REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2019

Committee for the Official Website (CWEB) October 23, 2018

Esteemed brothers in the Lord,

With fraternal greetings in the name of our Saviour, we hereby submit our report to General Synod Edmonton (Immanuel) 2019, as mandated by General Synod Dunnville 2016.

COMMITTEE MANDATE

Synod Dunnville 2016 gave the CWEB the following mandate:

4.3.1. To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions;
4.3.2. To revise the content of the website whenever necessary;
4.3.3. To continue the project of digitalizing Reports brought to past synods and to ensure that all reports for GS 2019 are available on the website before the next general synod;
4.3.4. To investigate the effectiveness of the website and to implement changes as considered necessary and desirable, focusing on the following matters: design and layout of the website, greater usability for smart phones and similar devices, menu structures, searching capabilities and greater use of graphics. The CWeb should also investigate whether or not it is possible to get permission for publishing links to the Psalms and Hymns of the Book of Praise on the website;
4.3.5. To use paid, professional services, if necessary, to complete 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 in a timely fashion;
4.3.6. To serve GS 2019 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of Synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

1. COMMITTEE MEETINGS, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

1.1. Since 2015, CWEB's primary form of communication has been a free online chat and collaboration system called Slack. This has allowed the committee members to keep one another informed of their activities, share relevant information, and discuss issues as they arise. Since GS 2016, the committee also had seven online meetings using Skype for voice and video communication to discuss and provide updates of projects and progress.
1.2. Br. Jeremy Koopmans, br. Jonathan Reinink, and br. Darryl Shpak have looked after the more technical side of the website and e-mail functions, while Rev. Roukema has helped maintain the website content, served as the main point of contact for emails received by the committee, and also served as convener for Skype meetings.

2. General Overview of the Regular Activities of the CWEB

2.1. A significant part of our mandate involves the regular maintenance of the existing website and associated technical functions, as well as the revision of the content of the website whenever necessary (Acts of GS 2016, Article 68, 4.3.1, 4.3.2). This includes posting news items from the churches (calls, worship service changes, special events), documents such as press releases, reports and announcements from various assemblies (classes, regional synods, synods, synodical deputies and committees). Content is also updated when out-of-date information is noticed (particularly by comparing the site's information to the Yearbook for the CanRC), and upon request by churches or individuals.

2.2. The CWEB can report that the canrc.org website does receive significant traffic. Over the last three years the canrc.org website was visited 547,462 by 119,841 unique visitors and had 927,137 pageviews. 83% of the visits were from Canada, 6% from the United States and 5% from Australia. 66% accessed the website from a desktop, 21% from a mobile device, and 13% from a tablet. A Google Analytics report on the usage of the canrc.org website can be found in **Appendix D**.

2.3. Although the GS 2016 did not mandate the CWEB with providing or maintaining the canrc.org email service, it is the CWEB's understanding that this was an oversight of GS 2016, and we have continued to provide and maintain this service. This oversight of GS 2016 was in all likelihood and in no small way caused by the CWEB's failure to request GS 2016 to include this in their mandate. As part of this understood mandate, the CWEB continues to provide email services to the churches. The ministers are provided with permanent canrc.org e-mail addresses, a mailing list for discussions, and technical support for these services. The main benefit of the canrc.org service is that it provides ministers with a professional email address (i.e., firstname.lastname@canrc.org) that doesn't change every time they move congregations. Some of the churches also use the canrc.org domain for their clerk's e-mail. The canrc.org email is hosted by Dreamhost, which is very effective in terms of cost, but not in terms of usability, functionality, or quality. Below, in §5, you will find a more detailed assessment of the service and a recommended way forward.

2.4. The CWEB occasionally receives comments from website visitors. Many of the e-mails the committee receives are clearly spam and are treated as such. We do, however, receive sporadic 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 or committees (i.e. foreign churches - CRCA) and we forward these to the appropriate individuals. The committee also thanks all those who have pointed out errors, omissions and corrections to the website content.

2.5. We continue to provide website hosting and domain name services for individual churches who wish to take advantage of it, something we have done historically but which was removed from the committee's mandate in 2016. Currently, only two congregations, Guelph (Emmanuel) and Guelph (Living Word) still have their sites hosted on our servers. (The report will interact further with this aspect of our activities and future mandate in §6 – Webhosting for Individual Churches)

2.6. As part of our mandate (Art. 68, 4.3.3), the CWEB continued the work of digitizing all past Synodical reports in searchable format. Br. Jonathan Chase (now Rev. Chase) completed this project, collecting and digitizing the past Synodical reports. These have been included on the new federation website. It should be noted that many of these documents were in Dutch, some were quite faded, and a number also included hand-written notes. As such, the quality of some the older documents inhibited the effectiveness of the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) processing and their resultant quality for indexing and searching functionality.

2.7. GS 2016 gave the CWEB a budget of $10,000, of which $5,800 was designated to implementing changes to the federation website, and $3250 to the project of digitizing past Synodical reports. As is noted under §3 – The New Federation Website (canrc.org) – the scope GS 2016's mandate in 4.3.4 far exceeded the amount budgeted and the church for the administration of the General Fund (Carmen East) granted an increase of

$3000 (see §3.1 for a more detailed explanation). With regard to other costs, the only ongoing expenses CWEB incurs have to do with the hosting plan at Dreamhost.com. For the details, we refer Synod to the financial report attached as Appendix A.

2.8. The rest of the mandate given to the CWEB by GS 2016 involved implementing significant improvements to the federation website (canrc.org) (Art. 68, 4.3.4, 4.3.5), and publishing links to the Book of Praise on the website (Art. 68, 4.3.4). Since these matters require a more extensive treatment, they are listed under their own headings below.

3. THE NEW FEDERATION WEBSITE (CANRC.ORG)

The most significant project undertaken by CWEB since the previous synod was the revamp of the website. GS 2016 mandated the CWEB with the following: "*To investigate the effectiveness of the website and to implement changes as considered necessary and desirable, focusing on the following matters: design and layout of the website, greater usability for smart phones and similar devices, menu structures, searching capabilities and greater use of graphics*." (Acts of Synod 2016, Article 68, §4.3.4) GS 2016 also mandated the CWEB "[to] *use paid, professional services, if necessary, to complete 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 in a timely fashion*." (Acts of Synod 2016, Article 68, §4.3.5)

3.1. After analyzing the needs of a modern website, including content administration, support for mobile devices, and support for high-quality searching, the committee concluded that that best approach would be to undertake a rebuild of the website. The previous website at canrc.org was launched in the spring of 2010, and had not been significantly modified since then, beyond normal content maintenance. The programming code for the existing federation website was written with the design needs of a website in 2010 in mind, and the code did not have a clean line of separation between the Content Management System (CMS) and the visual interface. Taking these two factors together, this meant that attempting to update and revise the existing website code to produce something approaching what GS 2016 had mandated would be a difficult and time-consuming process with uncertain results. It was determined that rebuilding the website from the ground up would be the quickest and most effective way to produce the results mandated by GS 2016 and would produce a website which would be more amenable to updates and refinements in the future.

3.2. The committee also determined that the scope of the project was beyond what the committee members could achieve as a group of volunteers and that the cost of using professional services to fully complete this part of our mandate would be somewhere in the area of $16,000 to $18,000 – significantly more than the $5800 designated by GS 2016 for this work. The successful completion of our mandate would rely heavily on volunteered time and professional services.

3.3. With these factors in mind, the committee determined that the most reasonable and practical approach would be to have a member of the CWEB do the work, and Jonathan Reinink (Web Developer, owner Church Social), was contracted to take on the project. Jonathan in turn contracted the professional design services of Jason Bouwman and Compass Creative to assist in the completion of the work.

3.4. It should be noted that even with the additional $3000 released from the General Fund, that Jonathan Reinink, as well as Jason Bouwman (Compass Creative), generously provided their services and time well below what is considered market-rates. It is estimated that approximately 50% of the work for this project was volunteered.

