

Hus Presbytery 2024 Meeting Minutes

October 3-4, 2024, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

October 3, Thursday

9:00 Divine Service – PM Rev. Jarmulak officiated; Rev. San Sanych preached

10:15 Session 1

1. Opening prayer - Jarmulak
2. Roll call/Quorum (min. 8/12 churches)
 - a. Christian Evangelical Reformed Church – Mykolaiv, Ukraine: 1 delegate
(Rev. Volodymyr Mykyta)
 - b. Evangelical Reformed Church – Mogilev, Belarus: Absent
 - c. Evangelical Reformed Church – Gdansk, Poland: Absent
 - d. Evangelical Reformed Church – Poznan, Poland: 1 delegate
(Rev. Andrzej Polaszek)
 - e. Evangelical Reformed Church – Wroclaw, Poland 1 delegate
(Rev. Sebastian Smolarz)
 - f. Holy Trinity Evangelical Reformed Church – Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine:
2 delegates (Rev. Ihor Lishchynskiy, Elder Roman Savchuk)
 - g. Holy Trinity Reformed Church – Dunaevtsy, Ukraine: 2 delegates
(Rev. Yurii Lukovoy, Deacon Andriy Muts)
 - h. Mitaka Evangelical Church – Tokyo, Japan 1 delegate
(Rev. Ben Smith)
 - i. Presbyterian Reformed Church – Burgas, Bulgaria Absent
 - j. Reformed Church of Christ the Savior – Rivne, Ukraine 2 delegates
(Rev. Oleksandr Orlov-Koshchavka, Rev. Serhiy Terentyev)
 - k. Reformed Evangelical Church of St Andrew – Pidhaichyky, Ukraine:
1 delegate (Rev. Volodymyr Yakubovsky)
 - l. Trinity Evangelical Church – Diosd, Hungary: 1 delegate
(Rev. Attila Hajdú)
 - m. Reasons for Absence:
 - Gdansk Church (Rev. Pawel Bartosik unable to travel)
 - Burgas Church (not enough money to travel)
 - Czech Republic Church – (Rev. Jan Prorok job commitments, family needs)
3. Quorum established – 9 of 12 churches represented
4. Introduction of Mission Churches, Candidate Churches, guests
 - a. Mission and Candidate Churches:
 - Reformed Congregation of the Most Holy Trinity, Karlovy Vary, Czechia
(mission church of ERC Wroclaw, Poland)
 - Bibelkirken Vestfold, Norway – new church name = Berøa Reformerte Kirke – Pastor Kenneth Rosenblad

- Berøa Presbyterianske Kirke, Ualand, Norway (will join remotely later)
- Christ Covenant Church, Langley, BC, Canada – Pastor Garry Vanderveen
- b. Introduction of Guests:
 - Alex Barendregt, Oleksandr Rogashko (Rivne elder), Viktoria Mykyta, John Unger (JEEP), Ivano-Frankivsk Deacons Dmytro Krysiuk, Eugene Dubovyi, Mykola Kurysh
- 5. Approval of Minutes 2023 (Appendix 4)
- 6. PM Report – Received unanimously
- 7. PM Jarmulak committee announcements:
 - a. Ordination Committee for Sanych, Jr.: Sebastian Smolarz, Ralph Smith, Ben Smith
 - b. Credential Review Committee for Kenneth Rosenblad: San Sanych Sr., Marek Kmiec, Attila Hajdú
- 8. Vote on addition to Agenda: discussion of absent churches
 - a. San Sanych Sr. made motion; Rev. Terentyev seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- 9. Discussion of absent churches
 - a. Rev. Hajdú, Rev. Smith, Rev. Vanderveen spoke
 - b. Committee consensus: remind absent brethren of constitutional requirement, encourage themment to notify Presbytery of pending absence, and commission PM Jarmulak and PMPT Smith to compose communication regarding absentee churches
- 10. Discussion re. dissolution of Belarus Church and situation of Pastor Sergey Udaliiov
 - a. PM Jarmulak recommended that Presbytery recognize the dissolution of Evangelical Reformed Church in Mogilev, Belarus; Presbytery assented.
- 11. New churches aspiring for Hus Presbytery membership
 - a. Christ Covenant Church, Langley, BC, Canada (Appendix 1). Sponsoring church: Trinity Evangelical Church, Diósd, Hungary
 - i. Introduction & Discussion
 - ii. Vote on candidate status
 - Rev. Hajdú moved to receive Langley church as a candidate church; Rev. Smolarz seconded. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.
 - iii. Discussion and Vote on “Fast Track” option, i.e. Immediate Reinstatement. Discussion of considering this option for immediate reinstatement of Langley church into full membership, which is constitutionally permissible. (This idea and recommendation came from both Anselm PM John Stoos and Rev. Jack Phelps; PMOC Uri Brito does not object.)
 - iv. Sanych Sr. moved that Presbytery consider this option; Rev. Terentyev seconded; discussion ensued; motion unanimously carried.

