

**THE RULES OF ORDER,  
THE CLASSIS OF ONTARIO, RCA.**

March 2013

**The Rules**

**of**

**Order**

The Classis Of Ontario, Inc  
2015

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Words or paragraphs that are stricken out have received first reading approval from the Classis to be deleted. Words or paragraphs in italics have received first reading approval from the Classis to be added to these Rules.

**THE RULES OF ORDER,  
THE CLASSIS OF ONTARIO, RCA.**

**PREAMBLE**

1. The Classis of Ontario is a judicatory and assembly of the Reformed Church in America (RCA), exercising its authority by virtue of the powers granted to it by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America. It is comprised of Reformed Churches, represented by elder delegates, and Reformed ministers in the Canadian province of Ontario.
2. The Classis of Ontario is incorporated according to the laws of the Province of Ontario.
3. The trustees of the corporation are The Executive Committee of the Classis of Ontario, Reformed Church in America.

**ARTICLE I. GENERAL RULES AND DEFINITIONS**

4. Definitions of ministers of the Word:
  - a. "Pastors" are those ministers who serve under a call and have been installed in a local church..
  - b. "Associate Pastors" are those ministers who serve under a call and have been installed in a local church which has more than one Pastor.
  - c. "Specialized ministers" are ministers who serve in a ministry approved by Classis but who are not installed in an organized church.
  - d. "Interim ministers" are ministers who are trained and

assigned to specialize in serving a church while the church is seeking a new pastor.

e. "Assistant ministers" and "Contract Ministers" are ministers who serve under a contract and perform a specialized pastoral service in a church with an installed Pastor or serve in a church without an installed Pastor. Such Ministers may be commissioned by the Classis if deemed appropriate.

f. "Ministers without charge" are persons who have been ordained to the ministry but who are currently not installed in a church nor serving in a specialized ministry.

g. "Retired ministers" and "Emeritus ministers" are ordained ministers who have honourably retired from a ministerial position upon reaching an age for retirement.

5. While all RCA ministers enrolled within a Classis are members of the Classis, ministers who are retired or without charge may not vote in Classis nor be delegates to higher assemblies.
6. Elders who are officers of Classis, or committee chairperson, shall be corresponding delegates during their term of office, with privilege of the floor but without vote unless they also are delegates.
7. The clerk shall record in the minutes the names of delegates who request that their vote be recorded.

**Definitions of Committees:**

8. A "Classis Committee" is a committee which is entrusted with some of the responsibilities of the Classis on an ongoing basis (also known as Executive Function) and which is required to report to Classis at every Stated Session of the Classis except when specifically exempted. Committee reports shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk so they are received at least five weeks before the date of the

Stated Session. Late reports cannot be received at Classis without a decision of the Classis following a clear statement for the reason of tardiness. A quorum for a committee to conduct business shall be the majority of the members duly elected or appointed to fill a vacancy but shall not be less than three.

9. No person shall serve on more than two Classis committees at the same time. Executive Committee members who serve on a committee by appointment as a representative of the Executive Committee as set out in *The Rules of Order of the Classis* may serve on two committees to which they are not appointed but elected in addition to the fulfilling such appointments.
10. A "Session Committee" is a committee that exists and functions only during the Sessions of the Classis.
11. An "Ad Hoc Committee" or "temporary committee" is a committee that is created for a specific purpose and task and which is disbanded upon completion of its task and after its final report to the Classis.
12. General Rule:  
The Classis shall be subject to the rules of the RCA Book of Church Order (BCO). In case of a conflict between *The Classis Rules of Order* and *The Book of Church Order*, *The Book of Church Order* shall prevail.

## ARTICLE II. CLASSIS SESSIONS

### Stated Sessions:

13. "The Classis shall meet in Stated Session twice yearly; (1) On the 1st Saturday of March; (2) On the fourth Saturday of October." The executive Officers of Classis by mutual

consent shall have the authority to postpone a Session, whether stated or special, due to unforeseen circumstances of a sudden or emergency nature. If at all possible the decision to postpone should be made 24 hours before the scheduled Session or as soon as possible thereafter. The session shall be rescheduled fourteen days later at the same time and place as originally intended unless otherwise provided for by the mutual consent of the Executive Officers of Classis.

14. Stated Sessions of the Classis shall ordinarily be hosted by the churches in the sequence listed alphabetically in the Directory of the General Synod.
15. Stated Sessions shall begin at an hour chosen by the President and shall adjourn by 5:00 PM Saturday.

### Special Sessions:

16. Special Sessions shall be called by the President in accordance with the BCO I.II. 4, section 2.
17. If a Special Session is called for purpose of discipline, the quorum requirements shall be a majority of the elder delegates and a majority of the enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the Classis.
18. Ordinations of candidates to the ministry and the installation of ministers are Special Sessions of the Classis. The Classis shall meet before a service of ordination or installation. There shall be a roll call, determination of quorum and an opening prayer. The Classis shall be deemed to be adjourned after the Benediction. The Consistory or the Steering Committee of the church at which the service is held shall be invited to meet with the Classis before the

service for Prayer.

