

# Hesed Project CRC

*Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds (hesed) of the Lord. Psalm 107:43*



## CIRCLES OF SOLIDARITY

What happens when a child discloses that they are gay? It can be a very difficult time for the young person, the family, and the church community. The one area of agreement in the CRC is that we have often failed at these critical moments in the life of our community.

Support from others who have worked through the range of issues and feelings can be very helpful. That is what the Hesed Project CRC offers to parents and young people. Parent support is available on a one-on-one basis. Young people are invited to join a group where they can discuss their concerns with other young people. Contact is confidential through Hesed email boxes, and all conversations will be treated confidential. This is peer support, not professional advice; Hesed respondents may be able to refer you to other sources of help as well.

Help Hesed Project CRC spread the word about the availability of this support through the [Act page](#) of the Hesed Project CRC website.



@hesedproject2022



Hesed Project CRC

## GOOD NEWS: CHURCHES LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Fear and a punitive spirit were intentionally created during Synod 2022. Discouragement, decisions to leave, and retreat into quiet care are understandable responses. Thankfully, a few churches are taking a different approach; if more churches follow their example, it will be good news for queer people who love the CRC as their church home and for young people growing up in the CRC.

### LAMENT

In a newsletter one church publicly lamented:

- "the exclusive and graceless position taken toward members of the LGBTQ+ community;"
- "that this report makes it difficult for Redeemer to live out its calling to Mirror Jesus & Embrace All."
- "the overall conduct of those speaking, the lack of listening, and the heavy-handed top-down approach of Synod toward the local congregation."
- the need to accept resignations of members who could not stay as a matter of conscience.

### INTERIM ACTIONS

Lament requires action; in this example, the church took some key responsible steps:

- "we are not requiring any office bearers to interpret the Heidelberg Catechism or scripture in light of its [Synod] decisions; and"
- "we need to have open conversation about everything pertaining to the Human Sexuality Report and the decisions of Synod 2022. That will start with a fall Townhall meeting."

Excerpts from [newsletter](#) sent by Redeemer CRC, Sarnia, to its members on September 1, 2022.

### POSITIVE POLICY

One church council adopted a positive policy after reflection, discussion, and a survey of its congregation:

"Grace Church celebrates LGBTQ+ people as image bearers, loved by God, and welcomes them whether single, in a dating relationship, or married. Those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord shall enjoy full participation in the life of the church, including ordination to the role of elder and deacon, preaching, being married, having their children baptized, and filling all leadership roles as their gifts allow."

### FORWARD POSTURE

Grace CRC, Grand Rapids closed its newsletter with the following posture:

"We don't all have to agree, and there's room for dissent. Paul's words from Ephesians 4 can both challenge and comfort us. May we bear with one another in love, making every effort to keep our unity in the Spirit through the bond of peace. Whatever our position on becoming an affirming church, let this scripture be our model for how we care for one another.

We pray that as brothers and sisters, the Spirit will bind us together and fill us afresh to be the voice and hands of Christ, welcoming our neighbors and building each other up."

*Excerpts from letter sent by the council of Grace CRC, Grand Rapids, to its members.*

## CLASSIS LEADERSHIP ON SAFE SPACE AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

"Because conversations and discussions are ongoing, we will not bind the consciences of any members and officebearers or limit their ability to speak. These HSR discussions have been and continue to be public conversations. However, we ought to expect respectful discussions that honour the opinions and convictions of the different persuasions in our community."

This statement by Classis Alberta North creates the conditions for constructive dialogue that Synod hinted at in its first decision and then closed down in its final decision on the Human Sexuality Report.

### CLASSIS ALBERTA NORTH ALSO TOOK THE FOLLOWING PRACTICAL STEPS:

#### 1. Advice to Councils on Personal Difficulty Gravamen:

"If Councils believe it is necessary that officebearers submit a confessional difficulty gravamen to continue as, or become an officebearer, that these gravamen be received without prejudice. In doing so, the council is choosing not to make decisions until such a time as the due processes of appeals and overtures have run their course. All officebearers remain in good standing and can participate in Classis as usual. This will give those who wish to proceed with appeals, overtures or Confessional Revision gravamens time to organize their thoughts and councils to consider a variety of options."

#### 2. Invitation to name issues for discussion

All members of Classis Alberta North were invited to submit suggestions for:

- issues to be discussed by classis; and
- how classis could facilitate constructive dialogue

The invitation to submit these to the Clerk of Classis also opens an avenue for persons whose home church may not very welcoming to still speak up and engage in the broader discussions of next steps at all levels of the CRCNA. (See the [Classis Alberta North website](#) for details)

Modelling open dialogue is particularly important in light of broad concerns about the way Synod conducted its discussion and then tried to close the door at all levels of the church.

If more classes adopt the example of Classis Alberta North, it would help to restore trust and lead to the kind of deliberation that should characterize the church as followers of Jesus.

The Hased Project CRC will contribute by sharing resources and stories across the CRC. Please let us know what is happening in your circles and how we might be helpful. Check out the resources and stories on the website and use the [Act page](#) to connect to others.

## NETWORK OF LOCAL CHURCH SUPPORT GROUPS

We know there are local small groups of people who want to provide more open, welcoming spaces for conversations about human sexuality. If you are part of one, you are not alone. Some have indicated they would like to learn from other groups. Hased Project CRC provides a way for local church groups to connect informally, share their experiences, and learn from others. Sometimes just knowing that there are others can be encouraging. No one will be outed. Contact is confidential through an Hased Project CRC email box; all conversations are treated carefully, and connections are only made with the full agreement of all parties. Help us spread the word. Contact can be made through the [Act page](#) of the Hased Project CRC website.