

General Synod Council Membership Expectations

Thank you for expressing an interest in serving on the General Synod Council (GSC). If elected, you will be working with 29 other individuals from across the denomination to accomplish the work of the General Synod when it is not in session. Membership on GSC is generally a single, non-renewable, four-year term, unless you are filling a mid-term vacancy.

GSC holds stated meetings three times per year as follows:

- Sometime in October (usually Friday and Saturday, and often in the latter half of the month) – this will likely be an in person meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Sometime in March (usually Tuesday through Thursday) – this will likely be an electronic meeting, via Zoom video conference.
- During General Synod in June (GSC members are corresponding delegates to the General Synod and comprise the Committee of Reference. GSC also meets twice over lunch immediately preceding the start of General Synod and immediately following its conclusion) – these meetings occur in person.

In addition, several shorter meetings may be scheduled by Zoom video conference throughout the year if things arise between stated meetings that require more timely action or follow-up.

The bylaws of the General Synod, found in the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*, lay out the responsibilities of the GSC in Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, which are summarized as follows:

As the executive committee, board of directors, and program agenda of the General Synod, as well as the Committee of Reference during the annual convening of the General Synod, the GSC seeks to enable participation in God's work in the world and to equip congregations and assemblies for mission and ministry. It establishes policies for programs to fulfill these purposes. It oversees and evaluates the performance of the general secretary, who is ultimately responsible for staffing and program implementation. It supports, strengthens, and coordinates the commissions, boards, and institutions of the RCA, prepares a budget to sustain established priorities, and otherwise administers the affairs of the RCA between sessions of the General Synod.

The GSC functions according to the principles of policy governance originated by John Carver (sometimes called "Carver governance"). It is important that GSC members understand this model and how the GSC operates in order to serve effectively on GSC.

The GSC's policy governance policies can be found [here](#). In particular, please review the sections titled GP-4 Expectations For Serving on GSC and GP-8 GSC Members' Code of Conduct.

In addition, a brief training on policy governance is held either before or as a part of the GSC's fall meeting each year. New members will be asked to attend.

The GSC hopes that its members exhibit the following characteristics:

- Willing to give high priority to attendance at GSC meetings
- Courage in speaking up during discussion
- Open-minded with good listening skills
- Prayerful regard for the ministries of GSC, denominational staff, and the RCA as a whole
- Not driven by personal agenda
- Passionate about the RCA
- Appreciative of the larger picture
- Sense of humor
- Willing to communicate GSC concerns back to your sending body

Finally, members are also expected to be supportive of denominational ministry efforts, including discipleship, leadership, mission, and a multicultural and multiracial future freed from racism.