**Notification Requirements:**

19. A written notice of a special Classis Session and of the business and agenda of that Classis Session shall be sent to the churches, ministers, committee members and corresponding delegates so that this information is received at least ten days before the Special Session. Such notification may be given by electronic mail as long as receipt of the electronic message is verified by the Stated Clerk. If electronic mail cannot be verified or is not available notice shall be given in the usual manner as described above. Minutes of a special session may be distributed by electronic mail in Personal Document File format to those for whom the clerk has an electronic mail address. All others shall receive the minutes in the usual manner.
- ~~20. A written notice of a Stated Classis Session and of the agenda of that session including all committee reports shall be sent to the churches, ministers, committee members and corresponding delegates so that the information is received at least twenty-one days before the Stated Session.~~
20. A written notice of a Stated Classis Session and of the agenda of that session including all committee reports shall be sent to the churches, ministers, committee members and corresponding delegates so that the information is received at least twenty-one days before the Stated Session. Such notification may be given by electronic mail as long as receipt of the electronic message is verified by the Stated Clerk. If electronic mail cannot be verified or is not available notice shall be given in the usual manner as described above. Minutes of a special session may be distributed by electronic mail in Personal Document File

format to those for whom the clerk has an electronic mail address. All others shall receive the minutes in the usual manner.

21. All matters to be presented to Classis shall be sent to the Stated clerk at such a time that the Stated Clerk can forward them to the proper committee. Where the time is short, a copy of the communication may also be sent to the Chairman of the pertinent Committee, but this copy must be nothing else than an exact copy of the communication sent to the Stated Clerk. Matters that are communicated later than seven weeks before Classis meets may be refused by a Committee, although the Committee must report this refusal to the Classis.

**Convening of Classis:**

22. When Classis convenes, it shall be called to order by the President, or if he cannot preside, by the Vice President. If these officers of Classis cannot preside, then Classis may be called to order by the Stated Clerk or by a member of the Executive Committee of the Classis. If the President or Vice President cannot preside, then the election of a temporary president shall be the first order of business.
23. All members of Classis shall attend all stated sessions of Classis unless a written excuse has been submitted to the Stated Clerk, and shall perform faithfully the duties assigned them.
24. Elder delegates shall be designated by their respective Consistories.
25. Seating of Classis:  
In the building where the Classis Session is held, all members and officers of Classis, committee chairpersons,

delegates to Classis, certified associates in ministry, as well as fraternal delegates and the officers and staff of RCA synods, shall be seated within the defined bounds of Classis as they are declared. No one else shall be permitted to sit within these bounds without the expressed permission or invitation of the President.

26. The Office of the Stated Clerk shall furnish voting members and delegates with a distinctive card or other unique item to be used by members and delegates to vote.
27. Guests and visitors may be presented to the Classis for special recognition.
28. The Privilege of the floor may be granted to visitors and guests provided that valid reasons are given for requesting it and the specific item or items on which they want to speak is stated. Privilege of the floor to speak on a matter is not a privilege of the floor to speak on any and all items of business. Persons and organizations listed on the agenda as issued with the Call to Classis of a Stated Session shall have the privilege of the floor for the item of business for which they are listed on the agenda.

### **ARTICLE III. THE AGENDA OF A STATED SESSION:**

29. The Stated Sessions of the Classis shall be held in accordance with BCO I.II.4, and shall follow this agenda except where otherwise specified in these Rules of Order, or unless set aside by a vote of the Classis.
  - (1) Call to Order, worship including a sermon and Prayer,
  - (2) Roll Call, either orally or by roll-call sheet. Declaration of quorum present and definition of the bounds of the

Classis. Seating of Fraternal delegates.

- (3) Stated Clerk's report on excused and un-excused absences, and on the validity of the Session.
- (4) Appointment of Session Committees.
  - a. The President's Report
  - b. Consistory and Board of Elders Minutes.
  - c. Leave of Absence.
  - d. Resolutions.
- (5) Recognition of visitors and guests.
- (6) Reading of the Minutes of the previous Stated Session by Title.
- (7) Reading of the Minutes of Special Sessions held since the previous Stated Session by Title, or, upon a two-thirds majority vote, in full, if minutes were not distributed three weeks prior to the Stated Session.
- (8) Approval of the Agenda.
- (9) Communications and referrals, complaints to be referred  
without reading.
- (10) Election of Officers (Spring Sessions).  
Election of Committee members (Fall Sessions).
- (11) Presentation of unfinished business.
- (12) Reports of Classical Representations.
  - a. Fraternal delegates
  - b. General Synod Council
  - c. Words of Hope
  - d. Redeemer University College
  - e. Regional Synod of Canada
  - f. Ecumenical Report
  - g. Western Theological Seminary
  - h. Countryside Camp and Conference Centre Association
  - i. Others
- (13) Reports of Classis Committee
  - a) General Finance Committee Budget Presentation

[No Debate]

b) Executive Report

- The President's report
- Stated Clerk's report on ministry review

BCO 1.II.7 Section 1(Fall)

- c) Church Planning and Development Committee
- d) Overtures and Judicial Business Committee
- e) Pastoral Relations Committee
- f) Student Care and Examinations Committee
- g) Discipleship Committee
- h) Christian Social Action Committee
- I) Special or ad hoc Committees, if any
- j) General Finance Committee

(14) Report of churches without installed pastors.

(15) Report of Session Committees.

- a. The President's Report
- b. Consistorial Minutes and Elders Minutes.
- c. Leave of Absence.
- d. Accounts.
- e. Resolutions.

(16) Closing of the Classis:

Statement of place of next Session; adjournment.  
Closing Prayer and Benediction.

