, wisdom in counsel, and grace to care without becoming overwhelmed.

8. Healthy Leadership and Relationships

| *Philippians 2:2-4*

Father, surround our pastor with trustworthy leaders and friends. Build unity, humility, wise conflict resolution, and relationships grounded in mutual respect.

9. Courage and Faith | *Joshua 1:9*

Lord, give our pastor courage to obey You when the path is difficult or unpopular. Strengthen their faith, perseverance, and freedom from the fear of people.

10. Fresh Filling of the Holy Spirit | *Ephesians 5:18*

Holy Spirit, fill our pastor afresh with Your gifts, power, wisdom, love, and fruit. Give fresh vision and make their ministry point people to Jesus.

CLOSING PRAYER Father, thank You for the pastor You have given us. Strengthen, protect, encourage, and refresh them. Give wisdom for every decision, courage for every challenge, grace for every relationship, and keep their heart close to Jesus. May their life and ministry bring glory to Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Fall 2026 Report | CLASSIS ALBERTA SOUTH/SASKATCHEWAN

Dear Friends of Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan,

As the temperatures begin to change and we welcome the beauty of autumn, we are reminded of God's faithfulness through every season. The harvest before us is a reflection of his abundant provision and a reminder that the seeds planted in faith continue to bear fruit in his divine timing.

Reflecting on the past fiscal year, we are filled with gratitude for your faithful partnership. Through your prayers, generosity and commitment, you have helped to bring hope, healing, and lasting change to vulnerable communities around the world. Your support is truly a tangible expression of Christ's love, giving families opportunities to flourish, and reminding them that they are not forgotten.

Enclosed, you will find your Classis Fall Report, highlighting the impact we have made together over the past year. We hope that the content will encourage you, as you see how God has been working through his people to bring restoration and renewed hope to communities near and far.

Thank you for walking alongside us at World Renew in this shared calling. As we begin a new ministry year, we look forward with hope and eager anticipation, trusting that God will continue to accomplish more than we could ever ask or imagine through his faithful church.

May God bless you richly this autumn with renewed strength, joy, and the assurance of his steadfast presence.

With gratitude and blessings,



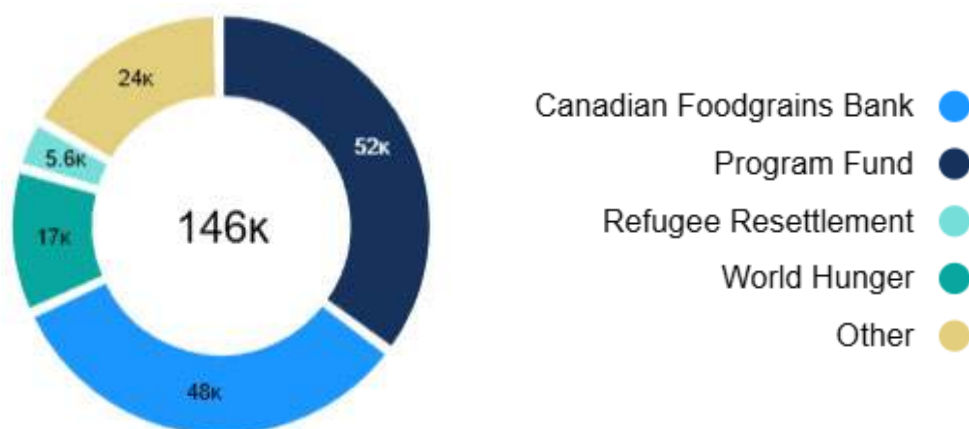
Chris Orme

Director for Church & Community Engagement, World Renew
corne@worldrenew.ca • 905-572-0350

Giving from Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan

- Thank you for your faithful support throughout the last fiscal year. Classis Alberta South/Saskatchewan contributed a remarkable **\$146,170.68** to World Renew's ministry, with much of this support directed to the Program Fund (Where Needed Most) and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

We are so grateful to partner with you, as together, we bring hope and lasting change to some of the most challenged communities around the world. The chart below provides a snapshot of your generous giving.



• Your Support Matters

We give thanks to God for the past fiscal year for the ways he has worked through the faithful partnership of supporters and churches like yours. Together, we have walked alongside more than **720,000 participants in 30 countries**, helping families strengthen food security, improve livelihoods, and build healthier, more resilient communities.

When disasters struck, your generosity helped to bring hope to **over 382,000 people in 22 countries** through emergency food, clean water, shelter, sanitation, home repairs and support to rebuild lives. Our Disaster Response Services volunteers also helped to **repair or rebuild 209 homes**, while trained International Relief Managers continued to serve communities affected by crises. Your support was also instrumental in welcoming **over 180 refugees** to Canada, helping families to begin a new chapter of their lives with hope and dignity.

Behind every number is a person, a family, and a story of hope made possible through your partnership. Thank you for being a part of this ministry with us, as we seek to share Christ's hope with some of the most vulnerable communities around the world.

- Responding to Disasters · [An Update on Venezuela](#)



From devastating wildfires, to flooding and earthquakes, disasters continue to leave families facing unimaginable loss.

Following the devastating earthquakes in Venezuela, thousands of families lost homes, loved ones, and access to basic necessities. Thanks to your support, World Renew and its partner, FundaCRECER, are helping families begin to recover. So far, 130 families in temporary shelters have received food and hygiene supplies. Children are finding safety and support through Child Friendly Spaces, while parents and caregivers receive emotional care and Psychological First Aid to help them cope with trauma and uncertainty.

