



KNOX PRESBYTERY

Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches

Spring 2025 Stated Meeting

March 26, AD 2025

Christ Church
Moscow, Idaho

Call to Order

The Spring 2025 Stated Meeting of Knox Presbytery was called to order at 8:17am by Presiding Minister Toby Sumpter (King's Cross Church, Moscow).

After singing and prayer, PM Toby Sumpter delivered an exhortation on the duty of forgiveness.

Roll Call (Establishment of a Quorum)

Member Churches

1. Christ Church (Moscow, ID): Douglas Wilson & Ben Zornes
2. Christ Church (Spokane, WA): Kenton Spratt
3. Christ Covenant Church (Grand Prairie, AB): Nathan Zekveld & Robin Shoemaker
4. Christ the Redeemer Church (Troy, ID): Joshua Dockter & Matt Meyer [Motion 4]
5. Covenant Presbyterian Church (Cochrane, AB): Chris Cousine
6. Holy Covenant Church (Mead, WA): Andre Fowlkes [Motion 3]
7. Holy Trinity Church (Colville, WA): Ed Iverson
8. King's Covenant Church (Tasmania, AU): Josh Downes & Geoff Downes via video call
9. King's Cross Church (Moscow, ID): Shawn Paterson & Zachary Wilke
10. King's Cross Church (Wenatchee, WA): Gene Helsel & Jess Monnette
11. Trinity Church (Coeur d'Alene, ID): Chase Fluhart
12. Trinity Covenant Church (Fort St John, BC): James Zekveld & Desmond Jones

Mission Churches

1. Christ Church Downtown (Moscow, ID): Ben Zornes (sponsored by Christ Church, Moscow)
2. King's Church (Spokane Valley, WA): Ben Tate (sponsored by Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene)
3. King's Covenant Church (Alberta, CA): Josh Holt (sponsored by Christ Covenant Church, Grand Prairie)

Candidate Churches

1. Igreja Protestante Reformada (Joinville, BR): Thiago McHurt (sponsored by Christ Church, Moscow)

Approve Agenda

Motion 3/26/25: 1 → Kenton Spratt (Christ Church, Spokane) made the following Motion:

To approve the agenda.

Second: Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow)

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

Motion 3/26/25: 2 → Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To set aside the in-person attendance requirement for King's Covenant Church (Tasmania, AU).

Second: Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee)

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

Accepting Mission Churches into Full Membership

Motion 3/26/25: 3 → Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee) made the following Motion:

To bring mission church, Holy Covenant Church (Mead, WA), into full membership of Knox Presbytery—waiving the two-year requirement.

Second: Ed Iverson (Holy Trinity Church, Colville)

Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee) and Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) spoke regarding the congregation's health.

Motion Carried: (14, 0, 2)

Motion 3/26/25: 4 → Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To bring mission church, Christ the Redeemer Church (Troy, ID), into full membership of Knox Presbytery.

Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) provided an update on the congregation.

Second: Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee)

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

Zachary Wilke Ordination Exam

Committee members: Shawn Paterson, chair (King's Cross Church, Moscow), Chase Fluhart (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene), Jared Longshore (Christ Church, Moscow), and Jess Monnette (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee).

Zachary Wilke's committee led the examination of Zachary with other delegates also asking questions.

Motion 3/26/25: 5 → Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To enter executive session.

Second: Jess Monnette (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee)

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

Motion 3/26/25: 6 → Wilke Ordination Committee made the following Motion:

To recommend Zachary Wilke for ordination as a minister of Word and sacrament to King's Cross Church in Moscow, Idaho.

Second: Not required

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0) [Zachary Wilke not present]

Motion 3/26/25: 7 → Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To leave executive session.

Second: Desmond Jones (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John)

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0) [Zachary Wilke not present]

Presbytery recessed at 10:22am and reconvened at 10:40am.

Introduction of Mission and Candidate Churches

Thiago McHertt (Joinville, Brazil) introduced himself and his congregation.

Motion 3/26/25: 8 → James Zekveld (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John) made the following Motion:

To seat Grace Bible Church (Saskatchewan, Canada) as a candidate church.

