

**General Synod Council
Reformed Church in America
Minutes of March 19-20, 2024 Meeting
Zoom Videoconference**

Welcome and Prayer

Kimberly Van Es, moderator of the General Synod Council (GSC), called the March 19-20, 2024 meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. (eastern) followed by a reflection and prayer by Susan Davis. Having established a quorum, members and staff were welcomed.

Members Present

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

Eddy Alemán, <i>ex-officio</i>	Sheila Moses
Nancy Boote	Judith Nelson
Calvin Brouwer	Eric Nichols
Vivian Campbell	Jon Opgenorth
Michelle Chahine	Carlos Rivera
Linda Cline	Neale Roller
Susan Davis	Joshua Scheid
Brian Engel	Jidong Shan
Clair Hoeksema	Kjersten Sullivan (ELCA)
Dwayne Jackson	Kimberly Van Es
Randy Karcher	Harris Van Oort
Bradley Kautz	Patricia Varga
Yong Bok Kim	Hank Vrielink
Michael Meyer-Veen	Maudelin Willock

Members Absent

The following member of the GSC was unable to attend the meeting:

Devonna Cousins

Staff

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

Terri Boven, *Recorder*
Elizabeth Brand, *Director of General Synod Operations*
Vanessa Funk, *Recorder in Training*
Jeremy Simpson, *Director of Diversity and Belonging*
Lisa Stover, *Interim Chief Financial Officer*
Christina Tazelaar, *Chief Operating Officer*

Opening Business

The moderator expressed a desire that the GSC's purpose be stated clearly and read part of the preamble of its current bylaws (2008, p.1), as follows.

This corporation - the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America (GSC) – is established by and responsible to the General Synod.

It acts as the executive committee of the General Synod (which is the highest assembly and judicatory in the Reformed Church in America), and it administers the affairs of the Reformed Church in America between the sessions of the General Synod.

It implements decisions, policies, and programs of the General Synod through proper channels and agencies, and it supports, strengthens, and coordinates the work of the several commissions, boards, institutions, and agencies of the Reformed Church in America, thus seeking to increase the effectiveness of the mission and witness of the church.

These bylaws are intended to direct and equip the GSC as it seeks to accomplish the foregoing.

The moderator reminded the GSC of the governance monitoring approach where all in attendance, including staff, may speak up if it seems to them that the GSC is not following its own adopted governance policies.

GSC 24-03 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To adopt the agenda as presented, with the moderator's suggested addition of a time for "comments for the good of the order" just prior to adjournment.

GSC 24-04 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To approve the October 13-14, 2023; November 16, 2023; and February 20, 2024, minutes of the GSC meetings with the two corrections noted to the October 13-14, 2023, minutes.

GSC Appointments

Kimberly Van Es currently serves on the Pastoral Formation Board (PFOB) and Sheila Moses currently serves on the Investment Advisory Committee (IAC) as the GSC representatives. Both GSC members' terms will conclude on June 30, 2024, which means their terms as GSC representatives to PFOB and IAC, respectively, will also conclude. The GSC needs to appoint a replacement for each body from among its members who have an interest

and/or experience in the work of PFOB and the IAC, respectively. The term of office will begin on July 1, 2024, and will be limited to the term of service of the GSC member.

GSC 24-05 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To appoint Nancy Boote to serve as the GSC Designee on the Pastoral Formation Oversight Board as of July 1, 2024, coterminous with her term on GSC.

GSC 24-06 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To appoint Jidong Shan to serve as one of the two GSC representatives on the Investment Advisory Committee, beginning on July 1, 2024, until the conclusion of her term on GSC.

Moderator Election

Patricia Varga presented the names of the following candidates identified by the GSC's Nominations Committee who have agreed to be considered for service as GSC moderator for the term beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

- Brian Engel
- Judith Nelson

Assessment Relief

The moderator reported that there were four requests for assessment relief and requested Lisa Stover summarize each request.

A request was received from the Classis of Muskegon for assessment relief for 2024 for the amount billed to the classis for First Reformed Church in Ravenna, Michigan, whose building was destroyed by fire in April 2022.

GSC 24-07 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To approve the request of the Classis of Muskegon on behalf of First Reformed Church in Ravenna, Michigan for relief of 2024 covenant shares in the amount of \$4,678.07.

