

UNREFERRED OVERTURES – 2024

NO. 11 – SESSION OF FIRST HUNGARIAN, TORONTO

Re: Forming a Hungarian diaspora presbytery

WHEREAS the fact that our Hungarian Presbyterian congregations and our Hungarian Presbyterian church members in Canada are scattered all over in various presbyteries from the east coast to the west coast and their ministry and pastoral care is not solved satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, to reach out to them to remote places of diaspora in their native language needs to be addressed with a plan and structural changes, therefore, the leaders of the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian congregations in Canada have jointly developed a new presbytery model to address this unsolved but urgent situation; and

WHEREAS, the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee conducted research for the last five years then presented a report to each session of each Hungarian congregation to be read; and

WHEREAS, the Session of the First Hungarian Church having had sufficient time to read the report and consider the proposal on the formation of a stand-alone diaspora mission presbytery for all of Canada in The Presbyterian Church in Canada; and

WHEREAS, presented by the session at the congregational meeting on January 14, 2024, of First Hungarian Church in the Presbytery of East Toronto, the congregation unanimously agreed with the above-mentioned proposal; and

WHEREAS this would enable them to organize the mission work, supervise and administer the pastoral care and worship and sacrament services currently provided and not provided in various presbyteries to the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian believers and communities; and

WHEREAS the decrease in number of the Hungarian Presbyterian congregations, their financial situation and the closure of churches in some places justify this change of model, which is based on a missionary plan and the organization of a nationwide service. We cannot accept what Jesus could not accept either, and he issued the command: “And when he saw the multitudes, he had compassion on them, because they were distressed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask therefore the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest’.” (Matthew 9, 36–38)

WHEREAS a diaspora missionary presbytery is able to serve the Hungarian Reformed diaspora responsibly and competently. Through its formation and its functioning within the care of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, it has the capacity to supervise and ability to reach out to regions of the country where it had no authority before to make decisions and resolutions in an organized church framework. The demand of the new situation in the church and society urges us to be ready for change to a new practice, following the encouragement of our Lord Jesus Christ, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you, and you will be my witnesses ... to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1, 8).

THEREFORE, the Session of First Hungarian Church, Toronto, humbly overtures the Venerable, the 149th General Assembly to concur with the proposal and approve the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee forming the Diaspora Missionary Presbytery in the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda under the supervision of the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, may deem best.

Transmitted without comment by the Presbytery of East Toronto.

NO. 12 – SESSION OF HUNGARIAN CHURCH

Re: Forming a Hungarian diaspora presbytery

WHEREAS the fact that our Hungarian Presbyterian congregations and our Hungarian Presbyterian church members in Canada are scattered all over in various presbyteries from the east coast to the west coast and their ministry and pastoral care is not solved satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, to reach out to the remote places of diaspora in their native language needs to be addressed with a plan and structural changes, therefore, the leaders of the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian congregations in Canada have jointly developed a new presbytery model to address this unsolved but urgent situation; and

WHEREAS, the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee conducted research for the last five years then presented a report to each session of each Hungarian congregation to be read; and

WHEREAS, the Session of the Hungarian Presbyterian Church, Montreal, having had sufficient time to read the report and consider the proposal on the formation of a stand-alone diaspora mission presbytery for all of Canada in The Presbyterian Church in Canada; and

WHEREAS, presented by the session at the congregational meeting on January 14, 2024, of Hungarian Presbyterian Church in Montreal, the congregation unanimously agreed with the above-mentioned proposal; and

WHEREAS this would enable them to organize the mission work, supervise and administer the pastoral care and worship and sacrament services currently provided and not provided in various presbyteries to the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian believers and communities; and

WHEREAS the decrease in number of the Hungarian Presbyterian congregations, their financial situation, and the closure of churches in some places justify this change of model, which is based on a missionary plan and the organization of a nationwide service. We cannot accept what Jesus could not accept, and he issued the command: “And when he saw the multitudes, he had compassion on them, because they were distressed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask therefore the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest’.” (Matthew 9, 36–38); and