3.5. The old website was hosted on a platform called Dreamhost which provided functionality in additional areas, including site hosting for individual church websites, email addresses for ministers and others within in the federation, and the ministerial email list. The hosting package we were using was set up in 2006 and was considered a "budget" package then. Its functionality was found to be inadequate for the redesigned site,

and the decision was made to switch to new service providers, Heroku and Algolia. This will affect other aspects of CWEB's mandate, namely website hosting (see §6) and the budget (see **Appendix A –** Budget)

3.6. **The new website launched on October 20, 2018 at canrc.org**. Features include:

3.6.1. A visual overhaul giving the site a modern, professional design

3.6.2. Responsive layout that works well on mobile devices

3.6.3. High resolution, retina display ready artwork

3.6.4. Extremely fast, high-quality site-wide searching, including full-text search of PDF document, all powered by Algolia

3.6.5. Optimized for fast browsing speeds (less than 500ms per page load)

3.6.6. Built in a search engine optimized manner

3.6.7. Complete content review and update

3.6.8. Improved site structure and navigation

3.6.9. Human-friendly links (e.g. canrc.org/churches/lincoln instead of canrc.org/?church=45)

3.6.10. Built using industry trusted software, frameworks and libraries (PHP 7.2, Laravel 5.7, Tailwind CSS, Postgres)

3.6.11. Hosted on a top-tier hosting provider (Heroku), with a secure connection (HTTPS) by default

3.7. Selected screenshots comparing the "old" and "new" versions of the website are included in **Appendix C**.

4. The Publishing of the Book of Praise on the Federation Website

GS 2016 also mandated the CWEB with the following: "*The CWeb should also investigate whether or not it is possible to get permission for publishing links to the Psalms and Hymns of the Book of Praise on the website*." (Acts of Synod 2016, Article 68, §4.3.4)

4.1. As it relates to this part of our mandate, we have been in communication with the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise (SCBP) regarding hosting this content. SCBP has informed CWEB that the text of the Psalms and Hymns is under copyright by various copyright holders, and that the formatting and layout of the musical notation of the Psalms and Hymns is under copyright by Premier Printing. After some communication, in late 2016, SCBP advised CWEB to include the prose sections only on the website and indicated that they would work further with the copyright holders to try to resolve this issue.

4.2. As a result, the new federation website includes the text of the prose sections of the Book of Praise, as provided to CWEB by Premier Printing at the advice of SCBP. The Psalms and Hymns, which were available in their old versions prior to the revision of the Book of Praise, have been removed. We hope that in the future, SCBP will be able to provide us with the remaining content.

5. Minister Email

As committee, we have historically offered email services to the churches of the federation (c.f. Acts of Synod 2013, Article 92, §4.3.4). Synod Dunnville 2016 did not include this in our latest mandate, but the Acts of Synod did not make it clear whether this removal was deliberate or not. As noted above, this is likely due to the fact that the CWEB report to GS 2016 did not include this in their recommended mandate. With this understanding we continue to provide e-mail services to the churches. However, there are significant challenges and issues with the minister email service.

5.1. It would be a gross over-generalization to say that the ministers have been dissatisfied with the canrc.org email service, but – as gross over-generalizations go – it is fairly accurate. The CWEB has received a significant amount of informal feedback indicating that many ministers find the email service frustrating and

even unworkable due to configuration issues and poor spam filtering. Over the years, the committee has noticed a decline in the usage of the canrc.org email accounts by ministers in favour of other email options (free services like Gmail, ISP offered services, etc.). Currently, very few ministers actually use the canrc.org email for regular daily use and, more often than not, they are using a personal email (Gmail/Hotmail) as their ministerial email.

5.2. The reason for this poor user experience is directly related to the service the churches use for the canrc.org email accounts. Our current email hosting is provided by Dreamhost, the same service which provided hosting for the former federation website. The email service provided by Dreamhost is fairly old and simple, and it is barebones, providing relatively little capability beyond basic email functions. Configuring (or reconfiguring) your email client is difficult and requires a number of settings to be correct to ensure that you are able to both send and receive emails from a canrc.org email address, and the process needs to be repeated in different forms on every device a minister wishes to use. The spam filtering provided is subpar in comparison with other email services. The webmail client is difficult to use, and while improvements have been made, it is still far behind what free services like Gmail provide.

5.3. As a result of these observations and considerations, one of the CWEB's activities over the last three years has been to investigate these usability issues and look at possible solutions for improved email service for the ministers and other users. There are a number of possible solutions open to the churches:

5.3.1. Maintain the status quo and continue providing the existing Dreamhost email service, at a cost of approximately $300.00 CAD per year, accepting that it is barebones email service and will not serve the needs of most ministers, and that it will likely be a seldom used email service. The CWEB has some concerns with this approach as it will mean the CWEB is providing a service that is largely unused, unappreciated and widely panned by users.

5.3.2. Discontinue or phase out email hosting altogether and encourage ministers to use their own personal emails or local church emails. While this is the approach to which most ministers are defaulting, the CWEB suggests that the canrc.org minister email offers a level of professionalism that a free service like Gmail or Outlook does not, and also offers a portability that a church specific email (ie. @burlingtonebenzer.ca or @stalbertcanrc.com) does not.

5.3.3. Continue hosting the canrc.org emails but move to a paid service (such as Office 365 or Gmail) that is more reliable and robust, understanding that the cost of providing the canrc.org email service will increase substantially.

5.4. The CWEB recommends that, if GS 2019 determines that the canrc.org email is beneficial and of importance to the churches and worth continuing, the CWEB be mandated to pursue and, as soon as is feasibly possible, purchase, an email service for the canrc.org emails that will reliably provide quality email service and usability.

5.5. The CWEB has performed an initial, although fairly thorough, investigation of a number of email services (namely, Office365 and G Suite) and the details of that investigation and the resultant tentative recommendation of G Suite Basic, can be found in **Appendix B.**

5.6. The cost for purchasing the G Suite Basic email service for the canrc.org email will be $6000 USD per year, adding a total amount of $18,000 USD to the CWEB's budget. This amount has been included in the budget (see Appendix A) and the CWEB recommends that GS 2019 leave an allowance for those funds to be used for the purchase of the G Suite Basic email service if a further investigation of the service indicates that this service is a fit for the churches.

5.7. The CWEB recognizes that this aspect of our activities could be seen to go beyond our understood mandate of providing email services to the churches, but we felt it prudent to proactively address what we saw to be a growing concern among the ministers when it came to the effectiveness and use of the canrc.org email service.

6. WEBHOSTING FOR INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES

6.1. CWEB's mandate has historically included provisions similar to "*provide web services and email services to the churches and to serve the churches with advice with regard to setting up their own websites.*" (Acts of Synod 2013, Article 92, §4.3.4) This was omitted from the mandate by Synod Dunnville 2016, but it is not clear if this was intentional. We have continued to provide site hosting and email forwarding on an *ad hoc* basis, as we have been able to do this at no additional cost. As part of our transition to a new hosting platform for the federation website, we will no longer have this ability.

6.2. Currently, only two congregations, Guelph (Emmanuel) and Guelph (Living Word) still have their sites hosted on our servers. We will inform these congregations that our current hosting for these sites will expire in fall 2020, giving them adequate time to make alternative arrangements.

6.3. The CWEB recommends that this be explicitly confirmed by GS 2019 (see §8.1.4)

7. COMPOSITION OF CWEB

7.1. When Synod 2016 convened, br. Jeremy Koopmans's 6-year term on the committee was coming to an end, and Rev. Bredenhof had recently departed for Australia, leaving two openings on the four-person committee. Br. Jeremy Koopmans indicated that he was willing to serve a second six-year term, and Synod appointed him to this position. Synod also appointed Rev. Anthony Roukema as a replacement for Rev. Bredenhof. Br. Jonathan Reinink and br. Darryl Shpak remained as the other two members of the committee.