Your generosity is providing more than emergency relief. It is restoring hope, dignity, and a sense of stability for families taking their first steps toward healing.

Long after the headlines fade, people are still rebuilding their lives. We invite you to remain alongside these communities with us, helping to bring hope and healing, and the love of Christ in times of great need.

Thank you for partnering with World Renew.

Learn more about our work in [International Disaster Response](#) and how we provide emergency assistance, support recovery, and help communities rebuild with hope.

• Your Partnership at Work

A food basket may seem simple, but for families displaced by conflict in Sudan, it brings relief, dignity, and hope.

Through World Renew partners Alsawaid Alkhadra Organization (AAO) and ACROSS, families facing severe food insecurity are receiving vital support and renewed hope.



As Muhammad Abdullah Burma shares, each basket represents more than food: *“It represents a family hoping for a better tomorrow, a child hoping to grow up healthy, and a community hoping to rebuild what has been lost.”*

Thanks to faithful partners like your churches, 7,200 people in Sudan received emergency food assistance. We are grateful for your generosity which is helping families experience the love of Christ in practical ways and bringing hope during a time of great hardship.

Upcoming Church Offerings

Looking for ways to help your congregation make an impact? Consider participating in any of these upcoming World Renew Sunday Offerings:

- **November 1, 2026** • World Hunger
- **December 25, 2026** • Christmas Gift Catalogue or Where Needed Most
- **February 21, 2027** • Canadian Foodgrains Bank
- **May 9, 2027** • First 1,000 Days (Mother’s Day Offering)
- **June 27, 2027** • Refugee Sunday
- **Oct 24 – Nov 7, 2027** • World Hunger

Resources and promotional materials are available through the World Renew Offerings webpage: [World Renew Offerings](https://worldrenew.org)

How Else Can Your Church Get Involved?

- **Give.**
Support World Renew's ministry through designated offerings and disaster response appeals, helping vulnerable families around the world.
- **Travel and Learn.**
Join World Renew on a journey to experience God in another country, grow in your faith, and witness World Renew's transformative work. Join us on the upcoming **Cambodia Discovery Tour, Nov 6-16, 2026**. Share these incredible opportunities with your church congregation!
Visit [Travel with us](#) to learn more.
- **Advocate.**
Many refugees continue to wait in vulnerable situations as Canada reduces annual refugee admissions. Join us in encouraging our government to renew its commitment to welcoming those seeking safety and hope.
Visit [Advocate for Refugees](#) to take action.
- **Pray.**
Pray for families facing hunger, poverty, conflict, and disaster. Pray for displaced people who are struggling to find hope. Pray for World Renew's local partners who faithfully serve their communities, and for leaders and decision-makers to be guided by God's wisdom, justice, and compassion.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." - Galatians 6:2

Thank you for the many ways you walk alongside us at World Renew. We, on the Church and Community Engagement team, value the opportunity to serve your church and stay connected, as together, we share Christ's hope with communities near and far. We invite you to call on us – we would be happy to connect!



Chris Orme
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Engagement
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Chidi Nwene
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Maria Oliveira
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grgraham@worldrenew.ca

ON MISSION TOGETHER

SPREADING THE GOSPEL THROUGH 3 KEY AREAS



LOCAL MISSION



GLOBAL MISSION



CHURCH PLANTING

STEP INTO THE 10-YEAR CHURCH PLANTING PLAN

Synod 2026 approved a strategic 10-year church planting plan for our denomination. By 2036, the CRCNA will become a multiplying denomination where every classis mobilizes their churches to participate in God's mission by making disciples, developing leaders, and planting churches across Canada and the United States.

Resonate is here to walk alongside your churches and classis as you step into this important work God has called us to as a denomination. Find resources, updates, and stories of God at work at www.resonateglobalmission.org/church-planting

WHAT CAN RESONATE DO FOR YOUR CHURCH?

Local Mission

- *Witness Curriculum* for practical steps on mission
- Global Coffee Break Bible study materials
- Congregational workshops and coaching

Global Mission

- Mission trips and volunteer opportunities from 1 week to 1 year
- Cohort program for young adults
- Missionary partnerships

Church Planting

- Discerning a call to plant
- Church planting residencies
- Discovery, assessment, coaching, and training of church planters

Thank you for stepping into God's mission!
www.ResonateGlobalMission.org



Church Planting Strategic Plan FAQ

Q. "What did synod decide on church planting and renewal?"

A. Synod 2025 instructed the CRC's agencies and institutions to develop a comprehensive ten-year plan for church planting. Developed collaboratively between June 2025 and April 2026, Resonate's director of church planting, Tim Sheridan, presented this plan to the delegates of Synod 2026. This plan was adopted with unanimous support from the delegates.

Q. "Is this plan achievable?"

A. We currently have identified approximately 50 potential church planters across North America in some stage of their discernment journey. While identifying another 100 over the next 5 years will stretch us as a denomination, we believe it is within reason if we all increase our intentional efforts in discipleship multiplication and leadership development.

Q. "Who actually owns this plan?"

A. This vision needs to be owned at the local level; Resonate has been tasked to steward this on behalf of the CRCNA. Church planting requires multiple partners to be sustainable - classes, local supporting churches, denominational agencies, and educational institutions. Getting to a place of denomination-wide clarity and shared ownership is vital and that is why the one-year objective aims for the following to be true in 12 months:

"the CRCNA will have designed and aligned an ideal church plant journey, with clear ownership across denominational agencies, Classes, and congregations for each stage from disciple to leader to church planter to launch, along with a funding plan to support implementation."