#### ARTICLE IV. THE OFFICERS OF THE CLASSIS:

30. The Officers of the Classis shall be the President, the Vice President, the Stated Clerk and the Treasurer. ***They shall be enrolled minister members of the Classis or elders in the churches of the Classis. Elders need not presently be a member of a local board of elders to serve as an officer of the Classis.*** At least one of these officers shall be a minister and at least one of them shall be an elder. No person shall hold more than one office.

- 31. The Officers of Classis shall be elected from a double slate with the exception of the President. The Vice President shall be the only candidate for President unless the office of Vice President has become vacant.
- 32. The President and Vice President shall be elected for a term of two years and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.
- 33. The Stated Clerk and the Treasurer shall be elected to a three year term and shall be eligible for re-election.
- 34. Officers of Classis shall be elected at the March Stated Session and their terms of office shall begin at the adjournment of that Session. Incomplete terms shall not count against reelection.
- 35. The election of a Vice President shall be done in the following manner:
- 36. The Nominations Committee shall present a ballot with two names and a space suitable and adequate for writing in another candidate. A two-thirds majority is required for a candidate to be elected on this first ballot.
- 37. If no one has been elected on the first ballot, the two nominations made by the Nominations Committee and all eligible persons receiving two or more votes on the first ballot will be in nomination for the second ballot. Election shall be by a simple majority.
- 38. If no one receives a majority on the second ballot, the Classis shall vote between the two candidates who received the largest number of votes on the second ballot.
- 39. The election of a Stated Clerk and a Treasurer shall follow

the same procedure as the election of a Vice President.

40. If the office of President becomes vacant by death or other unforeseen causes, the Vice President succeeds to the office of President for the remainder of the term of office and he shall then be elected President as if he were still the Vice President.
41. The Executive Committee is authorized to make temporary appointments to the positions of Vice President, Stated Clerk and Treasurer in the event that those positions become vacant due to death or other unforeseen causes. These appointments shall terminate at the next Stated Session of the Classis when an election shall be held in accordance with Articles 35 to 39 to fill the position(s) for the remainder of the unexpired term(s).

## ARTICLE V. DUTIES OF OFFICERS:

### **The President shall:**

42. Convene and preside over the Sessions of Classis, maintain good order as prescribed by *Roberts Rules of Order* and the BCO I.II.5 Section 1, and close them with prayer and a benediction.
43. Preside at all services of Ordination and Installation, using the *Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America*.
44. Be the chairman of the Executive Committee.
45. The president may report to a Stated Session. The report shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk in time to be included in the call to Classis and must be presented on the floor of classis by the president or his/her designate. Any recommendations coming from such report shall be referred

to a session committee who shall consider which Classis Committee has responsibility for the area of the recommendation and recommend to the Classis the recommendation(s) be referred to that committee. The Classis committee so charged shall report on the recommendation along with recommended actions at the next Stated Session as part of her usual report to the Classis.

### **The Vice President shall:**

46. Assume all the duties of the President if the President dies, becomes incapacitated, vacates his office, or is absent.
47. Preside at Classis functions when requested to by the President.
48. Be the chairman of the Nominations Committee.

### **The Stated Clerk of the Classis shall:**

49. Send and receive the Classis Communications, notifying the appropriate parties of the acts, proceedings, and appointments of Classis and distribute *The Rules of Order* and appropriate information to all members of Classis Committees.
50. Preserve and record the acts and proceedings of Classis in a suitable book, arranged according to the order of business; preserve all papers and documents of the Classis in a safe place; regularly submit Classis papers to the denominational archives; and forward the Book of Minutes to the Regional Synod.
51. At all Sessions of the Classis, place on the table copies of the minutes of Classis and minutes of the latest sessions of the Regional and General Synods, a copy of *The Book of Church Order, the Rules of Order of the Classis* and of



*Roberts' Rules of Order*; a schedule of unfinished business, and a list of all matters requiring the Classis' attention.

- ~~52. Distribute to the members and the Consistories true copies of the Minutes of every session within four weeks of the session; furnish members and committees with the texts of materials sent down for Classis action from the General Synod extracts from the Minutes and whatever materials their duties require. Minutes may be distributed electronically. The Stated Clerk shall provide printed copies of the minutes upon request.~~
52. Distribute to the members and the Consistories true copies of the Minutes of every session within four weeks of the session; furnish members and committees with the texts of materials sent down for Classis action from the General Synod, extracts from the Minutes and whatever materials their duties require. Minutes and other materials may be distributed electronically. The Stated Clerk shall provide printed copies of the minutes and other materials upon request.
53. Forward all appeals from persons, overtures, request for advice, etc. to the chairpersons of the appropriate Committees.
54. Appoint a temporary Clerk at Classis Sessions whose duty it shall be to assist the Stated Clerk as required to document the proceedings of the Session.
55. Maintain the list of those persons who are licensed to solemnize marriages under the Laws of the Province of Ontario. The Stated Clerk will make all routine additions and deletions as required. If a name is to be added or deleted on discretionary grounds, such actions shall be approved by the Executive Committee and the person

involved notified before such action is taken.