7.2. As of Synod 2019, the terms of br. Jonathan Reinink and br. Darryl Shpak are completed. 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.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. The CWEB recommends that GS Edmonton (Immanuel) 2019 decide:

8.1.1. To approve the budget of $28,737.15 for the period 2019-2021, with the understanding that $25,714.29 of that amount is earmarked for the potential purchase of G Suite Basic for the canrc.org email service;

8.1.2. To appoint two new members to the committee with six-year terms;

8.1.3. To request the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise seek an arrangement with copyright holders which would allow the entire Book of Praise to be hosted on the official website;

8.1.4. To confirm that website hosting for the churches is no longer part of the CWEB's mandate.

8.1.5. To send a letter of thanks to Jonathan Reinink and Jason Bouwman for their work on the federation website, as well as a letter to Rev. Jon Chase thanking him for his work digitizing (scanning and OCRing) the synodical reports.

8.2. The CWEB also recommends that General Synod Edmonton (Immanuel) 2019 give the committee the following mandate:

8.2.1. To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions;

8.2.2. To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, including:

8.2.2.1. Posting news items and documents upon submission by authorized individuals,

8.2.2.2. Annually auditing the site's information against the yearbook, and

8.2.2.3. Maintaining pages for synodical committees with their current mandates and contact information;

8.2.3. To make synod reports available on the web before the next synod;

8.2.4. To provide email services to the ministers of the churches;

8.2.5. To pursue - and as soon as is feasibly possible, purchase - an email service for the canrc.org emails that will reliably provide quality email service and usability;

8.2.6. To further investigate, in connection with 8.2.5, the use of the canrc.org clerk emails and determine a cost effective and reliable solution that will be a fit for the churches;

8.2.7. And to serve General Synod 2022 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.

Respectfully submitted by your committee,

Rev. A. Roukema, convener (Burlington, ON)
J. Koopmans (St. Albert, AB)
J. Reinink (Beamsville, ON)
D. Shpak (Winnipeg, MB)

APPENDIX A: FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND BUDGET

	Budget 2016-2018 (CAD)	Actual 2016-2018 (CAD)	Projected 2019-2021 (USD)	Projected 2019-2021 (CAD)
Website hosting	$900.00	$1,022.06	$2,088.00	$2,982.86
Domain name registration	$50.00	$36.90	$28.00	$40.00
Document scanning	$3,250.00	$3,250.00		-
Website redesign	$5,800.00	$8,800.00		-
Email hosting	-	-	$18,000.00	$25,714.29
Total	**$10,000.00**	**$13,108.96**		**$28,737.15**

CURRENCY

All the committees anticipated expenses for 2019-2021 are in US dollars. Over the last three years, the Canadian dollar has fluctuated between roughly 0.68-0.83 USD. For purposes of this budget, we have used a pessimistic value of 1.00 CAD = 0.70 USD.

WEBSITE HOSTING PLAN

The website hosting costs can be broken down into the following areas:

	Budget 2016-2018 (CAD)	Actual 2016-2018 (CAD)	Projected 2019-2021 (USD)	Projected 2019-2021 (CAD)
Dreamhost	$900.00	$1,022.06		-
Heroku			$828.00	$1,182.86
Algolia			$1,260.00	$1,800.00
Total	**$900.00**	**$1,022.06**	**$2,088.00**	**$2,982.86**

As detailed earlier in the report, we plan to migrate all our services off Dreamhost. Our current hosting plan expires in October 2020, and we do not plan to renew it after that. The new website is hosted on two different services. The site itself is hosted on Heroku, at a cost of $23 USD / month, and the search indexing is provided by Algolia, at a cost of $35 USD / month.

DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION

This is the fee for renewing the “canrc.org” domain name. Rates with our current provider are $14 USD per year. It was last renewed in October 2018, for a two-year period.

DOCUMENT SCANNING

Br. Jonathan Chase has been reimbursed $3,250 for the work he has done scanning past Synodical reports. This project is now complete and no further funds are necessary.

Website redesign

Synod Dunnville 2016 increased CWEB's budget to accommodate the new mandate to modernize the official website. In recognition of the value of the work to the federation, both Compass Creative and br. Reinink did this work at below market rates; still, the budget allocation was found to be inadequate. The consistory of Carman East approved additional spending of $3,000 in October 2018.

Email hosting

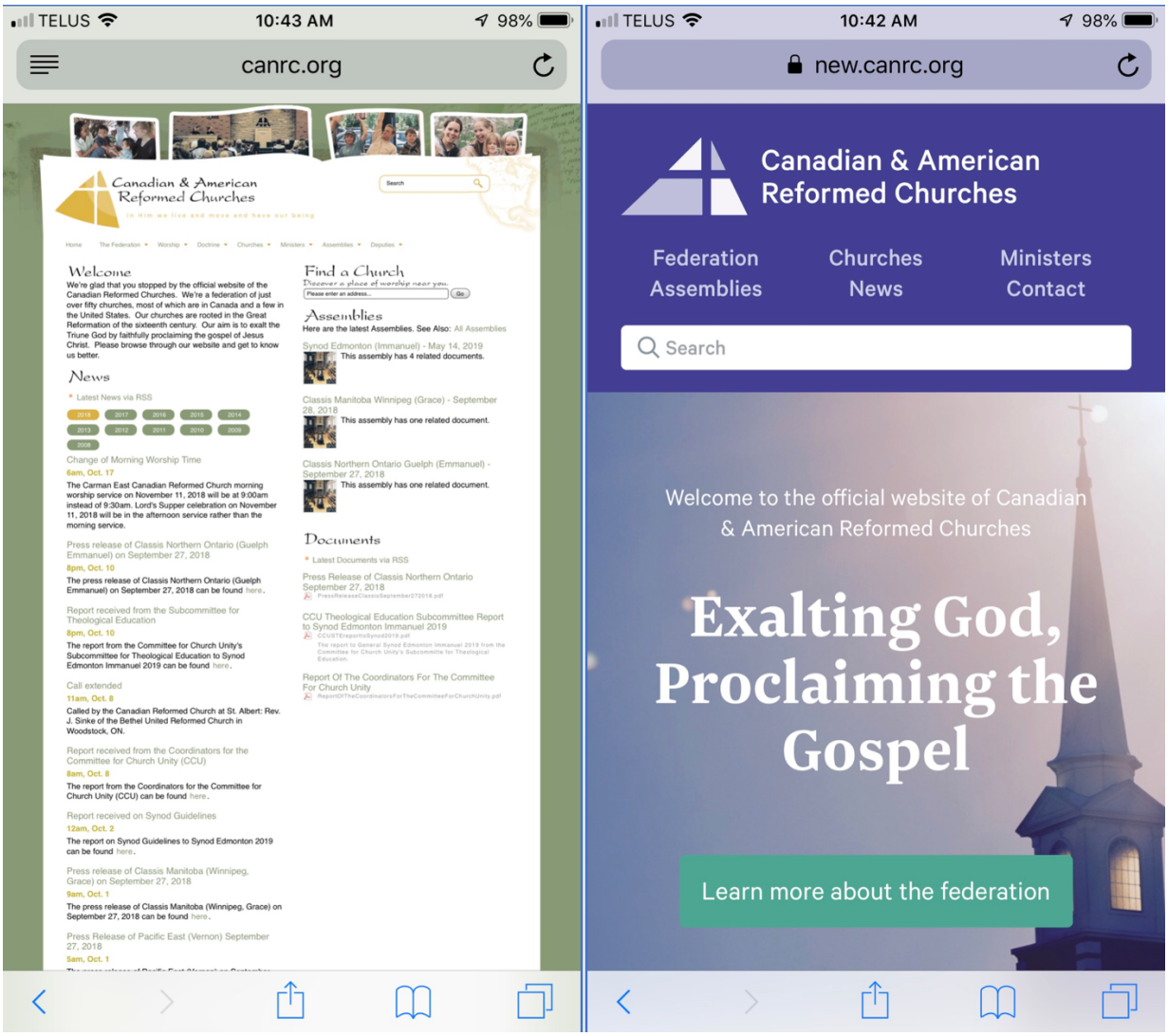
The G Suite Ready Basic service recommended by CWEB is a subscription service with a cost of $5 USD per user per month. We anticipate roughly 100 active email accounts, costing $6,000 USD/year.