Without ownership at the local level by congregations and classes, this plan will not achieve its desired results.

Q. "What support does Resonate plan to offer?"

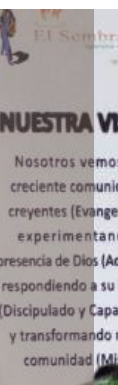
Resonate is committed to offering the following support:

- Working with congregations and classes to build church planting pathways so congregations and classes feel equipped to plant



RESONATEGLOBALMISSION.ORG

A Ministry of the Christian Reformed Church



- Providing robust and holistic assessments for leaders with a call to church plant
- Providing contextualized training pathways to equip planters, churches, and classes
- Providing coaching support to church planters
- Providing coaching support to parent churches and classes
- Supporting the development and flourishing of local "partnership teams" to support church plants in a sustainable way

Q. "How will this plan be funded?"

A. Funding for this strategic plan will need to come from the following critical sources:

- Ministry shares that support the staffing and resources needed to offer critical support to local congregations, Classes, and church planters (e.g. church planter assessments, church planter coaching, Legacy pathway coaching, etc.).
- Classis funds to support church plants in the Classis (e.g. Classis church planting funds).
- Congregations willing to support church plants in their regions.
- Planters equipped to raise financial support through donors and other forms of income.

Q. "What do classes and congregations need to do in response to these plans?"

A. This vision needs to be owned at the local level; Resonate has been tasked to steward this on behalf of the CRCNA. Church planting requires multiple partners to be sustainable - classes, local supporting churches, denominational agencies, and educational institutions. Getting to a place of denomination-wide clarity and shared ownership is vital and that is why the one-year objective aims for the following to be true in 12 months:

"The CRCNA will have designed and aligned an ideal church plant journey, with clear ownership across denominational agencies, Classes, and congregations for each stage from disciple to leader to church planter to launch, along with a funding plan to support implementation." Resonate's plan starts with a plea for the church to begin by laying a foundation of prayer and fasting. From that foundation there are five other elements to prioritize: discipleship multiplication, leadership development, church planting pathways, legacy (or closing church) pathways, and funding and capacity development.

For this strategic plan to be sustainable and have impact, every congregation in the CRCNA will need to participate in some way. This plan invites all of us into a culture shift of multiplication that will include the following shared efforts:

- A commitment to prayer and fasting as a denomination for God to raise up leaders and church planters in the CRCNA.
- A renewed commitment to discipleship multiplication.
- As disciples are made, an intentional commitment to develop leaders.
- Participate as able in classis church planter pathways as they are developed, which may



include supporting church plants emerging in the classis.

- Participate in the ministry share covenant commitment as a congregation within the CRCNA.

Q: "How can my church participate in this initiative if we are struggling ourselves?"

A: Synod's plan emphasized that this is a denominational effort, not one that only involves "healthy" churches.

Resonate recognizes that not every church or classis is in a place right now to engage fully, which is why the plan includes an intentionally slower rollout. This plan invites every church and classis to prayerfully reflect on their current season of ministry and pursue local vitality. For some churches and classes, this will be a call to partner with Thrive on a journey towards renewal.

Resonate's plan gives opportunity for each classis to participate in some way - prayer and fasting, making disciples, identifying leaders, supporting classis efforts in church planting, supporting churches engaging the legacy pathway, and committing what they are able to financially to support this plan.

Discipleship is the foundation. As disciples are made and multiplied, future leaders begin to emerge—particularly among those who demonstrate a pattern of discipleship multiplication. Among these future leaders will emerge future church planters. Resonate has already identified approximately 50 potential church planters across North America in some stage of their discernment journey. While identifying another 100 over the next 5 years will stretch us as a denomination, this goal is within reason if each church and classes will make intentional efforts in discipleship multiplication and leadership development.

Q. "What happens to declining churches?"

A. The investment in the resources needed to strengthen a legacy pathway for churches nearing the end of their life cycle is a vital part of this strategic plan. As the plan articulates, "end-of-life-cycle churches are not a problem to be managed but a legacy to be stewarded." Increasing our capacity to support declining churches will be critical to the success of this strategic plan.

Q. "What about smaller or struggling classes?"

A. There is also an intentionally slow roll out of this plan as we recognize that not every church or classis is in a place right now to engage fully. BUT, we would say that this plan is a call for every church and classis to examine their own health and work on internal renewal. We would hope that this might lead many churches and classes to partner with Thrive on a journey towards renewal.



We also believe every classis is able to participate in some way—prayer and fasting, making disciples, identifying leaders, supporting classis efforts in church planting, supporting churches engaging the legacy pathway, and committing what they are able to financially to support this plan.

Q. "Why start with discipleship instead of planting?"

A. Discipleship is the foundation. As disciples are made and multiplied, future leaders begin to emerge - particularly among those who demonstrate a pattern of discipleship multiplication. Among these future leaders will emerge future church planters. As we multiply disciples, we will multiply leaders, and as we multiply leaders we will increase our capacity to multiply churches. Without the foundation of discipleship, the multiplication of leaders needed to sustain movement in church planting is not possible.

