

RULES FOR CLASSIS COLUMBIA

2016 Edition

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RULES FOR CLASSIS COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

I. THE CONVENING AND CONSTITUTING OF CLASSIS

- A. Classis shall convene and be constituted according to the regulations of the Church Order and the Rules of Classis.
- B. Classis shall regularly convene twice each year, once in the fall and once in the winter.
- C. Designated pastors and churches will lead the delegates in a time of worship and a season of prayer.
- D. The president shall call the session to order at the appointed time and declare the Classis properly constituted.
- E. The stated clerk shall be stationed at the door to register credentialed delegates, distribute name badges, and have the first-time delegates sign the Covenant for Office-bearers.
- F. The host church is to arrange tables in a square or otherwise configuration at which the delegates shall be seated.
- G. The sessions of Classis shall be open to the public, unless Classis decides to meet in executive session. An executive session consists of office-bearers and delegates; a strict executive session consists of delegates only.
- H. The sessions of Classis shall commence at 9 AM. The host church shall be responsible for meals and refreshment breaks.
- I. A council not properly represented at Classis shall present an explanation.
- J. Ordained/commissioned pastors serving emerging congregations shall be seated as members of Classis with voting privileges following the endorsement of their parent council. They are also eligible to any office, role or appointment of Classis.
- K. No delegate shall take leave of the assembly without notifying the president.
- L. If a person is selected to go to Classis and the local congregation is unable to provide for the loss of wages, Classis may be requested to cover such expenses up to the amount of fifty dollars, provided the treasurer is notified of such a request in advance.

II. THE OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

- A. The officers shall be president, vice president, stated clerk and treasurer.
- B. The President
 - 1. The president shall be determined by alphabetical rotation of churches whose pastors who have agreed to serve as president provided that pastor has attended one previous session of Classis. The president shall be one of the three delegates from the church providing the chairperson for the duration of the Classis session.
 - 2. The president shall expedite business in the proper order and according to the rules of Classis.
 - 3. The president shall welcome guests and respond to greetings received or shall appoint a member of Classis to do so.
 - 4. The president shall close the session with appropriate devotions.
- C. The Vice President
 - 1. The vice president shall be determined by alphabetical rotation of the churches whose pastors have indicated a willingness to serve as president.
 - 2. The vice president shall serve as president of the next session of Classis.
 - 3. The vice president shall assume the duties of the president in the event of the president's absence.
 - 4. The vice president shall solicit and combine prayer concerns of Classis churches to be distributed before each season of prayer. The list can inform prayers at Classis and in each local church after Classis.
 - 5. The vice president shall serve as general assistant to the officers of the day.
 - 6. The vice president shall be in charge of mealtime devotions.
 - 7. The vice president shall appoint prayer leaders for each of the ministries, and these leaders shall lead in prayers without being announced following the conclusion re that particular ministry.
 - 8. The vice president shall write approximately a ½ page summary of the events of the Classis with a focus on what would be of interest to an average member of a congregation. The summary shall be sent to each church to be distributed however each council determines.
- D. The Stated Clerk
 - 1. The stated clerk and the alternate shall be elected to a three year term.
 - 2. The stated clerk shall keep an exact record of all the proceedings of the sessions, including
 - a. details of the opening and closing schedules,
 - b. names of the delegates seated,
 - c. names of those given privilege of the floor,
 - d. names of guests who address Classis,
 - e. instructions and overtures from councils,
 - f. summations of protests and appeals,
 - g. motions which prevail and main motions which are defeated,
 - h. any document or its excerpt which Classis decides to insert in the minutes.
 - 3. Interim duties of the stated clerk shall be:
 - a. to notify the synodical office in advance of the dates of the Classis sessions,
 - b. to prepare and mail the agenda eight weeks in advance of the Classis session,
 - 1) include a copy of the credentials,
 - 2) provide one copy of the agenda, the annual reports of functionaries, the annual reports of ministers extraordinary, and standing committee reports. Church visit reports shall also be included in this mailing. If in the judgment of the visitors a report is too sensitive, this report shall be read in executive session at the assembly,
 - 3) to remind the councils that delegates to Classis shall completely familiarize themselves with all the reports,
 - c. to prepare and mail a supplemental agenda four weeks in advance of the session,
 - 1) to include in this mailing instructions for lodging requests and directions to the host church,
 - 2) to remind the councils of the need to determine their joys and concerns to be included in the season of prayer,
 - 3) to instruct all church offices that all agenda materials which are before this session shall be copied and distributed to each council member,
 - d. to notify the candidate of the arrangements for the examination, to call the synodical deputies to be present at the examination, and to distribute copies of the candidate's sermons to all delegates of Classis and to the synodical deputies,
 - e. to write the first draft of minutes within days following the session and to e-mail them to the president and vice president for review and approval of this draft,
 - f. to send a copy of the minutes to each council which in turn shall have copies made for each member,
 - g. to send a copy of the minutes to the area Banner correspondent,
 - h. to sign the minutes of classis together with the president of the session at which the minutes were accepted, to carry on the correspondence of Classis, and to sign official documents,
 - i. to function as facilitator of the nominating committee,