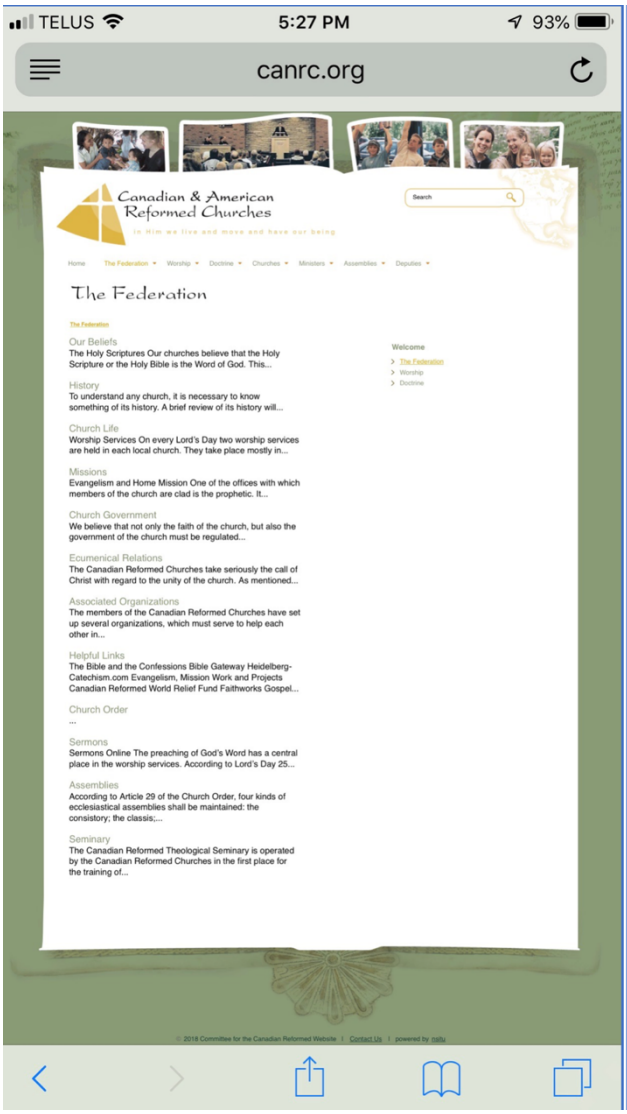
APPENDIX B: G SUITE BASIC FOR CANRC.ORG EMAIL SERVICE

1. The CWEB has performed an initial, although fairly thorough, investigation of a number of email services (namely, Office365 and G Suite) and tentatively recommends G Suite Basic by Google Cloud. The reasons for making this recommendation are as follows:
   1.1. This service will provide the following benefits:
      1.1.1. An email with a professional canrc.org email address, accessible via the web with the same interface as Gmail.
      1.1.2. Ease of use and configuration of email for any existing desktop email application (such as Outlook, Mail, Mozilla Thunderbird, etc)
      1.1.3. Ease of use and configuration of canrc.org email on phones and tablets (Apple or off brand)
      1.1.4. An effective and proven spam filter.
      1.1.5. Access to the G Suite web applications for editing documents, spreadsheets and presentations, as well as 30 GB cloud storage on Google Drive per user.
   1.2. The use of G Suite Basic would also allow the CWEB to move the ministers mailing list into this service as well, allowing us to make the contents of the list accessible online and searchable to the ministers.
2. Cost related considerations for the purchase G Suite Basic for the canrc.org email service.
   2.1. The cost for the current email hosting service, Dreamhost, is approximately $300 per year and would total approximately $900 for 2016-2019. As was pointed out in §5 of the CWEB report, this service is very affordable, but does not actually provide a meaningful or useable email service for our ministers.
   2.2. The cost for the G Suite Basic service would involve an ongoing cost of $5.00 USD/user/month. We anticipate roughly one hundred (100) active email accounts, which would mean a cost of $6,000 USD (approximately $8600 CDN) per year to the churches and would total $18,000 USD (approximately $25,800 CDN) for the CWEB's 2019-2022 budget.
   2.3. Since this service is billed per user, the CWEB would recommend no longer providing clerk email addresses to individual churches.
      2.3.1. The CWEB recommends this solution cautiously because it will potentially impact churches who use the canrc.org email service for their clerk emails. Since investigating solutions that would provide improved email services for the ministers was not actually part of our mandate from GS 2016, the CWEB has not closely investigated how many churches are actually using the canrc.org email addresses they have in our system.
      2.3.2. It should be made clear that most churches are already using a different solution for hosting their email and at present it appears that all of the church 'canrc.org' emails are 'forward only' emails, meaning that the email they actually use, and often publish, is not actually the canrc.org email (ie. clerk@anycanrc.canrc.org or bulletin@anychurch.canrc.org is being forwarded to clerk@anycanrc.ca or anychurchbulletin@gmail.com)
      2.3.3. There are solutions available to us if churches rely on the forwarding service, but the CWEB, because this was not part of our mandate, has not fully investigated these solutions and whether they would be a fit for how the churches currently use the canrc.org emails. We are also unsure as to whether the canrc.org emails are more of convenience for which the churches can find an easy solution, or if they are even aware they have a canrc.org email account.
   2.4. For this reason, the CWEB needs time (and an actual mandate) to investigate before they actually make the purchase and initiate the changeover, and hence the tentative nature of this recommendation. This recommendation holds much promise for the use of the canrc.org email service, but it also has some variables that have not been confirmed.

APPENDIX C: SCREENSHOT COMPARISON

COMPARISON OF THE MOBILE VERSIONS:




