

MO1 Report

Rev. Kent McHeard and Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck met via phone. We reviewed the written preaching elder examination for Dr. Lou Smith. By unanimous consent, the committee brings the following recommendation to the Classis:

R-1: To sustain the examination of Dr. Lou Smith in the area of RCA Doctrinal Standards, and further, to commission candidate Smith as a preaching elder in the Reverend Schenectady Classis for a period of two years, with authorization to preach anywhere within the bounds of Schenectady Classis and at the invitation of other churches within the regional Synod of Albany.

We also have realized that all our preaching elders need to be recommissioned, as it has been over two years since their last commissioning. As such, the committee brings the following recommendation to the Classis:

R-2: To commission Miranda Rand, John Moak, Clara Lasselle, and Kitt Jackson as preaching elders of the Reverend Schenectady Classis for a period of two years, with authorization to preach anywhere within the bounds of Schenectady Classis and at the invitation of other churches within the regional Synod of Albany.

The committee wishes to thank the classis as it assumes that the MO1 committee in this form will cease to exist following the adoption of the bylaw changes.

Respectfully,

Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck
MO1 Chair

Proposed Changes
to the Bylaws of Schenectady Classis
February 2018
Second Vote for Adoption

The Executive Committee of Schenectady Classis recommends the following changes to the Bylaws of Schenectady Classis.

The following will be struck out and replaced with text below. Subsequent articles will be renumbered accordingly.

Article VII. Committees of Classis

VII.01 The permanent committees of the classis are the:

- ~~(a) Operations Committee~~
- ~~(b) Ministry Oversight Committee 1: Commissioning, Certification and Staffing~~
- ~~(c) Ministry Oversight Committee 2: Licensure, Ordination and Care~~
- ~~(d) Church Oversight Committee~~
- ~~(e) Pastoral Search and Supervision Committee~~

- (a) **Ministry Oversight Committee: Commissioning, Certification, Licensure, Ordination**
- (b) **Church Oversight and Supervision Committee**

VII.02 The duties of the permanent committees:

- (a) The permanent committees assist classis in the fulfillment of its constitutional responsibilities. These by-laws assign specific areas of responsibility for this assistance to the permanent committees below.
- (b) The permanent committees are also responsible for any other matters assigned to them by classis.

V.II.03 Membership and Terms of Office

- (a) The members of the permanent committees are those active confessing members of classis churches or enrolled ministers appointed by the President, ~~except that members of the Operations Committee are not appointed but are elected by classis at the October stated session upon nomination by the President, and except that membership on the Pastoral Search~~ **Church Oversight** and Supervision Committee is limited to elders or enrolled ministers.

- (b) The terms of office for permanent committee members are three years, ~~except that the terms of office for members of the Operations Committee are five years, and except that the terms of office for members of the Pastoral Search~~ **Church Oversight** and Supervision Committee are three years or longer, as indicated in Section 12.01.b. ~~Permanent committee as~~ **indicated below**. Permanent committee members may be appointed to consecutive terms.

Proposed Changes
to the Bylaws of Schenectady Classis
February 2018
Second Vote for Adoption

(...)

~~Article VIII. Operations Committee~~

(Strike the entirety of Article 8 and its sections, renumber accordingly).

IX. ~~Ministry Oversight Committee 1: Commissioning, Certification and Staffing~~

~~IX.1. Membership~~

- ~~(a) The Ministry Oversight Committee 1 shall consist of six members, including the chairperson.~~
- ~~(b) The terms of office of the six members will be staggered so that two members will be appointed or reappointed each year.~~

~~IX.2. The duties of the Ministry Oversight Committee 1 are to:~~

- ~~(a) Assist classis in fulfilling the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* regarding the:
 - Commissioning and supervision of Preaching Elders.
 - Commissioning and supervision of Commissioned Pastors.
 - Certification and supervision of Associates in Ministry.~~
- ~~(b) Present a single slate of candidates for classis officers at the May stated session of classis or as otherwise required.~~
- ~~(c) Keep current a data base of people eligible to serve on the permanent and special committees of classis for use by the Executive Committee.~~

X. ~~The Ministry Oversight Committee 2: Licensure, Ordination and Care~~

~~X.1. Membership~~

- ~~(a) The Ministry Oversight Committee 2 shall consist of six members, including the chairperson.~~
- ~~(b) The terms of office of the six members will be staggered so that two members will be appointed or reappointed each year.~~

~~X.2. The duties of the Ministry Oversight Committee 2 are to:~~

- ~~(a) Assist classis in fulfilling the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* regarding the:
 - Supervision of Students of Theology.
 - Certificates of Fitness for Ministry
 - Supervision of Licensure and Ordination~~

Proposed Changes
to the Bylaws of Schenectady Classis
February 2018
Second Vote for Adoption

- ~~Reception of Ministers and Licensed Candidates of other denominations.~~
 - ~~Supervision of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.~~
- (b) ~~Recommend minimum standards of clergy compensation to the classis at the October stated session.~~
- (c) ~~Assist the classis in providing pastoral care for its enrolled ministers and their families.~~

XI. Church Oversight Committee

XI.1. Membership

- (a) ~~The Church Oversight Committee will consist of six members, including the chairperson.~~
- (b) ~~The terms of office of the six members will be staggered so that two members will be appointed or reappointed each year.~~

XI.2. The duties of the Church Oversight Committee are to:

- (a) ~~Assist classis in fulfilling the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* regarding the superintendence of the churches.~~
- (b) ~~Arrange for a minister of classis to superintend the dissolution of a pastoral relationship.~~
- (c) ~~Review the answers given by the ministers and elder delegates to the annual constitutional questions, arrange for timely and appropriate classical response, and present a report to classis at the May stated session.~~
- (d) ~~Meet with the consistory of any church that does not stay current with its assessments or does not fulfill the *Constitution's* or classis' minimum requirements for clergy compensation.~~
- (e) ~~Receive and review the requests of consistories that seek financial help and bring advise to the classis.~~

XII. Pastoral Search and Supervision Committee

XII.1. Membership

- (a) ~~The Pastoral Search and Supervision Committee will consist of nine members: the chairperson, who may be either a minister or an elder, plus four ministers and four elders who comprise four minister/elder teams~~
- (b) ~~The terms of office of the members will be staggered so that the members of each minister/elder team have concurrent terms. Moreover, the terms of office of a minister and elder actually serving as a team supervising a search will be extended until the search is completed.~~

XII.2. The duties of the Pastoral Search and Supervision Committee are to:

Proposed Changes
to the Bylaws of Schenectady Classis
February 2018

Second Vote for Adoption

- (a) ~~Advise the President on the appointment of supervisors for consistories without an installed senior pastor.~~
- (b) ~~Assist a consistory without an installed senior or sole pastor in contracting for interim pastoral services.~~
- (c) ~~Advise classis whenever a consistory seeks to enter into a contract for ministerial services.~~
- (d) ~~Assist the Search Committees of churches seeking a senior or sole pastor according to the most recent Pastoral Search Handbook published by the Reformed Church in America.~~
- (e) ~~Provide for a minister and elder of classis to attend meetings of consistories without installed senior or sole pastors.~~
- (a) ~~Serve as the agent of classis in arranging the installation of any pastor.~~

To be replaced with:

IX. The Ministry Oversight Committee: Commissioning, Certification, Licensure, Ordination

IX.1. Membership

- (a) The Ministry Oversight Committee shall consist of 5-7 members.
- (b) At least one member shall be a lay leader as defined below
- (c) The terms of office shall be 3 year terms. These may be renewed and/or be staggered to allow for continuation of leadership.

IX.2. The duties of the Ministry Oversight Committee are:

- (a) Assist classis in fulfilling the requirements of the Book of Church Order regarding the supervision of Students of Theology.
 - Certificates of Fitness for Ministry
 - Supervision of Licensure and Ordination
- (b) Assist class in fulfilling the requirements of the Book of Church Order regarding the supervision of Preaching Elders, Commissioned Pastors, and Associates in Ministry.
 - Commissioning and supervision of Preaching Elders.
 - Commissioning and supervision of Commissioned Pastors.
 - Certification and supervision of Associates in Ministry

X. Church Oversight and Supervision Committee

X.1. Membership

Proposed Changes
to the Bylaws of Schenectady Classis
February 2018
Second Vote for Adoption

- (a) The committee will consist of a chairperson appointed by the Classis Executive Committee. The chairperson shall delegate from within Classis, a sufficient number of supervisory teams to meet the needs of consistories within the Classis.
 - (b) The term of office of the Chairperson shall be renewable in 3 year increments. The number of active supervision teams will be based on need, as determined by events.
- X.2. The duties of the chairperson are to:
- (a) Assist classis in fulfilling the requirements of the Book of Church Order regarding the Superintendence of the Churches (Article 7).
 - (b) Appoint a minister from Classis to supervise the dissolution of a pastoral relationship.
 - (c) Advise the Classis Executive Committee on the appointment of supervisory teams for consistories without an installed pastor.
 - (d) Advise the supervisory teams assisting consistories without an installed pastor in contracting for interim pastoral services.
 - (e) Advise the Classis Executive Committee, via the Classis Clerk, when a consistory seeks to enter into a contract for pastoral services.
 - (f) Oversee supervisory teams who attend consistory and Search Committee meetings of churches without an installed pastor.
- X.3. Duties of a Supervisory Team
- (a) Supervisory teams will consist of two members each; one Minister of Word and Sacrament and one Elder.
 - (b) The terms of office of supervisory team members shall run concurrently; beginning at the time a pastoral relationship is dissolved and ending when the call letter for a new pastor is approved by the Classis Executive Committee.

CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY

REPORT: SEARCH AND SUPERVISION COMMITTEE, February, 2018

Churches under Supervision

AMITY: Contract Pastor Rev. John Hoeprich, Search Committee continues to be active. The Congregation is exploring the Commissioned Pastor route with one of its Elders.

Supervision: Rev. Kent McHeard

FORT MILLER: Contract Pastor Rev. Richard Hoffman. Search Committee active. Consistory is committed to RSA Fellowship Program sharing a Fellow (Jennifer Legg) with Bacon Hill and Old Saratoga.

Supervision: Rev. Joyce deVelder and Rev. Janet Vincent; Elders Nancy Purinton and Richard Behrens.

TRINITY: Contract Pastor Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck.

Supervision: Elder Miranda Rand

COBBLESTONE: Contract with Classis Student-Under-Care Ms. Heather Kramer for pastoral services. Consistory is assessing whether to invite Rev. Rett Zabriskie for consultancy services in order to provide interim services to help the congregation determine its character and direction for future ministry.

Supervision: Rev. Daniel Carlson

Respectfully submitted, John Moak, Chair

February, 2018

Report of the Ad-Hoc Overtures and Judicial Business Committee January 27, 2018 – 10 AM, Union St. Café, Schenectady NY

PRESENT: M. van Maastricht, L. De Kruif, J. Vanderbeck

Committee Composition and Purpose: This committee was formed by the direction of the President of Schenectady Classis, Kent Busman, at the stated meeting of the executive committee of the Schenectady Classis on November 2, 2017, at the request of executive committee member Jonathan Vanderbeck. The president subsequently appointed the Revs. Lindsey De Kruif, Matthew van Maastricht, and Jonathan Vanderbeck to serve on the committee and appointed Rev. van Maastricht to serve as acting chairperson. The committee's stated purpose is to prepare a report for the classis with recommendations on how to vote on proposed changes to the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America and to consider any proposed overtures to send to the regional Synod or General Synod.

The committee met over breakfast on January 27 to consider both the proposed changes to the *Constitution* of the Reformed Church in America and a possible overture that M. van Maastricht had brought. Please note that while the committee will be offering advice on how to vote, that the classis will properly be voting on whether to accept the changes themselves. This has caused confusion in the past – for example, if the committee advises voting NO on a change, the classis votes on the change itself, NOT on accepting the advice. As such, these recommendations do not come as formal motions before the body but are instead offered in an advisory capacity.

Proposed Change #1 – Regarding “Fuller Integration of the Commissioned Pastor into the Polity of the Reformed Church in America”

The advice of the committee is to vote **NO** on Proposed Change #1

Reasons:

1. The language of these proposed changes separate commissioned pastors from that of their office of elder; it sees the two as separate entities. At the same time, it allows the commissioned pastor to serve in many ways that a Minister of Word and Sacrament does, but without all the requirements of a Minister. These proposed changes further confuse the offices and place commissioned pastors in a sort of 2nd – Tier status; neither Minister nor elder.
2. The committee is concerned at how the use of commissioned pastors are being seen as a way to skirt the more rigorous requirements of a seminary education. While some may assert that the commissioned pastor process can be more easily tailored to individuals who come from different backgrounds (financial, racial/ethnic, etc), it concerns this

committee that rather than holding our existing denominational institutions accountable for culturally competent education that instead the commissioned pastor position is attempting to become a more accessible route. This also has the potential to create a 2nd – Tier status between those with privilege and those without.

Proposed Change #2 – Regarding “Furloughing Missionaries”

The committee offers no advice on Proposed Change #2.

Reasons:

1. The committee notes that this is a helpful change. Yet the change is not simply editorial.
2. The original wording of the section states:

*The furloughing missionary **with at least five years of service in the field** shall be eligible for appointment to the General Synod from the classis of membership once during each furlough and shall not be counted as one of the regular delegates of that classis. (BCO 1, IV, 3, 5, emphasis added by committee)*

Whereas the new section states:

The classis may appoint as a delegate one of its members who is a missionary on home assignment at the time of General Synod. The missionary delegate shall not be counted as one of the regular delegates of that classis and may serve as a missionary delegate only once every five years.

The committee notes that the new language does not connect length of service with that of eligibility for assignment. In other words, a new missionary who has only served for six months but might be home during General Synod could serve as a delegate and then simply have to wait five years for a next appointment. There is nothing that says the missionary must serve in the field for five years at a time.

The committee is not able to ascertain whether or not this was the intended purpose of the change, nor does it offer advice on whether or not this is a good change.

Proposed Change #3 – Regarding “Supersession of a Consistory”

The advice of the committee is to vote **YES** on Proposed Change #3

Reasons:

1. It clarifies the relationship between the installed minister and the call, if supersession were to happen.
2. The committee noted that while the disillusionment of call may not be the ideal outcome, it provides clarity, which is what the proposed change was asking for.

3. It was noted that the classis would want to handle this matter sensitively and consider extending a contract to the minister to continue services if appropriate.

Proposed Change #4 – Regarding “Definition of Minister of Word and Sacrament”

The advice of the committee is to vote **YES** on Proposed Change #4

Reasons:

1. This change makes clear that the Minister of Word and Sacrament can serve in a variety of positions, not simply parish ministry, and that a minister serving in a specialized capacity is still a full Minister of Word and Sacrament.
2. It was noted that the addition of the phrase “under the authority of the consistory” is technically incorrect, in regards to the ability of Ministers of Word and Sacrament to administer the sacraments – it is the Board of Elders alone that authorizes such administration. The committee offers a recommendation to send an overture to the General Synod to make this change. This recommendation is below.

Proposed Change #5 – Regarding “Supervisor of Consistory”

The advice of the committee is to vote **YES** on Proposed Change #5

Reasons:

1. This is a practical change that needs to be made. While perhaps not the original intention of supervision, many of our smaller classes simply cannot keep up with the demands of supervision of their many vacant congregations. This makes official that which has been occurring already.

In summary, the advice of the committee is:

#1 – NO

#2 – no advice

#3 – YES

#4 – YES

#5 – YES

Proposed Overtures to the General Synod:

In addition to discussing the changes to the *Constitution*, the committee also considered the following two overtures, one which was discussed in person and the other which was discussed over e-mail.

Overture #1 – Regarding “Executive functioning of the General Synod Council”

The Reverend Classis of Schenectady respectfully overtures the General Synod to instruct the Commission on Church Order to present such changes to the Bylaws of the General Synod as would ensure that the General Synod Council (GSC) officers do not form a body or an executive committee, or have any function, responsibility, authority, or power separate, distinct, or apart from the General Synod Council.

Reasons:

1. The GSC officers function as a collegial body, which wields significant power within the GSC and, by extension, the General Synod. They meet separately from the GSC despite the fact that they have no official standing, as a body, in the GSC.
2. The General Synod Council is itself the executive committee of the General Synod, which is the assembly, and the General Synod Council does not have an executive committee itself.
3. Such an arrangement concentrates broad and unspecified power in the hands of a few people and exercises an improper authority outside of the General Synod and this violates our basic understandings of how we believe that God desires the church to function.

In response to overture 1, the committee presents R-1:

R-1: To direct the Stated Clerk of the Reverend Schenectady Classis to submit overture 1 to the office of the General Secretary.

Overture #2 – Regarding “The Functioning of the Minister of Word and Sacrament”

The classis of Schenectady overtures the General Synod to further amend the following section of the Book of Church order, pending the approval of a change from the 2017 General Synod to ratify the current language: (new additions underlined, deletions ~~strickethrough~~)

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Sec. 4a

- a. A minister serving a congregation is a pastor and teacher of the congregation to build up and equip the whole church for its ministry in the world. The minister preaches and teaches the Word of God, administers the sacraments under the authority of the ~~consistory~~ board of elders, shares responsibility with the elders and deacons and members of the congregation for their mutual Christian growth, exercises Christian love and discipline in conjunction with the elders, and endeavors that everything in the church be done in a proper and orderly way. As pastor and teacher the minister so serves and lives among the congregation that together they become wholly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ in the service of the church for the world.

Reasons:

1. The board of elders is charged with providing "for the proclamation of the gospel and the

celebration of the sacraments" as well as guarding " the sacraments of the church from being profaned." (BCO, 1.I.1.8).

2. While the consistory is "guided by the following requirements in their provision of services of worship" to include the sacrament of baptism and the administration of the Lord's Supper (1.I.2.11), this is only to occur *following* the decision of the board of elders.
3. It is important that in a time where the roles of elder and minister are confused (i.e. the role of commissioned pastors), that the Order offers clarity on responsibilities in order preserve the parity of offices.

