



Travel

(Updated Nov. 2, 2009)

Uniting General Council World Communion of Reformed Churches June 18-28, 2010

Agency

The Uniting General Council has a preferred travel agent, Activa Travel. Activa Travel is seeking conference discounts, and group rates in some cases, mainly with Northwest and Delta Airlines and their partners (including KLM and Air France). Participants who pay their own way may choose to use other agencies, but most subsidized tickets will be purchased through Activa Travel.

Activa travel has designated Mr. Gene Gustafson as the primary liaison for travel to the Uniting General Council. You may contact him at:

Preferred method - Email: gene.gustafson@activatravel.com

Telephone: Direct: +1 616.588.5338, toll-free: +1 800 555-2184, X-338

Fax: +1 616.588.5501

Mail:

2905 Lucerne Dr., Ste 100

Grand Rapids, MI 49546, USA

When should you buy a ticket?

Airline tickets cannot be purchased more than 330 days before traveling, so participants may begin searching for tickets as soon as August 2009. Tickets purchased 90 days or more before travel are usually cheaper.

If you need to apply for a visa (requirements and instructions are found in a separate document, titled "Applying for Visas"), we advise that you get your visa first before purchasing a ticket.

Please tell us your travel arrangements

If you purchase a ticket through Activa Travel, then Activa will inform the UGC Coordinator about your itinerary.

If your ticket is purchased elsewhere, you must inform the Coordinator of your plans. When you have purchased a ticket, we prefer that you provide your travel information electronically. Please go to:

<http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=cHFBaEZLWmx2bWtEdF92b2R2a1UzZkE6MA>

When you answer the questions there, we will have your travel information.

If you find it difficult to use this web tool, please provide the following information by mail or email:

- Names
- Dates,
- times,

- airlines and flight numbers for both arrival and departure. (and please include a complete itinerary).

Send it to the UGC Coordinator, Richard van Houten, rvh@recweb.org, 2050 Breton Rd. SE, Ste 102, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.

What if you are sick when it is time to go?

If you are sick, please do not travel. Contact your travel agent immediately to see whether you can change your ticket. If you try to enter the United States, and you have signs of flu or fever, you will not be allowed into the country. This is especially true for travelers from countries where the H1N1 virus may be active.

Departure from your country of origin

You should try to check your luggage all the way to your final destination, so that it has a label to the Grand Rapids Kent County airport (GRR).

Do not take any fresh food, including any dried meat, with you in your luggage. Do not take anything with you that you want to sell. You may bring gifts, but it is illegal to bring anything to sell.

If you have a multiple entry visa, remember to check the expiration date before departure.

Before you depart from your country, you may be asked at the airport for your address in the USA. You will also need to fill this in on your landing card while on the airplane, before you arrive in the USA. If you are staying in a hotel, you should have the name of the hotel with you and give its address. If you are staying in the college rooms, the address where you will stay is:

Calvin College, 3201 Burton St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Arrival

International passengers must clear immigration and customs at their first landing in the United States. This will not be Grand Rapids.

While on the airplane going to the United States, you will be given a form to complete. If you have a visa, it will be a white I-94. If you are in the Visa Waiver Program, you will get a green I-94W. (See “Applying for a visa” for information on the Visa Waiver Program.) Every traveler must also complete a customs form.

When you arrive, you will first go through immigration. Have your passport and I-94 form ready. The immigration officer will scan your fingerprints and take your picture. He or she will then ask you a few questions, such as:

1. How long will you be staying?
2. What will you do here? Answer: I am attending an international church gathering
3. Will you do any work here? No. (If you preach, you cannot be paid for this! Your preaching will be a gift.)
4. Do you have anything with you to sell or give away? Answer: No, or “I have nothing to sell, but I have a few gifts for friends I may meet.”
5. Has anything changed since you received your visa – in family life, address, etc.? Just answer honestly.

After you go through passport control, then pick up your luggage and walk it through customs. After customs, there will be a place for you to hand your checked luggage back to the luggage system.

If you are asked for a contact person, you may list the UGC Coordinator:

Richard van Houten
2050 Breton Rd. SE, Ste 102
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Tel. 616-949-2910 (O) or 347-264-7400 (cell)

Trouble?

Airline travel does not always go as planned. If your flight is delayed or for some reason you cannot make the flight you planned to take, please try the following:

Tickets that are booked through Activa Travel will have contact information for Activa, and you may contact them about delays. Often they can help in rerouting your trip. If your experience is outside of normal office hours, Activa has provided a 24-hour number on your ticket where you can get help. Please use this number only after you have tried the office or sought help from the airlines. There is a small fee for each use.

You may also contact the coordinator by email or telephone. +1-616-949-2910 (office) or (cell) +1-347-264-7400.

Now, you have arrived in Grand Rapids! Look for the signs for the WCRC welcome area. We hope our friendly faces will be there to greet you and bring you safely to your residence and to the registration hall. Please call if for some reason we are not there to meet you.