Q. "How will success be measured?"

A. This strategic plan is calling for Synod 2026 to prioritize church planting for the next 10 years and embed annual progress reports into every Synod for the next 10 years. We will ask for annual updates on the following key metrics as we strive towards the 3-year milestones and 5-year moonshot::

- how many churches, classes, and leaders are engaged in discipleship multiplication;
- how many leaders each classis aspires to raise up in the next 10 years;
- how many classes develop an intentional discipleship multiplication pathway, leadership development plan, and church planting pathway;
- how many churches nearing the end of their life cycle engage a legacy pathway that will prioritize church planting; and
- the financial support and commitment made to support the church planter pathway in each classis.
- Stories of planters being raised up and new worshipping communities bearing witness to the gospel.

Q. "How does this affect our denominational identity?"

A. This plan has the potential to change the culture and identity of the CRCNA to become known as a church planting denomination committed to multiplication at all levels - disciples, leaders, and church plants. We believe that this plan invites us to renew our identity as God's missionary people. As the report reminds us, "And this gospel is meant to be embodied by a community of people commissioned and sent by the risen Jesus to make disciples of all nations as they are being transformed by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to this good news with the entirety of their lives." We believe this plan invites us into an exciting preferred future rooted in a passion to see the gospel saturate our world by multiplying disciples, leaders, and churches.

Q. "What is required in the first year?"

A. The plan narrows the focus of year 1 to one key outcome: designing a denomination-wide church



planting journey; clarifying ownership for each stage of this journey between classes, congregations, and denominational agencies; and clarifying the financial plan required to support the implementation of this plan over the next 10 years.

Q. "What kinds of churches will we plant?"

A. Within the context of our shared commitment to plant churches that are Reformed in polity and theology, we envision a variety of church planting models contributing to this strategic plan. This may include the following:

- Established churches adding additional services and/or campuses to multiply their witness in their local communities.
- Church plants among different language groups and/or diaspora communities.
- Established churches opening up their facilities for church plants of different language groups and/or diaspora communities.
- Networks of intentionally smaller churches meeting in homes or public spaces.
- Restarts of churches who have experienced decline for an extended period of time.

Q. "What kind of leaders are needed to help carry this vision forward in our classes?"

A. We will need at least two primary types of leadership in our classes to carry this vision forward. On the one hand, we will need leaders who can advocate for the growing number of diverse church planters who are entering the CRCNA with a passion to plant. The strategic plan identifies a number of barriers that we will need to overcome to strengthen our support for the growing diversity of leaders finding a home in the CRCNA. On the other hand, we will need leaders who have a passion and vision for multiplication in their classis. Leaders who can collaborate with other classes and denominational staff to develop intentional church planting pathways from discipleship multiplication → leadership development → equipping of church planters → supporting church plants. The plan calls for each classis to identify a strategic leader in their classis to help champion this vision for multiplication.



Dear CRCNA Classis Leaders:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ.

We have been praying for you as you begin this new year of ministry and continue faithfully serving the churches within your classis.

Many of you know the story of Antioch in the book of Acts. Born amid conflict and uncertainty, the church at Antioch became a powerful center of discipleship, mission, and sending. While there is much we can learn from its journey, we see four pivotal movements that shaped Antioch's witness and now invite us to consider how God is shaping our own community of churches within the CRCNA.

During Synod 2026, the theme "Our Antioch Moment" emerged. We now ask what it means for every congregation to embrace God's calling within its own context. Throughout the week, four invitations were made to our denomination:

- God is calling us to embrace communal prayer and spiritual practices for communal transformation.
- God is calling CRC congregations to embrace intergenerational discipleship that equips and multiplies leaders.
- God is calling the CRC to embrace a biblical vision of diversity that shapes our identity.
- God is calling the CRC toward a holistic mission that proclaims and demonstrates the gospel.

These movements are not simply ideas discussed at synod. They are invitations for all of us to discern together how God is leading the CRCNA in this season.

While this letter briefly introduces these themes, we encourage you to view the [general secretary's Synod 2026 address](#) to hear the broader vision. As you do, we invite you to prayerfully consider how your classis and the congregations you serve might participate in this shared calling.

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Grand Rapids MI 49506-1208
616-241-1691

3475 Mainway
PO Box 5070 STN LCD 1
Burlington ON L7R 3Y8
905-336-2920

crcna.org

Church Planting

In response to Synod 2025, the agencies and institutions of the CRCNA collaborated to develop a comprehensive ten-year church planting strategy. Between June 2025 and April 2026, leaders from across the denomination worked together on this effort, culminating in the presentation of the plan by Resonate's Director of Church Planting, Tim Sheridan. Synod 2026 adopted the plan with unanimous support.

The strategy begins with a foundation of prayer and fasting. From that foundation flow five additional areas of focus: discipleship multiplication, leadership development, church planting pathways, legacy (or closing church) pathways, and funding and capacity development.

For this vision to become sustainable and fruitful, every congregation and every classis has a role to play. Together, we are invited to:

- Commit to prayer and fasting, asking God to raise up leaders and church planters throughout the CRCNA.
- Invest intentionally in discipleship that multiplies mature followers of Christ.
- Identify, equip, and encourage emerging leaders.
- Participate in church planter pathways as they are developed within your classis, supporting new church plants where possible.
- Continue faithfully participating in the ministry share covenant that enables this shared work.

Church Renewal

Synod also emphasized that church planting and church renewal are denominational efforts. They are opportunities for the whole church—not only congregations currently experiencing growth.

As you discern your classis' next steps, we encourage you to consider how renewal may become part of your shared ministry. Thrive invites congregations to begin exploring [Thriving Congregations](#), with the flagship Thriving Essentials course serving as a helpful starting point. From there, churches may continue through additional Essentials courses or participate in one of Thrive's year-long discernment processes.