A request was received from the Classis of Muskegon for assessment relief for 2024 for the amount billed to the classis for The Adventure Church in Norton Shores, Michigan, due to significant loss of income.

GSC 24-08 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To approve the request of the Classis of Muskegon on behalf of The Adventure Church in Norton Shores, Michigan for relief of 2024 covenant shares in the amount of \$3,790.56.

A request was received from the Classis of the Americas for assessment relief for 2024 for the amount billed to the classis for City Church of Compton in Compton, California, due to the church being released from the RCA without paying the assessments due, causing financial hardship on the classis.

GSC 24-09

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To approve the request of the Classis of the Americas for relief of 2024 covenant shares associated with City Church of Compton in the amount of \$500.22.

A request was received from the Classis of the Americas for assessment relief for 2024 for the amount billed to the classis for the Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel de Sacramento, due to the church not filling out the CRF for a number of years, which caused assessments to be based on statistics from the last time a CRF was submitted. The church transferred into the Classis of the Americas in the last year, and the classis recently learned that the church's former classis had subsidized the assessed amount rather than correcting the data. Neither the church nor the Classis of the Americas has available resources to cover the full covenant shares amount based on the outdated numbers. Rather than approving or denying the full relief request, staff recommended to the GSC that a more sustainable way forward would be to align the church's covenant shares amount for 2024 with the church's financial statement proved by the classis. As long as the classis ensures that the church fills out the CRF going forward, this action will correct the covenant shares amount in this and future years.

GSC 24-10

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To adjust the amount of 2024 General Synod covenant shares due from the Classis of the Americas on behalf of Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel de Sacramento to \$2,497.23, pending accurate completion of the 2023 CRF, particularly the financial section, no later than April 15, 2024. This amount of covenant shares is based on the church's 2023 financial statement provided to GSC by the classis.

Permanent Committees (GP 10.1 and 10.2)

Sheila Moses presented the report of the Investment Advisory Committee.

Brian Engel presented the report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Executive Limitations Monitoring Reports

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on EL-1: Global Executive Constraint and reported partial compliance.

GSC 24-11 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on EL-1; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on EL-2: Treatment of Staff and reported partial compliance.

GSC 24-12 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on EL-2; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on EL-3: Financial Planning/Budgeting and reported compliance.

GSC 24-13 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on EL-3; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on EL-4: Financial Condition and Activities and reported compliance.

GSC 24-14 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on EL-4; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on EL-5: Financial Recording and Reporting and reported compliance.

GSC 24-15 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on EL-5; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on EL-11: Relationship with Subsidiary Organization and reported compliance.

GSC 24-16 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on EL-11; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

Budget

The general secretary updated the GSC on the three-year budget plan.

Commission Review Reports

The GSC is charged with reviewing each commission every five years and recommending to the General Synod the continuation, reconstitution, or discontinuation of the commission. GSC has established a rotation for these five-year reviews, and the two commissions up for review in 2023-2024 are the Commission on Christian Action and the Commission on Christian Unity.

Michael Meyer-Veen and Maudelin Willock reported on their review of the Commission on Christian Action.

GSC 24-17 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to the 2024 General Synod:

To approve the continuation of the Commission on Christian Action (CCA); and further,

To commend the CCA for its work in being a vital voice and an important resource for Christian action to the Reformed Church in America.

Calvin Brouwer and Neale Roller reported on their review of the Commission on Christian Unity, but noted that they had not been able to schedule a meeting with the commission.

GSC 24-18 A motion was made, supported, and rejected:

To recommend to the General Synod the continuation of the Commission on Christian Unity.

A motion was made and supported as follows:

To postpone the GSC's review on the Commission on Christian Unity in order to give the review team more time to connect with the commission for a more accurate review.

An amendment to the motion was made, supported, and adopted (additions underlined):

To postpone the GSC's review on the Commission on Christian Unity to the fall 2024 GSC meeting in order to give the review team more time to connect with the commission for a more accurate review.

GSC 24-19 The amended motion was adopted.

Recess

The moderator recessed the morning session of the March 19, 2024 GSC meeting at 1:55 p.m. (eastern).

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

Call to Order

The moderator called the afternoon session of the March 19, 2024 GSC meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. (eastern).

General Synod 2024

Jeremy Simpson joined the GSC to give a brief update on the planned antiracism training during General Synod. GSC was given opportunity to ask questions about the planned training.

