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(X)

**Attendance:****Present:** S. Midge, K. Busman, J. Moak, K. McHeard, M. Rand, J. Burnetter**Absent With Notice:** J. Meyer, C. Troost**Guests:** John Compton, Lindsey De Kruif, Jonathan Vanderbeck

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**Call to Order** by President Midge at 11:06 AM.**Opening Prayer** was offered by K. McHeard.

**Clerk Items:** President Midge informed the committee of the resignation of C. Troost as Stated Clerk. President Midge noted that J. Vanderbeck would continue to assist in the role of Stated Clerk until the formal election of a new clerk at the February Classis meeting. President Midge recommended L. De Kruif to take the place of Carol Troost. Following a question from K. McHeard, it was clarified that the Executive Committee, not Ministry Oversight Committee 1 would be advancing this recommendation.

M/S to recommend Lindsey De Kruif as the sole candidate for the office of Stated Clerk at the February Classis meeting (**CARRIED**).

M/S to accept the resignation of Carol Troost as Stated Clerk (**CARRIED**).

President Midge announced that a formal recognition for Carol's years of service would happen at a later date.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Burnetter noted that we finished the year in good shape, due to not spending the line item amount for CRTC. Burnetter noted that he has not closed the books yet, due to two churches still being delinquent on 4Q classis assessments. Both churches have been notified and communicated with the Executive Committee that these payments will be coming ASAP.

**"In This Together For Good" Task Force (ITTFGTF) Report:** Guest J. Compton from the ITTFGTF came to present on the work that the Regional Synod of Albany has been working on. Compton noted that the task force is asking classes to deepen relationships, both internally, and with one another, to share space for innovation and conversations that would actually lead to tangible change. Compton provided questions for the Committee to consider (see attached) and wondered if the classis would consider having a "robust conversation" around these topics in the future. It was noted that in Schenectady Classis that we don't have the same level of desperation as other classes; that our classis is relatively healthy, but that this doesn't mean we should sit and be complacent. Ultimately it was decided that we would consider inviting representatives from the task force in the future, and that the Executive Committee would consider topics to have presented on.

**Committee Reports:**

**Ministry Oversight 1:** Chairperson K. McHeard provided a written report and highlighted a few points of note:

- McHeard has spoken with a few candidates about being nominated for Vice President and President. He suggested that he is confident he has someone lined up for Vice President, but not sure about President. He noted he had not yet talked to our current Vice President if he would like to be nominated.
- Continued difficulty around ideas for supervision of Preaching Elders, especially since the closure of CRTC.
- Suggested this could be a topic the ITTFGTF could look at helping with.
- Noted there is nothing about Preaching Elders on either the Regional Synod or denominational website.

**Ministry Oversight 2:** Chairperson K. Busman gave an oral report on the status of our two candidates.

- Met in person with Heather Kramer
  - The committee feels as if she has solidified her calling.
  - Kramer notes she still has a few years to go – this has always been the understanding.
  - Preaching a lot at New Baltimore Reformed Church.
- Setting up a digital meeting with Jeremy Bork
  - Graduating in May, will need to be examined by the whole classis.
- Overall notes that the committee is in good shape

**Church Oversight Committee:** Chairperson J. Moak gave a written report. Noted that continued conversations around Classis liaisons need to happen, in order that they not be viewed as “spies” but rather as a means of support. L. De Kruif noted that she is now the installed minister at Helderberg (on the written report it had been noted as pending).

**Search and Supervision:** Chairperson M. Rand gave an oral report and noted she will be including a written report for classis. She reports that all five churches that the committee oversees (Amity, Altamont, Ft. Miller, Scotia, and Trinity) are in good places. She noted that Ft. Miller has put together a profile that might need further review.

**Review of Consistorial Reports:** President Midge had each member of the Executive Committee review 3 or 4 of the Consistorial Reports and to report back to the large group of anything to note.

- West Glenville – it was noted that their financial numbers were missing.
- FRC Schenectady – Report was rejected due to it being incomplete.
- Cobblestone and Ft. Miller have not yet turned in reports – both churches are being followed up with.

**Bylaw Changes:** The Executive Committee reviewed six proposed changes to the bylaws of Schenectady Classis. These changes were brought by Rev. J. Vanderbeck. The Committee reviewed the changes and determined they were in order.

M/S to recommend the six proposed changes to the bylaws of Schenectady Classis to the Classis for vote and ratification (**CARRIED**).

**Overture to Classis:** The Executive Committee reviewed an overture from Revs. J. Vanderbeck, J. Fulkerson, L. De Kruif, and A. Reilly regarding implementing a background check procedure for Ministers, Preaching Elders, and Commissioned Pastors in our classis. The Committee reviewed the overture and determined it was in order.

M/S to recommend the overture to the Classis for vote at the February meeting (**CARRIED**).

