CALL TO ORDER
The Rev. Dwayne Jackson, General Synod vice president, called to order the fourth meeting of the General Synod at 1:32 p.m. on Friday, June 10, 2022. Jidong Shan, corresponding delegate from the General Synod Council serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, offered prayer.

MISSIONARY VIDEO
The General Synod viewed a brief video presentation highlighting Justin Meyers, RCA missionary. The Rev. Sarah Palsma, regular delegate from Classis of Rochester, led the Synod in prayer for this mission work.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT
The vice president called upon the Rev. Philip Assink, General Synod president, to present his report to the General Synod. The president addressed the Synod and presented the following proposals in his report:

P-1
“To direct the Commission on Christian Action to explore the Alliance for Hope International as a possible partner to equip congregations and members of the Reformed Church in America to support the intervention and prevention of violence, for report to General Synod 2023.”

P-2
“To urge all classes and congregations that support RCA Global Mission through Partnership-in-Mission shares to maintain those partnerships, and, for congregations that have transferred or are transferring out of the RCA, to consider staying engaged with their RCA mission partners even when they are no longer formally connected to the RCA to sustain this kingdom witness.”

The vice president informed the Synod that the president’s proposals will be referred to the Committee of Reference for further referral to the proper advisory committee.

The president assumed the chair.
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY
The president called upon the Rev. Jeffery Lampen, corresponding delegate from the Commission on Christian Unity, to present the commission’s report (GS Workbook pp. 184-193). The Rev. Lampen addressed the Synod.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

CW 22-1 was presented to the house.

VOTED: To adopt CW 22-1 (GS Workbook p. 198) (yes 163; no 4).

MISSIONARY VIDEO
The General Synod viewed a brief video presentation highlighting Nozomi Brownell, RCA missionary. The Rev. Drew Poppleton, regular delegate from the Classis of Northern Michigan, led the Synod in prayer for this mission work.

TABLE DISCUSSION #2 – LAMENT
The president led the delegates through a guided exercise concerning churches that are leaving the RCA. At its conclusion the Rev. Todd Krygsheld, regular delegate from the Classis of Zeeland, led the Synod in prayer.

REPORT ON DISPOSITION OF NEW BUSINESS
The president invited Michelle Chahine, corresponding delegate from the General Synod Council serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, to present recommendations regarding the three items of new business presented on Thursday and Friday.

The first item of new business presented on Thursday was as follows:

“To instruct the general secretary to convene a meeting with other appropriate RCA ecumenical officers and at least two representatives from the Commission on Christian Unity to craft a resolution to be brought to the World Council of Churches (WCC), calling for the dismissal of the Russian Orthodox Church from WCC membership until it repents of and retracts its support for Russia’s unprovoked, unjustifiable and brutally inhumane war against Ukraine; and further,
To instruct the Commission on Theology and the General Synod Professorate to examine whether the conditions surrounding Russia’s unprovoked war against Ukraine meet the criteria for a declaration of status confessionis, a full break in communion due to the gravity of the breach of faithfulness to the gospel by any Christian communion supporting Russia’s (and Belarus’) war against Ukraine.”

In response to the foregoing (referred to by the Committee of Reference as item #1), the Committee of Reference recommended:

EC 22-12
To accept item #1 as new business and to refer it to the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business for report back to this session of the General Synod.

Reason:
The situation in Ukraine has been changing rapidly, and the response of the Russian Orthodox Church has become more apparent since the deadlines for submission of classical or regional synod overtures have passed, which supports that this could not have been submitted through regular channels.

EC 22-12 was presented to the house.

VOTED: To adopt EC 22-12 (Committee of Reference Report on New Business) (yes 156; no 14).

The second item of new business presented on Thursday was as follows:

“To instruct the General Synod Council, the Board of Benefits Services, the Church Growth Fund and any other appropriate agent of the General Synod, in consultation with the Commission on Christian Action, to introduce shareholder resolutions for any investments owned by said agents in gas and oil companies, for those companies to lower their profit share by 50% to help reduce the price of gas and ease the economic burden particularly for low-income wage earners; and further,

To encourage RCA regional synods, classes, congregations, officially related institutions and other appropriate parties to do the same.”

In response to the foregoing (referred to by the Committee of Reference as item #2), the Committee of Reference recommended:
EC 22-13
To accept item #2 as new business and refer it to the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business for report and recommendation back to this session of the General Synod.

Reason:
The recent spike in prices of gasoline occurred after the deadlines for submission of this concern through the regular channels of the church, which supports that this could not have been submitted through regular channels.

EC 22-13 was presented to the house.

VOTED: To adopt EC 22-13 (Committee of Reference Report on New Business) (yes 110; no 60).

The third item of new business, presented on Friday, was as follows:

“To direct the General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America to sign the ‘Open Letter to State Lawmakers from America’s Pro-Life Organizations’ by June 30, 2022 (https://www.nrlc.org/uploads/communications/051222coalitionletterstates.pdf).”

In response to the foregoing (referred to by the Committee of Reference as item #3), the Committee of Reference recommended:

EC 22-14
To accept item #3 as new business and refer it to the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business for report and recommendation back to this session of the General Synod.

Reason:
The letter was not published until May 12, 2022, which supports that this could not have been submitted through regular channels.

EC 22-14 was presented to the house.

VOTED: To adopt EC 22-14 (Committee of Reference Report on New Business) (yes 121; no 48).

RECESS
The president declared the General Synod recessed at 4:45 p.m., following a closing prayer by Israel Camacho, regular delegate from the Classis of the Southwest.