TELUS
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93%
canrc.org
Canadian & American Reformed Churches
In Him we live and move and have our being
Search
Home
The Federation
Worship
Doctrine
Churches
Ministers
Assemblies
Deputies
The Federation
The Federation
Our Beliefs
The Holy Scriptures Our churches believe that the Holy Scripture or the Holy Bible is the Word of God. This...
History
To understand any church, it is necessary to know something of its history. A brief review of its history will...
Church Life
Worship Services On every Lord's Day two worship services are held in each local church. They take place mostly in...
Missions
Evangelism and Home Mission One of the offices with which members of the church are clad is the prophetic. It...
Church Government
We believe that not only the faith of the church, but also the government of the church must be regulated...
Ecumenical Relations
The Canadian Reformed Churches take seriously the call of Christ with regard to the unity of the church. As mentioned...
Associated Organizations
The members of the Canadian Reformed Churches have set up several organizations, which must serve to help each other in...
Helpful Links
The Bible and the Confessions Bible Gateway Heidelberg-Catechism.com Evangelism, Mission Work and Projects Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund Faithworks Gospel...
Church Order
...
Sermons
Sermons Online The preaching of God's Word has a central place in the worship services. According to Lord's Day 25...
Assemblies
According to Article 29 of the Church Order, four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the consistory; the classis;...
Seminary
The Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary is operated by the Canadian Reformed Churches in the first place for the training of...
Welcome
The Federation
Worship
Doctrine
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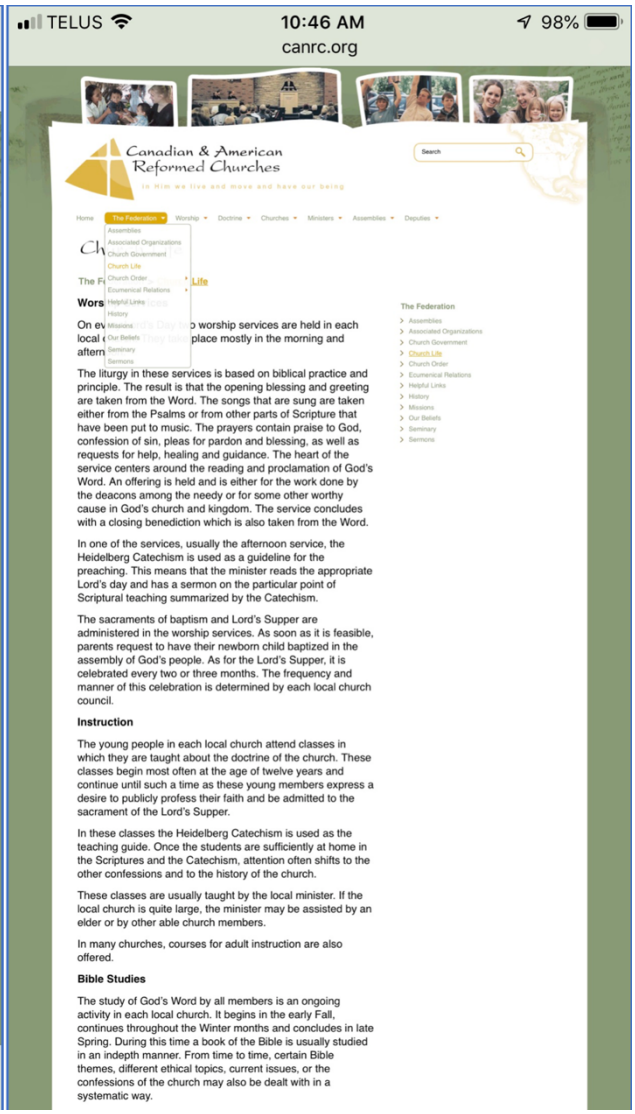
TELUS
10:46 AM
98%
canrc.org
Canadian & American Reformed Churches
In Him we live and move and have our being
Search
Home
The Federation
Worship
Doctrine
Churches
Ministers
Assemblies
Deputies
Assemblies
Associated Organizations
Church Government
Church Life
Church Order
Ecumenical Relations
Helpful Links
History
Missions
Our Beliefs
Seminary
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Life
Wors
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place mostly in the morning and
aftern
The liturgy in these services is based on biblical practice and principle. The result is that the opening blessing and greeting are taken from the Word. The songs that are sung are taken either from the Psalms or from other parts of Scripture that have been put to music. The prayers contain praise to God, confession of sin, pleas for pardon and blessing, as well as requests for help, healing and guidance. The heart of the service centers around the reading and proclamation of God's Word. An offering is held and is either for the work done by the deacons among the needy or for some other worthy cause in God's church and kingdom. The service concludes with a closing benediction which is also taken from the Word.
