

GENERAL SYNOD  
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

2023 Journal of Actions  
**Meeting 7**  
**Saturday afternoon - June 10, 2023**  
**H.S. Kuyper Fieldhouse**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Rev. Dwayne Jackson, General Synod president, called to order the seventh meeting of the General Synod at 1:33 p.m. on Saturday, June 10, 2022. Rev. Aric Balk, regular delegate from Classis of Nassau-Suffolk, offered prayer.

**MISSIONARY VIDEO**

Delegates viewed a brief video highlighting the work of Roland and Jane Van Es, RCA missionaries. The Rev. Dwayne Jackson, General Synod President, led the Synod in prayer for this mission work.

**TABLE DISCUSSION – ENCOURAGEMENT TO WOMEN IN CALL DISCERNMENT**

The president guided the delegates through 10 minutes of table discussion to talk about the ways to encourage women in their lives and congregation as they discern their call to serve.

**REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CONTINUED**

The president called upon the Rev. Philip Assink, moderator of the General Synod Council serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, to continue its report (GS Workbook pp. 38-45).

EC 23-7 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt EC 23-7 (GS Workbook p. 44)  
(yes 161, no 5).

EC 23-8 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt EC 23-8 (GS Workbook p. 45)  
(yes 160, no 4).

EC 23-9 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt EC 23-9 (GS Workbook p. 45)  
(yes 162, no 6).

EC 23-10 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt EC 23-10 (Addition to the Report of the General Synod Council serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, p. 2)  
(yes 165, no 5).

#### REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF FINANCE

The president called upon Rev. Brian Engel, corresponding delegate from the General Synod Council serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod, and Jillisa Teitsma, General Synod Treasurer and General Synod Council staff, to the platform to present the finance report (GS Workbook pp. 46-58). Rev. Engel addressed the Synod.

F 23-1 was presented to the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend F 23-1 as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

"To approve a General Synod 2024 covenant share rate of 2.7 percent, of which \$415,000 will be allocated for theological education according to the formula provided by PFOB in this manner: \$15,000 for collaborative work (PFOB and the General Synod professorate), \$150,000 to MFCA, and \$250,000 to NBTS."

**VOTED:** To not adopt the amendment to F 23-1 (yes 45, no 121).

F 23-1 was again before the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend F 23-1 as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

"To approve a General Synod 2024 Covenant shares rate of ~~(2.7 percent)~~ 2.5 percent, of which...."

**VOTED:** To not adopt the amendment to F 23-1 (yes 64; no 102)

F 23-1 was again before the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt F 23-1 (GS Workbook p. 57)  
(yes 145, no 18)

A motion was made and supported from the floor as follows:

“To instruct the Board of Benefits Services to clearly communicate to participants in the RCA Retirement Plan and in the RCA 403(b) Retirement Program that the default investment options (Fidelity Freedom Funds) do not follow the current RCA investment policy statements, and may include investments in the securities of companies whose principal business involves gambling, for-profit prisons, the production and distribution of tobacco or alcohol, adult entertainment and pornography, or firearms.”

**VOTED:** To adopt the motion (yes 135; no 32)

F 23-2 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt F 23-2 (GS Workbook p.58).  
(yes 119, no 47).

#### REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL BUSINESS

The president called upon Rev. the Kendra Van Houten, corresponding delegate from and moderator of the Commission on Judicial Business, to present the commission’s report (GS Workbook p. 217). The Rev. Van Houten addressed the Synod.

#### REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON NOMINATIONS

The president called upon the Rev. Patricia Sealy, corresponding delegate from and moderator of the Commission on Nominations, to present the commission’s report. The Rev. Sealy addressed the Synod.

N 23-1 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt N 23-1 (Supplemental Report of the  
Commission on Nominations, p. 4) (yes 161, no 1).

N 23-2 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt N 23-2 (Supplemental Report of the  
Commission on Nominations, p. 5) (yes 171, no 0).

N 23-3 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt N 23-3 (Supplemental Report of the  
Commission on Nominations, p. 6) (yes 170, no 0).