WHEREAS a diaspora missionary presbytery would be able to serve the Hungarian Reformed diaspora responsibly and competently. Through its formation and its functioning within the care of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, it would have the capacity to supervise and ability to reach out to regions of the country where it had no authority before to make decisions and resolutions in an organized church framework. The demands of the new situation in the church and society urge us to be ready for change to a new practice, following the encouragement of our Lord Jesus Christ, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you, and you will be my witnesses...to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1, 8);

THEREFORE, the Session of Hungarian Church, Montreal, humbly overtures the Venerable, the 149th General Assembly to concur with the proposal and approve the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee forming the Diaspora Missionary Presbytery in the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda under the supervision of the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, may deem best.

Transmitted with the approval of the Presbytery of Montreal.

NO. 13 – SESSION OF CALVIN HUNGARIAN, OTTAWA

Re: Forming a Hungarian diaspora presbytery

WHEREAS the fact that our Hungarian Presbyterian congregations and our Hungarian Presbyterian church members in Canada are scattered all over in various presbyteries from the east coast to the west coast and their ministry and pastoral care is not solved satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, to reach out to the remote places of diaspora in their native language needs to be addressed with a plan and structural changes, therefore, the leaders of the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian congregations in Canada have jointly developed a new presbytery model to address this unsolved but urgent situation; and

WHEREAS, the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee conducted research for the last five years and then presented a report to each session of each Hungarian congregation to be read; and

WHEREAS the decrease in number of the Hungarian Presbyterian congregations, their financial situation, and the closure of churches in some places justify this change of model, which is based on a missionary plan and the organization of a nationwide service; and

WHEREAS, we cannot accept what Jesus could not accept, and therefore he issued the command: “And when he saw the multitudes, he had compassion on them, because they were distressed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask therefore the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest’.” (Matthew 9, 36–38); and

WHEREAS, the formation of a diaspora mission presbytery would enable them to organize the mission work, supervise and administer the pastoral care and worship and sacrament services currently provided and not provided in various presbyteries to the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian believers and communities; and

WHEREAS, the diaspora mission presbytery would be able to serve the Hungarian Reformed diaspora responsibly and competently; and through its formation and its functioning within the care of The Presbyterian Church in Canada would have the capacity to supervise and ability to reach out to regions of the country where it had no authority before to make decisions and resolutions in an organized church framework; and

WHEREAS, the demands of the new situation in the church and society urge us to be ready for change to a new practice, following the encouragement of our Lord Jesus Christ, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you, and you will be my witnesses ... to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1, 8); and

WHEREAS, the Session of Calvin Hungarian Church, Ottawa, having had sufficient time to read the report and consider the proposal on the formation of a diaspora mission presbytery for all of Canada in The Presbyterian Church in Canada; and

WHEREAS, the session of Calvin Hungarian Church, Ottawa, from January 14, 2024, presented the proposal to the congregation in advance of a duly called meeting of the congregation held February 4, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the congregation of Calvin Hungarian Church, Ottawa unanimously agreed with the above-mentioned proposal;

THEREFORE, the Session of Calvin Hungarian Church, Ottawa humbly overtures the Venerable, the 149th General Assembly to concur with the proposal and approve the plan of the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee to erect and constitute the Diaspora Missionary Presbytery in the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda to serve the Hungarian reformed diaspora in Canada under the supervision of the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, may deem best.

Transmitted without comment by the Presbytery of Ottawa.