Second: Chris Cousine (Covenant Presbyterian Church, Cochrane)

James Zekveld (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John) provided background on the church.

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

Nathan Zekveld (Christ Covenant Church, Grand Prairie) introduced Josh Holt and King's Covenant Church in Alberta, Canada as a mission church of his congregation.

Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) shared that Christ Church is planning to start a service in Potlatch, Idaho soon.

Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) shared that they have now designated Christ Church Downtown as a mission church of Christ Church.

Andre Fowlkes (Holy Covenant Church, Mead) introduced a potential future mission church of his congregation in Sandpoint, Idaho.

Chase Fluhart (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene) shared that they hope to particularize mission church, King's Church (Spokane Valley) at the next presbytery meeting.

Presiding Minister Report (attached)

Motion 3/26/25: 9 → Kenton Spratt (Christ Church, Spokane) made the following Motion:

To ratify PM Toby Sumpter's denial for request to hear appeal from a member of Trinity Church (Coeur d'Alene) and the appointment of Jared Longshore to chair the committee on sacramental cooperation.

Second: Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee)

PM Toby Sumpter provided more information regarding his denial of the appeal.

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

PM Toby Sumpter provided background on the request contained in his report regarding the 2017 Presiding Ministers' Report to Christ Church (Moscow) and discussion ensued.

Presbytery recessed at 12:00pm and reconvened at 1pm.

Joe Rigney Presentation on *Emotional Sabotage* and *The Sin of Empathy*

Presbytery recessed at 2:42pm and reconvened at 2:56pm.

Greyfriars Hall and Center for Biblical Counseling

Joe Rigney updated on the new Greyfriars Hall program at New Saint Andrews College, number of students for the first year, and fundraising needs.

PM Toby Sumpter highlighted the work of the Center for Biblical Counseling (Christ Church, Moscow).

Memorial on the Nations

Motion 3/26/25: 10 → Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

That Knox Presbytery intends to vote for the current Memorial J at Council, and at the same time, will submit a proposal to replace it in three years with the language below.

Second: James Zekveld (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John)

Discussion ensued.

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

We condemn any doctrine that God has established any barriers to marriage for individuals based on ethnicity or skin color, prohibits or holds marriages between different ethnicities in contempt, or seeks to promote ethnic-based divisions in society. We view them as inherently divisive and contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We affirm that mankind is created in the Image of God; hence, no ethnicity is inherently more sacred or sinful than another, and all ethnicities can be in fellowship through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, interethnic marriages, churches, and commonwealths can exist and flourish in the present age.

Request Regarding 2017 Presiding Ministers' Report

Motion 3/26/25: 11 → Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee) made the following Motion:

To establish a committee that will draft language to ask Council to address the dilemma created by Part 2 of the PM report and make a recommendation to presbytery.

Second: James Zekveld (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John)

The committee will consist of Shawn Paterson (King's Cross Church, Moscow), Kenton Spratt (Christ Church, Spokane), and Jess Monette (King Cross Church, Wenatchee). They will report back at the Fall 2025 Presbytery.

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 1) [Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) abstained]

Fall 2025 Presbytery Meeting

Motion 3/26/25: 12 → Desmond Jones (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John) made the following Motion:

To meet for our Fall 2025 Presbytery meeting Sept. 29 evening–Oct 1 morning in Moscow, Idaho.

Second: Zachary Wilke

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0)

Religious Liberty

Matt Meyer (Christ the Redeemer, Troy) shared that they anticipate a legal battle in the future regarding their congregation's meeting location and may request assistance from the presbytery.

Extending Future Meetings

James Zekveld (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John) suggested having longer meetings to discuss important issues properly. PM Toby Sumpter will ask PMOC Uri Brito to consider an extra day at the next Council, allowing the Council and presbyteries to engage.

Presbytery recessed at 4:03pm and reconvened at 4:22pm. Desmond Jones (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John) left.

Sacramental Cooperation Committee Report (attached)

Jared Longshore (Christ Church, Moscow) and James Zekveld (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St John) explained their report and proposals.

