The Acts and Proceedings
of the 210th Regular Session
of the GENERAL SYNOD

# REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Convened on the campus of
Trinity Christian College
Palos Heights, IL
June 9-14, 2016

2016 Acts & Proceedings
2015 Statistical Tables

Vol. XCVI

# RECENT OFFICERS OF GENERAL SYNOD

A list of presidents, from the first in 1794 to 1955, can be found on pages 308-311 of the 1956 *Minutes of General Synod*. The list of presidents from 1956-1978 can be found on page i of the 2002 *Minutes of General Synod.* The list of presidents from 1979-1999 can be found on page i of the 2015 *Minutes of General Synod.*

## PRESIDENTS

| *Year of Election* | *From* | *Place of Election* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000—Elder Carol L. Mutch | New Jersey | Hempstead, NY |
| 2001—The Rev. Steven R. Brooks | Colorado | Pella, IA |
| 2002—The Rev. John C. H. Chang | New York | Orange City, IA |
| 2003—The Rev. David D. Schutt | California | Holland, MI |
| 2004—The Rev. Steven VanderMolen | Iowa | Wheaton, IL |
| 2005—The Rev. Irving Rivera | New York | Schenectady, NY |
| 2006—Elder Bradley Lewis | New York | Pella, IA |
| 2007—The Rev. John Ornee | Michigan | Pella, IA |
| 2008—The Rev. Carol Bechtel | Michigan | Holland, MI |
| 2009—The Rev. James Seawood | New York | Holland, MI |
| 2010—The Rev. Donald Poest | Ohio | Orange City, IA |
| 2011—The Rev. Lisa Vander Wal | New York | Grand Rapids, MI |
| 2012—The Rev. Thomas Smith | Iowa | Palos Heights, IL |
| 2013—The Rev. Carl Boersma | South Dakota | Pella, IA |
| 2014—The Rev. Gregory Alderman | California | Pella, IA |
| 2015—Elder Evan Vermeer | Iowa | Palos Heights, IL |
| 2016—The Rev. Daniel Gillett | Michigan | Palos Heights, IL |

## STATED CLERKS

| | |
|---|---|
| The Rev. John A. Ingham | 1932-1942 |
| The Rev. James E. Hoffman | 1942-1961 |
| The Rev. Marion de Velder | 1961-1968 |

## GENERAL SECRETARIES

| | |
|---|---|
| The Rev. Marion de Velder | 1968-1977 |
| The Rev. Arie R. Brouwer | 1977-1983 |
| The Rev. Edwin G. Mulder | 1983-1994 |
| The Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson | 1994-2011 |
| The Rev. Thomas R. De Vries | 2011- |

# PERMANENT COMMISSIONS, BOARDS, AND AGENCIES 2015-2016

*Indicates serving a final term

## GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gregory Alderman, *moderator* | 2016* | PP, GS |
| Paul Archer (*Ecumenical ELCA, non-voting*) | 2017* | |
| Benjamin Brooks | 2018* | RSFW |
| William (Ruggles) Church | 2016* | |
| Bruce Cornwell | 2017* | |
| Thomas De Vries (*General secretary*) | | *Ex-officio* |
| Gary De Witt | 2018* | RSA |
| Andrea DiPace | 2018* | |
| Susan Feenstra | 2016* | |
| Daniel Gillett | 2018* | VP, GS |
| Thomas Goodhart | 2017* | |
| Christopher Jacobsen | 2017* | RSMAt |
| Marilyn Lay | 2016* | RSNY |
| Arlan Moss | 2017* | |
| James Nakakihara | 2016* | |
| Sharon Palms | 2018* | |
| Craig Rottman | 2016* | RSH |
| Andres Serrano | 2019* | |
| Willie Si | 2019* | RSC |
| Jimmie Stevenson | 2017* | RSMAm |
| Cora Taitt | 2019* | |
| Wai Choon Tan | 2018* | |
| Lisa Tice | 2017* | |
| Michael Van Buren | 2019* | RSGL |
| Nancy Van Heerde | 2019* | |
| Cynthia Veldheer DeYoung | 2019* | |
| Evan Vermeer | 2017* | P, GS |
| Sally Weener | 2018* | |
| Robert Wierenga | 2016* | |

## RACIAL/ETHNIC COUNCILS

AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Deidre Dodson
Hellen Harvey
Valwin Knight
Jo Anna Lougin
Regina Reid
James Steward, *Chairperson*

COUNCIL FOR HISPANIC MINISTRIES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Pedro Agudelo, *President*
Israel Camacho
Luis Perez
Barbara Pimentel
Lorena Serrano

COUNCIL FOR PACIFIC AND ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jong Kug Kim
Paul Lee, *President*
Chung-I (Amos) Mo
Chanthala Sythavongsa
David Theonugraha
Timothy Kim
Imos Wu, *ex officio*

# COMMISSIONS

CHRISTIAN ACTION

Lindsay Bona ..... 2017
William Hertlein ..... 2017*
Sophie Mathonnet-VanderWell ..... 2017
Seung-Ryee (Salome) Ryew ..... 2018*
Patricia Sealy, *Moderator* ..... 2016
Emra Seawood ..... 2018*
Robin Suydam ..... 2016
Peter Vander Meulen (*Reformed ecumenical observer*) ..... 2017*
Vacancy ..... 2016
Vacancy (*ELCA ecumenical observer*) ..... 2017
(*to be named by the Commission on Christian Action*)
Vacancy ..... 2018

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP AND EDUCATION

Dennis Colton, *Moderator* ..... 2017
Lindsey De Kruif ..... 2018
Kent McHeard ..... 2016
Bethany Popkes ..... 2018
Jane Schuyler ..... 2016
Jacqueline Smallbones ..... 2017
Meine Veldman ..... 2018

CHRISTIAN UNITY

Wanzette (Ann) Bilbrew ..... 2018
Norma Coleman-James, *Moderator* ..... 2016*
Kathryn Davelaar Guthrie ..... 2018
Thomas De Vries (*General secretary*) ..... *Ex-officio*
Michael Hardeman ..... 2017
Mitchell Kinsinger ..... 2018*
James Payton (*ecumenical*) ..... 2017
Thomas Hung Yong Song ..... 2017*
Lisa Vander Wal ..... 2016
Jodie Wu ..... 2017

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Katherine Baker | 2016 | |
| Nancy Hoerner | 2017* | |
| Agustin Hubert | 2018 | |
| Sarah Palsma | 2017 | |
| Drew Poppleton | 2018 | |
| Ronald Rienstra, *Moderator* | 2016* | |
| Paul Thé | 2016 | |

CHURCH ORDER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Philip De Koster | 2018 | |
| Linda Gold | 2018 | |
| Allan Janssen | 2017* | |
| Bruce Neckers | 2017* | |
| Larry Schuyler, *Moderator* | 2016 | |

HISTORY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| James Brumm, *Moderator* | 2018* | |
| Kenneth Eberline II | 2016 | |
| David Tripold | 2017* | |
| Douglas Van Aartsen | 2016 | |
| Matthew van Maastricht | 2018* | |
| Linda Walvoord de Velder | 2017* | |

JUDICIAL BUSINESS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Arthur Casey | 2016 | RSA |
| Jonathan Gundlach, *Moderator* | 2016* | RSFW |
| Paul Janssen | 2018 | RSMAt |
| Russell Paarlberg | 2018 | RSMAm |
| John Terpstra | 2017* | RSH |
| Daniel Turis | 2017 | RSNY |
| John (Jack) Van Slambrouck | 2016 | RSGL |
| Barry Wynveen | 2018 | RSC |

NOMINATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gregory Alderman | 2016* | PP, GS |
| Kathy Jo Blaske | 2017* | RSMAt |
| Carl Boersma | 2018 | RSH |
| Israel Camacho | 2016 | CHM |
| June Denny | 2017* | |
| Lee DeYoung, *Moderator* | 2016 | RSGL |
| Micheal Edwards | 2018 | RSNY |
| Betsy Klaasen-Dykhouse | 2016* | RSFW |
| Robert Montgomery | 2018 | RSC |
| Annie Lee Phillips | 2017* | AABC |
| David Walsh | 2016 | RSA |
| Cary Winn | 2017 | RSMAm |
| Shuo-Min (Imos) Wu | 2018* | CPAAM |

RACE AND ETHNICITY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Karla Camacho | 2018 | |
| Amilcar Castillo | 2018 | CHM |
| Richard DeBruyne | 2017 | |
| Yong Bok Kim | 2016* | CPAAM |
| Jo Anna Lougin | 2018 | AABC |
| Alfonso Surrett Jr., *Moderator* | 2017* | |
| Gerri Yoshida | 2017* | |
| Vacancy | 2016 | |