Dwayne Jackson offered a prayer for this training and its presenters.

Jeremy Simpson was dismissed from the meeting with thanks.

Dwayne Jackson, vice moderator, assumed the chair.

GSC 24-20 A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To request that GSC be sent a more detailed plan for the antiracism training at General Synod via email by April 20 for GSC feedback.

The moderator resumed the chair.

Commission Connections

GSC members who conducted an annual connection with the commissions not being reviewed this year reported as follows:

- Jidong Shan - Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education

- Eric Nichols – Commission on Christian Worship
- Linda Cline - Commission on Church Order
- Randy Karcher - Commission on Nominations
- Carlos Rivera - Commission on Theology
- Kimberly Van Es - Commission for Women

The annual connection with the Commission on History had not yet been completed.

Recess

The moderator recessed the afternoon session of the March 19, 2024 meeting at 3:47 p.m. (eastern) following prayer by Yong Bok Kim.

Executive Session

The GSC met in executive session.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

Call to Order

The moderator called the morning session of the March 20, 2024 GSC meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. (eastern), followed by a reflection and prayer by the moderator.

Ends Monitoring Reports

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on E-2: Transformed and Transforming and reported compliance.

GSC 24-21

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on E-2; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on E-3: Church Multiplication and reported compliance.

GSC 24-22

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on E-3; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on E-4: Global Mission and reported compliance.

The vice moderator assumed the chair.

GSC 24-23

A motion was made, supported, and rejected:

To not accept the general secretary's monitoring report on E-4, and to request a revised E-4 report for the fall GSC meeting, with improved compliance indicators and corresponding data.

The moderator resumed the chair.

GSC 24-24

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on E-4; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient; however, to request that the general secretary include more concrete compliance indicators and data in next year's report.

The general secretary presented a monitoring report on E-5: Multicultural and Multiracial Future Freed from Racism and reported compliance.

GSC 24-25

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To accept the general secretary's monitoring report on E-5; GSC finds the interpretation reasonable and the data sufficient.

Executive Session

Staff were dismissed from the meeting, and the GSC met in executive session.

Policy Exploration and Review Team (GP 12.3)

Staff were invited back into the meeting, and the GSC discussed the report and recommendations submitted by the Policy Exploration and Review Team, who met to review the GSC's policy manual. The team consisted of Cal Brouwer, Linda Cline, and Joshua Scheid.

GSC 24-26

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend governance process policy GP-4: Expectations for Serving on GSC as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

General Synod Council Members will:

1. be in agreement with the stated mission of the RCA.

2. be willing to wholeheartedly invest in the work of the GSC through giving of their time, unique giftedness, and finances, each accordingly to their own ability.
3. be persons with vision and foresight, able to appreciate the rich history of the RCA while maintaining a strong vision for the future.
4. demonstrate good listening skills, both in GSC meetings and in the greater church.
5. demonstrate a commitment to prayer and to life-long learning.
6. speak honestly, ~~and~~ openly, and with appropriate decorum on issues before the GSC, and speak with one voice outside of GSC meetings.
7. have an understanding of RCA polity and be willing to learn and able to work effectively within policy governance.
8. be willing to represent GSC in classes in their region.
9. not speak to the media on behalf of GSC.
- ~~10.~~ 109. not miss more than one meeting annually without extenuating circumstances and approval by the moderator.
- ~~11.~~ 110. thoroughly prepare for each meeting by reviewing all agendas, minutes, and reports.

A motion was made and supported to amend governance process policy GP-6: Moderator's Role, point 2, as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

2. The authority of the moderator consists in making decisions that fall within topics covered by the Council's policies on Governance Process and GSC-General Secretary Linkage, with the exception of a) employment or termination of a General Secretary and b) where the Council specifically delegates portions of this authority to others. The moderator is authorized to use any reasonable interpretation of the provisions in these policies.
 - A. The moderator is empowered to chair GSC meetings with all the commonly accepted power of that position, such as ruling and recognizing.
 - B. The moderator has no authority to make decisions about policies created by the Council within Ends and Executive Limitations policy areas. Therefore, the moderator has no authority to supervise or direct the General Secretary.
 - C. The moderator may represent the Council to ~~outside parties~~ constituents of the RCA in announcing Council-

stated positions and in stating chair decisions and interpretations within the area delegated to her or him.