CJ Bowen (Trinity Reformed Church, Moscow—Kuyper Presbytery) shared regarding his presbytery's committee on a similar topic.

Motion 3/26/25: 13 → Sacramental Cooperation Committee made the following Motion:

For presbytery to propose to Council the edits to the Constitution, Book of Procedures, and proposed memorial included in their report, not including federational relationships.

Second: Not required.

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0)

Motion 10/1/24: 14 → Kenton Spratt (Christ Church, Spokane) made the following Motion:

To adjourn.

Second: Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee)

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0)

Meeting adjourned at 4:49pm.



KNOX PRESBYTERY

Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches

Knox Presbytery,

A couple of things to report to you for this Spring 2025 meeting, with two actions for you to ratify and an additional request for you to consider.

This last Fall I was able to visit Covenant Presbyterian Church in Cochrane, AB, just outside of Calgary for a short conference on feminism. Jared Longshore joined me and Pastor Cousine and another pastor, and between the four of us, we are relatively certain we broke several hate speech laws in Canada. Many people travelled long distances to attend, indicating great hunger for faithful Bible teaching in Canada.

I also visited Trinity Covenant Church in Ft. St. John, B.C. for another short conference on fatherhood and parenting. It was good to see God's continued blessing on the labors of the saints there and see how Pastor James Zekveld is settling in there. Please continue to be in prayer for the Benterud family who unexpectedly lost a young wife and mother of six children.

I have spent a fair bit of time this last Fall working with the session of Trinity Church in Coeur D'Alene after the resignation of their long time Pastor Stuart Bryan due to significant scandal and disorder among his children. Pastor Chase Fluhart and the other elders have done yeoman's work leading that congregation through a minefield, and we are tentatively hopeful that the storm is beginning to subside. Please continue to pray for the congregation as well as Stuart Bryan and his family.

Actions for Ratification

Unrelated to the above situation at Trinity Church, I received an official request to hear an appeal from a member of Trinity Church in Coeur D'Alene related to a business deal with another member of the church. I denied the request to hear the appeal because the member had signed an agreement with the elders to abide by their prior decision of arbitration.

I appointed Jared Longshore to chair the committee that presbytery requested to reconsider the language the CREC adopted regarding sacramental cooperation and reciprocity between churches. Jared added James Zekveld and Brian Brown to the committee and will likely have a report and possible recommendations for us at this Spring meeting.

Request for Consideration

Some of you will remember that many moons ago (~2015) Christ Church was embroiled in a significant social media firestorm over allegations of mishandling two abuse situations from around 2005-2006. This was essentially the #MeToo movement and early "woke" cancel culture coming for the ministries of Christ Church and Pastor Wilson. In the midst of that controversy, the Elders of CC

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requested that the CREC inquire into their handling of those criminal cases, but they specifically asked that the CREC *not* weigh into the social media storm that had erupted 10 years later.

A committee was formed made up of the Presiding Ministers of the presbyteries in October of 2015. Unfortunately, the PM Report was not delivered until nearly two years later, on August 15, 2017, and when it arrived, the report had two parts: the first part was an analysis of the specific abuse situations and handling by CC leadership with some recommendations as requested. But the second part of the report was an extensive critique of Pastor Wilson's blogging and social media presence in the midst of the controversy. Christ Church formally thanked the committee for the first part and registered its strong exception to the second part.

There was a fair bit of discussion regarding that exception, culminating in a visit from Knox PM Stuart Bryan and CREC PM Virgil Hurt. In the course of that visit in the Spring of 2018, Christ Church leadership told the PMs that the decision to include the second part of the report had so shaken their trust in the CREC that if another scandal broke out and there were requests for appeals to the CREC, Christ Church would refuse to comply with such requests. CC leadership admitted that this was an untenable position to be in, given their membership vows in the CREC and offered to leave the CREC if necessary. PM Bryan and Hurt's official letter following up on that visit acknowledged this position but urged Christ Church to stay in the CREC. After extensive discussion of these and related matters on the CREC email listserve with no resolution, CC leadership agreed to drop the matter.