THEOLOGY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dawn Boelkins | 2016 | |
| Jill Carattini | 2018* | |
| Jaeseung Cha | 2016 | |
| Tony Chapman | 2016 | |
| Laird Edman | 2017 | |
| Daniel Griswold, *Moderator* | 2016* | |
| Mark Husbands | 2017 | |
| Kristen Johnson | 2018 | |
| John Paarlberg | 2017* | |
| Sarah Schreiber (*Reformed ecumenical observer*) | 2017 | |
| Roger Willer (*ELCA ecumenical observer*) | 2017* | |
| John Young | 2018* | |

WOMEN

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Blaine Crawford, *Moderator* | 2018* | |
| Susan Hetrick | 2017 | |
| Dierdre Johnston | 2016 | |
| San-Yi (Shirley) Lin | 2018* | |
| Nolan Palsma | 2016* | |
| Barbara Pimentel | 2017 | |
| Kristen Tremper | 2018 | |
| Maudelin Willock | 2016 | |

# AGENCIES

BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gregory Alderman | 2016* | GSC Moderator |
| Norma Coleman-James | 2018* | |
| Thomas De Vries (*General secretary*) | | *Ex-officio* |
| Karen Feeney | 2018* | |
| Pamela Foster | 2018* | |
| Daniel Gillett | 2017* | VP, GS |
| Mark Kamper | 2016 | |
| Nelson Murphy | 2017 | |
| Robert Nykamp | 2016 | |
| Denise Ratcliffe, *President* | 2017* | |
| Jason Schnelker | 2017 | |
| Evan Vermeer | 2016* | P, GS |
| Vacancy | 2016 | |
| Vacancy | 2016 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Vacancy | 2016 | |
| Vacancy | 2018 | |
| Vacancy | 2018 | |

CHURCH GROWTH FUND

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Joel Bouwens, *President* | 2016* | |
| Thomas De Vries (*General secretary*) | | *Ex-officio* |
| Rod Douma | 2018 | |
| Mary Linge | 2017 | |
| Gregory Robinson | 2016 | |
| Diane Smith Faubion | 2018 | |
| Anthony Vis | 2017 | |

MINISTERIAL FORMATION CERTIFICATION AGENCY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Miriam Barnes, *Moderator* | 2017* | |
| Glen Carlson | 2016 | |
| Susan Cox | 2017 | |
| Thomas De Vries (*General secretary*) | | *Ex-officio* |
| Susan Feenstra | 2016* | GSC |
| Verlyn Hemmen | 2016* | |
| Renée House | 2018* | |
| Carol Jones | 2016 | |
| Anne Mead | 2016* | |
| Felix Theonugraha | 2018* | |
| David Wulkan | 2018 | |

# A GUIDE TO RCA ALPHABETESE

AABC ..... African American/Black Council
AAR ..... Approved Alternate Route
BCO ..... Book of Church Order
BOBS ..... Board of Benefits Services
CCA ..... Commission on Christian Action
CCDE ..... Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education
CCO ..... Commission on Church Order
CCT ..... Christian Churches Together in the USA
CCU ..... Commission on Christian Unity
CCW ..... Commission on Christian Worship
CFW ..... Commission for Women
CGF ..... The RCA Church Growth Fund, Inc.
CHM ..... Council for Hispanic Ministries
CJB ..... Commission on Judicial Business
COH ..... Commission on History
CON ..... Commission on Nominations
CORE ..... Commission on Race and Ethnicity
COT ..... Commission on Theology
CPAAM ..... Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries
CRCNA ..... Christian Reformed Church in North America
GSC ..... General Synod Council
MFCA ..... Ministerial Formation Certification Agency
*MGS* ..... *Minutes of General Synod*
NBTS ..... New Brunswick Theological Seminary
NCCC ..... National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
RCSC ..... Reformed Candidates' Supervision and Care
RS ..... Regional Synod
RSA ..... Regional Synod of Albany
RSC ..... Regional Synod of Canada
RSFW ..... Regional Synod of the Far West
RSGL ..... Regional Synod of the Great Lakes
RSH ..... Regional Synod of the Heartland
RSMAm ..... Regional Synod of Mid-America
RSMAt ..... Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics
RSNY ..... Regional Synod of New York
WCC ..... World Council of Churches
WCRC ..... World Communion of Reformed Churches
WTS ..... Western Theological Seminary

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


**I. Formation of General Synod**

Opening of Synod ..... 1
Worship ..... 1
Roll Call of General Synod ..... 3
Privilege of the Floor ..... 17
Seating of Delegates ..... 17
Minutes and Journal ..... 17
Approval of the Schedule and Agenda ..... 17
Advisory Committee Membership ..... 18

**II. Agenda of General Synod**

Disposition of Communications ..... 19
Presentation and Referral of New Business ..... 19
Report of the President ..... 20
Report of the General Secretary ..... 24
Report of the General Synod Council Serving as the Executive Committee of the General Synod ..... 34
Overtures and New Business ..... 166
General Synod Council Reports ..... 176
Report of the Church Growth Fund ..... 221
Report of the Board of Benefits Services ..... 224
Commissions ..... 230
Seminaries and Colleges ..... 309
Election of Officers ..... 340

**III. Close of General Synod**

Adjournment ..... 340

**IV. Tables**

Abbreviations and Key to Footnotes ..... 341
Symbols and List of Union and Federated Churches ..... 342
Table of Regional Synods and Classes ..... 344
2015 Statistical Tables ..... 345
Statistical Summary 2015
Organized Churches ..... 466
New Church Starts ..... 468
Supplement A ..... 469
Supplement D (See the *General Synod Directory*)

**V. Financial Reports**

Financial Reports Index ..... 474
General Synod Council ..... www.rca.org/financials
Board of Benefits Services ..... www.rca.org/financials
RCA Church Growth Fund, Inc. ..... www.rca.org/financials
RCA Endowment Fund ..... www.rca.org/financials
RCA Fund ..... www.rca.org/financials

# INDEX

(Ov) = Overtures received

A


Advisory Committees, Change *BCO* re: Appointment to ..... 174-175
Advisory Committees, Members of ..... 18
African American/Black Council
  Member ..... ii
  Report ..... 60-61
Agencies, Members of ..... v-vi
Alternate Means and Petitions Approved ..... 318, 322
Alternate Plan for General Synod, Ad Hoc Committee on ..... 136-139
Appeals ..... 291-294
  (See also Judicial Business)
Archives (See Communication)
Assessment 2016
  Alignment of Resources with Transformed & Transforming ..... 51-52
  How Each Dollar of GSC Assessment Is Used ..... 55
Assessment 2017
  BOBS Assistance Grant ..... 55-56
  Change from 2016 to 2017 ..... 58
  Synod 2016 Actions Impact ..... 57
  GSC Operating Budget Process ..... 52-54
  GSC Total ..... 57
  Theological Education ..... 56-57
Assistant Secretary, Appointment of ..... 36


B


*BCO* (See *Book of Church Order*)
Beezley, James, Petition Approved for ..... 318
Board of Benefits Services
  2015 Internal Audits
    General Fund ..... 48-49
    Insurance Fund ..... 48
    Retirement Program ..... 48
  Develop Mechanism for Insurance Coverage for Specialized Transition
    Ministers and Ministers between Calls/Contracts (Ov) ..... 166-168
  Members ..... v-vi
  Report ..... 224-229
    Communication ..... 227
    Proposed Amendments to the Constitution and Rules ..... 227-229
    Review of Services and Ministries ..... 224-227
      Assistance Program ..... 226-227
      Fidelity Investments and Fund Management ..... 224
      Insurance Programs ..... 226
      Reallocation Project ..... 225-226
      Retiree Chaplains Ministry ..... 226
      Retirement Services Correction Project ..... 225
    Staffing Changes ..... 227

BOBS (See Board of Benefit Services)
*Book of Church Order*
Amendments to ..... 35-36
Elder Delegate to Classis ..... 35
Classis Determination regarding Ministry Experience for Other Candidates ..... 35
Interpretations of the ..... 263-266
(See also Church Order, Commission on: Report: Inquiries and Replies to Requests for Interpretation of the *BCO*)
Proposed Amendments to ..... 157-158, 164-165, 173, 175, 258-259, 261-262, 263, 263-264, 264-66
Appointment of Advisory Committees ..... 175
Candidates, Appointment of, to Churches without Ministers ..... 261-262
Church Membership in Disbanding Churches ..... 263-264
Consistory Assurance of Marriages ..... 164-165
Formulary No. 5 ..... 264-266
Membership Calculation for GSC ..... 263
Order for Christian Marriage ..... 84
Supervision of Candidates for Ministry ..... 157-158
Regional Synod Executives as Corresponding Delegates ..... 173
Regional Synod Responsibilities ..... 258-259
Braunius, Lisa, Petition Approved for ..... 318
Bruggink, Donald J., Resolution for ..... 272
Budget Process 2016: Alignment of Resources with Transformed & Transforming ..... 51-52