NO. 14 – SESSION OF FIRST HUNGARIAN, VANCOUVER

Re: Forming a Hungarian diaspora presbytery

WHEREAS the fact that our Hungarian Presbyterian congregations and our Hungarian Presbyterian church members in Canada are scattered all over in various presbyteries from the east coast to the west coast and their ministry and pastoral care is not solved satisfactorily; and

WHEREAS, to reach out to the remote places of diaspora in their native language needs to be addressed with a plan and structural changes, therefore, the leaders of the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian congregations in Canada have jointly developed a new presbytery model to address this unsolved but urgent situation; and

WHEREAS, the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee conducted research for the last five years and then presented a report to each session of each Hungarian congregation to be read; and

WHEREAS, the Session of the First Hungarian Church (Calvin, Vancouver 1955) congregation having had sufficient time to read the report and consider the proposal on the formation of a stand-alone diaspora mission presbytery for all of Canada in The Presbyterian Church in Canada; and

WHEREAS, presented by the session on the congregational meeting on January 21, 2024, of the First Hungarian Church (Calvin, Vancouver 1955) in the Presbytery of Westminster, the congregation unanimously agreed with the above-mentioned proposal; and

WHEREAS, this would enable them to organize the mission work, supervise and administer the pastoral care and worship and sacrament services currently provided and not provided in various presbyteries to the Hungarian-speaking Presbyterian believers and communities; and

WHEREAS the decrease in number of the Hungarian Presbyterian congregations, their financial situation, and the closure of churches in some places justify this change of model, which is based on a missionary plan and the organization of a nationwide service. We cannot accept what Jesus could not accept either, and he issued the command: “And when he saw the multitudes, he had compassion on them, because they were distressed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask therefore the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest’.” (Matthew 9, 36–38); and

WHEREAS, the diaspora mission presbytery is able to serve the Hungarian Reformed diaspora responsibly and competently. Through its formation and its functioning within the care of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, it has the capacity to supervise and ability to reach out to regions of the country where it had no authority before to make decisions and resolutions in an organized church framework. The demand of the new situation in the church and society urges us to be ready for change to a new practice, following the encouragement of our Lord Jesus Christ, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you, and you will be my witnesses...to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1, 8);

THEREFORE, the session of First Hungarian Church (Calvin, Vancouver 1955) humbly overtures the Venerable, the 149th General Assembly to concur with the proposal and approve the Union of the Canadian Hungarian Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee forming the Diaspora Missionary Presbytery in the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda under the supervision of the Union of the Canadian Hungarian

Presbyterian Churches Consultation Committee of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, may deem best.

Transmitted without comment by the Presbytery of Westminster.

NO. 15 – PRESBYTERY OF CALGARY-MACLEOD

Re: Review of the sick leave policy

WHEREAS, The Presbyterian Church in Canada in its role as a responsible employer has a Sick Leave Policy that has been in place since 1990 clearly outlining one path that may lead to long term disability, which needs review and revision; and

WHEREAS, there are medical events that may take longer for recovery that are not eligible for long term disability and that lie outside the scope of the policy as it stands; and

WHEREAS, the reality of the policy may lead to the severance of the pastoral relationship between the minister and congregation in cases where there is an inability to return to work after six months and no possibility of long term disability benefit. This leaves the minister and family in an extremely vulnerable condition without pay and putting benefits and pensionable service at risk; and

WHEREAS, the current policy is not clear how to mitigate the probable claw-back of Employment Insurance sick leave benefits a member may encounter in the fourth to seventh month when the congregation is still required to provide a Housing Allowance placing undue stress on an already stressful situation; and

WHEREAS, members can be at the most vulnerable when they are experiencing medical events or transitions in ministry and require clearer information from the employee policies of the church to navigate these events; and

WHEREAS, it is the practice of the church to encourage generosity for congregations in their treatment of employees especially in the application of church policies, yet it seems that the current operating policy of the Pension and Benefits Board is to remove benefits that are not required by the law without permission from the General Assembly undermining that example and principle of generosity,

THEREFORE, The Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod humbly overtures the Venerable, the General Assembly to 1) direct the Pension and Benefits Board to review and revise the current Sick Leave Policy to include a pathway in addition to long term disability, such a revision should include recommendations on how to protect the stipend and benefits of the member in cooperation with the Canada Revenue Agency, and 2) to remind the Pension and Benefits Board that all changes to policies in relation to any benefit currently offered must be approved by the General Assembly, or to do otherwise as the General Assembly, in its wisdom, may deem best.