In response to overture 2 – the committee presents the R-2:

R-2: To direct the Stated Clerk of the Reverend Schenectady Classis to submit overture 2 to the office of the General Secretary.

The committee expresses its thanks to President Busman for the formulation of this committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck,
on behalf of the ad-hoc Overtures and Judicial Business Committee.

Synod Ministries Board Report

January 25, 2018

The Synod Ministries Board met at the Regional Synod Office on January 25, 2018.

There will be a Day of Mission on Sunday May 6 at Delmar Reformed Church beginning at 4pm. The schedule is:

4:00 p.m. – Exhibits of Synod Churches and Missions

6:00 p.m. – Dinner in the \$10-\$15 range. Albany Synod will pay for dinner for delegates.

7:00 p.m. – Post Dinner Exhibit/Video Presentation

Churches will be asked to share their ministries either in person or by video. We would like to highlight shared ministries and the Albany Synod Fellowship Program.

Albany Synod will meet in state session at Delmar Reformed Church the following day, Monday May 7.

Roger Krutz, from Albany classis and Shirley Hermann from Montgomery classis are both completing their second 3-year term and must be replaced as of the regional synod meeting in May. There is also a vacancy in Rochester classis.

All churches must complete background checks of their staff, including ministers, and all church volunteers who work with children and youth. If these are not done, the church's liability insurance will be substantially reduced. The synod is investigating how it can offer the service to all congregations in the synod.

A Pastors+Families Retreat will be held February 21-23 at Camp Fowler.

There will be two Faithwalking 101 retreats at Camp Fowler – May 17-19 and May 20-22. These are open to all who are interested.

10:13 AM
01/29/18
Cash Basis

Classis of Schenectady, RCA
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through December 2017

	Jan - Dec...	Budget	\$ Over B...	% of Bud...
Income				
40000 Income				
4010 Assessment Income				
Altamont	13,254.60	13,252.16	2.44	100.0%
Amity	6,485.22	6,485.12	0.10	100.0%
Bacon Hill	8,834.80	8,834.76	0.04	100.0%
Bellevue	7,048.99	7,049.06	-0.07	100.0%
Christ Community	19,361.96	19,361.32	0.64	100.0%
Fort Miller	2,913.60	2,913.60	0.00	100.0%
Glenville	7,331.00	7,331.00	0.00	100.0%
Helderberg	9,586.68	9,586.68	0.00	100.0%
Lishas Kill	9,210.73	9,210.72	0.01	100.0%
Lynnwood	14,286.02	14,286.04	-0.02	100.0%
Niskayuna	26,034.40	26,034.40	0.00	100.0%
Old Saratoga	4,508.26	4,511.36	-3.10	99.9%
Rotterdam I	6,303.14	6,203.16	99.98	101.6%
Rotterdam II	4,511.36	4,511.36	0.00	100.0%
Schenectady I	47,181.48	47,181.48	0.00	100.0%
Scotia	23,214.80	23,214.80	0.00	100.0%
Trinity	5,075.28	5,075.28	0.00	100.0%
Total 4010 Assessment Income	215,142.32	215,042.30	100.02	100.0%
4050 Interest Income				
Student Aid Grants	4,115.00	6,000.00	-1,885.00	68.6%
4050 Interest Income - Other	136.14	127.79	8.35	106.5%
Total 4050 Interest Income	4,251.14	6,127.79	-1,876.65	69.4%
4080 Other Income	40.00	0.00	40.00	100.0%
Total 40000 Income	219,433.46	221,170.09	-1,736.63	99.2%
Total Income	219,433.46	221,170.09	-1,736.63	99.2%
Expense				
50000 Expenses				
5010 Assessment Expense				
Albany Synod	68,640.00	68,640.00	0.00	100.0%
General Synod	119,502.24	119,502.24	0.00	100.0%
Total 5010 Assessment Expense	188,142.24	188,142.24	0.00	100.0%
6000 Classis Operations Expense				
6010 Bank Charges	1.50			
6020 Campus Ministry	0.00	1,600.00	-1,600.00	0.0%
6023 Same Gender Event	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.0%
6025 Ministry Oversight I CE	308.94			
6029 Fowler Prayer Cabin Rent	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	100.0%
6030 Clerk Stipend	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00	100.0%
6035 Treasurer Stipend	700.00	700.00	0.00	100.0%
6040 Clerks Meeting	0.00	800.00	-800.00	0.0%
6050 CRTC	0.00	5,000.00	-5,000.00	0.0%
6070 Insurance	1,776.00	1,500.00	276.00	118.4%
6080 Office Supplies	567.54	898.00	-330.46	63.2%
6090 Other expense	2,005.00	500.00	1,505.00	401.0%
6100 Record Secretary	0.00	500.00	-500.00	0.0%
6110 Student Aid	2,718.38	6,000.00	-3,281.62	45.3%
Total 6000 Classis Operations Expense	15,577.36	25,998.00	-10,420.64	59.9%
Total 50000 Expenses	203,719.60	214,140.24	-10,420.64	95.1%
Total Expense	203,719.60	214,140.24	-10,420.64	95.1%
Net Income	15,713.86	7,029.85	8,684.01	223.5%

10:12 AM

01/29/18

Cash Basis

Classis of Schenectady, RCA
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2017

	<u>Dec 31, 17</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
10000 Assets	
1010 Checking Classis	212,787.74
1095 Woodlawn Reformed Fund	25,011.36
Former RCA Cash Program	5,000.00
Grants for Third Parties	5,000.00
Jan & Craig Hoffman Fund	1,737.00
Student Aid Contributions	24,356.89
1010 Checking Classis - Other	273,892.99
Total 1010 Checking Classis	19,600.27
1090 Second Reformed Fund	293,493.26
Total 10000 Assets	293,493.26
Total Checking/Savings	293,493.26
Total Current Assets	293,493.26
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>293,493.26</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
30000 Equity	282,585.88
3000 Opening Bal Equity	282,585.88
Total 30000 Equity	-4,806.48
3010 Retained Earnings	15,713.86
Net Income	293,493.26
Total Equity	<u>293,493.26</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>293,493.26</u>

2017 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

The 2017 General Synod adopted the following amendments to the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America and recommended them to the classes for their approval in accordance with the Rules and Amendments of the Government of the Reformed Church in America and the Disciplinary Procedures (*Book of Church Order [BCO]*, 2017 edition, p. 73). A brief explanatory comment (not in bold) precedes each proposed amendment; it is not part of the proposed amendment to the Constitution and is not being voted on by the classes. For further background information about each of the proposed amendments, refer to the indicated pages of the 2017 *Minutes of the General Synod*. The minutes are available online at www.rca.org/minutes.

The amendments in the text below are indicated with proposed deletions stricken out and additions underlined.

1. Fuller Integration of the Commissioned Pastor into the Polity of the Reformed Church in America (*MGS 2017*, R 17-41, pp. 257-263)

Two foci are addressed in these proposed amendments approved by the 2017 General Synod. One focus is the 2016 General Synod's directive to the Commission on Theology (COT) to consider the capacity in which commissioned pastors would participate in regional synod and General Synod assemblies (*MGS 2016*, R 16-21, R 16-23, and R 16-25, pp. 148-149). Specifically, should these broader assemblies recognize the commissioned pastor through the office of elder, or as a servant of the church who functions as a minister? In other words, would the commissioned pastor be sent as an elder delegate or as a minister delegate? The COT concluded that "office" is the most significant identifying characteristic when forming assemblies in the RCA. The office into which a commissioned pastor is ordained is the office of elder. Therefore, if commissioned pastors are to attend the synods as delegates, they will attend as elders. All offices exist to bear witness to the prophetic ministry of Christ. Our broader assemblies are an assembly of offices and not a gathering of those called to ministry. See the 2017 COT report to General Synod for a fuller explanation (*MGS 2017*, pp. 314-319).

The second focus is the 2016 General Synod's directive that the commissioned pastor be more fully integrated into the *BCO*. Currently, one article (Chapter 1, Part II, Article 17; 2017 edition, pp. 58-60) sets forth the role and relationship of the commissioned pastor to the classis and local congregation, but the corresponding articles in other parts of the *BCO* do not mention commissioned pastors. These proposed changes seek to more fully integrate the role and relationship of the commissioned pastor to these bodies. Note two parallel principles that make commissioned pastors unique in our Reformed polity: One, commissioned pastors are ordained elders. The office of elder serves the local church. The purpose of the office of elder is for the governance of the congregation and for the effectiveness of the local church in ministry. Therefore, the commissioned pastor serves in the local church, not in a specialized ministry capacity that is not connected to a local church. The role was created to serve and equip the local church for ministry. Two, the commissioned pastor is commissioned by the classis and therefore is a member of the classis during the period of commissioned service in order that the classis may oversee the assigned ministry. The classis has two forms of membership: enrolled members and delegated members. Commissioned pastors are enrolled members during their period of commissioned service and may not serve as an elder-delegated member to the classis during this period.