- v. Question posed to Rev. Vanderveen, re. to which confessional standard(s) the church adheres, and any exceptions thereto. Stated exceptions to Three Forms of Unity and CREC Memorials are:
 - Heidelberg catechism exception re. paedocommunion
 - Belgic Confession v.1, exception re. the civil magistrate and Anabaptists being identified as Unitarian
 - CREC Memorial exceptions align with Rich Lusk
- vi. PM Jarmulak entertained motion to immediately receive Christ Covenant back into full membership in Presbytery. Rev. Hajdú moved; Rev. Smith seconded; unanimously carried.
- vii. PM Jarmulak administered new membership vows from Article 3 of BOP; Rev. Vanderveen responded affirmatively on behalf of Christ Covenant Church; thereby Hus Presbytery received Christ Covenant Church, Langley BC into full membership (non-voting until next year's presbytery). Christ Covenant Church officially welcomed, and right-hand of fellowship extended by all Hus delegates.
- b. Discussion of receiving Bibelkirken Vestfold, Larvik, Norway, as a candidate church into Hus Presbytery. Per Rev. Kenneth Rosenblad, the church name is changing to Berøa Reformerte Kirke. Sponsoring church: Trinity Evangelical Church, Diósd, Hungary
 - i. Rev. Hajdú moved to receive Berøa Reformerte Kirke as candidate church; Rev. Smith seconded.
 - ii. Discussion: introduction – Rev. Rosenblad
 - iii. Vote on candidate status. Unanimously carried.
- c. Berøa Presbyterianske Kirke, Ualand, Norway: moved to 17:00 today

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Session 2 commenced

1. Trinity Evangelical Church, Diósd, Hungary, proposals for Hus Book of Procedures (Appendix 2)
2. PM Jarmulak initiated discussion, describing BOP process for updating and harmonization
3. Rev. Hajdú outlined each proposal, found in Agenda Appendix 2
 1. New member churches must provide their constitution and bylaws to PM of Presbytery no later than 30 days prior to presbytery
 2. Examination of licensed ministers to preach and administer sacraments
 3. Clarification of pastor emeritus ministerial capacities
4. Rev. Hajdú moved to introduce proposals for discussion; Rev. Terentyev seconded.
 - a. Discussion re. BOP amendments and harmonization, committees
 - b. After discussion, Trinity Evangelical (Diósd) amended the motion around Proposal 1 to state that Hus Presbytery moves that the CREC Council adopts the change stated in Proposal 1 into the BOP. New amended motion begins:

“Trinity Evangelical Church moves that Hus Presbytery moves to request the CREC Council to adopt the following change to the Hus Presbytery Book of Procedures... etc., etc.”

Rev. Terentyev seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Rev. Hajdú moved to adopt Proposal 2 re. licensure for preaching and administering the sacraments; Rev. Smith seconded.
 - a. Discussion re. separation of ministerial duties, local session decisions

15:30 Session 3

1. Rev. Hajdú moved to amend Proposal 2 to create a Hus Presbytery Committee. New amended motion now begins:

“Trinity Evangelical Church moves that Hus Presbytery create a committee to modify the following provision to the CREC Book of Procedures for submission to CREC Council 2026...etc., etc.”

Rev. Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. PM Jarmulak appointed Revs. Vanderveen, Smith, Smolarz; Vanderveen will Chair
3. Rev. Hajdú moved to adopt Proposal 3 re. the capacities of pastor emeritus; Rev. Terentyev seconded.

- a. Discussion

4. Rev. Hajdú amended motion to instead task the newly-created Hus Presbytery Committee (see above) with recommending changes to the CREC governing documents with the amended proposal, striking last phrase “within his presbytery”. New amended motion now begins:

“Trinity Evangelical Church in Diósd, Hungary, moves that Hus Presbytery task the committee modifying the proposal for the CREC BOP to also create a proposal to harmonize the governing documents of the CREC regarding the legitimate functions of the pastor emeritus, taking into consideration the following proposal, etc., etc.

Rev. Terentyev seconded.