D. The moderator shall refer all requests from outside media to the Director of Communication.

E. The moderator may delegate this authority, but remains accountable for its use.

An amendment to the motion was made, supported, and adopted as follows: (additions are double underlined, deletions are double stricken):

2. The authority of the moderator consists in making decisions that fall within topics covered by the Council's policies on Governance Process and GSC-General Secretary Linkage, with the exception of a) employment or termination of a General Secretary and b) where the Council specifically delegates portions of this authority to others. The moderator is authorized to use any reasonable interpretation of the provisions in these policies.

A. The moderator is empowered to chair GSC meetings with all the commonly accepted power of that position, such as ruling and recognizing.

B. The moderator has no authority to make decisions about policies created by the Council within Ends and Executive Limitations policy areas. Therefore, the moderator has no authority to supervise or direct the General Secretary.

C. The moderator may represent the Council to ~~outside parties~~ constituents of the RCA in announcing Council-stated positions and in stating chair decisions and interpretations within the area delegated to her or him.

D. The moderator shall refer all requests from outside media to the ~~Director of Communication~~ staff spokesperson for media requests.

E. The moderator may delegate this authority, but remains accountable for its use.

GSC 24-27

The amended motion was adopted. The final amendment to GP-6 reads as follows:

2. The authority of the moderator consists in making decisions that fall within topics covered by the Council's policies on Governance Process and GSC-General Secretary Linkage, with the exception of a) employment or termination of a General Secretary and b) where the Council specifically delegates

portions of this authority to others. The moderator is authorized to use any reasonable interpretation of the provisions in these policies.

- A. The moderator is empowered to chair GSC meetings with all the commonly accepted power of that position, such as ruling and recognizing.
- B. The moderator has no authority to make decisions about policies created by the Council within Ends and Executive Limitations policy areas. Therefore, the moderator has no authority to supervise or direct the General Secretary.
- C. The moderator may represent the Council to ~~outside parties~~ constituents of the RCA in announcing Council-stated positions and in stating chair decisions and interpretations within the area delegated to her or him.
- D. The moderator shall refer all requests from outside media to the staff spokesperson for media requests.
- E. The moderator may delegate this authority, but remains accountable for its use.

GSC 24-28

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend executive limitations policy EL-1: Global Executive Constraint as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

The General Secretary will not cause or allow any organizational practice, activity, decision, or circumstance which is either imprudent, ~~contrary to the *Book of Church Order*, or~~ in violation of applicable laws or commonly accepted business and professional ethics and practices, or endangering to the organization's ability to accomplish the Ends.

GSC 24-29

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend executive limitations policy EL-2: Treatment of Staff as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

...

The General Secretary will not:

1. Operate without written personnel rules/guidelines as published and held by the RCA Human Resources office which: a) clarify rules for staff, b) provide for effective handling of grievances, c) protect against wrongful conditions, such as nepotism and grossly preferential treatment for personal reasons, and d) prevent all discrimination.

2. Operate without written job descriptions for all staff positions.
3. ~~2.~~—Unduly respond against any staff member for non-disruptive expression of dissent.
4. ~~3.~~—Allow staff to be unprepared to deal with emergency situations

A motion was made and supported to amend executive limitations policy EL-7: Asset Protection, points 5 and point 7, as follows (additions are underlined):

...

5. Invest or hold operating cash and all other investments in ways that are not in compliance with the GSC pre-approved investment policies.

...

7. Permit the sale, exchange or other transfer of any asset of the GSC with a value that is less than \$1,000,000 unless the asset sold, exchanged, or transferred is of lessor or comparable value to the asset being received for it, or unless GSC gives its prior consent. An exemption is allowed for the recycling of staff and office electronics that are deemed obsolete or fully depreciated with a value of less than \$1,000.

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

7. Permit the sale, exchange or other transfer of any asset of the GSC with a value that is less than \$1,000,000 unless the asset sold, exchanged, or transferred is of lessor or comparable value to the asset being received for it, or unless GSC gives its prior consent. An exemption is allowed for the recycling of ~~staff and office electronics—items~~ that are deemed obsolete or fully depreciated with a value of less than \$1,000.

GSC 24-30

The amended motion was adopted. The final amendment to EL-7 reads as follows:

...