- 55a. The Stated Clerk shall include with the call to each Stated Session of the Classis a list of all committee and other positions needed to be filled at the next Stated Session following the Stated Session for which the call is being issued. The list will also be distributed to the consistories of Classis along with a general description of the gifts needed for the various positions.
- 55b. The Stated Clerk shall include with the call to each Stated Session of Classis a list of all current committee members with their postal and electronic mail addresses and telephone numbers and terms of service..
- 55c. The Stated Clerk through his/her office shall annually engage the ministers and elder delegates in a review of the ministry of the separate congregations by addressing the questions as set out in Chapter 1, Part 1, article 7, Section 1 in the Book of Church Order. The Stated Clerk shall provide a complete written report listing all questions and answers from each church to the Classis with the call to the Fall Stated Session and shall also present the report on the floor of Classis. The entire report shall be entered in the minutes of the classis for the information of the synods.

**The Treasurer of the Classis shall:**

56. Receive all funds due to the Classis.
57. Pay all budgeted financial obligations of the Classis and of the Classis Committees.
58. Consult with the General Finance Committee in preparing the budget of the Classis and in paying for unbudgeted items.

**ARTICLE VI. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

59. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Classis, two minister members at large, and two elder members at large.
60. The officers of the Classis shall serve on this committee according to their terms of office. The members at large shall be elected to a three year term, and may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms. Terms shall be staggered to avoid an entire change in committee membership at one time. Incomplete terms of less than two years shall not count against re-election. At large members shall be elected at the Fall Stated Session. Terms shall begin and end at the adjournment of the Fall Stated Session. Retiring members may provide advice and attend meetings during a reasonable transition period at the discretion of the committee chair.
61. The Executive Committee shall have the general superintendence of the committees of Classis and shall make certain that the duties of the committees and the directives of Classis are carried out. The Executive Committee shall be the trustees of the incorporated entity of the Classis. The Executive Committee shall act in any Classis matter that is not the responsibility of any other person or committee.
- 61a. The Executive Committee shall consider requests from Consistories and other Classis Committees to dissolve or disband a church of the Classis. The Executive Committee or her representatives shall meet with the consistory and the congregation to seek out the facts of the request and shall then refer the matter to a Classis or Ad-Hoc Committee for consideration if appropriate or to the Classis for a decision to disband or dissolve the church. If referred to a committee the committee will report her findings to the Executive

Committee within 45 days.

- 61b. The Executive Committee shall consider requests from Consistories and other Classis Committees to supersede a consistory. The Executive Committee or her representatives shall meet with the consistory and the congregation if appropriate to seek out the facts of the request and shall then refer the matter to a Classis or Ad-Hoc Committee for consideration if appropriate or to the Classis for a decision. The polity of the Book of Church order will be strictly observed. If referred to a committee the committee will report her findings to the Executive Committee within 45 days.
- 61c. The Executive Committee shall be the coordinating committee in insuring all regulations as set out in the Book of Church Order are observed when a consistory is superseded or a church is disbanded or dissolved. The Executive Committee may appoint persons or a committee to assist in this function but shall superintend the actions required. The Executive Committee shall be the trustees of all real and other property owned by the Classis including real and other property that comes under the control of Classis as a result of a church being disbanded or dissolved and shall be empowered to buy, sell, rent or lease, or otherwise encumber such property. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to approve day to day matters in maintaining the real and other properties owned by or under the control of the Classis.
62. In superintending the Classis Committees, the Executive Committee may require reports from the Classis Committees but shall not usurp the function of any of the Classis Committees. If, after consultation with a Classis Committee and a careful study of a matter, the Executive Committee concludes that a Classis Committee has been in error, the

Executive Committee shall direct the Classis Committee to reconsider the matter, giving its reasons.

63. When a person serves both on a Classis Committee and on the Executive Committee of the Classis, and an issue dealt with by that Classis Committee comes before the Executive Committee of the Classis as part of the Executive Committee's oversight over the Classis Committees or as related to a matter before the Executive Committee, a person who has served on the Classis Committee which dealt with this issue shall not be permitted to vote on this issue and may participate only as a witness before the Executive Committee in the discussion of the issue by the Executive Committee.
64. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for relations with other denominations and with ecumenical agencies.
65. The Executive Committee shall approve all nominations to the Board of Countryside Camp and Conference Centre Association when requested by that organization.
- 65a The Executive Committee may appoint a person who is familiar with the Book of Church Order, the Rules of Classis and parliamentary procedure to assist the Clerk and President at the sessions of Classis. The term of such appointment will be at the pleasure of the Committee. The parliamentarian shall have the privilege of the floor in matters relating to interpretation of the rules and parliamentary procedure, but not in matters before the Classis unless asked by the chair of the session or is also a delegate or a minister member of Classis. The parliamentarian shall not have a vote unless also a delegate or minister member entitled to a vote.

## **ARTICLE VII. CLASSIS COMMITTEES:**

66. The committees listed below shall be committees with Executive Function, authorized to act for Classis when the Classis is not in session.
  - a. The Church Planning and Development Committee
  - b. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee
  - c. The General Finance Committee
  - d. The Pastoral Relations Committee
  - e. The Candidate Care and Examination Committee
  - f. The Discipleship Committee
  - g. The Christian Social Action Committee
  - h. The Nominations Committee
67. Every Classis Committee shall keep accurate minutes and open and close its meetings with prayer.
68. A Committee shall act for Classis in executive function only within its own proper area of responsibility.
69. Each Classis Committee elects its own chairman annually unless otherwise stated in these Rules.
70. The Members of Classis Committees shall be elected for a three year term and may serve for no more than two consecutive terms. Terms shall be staggered to avoid an entire change in committee membership at one time. Incomplete terms of less than two years shall not count against re-election. Members shall be elected at the Fall Stated Session. Terms shall begin and end at the adjournment of the Fall Stated Session. Retiring members may provide advice and attend meetings during a reasonable transition period at the discretion of the committee chair
71. Each Classis Committee shall report to the Classis at every Stated Session unless stated otherwise in these Rules of Order, and whenever asked to report by the Executive Committee.