**Proposed Overtures to General Synod:** The Executive Committee reviewed six potential overtures to send to the General Synod; five from the Classis of Mid-Hudson and one from J. Vanderbeck. The Committee agreed to continue to rework some of the overtures and make a decision on which ones to recommend to Classis for vote.

**Discussing Upcoming Classis Meeting Plans:** President Midge discussed what the upcoming plans would be for the Classis meeting. It was noted that the Constitutional Inquiries would happen at this time. It was also noted that further conversations around a Classis retreat could happen as well.

**New Business:** There was no new business brought before the Committee.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 1:16 PM.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck  
Clerk of Classis *Pro Tem*

**MINISTRY OVERSIGHT 1 : COMMISSIONING, CERTIFICATION, AND STAFFING**  
**A Committee of the Reverend Classis of Schenectady**  
**Report to Classis – February 2017**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bill Viscusi, First Term ends 2017  
Annie Reilly, First Term ends 2017, Clerk  
Art Hudak, First Term ends 2017 (requested to leave 2016)  
Kent McHeard, First Term ends, 2017, Chair

Meeting by Zoom.

The term limits are up for all members of the MO1 committee this year. This committee was formed three years ago with all new members, therefore the term expiration has come all at once. Rev. Annie Reilly has communicated her desire to step away from this committee. Mr. Bill Viscusi has not communicated his desire to remain for another term. Rev. Art Hudak communicated his desire to leave early in 2016. Kent McHeard is willing to remain for another term.

MO1 is working on the following areas;

Maintaining contact with our current Preaching Elders with regards to support and oversight

Examining Dr. Lou Smith who has applied to become a Preaching Elder from Lynwood.

Getting more members.

Finally,

The MO1 committee is interested in engaging in a conversation regarding a possible combining of MO1 and MO2 committees in Classis with two Chairs (a Chair for each committee) and a unifying of roles and responsibilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kent A. McHeard  
Chair

**Ministry Oversight Committee 2: Feb. 15, 2017**

- I. Opening prayer
- II. Committee roundtable to catch up with each other
  - a. Joyce beginning to look towards retirement
  - b. Kent regarding Waldensians in Uruguay
  - c. Garrett settling into his 3<sup>rd</sup> year @ Lynnwood
  - d. Jake about deploying a colleague overseas & now fulltime at Albany Med. Official graduation for CPE instructor will be May.
  - e. Lisa just returned from WCRC meetings in Germany.
  - f. Brad: his work with the Medical Mission in Bahrain. He also is again on the MFCA Board.
- III. Student Under Care: Jeremy Bork
  - a. Reviewed where he is in his studies and that we will be examining him at the May, 2017 meeting. Both Lisa and Kent have had contact with him in the last 3 months.
  - b. Will decide responsibilities for exam questions at a later meeting.
- IV. Student Under Care: Heather Kramer
  - a. We had a good discussion with Heather Kramer who was present for our meeting. She filled us in on the classes she has and currently is taking:
    - i. Gospel, Church, & Culture
    - ii. Building Inclusive Churches w/ people with disabilities
    - iii. Christian Ethics
  - b. Expressed frustration with her classmates some of whom share a very different mindset regarding ministry.
  - c. She has been "*battling conservative theology since starting at Western sometimes with spears and sometimes with hugs.*"
  - d. Heather started in 2012. Two years left. Still needs
    - i. Leadership
    - ii. Credo
    - iii. Pastoral Care
    - iv. Polity and Standards
  - e. She is happy to not rush through it and is appreciative of what she's learning.
  - f. Her vocation goals have evolved. While not wanting to give up totally on chaplaincy, but also has loved preaching.
  - g. She is preaching regularly at New Baltimore.
    - i. She has received good feedback from preaching at Lynnwood & Lisha's Kill as well.
  - h. What does Heather need from this committee? She missed checking in last year with this committee.
- V. Doug Vincent
  - a. Janet reported on his progress. He had approached the MO2 committee regarding coming under care, but he was directed to pursue becoming a preaching elder.
- VI. Closed with Prayer
- VII. Next meeting date is: Wednesday, 1:00 PM, March 22 at the Synod Office:
- VIII. Goal is to Zoom interview Jeremy Bork regarding his RCA History, Theology & Church Order

