

**General Synod Council
Reformed Church in America
Minutes of April 24, 2023 Meeting
Zoom Videoconference**

Welcome and Prayer

Philip Assink, moderator of the General Synod Council (GSC), called the April 24, 2023 meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. (eastern) followed by prayer.

Members Present

The following members of the GSC were present for all or part of the meeting:

Pedro Agudelo	Michael Meyer-Veen
Eddy Alemán, <i>ex-officio</i>	Sheila Moses
Philip Assink	Judith Nelson
Carole Barber	Eric Nichols
Calvin Brouwer	Albert Plat
Michelle Chahine	Neale Roller
Linda Cline	Jidong Shan
Susan Davis	Kjersten Sullivan (ELCA)
Bruce Deckinga	Kimberly Van Es
Brian Engel	Leigh Van Kempen
Randy Karcher	Harris Van Oort
Yong Bok Kim	Patricia Varga

Members Absent

The following members of the GSC were unable to attend the meeting:

Devonna Cousins	Bradley Kautz
Dwayne Jackson	Maudelin Willock

Staff

The following staff members were present for all or part of the meeting:

Terri Boven, *Recorder*
Elizabeth Brand, *Director of General Synod Operations*
Jillisa Teitsma, *Chief Financial Officer*

General Synod 2023

The General Synod president presented the 2023 General Synod special advisory committee membership as follows:

Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business

Moderator: Becky Town (Synod of Albany)
Vice Moderator: Eric Moreno (Classis of California)

Ministers

Gregory Dunlap (Classis of Greater Palisades)
Rebecca Riekse (Classis of North Grand Rapids)

Elders

Thais Lima (Classis of Ontario)
Elaine Noel (Classis of Minnesota)
Jan Van Wyk (Classis of Central Iowa)
Savitri Devi Mark (Classis of Columbia-Greene)

General Synod Professor

Carol Bechtel

Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance

Moderator: Steven De Vries (Classis of Zeeland)
Vice Moderator: Betsy Westman (Classis of Montgomery)

Ministers

Brandon Beebe (Classis of Southwest Michigan)
Susan Converse (Classis of Nassau-Suffolk)
Ted Godwin-Stremmler (Classis of Central Plains)

Elders

Tina Marie Bottini (Classis of Albany)
Claudia Flores (Classis of the Americas)
Joel Harmelink (Classis of Wisconsin)
Joaquin Salazar (Classis of the Southwest)

GSC 23-36

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To approve the 2023 General Synod special advisory membership as presented.

Policy Exploration and Review Team (GP 12.3)

At its March 21-22, 2023 meeting, GSC voted to amend GSC management delegation policy MD-5, Monitoring General Secretary Performance (GSC 23-29); however, one sentence of the proposed amendment was unintentionally omitted from the motion that GSC voted on at that time.

That additional sentence adds clarity by making the language of the policy parallel for both the Ends and Executive Limitation reporting.

GSC 23-37

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend management delegations policy MD-5: Monitoring of General Secretary Performance, point five, as follows (addition is underlined):

...

5. Ends Policies: A written report by the General Secretary is provided to the GSC annually at the spring meeting to coincide with the approval of the report from the GSC to the annual meeting of the General Synod. Updates and/or interim reporting are provided upon request.

Executive Limitations Policies: A written report by the General Secretary is provided to the GSC according to the schedule below. GSC members will receive EL monitoring reports on the 10th of each month (or the first business day following the 10th in the event that the 10th falls on a weekend or holiday), according to the schedule below. GSC members will also be sent an electronic form for evaluation of the report. Individual responses will be compiled and included in the agenda packet for board discussion and assessment of each monitoring report according to the following schedule: EL-1 through EL-5 will be considered at the spring meeting of the GSC; EL-6 through EL-13 will be considered at the fall meeting of the GSC.

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Church Transfers

General Synod approval is required when a church is transferred between two classes that are in different regional synods (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2, Section 3 (2022 edition, p. 69). The most efficient way for this transfer request to come to General Synod is through the GSC. The GSC received two requests.

GSC 23-38

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to the General Synod that it transfer City Church Denver in Denver, Colorado, from City Classis in the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics to Rocky Mountain Classis in the Regional Synod of the Far West.

GSC 23-39

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to the General Synod that it transfer Renacer Church in Doral, Florida, from the Classis de las Naciones in the Regional Synod of Mid-America to the Classis of the Americas in the Regional Synod of the Far West, provided that signatures from all five parties (the consistory of Renacer Church, the Classis de las Naciones, the Classis of the Americas, the Regional Synod of Mid-America, and the Regional Synod of the Far West) indicating their agreement with the transfer are received by the Office of the General Synod by May 1, 2023.

Covenant Shares

Jillisa Teitsma presented three recommendations regarding Covenant Shares and reported that the Covenant Shares Review Committee met and reviewed them last week. The first two recommendations will be presented to the 2023 General Synod for approval.

The first recommendation proposed a 2024 covenant shares rate which included an allocation of funds to theological education. Jillisa shared that the GSC will set aside \$30,000 of the assessments collected to be used for General Synod initiatives, a General Synod action approved for a specific purpose. The fund will be carried forward each year. If a General Synod action requires funding that exceeds this amount, an addition to the Covenant Shares percentage assessment will need to be voted upon.

The second recommendation would eliminate the gradual implementation formula used in assessing newly organized churches, which is no longer necessary, as the covenant shares method is based on percentage of income.

The third recommendation presented will help determine covenant shares for churches that either do not complete or enter \$0 on Consistorial Report Form (CRF) Line 21, which is the basis for covenant shares.

The GSC members were given opportunity for discussion.

GSC 23-40

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To propose to General Synod a 2024 covenant shares rate of 2.7 percent, of which \$415,000 will be allocated for theological education according to the formula provided by PFOB.

GSC 23-41

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To propose to General Synod that it eliminate the formula for assessing newly organized churches that was implemented with the adoption of R-51 in 2010. This will be effective for all newly organized churches that have organized on or after January 1, 2022. All newly organized churches currently being assessed under the graduated formula (those churches organized in the years 2018 to 2021) will be assessed based on the covenant shares method, but the graduated increase in their rate will continue to be based on the 2010 formula until they are paying 100% of the covenant shares rate.

GSC 23-42

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To adopt the following method for calculating covenant shares when either \$0 or no entry is made in CRF Line 21: If an organized church reports confessing members greater than zero in Line 2, but does not make an entry or enters \$0 in Line 21 (contributions received), covenant shares will be based on either a) the previous year's entry in Line 21, or b) if there is no entry on Line 21 from the previous year, the figure used to calculate the church's covenant shares amount will be \$2,500 multiplied by the number of confessing members as reported in CRF Line 2.

Future Dates and Locations

- May 11, 2023, 4:00 p.m. eastern – Zoom meeting in executive session to receive Relationship and Review Committee report
- June 8, 2023, 12:00 p.m. central (pre-Synod lunch meeting of Committee of Reference) – Central College; Pella, IA
- June 13, 2023, 12:00 p.m. central (post-Synod GSC meeting) – Central College; Pella, IA
- October 13-14, 2023, Fall stated meeting – Grand Rapids, MI

Adjournment

GSC 23-43

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to adjourn the April 24, 2023 meeting of the GSC at 11:26 a.m. (eastern) following prayer by Judy Nelson.

Terri Boven, Recorder