72. Whenever a member of one of these Committees is involved as an interested party in an issue before a Committee, that person may not vote on that issue and may participate only as a witness before the Committee in the discussion of the issue.

**ARTICLE VIII. THE CHURCH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

73. The Church Planning and Development Committee (CP&D) shall consist of six confessing members at least two of whom shall be Ministers and at least two of whom shall be Elders and the Treasurer of the Classis. A member of the Church Planning and Development Committee of the Regional Synod of Canada shall be an ex-officio member but without the right to vote.
74. The Church Planning and Development Committee shall:
75. In Classis Oversight of Financial Aid:
- a. Receive applications for financial aid from churches, review applications and make recommendations to Classis.
  - b. Extend emergency aid to both unorganized and organized churches from the appropriate funds of the Classis.
76. As the Advisory Committee of the Classis in Church Planning and Development:
- a. Look for opportunities for starting new churches or re-organizing existing churches in cooperation with the Regional Synod's Program Secretary and recommend the inclusion of a new church start in the denominational plan.
  - b. When asked, assist churches in assessing the prospects of relocation.
  - c. Recommend the organization of an unorganized church, when, in its judgment, a church is ready to organize.
77. Exercise the Consistorial Authority of Classis over the unorganized churches:

- a. Hold the membership of unorganized churches or churches that have been disbanded.
- b. Receive members or transfer members to other churches.
- c. Call ministers to serve the unorganized churches. Such calls shall be subject to the approval of the Pastoral Relations Committee.
- d. The CP&D Committee appoints members of a Steering Committee or causes them to be elected by the church, but always with the approval of the CP&D Committee.
- e. The Committee may delegate some of its program functions as a Consistory to the Steering Committee of an unorganized church. The delegation of such functions does not make a Steering Committee an actual consistory.
- f. The CP&D Committee is in a supervisory relationship over the unorganized churches, their Steering Committees and their pastors. The Steering Committee and the pastor of an unorganized church shall give the CP&D such information and reports as the CP&D requires of them. The CP&D can require unorganized churches to make changes in their procedures and practices.
- g. In unorganized churches without a pastor, the CP&D Committee appoints the chairman of the Steering Committee.
- h. When a church is organized, the exercise of the consistorial authority of the Classis by this Committee shall immediately cease.

**ARTICLE IX. THE OVERTURES AND JUDICIAL BUSINESS COMMITTEE:**

78. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee (OJB) shall consist of two ministers and two elders. It shall:
79. Examine all grievances, appeals or complaints, determine whether they have any substance and whether they are in regular order, attempt to settle them out of Classis and make recommendations to Classis regarding them.

80. Receive all overtures from the Consistories or from members, and, after examining them and the reasons given for making the overtures, make recommendations to Classis for action.
81. Study all matters referred to them by Classis and report on these matters at the next Stated Session of the Classis.
82. Oversee *The Classis Rules of Order*, receive requests for changes in *The Rules of Order*, and formulate and recommend changes to Classis. The committee shall keep up to date all references to the Book of Church Order in these rules. When updates are for renumbering purposes only, no formal rule change shall be required as long as the reference referred to has not changed except for its numerical reference in the Book of Church Order. All updates shall be reported to the Classis at the next Stated Session..
83. Review all proposed changes to the RCA Constitution and recommend actions to the Classis at the first Stated Session of each year.

**ARTICLE X. THE GENERAL FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

84. The General Finance Committee shall consist of one minister and one elder, the Treasurer of the Classis and a confessing member who is knowledgeable in the area of finance
85. The Committee shall have the responsibility for all the financial affairs of the Classis, including administration of the Capital Reserve Fund, and shall assist and oversee the Treasurer of the Classis.
86. The Committee shall prepare an annual budget for the Classis and shall prepare an assessment schedule to cover

the expenses of the activities of the Classis and the expenses of Classis Sessions.

87. The committee shall authorize the treasurer to:
  - a) Pay travel and other reasonable expenses to committee members upon written request of the committee chairperson, accompanied by all pertinent documentation to support the expenses. Reimbursement for public transportation shall be on the basis of the lowest fare available for the least expensive mode of transportation. The kilometre rate for reimbursement of motor vehicle travel shall be paid at three quarters of the rate set by the Classis based on the approved pastor's salary guidelines.
  - b) Reimburse one driver from each member church for kilometres travelled by motor vehicle at half the rate set by Classis based on the approved pastor's salary guidelines to and from a Stated Session of Classis. In addition reimburse other members of Classis who are not directly associated with an organized church of the Classis, who reside more than 15 kilometres from an organized church of the Classis and for whom car pooling is not possible for public transportation on the basis of the lowest fare available for the least expensive mode of transportation or kilometres travelled by motor vehicle at half the rate set by Classis based on the approved pastor's salary guidelines, to and from a Stated Session of Classis to a maximum of \$200.00 per member.
  - c) Reimburse the students of Classis for public transportation on the basis of the lowest fare available for the least expensive mode of transportation or kilometres travelled by motor vehicle at the rate set by Classis based on the approved pastor's salary guidelines, to the Annual Student Examination Session of Classis to a maximum of \$300.00 per student.
  - d) Reimburse actual expenses for members, students or guests of Classis when authorized to do so in writing by the

Executive Committee of Classis.