**Church Oversight Committee  
A Committee of the Reverend Classis of Schenectady  
Report to Classis – February 2017**

**Congregation – (Classis Liaison/Supervision) – Assigned Clergy**

1<sup>st</sup> Rotterdam (Woestina) – (Rev. Stacey Midge) – Under Rev. Kent McHeard  
1<sup>st</sup> Schenectady – (Rev. Dr. Scott DeBlock) – Under Rev. Dr. Bill Levering  
1<sup>st</sup> Scotia – (Cathy Lewis) – Rev. Lynn Bodden, Interim  
Altamont – (John Moak) – Rev. Roger Krutz – Interim  
Amity – (Rev. Kent McHeard) – Rev. John Hoeprich - Contract Minister  
Bacon Hill – (Nancy Purinton) – Under Rev. Janet Meyer Vincent  
Bellevue – (Rev. Stacey Midge) – Under Rev. Rich Scheenstra  
Christ Community – (Cathy Lewis) – Under Rev. Dr. Johan Bosman  
Cobblestone – (John Moak) – Under Rev. John Compton  
First Glenville – (Lew Kain) – under Rev. Jordan White  
Fort Miller – (Nancy Purinton/Richard Behrens) – Rev. Rich Hoffman - Interim  
Helderberg –(Lew Kain) –under Rev. Lindsey DeKruif  
Lisha's Kill – (Rev. Dr. Scott DeBlock) – Under Rev. Lisa Vander Wal  
Lynnwood – (John Moak) – Under Rev. Garret Szantner  
Niskayuna – (Rev. Stacey Midge) – Under Rev. Jason Fulkerson  
Old Saratoga – (Richard Behrens) – Under Rev. Joyce DeVelder

**Committee** - John Moak, Chairman; Lew Kain, Rev. Dr. Scott DeBlock, Rev. Stacey Midge, Cathy Lewis, Nancy Purinton, Richard Behrens.

**Notes:**

1. Fort Miller under supervision.
2. Amity Reformed under supervision.
3. Churches with interim ministers:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Scotia
  - Altamont
  - Fort Miller
4. Trinity Reformed under supervision.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Moak, CPE  
/w corrections

**SEARCH AND SUPERVISION COMMITTEE**  
**A Committee of the Reverend Classis of Schenectady**  
**Report to Classis – February 2017**

**Churches under Care**

**Amity:** Contract Pastor: Rev. John Hoeprich; Rev. Kent McHeard, Supervisor. The Pastoral Search Committee is actively involved in seeking a new pastor. Rev. Hoeprich has reduced his time, preaching two Sundays a month and leaving the remaining Sundays open for pulpit supply.

**Fort Miller:** Interim Pastor: Rev. Richard Hoffman; Supervisors: Revs. Joyce de Velder and Janet Meyer Vincent, Elders Richard Behrens and Nancy Purinton. The consistory has put together a church profile and extended Rev. Hoffman's contract. A building renovation will include a handicap-accessible bathroom and front entrance ramp as well as a private office and revamped meeting space.

**Scotia:** Intentional Interim Rev. Lynn Bodden; Rev. John Compton and Elder Miranda Rand, supervisors. Congregation has sound leadership, secure financial assets. A search committee has been formed, put together a church profile, posted their position on the RCA website and has received several applications for consideration.

**Altamont:** Intentional Interim Rev. Roger Krutz; Rev. Richard Scheenstra and Elder Randy Mix, supervisors. A search committee has formed, has received several profiles and completed its first round of interviews. The parsonage is in the process of a significant update. The renovation is expected to be completed mid-April.

**Trinity:** Contract Pastor Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck. Rev. Stacey Midge, Elder Miranda Rand, supervisors. Finances stable on bare-bones budget. Ministry continues with contract pastor and occasional pulpit supply. Policies to make church operations more functional have been put in place.

Respectfully submitted,  
Miranda Rand, Chair  
February 16, 2017





**SYNOD MINISTRIES BOARD SUMMARY**

- The Synod Ministries Board met at the Regional Synod Office on January 26, 2017.
- Tony Campbell (Associate General Secretary/Director of Mission Engagement), Kristen Van Kempen (Transformed and Transforming Coordinator), and Eliza Bast (Coordinator for Local Missional Engagement) joined us remotely. We shared the missional work of our congregations. They shared with us their idea for a “Day of Mission” in the Synod of Albany. A committee has been formed to start planning this. The event would probably occur sometime next year.
- The interfaith trip to Israel/Palestine will be February 16-27.
- The Pastors+Families Retreat will be February 21-23 and led by Mike and Sherri Meyer-Veen. There are still some spots available.
- The Regional Synod meeting will be April 30 – May 1 at Middleburgh Reformed Church. It will include a keynote address by Trisha Taylor about creating “holding environments” for difficult conversations.
- A Missional Marriage Retreat for those engaged in Ridder/Faithwalking will be held May 3-5.
- Faithwalking 101 – open to everyone – will be May 6-7 in Schoharie.
- There will be a Rochester-area Discipleship Learning Community. Start time is uncertain and recruitment is ongoing.
- The next session of Ridder Church Renewal will begin in May 2018.
- REACH Mission Trips will be hosting a workcamp in Columbia County July 23-29. The host school will be Ichabod Crane High School. The cost is \$419 per person. The Synod Ministries Board will provide a \$500 scholarship per church for up to six churches (\$3,000 total). Those six churches will not have to complete the grant request form – just indicate they want to participate. If more than six churches want to participate, the additional churches will have to complete the normal grant request form. A video featuring the kids from the Kinderhook Reformed Church group that attended in the past and an information packet will be available for distribution by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Patti Varga would serve as the contact person and work group coordinator as needed.
- Peter Cook, the executive director of the New York State Council of Churches met with us in person. The council has three foci – 1) They certify and support chaplains in our state prison system and other state institutions. 2) They