5. Logo proposal for Hus Presbytery (Appendix 3). Ben Zedek presented current design, which was commissioned for \$700, and moved that Hus Presbytery adopt the logo as-is. Yurii Lukovoy seconded.
 - a. Discussion re. various options, comparing other logos; no decision or action.
6. Election of Council delegates for the 2026 CREC Council
 - a. Nominees: Rev. Dr. Bogumił Jarmulak, Rev. Garry Vanderveen
 - b. Both men approved unanimously
7. Announcement of 2025 Hus Presbytery meetings
 - a. Spring meeting with a theological conference (Rev. Mark Horne, Proverbs)
 - i. March 26-28, Ivano-Frankivsk
 - b. Fall stated meeting (all business)
 - i. October 1-3, Ivano-Frankivsk
 - c. Intensive course in Biblical theology (Rev. Dr. Peter Leithart, I&II Samuel)
 - i. Last week of June, Ivano-Frankivsk (to be confirmed)

2) establish a Hus Presbytery committee to draft it, consisting of Rev. Smith, Rev. Vanderveen, and Rev. Hajdú

Motion seconded by Rev. Andrzej Polaszek; carried unanimously.

13:30 2024 Hus Presbytery Meeting adjourned.

18:30 BBQ

Presiding Minister of Hus Report

Rev. Dr. Bogumił Jarmulak

(Parts 1-3 to be received; Part 4 to be ratified)

1. Visits
 - a. 9x Ukraine (Ivano-Frankivsk, Pidhaichiky, Rivne, Mykolaiv)
 - b. 6x Hungary (Diósd)
 - c. 2x Norway (Larvik, Ualand)
 - d. 1x Japan (Tokyo)
2. Events
 - a. 2023 CREC Council
 - b. Hus Presbytery Spring meeting with Rev. Rob Hadding as guest speaker
 - c. Intensive Course on Matthew with Rev. Dr. Peter Leithart
 - d. Family Camp in Ukraine with Rev. Garry Vanderveen and Rev. Andrew Richardson
 - e. School of Service and Protection (Schola Servitii et Praesidii)
 - f. Literature Club in Ivano-Frankivsk
3. Remuneration of PM (per Constitution IV.10)
 - a. 1300USD from two churches
4. Committees appointed
 - a. Ordination examination committee for Oleksandr Orlov-Koshchavka Jr.
 - i. Rev. Ralph Smith
 - ii. Rev. Ben Smith
 - iii. Rev. Dr. Sebastian Smolarz
 - b. Ordination recognition committee for Kenneth Rosenblad
 - i. Rev. Attila Hajdú
 - ii. Rev. Oleksandr Orlov-Koshchavka Sr.
 - iii. Rev. Marek Kmiec

Appendix 1

Christ Covenant Church letter to Hus:

Fathers and Brothers,

We hereby petition the Hus Presbytery of the CREC to reinstate us as full members of the CREC.

Christ Covenant Church became a candidate church in 2000 and a full member in 2001. Our time in the CREC was sweet and glorious. When we withdrew and joined the PCA in 2017, it was largely due to internal conflicts that we were experiencing. Our time in the PCA was a blessing in many ways. It helped deal with our radical libertarian spirit and taught us the joy of faithful submission. At the same time, despite our membership in the PCA, we remained, culturally speaking, CREC.

Recently, the Standing Judicial Committee rendered a decision that guarantees voting privileges to all communicant members. At Christ Covenant Church, we have restricted voting privileges to communicant members 18 years old and over. The SJC's decision meant that we would need to re-write our constitution and allow, for example, three-year-olds to vote on the election of church officers. We find this requirement unwise, and given that SJC decisions cannot be appealed, we believed we had no choice but to withdraw from the PCA.

Of course, this is not the only issue facing the PCA. It should be noted, however, that the conservative numbers continue to grow, as well as the PCA, and there are good signs of Gospel faithfulness.

At the end of the day, however, the CREC is a better fit for CCC. This is our home. These are our people. This is our family.

On December 6, 2017, Presiding Minister Virgil wrote us the following:

"Dear Garry, and the CCC session,

I am sad to see you leave the CREC. I trust the Lord will grant you wisdom as you lead your congregation into the future. You have not burnt any bridges here, and while we do not expect your return crossing, it is most welcome.

God's grace and peace to you, your families and to Christ Covenant Church."

In God's good providence, the unexpected has indeed happened. We wish to return. On June 4, 2024, at a congregational meeting, Christ Covenant Church voted 77-3 to withdraw from the PCA and return to the CREC. This vote clearly indicates CCC's desire to return home.