88. The Committee shall function as the Ministers', Associates in Ministry and Ministers of Christian Education Salary Committee of the Classis and shall make recommendations about salaries and benefits for the following year to the Fall Stated Session of the Classis.
89. The Committee shall arrange for the annual auditing of all Classis accounts.
- 89a. The committee shall review requests to sell, transfer, lease, mortgage or otherwise alienate or encumber any property belonging to a church of Classis and requests from consistories to incur indebtedness exceeding two-thirds of the prior year's expenditures for congregational purposes as per BCO 1.I.2 Section 13. In the ordinary course of business the committee may approve such requests but may also bring the matter to the floor of Classis in unusual circumstances or larger amounts of debt or encumbrment.

**ARTICLE XI. THE PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE:**

90. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall consist of three ministers and three elders.
91. The Committee has supervision of the pastoral relations of churches, the minister members of the Classis, Associates in Ministry, Ministers under contract, preaching Elders, and salaried Assistants to Pastors. The Committee shall have the oversight over ministers in special ministries. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall:
92. Be the Committee that should be consulted when there are

difficulties in the relationship between ministers and churches, or relational problems within Consistories.

93. Be the advisory Committee of the Classis in all matters included under the BCO, I.II.7 Section 2 to 10., and I.II.11 and 1. II. 12 .
94. Have authority to dissolve the pastoral relationship between a pastor and a church and to supervise the dissolution of a pastoral relationship strictly in accordance with the BCO I.II.12 Section 8.
95. Act for the Classis to transfer the membership of ministers and licensed candidates to other Classes in the RCA or other ecclesiastical jurisdictions.
96. Receive RCA ministers and licensed candidates for membership into the Classis and arrange for their installation and consult with the Candidate Care and Examination Committee should examination of the candidate be required as set out in BCO 1.II.11 section 3.
97. When ministers or licensed candidates from other denominations are considered for membership in the Classis or serve in a church the Committee is to ensure that the requirements of the BCO I.II.11, "Reception of Ministers and Licensed Candidates from Other Denominations" and BCO I.II.12 Section 16 are observed.
98. Have authority to approve all calls to a minister or licensed candidate that comply with the regulations of the Classis and the Constitution of the RCA and all calls and contracts to candidates to insure they meet the requirements of the BCO 1.II.10 section 4 before ordination and advise the Stated Clerk when the regulations are met. And to consult with the Candidate Care and Examination Committee should examination of the candidate be required as set out in BCO 1.II.10 section 7.

99. If, in the opinion of the Committee, the person to be called is not suited to the church, or because of health, character or other serious reasons, would not be a suitable minister, then it is the duty of the Committee to consult with the Consistory of the calling church and counsel reconsidering the call or recommend changing the call to a contract for a term of two years. If agreement cannot be reached, then the Committee may properly ask the President to call a Special Session of Classis to deal with the issue.
100. Receive requests from consistories to commission a preaching Elder. If appropriate it shall request the Candidate Care and Examination Committee to examine the candidate. It shall arrange to commission the preaching Elder if terms of the BCO I.II.13 are met. It shall receive requests to renew the commission as per BCO I.II.13.Section 4.
- 100a. Receive requests from consistories for elders to become Commissioned Pastors. It shall supervise the Commissioned Pastor and insure that the requirements of BCO 1.II. 14 are met. It shall seek the aid of the Candidate Care and Examination Committee to meet the requirements of training and examination.
101. Make arrangements for classical pulpit supply at the request of churches without a minister. Licenced Candidates may be included in the rotation.
102. Appoint an experienced and competent minister as the supervisor over a vacant church. It shall also offer the assistance of a minister and an elder of the committee to assist the Consistory and the Supervisor in the pastoral vacancy and in the process of calling a pastor.
103. Require churches seeking a minister to follow the RCA "Handbook for Calling a Minister"; and to prepare a self-study before calling a new pastor, if this is deemed useful. Also, if it seems advisable to the Committee, to encourage a Consistory to obtain the services of an Interim pastor while a new pastor is being sought.
104. A regular schedule of visits to Consistories and Ministers shall be maintained so that at least one-third of the churches are visited each year.
105. Initiate consultation with ministers and consistories if there are any indications of an unsatisfactory pastoral relationship and take earnest steps to help pastors and churches.
106. The Committee shall appoint in consultation with the Executive Committee for a two year renewable term, a pastor who is a member of the Classis and his/her spouse if he/she is married, to serve as pastor or pastoral couple to the pastors of the Classis. The position may be shared by more than one pastor or pastoral couple as the committee deems appropriate. The appointment(s) shall be confirmed by a majority vote of both committees.
107. The Committee shall have superintendence over the pastor(s) or pastoral couples(s) and shall provide the following job description:
- I. To establish a rapport with pastors and their spouses. (Perhaps even with their children.) That means at least one visit with both pastor and spouse (if person is married) by the pastoral visitor.
  - II. To maintain regular contact with them throughout the year. This may be done by phone, e-mail, during ministerial meetings or otherwise. At least one face-to-face meeting.
  - III. To offer a pastoral presence to pastor/spouse in times of sorrow, physical or emotional illness, spiritual depletion, possible vocational changes or when other conflicts make their ministry burdensome.
108. The pastor(s) or couple(s) to pastors shall be a volunteer position. Appointees shall be reimbursed for mileage at normal Classis rate, meals, telephone and other legitimate

expenses they incur in the execution of the position. Accounts shall be presented to the chair of the committee for payment by the Treasurer of the Classis.