- j. to keep the archives of Classis in the Christian Reformed Archives in Grand Rapids, MI,
 - k. to notify the synodical office the elections of denominational functionaries and forward copies of synodical deputies' decisions re pertinent Classis decisions,
 - l. to submit a written report of stated clerk activity to be included with the supplemental agenda mailing and a written supplement for approval at each session of Classis,
 - m. to propose a schedule of host churches and dates for the following year at the last Classis session of the calendar year.
4. In case the stated clerk is not delegated by a church, the stated clerk shall have the privilege of the floor.
 5. The stated clerk shall receive an honorarium for each session in addition to restitution of all expenses incurred in behalf of Classis.
- E. The Treasurer
1. The treasurer and alternate shall be elected to a three year term.
 2. The duties of the treasurer shall be:
 - a. to receive from the churches, to record, and to distribute all ministry share contributions, sending them to the denominational treasurer,
 - b. to pay all expenses of Classis: cost of meals, authorized Calvin Seminary student grants/loans, and other approved expenses,
 - c. to present a treasurer's report to be included with the supplemental agenda mailing for the fall session,
 - d. to present at the first session of the fiscal year of Classis two copies of the annual financial report for each council represented at Classis. The treasurer shall indicate whether each church has met its ministry share responsibilities,
 - e. to propose the ministry shares for all Classical funds for the following year at the last session of Classis of the fiscal year,
 - f. to reject bills for lodging incurred in the city where Classis convenes.
 3. The treasurer shall be bonded as determined by Classis.
 4. In case the treasurer is not delegated by a church, the treasurer shall have the privilege of the floor.
 5. The treasurer shall receive an annual honorarium in addition to the restitution of all expenses incurred in behalf of Classis.

III. THE BUSINESS OF CLASSIS

- A. Matters as prescribed in the Church Order, Article 28, shall constitute the business of Classis.

- B. Established churches are represented by a minister, an elder and a deacon. Emerging churches are represented by their ordained minister or commissioned pastor. Substitutions may be made in which two delegates from a particular office may be designated when one delegate from each office is not available. At the session ministers, commissioned pastors and elders shall participate in doctrinal and disciplinary discussions and votes. Deacons shall be observers in these matters.
- C. The order of the agenda at regular sessions shall be: the opening worship/devotions, season of prayer, the stated clerk's report of attendance, declaring Classis to be officially constituted, examinations of unordained and ordained candidates for the ministry, the office of commissioned pastor, and licensure to exhort, discipline, overtures and communications, reports of study and pre-advisory committees, protests and appeals, elections, reports of classical and denominational functionaries, speakers, and closing schedule.
- D. Prayer concerns shall be determined by each church council for inclusion in the season of prayer.
- E. Consistories presenting disciplinary matters shall give a brief history of the case in writing on the credentials.
- F. No committee work shall be done on the floor of Classis. The exception to this rule would be a situation in which the Classis is unable to reach a decision on a given issue and it is decided to recommit the matter to the committee of pre-advice which worked on the issue before the session of Classis.
- G. Any overture failing to appear in the agenda shall not be accepted for consideration at the session. The only exception would be an emergency in a church which demands advice/decision immediately for the well-being of the congregation. The Interim Committee after reviewing the overture shall either approve or reject the overture to be placed on the agenda for the session of the day.
- H. Late communications which are in response to later denominational board actions or pronouncements from a denominational office shall be the business at this session.
- I. Protests and appeals by individuals or councils unable to yield to council/consistorial, classical, or synodical decisions shall be the business of Classis. A copy of the appeal or protest must be sent to the body from whose decision the appeal is made or against which protest is made in sufficient time to permit the body to prepare a response.
- J. Ministers serving in extraordinary positions whose credentials reside within the Classis shall annually present a report of their work.

IV. COMMITTEES AND FUNCTIONARIES OF CLASSIS

- A. Nature and Authority

1. Committees shall serve Classis by attending to matters in their respective spheres during the interim between classical sessions. They shall never assume an independent place alongside of Classis.
 2. Alternates shall be chosen for members of committees and functionaries.
 3. The organization of each committee shall be left to the committee members, unless specifically directed in these rules.
 4. Those chosen to denominational functions shall serve subject to the approval of Synod according to the applicable rules of Synod.
 5. Reports submitted to Classis shall be in writing and signed by the reporter. Reports of denominational functionaries shall be mailed to all councils with the agenda. Functionaries may update these reports at the classical session. Study committee reports shall be sent to the stated clerk.
- B. Term of office
1. Elected. All members elected by Classis shall serve for three years, unless otherwise stated. In the event of a vacancy, the alternate shall complete the term of the former incumbent. Classis shall observe the six year tenure rule relating to members of synodical boards and committees.
 2. Appointed. The term of appointive offices shall be determined and specified by the Classis at the time of appointments.
- C. Standing Committees of Classis
1. Interim Committee (elective)
 - a. The Interim Committee shall consist of three members, one member to be elected each year.
 - b. The committee shall execute all assignments which Classis entrusts to it, and shall attend to matters which cannot conveniently be deferred until the next session. It shall have power to call a special session of Classis when matters of great importance cannot be postponed until the next session, and shall be required to do so when at least three councils request such a session.
 - c. The duties of the committee shall include the approval of ministerial credentials of those entering or leaving the Classis, the appointment of counselors for vacant churches, schedules of classical appointments, the nominations of church visitors **(including timely reminders of their importance and encouragement to do them)**, the approval of nominees for classical committees, the appointment of the auditing committee, the arrangements made in consultation with the stated clerk and Classical Leadership Ministry Team for the examination of unordained and ordained candidates for ministry, and determining