Thus, Christ Church has continued in this position for the last 7 years: unwilling to submit to any judicial appeal process in the CREC but still a member church. This same untenable position has been inherited by King's Cross Church and is likely to be the same position as other "kirker" church plants. In other words, the problem is not only not going away, it is growing. In the meantime, that 2017 Presiding Minister's Report is still being weaponized by our enemies against Moscow ministries, and to date, it is the only official statement the CREC has ever made about Pastor Wilson's blog, social media presence, or ministry as a whole. I have attached the PM Report as well as the letter from PM Bryan and Hurt for your reference. As Presiding Minister of Knox it is my responsibility to address pastoral concerns in our assembly and churches, and I believe this is a significant matter that needs to be resolved. As it stands, we have two member congregations with a tenuous standing.

My request: would presbytery please consider this situation and if presbytery agrees that this situation is untenable and also agrees that the Moscow Kirker churches should remain in the CREC, would presbytery pass a motion requesting that Council rescind the second part of the PM Report and apologize? Just as we wish many churches/denominations would apologize for how they handled COVID, this is a moment for us to ask the CREC to show them how.

Action Items

1. Approve actions above
2. Consider the above request

Blessings in Christ,
Toby Sumpter

Knox Presbytery (CREC)
Presiding Minister, Toby Sumpter
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SAC COOP COM REPORT

Motion to establish committee:

"To task PM Toby Sumpter to form a committee to revise the language on sacramental cooperation that was adopted at last Council meeting in light of Douglas Wilson's paper and suggest a framework for fraternal relations."

Our Language, Both Old and New

We were aware at the very beginning that this approach could present some real challenges, and this recognition was addressed in our documents at the start. We originally said this:

(Article 3: Local Congregations)

"All members in good standing in a local CREC congregation must be received by any other CREC church regardless of confessional differences between the churches. All CREC churches will handle problems arising from differences in how membership is reckoned from church to church (*e.g.* individual vs. household) with all charity and good faith, seeking to include one another's members.

In the transfer of members from one CREC church to another, differences arising from issues such as membership, paedobaptism, and paedocommunion, must be handled with pastoral sensitivity. Receiving churches do not have to adopt or practice such variations, but they should do all within their power to accommodate them."

After our recent emendations, we now say this:

(Article 3: Local Congregations)

G. All members in good standing in a local CREC congregation must be received by any other CREC church regardless of confessional differences between the churches as included in the Book of Procedures, Article XIII Sacramental Cooperation.

H. Controversies within a local congregation regarding matters arising from differences between our various confessions will not be adjudicated beyond the local church level. All churches agree to work cheerfully and carefully in their study of doctrinal differences, and to strive for like-mindedness with one another
(Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16).

Article XIII. Sacramental Cooperation (Book of Procedures)

A. The CREC is a unified communion of churches with various confessional differences. While we allow a variety of views and practices related to the sacraments (*e.g.*, paedobaptism and credobaptism, paedocommunion and credocommunion), we seek mutual submission to one another (Eph. 5:21). Therefore, all CREC churches agree to recognize the sacramental actions of other CREC churches by accepting the baptismal and communicant status of their members, regardless of any confessional differences between the churches.

1. All members in good standing of a CREC congregation must be received by any other CREC church with their baptismal and communicant status intact, even if the receiving church would not have conferred that status themselves. All CREC churches will handle problems arising from differences in how membership is reckoned from church to church (e.g., individual vs. household) with all charity and good faith, seeking to include one another's members.
2. Any credobaptist church in this Communion must accept the validity of baptism administered in another CREC church, even if it would not have performed that particular baptism. Such a church shall accept that the person is, in fact, baptized, though they might consider the baptism irregular.
3. Any paedobaptist and credocommunion church (defined as having both communicant and non-communicant members, where non-communicants become communicants after the session accepts their profession of faith as credible), shall agree to accept the communicant status conferred by other CREC churches upon their members. Therefore, the credocommunion churches shall agree to accept transfers of members in good standing from other CREC churches and will honor and accept the communicant status they held in their sister church, regardless of age or mental capacity, by transferring them as communicant members.

