
REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2016

Committee for the Official Website (CWEB)

Esteemed brothers in the Lord,

With fraternal greetings in the name of our Saviour, we hereby submit our report to General Synod Dunnville 2016, as mandated by General Synod Carman 2013.

COMMITTEE MANDATE

Synod Carman 2013 gave CWEB the following mandate:

1. To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions;
2. To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, in particular ensuring that the text of the Book of Praise is the same as that most recently adopted and revised by general synod;
3. To make synod reports available on the web before the next synod;
4. To provide web services and email services to the churches and to serve the churches with advice with regard to possibilities of setting up their own websites;
5. To make all the Acts of all past general synods, as well as all committee reports to those synods, available on the website in searchable format;
6. To investigate the effectiveness of the website and to come with a proposal for improvement and include that in the report to the next general synod;
7. To serve Synod 2016 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget and any recommendations regarding new content to be added to the website.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONING

Synod 2013 appointed two new members to the committee: br. Jonathan Reinink and br. Darryl Shpak. Rev. Bredenhof remained on the committee as the convener and he maintained the website content on a regular basis. Br. Jeremy Koopmans, br. Jonathan Reinink, and br. Darryl Shpak have looked after the more technical side of the website and e-mail functions.

Typically, CWEB has functioned by means of regular contact among the members via e-mail. Some meetings have also been held using Skype for voice and video communication. In 2015, the committee began using an online chat and collaboration system called Slack.

The term of br. Jeremy Koopmans is now completed, and Rev. Wes Bredenhof stepped down from his role after accepting a call to the Free Reformed Church of Mount Nasura, Western Australia. CWEB will be sending a list of nominees for potential consideration by Synod under separate cover to be held in confidence and presented to the committee appointed by Synod to deal with the matter.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

As far as the technical set-up is concerned, nothing has changed in the last three years. We continue to have our website hosted by Dreamhost.com, which has continued to provide satisfactory and affordable service. For Synod's information, we have attached an appendix with some technical statistics about the usage of the www.canrc.org website.

Little new content has been added to the website, beyond the regular flow of news items, reports, press releases and new information about local churches or ministers. We would like to note to Synod that, since the revised Book of Praise is under certain copyright restrictions, we no longer host links to the Psalms and Hymns on the website.

We continue to provide e-mail services to the churches. The ministers are provided with permanent canrc.org e-mail addresses and a mailing list for discussions and so on. Some of the churches also use the canrc.org domain for their clerk's e-mail.

We also continue to provide website hosting and domain name services for individual churches who wish to take advantage of it.

CWEB continues to receive comments from website visitors. Many of the e-mails that the committee receives are clearly spam and are treated as such. However, occasionally we do receive inquiries from serious parties and these are responded to in a timely and appropriate fashion, usually by the convener. We also occasionally receive messages that are intended for individual ministers, and we forward these to the appropriate individuals. We also occasionally receive feedback from the churches – we value this interaction and often use it to improve our web presence.

As part of our mandate, CWEB began the work of digitizing all past Acts of Synod and Synodical reports in searchable format. Br. Jonathan Chase was found to be willing to take on this task. The Acts have all been successfully digitized, and are available on the website. For this work, Br. Chase was paid the sum of \$1250. He has begun the work of collecting and digitizing the past Synodical reports, but this is not yet complete. This work has been valued at \$3250.

With regard to other costs, the only expenses CWEB incurs have to do with the hosting plan at Dreamhost.com. For the details, we refer synod to the financial report attached.

Finally, Synod Carman 2013 also mandated that the committee "investigate the effectiveness of the website and to come with a proposal for improvement and include that in the report to the next general synod". CWEB regrets to inform Synod that we have not completed this mandate. Synod Carman 2013 noted that the website visits appeared to be declining; the statistics attached to this report show that between 2013 and 2015 there has been a slight increase in traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CWEB recommends that General Synod Dunnville 2016 give the committee the following mandate:

1. To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions;
2. To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, in particular ensuring that the text of the Book of Praise is the same as that most recently adopted and revised by General Synod;
3. To make synod reports available on the web before the next synod;

4. To provide web services and email services to the churches and serve the churches with advice with regard to possibilities of setting up their own websites;
5. To make all committee reports to past synods available on the website in searchable format;
6. To investigate the effectiveness of the website, prepare a proposal for improvement, and include that in the report to the next general synod;
7. And to serve Synod 2019 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget, and any recommendations regarding new content to be added to the website.

CWEB also recommends that General Synod Dunnville 2016 decide:

1. To approve the budget of \$4,200 for the period 2016-2018
2. To appoint two new members to the committee with six year terms

Respectfully submitted by your committee,

J. Koopmans (Edmonton, AB)
J. Reinink (Beamsville, ON)
D. Shpak (Winnipeg, MB)

APPENDIX A: FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND BUDGET

	Budget 2013-2015	Actual 2013-2015	Projected 2016-2018
Website hosting plan	\$450.00	\$438.08	\$900.00
Domain name registration	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
Document scanning	\$4,500.00	\$1,250.00	\$3,250.00
Total	\$5,000.00	\$1,688.08	\$4,200.00

WEBSITE HOSTING PLAN

This expense is \$382.80 USD, and is charged once every two years. The last renewal was September 2014; it will be due again in 2016 and 2018, and is naturally subject to fluctuations in the exchange rate.

DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION

This is the fee for renewing the “canrc.org” domain name. Our website hosting provider has done this at no charge over the last three years, but we are not confident that this will continue. Typical rates are approximately \$10 USD per year.

DOCUMENT SCANNING

Br. Jonathan Chase has been reimbursed \$1,250 for the work he has done scanning past Acts of Synod. The remaining amount is earmarked for scanning the past Synodical reports.

APPENDIX B: WEBSITE TRAFFIC

The table below gives an overview of traffic to the website over 2013-2015. Please note that the data for the first and last months (Dec 2012 and Oct 2015) represent partial months, and as such, are lower. Apart from these months, traffic to canrc.org has been fairly constant.

month	#reqs	#pages	
Dec 2012	33077	12515	
Jan 2013	399167	141353	
Feb 2013	401568	162338	
Mar 2013	450640	165352	
Apr 2013	432592	157138	
May 2013	750331	221214	
Jun 2013	462913	150134	
Jul 2013	389097	141075	
Aug 2013	368334	133970	
Sep 2013	495741	171142	
Oct 2013	469138	152038	
Nov 2013	408688	147783	
Dec 2013	405013	152185	
Jan 2014	441858	153299	
Feb 2014	415253	151354	
Mar 2014	446421	159521	
Apr 2014	412692	155025	
May 2014	429756	147738	
Jun 2014	431828	160051	
Jul 2014	391288	150771	
Aug 2014	359456	143950	
Sep 2014	427804	159240	
Oct 2014	421767	167657	
Nov 2014	398064	159273	
Dec 2014	389601	158970	
Jan 2015	460632	179920	
Feb 2015	422170	153209	
Mar 2015	453942	175106	
Apr 2015	421397	172225	
May 2015	428789	194425	
Jun 2015	508798	250920	
Jul 2015	376301	163204	
Aug 2015	396875	172091	
Sep 2015	477045	227333	
Oct 2015	271348	123569	