- whether late overtures or communications can be placed on the agenda of the session.
- d. This committee shall plan and execute training programs for church officers to be held annually. They shall take place in both a Yakima and in a Willamette Valley location. They shall be geared to include all office bearers. Other church members may be invited as well.
2. Home Missions Committee (elective)
- a. The Home Missions Committee shall consist of three ministers and three laypersons, two members to be elected each year. One minister and one layperson shall reside in each the Central and Lower Columbia areas, and one minister and one layperson shall represent Classis at large. The alternates shall represent Classis at large. Classical Mission Leader serves ex officio.
 - b. The committee shall meet as often as necessary, but not less than twice a year.
 - c. The committee shall supervise all home mission activity undertaken by Classis, serve in consultation with Christian Reformed Home Missions (CRHM) relating to any field, assist and counsel in the work of each field, and explore opportunities for new church plants.
 - d. The committee shall make recommendations to Classis for grant requests under the following circumstances and procedures:
 - 1) A member of the Home Missions Committee shall meet with the council pertaining to a loan request from the Christian Reformed Loan Fund before the committee makes its recommendation to Classis.
 - 2) A member of the Home Missions Committee shall meet with the council making any new grant requests administered by CRHM for ministry assistance (formerly Fund for Smaller Churches) or a grant for growing churches, both administered by the CRHM, and shall meet with the council not less than every two years for renewed requests following CRHM grant guidelines.
 - e. The committee shall be the administrator of the Evangelism Fund. The purpose of the Evangelism Fund shall be:
 - 1) to make funds available for exploratory costs in connection with prospective church plants,
 - 2) to make funds available for local evangelistic ministry opportunities and for congregational ministry revitalization and coaching; as endorsed by Classis and/or CRHM. A ministry assessment may be required for larger projects.
 - f. The committee shall be the administrator of the Revolving Fund. The purpose and regulations for the Revolving Fund are:

- 1) Purpose: to provide capital building loans for young churches (church plants) and for longer established churches which are in great need.
- 2) Regulations for church plants:
 - a) Loans will be available to newly formed groups upon the approval of Classis under the following conditions:
 - (1) The applicant must investigate other possibilities of financing,
 - (2) The total financial condition should be made available to Classis,
 - (3) The applicant group must provide a ten year financial and membership projection,
 - (4) Representatives of the applicant group must personally meet with the Classical Home Missions Committee about their request.
 - b) Loan requests should be made at least 60 days prior to the meeting of Classis in order to be considered at that session.
 - c) The Loan repayment shall be:
 - (1) the term is not to exceed 20 years,
 - (2) the interest rate shall be none the first five years, 2% below prime rate the next three years, and prime rate for the remaining nine years. The rate will be adjusted September 1 for the following calendar year.
 - (3) The repayment of principal stipulations shall be:
 - (a) The first payment shall be made not later than the first anniversary of the loan.
 - (b) The annual payments shall be at least 5% of the original principal.
 - (c) The Classical Home Missions Committee shall encourage the church to repay the loan as quickly as possible, thus freeing funds to help other churches.
- 3) Regulations for established churches:
 - a) In the use of the Revolving Fund emerging congregations shall have priority over established congregations. Established congregations shall not have the same repayment as church plants.
 - b) The following terms shall apply to established congregations:
 - Term: 10 years
 - Interest rate: Prime
 - First payment due: year one

- Minimum payment: at least 10% of principal
 - Callable: maximum \$30,000 with 60 days notice in the first year and no limit with a 60 day notice after one year.
- g. The committee will introduce pastors/commissioned pastors serving emerging churches, who will give an oral report of their ministry at least one Classis a year and provide a written report for each church for every Classis.
 3. Diaconal Committee (elective)
 - a. Function: to be a liaison between diaconal ministries and to be an umbrella committee of the Eastern Columbia Mercy Ministries and the Western Columbia Diaconal Conference.
 - b. The committee shall be supportive, educational, and a consultative agent for the needs of deacons or other congregational leaders and equip them to lead their congregations in the areas of stewardship, mercy and witness.
 - c. The committee shall offer assistance to the churches in their ministry of mercy whenever necessary, such as
 - (1) provide information regarding services offered by other institutions of mercy and agencies, and using the help given especially by Northwest Mercy ministries and World Renew.
 - (2) coordinate needs and resources in the local church with those in the community,
 - (3) encourage local diaconates to develop their ministry potential by identifying needs and responding to specific requests,
 - (4) help newly organized churches in beginning their diaconal work in cooperation with the Classical Home Missions Committee,
 - (5) encourage local congregational involvement in a wider scope of ministry in cooperation with other churches and agencies.
 - d. The committee shall perform ministries of mercy which are beyond the scope and resources of the individual churches within Classis.
 - e. The committee chair shall submit a written report of its work for the agenda of Classis and report verbally at Classis any update which is of interest to the session.
 - f. The committee shall submit names to Classis of nominees to fill positions as they become vacant.
 - g. The committee shall consist of six members, two members from the Eastern Columbia area, two members from the Western Columbia area, the classical delegate to World Renew, and a pastor who shall also serve on the CLMT.
 4. Youth Committee (elective)

- a. The committee shall assist and facilitate effective youth ministry in the Classis through the development, maintenance, growth and renewal of youth and young adult ministries.
- b. The committee shall work together as partners with the local congregations. This shall be done by:
 - 1) educating classis and local congregations regarding the Relational Model of Youth Ministry and its implementation,
 - 2) developing a youth ministry resource library or file, which would include an annotated bibliography, catalogues, etc.,
 - 3) communicating to the appropriate agencies youth needs not currently being addressed.
- c. The committee shall investigate and address the needs of the youth within each local congregation. This shall be done by:
 - 1) becoming informed regarding the youth ministry in each church by identifying and dialoguing with a key person in each congregation (youth pastor, youth elder, youth leader, and youth education chairperson),
 - 2) communicating needs to various youth agencies as appropriate,
 - 3) developing evaluation tools which can be used by congregations to assess the needs of their youth,
 - 4) developing youth ministry expertise through consultation with experts and/or by reading and discussing youth ministry trends and issues.
- d. The committee shall facilitate a network between the congregational youth ministries of the classis. This shall be done by:
 - 1) promoting contact between churches by
 - a) identifying a key contact person for youth in each congregation and publishing a list of their names, addresses and phone numbers,
 - b) publishing a newsletter,
 - c) facilitating key contact person's training and informational meetings.
 - 2) encouraging combined youth ministry activities.
- e. The committee shall communicate and promote the work of the Christian Reformed Publications Youth Department and of the Dynamic Youth Ministries to Classis and the local congregations. This shall be done by:
 - 1) disseminating information of a promoting participations in the activities of these organizations,
 - 2) encouraging membership in Youth Unlimited (YU), Early Teen Ministry (ETM), Cadets, and GEMS.