5. Invest or hold operating cash and all other investments in ways that are not in compliance with the GSC pre-approved investment policies.

...

7. Permit the sale, exchange or other transfer of any asset of the GSC with a value that is less than \$1,000,000 unless the asset sold, exchanged, or transferred is of lesser or comparable value to the asset being received for it, or unless GSC gives its prior consent. An exemption is allowed for the recycling of office items that are deemed obsolete or fully depreciated with a value of less than \$1,000.

GSC 24-31

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend executive limitations policy EL-9: Communication and Support to the Board, point 3, as follows (additions are underlined):

3. Allow the GSC to be without decision information required periodically by the GSC or let the GSC be unaware of relevant trends within our ecumenical relationships.

GSC 24-32

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend executive limitations policy EL-12: Ecumenical Responsibilities as follows: (additions are underlined):

The General Secretary shall not fail to carry out his or her responsibilities as the General Synod's chief ecumenical officer, as described in the General Secretary's job description.

A motion was made and supported to amend executive limitations policy EL-13: Diversity in Staff Team as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

The General Secretary will not plan, implement, or evaluate key projects or strategic priorities without ensuring both that at least 25 percent of those assigned to the ministry staff team are people of color, and also that the ministry staff team reflects the full diversity of the RCA including gender, age, ~~and~~ ability, and cultural background.

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend the motion as follows (deletions are double stricken):

The General Secretary will not plan, implement, or evaluate key projects or strategic priorities without ensuring both that at least 25

percent of those assigned to the ministry staff team are people of color, and also that the ministry staff team reflects the ~~full~~ diversity of the RCA including gender, age, ~~and~~ ability, and cultural background.

GSC 24-33

The amended motion was adopted. The final amendment to EL-13 reads as follows:

The General Secretary will not plan, implement, or evaluate key projects or strategic priorities without ensuring both that at least 25 percent of those assigned to the ministry staff team are people of color, and also that the ministry staff team reflects the ~~full~~ diversity of the RCA including gender, age, ~~and~~ ability, and cultural background.

Recess

The moderator recessed the morning session of the March 20, 2024 GSC meeting at 2:00 p.m. (eastern).

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

Call to Order

The moderator called the afternoon session of the March 20, 2024 GSC meeting to order at 2:34 p.m. (eastern).

Policy Exploration and Review Team (GP 12.3)

GSC 24-34

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to amend ends policy E-1: Global Executive Constraint as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

~~Led by the Holy Spirit and guided by the General Synod's three interconnected strategic priorities in Transformed & Transforming, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to support and oversee the work of all its ministries, missions, assemblies, commissions, boards, institutions, and agencies.~~

~~The result of this covenant will be the effective implementation of the entirety of Transformed & Transforming, with the goal of benefiting those who come into contact with the RCA.~~

~~Emphasis will be placed upon the wise stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, which demonstrates both efficiency and the prioritization of Transformed & Transforming.~~

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to support and oversee the work of our churches, assemblies and agencies, boards and commissions, and mission partners to make disciples who grow disciples based upon the principles of Christ-centeredness, trust, collaboration, adaptability, and diversity.

A motion was made and supported to amend ends policy E-2: Transformed & Transforming as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

~~E-2 TRANSFORMED & TRANSFORMING~~EQUIPPING LEADERS

~~The RCA will engage, equip, and encourage congregations and missional communities in the work of cultivating transformation that results in faithful and passionate disciples of Jesus.~~

~~The RCA will identify potential leaders and encourage and equip potential and existing leaders for missional, congregational and pastoral leadership. These leaders will reflect the full diversity of the RCA, such as gender, age, race, ability, and cultural backgrounds, with a special emphasis on youth.~~

~~The RCA will engage, equip, and encourage congregations and missional communities to participate in Christ's kingdom mission, both locally and globally.~~

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to encourage and equip disciples to lead missionally, congregationally, and pastorally. These leaders will reflect the full diversity of the RCA including gender, age, race, ability and cultural backgrounds.