In one of the services, usually the afternoon service, the Heidelberg Catechism is used as a guideline for the preaching. This means that the minister reads the appropriate Lord's day and has a sermon on the particular point of Scriptural teaching summarized by the Catechism.
The sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper are administered in the worship services. As soon as it is feasible, parents request to have their newborn child baptized in the assembly of God's people. As for the Lord's Supper, it is celebrated every two or three months. The frequency and manner of this celebration is determined by each local church council.
Instruction
The young people in each local church attend classes in which they are taught about the doctrine of the church. These classes begin most often at the age of twelve years and continue until such a time as these young members express a desire to publicly profess their faith and be admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
In these classes the Heidelberg Catechism is used as the teaching guide. Once the students are sufficiently at home in the Scriptures and the Catechism, attention often shifts to the other confessions and to the history of the church.
These classes are usually taught by the local minister. If the local church is quite large, the minister may be assisted by an elder or by other able church members.
In many churches, courses for adult instruction are also offered.
Bible Studies
The study of God's Word by all members is an ongoing activity in each local church. It begins in the early Fall, continues throughout the Winter months and concludes in late Spring. During this time a book of the Bible is usually studied in an indepth manner. From time to time, certain Bible themes, different ethical topics, current issues, or the confessions of the church may also be dealt with in a systematic way.
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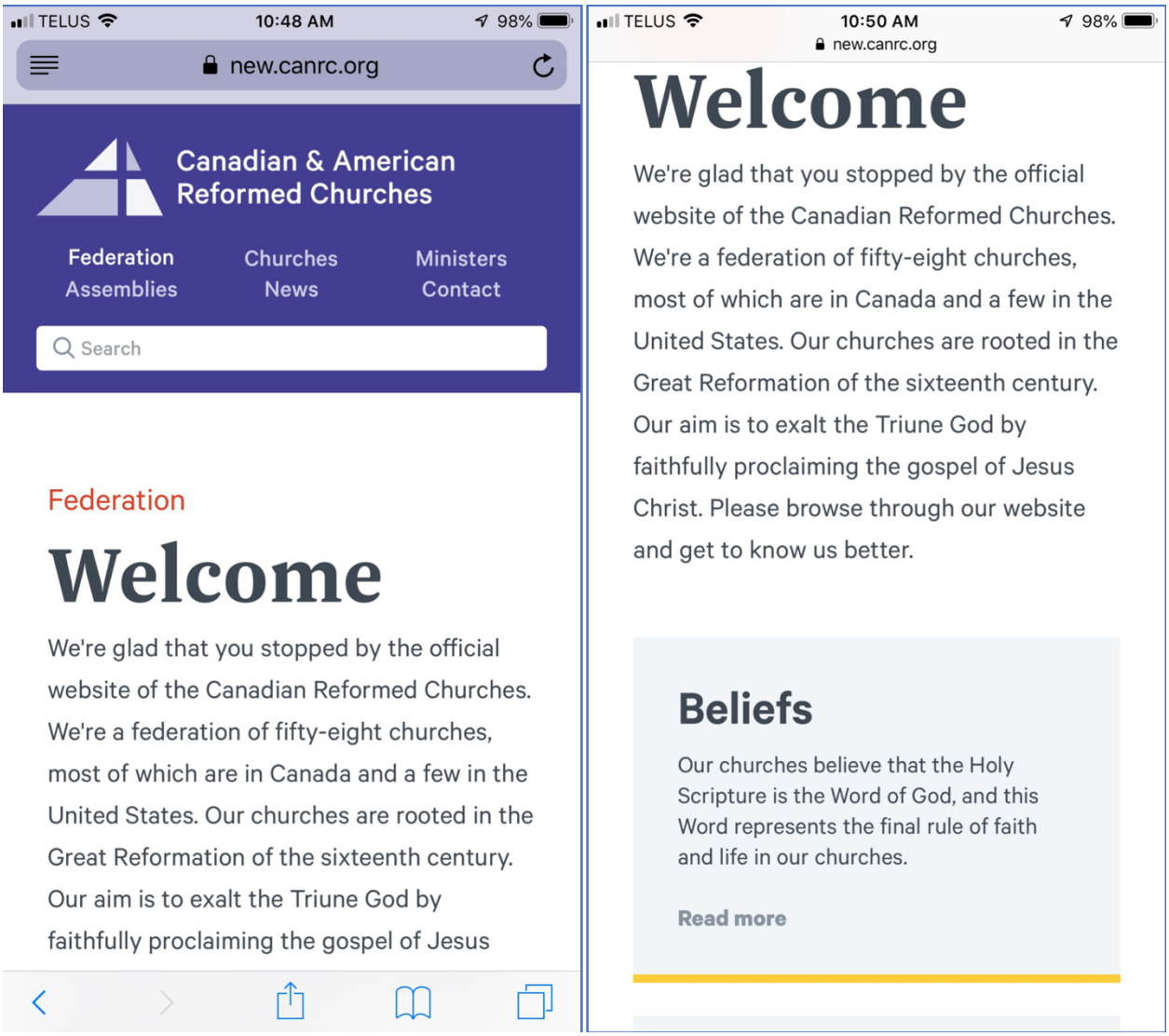
TELUS
10:48 AM
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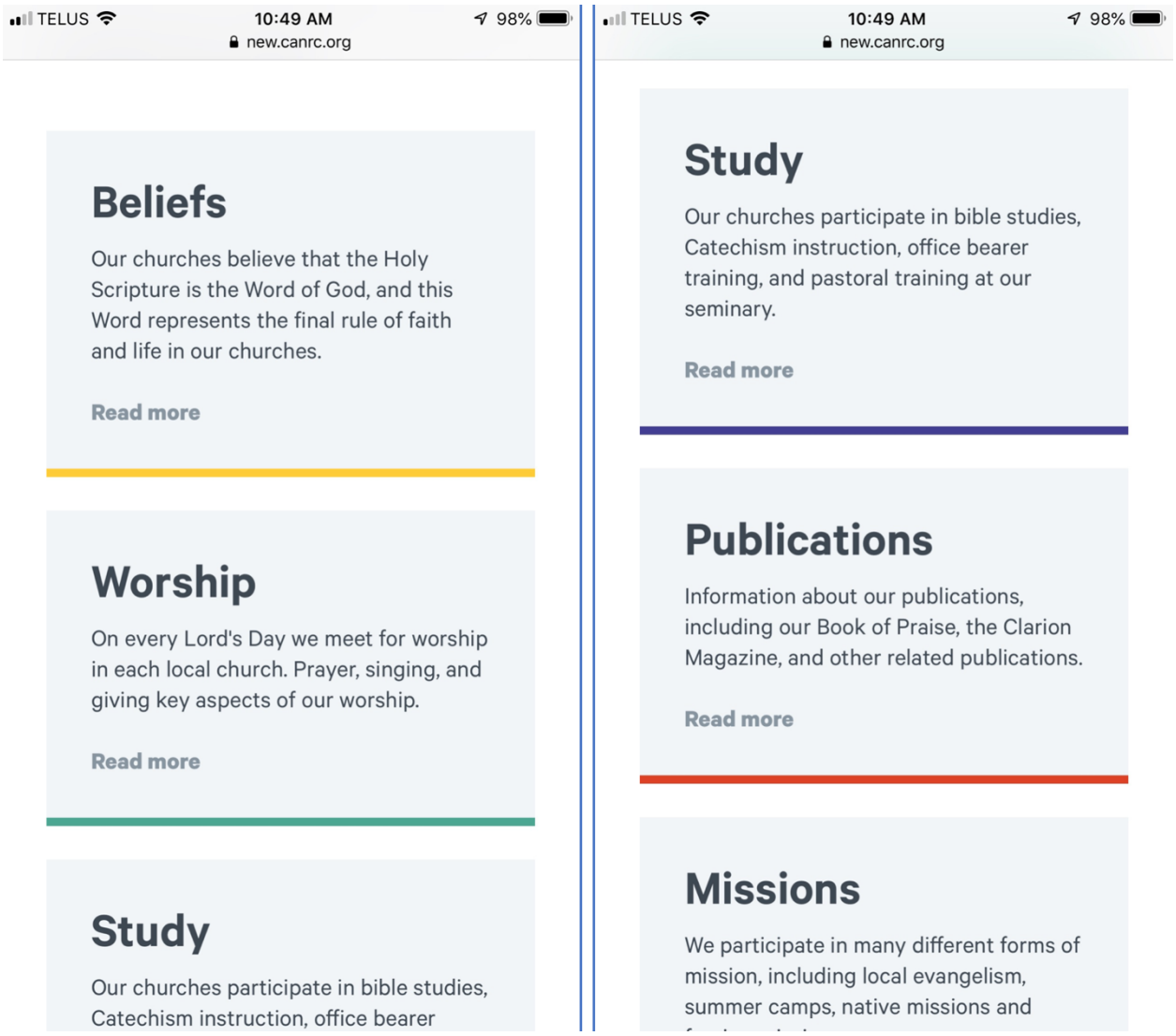
Beliefs
Our churches believe that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God, and this Word represents the final rule of faith and life in our churches.
Read more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Beliefs
Our churches believe that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God, and this Word represents the final rule of faith and life in our churches.
Read more
Worship
On every Lord's Day we meet for worship in each local church. Prayer, singing, and giving key aspects of our worship.
Read more
Study
Our churches participate in bible studies, Catechism instruction, office bearer
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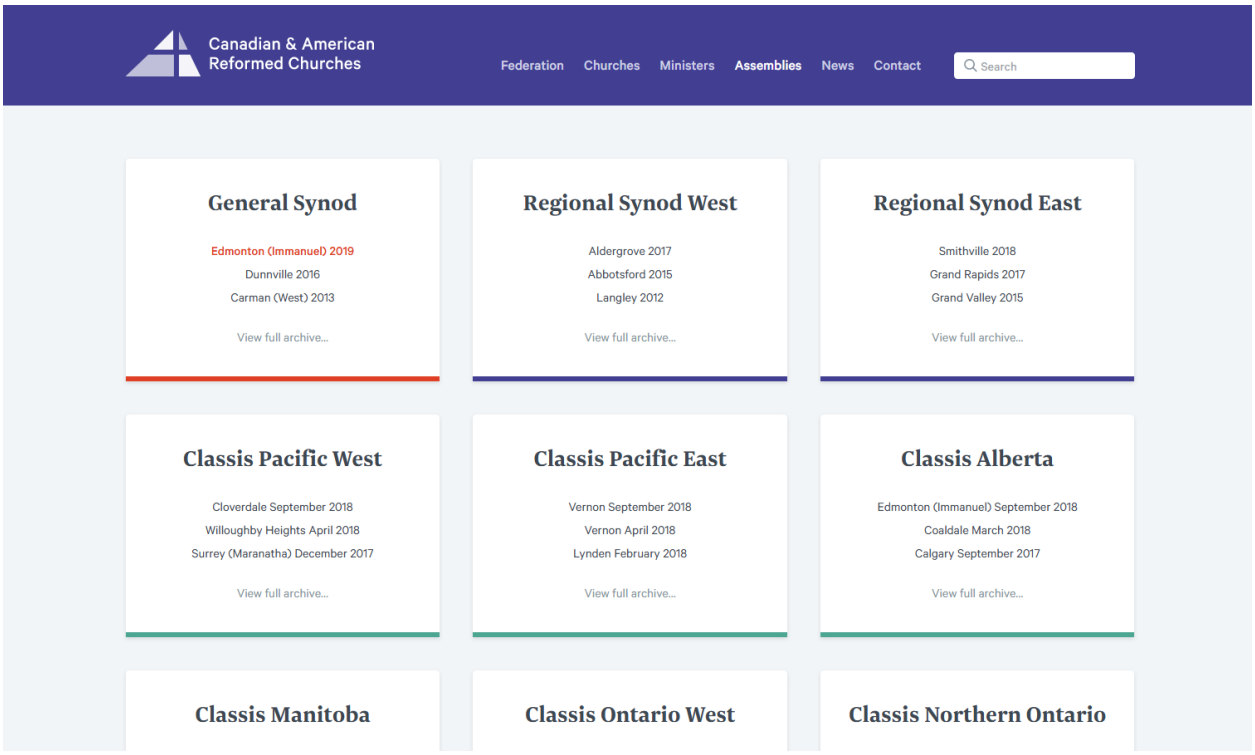
Study
Our churches participate in bible studies, Catechism instruction, office bearer training, and pastoral training at our seminary.
Read more
Publications
Information about our publications, including our Book of Praise, the Clarion Magazine, and other related publications.
Read more
Missions
We participate in many different forms of mission, including local evangelism, summer camps, native missions and