The following highlights may help with a review of the proposed changes. In Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, note that a commissioned pastor may be a member of a consistory as a commissioned pastor if that appointment is included in the commission authorized by the classis. (The congregation could also elect the person to a term of service on the consistory as an elder.) But a commissioned pastor is not automatically a member of a consistory by virtue of being a commissioned pastor. In the proposed Chapter 1, Part II, Articles 1, 2, and 4, the commissioned pastor is more fully integrated into the membership and ministry of the classis. Article 7's proposed changes recognize that a commissioned pastor may serve as a pastor of a local church, and therefore the constitutional inquiry questions would also include commissioned pastors. Article 17 is rearranged to more easily identify the various stages of the commissioned pastor's relationship with the classis, and the language is updated.

Chapter 1, Part I

Article 1. Definitions

Sec. 1. A consistory is the governing body of a local church. Its members are the installed minister/s of that church serving under a call, ~~and the elders and deacons currently installed in office, and commissioned pastors authorized by the classis.~~ (See Chapter 1, Part II, Article 17, Section 8.) A consistory is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through committees. An organizing church has a classis-appointed governing body that functions similarly to both a consistory and a board of elders.

Sec 8. ... Elders, together with the installed minister/s serving under a call and/or commissioned pastor/s (if any), are to have supervision of the church entrusted to them. ... Elders exercise an oversight over the conduct of one another, and of the deacons, and of the minister/s. They make certain that what is preached and taught ~~by the minister/s~~ is in accord with the Holy Scripture. They assist the minister/s with their good counsel and in the task of visitation.

Article 2. Responsibilities of the Consistory

Sec. 9. A consistory or its minister may request the classis to terminate the minister's relationship to that church. (See Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 8.) A consistory or its commissioned pastor may request the classis to terminate the commissioned pastor's commissioning to that church.

Sec. 11.

e. Ordinarily, the preaching of the Word shall be performed by a Minister of Word and Sacrament, a commissioned pastor under contract with the congregation, a preaching elder under contract with the congregation, or a candidate for ministry appointed pursuant to Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 7.

- 1. A consistory or a governing body may issue an invitation to preach to a minister of another denomination whose character and standard is known.**
- 2. A consistory or governing body may determine whether to issue an invitation to preach to a minister whose character and standard is not**

known to them once that minister has first furnished the consistory or governing body with written evidence of recent date of that minister's good ministerial standing and the minister's authorization to preach the Word.

3. A consistory or a governing body may authorize, in occasional or special circumstances, other persons to preach.

~~Sec. 11.~~

- ~~e. The consistory of a church may invite or permit ministers of other denominations whose character and standard are known to preach for them. Ministers of other denominations or their counterparts whose character and standard are not known shall not be engaged to preach in a local church until they have furnished to the consistory written evidence of recent date of their good ministerial standing and of their authorization to preach the Word. The consistory shall then determine whether to issue an invitation to preach. Ordinarily, the preaching of the Word shall be performed by an ordained minister or a theological student appointed pursuant to the Government of the Reformed Church in America, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 7. In special circumstances, an elder commissioned by the classis as a preaching elder may preach. However, a consistory may authorize, in occasional or special circumstances, other persons to preach.~~

Chapter 1, Part II

Article 1. Classis Defined

The classis is an assembly and judicatory consisting of all the enrolled ministers of that body, commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis, and the elder delegates who represent all the local and organizing churches within its bounds. The classis is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through committees. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates, and those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the classis, and commissioned pastors serving under a commission approved by the classis.

Article 2. Responsibilities of the Classis

Sec. 2. The classis shall exercise a general superintendence over its enrolled ministers, its commissioned pastors, and over the interests and concerns of the congregations within its bounds, and shall enforce the requirements of the Government of the Reformed Church in America.

Sec. 8. The classis shall examine candidates for ministry throughout their training process and prior to granting a certificate of licensure. students of theology for licensure, and licensed candidates for the ministry for ordination. The classis shall examine candidates for commissioned pastor throughout their training process and/or prior to commissioning.

Sec. 10. The classis shall approve and disapprove calls and contracts, and effect and dissolve the relationship between ministers and churches or congregations. The classis shall approve and disapprove contracts, and effect and dissolve the relationship between commissioned pastors and churches or congregations.

Article 4. Sessions of Classis

Sec. 1. Stated sessions of classis shall be held at least annually at such times as the classis may determine. All classis sessions shall begin and end with prayer. There shall be a sermon preached, or a devotional service, or both, at each stated session. The presence of (a) a majority of elder delegates ~~and commissioned pastors,~~ and (b) a majority of commissioned pastors and ~~those~~ ministers who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis is required.

Sec. 2. The president of classis shall call a special session of classis whenever special business requires it or upon the written request of two ~~ministers-classis members~~ and two elder delegates. At least ten days' notice of any special session shall be given to all the ~~ministers-members~~ and elder delegates of the classis. The notice shall state the purpose of the special session. The presence of three ~~ministers-classis members~~ and three elder delegates shall constitute a quorum to transact the business stated in the notice of such special session.

Article 6. Transaction of Business

Sec. 4. Except as otherwise provided in the *Book of Church Order*, a members of a classis committees, commissions, or boards shall be a member of the classis or a confessing members of one of its the churches or congregations in the classis.

Article 7. Superintendence of the Local and Organizing Churches

Sec. 1. The classis shall annually engage ~~the ministers-its members~~ and elder delegates in a review of the ministry of the separate congregations by addressing the following questions. The answers shall be entered in the minutes of classis for the information of the synods:

- m. Does the consistory or governing body regularly engage its minister/s and/or commissioned pastor/s in a mutual reflection on the ministerial needs and challenges of the congregation?
- n. Do the salary, housing, arrangements for professional development, and all other benefits received by the minister/s and/or commissioned pastor/s meet the terms of the original call or contract, subsequent revisions thereof, and the minimum standards of the classis?

Article 15. Supervision of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Sec. 12. The classis shall keep a record book in which the declarations for licensed candidates, commissioned pastors, and ministers are clearly written. Those who are received on examination or on certificate shall subscribe to the proper declaration in the presence of the classis.

Article 17. Commissioning and Supervision of Commissioned Pastors

Sec. 1. A commissioned pastor is an elder who is trained, commissioned, and supervised by a classis for a specific ministry within that classis and under the auspices of a local church or congregation that will include the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. The commission shall be valid for the period of assigned service.

Sec. 2. Preparation for Commissioning

- a.** A consistory or governing body may recommend a confessing member of a Reformed church to the classis as a candidate to become a commissioned pastor.
- b.** ~~Sec. 3.~~ Upon acceptance of the consistory's application on behalf of a candidate, the classis shall approve and supervise a training plan for that person. The classis shall satisfy itself that the candidate exhibits ministry competence in 1) maturity of faith, 2) personal integrity, 3) understanding of the Old and New Testaments and biblical interpretation, 4) Reformed theology, 5) church history, 6) knowledge of and adherence to the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America (the Government, the Standards, and the Liturgy), 7) nature and administration of the sacraments, 8) ability to preach, 9) capability to minister within the church, and 10) understanding of and adherence to pastoral ethics and practices.
- c.** ~~Sec. 4.~~ In satisfying itself concerning a candidate's ministry competence, the classis shall employ criteria established by the General Synod Council.

Sec. 3. Confirming an Invitation to Ministry

- a.** ~~Sec. 5.~~ Upon satisfaction by the classis of the candidate's ministerial competence, the classis shall ~~identify~~ confirm the specific form of commissioned service appropriate to the gifts and training of the candidate. When the classis receives an invitation for a ministry from one of its local churches or congregations it deems appropriate for the candidate, and upon the candidate's acceptance of this invitation to ministry, the classis shall 1) authorize the ministry, 2) approve a contract, and 3) commission the candidate to the authorized ministry to the extent of the contract. A church or congregation shall not enter into a contract with a commissioned pastor except by the approval of the classis.
- b.** ~~Sec. 6.~~ After a classis approves a candidate for commission to an authorized ministry, the classis shall appoint a time and place for a commissioning service at a regular or special classis session. The service shall utilize a liturgy approved by the General Synod. The commissioned pastor shall read aloud and sign the Declaration for Commissioned Pastors (Appendix, Formulary No. 16) shall be made orally by the candidate in the presence of the classis as part of that order for commissioning. (See Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 12.)
- c.** ~~Sec. 7.~~ The classis shall assign a mentor for each commissioned pastor for the period of training and ministry.