- f. The committee shall include members representing the following interest: a parent representative, a current active representative for Dynamic Youth ministries, a pastor with youth ministry interest, youth pastor/youth elder, and a young adult representative. These members shall reflect a broad geographical representation within Classis. The committee is encouraged to appoint two students/young people to the committee.
 - g. The committee shall submit to Classis the names of nominees to fill expired/vacant positions.
 - h. The committee shall submit a written/verbal report detailing its work at each session of Classis.
 - i. The committee shall convene twice a year with the option of additional meetings as needed.
 - j. The committee shall propose a budget which covers the cost of travel, phone calls, mailings, training events, resource material, etc.
5. Classical Ministerial Leadership Team (CMLT)
- a. Function: The committee will advise member churches regarding candidacy policies and procedures; collaborate with Article 6 students and Article 7 & 8 applicants in the preparation of their Ministry Readiness Profiles; guide ministries through the application process for commissioned pastors (Article 23), and provide the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee with endorsements and other necessary information. The CMLT will also make arrangements for the exams of those seeking licensure to exhort.
 - b. Mandate: The CMLT will be tasked with the following:
 - 1) The CMLT will be a consultation and advisory resource to the member congregations of Classis, Classis itself and other interested parties regarding matters related to ministerial candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church.
 - 2) The CMLT will provide information and advice to member congregations of its Classis, Classis itself and other interested parties concerning the candidacy parties.
 - 3) The CMLT will encourage the congregations of Classis to be pro-active in identifying possible candidates for ministry in the CRC and offer resources to help people discern their calling.
 - 4) The CMLT will provide counsel that will help councils, Classis and those preparing for the ministry in the completion of the individual's Ministry Readiness Profile.
 - 5) The CMLT will recommend to Classis and administer the distribution of appropriate financial resources to assist those

preparing for ministry. See Supplement IV.A. for rules and guidelines.

- 6) Upon receiving a positive recommendation to enter the candidacy process from an individual's council, the CMLT will interview the individual and work with them to prepare a financial plan as well as a study plan or learning covenant. In the case of individuals entering the candidacy or affiliation process through Article 7 or 8 the CMLT will provide the Synodical Ministerial Candidacy Committee with required information.
- 7) The CMLT will arrange for the necessary examinations for those seeking ordination into the ministry. This will include assigning a preaching text, and requesting examiners to conduct the Classical exam.
- 8) The CMLT will assist the church and Classis that initiated the process of study-candidacy process in appropriately celebrating the progress of those preparing for the ministry under its care, giving thanks to God for his provision of faithful and gifted leadership for his church.
- 9) The CMLT will request the stated clerk to arrange for synodical deputies when necessary for candidacy issues.
- 10) This committee will be composed of three pastors and two elders, ordinarily from both the east and west sides of Classis. One committee member will be a pastor from the CIC.

D. Other Committees and Functionaries of Classis

1. Pre-advisory Committee (appointive): The president shall appoint delegates to the pre-advisory committee (when needed in advance of the Classis session), the credentials committee, and special matters (when needed).
2. Nominating Committee (appointive):
 - a. The president and vice president at the fall and winter sessions of Classis shall function as the nominating committee to prepare the ballots for the coming fall and winter sessions of Classis. The stated clerk shall function as facilitator on this committee.
 - b. The fall session shall fill vacancies and the winter session shall vote the annual ballot. Nominations of delegates to Synod shall not be made by this committee.
 - c. Each committee is responsible for offering names of possible nominees to serve on their respective committees. These names are to be submitted to the stated clerk and approved by the Interim Committee and then forwarded to the nominating committee.

3. Auditing Committee (appointive): The Interim Committee at the fall session shall nominate two auditors who by training or experience are qualified to examine and audit the books and records of the classical treasurer. This committee shall present a written statement to the stated clerk and to the treasurer.
4. Worship Committee:

The Classis clerk, in consultation with the CIC, shall maintain a list of ministers and other interested persons who will serve as the worship leader. No one will serve as worship leader at the same Classis for which they are the president or vice president of Classis.

 - a. The worship leader will plan Classis worship which is intended to last about 20 minutes, with a couple of songs and other elements of worship as desired.
 - b. The worship leader will deliver an 8-10 minute devotional message.
 - c. The worship leader will consult with the host church related to music and musical accompaniment.
 - d. The worship leader will introduce a season of prayer, intended to last about 30 minutes.
5. Church Visitors (appointive):
 - a. Teams of church visitors and alternates shall be appointed by the Interim Committee at the winter session and shall serve for two year terms. The committee shall note Church Order Article 42a when making appointments.
 - b. The visitors shall develop a written report for each church which shall be an evaluation of the spiritual life of the churches, outreach program, and any other significant items concerning them, including detailed reports of special problems. They shall send a copy of their report to the church visited in advance of the agenda mailing. If a report is judged too sensitive, it shall instead be read in executive session at Classis. These visits shall be made between February and June 15.
 - c. These records shall be kept in an electronic file by the stated clerk.
 - d. The churches of the eastern area of Classis shall be visited by ministers/elders in their area, and in the western area of Classis, by ministers/elders in their area. In the event of a major problem in one of the churches in a given area, the church involved shall be permitted to ask for a visiting team from another area.
 - e. Church visitors shall allow up to two hours for each visit.
 - f. The church visitors as representatives of Classis shall relate their work primarily to the local council. cf. Church Order Article 42, and "Guide to Church Visiting."

