Fathers and brothers,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I pray that this communication finds all of you well, and that you and your congregations continue to grow in the grace of Jesus Christ. The purpose of this communication is to address the question of virtual participation in the upcoming 2021 General Synod meeting. The General Synod’s Executive Board appointed a committee to study the issue of virtual participation in order to make recommendations to the General Synod at our coming meeting. While that committee has worked diligently and will propose what I believe are excellent recommendations, these new policies, if adopted, will not be in place until 2022.

So, your physical attendance is expected for our 2021 General Synod meeting unless you are legally prevented from attending in person. The option for virtual participation (similar to last year’s General Synod meeting) will be made available only to those who are legally prevented from attending, and for those who face stringent legal requirements for returning to home and work, such as mandatory quarantine periods.

I know that for some, physically attending General Synod meetings can be challenging. Traveling long distances for the sake of meetings can be costly, time consuming, and often enough, a chore. Even so, your presence and participation are of vital importance as we, like those first elders who attended the Council of Jerusalem, meet together to consider the questions that come before us. This year’s meeting brings with it reports from various committees considering issues of vast importance for the future of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. While we are grateful for the technology that makes virtual participation possible, and while Bonclarken faces substantial costs for improving their
infrastructure to make virtual participation possible, physical attendance at our meetings is still far more preferable than virtual. In addition, it is good for the brothers to gather together in person.

As it was with last year’s meeting, CDC guidelines will be followed this year. Bonclarken and Central Services will handle necessary precautions in the same excellent manner they employed in the past. Future communications will offer more details on safety protocols that will be in place. For right now, let us continue to pray for the Lord’s mercy in bringing this pandemic to an end, but more importantly, let us pray that the light of the Gospel would blaze forth in this time of great darkness.

For Christ and His Kingdom,
Rev. Patrick Malphrus, Moderator-Elect
On Behalf of Synod 2021 Planning Committee

**SAFETY FIRST:**

We are confident that Bonclarken has the proper safety protocols in place to provide a very safe, secure and comfortable Synod week. We are all called to do our part by wearing masks, hand sanitizing regularly and social distancing.

The Opening Worship and Synod business meetings will take place in the Youth Activities Bldg and other designated spaces (Chapel, Patrick Room, etc.) depending on the number of registered delegates.

All voting delegates (even those who are **ELIGIBLE** to participate virtually) will need to be registered no later than May 28.

There will be no on-site registrations.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

A tentative schedule will be posted on arpchurch.org in the coming weeks.

**Tuesday morning:** Sign-in, presbytery meetings and moderator committee meetings

**Tuesday afternoon:** Opening Worship followed by business sessions.

**Wednesday/Thursday:** Synod Business Sessions

MEALS & LODGING:
CONTACT BONCLARKEN

www.bonclarken.org/arp-events  
828-692-2223

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

**Will there be displays?** Plans are underway for an outdoor (tent covered) display area. More details coming soon!

**Will there be any family/children activities?** Covid restrictions will limit the amount/format of additional activities other than Synod worship and Synod business. Please contact Bonclarken directly if you wish to host any type of gathering. There will be no children’s activities or kids camp this year.

We've attempted to answer all the questions we could anticipate at this point. However, if you’ve read through this information and your question has not been addressed, please contact Central Services (cscott@arpsynod.org)

HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2021SYNOD