promote faith formation opportunities for high school students and young adults. 3) They help local churches and judicatories work ecumenically on a grassroots level to collaborate with other religious and secular partners to do justice. He shared with us our history of support and our current giving. He also shared a future learning event which will occur in early July – The Rural/Urban Divide in Politics and the Church.

- Abby Norton-Levering shared with us the Capital Region Theological Center dormancy/revisioning process. There currently are no staff. The board meets occasionally to decide on the next steps (if any) for CRTC.
- Abby also shared news about the Albany Synod Fellowship Program – an organized supportive learning process for new clergy. A planning team consisting of synod staff, church leaders, pastors, and educators will partner with classes, congregations, and Camp Fowler to create the program which they hope will begin in July 2017.

The Revs. Jonathan Vanderbeck, Lindsey De Kruif, Jason Fulkerson, and Annie Reilly respectfully overture the reverend Schenectady Classis to direct the Ministry Oversight Committee 1 & Ministry Oversight Committee 2 to develop a single, consistent Classis-wide policy that mandates background checks for all enrolled ministers within the classis, as well as all ministers, preaching elders, and commissioned pastors serving classis churches, with report back to the Classis in May 2017 for ratification.

**Reasons:**

- 1.) The Reformed Church in America does not currently require background checks for ministers.
- 2.) The classis is charged with the supervision of the enrolled ministers in its care, as well as the general superintendence of churches within its bounds. (BCO 1, II, 2, 2)
- 3.) The classis is charged with “regular and thorough supervision of commissioned preaching elders.” (BCO 1, II, 16, 4)
- 4.) The classis is charged with the supervision of commissioned pastors. (BCO 1, II, 17, 1)
- 5.) The bylaws of Schenectady Classis delegate the supervision of Ministers of Word and Sacrament to the Ministry Oversight Committee 2 (Bylaws of Schenectady Classis, Article X, Sec. 2a)
- 6.) The bylaws of Schenectady Classis delegate the supervision of preaching elders and commissioned pastors to the Ministry Oversight Committee 1 (Bylaws of Schenectady Classis, Article IX, Sec. 2a)
- 7.) The protection of children and the most vulnerable within our congregations should be a top priority for our classis.
- 8.) While churches may have their own individual background check policies for volunteers, it is important that the classis have a standard for the ministers, preaching elders, and commissioned pastors that it is directly responsible for supervising, in the event that a church does not have adequate policies.

### Update on Jacob's Well

Last fall the classis executive committee approved a \$25,000 grant application from Bellevue Reformed Church to the regional synod for funding to support our intern program at Jacob's Well, Bellevue Reformed Church's neighborhood café. The grant was approved by the synod this past November. They asked us if we would give updates to you that we would in turn pass on to the synod. Since most of you did not see the original grant application, let me offer a little history.

In May, 2013 Bellevue Reformed Church purchased a building two lots over from our church facility. It contains two side-by-side storefronts and four apartments. We purchased the building for \$89,000, with the entire amount coming out of our discretionary endowment fund. This was quite an adventure of faith, even for our normally missionally-minded community. Our endowment is relatively small (and now smaller). Because of some unusual circumstances, our consistory had to decide whether to purchase the property within 24 hours of hearing about its availability. During a hastily called meeting, many concerns and hard questions were voiced and raised. Gradually the mood shifted from skepticism to a sense that God was calling us to take on this new venture (without even knowing what we would do with the building!).

Seven months later, Ruth's Place – our neighborhood thrift store – was birthed. It is open two days a week, Thursday and Saturday. It sells good quality clothing and some household articles at prices far below most thrift stores. Our neighbors love it. Many talk about the atmosphere they feel when they walk in. Some are surprisingly forthcoming about their personal struggles. Many are quite open to being prayed for.

A year and a half ago, Jacob's Well – our neighborhood café – opened its doors. We're open Wednesday evenings, Thursday afternoon and evening, Friday afternoons, and Saturday morning/early afternoon. Until recently we staffed both ministries entirely with volunteers – none of us with a background in food service! It's been quite a ride, but we are finding our way. We keep experimenting with menu and hours. Our prices barely cover our food costs, but provide affordable meals for our neighbors. Most importantly, we've had the opportunity to get to know many of our neighbors. Several customers from Ruth's Place and Jacob's Well are now attending worship on Sunday mornings. (A person who came to us through Ruth's Place is one of the core team members of Jacob's Well.) Several middle-schoolers from the neighborhood hang out here regularly. A few of them also attend our church and participate in City Life, a ministry of Youth for Christ that meets in our building.