109. The pastor(s) or pastoral couple(s) shall report to the committee semi-annually in a timely fashion so that the report or summary can be included in the report to Classis. Strict confidentiality is assumed and the reports shall be of a general nature but thorough enough so the committee can evaluate the effectiveness of the position.
110. The pastors of Classis and their families shall have the freedom to select their own pastor or pastoral couple but must notify the Classical Pastor of their choice. Pastors and pastoral couples so selected shall be guided in the execution of their position by the provisions of Paragraphs 107, 108, and 109, except that accounts and reports shall be presented to the Classical Pastor.
111. The Committee shall be required to approve before action is taken the hiring and dismissal of all permanent and contract employees over 90 days, of Classis, its boards, committees and other jurisdictions including the churches of Classis. Such approval shall not be required for persons not directly employed by the Classis who are employed for twenty or less hours per week.

**ARTICLE XII. THE CANDIDATE CARE AND EXAMINATION COMMITTEE:**

112. The Candidate Care and Examination Committee shall consist of three ministers and three elders and one member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee member shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and serve at her pleasure.
113. The Committee shall be the Classis' agent for the supervision of all Students of Theology and Candidates for

Licensure, Ordination, Licenced Candidates, Certification as Associates in Ministry and Certification as Ministers of Christian Education who are under the care of Classis. It shall:

114. Be the Advisory Committee of the Classis in all matters under the BCO, I.II.8, I.II.9 and I.II.10 section 1&2 (I.II.11.-Omit)
115. Be guided by the Classis of Ontario's "Handbook for the Enrolment, Supervision and Examination of Candidates for the Ministry".
116. Receive requests from church members through their consistory for certification as Associates in Ministry and from ministers for certification as Ministers of Christian Education. It shall be guided by the criteria approved by General Synod as set out in the latest edition of the Certification Handbook, "A Classis Guide for Certifying Associates in Ministry and Ministers of Christian Education".
117. Enrol Students and Candidates under the care of the Classis.
118. Examine students and candidates as they pursue theological education as set out in BCO, 1.II.8 section 6 and report the results of each examination to the Classis at the next Stated Session following such examination; and examine candidates who have received the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry for licensure and ordination before the Classis as set out in BCO 1.II.8 section 7.
119. The Candidate Care and Examination Committee shall oversee the Ontario Classis Student Fund, with the Classis Treasurer disbursing the funds.
120. The Ontario Classis Student Fund is established to provide financial assistance to students of the Classis enrolled with the approval of the Student Care and Examination



Committee in a Reformed Church seminary or another divinity school with a Reformed Confession and an adequate faculty and curriculum. Undergraduate students may also be assisted in extraordinary circumstances.

121. To receive assistance from the Fund, students must be communicant members in good and regular standing of one of the churches of the Classis.
122. Applications for assistance for each school year must be made to the Chairman of the Student Care and Examination Committee no later than the previous May 1. The application shall include a letter explaining the student's needs and plans. The letter shall be accompanied by a certification of admittance or registration from the school, the school's standard certification of financial need, and a recommendation from an officer of the school.
123. Financial grants and loans shall be made at the discretion of the Committee.
124. To receive a grant requires that the student sign a promise to serve in some kind of Christian Ministry within the RCA for a minimum of five (5) years. Should the student fail to meet this obligation, the grant extended to him becomes a loan due and repayable to the degree of one/fifth of the grant amount for every year less than five years of service. The Committee may waive part or all of the repayment under extenuating circumstances.
125. The Committee shall report the financial Status of the Fund to the Classis at the Spring Stated Session.

#### **ARTICLE XIII. THE DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE:**

126. The Discipleship Committee shall consist of two ministers, two elders and two confessing members. The committee

may enlist the contributions of other confessing members as needed but they shall not have a vote.

127. The Discipleship Committee shall have the responsibility in the Classis for giving leadership in the areas of:
  - a. Education and lay leadership training.
  - b. Programs & Activities for young people and young adults.
  - c. Programs for adults.
  - d. Family life and marriage enrichment programs.
  - e. Evangelism.
  - f. Christian missions.
128. In carrying out its tasks, the Committee shall:
  - a. Serve as Classis liaison with the Reformed Church Women's and the Reformed Church Men's Ministries.
  - b. Oversee the classical Youth and Young Adult Fellowship.
  - c. Maintain a useful contact with the Cadet and Gems organizations.
  - d. Maintain a working relationship with Countryside Camp and Conference Centre Association Inc..
  - e. Make itself knowledgeable about useful denominational programs and publications.
  - f. Be a resource for educational resources and applications.
  - g. Plan and provide seminars to enhance discipleship.

#### **ARTICLE XIV. THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE:**

129. The Christian Social Action Committee shall consist of the members of the Executive Committee of the Classis.
130. The Christian Social Action Committee shall:
  - a. Study current social issues facing the RCA in Canada and recommend to Classis a suitable path forward for all the churches, based on the Word of God.

- b. Provide the Classis and her churches with statements on moral and spiritual issues in society that affect the Christian community and the nation.
- c. Receive direction from Classis as to which issues it should study.
- d. Assist, facilitate and encourage the churches of the Classis and their members to take actions that will be of help to those persons that are disadvantaged or unfairly discriminated against and victimized in our society.