- g. The church visitors may use the following option in their visitation: The council presents an evaluation to the visitors in advance of the visit which will cover four areas of congregational life. This evaluation will constitute the basis for discussion at the visit.
 - 1) What the Lord is doing in these areas: public worship (preaching, music, prayer, offerings, sacraments, lay participation, second service, other); Bible study and fellowship groups (men, women, couples, youth, children, prayer, catechism, Church School, other); evangelism (personal, local projects, national, world-wide, other); and helping services (specific service to members and non members, other).
 - 2) What you would like to see the Lord do in the next year in your congregation in the areas of public worship, Bible study and study groups, evangelism, and helping service?
 - 3) How your congregation can (or who can) help fulfill what you would like to see the Lord do among and with you?
 - h. The church visitors shall delve into the reasons why a church is not meeting its denominational ministry shares, taking into account the formula for ministry shares reduction in churches where this may apply. When Classis is convinced a church is unable to meet the ministry shares, the churches within the Classis should be requested to assist that church to meet its denominational obligations.
6. Counselor (appointive): The Interim Committee shall appoint a counselor to give guidance to a council of a church which is without a resident pastor or commissioned pastor. When this need is concluded by the arrival of a resident pastor or commissioned pastor, the counselor shall give a report of his work to Classis.
7. Study Committee (appointive)
- a. In order to facilitate its work Classis may appoint committees to consider questions and matters which require special study. A study committee shall serve only for the period designated. The first named person shall be chairperson and the second named, reporter. The chairperson shall be responsible for the proper functioning of the committee.
 - b. Any member of Classis may appear before these committees for the purpose of speaking about any matter referred to it.
 - c. Committee reports shall be signed by the chairperson and the reporter. In case of a minority report(s), each report must be signed by the members favoring it. A minority report may be divergent in every detail from the committee report, or the

- divergence may concern only parts of the report. The report of the majority shall be considered the report of the committee.
 - d. The task of defending the report in discussion shall rest primarily upon the chairperson and reporter of the committee. They shall have precedence over other speakers, and shall not be limited as to the number and length of their speeches. If after adequate discussion the majority report does not find general favor, its recommendations may be either rejected or tabled; or they may be tabled for the purpose of giving the minority report(s) a hearing. After such rejection or tabling, a motion is in order to proceed to a discussion of the minority report(s).
 - e. Recommendations of a committee may be recommitted whenever the work of Classis can be thus expedited.
 - f. When a pre-advisory committee gives advice to Classis differing materially from the recommendations of the study committee, the proposals of the latter shall have precedence over those of the former and shall be the first to come for a vote.
8. Synodical delegates (elective): At the winter session the required number of delegates to Synod shall be chosen by ballot. All ministers officially enrolled in Classis are eligible for election. Before balloting the names of the ministers who have represented Classis at the previous two Synods shall be noted. Councils are requested to submit the names of elders and deacons who are eligible to attend Synod.
9. Functionaries on denominational boards and committees (elective):
- a. World Missions
 - b. Home Missions
 - c. Calvin College
 - d. Calvin Seminary
 - e. Back to God Ministries International
 - f. World Renew
 - g. Board of Trustees
- These elections shall be certified by the Christian Reformed Board of Trustees.
10. Synodical Deputy (elective): Classis shall elect a minister and alternate officially enrolled in Classis to function as Synodical Deputy according to the rules as specified by Synod. The Christian Reformed Board of Trustees shall certify this election.
11. Fraternal delegates (appointive): When the opportunity arises to have an exchange of fraternal delegates with churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, the Interim Committee shall appoint a delegate to represent Classis Columbia at the corresponding assembly. The Classis delegate shall attend the entire session of these assemblies.

IV. SUPPLEMENTS

A. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT FUND APPLICANTS

1. The CLMT shall manage all ministerial student matters.
 - a. The committee shall base its recommendations upon the following qualifications:
 - (1) The applicant shall be a communicant member, member in good standing in one of the churches of Classis Columbia
 - (2) The applicant shall be student of Calvin Theological Seminary,
 - (3) The consistory shall attest to the applicant's spiritual qualifications and that the applicant is in need of financial aid,
 - (4) The applicant shall provide a statement of health from a reputable and competent physician,
 - (5) The applicant shall be interviewed by the committee preferably before aid is granted,
 - (6) The applicant shall present a statement of need annually.
 - b. The student granted aid by Classis shall sign the following document of agreement:

This agreement made and entered into this day of _____, 20____, by and between Classis Columbia of the Christian Reformed Church as Party of the First Part, and Mr. _____ of the _____ Christian Reformed Church, city of _____, state of _____, as the Party of the Second Part.

