

GENERAL SYNOD
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

2023 Journal of Actions
Meeting 12
Monday evening - June 12, 2023
H.S. Kuyper Fieldhouse

CALL TO ORDER

The president called to order the twelfth meeting of the General Synod at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, June 12, 2023. The Rev. Riana Shaw Robinson, corresponding delegate from the Commission on Race and Ethnicity, offered prayer.

MISSIONARY VIDEO

Delegates viewed a brief video highlighting the work of Roger and Sue Scheenstra, RCA missionaries. Susan Davis, regular delegate from the Classis of California, led Synod in prayer for this mission work.

TABLE DISCUSSION

The president guided the delegates through 10 minutes of table discussion in which the delegates were to imagine if God called them to go into the mission field, and consider the gifts/skills they would bring to bless others.

PRESENTATIONS OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

The president invited the Rev. Dr. Patricia Sealy, corresponding delegate from the Commission of Nominations, and the following vice presidential candidates to the platform:

- The Rev. Miriam Barnes, regular delegate from the Classis of Zeeland
- The Rev. Dr. Carlos Rivera, regular delegate from the Classis of Brooklyn
- Rev. Joshua Scheid, regular delegate from the Classis of Nassau-Suffolk
- Rev. Troy Van Beek, regular delegate from the Classis of East Sioux

Rev. Dr. Sealy introduced each candidate in alphabetical order and each candidate addressed the Synod.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN ACTION, CONTINUED

The president called upon Cameron Van Kooten Laughead, moderator of the Commission on Christian Action, and the Rev. Becky Town, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, to resume their presentation of the commission's report (GS Workbook, pp. 155-163) and advisory committee's advice (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, pp. 3-4). Mr. Van Kooten

Laughead addressed the Synod.

CA 23-2 was presented to the house (GS Workbook, p. 157).

The president called upon Rev. Town to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to amend CA 23-2 as follows (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, pp. 3-4) (deletions are stricken).

To form an ad hoc committee, meeting remotely via Zoom or other technology, to seek further transparency and understanding around the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and unemployment insurance for denominational (GSC) staff. This committee will be chaired by the moderator of the Commission on Christian Action, and membership will be made up of at least one person from each of the following groups or GSC staff departments: GSC legal counsel, GSC human resources, GSC financial offices, General Synod Council, and the Commission on Theology, along with others who may be deemed appropriate at the chair's discretion, in consultation with the committee membership. This committee's purpose will be to understand the current practices affecting GSC staff and seek to bring a legally, financially, and theologically sound recommendation to the General Synod of 2024 ~~related to ending any unnecessary NDA and unemployment practices.~~

VOTED: To adopt CA 23-2 as amended (yes 160; no 10).

CA 23-2 as amended was before the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend the motion as follows (additions are underlined, deletions stricken):

To form an ad hoc committee, meeting remotely via Zoom or other technology, to seek further transparency and understanding around the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and unemployment insurance for denominational (GSC) staff. ~~This committee will be chaired by the moderator of the Commission on Christian Action, and~~ The membership will be made up of at least one person from each of the following groups or GSC staff departments: GSC legal counsel, GSC human resources, GSC financial offices, General Synod Council, the Commission on Christian Action, and the Commission on Theology, along with others who may be deemed appropriate at the ~~chair's discretion, in consultation with~~ of the committee's membership. The committee shall choose a chairperson from its membership who is not a staff member. This committee's purpose will be to understand the current practices affecting GSC staff and seek to bring a legally, financially, and theologically sound recommendation to the General Synod of 2024.

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to CA 23-2 (yes 163; no 9).

CA 23-2 as twice amended was before the house.

VOTED: To adopt CA 23-2 as twice amended (yes 149; no 21).

CA 23-3 was presented to the house (GS Workbook, p. 159).