An amendment to the motion was made, supported, and adopted as follows (deletions are double stricken):

~~E-2 TRANSFORMED & TRANSFORMING~~EQUIPPING LEADERS

~~The RCA will engage, equip, and encourage congregations and missional communities in the work of cultivating transformation that results in faithful and passionate disciples of Jesus.~~

~~The RCA will identify potential leaders and encourage and equip potential and existing leaders for missional, congregational and pastoral leadership. These leaders will reflect the full diversity of the RCA, such as gender, age, race, ability, and cultural backgrounds, with a special emphasis on youth.~~

~~The RCA will engage, equip, and encourage congregations and missional communities to participate in Christ's kingdom mission, both locally and globally.~~

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to encourage and equip disciples to lead missionally, congregationally, and pastorally. These leaders will reflect the full diversity of the RCA including gender, age, race, ability and cultural backgrounds.

GSC 24-35

The amended motion was adopted. The newly-adopted version of E-2 reads as follows:

E-2 EQUIPPING LEADERS

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to encourage and equip disciples to lead missionally, congregationally, and pastorally. These leaders will reflect the diversity of the RCA including gender, age, race, ability and cultural backgrounds.

A motion was made and supported to amend ends policy E-3: Church Multiplication as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

~~The RCA will~~ Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to foster a sustainable movement of church multiplication in cooperation with assemblies, agencies, boards, and congregations, to through starting new RCA congregations, and equipping RCA church planters both locally and globally, and receive already-established congregations.

The vice moderator assumed the chair.

An amendment to the motion was made, supported, and adopted as follows (deletions are double stricken):

~~The RCA will~~ Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to foster a sustainable movement of church multiplication in cooperation with assemblies, agencies, boards, and congregations, to through starting new RCA congregations, and equipping RCA church planters both locally and globally, and receive already-established congregations.

The moderator resumed the chair.

GSC 24-36

The amended motion was adopted. The newly-adopted version of E-3 reads as follows:

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to foster a sustainable movement of church multiplication in cooperation with assemblies, agencies, boards, and congregations, to start new RCA congregations, equip RCA church planters, and receive already-established congregations.

A motion was made and supported to amend ends policy E-4: Global Mission as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

~~The RCA will~~ Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to connect and engage people throughout the world by way of RCA-connected to what God is doing in the world, through mission partners that who cross boundaries in word and deed with to show the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

An amendment to the motion was made, supported, and adopted as follows (additions are double underlined, deletions are double stricken):

~~The RCA will~~ Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to connect and engage people throughout the world by way of Reformed Church Global ~~RCA-connected~~ to what God is doing in the world, through ~~m~~ Mission partners that who cross boundaries in word and deed with to show the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

GSC 24-37

The amended motion was adopted. The newly-adopted version of E-4 reads as follows:

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to engage people throughout the world by way of Reformed Church Global Mission partners who cross boundaries to show the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

A motion was made and supported to amend ends policy E-5: Multicultural and Multiracial Future Freed From Racism as follows (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

E-5 MULTICULTURAL, ~~AND~~ MULTIRACIAL, AND MULTIGENERATIONAL FUTURE FREED FROM RACISM

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to commit~~be a fellowship of congregations committed~~ to a multicultural, ~~and~~ multiracial, and multigenerational future freed from racism, engaging all of God's people locally and globally in mission and ministry ~~and resisting the sin of~~ free from racism, sexism, and ableism.

An amendment to the motion was made, supported, and adopted as follows (additions are double underlined):

E-5 MULTICULTURAL, ~~AND~~ MULTIRACIAL, AND MULTIGENERATIONAL FUTURE FREED FROM RACISM

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to commit~~be a fellowship of congregations committed~~ to a multicultural, ~~and~~ multiracial, and multigenerational future freed from racism, engaging all of God's people locally and globally in mission and ministry ~~and resisting the sin of~~ free from the sins of racism, sexism, and ableism.

GSC 24-38

The amended motion was adopted. The newly-adopted version of E-5 reads as follows:

E-5 MULTICULTURAL, MULTIRACIAL, AND MULTIGENERATIONAL FUTURE

Led by the Holy Spirit, the General Synod Council covenants with the General Synod of the RCA to commit to a multicultural, multiracial, and multigenerational future engaging all of God's people locally and globally in mission and ministry free from the sins of racism, sexism, and ableism.

General Synod 2024

The GSC heard updates from Elizabeth Brand and Judith Nelson regarding the schedule and worship plans for the 2024 General Synod.

The GSC discussed processing all business from commissions through the special advisory committees before coming to the floor of General Synod, as was done for General Synod 2023.