Discipleship remains foundational throughout this work. As disciples are formed and multiplied, God raises up future elders, deacons, pastors, church planters, and leaders who will serve both renewal and mission.

Moving Forward Together

As classis leaders, you play an important role in helping congregations discern God's leading. We encourage you to share this vision with the churches in your classis and invite them into prayerful participation in this season of church planting, renewal, and discipleship.

To support that work, we encourage you to review the [Synod 2026 FAQ](#) and [Acts of Synod](#). We also invite you to watch for future updates from the church planting implementation team throughout the coming year.

Church, this is our Antioch Moment. It is a unique opportunity for our denomination to step together into a season of renewed discipleship, faithful mission, and Spirit-led multiplication.

May God grant you wisdom, discernment, and courage as you lead the churches entrusted to your care.

In Christ,

Zach King, Al Postma, Dan DeKam



Zach King
General Secretary



Al Postma
Executive Director, Canada



Dan DeKam
U.S. Director of Ministry Operations

Note: [Here is a video](#) for your fall classis meeting.



The Ministry to Seafarers

401 East Waterfront Rd.

Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6A 4G9

Phone: 604-253-4421

Email: crcvanportchaplain@gmail.com

www.ministrytoseafarers.com

CLASSIS REPORT: Fall 2026

1. We were blessed this past summer with the service of a fine intern who served with us from May-August. Christian Santana is an Indonesian theology student at VST, who



worked with us 30 hours/week through the summer, visiting at both the downtown and Roberts Bank centres. He connected well with many of the seafarers, especially those from Indonesia, understandably. Christian will continue to serve with us one day a week through the Fall as a continuation of his theological field education (TFE) programme at VST. Significant support for his summer internship was provided by the ITF Seafarers Trust, which came through NAMMA.

Christian with an Indonesian chief cook

2. The Strait of Hormuz has been very much in the news for the past months, since the start of the conflict between the US/Israel and Iran. The impact for seafarers has been devastating. At one point an estimated 20,000 seafarers were stranded in the Persian Gulf. One crew at the Westridge oil & gas terminal in July shared how they escaped through the Strait "in the dark" at the same time another ship just 5 miles from them was attacked. Some seafarers who are destined to head to that region are refusing to go, and all are fearful. The conflict zone has now widened to include areas near Yemen as well. Another increasingly dangerous conflict zone is that of the Black Sea with the Russian war on Ukraine. And the piracy situation near Somalia is also heating up again. An upcoming article in the *Christian Courier* will be highlighting the Strait of Hormuz situation, and that of seafarers generally. Keep these situations in your prayers.
3. This Summer we were finally able to gain access to Westridge Terminal, where the Transmountain pipeline ends. This terminal has become increasingly busy, but oil and gas terminals here have been difficult to access for safety and security reasons. With increased traffic lately, the terminal is now working with us to allow us to visit ships that pass through the terminal. Crews have really been appreciating our visits, as large oil tankers don't often receive visitors and shore leave is more challenging for them.

4. On one ship recently, when I boarded, I could sense almost immediately that things weren't quite right. Nothing explicit was stated, but generally we can "feel" when things are off a bit – usually fairly quickly on our visits. I contacted Nathan with ITF to let him know and suggested he make a visit to the ship. He did just that, and it turned out my gut feeling was right. The crew were not being given their cash advances and were also not being allowed shore leave. I visited the ship again the day after Nathan was on board and the mood had improved significantly, and I was thrilled to bring some of the crew ashore later in the day. As Nathan shared with me, "Always follow your gut."
5. As mentioned at the last classis meetings, I am moving towards retirement next year. I've been waffling a bit on when to step down, but at last have settled on completing my time in this ministry at the end of June 2027. Advertising for the role should be out by the time of the Classis meetings. If you are aware of anyone who might be interested in this position or if you have someone to suggest, please be in touch or have them be in touch through the ad. This is a very rewarding and important ministry, so please help us in finding the right person to carry on the work. It would be good to have someone in the role by April or May next year so we can have ample time for orientation and handover. The ad for the position will be available through various sites and posts, and it and the job description can be found on our website – ministrytoseafarers.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Roosma
Chaplain

John Bandstra
Board Chair

Redeemer University Fall Classis Report 2026

August 2026

Greetings from Redeemer University

With the fall term approaching, Redeemer University is preparing to welcome new and returning students back to campus. We anticipate approximately 1,170 students—a record enrolment!—with nearly 600 living on campus. Through classroom learning, campus activities and spiritual community, Redeemer prepares students to reflect the love of Jesus Christ in every career and calling. We are grateful for the ongoing prayers and financial support from Christian Reformed Churches that makes this mission of Reformed Christian higher education possible!

New Program Development

July marked a historic moment for Redeemer as the community welcomed the inaugural cohort of Master of Education students to campus for their in-person, one-week residency. This was a milestone, as it officially launched the first-ever graduate program at Redeemer.

The School of Education is also actively redesigning and condensing the two-year Bachelor of Education program into a one-year program to meet new provincial requirements. The program will begin after May 2027, ensuring a Reformed Christian perspective continues shaping educators.

Redeemer is also developing a Master of Arts in Reformed Thought, with a projected launch in fall 2027. This graduate program builds on Redeemer's established faculty strengths in Reformed theology and philosophy and distinctive resources, including the neo-Calvinist collections housed in the H. Evan Runner Reading Room: the Cal Seerveld collection and the Albert Wolters collection. The program will prepare students for doctoral study and scholarly leadership in church, academia and culture.