C

Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group
Report ..... 152-159
Assessments, Review of ..... 153-154
Conclusion ..... 159
Continuing Work ..... 154-159
*BCO* Changes ..... 156-159
Best Practices for Candidates and Classis ..... 156
Certificates of Fitness, Granting of ..... 155
Group Continuation ..... 154-155
Theological Education, Standards and Preparation for ..... 155-156
Candidates to Churches, Appointment of, without Installed Minister or Minister Under Contract (*BCO* Interpretation) ..... 261-262
CCSC (See Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group)
CCT (See Christian Churches Together)
Central College
Report ..... 330-333
Certificates of Fitness
Awarded ..... 322
Cha, Nomination of Jaeseung, as General Synod Professor ..... 310-311
Charge, Who May Bring in a Higher Judicatory (*BCO* Interpretation) ..... 266
Chart (See Illustration)
Christian Action, Commission on
Members ..... iii
Report ..... 230-240
Investing, Socially Responsible ..... 240

Mass Incarceration
Coalition ... 233-234
Resources, Webpage for ... 234
Joint Paper on ... 234-235
Other Work ... 239-240
Reorientation/Reparative Therapy, Referral of Overture on ... 230-233
The Church and Criminal Justice: A Brief Exhortation ... 235-239
Christian Churches Together ... 247-248
Christian Discipleship and Education, Commission on
Members ... iii
Report ... 241-242
Kent's (McHeard) Story ... 241-242
Christian Reformed Church (CRC) Relationships ... 21, 28, 29, 37, 54, 65, 70, 135, 177, 182, 185, 205, 209, 216, 248, 251, 321, 283-286, 342
Christian Unity, Commission on
Members ... iii
Report ... 243-250
Acknowledgements ... 250
Ecumenical Involvement
Christian Churches Together ... 247-248
Global Christian Forum ... 246
National Council of Churches ... 247
Overview ... 243
RCA–Formula of Agreement Relationships ... 248
Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue ... 248
World Communion of Reformed Churches ... 245-246
World Council of Churches ... 244-245
Encouragement to Review "Scripture and Moral Discernment" ... 250
Ongoing Work of the Commission ... 248-250
Christian Worship, Commission on
Members ... iv
Report ... 251-257
Bible Translation ... 252
Communion Elements: Gluten-Free Bread ... 252
Guidelines for General Synod Worship ... 252-257
Additional Recommendation ... 257
Prayer ... 255
Preaching ... 255-256
Psalm ... 256
Sacrament ... 256
Scripture and Speaking ... 254
Song ... 254
Structure ... 253
Suppositions ... 256-257
Symbol ... 256
Proposed Revision of Directory for Worship ... 251
Survey of Worship Practices ... 251
Thanks ... 257
Christian Zionism, Revise General Synod Statement on (Ov) ... 169-171

Church Growth Fund
Members ..... vi
Report ..... 221-223
Assets ..... 221
Earnings ..... 222
Financial Highlights ..... 223
Financial Strength ..... 222
Future Activity ..... 223
Ministry Grants ..... 222
Savings Certificates ..... 221-222
Church Multiplication ..... 28, 30, 54, 64, 203-205, 221, 222
Church Order, Commission on
Members ..... iv
Report ..... 258-270
Commission Initiated Work ..... 266-270
*BCO* Revisions to Correct Erroneous Cross-References ..... 266-270
Regarding Method of Citations within and to the *BCO* ..... 270
Commissions and Task Force Collaborations ..... 261-263
Appointment of Candidates to Churches without Installed Minister or Minister Under Contract ..... 261-262
Candidates for Ministry Who Are Not Members of a Local Church ..... 261
Method of Calculating Membership for General Synod Council ..... 263
Inquiries and Replies to Requests for Interpretation of the *BCO*
"Inactive" vs. "Without Charge" ..... 263
Church Membership ..... 263-264
Formulary No. 5 ..... 264-266
Who May Bring a Charge in a Higher Judicatory? ..... 266
Referrals from 2015 ..... 258-260
Commissioned Pastor Summit ..... 260
Postponed Action Regarding Consistory of Governing Body Responsibilities ..... 259-260
Regional Synod Responsibilities ..... 258-259
Task Force Regarding Diaconal Assemblies ..... 260
Selection of Moderator and Secretary and Corresponding Delegate ..... 270
Church Status/Name, Changes in (Supplement A) ..... 449-451
Churches, Union and Federated ..... 342-343
Classis Determination regarding Ministry Experience for Other Candidates: *BCO* Amendment ..... 35
Coakley, John, Resolution of Gratitude for ..... 311
Colleges Reports (See Central College, Hope College, Northwestern College) ..... 330-340
Commissioned Pastor Summit ..... 142-152, 260
Report ..... 142-152
History and Evolution ..... 143-144
Suggested Changes to *BCO* ..... 146-149
Tensions Produced ..... 149-150
Theological Foundations ..... 144-149
Vision of What Should Be ..... 150-152
Commissions, Members of ..... iii-v
Commissions
Reports ..... 230-308
Review Process Report by GSC Moderator ..... 42-45

Communication
Report ..... 68-71
Coordinated Communication ..... 69
Electronic Communication Changes ..... 69
Faith Alive Christian Resources Partnership ..... 70
Office of Historical Services (Archives) ..... 70-71
Print Communication ..... 69
Supporting Transformed & Transforming ..... 68-69
Translation Efforts ..... 70
Complaints ..... 291-294
Corresponding Delegates to General Synod, Regional Synod Executives as (Ov) ... 171-173
Councils (See African American Council; Hispanic Ministries Council;
Pacific and Asian American Ministries Council)
CRC (See Christian Reformed Church)
Criminal Justice and The Church: A Brief Exhortation ..... 235-239

D

Delegates
Corresponding ..... 13-16
Ecumenical ..... 15-16
Roll Call ..... 3-16
Development
Report ..... 59-60
Diaconal Assemblies, Task Force Regarding ..... 260
Disability Concerns ..... 215-216
Diversity in the RCA ..... 301, 302, 308

E

Ecumenical Relationships (See Christian Reformed Church; Christian Unity)
Elder Delegate to Classis: *BCO* Amendment ..... 35
Engaging in Christ's Kingdom Mission (See Mission, Engaging in Christ's Kingdom)

F

Finance, Office of
Report ..... 47-58
2015 Internal Audits
Board of Benefits Services
General Fund ..... 48
Insurance Fund ..... 48
Retirement Program ..... 48
Church Growth Fund ..... 49
General Synod Council ..... 47
Annual Audits ..... 47-49
Church Growth Fund Investments ..... 50
Excess Operating Cash ..... 49
Financial Summaries, GSC ..... 47-48
Investments ..... 49
Operating Budget Process ..... 52

Planned Giving Progams....50
RCA Endowment Fund....49
RCA Retirement Plans....50
Socially Responsible Investments....50
Transformed & Transforming, Alignment of Resources with....51
Financial Reports....452
Formation of General Synod
Advisory Committee Membership....18
Approval of Agenda and Schedule....17
Delegates....17
Minutes and Journal....17
Opening....1
Privilege of the Floor....17
Roll Call....3-16
Worship....1-2
Formulary No. 5 (*BCO* Interpretation)....264-266

G

Gabhart, Jonathan, Petition Approved for....318
General Secretaries of General Synod, List of....i
General Secretary
Interpretation of Ends....176, 180, 203
Report: "Being the Church"....24-33
General Synod Council
Members....ii
Method of Calculating Membership for (*BCO* Interpretation)....263
Report
Communication....68-71
Cultivating Transformation in Christ (See Transformation, Cultivating, in Christ)
Development....59-60
Engaging in Christ's Kingdom Mission (See Mission, Engaging in Christ's Kingdom)
Equipping Emerging Leaders (See Leaders, Equipping Emerging)
Postponed Business from 2015....159-165
*BCO* Change Regarding Marriage (*MGS 2015*, pp. 188-192)....160-165
Response to 2013 Referrals....152-159
Reestablish Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group (R-30)....152-159
Transformed & Transforming Implementation Plan (R-10)....152
Response to 2014 Referrals....136-152
Ad Hoc Committee on Alternate Plan for General Synod (R-14)....136-139
Study of Commissioned Pastor (R-56)....141-152
Task Force to Assess RCA Governance with Five-fold Test (R-15)....139
Using Five-fold Test in Regional Synods and Classes (R-16)....139-141
Response to 2015 Referrals....72-136
Coalition on Mass Incarceration (R-35)....135
Task Force on Diaconal Assemblies (R-51)....136
Task Force on Interreligious Understanding....135-136
General Synod Council: Serving As the Executive Committee....34-165