Sec. 4. The Commissioned Pastor

- a. ~~Sec. 8.~~ The commissioned pastor shall be authorized to preach the Word and celebrate the sacraments. The classis may authorize the commissioned pastor to any or all of the following functions:
1. To serve as a member of consistory.
 2. ~~a-~~ Serve as presiding officer of the consistory at its request and may be appointed supervisor of that consistory.
 3. ~~b-~~ Preside at the ordination and installation of elders and deacons.
 4. ~~e-~~ Perform a service of Christian marriage when approved by consistory and subject to state and provincial law.
- b. ~~Sec. 9.~~ The commissioned pastor shall be a member of classis during the period of commissioned service, ~~but~~ and shall not serve as an elder delegate to the classis from a local church. A commissioned pastor may serve as an elder delegate to a regional and/or General Synod.
- c. ~~Sec. 10.~~ The classis shall evaluate the performance of the commissioned pastor ~~at least annually.~~
- d. ~~Sec. 11.~~ Upon completion of the authorized ministry by a commissioned pastor, the classis shall provide to that person a written statement of the training received and the ministry that was performed.
- e. ~~Sec. 12.~~ The commissioned pastor shall remain a member of a local church, but is amenable solely to the discipline of the classis as set forth in Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3 of the *Book of Church Order*, for the period of commissioned service.
- f. The classis in which a commissioned pastor's membership is held is the only classis to which the commissioned pastor is amenable.
- g. ~~Sec. 13.~~ Upon request of the regional synod, ~~t~~The classis shall submit to an ~~annual review upon request of regional synod~~ of the processes used by the classis for commissioned pastor selection, preparation, commissioning, support, and supervision.

2. Furloughing Missionaries (MGS 2017, R 17-42, p. 263)

The BCO currently provides that furloughing missionaries may serve as delegates to General Synod (see BCO Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 1 and Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 3, Section 5; 2017 edition, p. 65 and p. 67). The issue of concern with these BCO sections is that RCA Global Mission no longer uses the designation of "furloughing missionaries." In other words, the RCA no longer has furloughing missionaries.

The proposed changes offer revisions that reflect current terminology and practices without changing our long-held value that missionaries are a needed presence at our General Synod gatherings.

Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 1

... Certification Agency; a number of ~~furloughing~~ missionary and chaplain delegates; and corresponding delegates provided for in the bylaws of General Synod ...

Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 3

Sec. 5. The classis may appoint as a delegate one of its members who is a ~~The furloughing missionary on home assignment at the time of with at least five years of service in the field shall be eligible for appointment to the General Synod. The missionary delegate from the classis of membership once during each furlough~~ and shall not be counted as one of the regular delegates of that classis and may serve as a missionary delegate only once every five years.

3. Supersession of a Consistory (MGS 2017, R 17-43, pp. 264-266)

After receiving questions about the supersession process, the Commission on Church Order worked with the relevant BCO passage (Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9; 2017 edition, pp. 37-39) to simplify and clarify the steps necessary to enact a supersession of a consistory. Two particular topics were addressed: 1) the relationship of the pastor(s) to the supersession action; and 2) the repeated requirement in the text for a two-thirds vote by the classis to take actions.

Regarding the relationship of the pastor to the supersession action, the proposed text understands that if the consistory is dissolved then the call to the pastor(s) no longer exists. In other words, the pastoral relationship dissolved since there isn't a consistory with which to have such a relationship or to which the pastor can be installed. Therefore, the proposed text plainly states that the pastoral relationship is dissolved. Please note that (a) a minister whose call is dissolved as a part of a supersession process may nevertheless continue to serve under contract in a capacity agreed upon by the minister and the supersession team exercising functions that are necessary for the administration of the church, and (b) nothing prevents a reconstituted consistory from extending a new call to the minister whose call was dissolved as a part of the supersession process.

Regarding the two-thirds majority vote, the proposed text clarifies that a two-thirds vote is required at two places in the process: when the classis first acts to supersede a consistory and establish a supersession team, and when the classis acts to reconstitute a consistory and thus end the supersession period.

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9

~~Sec. 2. Classis shall be directed by the following rules when superseding a consistory:~~

- a- Before superseding a consistory, the classis shall notify the church consistory and the ministers (if any) of its intention and summon the**

governing body consistory to show cause why that consistory should not be dissolved and the church and its property be administered under the direction and supervision of the classis. If the basis for supersession is the request of the consistory, the consistory need not show cause why it should not be dissolved and may instead advise the classis of its approval of this action.

Sec. 3. The notice required by Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9, Section 2 shall include the following:

- 4a. The basis upon which the classis is seeking supersession, with specific reference to a condition found in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9, Section 1.
- b. Notice that the action of supersession causes the termination of the ministerial relationship.
- 2c. The time, date, and location of the classis meeting where supersession shall be considered.
- 3d. A statement that the consistory must appear at the meeting identified in Section 13(a)(2) the notice to show cause and show cause why it should not be dissolved.
- b. If the basis for supersession is the request of the consistory, the consistory need not show cause why it should not be dissolved and may, instead, advise the classis of its approval of this action.

Sec. 4. After having heard the consistory, the classis may act to supersede the consistory. A decision to supersede requires a two-thirds vote at a stated session or special session where a quorum is present, meeting the requirements of a quorum of a stated session of classis. In combination with a decision to supersede or thereafter, the classis may also elect, in accordance with the laws of the state in which that church is located, to:

- a. Terminate whatever authority the consistory or any other body has as trustees of the church property.
- b. Take the church under its direction by appointing such trustees as are required for the protection, preservation, management, and ownership of the property during such time as the classis shall determine.

Sec. 5. c. If the classis, after having heard the consistory, continues in its intention, it shall dissolve the consistory and otherwise terminate the formal organization of that church and

- a. When a consistory is superseded, the consistory is dissolved and any ministerial relationships of that church are terminated. The classis shall take such steps as may be necessary to bring that church, its ministry, and its property under the direct administration of the classis.
- d.b. Such a church shall not have a consistory, but the The classis shall designate these persons, not necessarily members of that church, who, in

lieu of the consistory, shall exercise the functions of a consistory or a board of elders or a board of deacons as may be necessary for the administration of the church. These persons shall serve the church in the same capacity as a consistory until such time as the life of the church has reached an end or a consistory for the church is reconstituted (Chapter 1, Part II, Article 97, Section 745). The supersession board is authorized to carry out the responsibilities of Chapter 1, Part I, Articles 2, 5, and 6, without further acts of the classis. In carrying out these responsibilities, the supersession board shall follow the requirements of Chapter 1, Part I, Article 4. The classis may grant additional authority to the supersession board or may impose restrictions on the authority automatically granted to the supersession board.

~~e. The final action of the classis to dissolve a consistory shall require a two-thirds vote. The classis shall have a quorum present consisting of (a) a majority of elder delegates and commissioned pastors, and (b) a majority of those ministers who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis.~~

~~Sec. 3. When the classis has superseded a consistory, it shall have the authority, in the exercise of its discretion and in accordance with the laws of the state in which that church is located, to:~~

- ~~a. Terminate whatever authority the consistory or any other body has as trustees of the church property.~~
- ~~b. Take the church under its direction by appointing such trustees as are required for the protection, preservation, management and ownership of the property during such time as the classis shall determine.~~

~~All actions of the classis under this section shall require a two-thirds vote. The classis shall have a quorum present consisting of (a) a majority of elder delegates and commissioned pastors, and (b) a majority of those ministers who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis.~~

~~Sec. 64. The classis shall have the authority to reconstitute the consistory of a church when, in the judgment of the classis, sufficient growth has been achieved or suitable stability created so that the church can continue ministry without classis administration. The classis shall guide the consistory selection process (Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 14). The decision to reconstitute the consistory requires a two-thirds vote at a stated session or special session where a quorum is present, meeting the requirements of a quorum of a stated session of classis. All actions of the classis under this section shall require a two-thirds vote. The classis shall have a quorum present consisting of (a) a majority of elder delegates and commissioned pastors, and (b) a majority of those ministers who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis.~~

4. Minister of Word and Sacrament (MGS 2017, R 17-44, pp. 268-269)

In RCA polity, there is one office to which all ministers are ordained; that is, the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. However, numerous persons have shown that the current *BCO* text can be interpreted to mean that pastors are Ministers of Word and Sacrament, but specialized ministers have their own office. To clear away this misinterpretation, these proposed amendments to the *BCO* text are presented. This proposed text does not introduce new meaning, but clarifies the intended meaning of the text.

Also, the proposed changes capitalize "Sacrament" in the title "Minister of Word and Sacrament." This change is being implemented editorially wherever "Minister of Word and Sacrament" is found in the *BCO*. Both Word and Sacrament are to be capitalized since both refer to Christ.

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1

Sec. 3. Ministers are those men and women who have been inducted into the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament that office by ordination in accordance with the Word of God and the order established or recognized by the Reformed Church in America. Ministers of Word and Sacrament They are equal in authority as ministers and as stewards of the mysteries of God. Ministers shall ordinarily be confessing members of only the Reformed Church in America, except as otherwise provided in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 1 and in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 4. No person who has relinquished the ministry for which installed or commissioned or who has been suspended or deposed from the ministry shall exercise that office.

Sec. 4. The Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament is one of servanthood and service representing Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit. Ministers are called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the ministry of the Word of God.