COMPARISON OF DESKTOP VERSIONS OF NEW SITE AND OLD SITE: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General Synod
Edmonton (Immanuel) 2019
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Carman (West) 2013
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Abbotsford 2015
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Regional Synod East
Smithville 2018
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Grand Valley 2015
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Classis Pacific West
Cloverdale September 2018
Willoughby Heights April 2018
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Vernon September 2018
Vernon April 2018
Lynden February 2018
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Classis Alberta
Edmonton (Immanuel) September 2018
Coaldale March 2018
Calgary September 2017
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Classis Manitoba
Classis Ontario West
Classis Northern Ontario

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in Him we live and move and have our being
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According to Article 29 of the Church Order, four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained:
the consistory;
the classis;
the regional synod; and
the general synod.
General Synod
Every three years the churches convene a General Synod for the purpose of dealing with matters of common concern and to deal with matters being appealed. The next synod has been scheduled for May 2016, to be convened by the CanRC of Dunnville, ON.
The Acts of General Synod may appear on this web site shortly after they have been adopted in plenary session, if a Synod so desires. It should be noted that although the content has been adopted, this remains an unofficial copy of the Acts. Typographical errors and the like which are brought to our attention will be corrected in the final official printed copy.
Matters of a confidential nature which are dealt with in closed session will not appear on this site. Synod may also decide not to post other matters of a sensitive nature.
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Government

Church Order

The Church Order of Dort, which was adopted by the Synod of Dort in 1618-19, has its roots in the early organization of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. As early as 1563, these churches began to meet in ecclesiastical assemblies, and in the next eight years the rudiments of the church order were developed and put into practice. For the most part, the decisions of the assemblies in this period leaned heavily on the church orders of the Reformed churches in France and Geneva.

The persecution and the ensuing expansion of the churches in this period fuelled the desire of church leaders to unite the brotherhood in one federation. In 1568, during the darkest days of the persecution, leaders of Reformed churches of the Netherlands met in Wesel to address the great organizational needs in the churches. In 1571, the first Synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands met in the city of Emden, which at the time served as a haven for many persecuted Reformed believers.

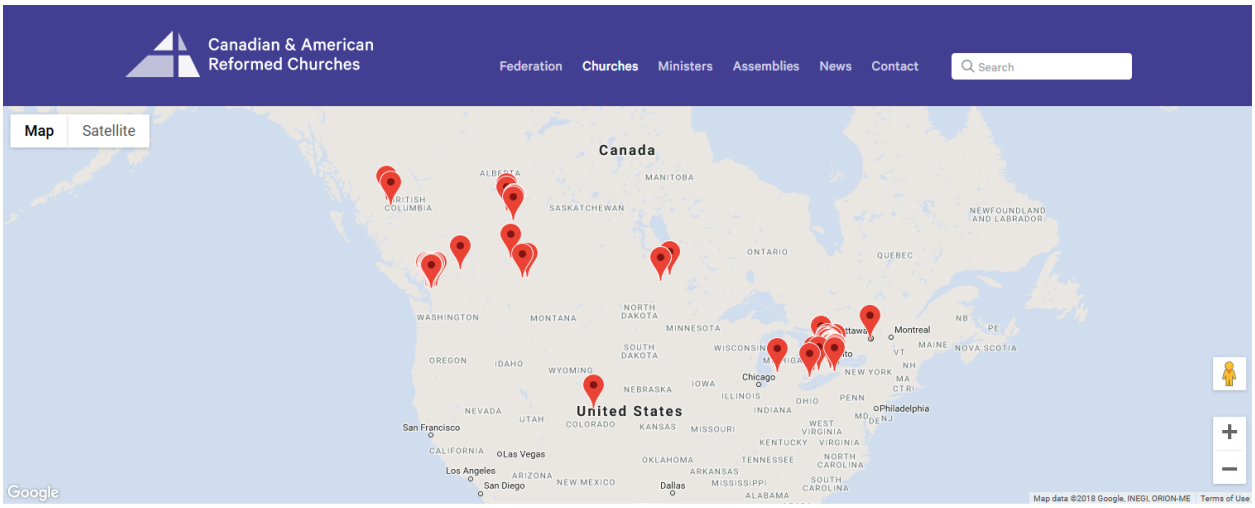
The church order adopted at Emden was revised at the Synods of Dort (1574 and 1578), Middelburg (1581), and The Hague (1586), before being adopted by the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. Since this Synod of Dort the Church Order remained in force until 1816, when King William I set it aside and introduced a new Regulation governing the life of the churches.

I. Introduction

1 Purpose and Division

II. Offices And Supervision Of Doctrine

2 The Offices
3 The Calling to Office
4 Eligibility for the Ministry
5 Ordination and Installation of Ministers of the Word
6 Bound to a Church
7 Recent Converts
8 Exceptional Gifts
9 From One Church to Another
10 Proper Support
11 Dismissal
12 Bound for Life
13 Retirement of Ministers



Classis Pacific West | Classis Pacific East | Classis Alberta | Classis Manitoba | Classis Ontario West
Classis Northern Ontario | Classis Central Ontario | Classis Niagara

Classis Pacific West

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Pastor Paul Aasman
Missionary (Streetlight Ministries)
Hamilton (Streetlight), Ontario
Rev. Richard Aasman
Minister
Edmonton (Providence), Alberta
Rev. Douwe Agema
Minister
Guelph (Living Word), Ontario
Canadian & American Reformed Churches
in Him we live and move and have our being
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Assemblies
Deputies
All Ministers
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
A
Pastor Paul Aasman
Missionary (Streetlight Ministries)
Rev. Richard Aasman
Minister of the Word
Rev. Douwe Agema
Minister of the Word
B
Rev. Ben J. Berends
Minister emeritus
Rev. Ralph Boersema

APPENDIX D: GOOGLE ANALYTICS FOR THE FEDERATION WEBSITE (CANRC.ORG)

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Overview

All Users
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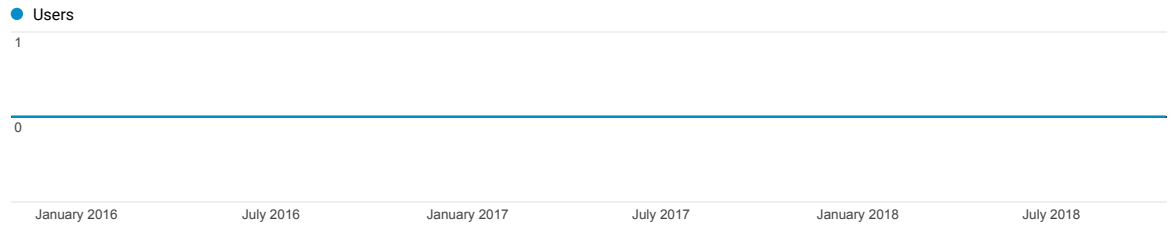
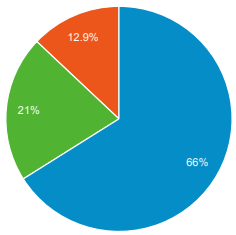
Explorer

Summary



Device Category	Users	Sessions	Contribution to total: Sessions
	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)	547,462 % of Total: 100.00% (547,462)	
1. desktop	0	66.05%	
2. mobile	0	21.02%	
3. tablet	0	12.94%	