Finally, the university is exploring partnerships with a number of seminaries to offer Pre-Seminary pathways to meet a growing need for pastors in North America. These pathways will allow students who feel called to pastoral and ministry leadership to connect with seminary leaders and participate in ministry-related learning experiences throughout their Redeemer degree.

Engaging Campus Activities

There are many exciting initiatives planned on campus this fall that will bring together students, pastors, scholars and community members. The Albert M. Wolters Centre for Christian Scholarship will be hosting a mini-conference celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the printing of William Tyndale's English New Testament in 1526. The Wolters Centre will also be hosting a two-day conference exploring a scriptural understanding of creation care. Redeemer will also be launching a new podcast called World Redeemed, focused on thought leadership and Reformed scholarship.

Reaching High School Students

This fall, Redeemer will be partnering with key Christian high schools to offer advanced university credit courses for senior high school students. These dual credit courses will increase variety and breadth for students while also preparing them for university level learning grounded in a biblical worldview.

Thank You

The generosity of Christian Reformed churches helps to sustain the mission and vision of Redeemer. We value your partnership in all that the Lord is doing in the lives of Redeemer students. We thank God for your faithful commitment to see minds renewed, lives transformed and a world redeemed.

In Christ,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Zietsma', followed by a horizontal line.

David Zietsma, PhD
President, Redeemer University

Fall 2026 Classis Report

25 years of Love in Action



John Wildeboer - National Director of DMC

When I first considered applying for the role of National Director with Diaconal Ministries Canada, I knew I would be following in the footsteps of remarkable leaders—people like Peter Zwart, Ben Vandezande, Hans Kater, and Ron Vanden Brink. Each of them shared a deep passion for helping churches make a tangible difference in their communities and across Canada by putting the love of Jesus into action. Now, as we celebrate **25 years of Diaconal Ministries Canada**, we celebrate more than a milestone—we celebrate **God's faithfulness**.

For 25 years, churches, deacons, and faithful servants all across Canada have been loving their neighbours in practical, tangible ways. Thousands of stories have unfolded: neighbours welcomed, people restored, communities strengthened, and lives changed. Much of this ministry happened quietly, without recognition or fanfare. But God was there—and He continues to work through His people. If you're not already following us on social media, join us! Each week we're sharing throwback stories and celebrating the people and moments that have helped shape DMC over the past 25 years. **Every story matters. Every act of love matters. And every story points us back to God's faithfulness.**

And now, we want to celebrate together!

On **October 17 in Hamilton**, we'll gather for an in-person evening of **connection, celebration, and thanksgiving**. We'll share stories of the past 25 years, celebrate the incredible impact of churches and deacons across Canada, and look ahead with hope and excitement to what God is calling us to in the next 25 years.

Come celebrate where we've been. Give thanks for what God has done. And dream with us about what comes next. We would be honoured to have you join us!



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

25 YEARS OF LOVE IN ACTION

It will be an evening of gratitude for the
past and excitement for the future

OCTOBER 17, 2026 | 7:00 PM
PERKINS CENTRE, 1429 MAIN ST E, HAMILTON, ON.

 **DIACONAL
MINISTRIES
CANADA**



NewGround Endowment Fund

Two other ways to participate if you can't make the 25th in person!

Our anniversary is not only about looking back—it's about **preparing the soil for the next 25 years**. There are two additional ways you can be part of that future.

1. ANNOUNCING - The NewGround Endowment Fund

We are excited to share that we have established **The NewGround Endowment Fund** in partnership with **Christian Stewardship Services (CSS)**.

The purpose is simple: to create a lasting source of funding that will help support local churches as they develop new and creative ways to serve their communities.

Our goal is to raise **\$100,000** this year and grow the fund to **\$1 million within 10 years**.

You can contribute through a cash donation or a gift of securities. Every gift helps build a foundation for the future and ensures that churches will continue to have opportunities to join God in His renewing work in their communities.

2. NewGround offerings within your church

Every year we use the offerings collected across Canada to set the grant amount for our NewGround Grants. In 2025 we gave out \$90,000 in grants. In 2026 we were hoping to give out \$100,000 in partnership grants. Unfortunately we saw a decrease in funds received through the offerings collected this past September - August.

Please help us to continue to **grow our impact by being sure to have an offering for NewGround in your offering calendar**. A good Sunday for this has been the first Sunday in May. Every year in February we mail out new NewGround Flyers and send a video highlighting a NewGround Partner Grant and impact story that can be played during the offering.

Please be sure to plan for that!

Twenty-five years ago, God planted a seed.

Through the generosity and faithfulness of churches and individuals across Canada, that seed has grown into thousands of stories of love in action.

Now we have the opportunity to prepare the soil for the next 25 years.

Thank you for being part of the story.





Recent Changes of people at Diaconal Ministries Canada



FAREWELL

June

This past June, we were saddened to say goodbye to Rachel Vroege, who served as DMC's Regional Director for Western Canada for 13 years. We asked Ron Vanden Brink (Retired National Director of DMC) to write an equip blog entry as a [Tribute to Rachel](#). He said "sometimes the most powerful ministry begins by asking a different question: **What is God already doing here?**" Rachel spent years helping churches discover the answer to that question.

