

1 **Special Committee re. SJC & IRPC ... Report to 2023 Synod**

2 Dear brothers by the grace of adoption into the family of our Lord, Jesus Christ:

3 Your Committee was given this task: “... *to facilitate a meeting between members of the*
4 *SJC & the IRPC in the pursuit of the peace, purity, and unity of the church.*”

5 After extensive discussion, the Committee decided to proceed with the assumption that
6 remit allowed for only a single meeting. With this in mind, the Committee attempted to
7 make arrangements for the meeting within a month of the Synod meeting, but the
8 difficulty of logistics made such arrangements impossible. The plan, then, targeted a
9 meeting date in late September, 2022.

10 Through consultation with various parties and counselors, two particular concerns for
11 such a meeting became evident: (1) There was much concern that a large-format meeting
12 dealing with such difficult matters would get out of hand, resulting in more offense and
13 creating yet another barrier to reconciliation between the Immanuel congregation and the
14 other parties. (2) Both the representatives of the [SJC] Commission and the members of
15 the [IRPC] congregation were agreed on their fears that such a meeting would become a
16 re-trial of the case, again creating more confusion and offense.

17 To address the first concern, the meeting was constructed to constrain the number of
18 interactions by involving a discussion between the (local) members of the IRPC Session
19 and representatives of the Commission, with the Committee setting the frame for the
20 discussion and the moderator of Synod presiding over the meeting. In the event, the active
21 individuals in the meeting were, then, the three locally elected members of the Immanuel
22 Session, one member of the Commission, an alternant of the commission, and the legal
23 counsel for the Commission, your Committee, and the Moderator of the 2022 Synod.
24 The congregation was in attendance.

25 In order to allow for input into the discussion from the congregation, an intermission
26 was set in the center of the meeting, during which the congregation met with the
27 Immanuel Session to request focus on particular topics and additional questions for
28 the latter half of the meeting.

29 To address the second concern, the content of the meeting’s discussion was structured
30 around specific questions from the Session to the representatives of the Commission.
31 Questions were solicited from the congregation, and then were filtered to remove
32 questions centering on the content of the trial itself, then were compiled & compressed.
33 An open call for questions was sent to the Congregation, and 69 questions were received,
34 which were compiled into nineteen questions, from which seven questions were selected
35 by the Session and forwarded through the Committee to the representatives of the Session
36 prior to the meeting.

1 The meeting was held on the 19th of September, from 7-9 p.m. at the Immanuel church
2 building. The agenda for the meeting is below. The conversations of the evening were
3 substantive, thoughtful and cordial, though, understandably, did not fully encompass
4 the range of questions, and were largely inconclusive. Following the meeting the
5 representatives of the Commission and the Committee and Moderator remained
6 having largely cordial and helpful conversations with members of the Immanuel
7 congregation, leaving around 10 p.m.

8 *Kenneth de Jong (Chairman), Matt Filbert, and Brad Johnson*

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- 10 1. Introductions and Purpose of Meeting ... Elder Ken de Jong
- 11 2. Devotion from Hebrews 12:3-11 ... Elder Brad Johnston
- 12 3. Direction ... by Moderator Harry Metzger
- 13 4. Dialogue of IRPC Elders and Synod Judicial Commissioners (1 hour)
- 14 5. Dialogue of IRPC Elders with Immanuel RP congregation (15 minutes)
- 15 (Committee and Commissioners excused)
- 16 6. General break (5 minutes)
- 17 7. Follow-up questions from IRPC Elders (20 minutes)
- 18 8. Making supplication to God for all the saints (up to 20 min.) ... Elder Matt Filbert
- 19 (2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 6:18)