Commissions Review Process Report by Moderator ..... 42-45
Internal Governance and Administration ..... 37-41
Salary Structure for FY 2016 ..... 37-41
(See also General Synod: Meeting; Communication, Office of; Development, Office of; Finance, Office of; Racial/Ethnic Councils, etc.)
General Synod Meeting
Adjournment ..... 340
Advisory Committee Membership ..... 18
Amendments to the *BCO* ..... 35-36
Appointment of Assistant Secretary ..... 36
Appointment of Treasurer ..... 36
Approval of Agenda and Schedule ..... 17
Closing ..... 340
Delegates, Seating of ..... 17
Disposition of Communications ..... 19
Election of Officers ..... 340
General Synod Planning ..... 36-37
Location ..... 37
Minutes and Journal ..... 17
New Business ..... 19
Offering ..... 35
Opening ..... 1
Privilege of the Floor ..... 17
Referral of Business ..... 35
Review of Regional Synod Minutes ..... 35
Roll Call ..... 3-16
Tellers ..... 17
Worship ..... 1-2
Global Mission (See also Mission, Engaging in Christ's Kingdom) ..... 216-219
Additional Reporting
Deaths ..... 219
Global Mission Statistics ..... 216
New Mission Assignments ..... 218
New Staff ..... 218
PIM Shares ..... 216
Transitions in Mission Personnel ..... 216-218
Hawley, Bruce and Laurie ..... 217-218
McAuley, Larry and Linda ..... 216-217
"Group of Five" (See Special Council Report)

H

Hawley, Bruce and Laurie, Resolution on Retirement of ..... 217-218
Hispanic Ministries Council
Report ..... 61-66
Church Planting Summit in Orlando, FL ..... 63-64
Conclusion ..... 66
Finances ..... 63
Hispanic Pastoral Networks ..... 65
Immigration ..... 64-65
Language, from Spanish to bilingual ..... 63

Leadership ..... 61-62
Meeting Format, from business to equipping ..... 63
Purpose—from advocacy to mssion ..... 62
Reformed Leadership Initiative ..... 65-66
Restructuring ..... 61-62
Study Tours to Israel ..... 66
Theological Education for Hispanic Leaders ..... 64
Transformed & Transforming Initiatives ..... 65
Historical Services, Office of (See Communication)
History, Commission on
Members ..... iv
Report ..... 271-290
Brief History of Schism and Separation in the RCA along with a Summary of the Creeds and Confessions as Statements of Unity ..... 278-290
Providing for the Future ..... 272-273
Reacting to the Present ..... 274-276
Reflecting on the Past ..... 271-272
Resolution for Donald J. Bruggink ..... 272
Resolution for Margaret Kapteyn ..... 272-273
Responses to 2015 Paper (R-44) ..... 274-276
Special Act of Providence ..... 273-274
What Was the Reformation ..... 276-278
Homosexuality (See Human Sexuality)
Hope College
Report ..... 334-336
Human Sexuality ..... 72-79, 230-233, 304-305
Homosexuality and Reorientation/Reparative Therapy, Referral of Overture on ..... 230-233
(See also Special Council)

I

Illustration
2015 GSC Audited Income Sources ..... 47
2015 GSC Expenses ..... 48
2016 GSC Budget Sources of Funds ..... 52
2016 GSC Budget Use of Funds (by area of expense) ..... 53
2016 GSC Budget Use of Funds (by type of expense) ..... 53
Change in Assessment from 2016 to 2017 ..... 58
Compensation Structure
Chicago, Illinois ..... 39
Grand Rapids, Michigan ..... 38
New Brunswick, New Jersey ..... 39
New York, New York ..... 40
Orange City, Iowa ..... 40
Paramount, California ..... 41
How Each Dollar of GSC Assessment Is Used ..... 55
MFCA Candidates ..... 322
"Inactive" vs. "Without Charge" (*BCO* Interpretation) ..... 263
Insurance Coverage for Specialized Transition Ministers and Ministers between Calls/Contracts (Ov) ..... 166-168

J

Jadhav, Sandeep, Alternate Means and Petitions Approved for....322
Judicial Business, Commission on
Members .... iv
Report .... 291-294

K

Kapteyn, Margaret, Resolution for .... 272-273

L

Leaders, Equipping Emerging
Emerging Leaders
Goals
One-Year (by June 2016) ....183
Five-Year (by June 2018)....183
Leadership Development Connection Events....181
Leadership Development Leadership Communities....181
Leadership Development Learning Communities ....181
Progress.... 184-185
RCA Leadership Collaboratives .... 181-182
Reformed Leadership Initiative .... 182-183
Ends Policy E-3: Equipping Emerging Leaders ....180
General Secretary's Interpretation ....180
Overview....180
Team ....181
Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches.... 185-187
Coaching ....186
Congregational Vitality Pathways....186
Goals
Five-Year (by June 2018).... 186-187
One-Year (by June 2016) ....186
Maximizing First-Call Potential ....185
Pastors and Congregations in Transition....185
Progress....187
Ridder Church Renewal....185
The Ezra Project....186
Liturgy
Order for Christian Marriage, Appendix A .... 87-102
Order for Christian Marriage, Appendix B .... 103-118

M

Marriage, Order for Christian, Appendix A .... 87-102
Marriage, Order for Christian, Appendix B .... 103-118
Mass Incarceration.... 300-301
Coalition .... 233-234
Joint Paper on.... 234-235
Resources, Webpage for....234

The Church and Criminal Justice: A Brief Exhortation ..... 235-239
McAuley, Larry and Linda, Resolution on Retirement of ..... 216-217
McHeard, Kent, Story about ..... 241-242
Membership, Church (*BCO* Interpretation) ..... 263-264
Ministerial Formation Certification Agency
Members ..... vi
Report ..... 319-322
Alternate Means and Petitions ..... 322
Budgets and Finances ..... 321
Certificates of Fitness Awarded ..... 322
Cooperative Efforts ..... 321
Enrollment and Other Statistics ..... 320
Future Vision for the Agency ..... 320-321
Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Retired ..... 188-191
Ministry, Candidates for, Who Are Not Members of a Local Church (*BCO* Interpretation) ..... 261
(See also Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group)
Minority Councils (See specific council: African American Council; Hispanic Ministries Council, Pacific and Asian American Ministries Council)
Mission, Engaging in Christ's Kingdom
Church Multiplication ..... 203-204
Goals
Five-Year (by June 2018) ..... 205
One-Year (by June 2016) ..... 204
Progress ..... 205
Disability Concerns ..... 215-216
Goals
Five-Year (by June 2018) ..... 215-216
One-Year (by June 2016) ..... 215
Progress ..... 216
Ends Policy E-4 ..... 203
Equipping Congregations for Global Missional Engagement ..... 205-208
Progress ..... 207-208
Goals
One-Year (by June 2016) ..... 206
Five-Year (by June 2018) ..... 206-207
Equipping Congregations for Local Missional Engagement ..... 208-209
Goals
One-Year (by June 2016) ..... 208
Five-Year (by June 2018) ..... 209
Progress ..... 209
General Secretary's Interpretation ..... 203
Missional Mosaic ..... 209-213
Advocacy through Addressing Public Policy ..... 211-212
Goals
One-Year (by June 2016) ..... 212
Five-Year (by June 2018) ..... 212
Increasing Congregational Cultural Agility ..... 210-211
Progress ..... 212-213
Overview ..... 203
Volunteer Engagement ..... 213-215

Four Areas of Focus ..... 214
Goals
One-Year (by June 2016) ..... 214
Five-Year (by June 2018) ..... 214-215
Progress ..... 215
Myers, Julie, Petition Approved for ..... 318

N

National Council of Churches ..... 243, 247
Native American Ministry ..... 302
Necrology ..... 192-202
New Brunswick Theological Seminary
Report ..... 309-311
A New Strategic Direction ..... 309
New Partners ..... 309-310
New Resources and Strategies ..... 310
Nomination of Jaeseung Cha as General Synod Professor ..... 310-311
Resolution of Gratitude for John Coakley ..... 311
New Business ..... 19, 174-175
Advisory Committees, Appointment to ..... 174-175
President's Recommendation ..... 174
Nominations, Commission on
Members ..... iv
Report ..... 295-298
Northwestern College
Report ..... 337-339