GSC 24-39

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To have all items of business coming to General Synod 2024 from commissions (except the Commissions on Nominations and Judicial Business) processed through the special advisory committees before coming to the floor of General Synod; and further,

To delegate authority to the General Synod officers, in consultation with synod planning staff, to determine whether this decision should be adjusted once the majority of business has been submitted, if the amount of business submitted would create an unreasonable amount of business for the advisory committees.

Racial and Ethnic Councils

The moderator reported that the ad-hoc team approved by the GSC, at its March 2023 stated meeting (GSC 23-32), has developed the bylaws for Native American Indigenous Ministries (NAIM).

GSC 24-40

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To refer the proposed NAIM bylaws back to the NAIM steering committee for revision, and in particular to: 1) Include the participation of all RCA NAIM congregations in forming the bylaws and, 2) To be in compliance with the RCA diversity goal in being a Revelation 7:9 denomination.

A report was received from the Council for Hispanic Ministries and the GSC was given opportunity to discuss it.

A report was received from the Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries and the GSC was given opportunity to discuss it.

GSC 24-41

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To have the moderator send a message to the Hispanic Council and CPAAM indicating that we greatly appreciate their reports and thank God for their ministry in the RCA.

A report was received from the African American Black Council (AABC) in response to a request from the GSC in October 2023 (GSC 23-72) containing specific suggestions for changes to the *Book of Church Order* to make the *BCO* more antiracist and culturally inviting. The AABC's report contained seven proposed changes. A GSC subcommittee composed of Joshua Scheid, Kimberly Van Es, and Maudelin Willock processed this report and made five recommendations to the GSC in response.

GSC 24-42

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to General Synod 2024 to adopt the proposed amendment to the *Preamble of the Book of Church Order* (2023 ed., pp. 3-5) for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

The Representative Principle. The power which Jesus Christ bestows upon his church is mediated by the Holy Spirit to ~~all the~~ people of every tribe, tongue, and nation. Since not everyone in the church can hold an office, and since the offices differ among themselves in function, some persons will always be subject, within the proper exercise of authority, to the decisions of others. Since the whole church cannot meet together at one time and place to deliberate, representative governing bodies must be established on the various levels. The unity of the church is preserved in acceptance of the fact that all are governed by the decisions made ~~in~~ on their behalf by those who represent them.

...

While governance of the Reformed church is executed through the offices gathered in assemblies, the church expresses its full ministry through all its members in a variety of tasks. Each assembly is charged with determining the nature and extent of its ministry in faithful obedience to Scripture and in responsible concern for the church's mission in the world. Every member, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, color, or class, receives a ministry in baptism and is called with the whole church to embody Christ's intentions for the world.

The Equality of the Ministry. The Reformed Church in America uses the term “parity” to describe its concept of the equality of ministers. It is not meant that authority can never be exercised by one over the other. But in every instance this authority will be delegated by the proper body, and the authority will cease to be exercised when the need for it is no longer demanded. The principle of equality pertains also among churches, among elders, and among deacons. The principle of the equality of the ministry, conceived now in its broadest sense as including the functions of the elder and the deacon, is based upon the fact that the entire ministerial or pastoral office is summed up in Jesus Christ himself in such a way that he is, in a sense, the only one holding that office. Every ministerial function is found preeminently in him. By his Holy Spirit he distributes these functions among those whom he calls to serve in his name. Therefore, the church continually seeks to equip, empower, and embrace servant leaders who reflect the full diversity of the body of Christ. The church is called to reform any biases, behaviors, policies, or procedures that diminish the spiritual gifts or contributions of any Christian due to gender, race, ethnicity, or economic class.

GSC 24-43

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to General Synod 2024 to adopt the proposed addition to the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2, Section 1 (2023 edition, p. 31) for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined):

Article 2. Responsibilities of the Classis

Sec. 1. The classis, in consultation with its congregations and its partners in mission, shall regularly consider the nature and extent of ministry within classis bounds in obedience to Holy Scripture and in response to the needs of the world within which the classis ministers. The classis may form such entities as may be needed for the ministry of the church, provided such bodies do not infringe upon the prerogatives of other classes, consistories, or synods. To the extent possible, the ministries of the classis shall reflect the racial-ethnic and socio-economic diversity found within the classis bounds.