**ARTICLE XV. THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

- 131. The Nominations Committee shall consist of the members of the Executive Committee of Classis. The Vice-President shall act as the Administrative Officer of the committee.
- 132. Deleted Spring Session 2005, page 2005-14.
- 133. The Nominations Committee shall provide Classis in its normal report with a single slate of nominations for each position needed to be filled except when a double slate is required by these rules or the Book of Church Order. The committee shall endeavour to have as wide a representation of the congregations as possible.
- 134. The Nominations Committee shall make appointments to fill vacancies on committees that occur between Stated Sessions. The Classis shall consider confirmation of the appointment by a vote at the next Stated Session. The appointment shall only be to fill the unexpired term that has become vacant and a confirming vote by the Classis shall not constitute a new term.
- 135. Deleted Fall Session 2005, page 2005-41 of the Classis Minutes.

**ARTICLE XVI. SPECIALIZED MINISTERS:**

- 136. All ministers of the Classis who exercise the Gospel Ministry outside of an organized church shall be classified as Specialized Ministers and may be commissioned by the Classis if appropriate.
- 137. Such specialized ministries include institutional or military chaplaincies, professional counselling, the pastorates of unorganized churches, teaching Religion or Religion related disciplines, employment by RCA or ecumenical agencies, missions, and whatever service that the Classis shall approve of as constituting a special ministry.
- 138. The Classis will supervise and support the minister's personal ministry within her/his specialization. The Classis normally cannot supervise ministries separate from the structure of the Classis and its churches, nor is such supervision implied by approval and/or commissioning
- 139. The Classis will give careful attention to Ministers without Charge, and will review their status on an annual basis through its Pastoral Relations Committee.

**ARTICLE XVII. OTHER MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL:**

- 140. Unordained Church Workers, whether salaried or volunteer, may be commissioned by use of the appropriate form in the Liturgy. Such commissioning shall be a function of the Church, not of the Classis. Hiring or dismissal of salaried Church Workers must be approved by the Pastoral Relations Committee if they are employed twenty or more hours per week.
- 141. Commissioned Church Workers have no membership or direct relationship with the Classis. When they perform

functions of ministry they are under the Classis supervision of ministry within the churches of the Classis. They may also ask the Classis, by her Pastoral Relations Committee, for her counsel and assistance in pastoral relations and personal problems.

142. Unordained persons who fill pulpits when there is need as authorized by the BCO I.I.2, Section 7, Subsection E, cannot be licensed to preach, but they may ask the Classis for a letter stating that they are persons of sound doctrine and honest and pious character who possess gifts and ability for the edification of the Church. Such a letter may be given by the Stated Clerk with the approval of the President of Classis and the Chairman of the Pastoral Relations Committee. Such a letter shall be over two signatures, the signatures of an officer of the Classis and the chairman of the Pastoral Relations Committee. The letter can be revoked by the authority of the Pastoral Relations Committee.

#### **ARTICLE XVIII. DELEGATES TO SYNODS AND REPRESENTATIVES:**

143. Delegates to the Regional Synod shall be nominated by the Nominations Committee and elected by Classis for a term required by the Regional Synod.
144. Elder delegates to the General Synod shall be chosen in regular rotation from Consistories.
145. Minister delegates shall be chosen from the ministers in active service with the Classis, their year to attend a General Synod shall be determined from their last attendance at the General Synod or from the year of ordination, whichever shall apply.
146. The Classis elects representatives to the General Synod Council, other institutions and agencies of the Reformed Church in America, and such other institutions supportive of

the Reformed Church as the Classis chooses. The Nominations Committee shall provide nominations in the normal way. The representatives report, but direct their business and any motions through the appropriate Classis committees.

#### **ARTICLE XIX. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS:**

147. The local consistories and Classis committees shall offer any member involved in a judicial process under Chapter Two of the book of Church Order any assistance at their disposal to bring the matter before the proper judicatory in good and timely and regular order and shall inform all parties of their rights and obligations as set out in the Book of Church Order.
148. Deleted.

#### **ARTICLE XX. ASSESSMENTS:**

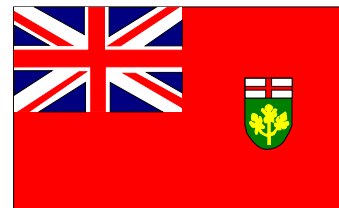
149. Assessments for the expenses of Classis Sessions and the support of Classis Programs shall be levied annually on the basis of the number of each church's active communicant members as reported by the General Synod.
150. Classis Assessments shall be paid in five instalments.

#### **ARTICLE XXI. AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF ORDER:**

151. These Rules of Order may be amended at any Stated Session, or at a Special Session when stated in the call of the Session and when a majority of the ministers and elder delegates are present, by a two-thirds vote of members present provided that:

152. At the previous Session, the substance of the amendment shall have been submitted in writing and endorsed by a simple majority and:
153. The Overtures and Judicial Business Committee shall have had the opportunity to study the amendment, redraft it if necessary, and advise the Classis.
154. Additions to these rules shall be entered in sequence with the addition of lower-case letters (i.e. 144a, 144b, 145c).
155. These rules, where not made obligatory by the Constitution of the RCA, and where not expressly forbidden, may be suspended by a 3/4 vote of members present at a Stated Session or at a Special Session when the majority of the enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the Classis and the elder delegates are present.

### **Notes and Comments**



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