Frankly, we feel we are just at the beginning of realizing this ministry's potential. We envision discussion groups, art groups, maybe an Alpha Course or Q Place, and eventually even the possibility of a worshipping community meeting here.

People told us at the beginning that it wasn't realistic to try running a restaurant with just volunteers. We're finding that to be true. Our volunteer ranks have also been thinned by some physical and mental health issues. It's important to note that these are not our only outreach

ministries. We have a strong Kids Hope USA mentoring program that connects members from our congregation with students at a local elementary school. We've had a basketball ministry (that includes spiritual input and discussion) with about 25-30 young men (and a couple of young women) from the surrounding communities. We are an urban, multiracial congregation, with many children and young people coming to Sunday worship, Sunday School and midweek activities without their parents. So the lines between in-reach and outreach get pretty blurred here.

The specific purpose for this grant was to provide funding for "interns" to help us with our staffing needs until we are able to develop a self-sustaining business model for our café, Jacob's Well. We experimented this past summer with having two young interns (a nineteen and a twenty-four year old) work some of our shifts (a total of 23 hours a week). This not only helped with our staffing needs, but provided opportunities for young people to learn skills, grow in faith, and learn how to work with a ministry team.

Arthur, one of our interns, came to Christ through our basketball ministry. He's faced tremendous challenges from early childhood, his father having killed his mother when Arthur was only one and a half years old – while he was in the adjoining bathroom, shut in with his cousins. His father is in prison. His grandmother raised him. He is currently living with one of our newest "members" (who is actually a member of a local Episcopal Church, a former missionary to Liberia, and a recent widower who loves being at BRC.) Arthur also works at Stewart's down the road, helps oversee our basketball ministry, works with City Life, and knows a ton of people in the neighborhood.

Aliajah, another intern, often walks to Jacob's Well from an apartment on State Street. With no father in his life, with an older brother with a cocaine habit, a younger brother on the autism spectrum, and a mother who has to work long hours to provide the basics, Aliajah faces significant challenges. At Jacob's Well he is loved, he's being taught how to gather in his attention, he's learning how to cook and clean, and he's discovered a spiritual gift for connecting quite quickly and personally with customers who engage him in conversation. In addition to working at Jacob's Well Aliajah is working on getting his GED through a program called YouthBuild.

Carlos, a third intern, was hired after the synod grant was approved. With some assistance from a member of another Reformed Church who met with Carlos at Jacob's Well, Carlos has since found full-time paid employment at a car dealership in the capital region. His employer told the RCA member this past week that he would love to have "seven Carlos" working for him.

Since Carlos left, his younger sister has started volunteering, hoping eventually to become an intern herself. She's gotten into quite a bit of trouble in the past, but has been working very hard at Jacob's Well. Unfortunately, she hurt her knee recently, which required surgery. We look forward to having her back and possibly becoming an intern. (In the meantime, one of her friends has started to volunteer.)

Jael, our fourth intern, coming from a much more stable home environment, started attending our church about a year ago, mainly because she wanted to be a part of a

congregation that was more community-minded. In addition to her work at Jacob's Well, Jael has been pouring herself into the lives of several of the younger girls that are attending our church. (For example, she had a Valentine's Day party for them at Jacob's Well.) She takes them to worship and often spends Sunday afternoon with them. Jael now has another full-time job, but continues to volunteer at Jacob's Well and remains very involved with the young girls. She also helps out with a weekly Bible study for the young adults in our church.

At this point in my writing my report, Arthur knocks on my door enthusiastically reporting that they were really busy today at Jacob's Well, and that he had a great team working with him. He also told me about a conversation he had yesterday with Ted, one of our 60-year-old neighbors (a man who used to tell me he was a Satanist, but doesn't actually believe in God or Satan). They were able to share life stories and realized that they had a lot in common. I've seen Ted mellow a lot since we first got to know him about 3 years ago. He says he enjoys watching the variety of people that walk out of our church on Sunday mornings. He thinks Jesus would be pleased.

We think so, too.

Rich Scheenstra

Summary of Proposed Bylaw Changes:

- 1.) Changing responsibility of nominations from a nonexistent committee.
- 2.) Succession of office.
- 3.) Requirements for election
- 4.) Removal of confusing language re: succession of office.
- 5.) Appointment of *pro tempore* officers.
- 6.) Boundaries of the floor.



Overture to Schenectady Classis regarding the amending of bylaws.

1.) The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck respectfully overtures the Reverend Schenectady Classis to approve the following change to the bylaws of The Classis of Schenectady and to record the approval so that the Classis may take the final declarative vote at its stated session in May, (underlines are additions, deletions are ~~stricken~~):

Section 4.02 Election of officers shall be undertaken as follows:

(...)