A motion was made and supported:

To recommend to General Synod 2024 to adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 11f (2023 edition, p. 16) for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

- f. The points of doctrine contained in the ~~Heidelberg Catechism~~ Reformed confessions shall be explained by the minister at regular services of worship on the Lord's Day so that the exposition of them is completed within a period of four years.

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

The points of doctrine contained in the ~~Heidelberg Catechism~~ Reformed confessions Doctrinal Standards shall be explained by the minister at regular services of worship on the Lord's Day so that the exposition of them is completed within a period of four years.

GSC 24-44

The motion as amended was adopted. It reads:

To recommend to General Synod 2024 to adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 11f (2023 edition, p. 16) for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

- f. The points of doctrine contained in the ~~Heidelberg Catechism~~ Doctrinal Standards shall be explained by the minister at regular services of worship on the Lord's Day so that the exposition of them is completed within a period of four years.

GSC 24-45

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to General Synod 2024 to adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 5 (2023 edition, p. 56) for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined):

Sec. 5.

- a. The classis shall designate a minister to serve as a mentor to guide, counsel, and model the learning and developmental processes of each newly-ordained

minister or, where deemed appropriate by classis, a minister received from another denomination.

- b. The classis shall ensure that all enrolled ministers actively serving under its jurisdiction are adequately trained to serve fruitfully in the urban, suburban, rural, and/or tribal areas to which they are assigned.

GSC 24-46

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to General Synod 2024 to adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 17, Section 2 (2023 edition, p. 61) for recommendation to the classes for approval(additions are underlined):

Sec. 2. Preparation for Commissioning

- d. The classis shall satisfy itself that the candidate is knowledgeable of and adequately trained to serve fruitfully in the urban, suburban, rural, and/or tribal areas to which they are to be commissioned.

The vice moderator assumed the chair.

GSC 24-47

A motion was made, supported, and adopted as follows:

To form a GSC subcommittee to work through the AABC's non-BCO report and recommendations.

The moderator resumed the chair.

GSC members willing to serve on this subcommittee should contact the moderator.

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 (2023 edition, p. 69). The most efficient way for this transfer request to come to General Synod is through the GSC. The GSC received one such request involving four churches.

GSC 24-48

A motion was made, supported, and adopted:

To recommend to the General Synod that it transfer Cantico Nuevo Ministerio Internacional in Humble, Texas; Iglesia Nueva Vida in Plano, Texas; Iglesia Oasis Internacional in Carrollton, Texas; and Iglesia Reformada Impacto in Pittsburg, Texas, from the Classis of the Americas in the Regional Synod of the Far West to the International Classis of Texas in the Regional Synod of the Heartland, provided that signatures from all eight parties (the consistories of all four churches, the Classis of the Americas, the International Classis of Texas, the Regional Synod of the Far West, and the Regional Synod of the Heartland) indicating their agreement with the transfer are received by the Office of the General Synod by May 1, 2024.

Moderator Election, continued

GSC 24-49

Motion made, supported, and adopted:

To elect Judith Nelson to serve as GSC moderator and Brian Engel to serve as GSC vice moderator, for the term of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

The General Synod's vice president serves as GSC's second vice moderator. This person will be elected at General Synod 2024 for the term of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

The General Synod's general secretary serves as GSC secretary.

Leadership Reports

The following GSC members addressed the GSC:

- Judith Nelson, General Synod president
- Joshua Scheid, General Synod vice president

Restructuring Team

Michelle Chahine reported that the penultimate draft of the restructuring team report is available on the RCA website.

Future Dates and Locations

- April 10, 2024, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time - Zoom meeting to finalize covenant shares and approve special advisory committee membership
- June 13, 2024, 12:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (pre-Synod lunch meeting of Committee of Reference)
- June 17, 2024, 12:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (post-Synod GSC meeting) - *Note: Due to the adjusted end time for General Synod, this*

meeting is taking place over lunch on the MONDAY of synod rather than the Tuesday.

- October 11-12, 2024, Fall stated meeting – Grand Rapids, MI

Adjournment

Due to time constraints, the board did not address three listed agenda items that were not connected to actionable business - oral reports from GSC members on classis visits, the moderator's report and comments for the good of the order.

GSC 24-50

A motion was made, supported, and adopted to adjourn the March 19-20, 2024 meeting of the GSC at 5:29 p.m. (eastern) following song by Maudelin Willock.

Terri Boven, Recorder

DRAFT