Witnesseth: That it is mutually agree that the said Second Party desirous of preparing for the Gospel ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, and being in need of funds for such preparation, and the said First Party is hereby ready and willing to offer the necessary funds to the extent of \$ _____ per school year upon the conditions hereinafter stipulated by the said First party, which conditions are hereby agreed upon and accepted by said Parties. The said conditions are as follows:

 - 1) *That the student shall promptly send to the CMLT a notification of matriculation in Calvin Theological Seminary, certified by the registrar of the seminary, before the student can receive any support for the current year.*
 - 2) *That the student shall indicate at registration the fact of being supported by Classis Columbia so that the registrar may send report cards when issued, to the CLMT.*
 - 3) *That should the student become married, the student shall inform the CMLT which shall review the matter of the student's support.*
 - 4) *That the student shall be willing at any time to explain any and all irregularities concerning which the CLMT may wish to address..*
 - 5) *That the student shall not discontinue studies for any period of time without first notifying the CMLT.*

- 6) *That if at any time the student should question or depart from the Reformed faith, the student shall immediately notify the CMLT to that effect.*
- 7) *That the student shall put forth every effort to live a godly life and maintain academic respectability and that if and when Classis should notify the student of the withdrawal of its support because of any irregularities in the student's faith or conduct, the student shall promptly (within six months) make arrangements with the CMLT for the reimbursement of all funds advanced the student..*
- 8) *That the student shall promptly make arrangements with the CMLT for the reimbursement of all funds advanced if and when the student discontinues training for the ministry in Calvin Theological Seminary, or fails to enter the ministry, or enters the ministry in a church other than the Christian Reformed Church.*
- 9) *That if when as a pastor would leave the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church to serve another church or denomination, or should enter upon a secular vocation before having served five years in the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, all monies advanced by this fund shall be refunded: after five years of service two-thirds shall be refunded; one third after ten years, and after fifteen years, zero.*
- 10) *That if the recipient of these funds should fail to live up to this Document of Agreement, this case shall be brought to the attention of the supervising consistory, and if need be, will be dealt with after a disciplinary manner, and as a last resort he dealt with through legal procedure.*

I agree to be bound by the terms of the document in all matters.

Signed:

Witness:
- c. The student who enters the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church and remains on its clergy registry shall not be required to refund monies received from this fund.
- d. Classis may make exceptions to these rules, e.g., a member of a church in another classis.
- e. Classis may, as resources are available, grant funds to those pastors seeking to pursue their doctoral degree (Ph.D, D.Min., Ed.D) at an approved seminary. Such funds may be used only for tuition expenses and priority MUST be given to students pursuing their M.Div. degree.

B. PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINATIONS

1. Candidate for the ministry (unordained)
 - a. As soon as a candidate has accepted the call from one of the churches in Classis, the council shall notify the CLMT, requesting an examination.
 - b. Following this notification, the CLMT shall send the candidate a copy of the classical rules and shall request the candidate to send to the CLMT the candidates' seminary diploma, call letter and a copy of the letter of acceptance.

- c. The stated clerk and the CLMT shall arrange the schedule for examination. The schedule shall be published in the agenda. The stated clerk shall request the presence of three neighboring synodical deputies.
- d. The candidate shall prepare a sermon on a text assigned by the CLMT. In addition the candidate shall submit two other sample sermons, one of which shall be a catechism sermon. The two sermons which the candidate presents shall not be any which have used in practice preaching or for academic evaluation in the seminary. A copy of these sermon manuscripts shall be submitted to the stated clerk. The stated clerk shall place these sermons in the agenda mailings and send them to the synodical deputies.
- e. If the credentials and the sermon manuscripts are satisfactory, the candidate shall deliver his sermon at a worship service in his calling church prior to the session of Classis. Two sermon critics shall be present at this worship. The critics shall also discuss the sermon with the candidate prior to the examination in the other areas of the examination.
- f. The examination schedule shall be:
 - 1) Four classical delegates shall be appointed as official examiners, two of whom shall serve as sermon critics.
 - 2) The examination of Practica shall take place. The examiner shall introduce the candidate. The examiner shall inquire into the candidate's relationship to God, commitment to the ministry, understanding of the meaning and relevance of the ministry for our times, loyalty to the church, and related matters. Synodical deputies and Classis delegates shall have opportunity to ask questions.
 - 3) A motion to proceed with the examination shall prevail. This shall not be enacted without the concurrence of the synodical deputies.
 - 4) The sermon critics shall present a sermon evaluation in the presence of the candidate, and attention shall be given to the candidate's manner of conducting the worship service. Additional questions with reference to the sermon and its delivery shall be allowed.
 - 5) A motion to proceed with the examination shall prevail. This shall not be enacted without the concurrence of the synodical deputies.
 - 6) The examination of Biblical and theological position shall take place. The examiner shall inquire into the candidate's Biblical and theological judgment, competence and soundness. The examination shall continue a minimum of thirty minutes per candidate. Opportunity shall be provided for additional questions.
 - 7) In executive session a motion to admit shall be received and given consideration.

- 8) Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit shall be offered.
 - 9) Classis shall vote by ballot.
 - 10) The synodical deputies shall present their written statement.
 - 11) If the synodical deputies do not concur with the decision of Classis, Classis and the synodical deputies may try to reach a unified decision. In the event that agreement cannot be reached between them, the matter is automatically referred to Synod for final adjudication.
 - 12) If the vote is favorable, the president shall present the candidate the classical diploma and shall speak appropriate words.
2. Candidate for the ministry (ordained)
- a. A "colloquium doctum" is a friendly and informal interview with a minister of another denomination who desires to be declared eligible for a call to a Christian Reformed Church. The minister shall make application to the Classis through the CMLT.
 - b. Need to call a minister from another denomination must be established by the Classis with the concurrence of the synodical deputies before an examination can take place. The determination of need is specified in the Church Order Supplement under Article 8 of the Church Order.
 - c. The council of a church within Classis shall not nominate a minister from another denomination without classical approval. Classis shall receive from the minister, a statement of health, appropriate diplomas, and the evaluated psychological report prior to beginning the determination of need.
 - d. At the scheduled colloquium doctum, the pastor shall present a testimonial from his council or classis or presbytery concerning his purity of doctrine and sanctity of life.
 - e. The following criteria shall be applied for approving or disapproving the nominee/applicant:
 - 1) soundness of doctrine
 - 2) sanctity of life
 - 3) knowledge and appreciation of Christian Reformed practice and usage.
 - f. A colloquium doctum of a minister whose primary language is not English shall take place in the presence of a panel of four pastors and two elders appointed by the Interim Committee.
 - 1) This dialogue shall take place in a more relaxed atmosphere the night before the Classis session. It shall take place with the synodical deputies being present. The Interim Committee shall have the authority to engage a competent translator. At the conclusion of this interview the panel shall prepare their recommendation to be heard at Classis the next morning.