Through asset-based community development, Indigenous justice and reconciliation, and countless relationships with churches and communities, **she challenged assumptions, opened doors, and invited people into deeper relationship with God and with one another.** Her ministry was marked by curiosity, compassion, and a deep belief that God is already at work—often in places and through people we might otherwise overlook. **We are grateful for Rachel's faithful service and the lasting impact** she has had on Diaconal Ministries Canada, the churches she served, and the communities she walked alongside.



WELCOME

End of June

At the end of June, Ayo Orebiyi joined our team as our **Communications Coordinator**, and he has already made a tremendous impact! In his short time with Diaconal Ministries Canada, **our social media engagement has exploded.** Ayo is a valued addition to our team, bringing creativity, energy, and a passion for telling the stories of what God is doing through churches and communities across Canada. We're excited to see how God will use Ayo's gifts to grow our online presence and **help more people discover the incredible stories of love in action happening across our country.**

SCAN HERE
TO FOLLOW
DMC ON
FACEBOOK



Be sure to follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to see and hear all the great things God is doing across Canada!



One of the original six Diaconal Coaches, John Klein-Geltink, recently retired from Diaconal Ministries Canada. **After 45 years** of involvement in diaconal ministry across Ontario and Canada, John has a wealth of wisdom, stories, and experience to share. Mark Vanderwees recently sat down with John over a farewell lunch and asked him a few questions—including what wisdom he would pass on to us as we continue the work of helping churches and communities discover and share God's gifts. Read more about John's answers and wisdom [here](#). We're grateful that retirement from coaching doesn't mean saying goodbye completely! John has signed on to continue serving DMC as our Ontario Southwest Board Member. **Thank you, John, for 45 years of faithful service, wisdom, and commitment to the ministry of the deacon.** We're excited that there's still more to come!





DMC / IMPACT REPORT

What IMPACT is DMC having?

This past spring, we developed a tool called **"The Change Map"** to help us better understand the impact DMC is having in churches across Canada.

As we listened to deacons and reflected on their experiences, five key areas of impact emerged. Here are those five areas, along with a quote from a deacon that brings each one to life.

1 A Shift from Charity to Empowerment

*"We are less likely to jump to conclusions about other people's needs and more aware of the importance of including the recipients of care in the planning and offering of services."
"Judge less. Listen more."*

2 Greater Confidence & Better Leadership

"We were doing things wrong... thankful for your workshops. Big help to me!"

3 Training is Producing Real Change

"We had the congregation fill out an asset-mapping survey... It has made us aware of assets that we have in our congregation and needs that are there."

4 Stronger Community Engagement

"We've begun exploring ways that we can join God where He's already at work in our community."

5 A Transformation in Culture

"We need to be more understanding and compassionate when listening to or responding to people's requests for assistance."

WORKSHOP SERIES

3 of our Workshops

DEACON 101

- This workshop will help new deacons learn about their role and refresh returning deacons, allowing them to share their experiences and insights
- We will take a closer look at the "Deacons Mandate" and look at practical examples of how that is worked out in your church, local community and beyond
- Don't forget to invite pastors, Elders and Church

Helping without Harming

- **Gain** a biblical framework for benevolence
- **Learn** to distinguish relief from restoration
- **Strengthen** food bank and deacon fund practices
- **Explore** ways to reduce dependency and promote dignity
- **Develop** a wiser, more impactful approach to care



Developing Benevolence Guidelines



- Throughout this workshop your church/team of deacons will know when to spend a significant amount of time with a request or when to refer an individual/family to other agencies
- Sharing these guidelines with the pastor, staff and elders will also help your entire leadership know how to respond to requests you encounter

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE

[Find the Korean translation of this letter here](#)

[Find the Spanish translation of this letter here](#)

Dear Friends,

In June of 2027, Thrive is partnering with the Children's Spirituality Summit to host a conference dedicated to supporting children's ministry leaders. The event will take place from **June 1–4, 2027**, at the Prince Conference Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The gathering begins on June 1 with Resource and Connect, a specialized pre-event designed specifically for Christian Reformed Church children's ministry leaders. Thrive is organizing this day to give our denomination's leaders space to exchange resources, build relationships, and explore best practices together.

The main Children's Spirituality Summit will follow from June 2–4 around the theme *"Together with Children, Together with God."* This portion of the conference will offer valuable opportunities to engage with and learn alongside children's ministry leaders in an ecumenical context.

Thrive is offering the following opportunities:

- **Free registration to Resource and Connect** for the first 80 CRCNA children's ministry leaders who register for the summit. This includes lodging and meals at the Prince Conference Center for June 1.
- **One free registration from each classis for the Children's Spirituality Summit** - please nominate a representative to claim this scholarship and attend! Travel and lodging included as applicable if booked through Thrive.
- **Select additional financial assistance** may be available for other children's leaders within your classis who would like to attend. We do not want cost to be a barrier to participation!

We write to ask that you share this opportunity at your upcoming classis meeting and send an email to all classis representatives to nominate a children's ministry leader (staff or volunteer) from your region to attend. A sample email is attached for you to use as a template. Classis representatives should submit nominations from their churches to the classis clerk by January 15, 2027, who will select one nominee to claim the scholarship and represent that classis at the conference. In making this selection, the clerk should consider the following factors: a) nominees whose churches may not have the financial resources to send them to the conference on their own, b) nominees who may be at the beginning of their children's ministry journey and would benefit from connection to resources, or c) nominees who may be more isolated in their ministry and benefit from connection to peers.