- (c) A single slate of candidates shall be presented by the ~~Human Resources Committee~~ Ministry Oversight 1 Committee. Additional nominations for each office may be made from the floor, but shall be limited to those who are present.

(...)

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Reasons:

1. Our bylaws do not define a Human Resources Committee. This role of nominations is solely the responsibility of the Ministry Oversight 1 Committee.

Overture to Schenectady Classis regarding the amending of bylaws.

2.) The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck respectfully overtures the Reverend Schenectady Classis to approve the following change to the bylaws of The Classis of Schenectady and to record the approval so that the Classis may take the final declarative vote at its stated session in May (underlines are additions, deletions are ~~stricken~~):

Section 4.02 Election of officers shall be undertaken as follows:

(...)

- (d) If the President is completing a first term, they shall be the sole nominated candidate for office of President. If the President is completing a second term or does not wish to be reelected to a second term, the Vice President shall be the sole nominated candidate for the office of President. If the Vice President does not wish to be nominated for the office of President, the Ministry Oversight 1 Committee shall then provide a single candidate nomination for the office of President.

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Reasons:

1. Currently, our bylaws do not provide for the Vice President to be the sole candidate for the office of President should that office need to be fulfilled. This is not consistent with the nominating process for President at either the Regional Synod or General Synod (*Bylaws of the Regional Synod of Albany*, Article 3, Section 3b & *BCO 3.1.2.2a*).
2. The bylaws of Schenectady Classis already allow the Vice President to assume the duties of the President if the President is absent (Section 4.06a) and to become the President if the office of the President is vacant (Section 4.04a).
3. Rather than having the presiding officer of the Classis be someone with no experience on the Executive Committee, it would make sense to have the Vice President, who has already operated on that committee and perhaps has actually assumed presidential duties, to be the nominee.
4. If the Classis does not wish for the Vice President to become the President, the Classis retains the right to vote in the negative.

Overture to Schenectady Classis regarding the amending of bylaws.

3.) The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck respectfully overtures the Reverend Schenectady Classis to approve the following change to the bylaws of The Classis of Schenectady and to record the approval so that the Classis may take the final declarative vote at its stated session in May (underlines are additions, deletions are ~~stricken~~):

Section 4.02 Election of officers shall be undertaken as follows:

(...)

- (e) An affirmative vote of the majority of the enrolled ministers and elder delegates present shall be required to elect an officer. If the vote is not affirmative, nominations may be received from the floor. If more than one nomination is present, the nominee who receives a plurality of the votes shall then be presented as a single-slate candidate. The classis shall then vote on this single candidate, with an affirmative vote of the majority of the enrolled ministers and elder delegates present required to elect the nominee.

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Reasons:

1. Our bylaws do not state the requirements for election, particularly if more than one candidate is nominated (by way of floor nominations or if the single-slate candidate is voted down).
2. Our bylaws also do not account for what happens if the single-slate nominee from the Ministry Oversight 1 Committee is not approved.

Overture to Schenectady Classis regarding the amending of bylaws.

4.) The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck respectfully overtures the Reverend Schenectady Classis to approve the following change to the bylaws of The Classis of Schenectady and to record the approval so that the Classis may take the final declarative vote at its stated session in May (underlines are additions, deletions are ~~stricken~~):

Section 4.03 Terms of office are as follows:

- (a) The terms of office for President and Vice President are one year ~~or until a successor is chosen~~. The President and Vice President may be reelected to a second consecutive term, but not to a third consecutive term.
- (b) The terms of office for Stated Clerk and Treasurer are three years, ~~or until a successor is chosen~~. Each may be elected to consecutive terms.

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Reasons:

1. These phrases are unnecessary and confusing. This implies that the officers could simply be replaced. There is a process in place for filling vacancies as outlined in Section 4.04.

Overture to Schenectady Classis regarding the amending of bylaws.

5.) The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck respectfully overtures the Reverend Schenectady Classis to approve the following change to the bylaws of The Classis of Schenectady and to record the approval so that the Classis may take the final declarative vote at its stated session in May (underlines are additions, deletions are ~~stricken~~):

Section 4.04 Vacancies will be filled as followed:

(...)

(c) The Executive Committee may appoint a person to fill the role of Stated Clerk or Treasurer *pro tempore* if the position becomes vacant between sessions.

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Reasons:

1. In the event these positions become vacant, there are often duties that the office of the Stated Clerk or Treasurer may need to fulfill. Calling the entire classis together to elect a new officer may not be practical.
2. These positions often require training. Having someone operating *pro tempore* while a long term person is being trained is helpful.

Overture to Schenectady Classis regarding the amending of bylaws.