- 2) At the morning session the candidate shall give a testimony and a short biography. This shall be followed with the recommendation of the panel who conducted the interview.
 - 3) In executive session opportunity shall be given for discussion and prayer.
 - 4) Classis shall vote by ballot on the recommendation of the panel.
 - 5) Thereupon the synodical deputies shall announce their decision to concur or not to concur.
3. Candidate for the ministry via Article 7 of the Church Order. The CLMT and stated clerk shall arrange for this examination according to the synodical decisions.
 4. Candidate for a commissioned pastor
 - a. The calling church shall notify the CLMT requesting examination.
 - b. Following notification, the CLMT shall send the candidate a copy of the classical rules and shall request the candidate to send to the CMLT a consistorial recommendation and a job description from the church in which the appointee holds membership, any evidence (diplomas, transcripts. etc.) of formal education and of specialized training in Bible and evangelism, a copy of the appointment from the church which is requesting his ordination as a commissioned pastor, and a copy of the candidate's letter of acceptance.
 - c. The candidate shall preach a sermon in an official worship service on a text assigned by Classis. Two members of Classis shall be present to serve as sermon critics. They will present to Classis an evaluation of the sermon and the candidate's manner of conducting the worship service. A copy of the sermon shall be provided to all delegates.
 - d. Concurrence from synodical delegates is required re ministerial fitness of candidate and job description.
 - e. The examination schedule shall be:
 - 1) Practical matters regarding Christian testimony, walk of life, relationships to others, love for the church, interest in evangelism and the promotion of Christ's kingdom.
 - 2) Examination in the knowledge of Scripture
 - 3) Examination in Reformed doctrine
 - 4) Examination in the knowledge of the Standards of the Church and Church Order
 - e. When the commissioned pastor accepts an appointment to another field, the pastor shall submit to such an examination as is considered as appropriate by the classis to which the commissioned pastor's calling church belongs, and then be ordained to a new field of labor.
 5. Licensure to exhort

- e. Members of the Christian Reformed Church not formally preparing for the ministry may be given licensure to exhort by Classis, provided the following requirements are met: the existence of a real need for exhorters within the Classis, the evidence of a sound Reformed position, and the ability to exhort in an edifying manner.
- f. The applicant shall present a consistorial recommendation.
- g. The CMLT shall make arrangement for an examination in the following subjects: practica, knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, doctrine and Christian ethics. The applicant shall conduct a worship service and bring a message on a Scripture text as assigned by the Interim Committee.
- h. Opportunity shall be given for questions.
- i. Classis shall be in executive session during the discussion.
- j. If the vote to grant licensure prevails, the president shall so inform the applicant with appropriate words.
- k. The licensure period shall be for three years. The request for renewal shall be made in writing.

C. THE RULES OF ORDER

1. Use of various motions
 - a. Main motions
 - 1) A main motion presents to Classis a matter for consideration or action.
 - 2) The mover shall obtain recognition by the president and then present his motion.
 - 3) The president may ask for the motion in written form.
 - 4) The president shall rule the motion out of order if there is another motion before Classis and it conflicts with the previous decision taken during the same session of Classis, or if it conflicts with Scripture, the Forms of Unity, or the Church Order
 - 5) Recommendations by committees shall be considered main motions.
 - b. Motions to amend
 - 1) A motion to amend is a proposal to alter a main motion before final action is taken on the motion.
 - 2) A motion to amend may propose any of the following: to strike out, to insert, or to substitute certain words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs.
 - 3) A motion to amend is not a proper amendment if it nullifies the main motion or is not germane to it.
 - 4) A motion to amend an amendment is permissible and is called a secondary motion.

- 5) Motions not amendable are listed under the section, Classification of Motions.
- c. Motions to suppress debate or hasten action
- 1) Call for the question. This motion may be moved to terminate discussion of any debatable motion by calling for an immediate vote. If adopted, the previous question (main motion) must be voted on without further debate. If rejected, debate continues.
 - 2) Suspend rules. This motion may be made in order to facilitate the business of Classis with respect to some specific purpose. The purpose must be stated by the mover.
 - 3) Limit debate. This motion proposes to restrict the time available for debate on a specific subject, and requires the president to call for a vote at a specified time.
 - 4) Make special order of business. This motion would direct the president to interrupt pending business at a specific time in order to consider the special matter proposed.
- d. Motions to delay or prevent action
- 1) Postpone to a definite time. A motion to postpone action on a given matter may be made, which shall propose a specific time when the matter shall again become the order of the day.
 - 2) Lay on the table. This motion allows Classis to delay consideration of a matter in order to deal with more urgent business first. Matters thus tabled shall either be taken from the table before Classis adjourns, or if left on the table, shall be regarded as never having appeared before Classis.
 - 3) Refer to committee. Classis may assign consideration or study of any motion to a committee for recommendation, and may recommit matters so referred.
 - 4) Withhold action. Classis may decide to withhold action on a matter by passing a motion to withhold action, postpone indefinitely, or by leaving a matter tabled.
 - 5) Object to consideration. A delegate may state an objection to considering a proposed matter. The president shall immediately either sustain or overrule the objection, stating his reason for so deciding. The objector, if not satisfied, may appeal the rule of Classis. The objection then becomes debatable, and requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote to be sustained.
- e. Motions regarding actions once decided
- 1) Reconsider. Motions to reconsider propose a new discussion and a new vote on a matter already decided. A motion to reconsider must be made during the same meeting of Classis in which the motion in question was passed.
 - 2) Rescind. For weighty reasons, a delegate may move to rescind a previous decision taken at the same meeting of Classis, but