- a. A minister serving a congregation is a ~~in the local church the minister serves as pastor and teacher of the congregation to build up and equip the whole church for its ministry in the world. The minister preaches and teaches the Word of God, administers the sacraments under the authority of the consistory, shares responsibility with the elders and deacons and members of the congregation for their mutual Christian growth, exercises Christian love and discipline in conjunction with the elders, and endeavors that everything in the church be done in a proper and orderly way. As pastor and teacher the minister so serves and lives among the congregation that together they become wholly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ in the service of the church for the world.~~**
- b. A specialized minister is a ~~Sec. 5. The office of the minister in a specialized ministry is to serve as pastor and teacher of the people among whom the minister works, to build up and equip those people, and to serve with the whole church in its ministry in the world. The specialized minister proclaims the Word of God in word and deed and administers the sacraments when appropriate under the authority of the classis. The minister so serves and lives among the people that together they become wholly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ in the service of the church for the world.~~**

- c. Proper ecclesiastical designation of ministers shall accord with the nature of their ministry, such as pastor, teacher, professor, missionary, chaplain, president, executive secretary, director, or other appropriate designation.**

5. Supervisor of Consistory (*MGS 2017, R 17-45, p. 270*)

The following proposed change to *BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 3 (2017 edition, p. 34) is offered to allow classes to work together to meet one another's needs for supervision of churches experiencing a pastoral vacancy. The proposed amendment would permit the appointment of a classis supervisor who is a minister from another classis. This authorization could make it possible for this classis responsibility to be more broadly held, thereby relieving stress when one classis has too many vacancies for its ministers to properly attend to.

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7

Sec. 3. The classis shall appoint ~~one of its ministers~~ a minister as supervisor of all proceedings of the consistory of a church without an installed minister. If the minister to be appointed as supervisor is a member of another classis, then the classis shall consult with the minister's classis of membership prior to making such appointment. The classis shall determine the appropriate responsibilities for the supervisor.

**The Minutes of
the Special Session of
The Reverend Classis of Schenectady
For the Commissioning of Rev. Jennifer Legg
Old Saratoga Reformed Church
February 11, 2018 — 3:30 PM**

Attendance:

Present:

Enrolled Ministers: K. Busman (presient), L. De Kruif (clerk), J. deVelder, J. Fulkerson, K. McHeard, J. Vanderbeck, J. Vincent

Elder Delegates: M. Sanders, J. Thomas, T. de Jong, D. Whitehouse

Retired Ministers: none

Preaching Elders: none

Candidates: none

Guests: Robert Hoffman (Synod of Albany), Richard Hoffman (Interim, Fort Miller Reformed), Abbie Norton-Levering (Synod of Albany)

++++

Call to Order by President Busman at 2:30 PM.

Approval of the Order of Worship: The President asked for a motion to approve the order of worship for the commissioning of Rev. Jennifer Legg as the Albany Synod Ministry Fellow of the Turning Point Churches. A motion was made from the floor.

M/S/C to approve the order of worship for the commissioning of Rev. Jennifer Legg.

The Vice President asked for a motion and to give guests the privilege of the floor. A motion was made from the floor .

M/S/C to give guests the privilege of the floor.

Announcements were made concerning the order of worship.

Adjournment: The President asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting with the benediction. A motion was made from the floor.

M/S/C to adjourn the meeting with the closing benediction of the service of worship for the commissioning of the Rev. Jennifer Legg.

Commissioning of Rev. Jennifer Legg followed.

Meeting was adjourned with the closing benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Lindsey De Kruif
Stated Clerk
2/11/2018

**The Minutes of
the Special Session of
The Reverend Classis of Schenectady
For the Commissioning of Rev. Stacey Duensing
Lynnwood Reformed Church
November 12, 2017 — 2:30 PM**

Attendance:

Present:

Enrolled Ministers: A. Reilly (vice president), L. De Kruif (clerk), D. Carlson, J. Fulkerson, M. Hodgins, K. McHeard, G. Szantner, J. Vanderbeck, M. van Maasstricht, Ja. White, Jo. White

Elder Delegates: L. Lumbra, W. Ports, C. Jackson

Retired Ministers: J. Hoffman

Preaching Elders: J. Moak, C. Lasselle

Candidates: none

Guests: K. Grosch, M. Rudins (Delmar Reformed Church) M. Strong (Exec. Secretary, Regional Synod of Canada)

++++

Call to Order by Vice President Reilly at 2:30 PM.

Approval of the Order of Worship: The Vice President asked for a motion to approve the order of worship for the commissioning of Rev. Stacey Duensing as the Pastoral Resident of Discipleship at the Lynnwood Reformed Church.

M/S/C to approve the order of worship for the commissioning of Rev. Stacey Duensing.

The Vice President asked for a motion and to give guests the privilege of the floor. A motion was made from the floor to approve the agenda.

M/S/C to give guests the privilege of the floor.

Announcements were made concerning the order of worship.

Adjournment: The Vice President asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting with the benediction. A motion was made from the floor.

M/S/C to adjourn the meeting with the closing benediction of the service of worship for the commissioning of the Rev. Stacey Duensing.

Commissioning of Rev. Stacey Duensing followed.

Meeting was adjourned with the closing benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Lindsey De Kruif
Stated Clerk
11/12/2017

**The Minutes of
the Special Session of
The Reverend Classis of Schenectady
For the Installation of Rev. Megan Hodgin
First Reformed Church of Scotia
October 15, 2017 — 3:30 PM**

Attendance:

Present:

Enrolled Ministers: K. Busman (president), L. De Kruif (clerk), D. Carlson, S. Duesing, W. Faulkner, M. Hodgin, G. Szantner, M. van Maastricht, L. VanderWal, Ja. White, Jo. White

Elder Delegates: R. Doyle, K. Jackson, W. Ports

Retired Ministers: A. Hudak

Preaching Elders: M. Rand, J. Moak

Candidates: H. Kramer

Guests: M. Mare, M. Rudins, D. Schalekamp

++++

Call to Order by President Busman at 3:45 PM.

Approval of the Order of Worship:

The President asked for a motion to grant privilege of the floor to guests of the Classis. A motion was made from the floor to grant privilege of the floor.

M/S/C to grant privilege of the floor to guests of the Classis.

The President asked for a motion to approve the order of worship for the installation of Rev. Jason White to of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament at the First Reformed Church of Scotia. A motion was made from the floor to approve the agenda.

M/S/C to approve the order of worship for the installation of Rev. Jason White.

Announcements were made concerning the order of worship.

Adjournment: The President asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting with the benediction. A motion was made from the floor.

M/S/C to adjourn the meeting with the closing benediction of the service of worship for the installation of the Rev. Jason White.

Installation of Rev. Jason White followed.

Meeting was adjourned with the closing benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Lindsey De Kruif
Stated Clerk
1/14/2018

DRAFT

**The Minutes of
the Stated Session of
The Reverend Classis of Schenectady
October 24, 2017 — 7:00 PM
Bacon Hill Reformed Church**

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT:

Enrolled Ministers: K. Busman (President), A. Reilly (Vice President), L. De Kruif (clerk), D. Carlson, S. Duensing, J. deVelder, J. Fulkerson, M. Hodgins, R. Scheenstra, R. G. Szantner, M. van Maastricht, J. Vanderbeck, J. Meyer Vincent, Ja. White, Jo. White

Elder Delegates: M. Anderson, B. Book, K. Brittain, M. Feuz, K. Hayner, J. Healey, K. Heilman, C. Jackson, B. Lewis, K. Mix, D. Parker, J. Pettis, M. Sanders, D. Schalekamp, J. Stevens, B. Valenti, C. Troost, P. Woomer

Retired Ministers: none

Preaching Elders: J. Moak, M. Rand, C. Lasselle

Candidates: H. Kramer

Guests: B. Book, K. Grosch (Search and Supervision), J. Hoeprich (interim Amity), R. Hoffman (interim Fort Miller), D. Walsh

ABSENT WITH NOTICE: J. Marvel, L. VanderWal, K. McHeard, S. DeBlock, S. Midge, W. Schutter, J. Burnetter (Treasurer)

ABSENT WITHOUT NOTICE: J. Bork, B. Doolittle, B. Levering, T. McCrossan, J. Bosman

++++

The classis was led in worship by Rev. Janet Meyer Vincent at 7:10 PM.

Call to Order by President Busman at 7:39 PM.

The President called for a quorum. Clerk De Kruif declared a quorum.

The President appointed James Petris and Garret Szantner as tellers for the duration of the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda: The President asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion was made and supported from the floor to approve the agenda.

DRAFT

DRAFT

Voted: to approve agenda. (APPROVED)

Approval of the Minutes: The President asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 2017 States Session, and the Special Sessions held August 5, October 15, and October 22. A motion was made and supported from the floor to approve the minutes. David Schalekamp requested to be added to the list of present members for the ordination of Rev. Jeremy Bork.

Voted: to approve the minutes as corrected. (APPROVED)

A motion was made and supported from the floor to grant privilege of the floor to the Schuylerville Central School administrators.

Voted: to adopt the motion. (APPROVED)

Presentation from Schuylerville Central Schools Superintendent: Rev. Meyer Vincent welcomed Dr. Ryan Sherman, Superintendent of Saratoga Springs Schools, who addressed the classis on the challenges faced by the school district. Principals Mr. Greg Barthelmus (Elementary), Ms. Kate Elsworth (Middle School), Mr. James Ducharme (High School) also joined Dr. Sherman in the presentation. They addressed both academic and social challenges faced by the students in their district. Poverty, mental health issues and the breakdown of the traditional family, noted particularly in the decline of parent involvement, were highlighted as the primary challenges faced by the school. Dr. Sherman and the principals each shared how the school has addressed these and has seen a positive impact from their work.

