

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATION

Since its origins in 1628, the Reformed Church in America (RCA) has given testimony to the goodness and faithfulness of God. Today, we continue to share stories of how God is at work among us. We also share ideas, goals, concerns, prayer needs, and other information and resources. This happens in a wide variety of ways, utilizing longstanding communication channels alongside new ones.

Supporting Denominational Priorities

General Synod Council (GSC) communication staff communicates about and provides marketing support for key RCA initiatives, including RCA Global Mission, Church Multiplication, Transformed & Transforming, and Advocacy and Race Relations. Stories of transformation have taken the form of podcasts and website features, newsletters, social media posts, and video testimonies.

Increasing Focus on Digital Communication

In 2019, the RCA unfolded a new digital strategy with the launch of Faithward.org. The site, focused on moving faith forward, includes ideas for living out faith, reflections on Scripture, and resources for churches. Faithward.org includes many stories and resources from *RCA Today* and added content from a regular rotation of contributors from throughout the church. In its first year, Faithward helped church leaders connect with resources and spend time in thoughtful reflection about faith. It also engaged people asking big questions like “Who is God?” and “How do I know God’s listening when I pray?” and “How do I know what God wants for me?” As Faithward’s reach grew, it began to shift from a blog site to a resourcing hub for the wider church. In its first three years, Faithward has reached more than 1 million users, from pastors looking for tools to teens struggling with their faith. In 2021, 60 percent of site visitors were under the age of 45. In 2021, the site had 1,219,254 page views with visitors from nearly every country in the world.

Faithward includes an online learning platform, Faithward Learn (learn.faithward.org), to facilitate skill-building for ministry leaders amid the shifts of a digital world and pandemic realities. Though the world is opening back up after the pandemic, digital and hybrid equipping opportunities will continue to be provided; they make learning accessible to more people in the RCA and beyond, and they make it more affordable with lower travel costs. Courses offered on Faithward Learn in 2021 addressed disability advocacy, discipleship, and Bible study, among other things. Numerous webinars were also offered.

The RCA website, www.rca.org, continues to resource RCA leaders with RCA-specific materials, including creeds and confessions, liturgies, and information about governance.

A News and Resources email newsletter provides dynamic, responsive resourcing to church leaders twice a month; other email newsletters provide updates related to particular topics or initiatives. Subscribe at www.rca.org/subscribe.

The RCA communication team manages websites and social media interactions online. In the last year, more than 1 million people have interacted with the RCA on [RCA.org](https://www.rca.org), [Faithward.org](https://www.faithward.org), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Vimeo.

Translation Efforts Continue

As the RCA grows in diversity, the need for translated materials also grows. In addition to offering the 2021 *Book of Church Order* in Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin, a number of resources from Transformed & Transforming, Advocacy and Race Relations, and Church Multiplication have been translated. Recent translation projects include curriculum for the Renovations project, a Lent discipleship calendar, and the She Is Called Women of the Bible study series, volume 2. A She Is Called edition of the Purposeful Living curriculum is the first project to be initiated in Spanish and translated into English.

Report on the RCA Store

Beginning in 2021, resources specific to the RCA are available on an online RCA Store rather than being housed and distributed through Faith Alive Christian Resources. This move significantly reduced both production and fulfillment costs for the denomination.

The RCA Store (store.rca.org) was launched in summer 2020, offering synodical resources as a pilot project. Select additional resources have been added, with more expected over time. The store is a print-on-demand platform, which requires no inventory. When an order comes in, each item is printed at that time and shipped to the purchaser.

Revenue from the RCA Store supports the ministry of the Reformed Church in America.