Members in good standing of one CREC church shall be received by transfer to another CREC church, with their baptismal and communicant status intact, regardless of confessional differences. However, once a member has transferred, the receiving church is not under obligation to deviate from its regular practice if children are subsequently born to the member. Any new admission to baptism and the Lord's Supper shall be done according to the church's normal practice.

Proposed Language for churches entering under the 1689:

"As a church that subscribes to the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, we believe, teach, and practice that 'those who personally profess repentance toward God and faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ are the only proper subjects of baptism,' and that 'immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary for this ordinance to be administered properly.' Nevertheless, in keeping with our historic Reformed Baptist heritage, we will accept infant baptisms and baptisms performed through sprinkling or pouring as valid baptisms for the purposes of membership in the local church and communicant status at the Lord's Table."

Doug's White Paper: Sectarianism and 4 Oddities

A credo-communion church which practices paedobaptism is not in the same position that the Reformed Baptist church is. Our statement cited earlier said that they would not have to *practice* paedocommunion, but they would have to do all within their power to accommodate it. But once they had received a family with a communing two-year-old, the first time they administered communion to the congregation, they would have to start *practicing* paedocommunion, which would violate their conscience. ***The oddity is that the Presbyterian credo-communion church is much closer to the majority of CREC churches doctrinally than is the Reformed Baptist***

church. They are much closer, but they are now prohibited from joining and the Reformed Baptist church is not. They consider their infants to be covenant members, and the Reformed Baptist church considers them to have no part in the new covenant at all. This means that we allow churches to come in when *all* the infants in the congregation are excluded entirely, and won't allow churches in if they exclude one child more than that. They hold back all their own children, just like the Reformed Baptists, but then they also exclude the one child of a family seeking to transfer in.

A second oddity is that churches that subscribe to the Westminster with the same understanding that most of the authors of the Westminster had (credo-communion) could be excluded from membership in a denomination that has the Westminster Confession as one of the confessional options, and which many if not most of our churches use. The Westminster Confession by itself does not exclude the practice of paedocommunion, but the Westminster *Standards* do, which reveals for us what their original intent was. Thus when they proscribe "ignorant and ungodly" persons from the Supper (WCF 29.8), a paedocommunion advocate can interpret those words as not referring to the ignorance of infancy, but rather to a culpable ignorance of the sort that hangs out with ungodliness. And he can do this while recognizing that the Westminster Standards do elsewhere exclude the kind of ignorance that infants have.

But is there not a true *weirdness* in having churches with the Westminster Confession as our standard while at the same time recognizing that we would exclude from membership almost all of the men who wrote it? This is not the case in other areas where we take exceptions to the Confession—pope as antichrist, parts of the OT in Aramaic, lawful sabbath activity, etc. Those disagreements don't have the same impact at all.

A third oddity is that if paedocommunion truly is a creedal advance, one that stands of the shoulders of the Reformers who have gone before us, as most of us want to maintain, it ought to proceed in a reformational way, not a revolutionary or schismatic way.

A fourth oddity, as though we didn't have enough of them, is that we are now distinguishing CREC-administered sacraments from sacraments administered by other orthodox Christian bodies. We are requiring a receiving church to accept a communicant status of someone coming from a CREC church, while not requiring this if they were coming from a PCA church, with all other factors being identical. This has the effect of treating the two Christian sacraments as denominational tokens, which in my view is not right.

"My concern is that, depending on how we apply our new language, we are drifting toward a sectarianism of our own."

Sac Coop Com Recomendations for Formal Revision:

(Article 3: Local Congregations)

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Our Proposed Memorial

At the spring meeting of Knox Presbytery, the following proposed memorial was accepted as a first reading. Sac Coop Com recommends adding one word:

“As elders who hold the keys, we [**ordinarily**] do not exclude baptized children from the Lord's Table, because God has incorporated them into His covenant and congregation through baptism. The covenant promises are theirs in Christ. We believe that in the sacraments God calls us to respond by faith in Christ according to our age and capacity. We affirm that faith is a necessary condition for worthy participation at the Table and that God gives such faith even to small children. Jesus said: ‘Let the little children come to me.’”