The president called upon Rev. Town to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to vote in favor of CA 23-3 (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p. 4).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend the motion as follows (deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

To resolve to pray in the name of Christ Jesus for global peace – particularly naming peace in the Holy Land and any other noteworthy conflicts at this time - at each of the ~~worship services held during meetings~~ gathering of the General Synod until peace comes.

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to CA 23-3 (yes 161; no 9).

CA 23-3 as amended was before the house.

VOTED: To adopt CA 23-3 as amended (yes 161; no 9).

CA 23-4 was presented to the house (GS Workbook, p. 159).

The president called upon Rev. Town to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to vote in favor of CA 23-4 (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p. 4).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend the motion as follows (additions are underlined):

To urge classes and congregations (through classis clerks) to begin a study of the conflicts in the Holy Land with the attempt to understand the fears of each side of the conflict, making use of the following resources, among others, for this study:

1. Joshua and Sally Vis - <https://joshvis.com/resources>

2. RCA Middle East Peacemakers -
www.facebook.com/groups/550613948318966
3. The Parents Circle - Families Forum -
www.theparentscircle.com.
4. Churches for Middle East Peace - <https://cmep.org>

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to CA 23-4 (yes 163; no 7).

CA 23-4 as amended was before the house.

VOTED: To adopt CA 23-4 as amended (yes 154; no 19).

CA 23-5 was presented to the house (GS Workbook, p. 159).

The president called upon Rev. Town to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to vote in favor of CA 23-5 (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p. 4).

VOTED: To adopt CA 23-5 (yes 159; no 11).

CA 23-6 was presented to the house (GS Workbook, p. 160).

The president called upon Rev. Town to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to vote in favor of CA 23-6 (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p. 4).

VOTED: To adopt CA 23-6 (yes 151; no 18).

CA 23-7 was presented to the house (GS Workbook, p. 162).

The president called upon Rev. Town to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to vote in favor of CA 23-7 (Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p. 4).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend the motion as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

To ~~urge~~ invite and welcome members of the congregations, classes, and regional synods of the Reformed Church in America to educate themselves on the resources highlighted in the CCA's 2023 report on spiritual abuse in order to equip congregations and members to address spiritual abuse, both locally and systemically.

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to CA 23-7 (yes 147; no 20).

CA 23-7 as amended was before the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend CA 23-7 as follows (deletions are stricken):

To invite and welcome members of the congregations, classes, and regional synods of the Reformed Church in America to educate themselves on ~~the resources highlighted in the CCA's 2023 report on~~ spiritual abuse in order to equip congregations and members to address spiritual abuse, both locally and systemically.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

VOTED: To cease debate (yes 154; no 16).

VOTED: To reject the amendment to CA 23-7 (yes 58; no 112).

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend the amended motion as follows (additions are underlined):

To invite and welcome members of the congregations, classes, and regional synods of the Reformed Church in America to educate themselves on the resources highlighted in the CCA's 2023 report as well as other resources on spiritual abuse in order to equip congregations and members to address spiritual abuse, both locally and systemically.

VOTED: To adopt the amendment to CA 23-7 (yes 156; no 15).

CA 23-7 as twice amended was again before the house.

VOTED: To adopt CA 23-7 as twice amended (yes 143; no 29).

PASTORAL FORMATION OVERSIGHT BOARD

The president called upon Kim Van Es, member of the Pastoral Formation Oversight Board, to present the board's report (GS Workbook, pp. 247-

251). Ms. Van Es addressed the Synod.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD PROFESSORATE

The president called upon the Rev. Dr. Carol Bechtel, General Synod professor and regular delegates from the professorate, and Rev. Dr. Micah McCreary, General Synod professor and regular delegate from the professorate, to present the report of the professorate (GS Workbook, pp. 245-246). Rev. Dr. Bechtel and Rev. Dr. McCreary addressed the Synod.

RECESS

The president declared the General Synod recessed at 9:12 p.m., following prayer by Ina Montoya, regular delegate from the Classis of Rocky Mountain.