6.) The Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck respectfully overtures the Reverend Schenectady Classis to approve the following change to the bylaws of The Classis of Schenectady and to record the approval so that the Classis may take the final declarative vote at its stated session in May (underlines are additions, deletions are ~~stricken~~):

Section 5.03 All enrolled ministers and elder delegates shall have privilege of voice and of vote.

Section 5.04 All preaching elders, associates in ministry, students under care, licensed candidates, and retired ministers shall have privilege of voice, but *not* of vote.

Section 5.05 Invited guests and all others present may be granted the privilege of the floor with a vote of 2/3 of the classis members present.

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Reasons:

1. Our bylaws currently do not delineate who has privilege of the floor and who has privilege of vote.
2. The Book of Church Order only speaks to Associates in Ministry regarding privilege of floor, not preaching elders, students under care, licensed candidates, or retired ministers. (*BCO*, 1.II.6.5).
3. There is no provision for granting privilege to the floor to invited guests in our bylaws.

Summary of Proposed Overtures:

- 1.) Implementation of learning time.
- 2.) Increased communication
- 3.) Accessibility of GS Minutes

**1.) The Reverend Schenectady Classis respectfully overtures General Synod 2017 to instruct the Commission on Church Order and the General Synod Council to create and implement a process of learning during all-synod advisory committee time at General Synod 2018. This learning process would include information on the RCA's Constitution and RCA polity.**

Reasons:

1. In the midst of discussion around various overtures and constitutional amendments, it has become clear that many delegates are unclear about matters of our denominational polity. This is due to a variety of reasons, including the fact that it has been many years since many of our ministers have taken polity courses, that elder delegates often never take polity courses at all, and that constant changes to the Book of Church Order have led to delegates often not having the present awareness regarding matters of polity and governance.
2. Providing continuing education for our delegates is beneficial to both the process of the General Synod and for the Church as a whole.



**2.) The Reverend Schenectady Classis respectfully overtures the General Synod to instruct the General Synod Council to identify areas in which the community and communication across the Reformed Church in America has broken down, as well as the consequences to which this breakdown has led in regards to the process of governance, with report back to the General Synod in 2018 with recommendations to address these matters.**

Reasons:

1. The Classis of Schenectady recognizes that there has been a fundamental breakdown in communication, both within the General Synod itself, and throughout the denomination as a whole, and that this has had a negative affect on relationships within the denomination.
2. Reformed assemblies have two basic, deeply related functions: *koinonia* (fellowship, relationship, community) and *episcopate* (oversight, governance). The governance function of the assembly works only to the extent that its community is healthy. We see that the General Synod is suffering in its governance capacity because its community is suffering. We believe that this phenomenon is present both in the life of the RCA as a whole and in the life of the synod as an assembly. We believe the synod has the capacity and responsibility to address both.

**3.) The Reverend Schenectady Classis respectfully overtures the General Synod to direct denominational staff to make all Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod (hereinafter referred to as “the minutes”) available on the denominational website, for completion by December 2017.**

Reasons:

- 1.) Currently, only the minutes from years 2016-1995 are available on the website. Previous years are only available in print, which are not easily accessible.
- 2.) In a denomination as old as ours, it is important that we know and remember our history. Having accessible means to revisit our history is important.

MINUTES  
CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY  
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

AMITY REFORMED CHURCH  
SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK  
OCTOBER 25, 2016

CHURCHES:  
1<sup>st</sup> Schenectady

ELDERS  
Brad Lewis

PASTORS

Niskayuna  
Helderberg  
Old Saratoga  
1<sup>st</sup> Rotterdam  
Amity  
Glenville  
Fort Miller

Eleanor VanPelt

Daniel Carlson  
Stacey Midge  
Jason Fulkerson

1<sup>st</sup> Scotia  
Bacon Hill  
2<sup>nd</sup> Rotterdam  
Lisha's Kill  
Bellevue  
Altamont

Patrick Woomer  
Ken Brittain  
Georgia Beatty

Joyce deVelder  
Kent McHeard  
John Hoeprich (MC)  
Jordan White

Trinity  
(MC)  
Lynnwood  
Christ Community

Malcom Sanders  
Mana Anderson  
David Schalekamp  
James Pettis, Jr.  
David Parker

Lynn Bodden (INT)  
Janet Vincent  
John Compton

Bill Book  
Kitt Jackson  
Rich Lasselle  
Laurie Lynn Lumbra

Richard Scheenstra

Bill Ports  
Jody O'Neill

Jonathan Vanderbeck

Garret Szanter  
Johan Bosman  
Lindsay DeKruif (MC)

**SPECIALIZED MINISTERS**

Kent Busman

Jake Marvel

Annie Reilly

**RETIRED MINISTERS**

Alan Jager

**STUDENTS UNDER CARE**

Heather Kramer

**COMMISSIONED PREACHING ELDERS, ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY, AND/OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Kay Grosch (Church Supervision)

Kitt Jackson (PE)  
Miranda Rand (PE)