President Busman than opened the floor for comment and question. Members of classis and guests asked questions and shared their reflections on the presentation. President Busman expressed respect and appreciation for the work of the schools.

A motion was made and supported to thank the administration of Schuylerville Central Schools.

Voted: That the Reverend Schenectady Classis thanks the administrators of the Schuylerville Central Schools for sharing with the classis and selflessly serving their community, mirroring for us what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves.
(APPROVED)

Approval of Consent Agenda: The President asked for a motion to receive the 2017 General Synod Report, the Synod Ministries Board Report, the Camp Fowler Report, the Search and Supervision Report, the Ministry Oversight 2 Report, the Trinity Reformed Church Grant Report and the Bellevue Reformed Church Grant Report by way of the Consent Agenda. A motion was made from the floor and supported.

Voted: to approve the consent agenda. (APPROVED)

DRAFT

DRAFT

Clerk Items: The Clerk presented Rev. Stacey Duensing, the Pastoral Resident of Discipleship at Lynnwood Reformed Church, to be received into Schenectady Classis from Holland Classis. The president asked for a motion from the floor to receive Rev. Duensing into Schenectady Classis. A motion was made from the floor and supported

Voted: to receive Rev. Duensing into Schenectady Classis. (APPROVED)

President Busman asked Rev. Joyce deVelder (the first woman ordained in Schenectady Classis) to pray a blessing on Rev. Duensing.

Rev. Duensing read the Declaration for Ministers, and was received as a member of Schenectady Classis. She will be commissioned to her ministry as Pastoral Resident of Discipleship at Lynnwood Reformed Church in a Special Session of Classis on November 12. Classis will meet at 2:30 PM and worship will begin at 3:00 PM.

The Clerk noted that Rev. J. Compton has transferred to Great Lakes City Classis to serve as a church planter with Grace Ann Arbor. Rev. Jeremy Bork began serving in August as the Associate Minister for Youth and their Families at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Grand Rapids, MI. Rev. Megan Hodgkin was installed as the minister of First Reformed Church of Scotia. Rev. Matthew van Maastricht was installed as the minister of the Altamont Reformed Church. Student under care Heather Kramer has been appointed to serve the Cobblestone Reformed Church. Rev. Jason White has returned from mission service in Romania and will serve at First Reformed Church of Scotia as the Associate Minister for Youth and Families. Licensed Candidate Jennifer Legg will serve as the Albany Synod Ministry Fellow at the Turning Point Churches (Bacon Hill, Fort Miller, and Old Saratoga). Ms. Legg will be ordained by the Classis of Mid-Hudson on November 12.

The Clerk noted that Rev. Jonathan Vanderbeck, Rev. Jordan White, and elders from First Reformed of Rotterdam (Woestina) and Old Saratoga Reformed are to be appointed delegates to the 2018 General Synod in Grand Rapids MI, June 7-12. Delegates have yet to confirm.

The Clerk noted that Rev. Jordan White, Rev. Jason White, Rev. Joyce deVelder, and Rev. Ben Doolittle, and elders from Old Saratoga Reformed, First Reformed Church of Rotterdam (Woestina), Amity Reformed, and First Reformed of Amsterdam (West Glenville) are to be appointed delegates to the 2018 Regional Synod of Albany at the Delmar Reformed Church, May 7. Delegates have yet to confirm.

The Clerk noted the dates of the 2017-2018 stated sessions of classis will be held on February 27, 2018 at Cobblestone Reformed Church; and May 22, 2018 at Lisha's Kill Reformed Church.

The Clerk noted that Jennifer Fulkerson of the Niskayuna Reformed Church has been appointed to serve on the Synod Ministries Board. Ms. Fulkerson fills a three-year term, which began in 2016.

DRAFT

DRAFT

The Clerk presented a resolution honoring former Stated Clerk Carol Troost. The president asked for a motion to approve the resolution. A motion was joyfully made and supported from the floor. Resolution of Thanksgiving and Affirmation for the service and ministry of Ms. Carol Troost.

Whereas the Reverend Schenectady Classis is an assembly and judicatory within the Reformed Church in America;

Whereas the classis is served by a stated clerk who is elected by the classic and serves as an officer of classis;

Whereas the stated clerk ensures the business of classis is conducted in a faithful and orderly manner;

Whereas Ms. Carol Troost, an ordained elder of the First Reformed Church of Schenectady has faithfully served the Reverend Schenectady Classis as its stated clerk for the past thirteen years;

Whereas the ministry of the Reverend Schenectady Classis has been blessed and strengthened by the work of Ms. Troost;

Whereas over twenty-eight Ministers of Word and Sacrament have been warmly welcomed into the Reverend Schenectady Classis by Ms. Troost in her role as stated clerk;

Whereas no member or delegate of the classis has ever felt alone, disconnected, or forgotten, thanks to the prolific email correspondences from Ms. Troost who kept us all up-to-date on all the happenings in the greater Schenectady area; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Reverend Schenectady Classis: thanks Ms. Carol Troost for her years of dedicated service to the denomination, classis, and local congregation in her work as stated clerk of Schenectady Classis;

Done this day in stated session of the Reverend Schenectady Classis, on the twenty-fourth of October, the year of our Lord, two thousand and seventeen.

Voted: to approve the resolution honoring former Stated Clerk Troost. (APPROVED)

Albany Synod Fellowship Program: Revs. Janet Meyer Vincent, Joyce deVelder, and Richard Hoffman presented on the participation of the Turning Point Churches in the Albany Synod Fellowship Program, explaining the process of applying to be a ministry site and meeting with their ministry fellow candidate. They will welcome licensed candidate Jennifer Legg as their fellow. Following seminary, Jennifer has worked a manger of a coffee shop and has been active in the ministry of her local church. She has also been ordained as an elder of the First Reformed Church of Cary, NC. Her ministry will begin on November 1, and she will serve as a ministry

DRAFT

DRAFT

fellow for two years. Her ministry will be supported by a fellowship team consisting of members of three congregations. The churches have requested financial assistance for their participation in the program.

Treasurer's Report:

The President presented the 2018 Budget noting the funds designated for the Albany Synod Fellowship Program. The President presented R-1:

R-1: To approve the 2018 Budget. This budget includes designated funds to support the Albany Synod Ministry Fellow serving the Turning Point Churches. Classes assessments will be \$13.22 per member. (ADOPTED)

Voted: to approve the 2018 Budget. (APPROVED)

A motion was made and supported from the floor:

To direct the Executive Committee to develop a plan for classis churches to pay assessments based on annual church income rather than church membership, for report back to the classis at its February 2018 meeting.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend the motion (underlines insertions, deletions strikethroughs)

“...to the classis at its ~~February~~ May 2018 meeting.” (AMENDMENT APPROVED)

The amended motion was before the body.

Voted: To direct the Executive Committee to develop a plan for classis churches to pay assessments based on annual church income rather than church membership, for report back to the classis at its May 2018 meeting. (ADOPTED)

The President asked for a motion to receive the August 2017 report from the treasurer. A motion was made from the floor and supported.

Voted: to receive the August 2017 report from the treasurer.(APPROVED)

Reports from Committees:

Executive Committee:

The Vice President assumed the chair, so the president could present the Executive Committee Report. The President presented the following recommendations on behalf of the Executive Committee:

R-2 To approve the proposed amendments to the bylaws of Schenectady Classis.

DRAFT

DRAFT

A motion was made and was supported to amend the proposed bylaws as follows (deletions strikethroughs, additions underlined):

IX. 2. The duties of the Ministry Oversight Committee are:

- (b) Assist class in fulfilling the requirements of the Book of Church Order regarding the supervision of ~~Lay Leaders~~ Preaching Elders, Commissioned Pastors, Associates in Ministry.
- Commissioning and supervision of Preaching Elders.
 - Commissioning and supervision of Commissioned Pastors.
 - Certification and supervision of Associates in Ministry

The amended motion was before the body.

Voted: To approve the proposed amendments to the bylaws of Schenectady Classis as amended. (APPROVED)

The bylaws changes will again be voted upon at the February 2018 Stated Session for final adoption into the bylaws.

R-3 To approve an increase of 2.2 percent on the 2018 Clergy Compensation Schedule.

Discussion followed. A point was raised that while clergy salary increases have been based on the CPI (Consumer Price Index), while increases in Social Security and government pensions are based on the PCE (Personal Consumption Expenditures), which was only 2 percent in last year. Discussion ceased, and the Vice President called for a vote.

Voted: To approve an increase of 2.2 percent on the 2018 Clergy Compensation Schedule. (APPROVED)

Ministry Oversight 1 Committee:

Chair Jonathan Vanderbeck presented report, and presented the following recommendations:

R-4 To encourage churches and ministers to identify individuals within their congregations who may be interested and gifted in becoming a commissioned preaching elder and bringing those names to the attention of the MO1 committee. (APPROVED)

Discussion was opened. The president called for a vote. Recommendation was approved.