only if he voted on the prevailing side when the original decision was taken. Action taken at a previous meeting of Classis can be rescinded only when the Classis is overtured to do so and reasons are judged to be weighty.

- f. Privileged motions
- 1) Call for the order of the day. When a delegate believes that the regular business of Classis is being obstructed, he may call for the order of the day. If passed, the president is required to call for presentation of the next business listed on the agenda.
 - 2) Point of order. If a delegate is persuaded that the parliamentary rules of Classis have been ignored or misapplied, he may make a point of order.
 - 3) Division of the question. At the request of any delegate a motion consisting of plural parts must be divided into its component parts and each part must be voted on separately.
 - 4) Recess. Non-scheduled recesses may be proposed, in which case the motion shall specify time and duration.
 - 5) Adjourn. Classis normally does not adjourn until all matters legally upon the table have been acted upon. This motion has precedence over all other motions.

2. Classification of motions according to precedence

	Second Needed	Amend- able	Debat- able	Req. vote	Intrprt speaker
A. Privileged motions					
1. Call for order of the day	no	no	no	chm	yes
2. Fix time of next meeting	yes	yes	no	½*	no
3. Recess	yes	yes	yes	½	no
4. Adjourn	yes	no	no	½	no
B. Subsidiary motions					
5. Lay on table	yes	no	no	½	no
6. Call for question	yes	no	no	2/3**	no
7. Limit debate	yes	no	no	2/3	no
8. Postpone to certain time	yes	yes	yes	½	no
9. Refer to a committee	yes	yes	yes	½	no
10. Amend	yes	yes	***	½	yes
11. Postpone indefinitely (or withhold action)	yes	no	yes	½	no
C. Main motions (no order of preference)					
12. Main motion for general business	yes	yes	yes	½	no
13. Take from the table	yes	no	no	½	no
14. Reconsider	yes	no	***	½	yes

15. Rescind	yes	no	yes	2/3	no
16. Make special order of business	yes	yes	yes	2/3	no
D. Incidental motions (no order of preference)					
17. Point of order	no	no	no	chm	yes
18. Appeal from decision of chair	yes	no	***	½	yes
19. Suspend rules	yes	no	no	2/3	no
20. Object to consideration	no	no	no	2/3	yes
21. Parliamentary inquiry	no	no	no	chm	yes
22. Request for information	no	no	no	chm	yes
23. Withdraw motion	no	no	no	½	no

* one more than half of those voting (Simple majority)

** means two-thirds of those voting

*** only debatable when the motion to which it is applied is debatable

3. Discussion

- a. A delegate who wishes to speak in discussion on a matter must be recognized by the president. He must address his remarks to the chair.
- b. A speaker may be interrupted by a call to order by the president or by those motions listed under section 2 as permissible interruption.
- c. The president may hasten discussion by calling upon speakers to be brief and to the point.
- d. If a delegate has spoken twice on a matter, others who have not yet spoken twice shall ordinarily be given priority by the president.

4. Voting

- a. Voice. The president shall call upon those voting affirmatively to say, "yes," those voting against the motion to say, "no."
- b. Raising right hand. If the president cannot determine the outcome of a voice vote, or if a delegate cannot determine the outcome of a voice vote, or if a delegate questions the chair's judgment as to the outcome of such a voice vote, the chair shall ask the delegates to vote by raising their right hands, thus indicating their vote.
- c. Roll call. Voting shall be done by this method only if Classis decides by majority vote.
- d. Ballot. Classis may decide by majority vote to use the ballot in important matters. The following matters must always be vote by ballot: elections, admission to the ministry, granting licensure to exhort, discipline of a person whose name is known to Classis.
- e. The right to vote in any matter is the prerogative of the president.

D. PROTEST AND APPEAL

1. A delegate may protest any decision of Classis if he is persuaded that the teaching of the Scripture or the Forms of Unity, or the stipulations of the Church Order have been violated, or that he has suffered an injustice, and may appeal from the decision of Classis to Synod. The protestant shall declare his intention to protest during the session in which the challenged action took place.
2. Protests and appeals must be registered individually and not in groups. A copy of the appeal or protest must be filed with the stated clerk in time to allow Classis to prepare an answer to the next Synod.
3. A member of Classis may ask to have his negative vote recorded, provided he makes his request immediately after the vote in question is taken.

E. REVISION OF RULES

These rules may be revised by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the assembly, provided the revision has been submitted to the councils for consideration.

F. CONCERNING DEVOTIONS

1. Devotions in the opening schedule may consist of songs, the prayer for ecclesiastical assemblies, and other prayers, Scripture reading, and pertinent remarks.
2. Devotions at meals shall include Scripture and prayer before the meal is served.
3. Following a recess, it is appropriate that Classis should reconvene with a song.
4. The closing schedule shall consist of remarks and prayer by the president, and the singing of the doxology by the assembly.

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