Clara Lasselle (PE)

**GUESTS:** Robert Hoffman, Regional Synod of Albany, Nancy Ryan, President of RSA, Doug Vincent.

**CLASSIS OFFICERS**

President  
Vice-President  
Clerk  
Treasurer  
Church Oversight  
Ministry Oversight I  
Ministry Oversight II  
Operations  
Search and Supervision

Rev. Stacey Midge  
Rev. Kent Busman  
Carol Troost  
Jim Burnetter  
John Moak  
Rev. Kent McHeard  
Rev. Kent Busman  
vacant  
Miranda Rand

1<sup>st</sup> Schenectady  
Camp Fowler  
1<sup>st</sup> Schenectady  
Christ Community  
Niskayuna  
1<sup>st</sup> Rotterdam  
Camp Fowler  
Lisha's Kill

**Worship:** Amity Reformed Church led worship

**Call to Order, Presentation of Agenda:** President Stacey Midge called the assembly to order. The agenda was approved as presented.

**Declaration of a quorum and appointment of tellers:** Stacey declared a quorum and appointed tellers, Brad Lewis and Jonathan Vanderbeck.

**Approval of May minutes (Appendix A)** The minutes were approved.

**Special Session for Jordan White (Appendix B)**

**Special Session for Jason White (Appendix C)**

**Executive Committee Minutes for Information (Appendix D)**

While the executive committee reviews the by-laws, all responsibilities of the committee responsibilities will be met.

**Reception of reports by consent (M/S/P to receive all of the reports)**

Search and Supervision (Appendix E)

Ministry Oversight I (Appendix F )

Ministry Oversight II (Appendix G)

Church Oversight (Appendix H )

**Clerk Items**

Annual Reports, Consistorial Questions CRF's will be distributed by mail. Hard copies are due to the clerk at the February meetin. Consistorial questions will be completed at the February meeting.

Appointments to SMB ( ) and ASEC (Laurie Lumbra)

Delegates to Regional Synod, May 1, Middleburg, General Synod, June 8-13, Holland,

MI: Carol and the executive committee will continue to approach possible delegates.

Web pages – Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck (Appendix I)

**Treasurer's Report:**

The correct financials will be sent out and approved at the February meeting.

Budget (hard copy) Jim Burnetter reviewed the budget. M/S/P to approve the 2017 budget.

**General Synod Report:** Delegates Stacey Midge, Kent McHeard, Carol Jackson, Brad Lewis. Attending: Jonathan Vanderbeck. Each delegate shared one specific thing about their experience. All agreed there was a great deal of tension at the meeting and the issue of same sex marriage and the proposed changes to the BCO.

**Classis Discussion:** Proposed BCO changes and Regional Synod FAQ paper.

FAQ: 2016-general-synod-faq one the [www.albanysynod.org](http://www.albanysynod.org) site

The delegates broke into discussion groups and reported on their reaction to each of the proposed changes to the BCO.

**Old Business:**

**New Business:** Altamont presented a proposal for a mission grant to establish a community dinner to be presented to the Regional Synod for approval. M/S/P

**Celebrations, Concerns, Adjournment, Prayer**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Carol Troost**

**Stated Clerk, Classis of Schenectady.**

MINUTES SPECIAL SESSION  
CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY  
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

HELDERBERG REFORMED CHURCH  
SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK  
NOVEMBER, 2016

CHURCHES:  
1<sup>st</sup> Schenectady

ELDERS  
Brad Lewis

PASTORS

Niskayuna  
Helderberg  
Old Saratoga  
1<sup>st</sup> Rotterdam  
Amity  
Glenville  
Fort Miller

Joan Healy

Daniel Carlson  
Stacey Midge  
Jason Fulkerson  
Lindsay DeKruif

Kent McHeard

1<sup>st</sup> Scotia  
Bacon Hill  
2<sup>nd</sup> Rotterdam  
Lisha's Kill  
Bellevue  
Altamont

Kitt Jackson  
Rich Lasselle

John Compton

Trinity  
Lynnwood  
Christ Community

Jonathan VanderBeck  
Garret Szanter

**SPECIALIZED MINISTERS**

Annie Reilly

**RETIRED MINISTERS**

Craig Hoffman

Jan-Luben Hoffman

**COMMISSIONED PREACHING ELDERS, ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY, AND/OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Kay Grosch (Church Supervision)      Kitt Jackson (PE)      Clara Lasselle (PE)      John Moak (Chair, CO),  
Miranda Rand (Chair, Supervision), Carol Troost (Clerk)

The meeting was called to order with prayer by President Stacey Midge.

M/S/P to approve the order of worship for the installation of Lindsay DeKruif to the Helderberg Reformed Church.

M/S/P to adjourn to the sanctuary for the service and benediction.

Submitted,

Carol Troost, Clerk