DRAFT

DRAFT

R-5 To adopt the following policy in regards to background checks for all ministers, commissioned pastors, and preaching elders who are enrolled, licensed, and/or commissioned within the classis: (APPROVED)

*The Reverend Classis of Schenectady
Background Check Policy*

The Reformed Church in America is a fellowship of congregations called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the very presence of Jesus Christ in the world. Our shared task is to equip congregations for ministry—a thousand churches in a million ways doing one thing—following Christ in mission, in a lost and broken world so loved by God.

In response to the Book of Church Order mandates regarding the supervision of enrolled ministers, commissioned preaching elders, and commissioned pastors (BCO 1, II, 2; 16; 17, 2; 4; 1) the Reverend Classis of Schenectady holds the following policy regarding required background checks (which may include a criminal history check, Sex Offender Registry Database(s), and or statement(s) of conviction) for all enrolled ministers within the classis, as well as all ministers, preaching elders and commissioned pastors serving classis churches. The Reverend Classis of Schenectady shall not approve calls or contracts from any consistory or governing body for any person who has not had a background check.

Background Check means, at a minimum, the process of gathering and reviewing criminal history records and sexual offender registry records, churches may decide to conduct further background research.

Criminal History Check means the process of gathering and reviewing criminal history records or information furnished by a criminal justice agency or third party vendor in the business of obtaining and providing criminal history records relating to an individual's criminal convictions. A criminal history record does not include an individual's conviction records that have been sealed by court order. Criminal records include in-state, out-of-state and international criminal history, including misdemeanor and felony convictions.

The Executive Committee of the Reverend Classis of Schenectady is solely authorized to conduct and oversee the Background Check process necessitated pursuant to this Policy on behalf of The Classis of Schenectady. The Classis may work with law enforcement or contract with outside agencies in executing any of the obligations set forth in this Policy. The Executive Committee of the Reverend Classis of Schenectady is responsible for making decisions regarding what type of Background Check is appropriate, and for making recommendations regarding the reception or retention of enrolled ministers within the classis, as well as all ministers, preaching elders and commissioned pastors serving classis churches. If the Executive Committee determines that an individual does not pass a background check, the Executive Committee shall not approve the call/commission/license. No further information shall be disclosed.

DRAFT

DRAFT

The Executive Committee of Classis may elect to perform Background checks on all current installed ministers along with preaching elders and associates in ministries. Currently the Reverend Classis of Schenectady does not have any commissioned pastors within its boundaries; however the same shall be applied to commissioned pastors should any are received into the Classis Boundaries.

The Reverend Classis of Schenectady may use but is not limited to the following companies that offer background checks:

- *Secure Search*
- *LexisNexis Screening Solutions*
- *Safe Hiring Solutions*
- *Protect My Ministry*

All background checks shall be kept on file by the Stated Clerk of the classis. The results of the background check shall not be shared outside of the Executive Committee and the individual who was background checked.

Discussion held. A question was raised about who should bear the cost of doing background checks. The president called for discussion to cease and a vote was held. The recommendation was approved.

The Executive Committee will work with Church Supervision and Oversight on implantation.

Church Supervision Committee:

no report

Old Business: No old business presented.

New Business:

Altamont Reformed Church SMB Grant Application: The Altamont Reformed Church (ARC) requested approval of an application for a grant of \$500 from the Synod Ministries Board. This is their second year requesting a grant for their ministry of providing a monthly free meal to their community. Members of classis encouraged representatives of ARC to apply for \$1000 of grant funds. The President asked for a motion to approve the grant in the amount of \$1000. A motion was made and supported from the floor.

Voted: to approve the SMB grant application for \$1000 from the Altamont Reformed Church. (APPROVED)

The application will be submitted to SMB for final approval.

DRAFT

DRAFT

Preaching Elder/Chair of Church Supervision John Moak noted thanks to Preaching Elder/Chair of Search and Supervision Miranda Rand upon her resignation from the post. Preaching Elder John Moak will assume the chair of the newly formed Church Oversight and Supervision Committee. Other classis members also expressed thanks to Elder Rand for her dedicated service to the search processes of many congregations.

Adjournment:

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to adjourn following closing prayer and affirmations.

Voted: to adjourn the meeting following affirmations and closing prayer. (APPROVED)

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

A poem in honor of the October 2017 Stated Session:

The Church Agenda

The vote was to receive the trinity of
Boards, budgets, and amendments.

Yet we consented to no increase in agenda pain.

Our hearts approved the old items
that instilled a more cogent closing report:

The minutes of our transition to prayer
for humility, purity, and peace.

-schdy classis, October, 2017

David Walsh

DRAFT

CHRIST COMMUNITY REFORMED CHURCH
SYNOD MINISTRIES BOARD GRANT REQUEST
LITTLE FREE PANTRY

“Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can change the world.”

--Howard Zinn

We respectfully submit this request to the Albany Synod for consideration of a Mission Ministry Grant.

The middle/high school youth group (known as Compass) at Christ Community Reformed Church, Clifton Park, wishes to create a Little Free Pantry. A Little Free Pantry is a suspended box filled with non-perishable food items, hygiene items and/or school supplies from which people can either take what they need, or give what they can. A Little Free Pantry will provide our community with a valuable resource while our youth test concepts like community, charity and sharing.

Little Free Pantries are small and therefore cannot be relied upon for someone's complete need of food. But this pantry will always be “open” and can provide a food insecurity safety net. Whether stocking the pantry or taking a needed item, we all approach the Little Free Pantry the same way, so it helps reduce some of the shame that often accompanies need.

Our vision is that the Little Free Pantry will eventually become partially self-sustaining, providing food and other items for people in our community who are in need of them. The pantry will be replenished initially by our church, but as awareness grows, it is our hope that other groups and individuals in our community will wish to participate and help. We expect for the first year or two our church will supply the pantry with food and other necessary items so there is always something available for people to take. Long term, it is our hope that this project will prove successful and the idea will spread to other areas of our community.

With a grant from the Albany Synod, we will be able to purchase the building materials and food/hygiene items necessary to begin our pantry. The CCRC Consistory has approved

the construction and placement of this structure on church grounds. Our Buildings and Grounds Committee will help us to construct this pantry. We have contacted the Town of Clifton Park and they have no objections to the addition of a Little Free Pantry to our church grounds. Additionally, Consistory has agreed to match a \$500 grant if we are selected by the Albany Synod.

We will determine the effectiveness of this program in several ways.

1. Is the Little Free Pantry being used by members of the community? Is it reaching those in need and filling a food insecurity gap that cannot be addressed by food pantries?
2. Is there a positive reaction to the addition of the Little Free Pantry by the community?
3. Are groups and individuals outside of our church family joining us in stocking the pantry?

If responses to these questions are positive, we will consider the Little Free Pantry to be an effective and successful addition to our community.

Our budget for this project is \$500. We estimate the cost of materials to build the Little Free Pantry will be about \$200-\$250. Each month our CCRC Mission Committee collects food for "Food Basket Sunday". The March collection will specifically request items that will create the beginning of our stockpile for the Little Free Pantry. Financially, this is how our project will begin. Other food drives and fundraisers, such as car washes and bake sales, can be considered as additional opportunities to raise funds for this project.

This report was prepared by representatives of the CCRC Compass Youth Group, with the guidance of the youth group leaders. We believe a project like this will benefit our community, but it will also provide our youth with several valuable lessons along the way. In addition to learning the skills necessary to launch this service project (planning, construction, food pantry stocking and maintenance, decision making), they will also learn about justice, perseverance, and how to deal with roadblocks or disappointments. We hope this project will help create a foundation of service that will last a lifetime.

Sources:

<http://www.littlefreepantry.org/frequently-asked-questions>

ADENDUM

Responses needed for final grant approval:

Are there other funding sources for this pantry (the building and initial stocking) other than the Food Basket Sunday offering and this grant? I do see that you state that the hope is that it will be self-sustaining.

Our food basket Sunday March collection will be donated to this project, so we'll have a stockpile of food and hygiene items to get us started. Ongoing needs are tricky to estimate because there are two factors that are variable:

- how much will the pantry be used? We are not sure how quickly contents will be depleted.
- when will "neighbors" begin giving to the pantry? The theme of the pantry is "Take what you need, give what you can", but we need families, groups and/or organizations in the area to contribute to our pantry.

As far as initial depletion, the CCRC consistory has agreed to fund \$500 to match the \$500 grant from the Albany Synod.

We aren't sure how long these funds will last, but as our inventory is depleted our youth will need to plan additional fund raisers or food drives. We expect the children will gain skills and experience in several areas as we maintain this pantry including budgeting, maintaining inventory, planning and creating food drives and fund raisers. In addition, the physical pantry will need to be stocked, maintained and possibly repaired.

Creating awareness about the Little Free Pantry is another important piece of the project. Initially, the youth are introducing the project to our congregation. Construction of the pantry is in the early stages; we hope to have the pantry completed, erected and stocked by late April.

The timing is important because CCRC hosts a community 5K run each May. This event draws many members of the community to our church each spring. This is a great opportunity for the youth to generate awareness and interest in the Little Free Pantry. Developing an ongoing plan to publicize the project will be important if the pantry is to become self-sustaining.