Our hope and prayer is that we will be reinstated this fall and that, together, in the bonds of love, we will strive together for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ Jesus.

Blessings in Christ,
The Session of Christ Covenant Church

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Grace to you and peace!

I am writing you on behalf of my Session and Christ Covenant Church. As part of our application to be reinstated into CREC membership via Hus Presbytery, we submit the Christ Covenant Church Form of Government and Book of Confessions. Please note:

1. We have adopted the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon.
2. We have adopted the Three Forms of Unity and expressed our clarifications and/or exceptions.
3. We have adopted the Confessional Statement on Sex, Gender and Marriage.
4. We have adopted the Constitution of the CREC into the Christ Covenant Church Form of Government and Book of Confessions.
5. We have expressed our clarifications and/or exceptions to the Book of Memorials.

If you have any questions for me now, please email them to me (grvdveen@gmail.com). Otherwise, I look forward to answering them in October.

Blessings,

Garry

From PM's message to Hus mailing list re Fast Track (July 7, 2024)

"Regarding the Christ Covenant Church in Langley, BC, the church has petitioned to be reinstated into the CREC and join the Hus presbytery. Rev. Garry Vanderveen will join us at the Hus meeting in October. The sponsoring church is the Trinity Evangelical Church in Diosd, Hungary.

The principal reason for Hus is the lack of a Canadian presbytery in the CREC. Eventually, the Langley church will move to a Canadian presbytery when it's formed. This might happen in 2029. Besides, the church, and especially Garry, has been involved in the ministry of many Hus churches for almost 20 years, even after leaving the CREC in 2017. In the CREC, most churches join a presbytery that is geographically closest, but there are exceptions. Non-American churches have joined a presbytery where they have special relationships, like the Russian or English churches. Thus, the CREC constitution requires that we must exercise wisdom and discernment in this matter. I will send you all the necessary paperwork in the next few weeks, together with an official request from the Diosd church to initiate the procedure.

Since the CREC constitution does not make provisions for churches to rejoin the CREC, we will follow the procedure for admitting new member churches, with one exception: we will not require CCC to be a candidate church for one year. Since Langley church has been with us in Anselm for years, we (almost all) know Garry and other people from his church. The church has been involved in the ministry of our churches in Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, and Japan for years. Even during COVID and the war, Garry came over several times, so the point is that we all know him and his church very well. Attila and I have also visited him and his church and met with his elders several times since the church joined the PCA. Finally, PM Stoos and Rev. Jack Phelps also believe that the candidacy step is unnecessary, as they suggested the same process if Christ Covenant Church had returned to Anselm Presbytery. The purpose of the candidacy status is for the sponsoring church to get to know it well so that it can “answer questions concerning the general health of that church and the likelihood of that church being able to embrace the CREC constitution when considered for full membership.” Additionally, the sponsoring church must be able to “answer questions related to the doctrinal integrity of the church’s confession, and the moral, spiritual, and covenantal health of the families of the officers.” Clearly, given CCC’s long history with us, the Diosd church is fully prepared to proceed at this time.

Of course, it remains the decision of Hus whether we receive Christ Covenant Church at our October meeting. We can reinstate them immediately, but we also have the authority to put in place additional requirements or steps in place. Thus, I believe that the best approach is to reinstate them only if we receive the unanimous support of the Hus delegates present at the meeting. We will need to vote on requiring a unanimous vote at our October meeting.”

Appendix 2

Trinity Evangelical Church, Diósd, Hungary, proposals for Hus Book of Procedures

Proposal #1: Re: Constitutions

Motion – Amended

Trinity Evangelical Church moves that Hus Presbytery moves to request the CREC Council to adopt the following change to the Hus Presbytery Book of Procedures:

Article III.B

B. Delegates about to become new members shall normally provide to the presbytery a one-page summary of their church (membership, elders, confessional standards, other useful descriptions, etc.). **They shall provide a copy of their constitution and bylaws to the Presiding Minister of the presbytery at least 30 days prior to the stated meeting of presbytery.**

Article IV.3.a

Conditions for Particularization

a. The mission church shall have its own constitution and bylaws, **which the Presiding Minister shall receive a copy at least 30 days prior to the stated meeting of presbytery.**

Article VIII. Notification of Presiding Ministers

A. The session of elders of each CREC church shall notify the Presiding Minister of Presbytery under the following circumstances:

1. Before formally admonishing a minister (pastor) or elder (formal admonishment consists of an act of the session, entered into the minutes and delivered to the minister or elder verbally or in writing).
2. Before dismissing a minister (pastor) or elder or calling for his resignation.
3. Upon any instance of divorce, marital separation, or excommunication (or similar public scandal that implicates the reputation of the broader assembly) in a minister's or elder's household.