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON HISTORY

The president called upon the Rev. Dr. Daniel Meeter, corresponding delegate from and moderator of the Commission on History, and the Rev. Becky Town, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, to present the commission's report (GS Workbook pp. 192-216) and advisory committee's advice. The Rev. Dr. Meeter addressed the Synod.

H 23-1 was presented to the house.

The president called upon Rev. Town, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, to provide the advice of the advisory committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to vote in favor H 23-2 ( Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p.5).

**VOTED:** To adopt H 23-1 (GS Workbook p. 200).  
(yes 165, no 4).

H 23-2 was presented to the house.

The president called upon Rev. Town, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, to provide the advice of the advisory committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee was to vote in favor H 23-2 ( Report of the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business, p.5).

**VOTED:** To adopt H 23-2 (GS Workbook p. 200).  
(Voice vote).

## MISSIONARY VIDEO

Delegates viewed a brief video highlighting the work of Nathan and Nozomi Brownell, RCA missionaries. Gerri Yoshida, woman delegate from the Regional Synod of New York, led the Synod in prayer for this mission work.

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

The president called upon the Rev. Troy Van Beek, member of the Commission on Christian Worship, to present the commission's report (GS Workbook pp. 181-182). Rev. Van Beek addressed the Synod.

## COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY

The president called upon the Rev. Liz Estes, corresponding delegate from

and moderator of the Commission of Theology, and the Rev. Steven DeVries, moderator of the advisory committee on Church Order and Governance to present the commission's report (GS Workbook pp. 222-241) and advisory committee's advice.

TH 23-1 was presented to the house.  
(GS Workbook p. 225).

The president called upon the Rev. Steven DeVries, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, to provide the advice of the Advisory Committee. The advice of the advisory committee was to amend TH 23-1 ( Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, p. 2) as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

“To adopt the following amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod, BCO Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 9a (2022 ed., p. 119), for recommendation to General Synod 2024 for final approval:

...The membership shall include two persons from among the Reformed Church seminary faculties, one General Synod professor, two persons from among the faculties of the Reformed church colleges, three ~~pastors~~ Ministers of Word and Sacrament (at least one of whom serves a local church, when possible), and at least two laypersons people who do not hold the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.”

**VOTED:** To adopt the amendment to TH 23-1  
(yes 148, no 19).

TH 23-1 was presented to the house as amended.

**VOTED:** To adopt TH 23-1 as amended  
(Yes 147, no 13).

TH 23-2 was presented to the house  
(GS Workbook p. 225)

The president called upon the Rev. Steven DeVries, moderator of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, to provide the advice of the advisory committee. The advice of the Advisory Committee

was to amend TH 23-2 ( Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, p.2) as follows (deletions are stricken):

“To instruct the general secretary to make the paper “Together in Difference” available to all classes, consistories, and assemblies of the RCA, and to invite them to hold discussions and write responses; and further,

To encourage church bodies to respond to the following question: “How do you live together in difference when it comes to questions of human sexuality?” In particular, the commission wishes to collect stories and organizing principles, such as bylaws, that promote unity, purity, and peace among classes, consistories, and assemblies who permit and enable differences in practices and interpretations; and further,

To request that such responses be sent via email to the next moderator of the Commission on Theology, ~~Rev. James Hart Brumm, at jhartbrumm@aol.com with the subject line: Together in Difference,~~ no later than January 1, 2024.”

**VOTED:** To adopt the amendment to TH 23-2  
(yes 151, no 15).

TH 23-2 was presented to the house as amended.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate (yes 118, no 51).

**VOTED:** To not adopt TH 23-2 as amended  
(yes 64, no 105).

#### REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDER AND GOVERNANCE

The president called upon the Rev. Betsy Westman, vice moderator of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance, to present the committee’s report (Report of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance).

OG 23-1 was presented to the house.

**VOTED:** To adopt OG 23-1 (Report of the Advisory on Church Order and Governance, p. 1)  
(yes 157, no 7).

**RECESS**

The president declared the General Synod recessed at 4:39 p.m., following a closing prayer by Sandi Bechtel, regular delegate from the Classis of Illinois.