

NORTH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED COUNCIL

Press Release
November 20, AD 2024

The 49th annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) convened on Tuesday afternoon, November 12, 2024. It was hosted by the Reformed Church in the United States at the Northland Reformed Church in Kansas City, Missouri. The outgoing Chairman, Rev. J. P. Mosley, led the opening devotions.

Basis

The constitutional basis of NAPARC's fellowship is "*Confessing Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts, and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms.*"

Membership

All 13 Member Churches of NAPARC were represented. The Member Churches include the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC), the Reformed Church of Quebec (Église réformée du Québec) (ERQ), the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA), the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC), the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC), the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). Representatives of the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC), the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRCA), and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada (RPCC) attended as invited observers.

Officers

One of the first orders of business was the election of new officers. Elected as Chairman was Rev. Bruce Parnell of the RPCNA. Elected as Vice-chairman was Rev. Joel Dykstra of the URCNA. Rev. Ralph Pontier was elected to a seventh term as Secretary, and Mr. Danny McDaniel of the PCA was elected to a second term as Treasurer. The chairmanship and vice-chairmanship rotate annually among the Member Churches following an alphabetical listing of them.

Reports

The bulk of the time at NAPARC is spent in Member Churches giving oral reports about what the Lord is doing in their midst, and in praying for one another after each report. Reports were heard of both spiritual blessings and the struggles of ministry. The ARP reported the completion of study papers on membership in secret societies and another paper on the diaconate. The FRCNA reported on the near completion of a new Psalter developed jointly with the HRC and the PRCA. The RCUS reported on a new study completed on Sexual Misconduct Prevention. The URCNA reported on two studies papers completed, one on Digital Media and Worship, and one on Human Sexuality.

Discussions

After the reports and prayer, three topics of discussion were taken up. The topics were chosen from suggestions by Member Churches in their written reports included in the Council docket. They included:

- How can we better foster, and coordinate, interchurch relations at the presbyterial and classical levels?
- What can we do to encourage men to pursue theological education in preparation for the pastorate and for missions?

- How do the member churches handle requests from international churches for fraternal relations? What are unique opportunities and risks presented by such requests? Do you have different categories for internationals as compared to national (e.g. “corresponding” or “observer” churches)? Do you encourage them to establish a relationship with a lower court (presbytery) first in order to build relationships?

Devotions and Inspiration

A devotional service was held on Tuesday evening led by Rev. Chris Campbell, pastor of the host congregation. He spoke on the joys of Christian ministry from 3 John 4, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” On Wednesday evening, after feasting on Kansas City’s famous barbeque, Rev. Dr. Breno Macedo, senior pastor of Messiah’s Independent Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, spoke on “The Preservation of Plain Preaching.” He underscored the need for good pastoral training in homiletics and the need for sermons where the order of the text is followed and where the text is explained in its context. The sermon must be in plain, simple language with proclamation, confirmation, and application. Rhetorical embellishments and extensive citations should be avoided which he likened to food made unpalatable by too much spice.

Bilateral Opportunities

The NAPARC schedule runs from Tuesday afternoon to Thursday noon and provides many time slots for bi-lateral meetings between the inter-church or ecumenical committees of the Member Churches. These smaller meetings have proven fruitful for Member Churches to grow closer together and manifest more fully their oneness in Christ.

Consultations

In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, NAPARC sponsors consultations where representatives of Member Churches gather to discuss cooperation in specific areas of ministry. For more than thirty years, there have been annual world mission consultations in September of each year. This year the meeting was held in October. Representatives from seven NAPARC Member Church world mission agencies (WMA) were present. They were from the ARPC, CanRC, HRC, FRCNA, OPC, RPCNA, and URCNA. They met together for the annual consultation at the OPC’s administration offices in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. Joining with them were representatives from five NAPARC Member Church diaconal ministries/agencies (DMA). They were from the CanRC, FRCNA, HRC, OPC, and URCNA.

The next NAPARC Joint WMA/DMA Consultation is scheduled for September 16-19, 2025, with Mr. Mark T. Bube as the chairman and Rev. Timothy J. Worrell as secretary. It will be held concurrently with the ICRC WMA Consultation.

The Council also appointed Rev. Bruce Parnell as convener of a consultation on Theological Training to be hosted by the RPCNA with assistance from the HRC and ARPC. It will be held concurrently with the next meeting of the Council.

Hosting

The Council enjoyed the gracious and generous hospitality of the Northland Reformed Church and experienced warm and joyous fellowship with fellow delegates, observers, and other guests.

Proceedings and Next Meeting

The minutes of the Council, along with NAPARC’s Constitution, Bylaws, and other resources, can be found at NAPARC’s website: naparc.org. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for November 11-13, 2025, to be hosted by the RPCNA at the Hope Community Reformed Presbyterian Church in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.

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