Rows 1 - 3 of 3

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Location

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Nov 1, 2015 - Oct 16, 2018

Map Overlay

Summary

Country	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completions	Goal Value
	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)	**119,841** % of Total: 100.04% (119,789)	**547,462** % of Total: 100.00% (547,462)	**76.71%** Avg for View: 76.71% (0.00%)	**1.69** Avg for View: 1.69 (0.00%)	**00:01:14** Avg for View: 00:01:14 (0.00%)	**0.00%** Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	**0** % of Total: 0.00% (0)	**$0.00** % of Total: 0.00% ($0.00)
1. Canada	0 (0.00%)	79,360 (66.22%)	**452,995 (82.74%)**	78.00%	1.63	00:01:11	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
2. United States	0 (0.00%)	15,634 (13.05%)	**32,541 (5.94%)**	73.18%	1.89	00:01:19	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
3. Australia	0 (0.00%)	5,260 (4.39%)	**27,002 (4.93%)**	73.80%	1.86	00:01:17	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
4. Netherlands	0 (0.00%)	5,303 (4.43%)	**10,859 (1.98%)**	65.72%	2.28	00:01:43	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
5. South Korea	0 (0.00%)	1,564 (1.31%)	**3,895 (0.71%)**	41.54%	2.86	00:02:40	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
6. South Africa	0 (0.00%)	1,162 (0.97%)	**2,646 (0.48%)**	63.57%	2.45	00:02:20	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
7. Russia	0 (0.00%)	1,672 (1.40%)	**2,344 (0.43%)**	88.27%	1.19	00:01:24	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
8. United Kingdom	0 (0.00%)	1,229 (1.03%)	**2,003 (0.37%)**	71.14%	1.90	00:01:26	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
9. China	0 (0.00%)	1,190 (0.99%)	**1,475 (0.27%)**	81.02%	1.89	00:01:31	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)
10. Brazil	0 (0.00%)	798 (0.67%)	**1,206 (0.22%)**	48.26%	3.06	00:03:51	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	$0.00 (0.00%)

Rows 1 - 10 of 188

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Pages

All Users
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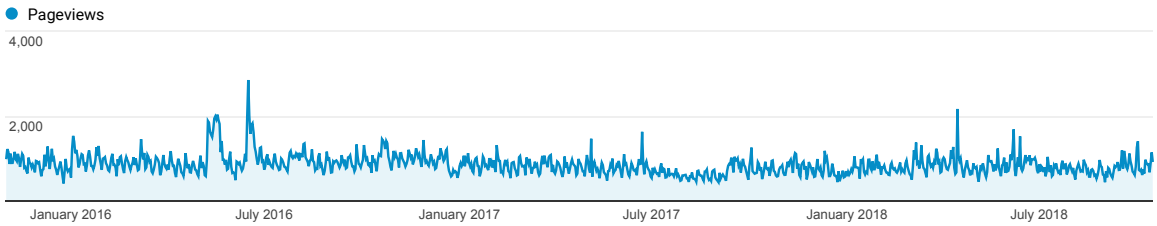

Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
	927,137 % of Total: 100.00% (927,137)	**762,290** % of Total: 100.00% (762,290)	**00:01:47** Avg for View: 00:01:47 (0.00%)	**547,455** % of Total: 100.00% (547,455)	**76.71%** Avg for View: 76.71% (0.00%)	**59.05%** Avg for View: 59.05% (0.00%)	**$0.00** % of Total: 0.00% ($0.00)
1. /	**550,361** **(59.36%)**	480,045 (62.97%)	00:02:46	471,312 (86.09%)	80.13%	76.80%	$0.00 (0.00%)
2. /?churches=All	**13,800** **(1.49%)**	8,615 (1.13%)	00:01:08	3,682 (0.67%)	39.90%	29.15%	$0.00 (0.00%)
3. /?page=56	**12,983** **(1.40%)**	6,974 (0.91%)	00:01:56	3,691 (0.67%)	47.98%	43.46%	$0.00 (0.00%)
4. /search.php	**10,170** **(1.10%)**	6,879 (0.90%)	00:01:10	244 (0.04%)	37.30%	27.46%	$0.00 (0.00%)
5. /?page=23	**8,843** **(0.95%)**	5,960 (0.78%)	00:01:07	3,704 (0.68%)	56.70%	49.07%	$0.00 (0.00%)
6. /?assembly=247	**8,793** **(0.95%)**	6,884 (0.90%)	00:02:38	3,009 (0.55%)	52.54%	52.94%	$0.00 (0.00%)
7. /?ministers=All	**7,263** **(0.78%)**	3,983 (0.52%)	00:00:44	1,230 (0.22%)	24.15%	14.55%	$0.00 (0.00%)
8. /?page=9	**4,726** **(0.51%)**	3,152 (0.41%)	00:00:24	313 (0.06%)	27.80%	9.84%	$0.00 (0.00%)
9. /?page=26	**4,596** **(0.50%)**	3,296 (0.43%)	00:00:34	850 (0.16%)	48.35%	18.80%	$0.00 (0.00%)
10. /?page=31	**4,224** **(0.46%)**	2,979 (0.39%)	00:00:46	1,798 (0.33%)	28.87%	21.21%	$0.00 (0.00%)
11. /?churches=Table	**4,111** **(0.44%)**	2,537 (0.33%)	00:02:40	624 (0.11%)	48.56%	35.51%	$0.00 (0.00%)
12. /?page=30	**3,964** **(0.43%)**	2,767 (0.36%)	00:00:49	1,709 (0.31%)	29.26%	22.53%	$0.00 (0.00%)
13. /?y=2016	**3,893** **(0.42%)**	3,389 (0.44%)	00:01:35	479 (0.09%)	72.65%	57.49%	$0.00 (0.00%)
14. /?page=393	**3,881** **(0.42%)**	3,302 (0.43%)	00:03:26	3,103 (0.57%)	83.47%	78.41%	$0.00 (0.00%)
15. /?page=55	**3,437** **(0.37%)**	2,085 (0.27%)	00:00:22	871 (0.16%)	12.28%	8.84%	$0.00 (0.00%)
16. /?page=502	**3,212** **(0.35%)**	2,506 (0.33%)	00:01:58	110 (0.02%)	50.91%	52.02%	$0.00 (0.00%)
17. /?page=19	**3,170** **(0.34%)**	2,343 (0.31%)	00:02:54	968 (0.18%)	62.81%	49.53%	$0.00 (0.00%)
18. /?page=12	**2,978** **(0.32%)**	2,434 (0.32%)	00:01:14	658 (0.12%)	51.06%	30.12%	$0.00 (0.00%)
19. /?page=22	**2,700** **(0.29%)**	1,851 (0.24%)	00:00:19	89 (0.02%)	52.81%	9.78%	$0.00 (0.00%)
20. /?page=15	**2,623** **(0.28%)**	2,263 (0.30%)	00:03:14	822 (0.15%)	64.23%	47.20%	$0.00 (0.00%)

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Audience Overview

All Users
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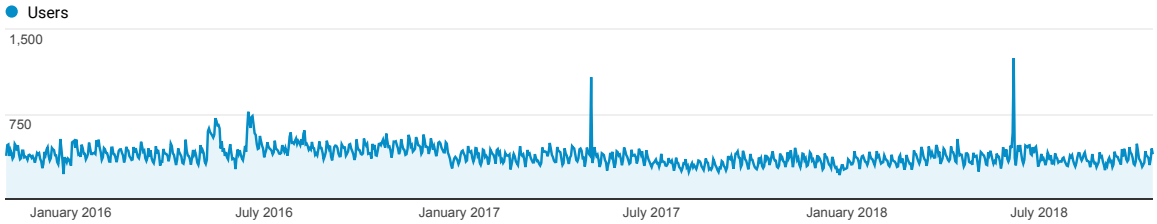
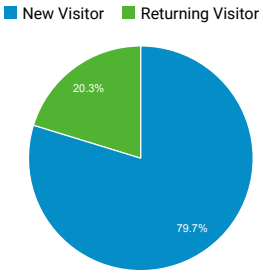


Users	120,694
New Users	119,789
Sessions	547,462
Number of Sessions per User	4.54
Pageviews	927,137
Pages / Session	1.69
Avg. Session Duration	00:01:14
Bounce Rate	76.71%



	Language	Users	% Users
1.	en-us	43,939	53.58%
2.	en-ca	19,681	24.00%
3.	en-gb	8,424	10.27%
4.	nl-nl	1,708	2.08%
5.	en-au	1,565	1.91%
6.	nl	933	1.14%
7.	c	833	1.02%
8.	ko	736	0.90%
9.	ko-kr	657	0.80%
10.	ru	553	0.67%

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