O

Office, Responses to 2015 Paper on (R-44) ..... 274-276
Officers of General Synod, Recent ..... i
Order for Christian Marriage, Appendix A ..... 87-102
Order for Christian Marriage, Appendix B ..... 103-118
Overtures and New Business ..... 166-175
Prepare Statement on Two-State Solution for Israel/Palestine (British Columbia) ..... 170-171
Insurance Coverage for Specialized Transition Ministers and Ministers between Calls/Contracts (Albany, Montgomery, Rochester, Columbia-Green, RS Albany) ..... 166-168
Regional Synod Executives as Corresponding Delegates to General Synod (RS Heartland, RS Far West, RS Great Lakes, RS New York) ..... 171-173
Revise General Synod Statement on Christian Zionism (British Columbia) ..... 169-170

P

Pacific and Asian American Ministries Council
Report ..... 67-78
Cultivate Transformation in Christ ..... 67
Engage in Christ's Kingdom Mission ..... 68
Equip Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow ..... 67-68

Suggestions to the GSC .....67, 68
Papers
Brief History of Schism and Separation in the RCA along with a Summary of the Creeds and Confessions as Statements of Unity..... 278-290
Unity of the Church and the RCA..... 323-329
What Was the Reformation..... 276-278
Partners-in-Mission Shares .....216
Penning, David, Petition Approved for.....318
PIM (See Partners-in-Mission)
President
Report ..... 20-23
Connections Between Churches .....21, 174
Presidents, List of Recent ..... i
Prisons, For-Profit, and Socially Responsible Investing.....240
Professorate
Report ..... 323-329
Unity of the Church and the RCA..... 323-329
A Concluding Word .....328
A Plea..... 327-328
Confession as Sign and Expression of Unity..... 324-325
Thinking Long and Hard about Separation..... 326-327
Unity and the Church's Conscience.....324
Unity Front and Center: the Belhar Confession..... 325-326
Unity as Gift..... 325-326
Unity as Obligation .....326

R

Race and Ethnicity, Commission on
Members .....v
Report ..... 299-302
Electronic and Social Media .....301
Giving Thanks.....302
Listen and Learn .....301
Mass Incarceration..... 300-301
Monitoring Diversity .....301
Native American Ministry.....302
Official Responsibilities.....299
R-91 Task Force on White Privilege Recommendations ..... 299-300
Racial Makeup of CORE .....302
Racial/Ethnic Councils.....301
Resources .....302
Webinars.....302
Racial/Ethnic Councils
Members .....ii-iii
(See African American Council; Hispanic Ministries Council; Pacific and Asian American Ministries Council)
Reformation, What Was the ..... 276-278
Regional Synod Responsibilities ..... 258-259
Reorientation/Reparative Therapy, Referral of Overture on..... 230-233
Roll Call ..... 3-16

Roster of Commissions and Agencies ..... ii-vi

S

Salary Structure ..... 37-41
Schism and Separation, Brief History of, in the RCA along with a Summary
of the Creeds and Confessions as Statements of Unity ..... 278-290
Seminaries Reports (See New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Western Theological
Seminary, Ministerial Formation Certification Agency, Professorate) ..... 309-329
Sexuality, Human (See Human Sexuality)
Special Council
Report ..... 72-79
21 Days of Prayer, Fasting, and Devotion throughout the RCA ..... 74
Addendum from the "Group of Five" ..... 79-87
Affinity Classes ..... 84-85
Authority of the Classis to Ordain Ministers ..... 79-81
Authority of the Consistory to Approve Marriages ..... 81
Constitutional Liturgies for Marriage ..... 82-84
Recommendations to the 2016 General Synod ..... 79
Orderly Separation ..... 85-87
Additional Recommendation from the Group of Five ..... 78
Convening ..... 74-77
Final Comment from the Group of Five ..... 79
Guiding Principles ..... 74
Participants ..... 73
Recommendations Compiled by the Group of Five ..... 77-78
Report of the All-Synod Advisory Committees Summary Team ..... 119-135
Advisory Committee Process ..... 119-122
Appendix (Responses) ..... 122-135
Introduction ..... 119
Spidahl, Andrew, Petition Approved for ..... 318
Stated Clerks of General Synod, List of ..... i
Statistical Reports ..... 341-448
Supplement A: Changes in Church Status/Name ..... 449-451

T

Table (See Illustration)
Task Force
Alternate Plan for General Synod, Ad Hoc Committee on
Report ..... 136-139
Considering our Current Reality ..... 137
Preferred Future ..... 137-138
Proposed Way Forward ..... 138-139
Theology, Commission on
Members ..... v
Report ..... 303-305
Acknowledgements ..... 305
Continuing Work and Other Items ..... 303-304
Human Sexuality ..... 304-305

Transformation, Cultivating, in Christ
Ends Policy E-2 ....176
General Secretary's Interpretation .... 176-179
Goals
One-Year (by June 2016) .... 177-178
Five-Year (by June 2018)....178
Progress.... 178-179
Synopsis .... 176-177
3DM Learning Communities ....177
Discipleship Pathway Learning Communities....177
Faithwalking Learning Communities ....177
Holistic Discipleship Leadership Communities.... 176-177
Sticky Faith Learning Communities ....177
VantagePoint3 Learning Communities ....177
Transformed and Transforming: Summary.... 28-31, 180-187, 176-179, 203-220
(See also Leaders, Equipping Emerging; Mission, Engaging in Christ's Kingdom; Transformation in Christ, Cultivating)
Treasurer, Appointment of ....36

W

Western Theological Seminary
Report .... 312-318
Academic Dean....316
Celebrating Faculty Accomplishments .... 317-318
Enrollment....313
Faculty and Staff Appointments.... 316-317
Financial Support....313
Lilly Grant on Preaching....314
Lilly Grant on Student Debt.... 313-314
Petitions Approved....318
Seminary Events
140th Commencement ....316
Bast Preaching Festival.... 314-315
Celebrating Women in Church Leadership....315
"La Iglesia Responde al Problema de Violencia Domestica" ....315
Osterhaven Lectures....315
Stoutemire Lecture....314
Summer Institute on Theology and Disability ....316
Transition into Ministry (T.I.M.) Summit.... 315-316
Writer-in-Residence ....315
"Voices of Western Seminary" in Perspectives....315
Strategic Plan ....312
Diversity and Cultural Competence....312
Partnerships for Church Planting, Empowerment, and Renewal....313
Resourcing a 21st-Century Seminary and Facility Expansion and Renovation for Living into the Vision ....313
Teaching and Learning for Culturally Engaged Leadership ....312
Trustee Appointments ....318
Update on the Life and Witness of WTS .... 312-318
Vice President of Academic Affairs....316

White Privilege Recommendations, R-91 Task Force on ..... 299-300
Wierenga, Joshua, Alternate Means and Petitions Approved for.....322
Women, Commission for
Members .....v
Report ..... 306-308
Appointments and Nominations .....306
Clergywomen Survey.....306
Faithful Service.....307
Recommendations to General Synod
Family Leave Policies..... 307-308
Guidelines to Insure Diversity .....308
Job Postings .....308
Women in Higher Leadership in the RCA .....307
Words of Hope: Report ..... 219-220
World Communion of Reformed Churches ..... 245-246
World Council of Churches..... 244-245
Worship, Closing.....340
Worship, Guidelines for General Synod ..... 252-257
(See also Christian Worship)

# ACTS AND PROCEEDINGS

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA CONVENED IN ITS TWO HUNDRED TENTH REGULAR SESSION ON THE CAMPUS OF TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE IN PALOS HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS, ON THURSDAY, THE NINTH OF JUNE, A.D. TWO THOUSAND SIXTEEN, AT 3:00 P.M., CENTRAL TIME.

## FORMATION OF THE SYNOD

### OPENING OF SYNOD

The General Synod was opened by president Evan Vermeer on Thursday afternoon, June 9, 2016. The synod was led in an opening devotional and prayer by the president. The president introduced the vice president, parliamentarian, general secretary, and meeting recorders, and recognized others in attendance as corresponding delegates or seminar attendees. The president and vice president presented a brief orientation regarding how the General Synod will conduct its business. The parliamentarian explained parliamentary procedures to the General Synod. The president explained how reports are presented to the General Synod. The general secretary explained certain procedural matters, including ways to access the General Synod workbook electronically and the method of reviewing the journal of actions.