B. Presiding Ministers of Presbytery shall report to the Presiding Minister of Council the same information.

C. The session of elders of each CREC church shall notify the Presiding Minister of Presbytery of any changes to their constitution or bylaws so that the next stated meeting of presbytery can review them to ensure that they are consistent with CREC standards.

Rationale

Article IV.A.6.b of the CREC Constitution states that changes to presbytery BOPs are to be "set out separately by Article" from the CREC BOP. This will assist the PM of Council in properly harmonizing the BOPs of all presbyteries at the next Council meeting.

At present, mission and candidate churches do not need to share their constitutions with presbyteries when they particularize or join. They only need to share them with the sponsoring church who, in turn, must be prepared to answer questions about it. The question naturally arises: how will presbytery be aware of what questions would be appropriate if they have never read the constitution?

Proposal #2: Licensure for Preaching and Administering the Sacraments

Motion - Amended

Trinity Evangelical Church moves that Hus Presbytery create a committee to modify the following provision to the CREC Book of Procedures for submission to CREC Council 2026:

Article X. Licensure for Preaching and Administering the Sacraments

A. To preserve the purity of the Gospel, no man is permitted to preach or administer the sacraments in a congregation on more than six occasions per year without proper licensure from the presbytery to which the congregation belongs.

B. An elder, a candidate for ministry, a minister from another denomination, or some other man may be licensed for the purpose of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments when he passes the following parts of the ordination examination found in Appendix B:

1. Personal Statement;
2. Bible, Theology, and Worship and Sacraments;
3. Two exegetical papers.

C. The steps for licensure are as follows:

1. A session shall make an application to a Presiding Minister of Presbytery;
2. The Presiding Minister of Presbytery shall appoint a committee to examine the candidate;
3. If the candidate successfully completes the exams, the committee will recommend that the candidate be examined in a public presbytery meeting.
4. If the presbytery approves the candidate, he shall be licensed to preach and administer the sacrament as required by his local session.

D. Should he be ordained as a pastor at a later time, he will need to complete the other parts of the ordination exams.

Rationale

In many instances, a local church requires someone to preach and administer the sacraments before a candidate is ready for ordination. Additionally, there are occasions when a man is willing to serve a local church temporarily but does not intend to pursue full-time ministry. In such cases, it is appropriate for the individual to undergo a partial examination. This approach aligns with the biblical precedent for ensuring that those who minister in the church are adequately prepared and approved (1 Timothy 3:10).

Theologically, this safeguards the purity of the Gospel and the proper administration of the sacraments, which are means of grace. Practically, it provides flexibility for churches in times of need, ensuring that the spiritual nourishment of the congregation is maintained without compromising doctrinal integrity. By instituting a licensure process, we uphold the high standards of ministry while accommodating the practical realities of church life.

Proposal #3: Pastor emeritus serving as a pro tempore elder in another church

Motion - Amended

Trinity Evangelical Church in Diósd, Hungary, moves that Hus Presbytery task the committee modifying the proposal for the CREC BOP to also create a proposal to harmonize the governing documents of the CREC regarding the legitimate functions of the pastor emeritus, taking into consideration the following proposal:

Article XII.

F. Ministers who have served in one or more churches for at least 20 years, including at least 10 years in one or more CREC churches, and are at least 50 years old, are eligible to retire as a minister and be recognized by their session as an honorably retired minister (pastor emeritus). A pastor emeritus shall retain all honors and privileges associated with the ministry of Word and Sacrament. A pastor emeritus who is a member of a CREC congregation may, with the consent of his session, serve in any office or function in his presbytery or the council, including but not limited to serving as a delegate, serving on a committee, ~~or~~ serving as a presiding minister, **or serving as an elder pro tempore on a member church session.** ~~within his presbytery.~~

Rationale

The CREC Constitution III.N spells out how to “borrow,” for the time being, a session member from another church so that he may serve as an elder pro tempore. The Constitution does not mention a retired minister as a possible elder pro tempore, only session members. However, the CREC Book of Procedures XII.F allows a retired minister to “serve in any office or function in his presbytery or the council, including but not limited to serving as a delegate, serving on a committee, or serving as a presiding minister.” It seems that if a retired minister may serve as a PM of the Council, he may also serve as an elder pro tempore. This is why we propose to amend the Hus BoP to make it explicit and beyond any doubt.