Once selected, we ask that you provide the nominee with this linked form ([Claim Your Scholarship for the 2027 Children's Spirituality Summit](#)) so they can claim their all-expenses-paid scholarship by January 29, 2027. Please only provide this form to one person per classis. Additional leaders who wish to attend are encouraged to do so and registration information will be available on The Network later this fall. Please reach out to Sammantha Sweetman, Thrive Administrative Coordinator, with any questions about the scholarship process or financial assistance for additional attendees: ssweetman@crcna.org

Thank you for your time and your partnership in supporting those who shepherd the children in our churches. We are deeply grateful for your help in passing along this opportunity to your classis leaders and look forward to connecting with your representative next summer.

Sincerely,

Rick Zomer

Rick Zomer

Faith Formation Consultant

rzomer@crcna.org

800 2725125 ext 7045

crcna.org/thrive



The congregational support agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. [Connect with us.](#)

Thrive is the congregational support agency of the CRCNA. [Connect with us.](#)

Schedule a meeting with me [here](#)

SAMPLE EMAIL

I am writing to share an exciting opportunity for the children's ministry leaders in our churches!

In June of 2027, Thrive, the congregational support agency of the CRC, is partnering with the Children's Spirituality Summit to host a conference dedicated to supporting children's ministry leaders. The event will take place from June 1–4, 2027, at the Prince Conference Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The gathering begins on June 1 with Resource and Connect, a specialized pre-event designed specifically for Christian Reformed Church children's ministry leaders. Thrive is organizing this day to give our denomination's leaders space to exchange resources, build relationships, and explore best practices together. The main Children's Spirituality Summit will follow from June 2–4 around the theme *"Together with Children, Together with God."* This portion of the conference will offer valuable opportunities to engage with and learn alongside children's ministry leaders in an ecumenical context.

Thrive is offering one full scholarship per classis to this conference! Included in this scholarship:

- the cost of registration for the Children's Spirituality Summit (June 2-4, 2027)
- the cost of registration for the CRCNA-specific Resource and Connect pre-event (June 1, 2027)
- all meals included in these event registrations
- travel and lodging as applicable if booked through Thrive

Please nominate a children's ministry leader (staff or volunteer) from your church to claim this scholarship by confirming their interest and availability and submitting their name and contact information to me by January 15, 2027. I will select the representative from our classis and provide them with the form from Thrive to claim their scholarship by January 29, 2027.

Additional leaders are encouraged to attend and registration information will be available on The Network later this fall. Churches are encouraged to consider sending their children's ministry leaders as they are able. Thrive may also be able to provide some financial assistance to additional attendees from each classis upon request.

Please reach out to me with any questions and I look forward to receiving the nominations from your congregation!

Dear Classis Alberta South/Sask.,

At Thrive, we hold a clear and joyful vision of what a healthy, flourishing congregation can be: a community gathered under the loving reign of Christ, shaped by His Word, nourished by His Spirit, and sent into the world to bear witness to His reconciling mission. We see congregations as spiritual households rooted in worship, growing in lifelong discipleship, ordered for mutual care, marked by holiness, and engaging their neighbors compassionately with the good news of Jesus Christ. Thrive's calling is to journey alongside congregations as a humble companion, strengthening their worship, leadership, community life, embodied hospitality, and mission so that they may embody the good news of Jesus Christ faithfully and fruitfully in their particular contexts.

We're excited to play a role in the CRCNA's renewal and church planting efforts over the next several years through Thriving Congregations, an initiative designed to help your church leaders connect - with each other, with your local community, and with other congregations who share your ministry passions. By joining this renewal journey, your church will learn to refresh your vision, understand your mission, deepen your discipleship, and develop practical steps to live into the ways God has uniquely gifted your congregation. Thriving Congregations is about meaningful conversations and flourishing as you discern where God is leading you next. Our team is eager to journey alongside you in this renewal journey!

Thrive remains committed to our mission to equip and encourage congregations with the tools you need to flourish. Our hope is that you will be quick to approach us with questions, requests for support or resources, and stories of how God is working in your local context.

May God bless you richly as you continue to follow His leading in your ministry.

Peace to you,

Dr. Lee Carter
Director, Thrive



Elder Essentials

Elder Essentials is now available! This course closely follows ordination forms to equip new and experienced Elders to embrace their missional call. Participants will be equipped to have a deeper understanding of the unique role of Elders, gain tools to nurture a healthy, thriving congregation through preaching, sacraments, fellowship, faith formation, and gospel witness, and articulate how to participate in God's mission as it is embodied in your local church. Thrive will make one free copy available to every congregation this fall. To order additional workbooks, talk to your Regional Connector or visit crcna.org/elder-essentials

Thriving Essentials

Thriving Essentials is an interactive course that is renewing congregations and reenergizing engaged members across our denomination. Hosted in your own church and led by a qualified Thrive facilitator, participants will explore four core concepts of a healthy ministry: Mission, Discipleship, Discernment, and Leadership. Alignment and clarity on these key foundations can bring renewed energy to a church's ministry. Inquire at crcna.org/ThrivingCongregations/thriving-essentials

Support for Vacant Congregations

Is your church in the middle of a vacancy or looking ahead to one? We can help! In transitional seasons such as vacancy, Thrive is able to come alongside congregations to help you be aware of unique needs that may arise, understand what may be going on in the hearts and minds of church members, and support wise decision-making for next steps. Talk to your Regional Connector or email thrive@crcna.org.



LIZ TOLKAMP
REGIONAL CONNECTOR

📞 800-272-5125 ext. 5111

✉ ltolkamp@crcna.org

🌐 crcna.org/thrive