### WORSHIP

Thursday evening (June 9, 2016) the delegates gathered at 7:30 p.m. in the Ozinga Chapel Auditorium for an opening worship celebration. The service was led by a worship team composed of Jon De Groot, Ian Else, Juliana Else, Ariel Gomes, Sam Roskamp, and Nancy Vermeer. The Word was preached by Ann Bilbrew, pastor of the Riverdale campus of Living Springs Community Church, Riverdale, Illinois. The sacrament of communion was shared, with Ann Bilbrew and president Evan Vermeer serving as co-celebrants. An offering was given for Setshabelo Family and Christian Services in Botshabelo, South Africa.

In addition to the opening worship celebration and Friday evening celebration, the daily worship leaders on Friday and Saturday mornings included Jon De Groot, Ian Else, Juliana Else, Travis Else, Ariel Gomes, and Sam Roskamp, and the daily worship leaders on Monday morning included Jon De Groot and Travis Else. The preacher on Friday, Saturday, and Monday morning was Travis Else.

Meetings of the General Synod were opened and closed with prayer by the following persons:

**Thursday, June 9**
Afternoon Opening Prayer — Evan Vermeer, General Synod president
Afternoon Closing Prayer — Bonnie Tryon, Classis of Schoharie

**Friday, June 10**
Morning Closing Prayer — William Hop, Classis of Great Lakes City
Afternoon Opening Prayer — Ming-Chen Rohrer, Seminarian Seminar participant
Afternoon Closing Prayer — Willie Si, General Synod Council

**Saturday, June 11**
Morning Closing Prayer — Miguel Alanis, Commission on Race and Ethnicity
Afternoon Opening Prayer — Sharon Palms, General Synod Council
Afternoon Closing Prayer — Paul Jones, Classis of Central Iowa
Evening Opening Prayer — Carol (Kitt) Jackson, Classis of Schenectady
Evening Closing Prayer — Charles Contreras, Classis of Illiana-Florida

**Sunday, June 12**
General Synod participants worshipped in area churches.

**Monday, June 13**
Morning Closing Prayer — Maria Toews, Regional Synod of Canada
Afternoon Opening Prayer — Karla Camacho, Regional Synod of the Far West
Afternoon Closing Prayer — Gary Sheppard, Classis of Northern Michigan
Evening Opening Prayer — Lynn Min, Seminarian Seminar participant
Evening Closing Prayer — Daniel Gillett, General Synod vice president

**Tuesday, June 14**
Morning Opening Prayer — Janice Melichar-Utter, Classis of Mid-Hudson

## REGIONAL SYNOD OF ALBANY

Nancy Ryan

**Classis of Albany**
MINISTERS
James Brumm
Timothy Van Heest

ELDERS
Ruth Teal
Nancy Wyche

**Classis of Columbia-Greene**
MINISTERS
Derek DeJager
Gary De Witt

ELDERS
Cynthia Smith
Patti Varga

**Classis of Montgomery**
MINISTERS
Brian Engel
Jeffrey McIlrath

ELDERS
Diane Reynolds
Debra Sanburn

**Classis of Rochester**
MINISTERS
Daniel Griswold
Sarah Palsma

ELDERS
Dennis Heslink
Lee Vermeer

**Classis of Schenectady**
MINISTERS
Kent McHeard
Stacey Midge

ELDERS
Carol Jackson
Bradley Lewis

**Classis of Schoharie**
MINISTERS
Sherri Meyer-Veen
Jennifer Yeske

ELDERS
Bonnie Tryon
Mildred Zuk

**REGIONAL SYNOD OF CANADA**

Graham Olson

**Classis of British Columbia**
MINISTERS
James Moerman
Randy Opmeer

ELDERS
Gail Hughes
Margaret Ritchie

**Classis of Canadian Prairies**
MINISTERS
Robert Derrick
Albert Plat

ELDERS
David Annand
Jeff Pasche

**Classis of Ontario**
MINISTERS
R. Leslie Boyd
James Vellenga

ELDERS
Bill Bonvanie
Cornelius Ubbels

**REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE FAR WEST**

Philip Assink

**Classis of California**
MINISTERS
Ned Beadel
Richard DeBruyne
Mark Schwarz
Juno Smalley

ELDERS
William Conrad
Susan Davis
Eric Moreno
Marvin Zwart

**Classis of Cascades**
MINISTERS
Thomas Katsma
Charles Swoboda

ELDERS
Mark Van Kommer
Kevin Whipple

**Classis of Central California**
MINISTERS
Beryl Banks
Michael Scott

ELDERS
Wynn Joe
Kenneth Shepard

**Classis of the City**
MINISTERS
Larry Barber
Fred Harrell

ELDERS
Michael Ehrenfried
John Yates

**Classis of Rocky Mountains**
MINISTERS
Jeffrey Allen
A. Eugene Pearson

ELDERS
John Mitchell
Carolyn Pearson

**Classis of the Southwest**
MINISTERS
Ted Vande Berg
Randal Wieland

ELDERS
George Stegmeir
Diane Wieland

**REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE GREAT LAKES**

Branson Parler

**Classis of Great Lakes City**
MINISTERS
Richard Christy
Scott Nyp
Paul Pratt
Richard Van Dop
Dean Van Farowe

ELDERS
James Bobeldyk
Lee DeYoung
Deborah Hammerle
William Hop
Walter Rozeboom

**Classis of Holland**
MINISTERS
Ruth Hawley-Lowry
Lynn Japinga
Kama Jongerius
Charles Van Engen*
Robert Van Voorst

ELDERS
Leah Dykstra
Glenda McKinley
Kathy Sheridan
Paul Wise

**Classis of Muskegon**
MINISTERS
Gregory Stamm
Randall Vander Weit

ELDER
Jeremy Wurn

**Classis of North Grand Rapids**
MINISTERS
Eric Cook
David Veldt

ELDERS
Mark Bultema
Craig Vander Heide

---

* Missionary delegate per *BCO* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 3, Section 5

**Classis of Northern Michigan**
MINISTERS
Michael De Ruyter
Kevin Schutt

ELDERS
Gary Sheppard
Jerry Wheeler

**Classis of Southwest Michigan**
MINISTERS
Nate Bull
Laura Osborne
Wesley Tillett

ELDERS
Timothy Buis
Brian DeVries
David Mejeur

**Classis of Zeeland**
MINISTERS
Douglas Baker
Ralph Houston
Shawn Hulst
John Nyitray
Christopher Timmer
D. Scott Van Oostendorp

ELDERS
Matt Bakker
Alvin Eaton
Dan Hoffman
Mark Northuis
William VanderZouwen
Scott Van Haitsma

**REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE HEARTLAND**

Lori Walber

**Classis of Central Iowa**
MINISTERS
Jane Brown
Mark Jicinsky
Stephen Mathonnet-VanderWell
Anthony Vis

ELDERS
Paul Jones
Gary Van Genderen
Lori Witt
Janet Van Wyk

**Classis of Central Plains**
MINISTERS
Roc Bottomly
Terry Maassen

ELDERS
Harris Van Oort
Wallace Walcher

**Classis of Dakota**
MINISTERS
David Landegent
Rick Timmer
Ronald Van Peursem

ELDERS
Darrell DeBoer
Jerry Schilling
Jan Siemonsma

**Classis of East Sioux**
MINISTERS
John Messer
Russell Muilenburg
Luke Schouten

ELDERS
Douglas Anderson
Daniel Dykstra
David Johnson

**Classis of Minnesota**
MINISTERS
Michael Altena
Neal Ooms
Timothy Rotman

ELDERS
Byron Hayunga
Dale Hudson
Gene Smith

**Classis of Pleasant Prairie**
MINISTERS
William Peake
Scott Summers

ELDERS
David Eilderts
David Harms

**Classis of West Sioux**
MINISTERS
Robert Horstman
Michael Metten
R. Van Rathbun
Kevin Yurk

ELDERS
Sharla Boone
Ronald Boote
Tim DeBoer
David Reinke

**REGIONAL SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA**

Stuart Swenson

**Classis of Chicago**
MINISTERS
Chad De Jager
Howard Hoekstra

ELDERS
Judy Bury
Harry De Bruyn

**Classis of Illiana-Florida**
MINISTERS
Dale Buettner
Anthony De La Rosa
Jason De Vries
Shawn Gerbers

ELDERS
Charles Contreras
Robert Eenigenburg
Jerry Singer
Glenn Sterrett

**Classis of Illinois**
MINISTERS
Philip Doeschot
Stephanie Doeschot

ELDER
Deb Letcher

**Classis of Wisconsin**
MINISTERS
Robert Abel
Vance Elzinga
Robert Ford
John Tilstra

ELDERS
Robert Caljouw
Dean Meeusen
Robert Petts
Marc Theune

**REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTICS**

Catherin Gumpert

**Classis of Delaware-Raritan**
MINISTERS
Fred Mueller
Martin Winters

ELDER
Robert LeFever
George Rounds

**Classis of Greater Palisades**
MINISTERS
Phyllis Palsma
Shuo-Min (Imos) Wu

ELDERS
Lisa Bontemps
Ilkwon (Danny) Cheong

**Classis of New Brunswick**
MINISTERS
Scott Harris
Tricia Sheffield

ELDERS
Debi Jensen
William Seaman

**Classis of Passaic Valley**
MINISTERS
Kathleen Edwards Chase
Ed Hawkins

ELDERS
Deborah Pierce
Gary Van Schaick

**REGIONAL SYNOD OF NEW YORK**

Daniel Meeter

**Classis of Brooklyn**
MINISTERS
De'Lafayette Awkward
Melody Meeter

ELDERS
Erma Rolle
Michael Schroder

**Classis of Mid-Hudson**
MINISTERS
Richard Ruch
Aaron Schulte

ELDERS
Jay Gumaer
Janice Melichar-Utter

**Classis of Nassau-Suffolk**
MINISTERS
Yong Bok Kim
Steven Pierce

ELDERS
Susan Converse
Kim Pavlovich

**Classis of New York**
MINISTERS
Sharon Atkins
Alfred Correa
Terry Troia

ELDERS
Sheila Moses
Kelvin Spooner
Irma Williams

**Classis of Orange**
MINISTERS
Toni Macon
Brian Randazzo

ELDER
Thomas Kaiser

**Classis of Queens**
MINISTERS
Anna Jackson
Neil Margetson

ELDERS
Lisa Bell-Matthews
Thomas Kaiser

**Classis of Rockland-Westchester**
MINISTERS
Samuel Clover
Elizabeth Niehoff

ELDERS
Florence Dryden
Ji Ho Kim

**GENERAL SYNOD PROFESSORS**

Thomas Boogaart
James Brownson
John Coakley
Renée House
Cornelis Kors

## CORRESPONDING DELEGATES

## GENERAL SECRETARY
Thomas R. De Vries

## GENERAL SECRETARY EMERITUS
Edwin G. Mulder

## COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE
Gregory Alderman
Paul Archer
Benjamin Brooks
William (Ruggles) Church
Bruce Cornwell
Gary De Witt
Susan Feenstra
Daniel Gillett
Thomas Goodhart
Christopher Jacobsen
Arlan Moss
James Nakakihara
Sharon Palms
Craig Rottman
Andres Serrano
Willie Si
Jimmie Stevenson
Cora Taitt
Wai Choon Tan
Lisa Tice
Michael Van Buren
Nancy Van Heerde
Cynthia Veldheer DeYoung
Evan Vermeer
Sally Weener
Robert Wierenga

## BOARD OF BENEFITS SERVICES
Denise Ratcliffe

## CHURCH GROWTH FUND
Joel Bouwens

## NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
**Board of Trustees**
Michael Bos
**President**
Gregg Mast
**Students**
Franco Juricic
Cheryl Miller

## WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**President**
Timothy Brown
**Students**
Paige Douglas
Audrey Edewaard

## MINISTERIAL FORMATION CERTIFICATION AGENCY

**Board of Trustees**
Miriam Barnes
**Student**
Ming-Chen (Grace) Rohrer

## CENTRAL COLLEGE

**President**
Mark Putnam

## HOPE COLLEGE

**President**
John Knapp

## NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

**President**
Gregory Christy
**Student**
Savannah Clapper

## GENERAL SYNOD COMMISSIONS

**Commission on Christian Action**
Sophie Mathonnet-Vanderwell
**Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education**
Dennis Colton
**Commission on Christian Unity**
Norma Coleman-James
**Commission on Christian Worship**
Drew Poppleton
**Commission on Church Order**
Larry Schuyler
**Commission on History**
James Brumm
**Commission on Judicial Business**
Jonathan Gundlach
**Commission on Nominations**
Lee DeYoung
**Commission on Race and Ethnicity**
Alfonzo Surrett, Jr.
**Commission on Theology**
Daniel Griswold
**Commission for Women**
San-Yi (Shirley) Lin

## ADDITIONAL COMMISSION DELEGATES

**Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education**
Savannah Clapper
**Commission on Race and Ethnicity**
Miguel Alanis
**Commission for Women**
Olga Shaffer

## REGIONAL SYNOD WOMEN

**Regional Synod of Albany**
Paige Convis
**Regional Synod of Canada**
Jennifer Lucking
Maria Toews
**Regional Synod of the Far West**
Karla Camacho
Susan Keesen
**Regional Synod of the Great Lakes**
Laurel Kempkers
Judith Nelson
**Regional Synod of Mid-America**
Pam Otten
Marjorie Vander Wagen
**Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics**
Larissa Romero
**Regional Synod of New York**
Donna Field
Alice Williams

## YOUTH

**Regional Synod of Canada**
Ellen MacRae
**Regional Synod of the Far West**
Elisabeth Poit
**Regional Synod of the Great Lakes**
Eric Robbert
**Regional Synod of the Heartland**
Courtney Van Beek
**Regional Synod of New York**
Claire Houston

## ECUMENICAL DELEGATES

**Assemblies of God**
Cecil M. Robeck
**Christian Reformed Church in North America**
Emmett Harrison
**Evangelical Covenant Church**
Gary Walter
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**
Roger Willer

**Global Christian Forum**
Kathryn Johnson
Larry Miller
**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**
Gun Ho Lee
**United Church of Christ**
Rachel Hackenberg

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE PEOPLE

**General Synod Council Mission Observers**
Andrew and Amy Fields
Bruce and Laurie Hawley
Olivia Holt
Jennifer Lucking
Larry and Linda McAuley
Rowland and Jane Van Es
Joshua and Nicoly Vis

**Global Mission Guests**
Neo Ravhuhali
Mbuelo Goodwill Pheteni
Paul and Cathy Scholten

**Parliamentarian**
Bruce Neckers

## SEMINARIAN SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

**New Brunswick Theological Seminary**
Sharon Gross
Kelly Kotch
Franco Juricic
Cheryl Miller
Mark Poyner

**Western Theological Seminary**
Paige Douglas
Audrey Edewaard
Jonathan Vanderbeck
Ma Xiaoquin

**Ministerial Formation Certification Agency**
Minsuk Lee
Lynn Min
Peter Min
Ming-Chen Rohrer
Mark Van Der Brink

## PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

In order that the parliamentarian, speakers who have received official invitations from the General Synod Council, and General Synod Council executive staff may respond to questions for clarification and participate as requested by the General Synod president in presentations to the General Synod and in other activities that appear on the agenda, the General Synod:

**VOTED:** To grant privilege of the floor to the parliamentarian, speakers who have received official invitations from the General Synod Council, and General Synod Council executive staff.

## SEATING OF DELEGATES/DECLARATION REGARDING QUORUM

The general secretary informed the synod that there were no irregularities and all delegates could be seated. The possible membership of General Synod was 238, with enrolled membership at 234, therefore, a quorum was declared present.

## MINUTES AND JOURNAL/TELLERS

The Acts and Proceedings of the 209th regular session of the General Synod were read by title.

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the meeting of June 11-16, 2015, the procedure for approving the journal of actions, and the membership of the advisory committees.

The Rules of Order were read by title, and copies were placed on the secretary's table.

General Synod Council members Sue Feenstra and Nancy Van Heerde, Lee DeYoung (corresponding delegate from the Commission on Nominations and regular delegate from the Classis of Great Lakes City), and all Seminarian Seminar participants were appointed as tellers.

## APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND SCHEDULE

The General Synod approved a schedule based upon the agenda of General Synod prescribed in the Special Rules of Order of the General Synod (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part II, Article 1). See p. 35 for the General Synod's adoption of R 16-1.

In addition to the prescribed agenda, the schedule provided for the following presentations, forums, programs, or activities:

- On the evening of Friday, June 10, the General Synod heard a presentation entitled "On Mission Together: The Transformed and Transforming Celebration." The program included a panel discussion regarding Aspen Leadership Collaboratives.
- On the evening of Saturday, June 11, the General Synod heard a presentation by J. Todd Billings regarding "The Mystery of Our Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church."
- On the evening of Sunday, June 12, the General Synod heard an ecumenical presentation by Monica Schaap Pierce (RCA ecumenical associate), Larry Miller (general secretary,

Global Christian Forum), Kathryn Johnson (Global Christian Forum), and Cecil (Mel) Robeck (Global Christian Forum) regarding the pursuit of unity through ecumenical endeavors, and the work of the Global Christian Forum in particular.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The following delegates were designated by the president to serve on advisory committees that considered specific business on church order and governance and overtures and new business.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHURCH ORDER AND GOVERNANCE**
**Moderator**: Kathleen Edwards Chase (Passaic Valley)
**Vice Moderator:** Scott Nyp (Great Lakes City)
**Ministers:**
Dave Landegent (Dakota)
Beryl Banks (Central California)
Terry Maassen (Central Plains)
Renée House (General Synod Professor)
**Elders:**
Debi Jensen (New Brunswick)
Gail Hughes (British Columbia)

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND NEW BUSINESS**
**Moderator:** Timothy Rotman (Classis of Minnesota)
**Vice Moderator:** Susan Converse (Classis of Nassau-Suffolk)
**Ministers:**
Jane Brown (Central Iowa)
Toni Macon (Orange)
Nate Bull (Southwest Michigan)
Shuo-Min (Imos) Wu (Greater Palisades)
Thomas Boogaart (General Synod Professor)
**Elders:**
Deborah Hammerle (Great Lakes City)
Harry De Bruyn (Chicago)

**MODERATORS OF THE ALL-SYNOD ADVISORY COMMITTEES**
David Annand
Miriam Barnes
Roc Bottomly
Catherin Gumpert
Kama Jongerius
Shirley Lin
Kent McHeard
John Messer
Sheila Moses
Mark Northuis
Pam Otten
Sarah Palsma
Steve Pierce
Van Rathbun
Ken Shepard
Kelvin Spooner
Scott Van Oostendorp
Wallace Walcher

## DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS

The general secretary informed the General Synod that the Office of the General Synod received no communications that were directed to or intended for the General Synod.

## PRESENTATION AND REFERRAL OF NEW BUSINESS

One item of new business was presented to and received by the General Synod. The business was referred to the Committee of Reference for further referral or disposition as appropriate. The president subsequently informed the General Synod that the new business had been accepted and retained by the Committee of Reference for further action. For additional information see the General Synod Council's Report Regarding New Business on pp. 174-175.

# REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

**Evan Vermeer**

I have to begin this presentation with a lot of "thank-yous." First, I want to thank this General Synod and congregations throughout the RCA for allowing me the privilege of serving you in this office for the past year. I have been to all eight regional synods and have had the honor to meet so many people from the RCA and see where God is at work in them, through them, and ahead of them. It has been a blessing and an honor.

Next on my list to thank is my family: my wife, kids, and grandkids, who have all been so gracious in allowing me the time to serve you in this position. I am so blessed to have a committed Christian family that has supported me in every way as I sought to follow God's leading this year.

Dan Gillett was elected as vice president of General Synod last year. I did not know him before, but we have become close friends in Christ. He has been a blessing to me as he has been an advisor, a trusted confidante, and a person who was willing to help in every way. He, too, has sacrificed. While I have been to all eight regional synods, Dan has been to seven. He has enabled the two of us to respond to every request possible. We are truly a team. I appreciate him so much. Thanks, Dan.

My next list of "thank-yous" is almost endless. I have been overwhelmed by the prayer support I have experienced. The continuous flow of personal comments, emails, and texts just about blows me away. I have had a four-member prayer team that has allowed me to unload on them while asking nothing in return. Beyond that, friends, church members, classis members, and people from across the continent have offered their prayer support to me. It has been amazing to have groups of up to 100 people gather around me and lay hands on me and pray for me. This happened several times. It is a very humbling experience, and one that I won't forget.

Last, I must thank my God. He has traveled with me, given me timely flights, protected me, and guided me. Through it all, he has allowed me to be away from my work without issue. Every time I had to travel, I would trust God to manage both the trip and what I left behind at home, and provide me with what I needed. He was so faithful. In addition, I was able to meet and talk with hundreds of people across North America, and that is a blessing I will never forget.

There are some exciting proposals coming before this General Synod. You will hear of a plan to further develop and nourish the commissioned pastor program. This program is essential to our ability to reach more and more people for Christ. It is a successful program that is growing in numbers and helping to fill the void where there aren't enough pastors. You will also get an opportunity to hear about, and then speak into, a plan for a different way of doing General Synod that includes a church-wide equipping event every other year. Please give these two reports your full attention.

This has been a year of anxiety throughout the church, as we all know. I am so thankful to my God for continuing to give me peace and reminding me that this is in his hands. A little over a year ago, I was driving on I-29 through Iowa on a three-hour trip. I was playing some gospel music on my radio and I was almost in pain over anxiety for the church. I was singing and praying and agonizing. Suddenly a verse came to me. I wasn't sure where it was located, so I pulled over on the interstate and got out my Bible. It was Matthew 16:18 (ESV). Jesus is speaking: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." That measure of peace has stayed with me for this entire year. I realize that I am not in control and can do nothing on my own.

I trust God to lead—to give me the thoughts and words I need when I need them. I trust God to do the same with the Reformed Church in America and with our business here this week.

What have I seen in the church around the country? God is at work doing amazing things. Transformed & Transforming is taking root and bearing fruit—our general secretary will update you on its progress. There are almost 400 churches that have done something with Transformed & Transforming; this process has been in place for barely two years. The number of volunteers has increased dramatically. Mission trips to other areas are happening in many churches. That is an amazing response.

I have seen an old-line denomination begin the turn from inward focus to an outward focus. That is very apparent when you see that more than 100 churches in the RCA have signed on to the Ridder Church Renewal program. The big deal here is that this program involves the lay leadership of the church as well as the pastor. This gives immediate buy-in and has more longevity. Pastors cannot do the work on their own, and getting both buy-in and involvement from lay leaders within the congregation brings stability and staying power to the work of the church. I have seen churches look beyond their walls and out into their community for the first time. The mission field is not only over the ocean but also in our backyard. I have heard of local programs in many places that include food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelter for the homeless. I have seen churches quit focusing on what they want and started asking what God wants for their church and their community. I talked with people who are actually moving to another part of their city to lead in planting a church. I have heard of instances where a church that has some financial means has actually hired a pastor and placed that pastor in a neighbor church that is struggling. I have heard from struggling inner-city churches who are crying out for help and financial support as they serve people who have little or no resources. This is an area we must address as a denomination.

So at this time, I would like to make a recommendation that will create resources and processes to allow this kind of partnership to occur:

> P-1
> To instruct the General Synod Council to formulate a structured procedure to connect financially stable churches with those churches working in economically deprived areas that need both financial and human resources to meet the needs and grow the mission in those areas, facilitating these connections across classis and regional synod lines; and further,
>
> To bring the first report on this procedure to the 2017 General Synod.

I have seen cross-denominational efforts bearing kingdom fruit. This small denomination with its limited resources is doing amazing work for Jesus in so many areas, and we are doing it in conjunction with many ecumenical partners around the globe. This is nowhere more apparent than in the Regional Synod of Canada where the RCA and CRCNA are doing so many things together. I think there is a lesson for all of us there. We continue in mission with our CRCNA partners in many areas in the United States as well. This really does my heart good and I have to believe God is smiling over those efforts.

I have seen a major move to serve and minister to and with non-white populations. This is a big deal. The racial/ethnic tapestry of North America continues to become more diverse and we see that diversity within our denomination as well. Multiracial and multiethnic growth in our churches is a gift from God and it strengthens us in so many ways. There is enhanced opportunity to grow our churches and serve when our congregations look like the neighborhoods around our churches.

In the past year, I've been reminded that we have an exceptional Global Mission program that is partnering with RCA congregations and finding new ways to bring the gospel of Jesus to those who don't know him. There is never enough money or staff to meet the challenges of outreach in our world, but we have a staff that is using their resources to the utmost. Training local pastors is proving to be a very effective method of bringing the saving grace of Jesus to new places in a big way. You will have an opportunity to learn more about a new field for Global Mission. I have asked that the offering taken in our opening and closing services go to an orphan program in South Africa. There is also new excitement in Global Mission with the appointment of Doug Leonard as the director. Doug has spent years in the field and has a real understanding of what it takes to reach the lost for Christ.

We all know about the huge refugee challenge in our world. There are many organizations trying to address this issue, but it is overwhelming. There is also growing persecution of Christians in various places around the globe. We in the RCA have a mission field here if we can continue to find effective ways to address these issues.

I have also seen some areas of concern for our churches. There is a major move in the North American church towards social justice. While this is very admirable, if we as Christians get involved with social justice issues and don't use this as an avenue to bring along the gospel of Jesus, we have missed the mark. We are not here as God's representatives to only provide for physical needs. We must meet the physical needs of people to show compassion, gain trust and friendship, and share news of the saving grace of Jesus. Any effort to help the helpless without preaching the gospel only makes us feel good and we fail to live up to the commands of our Lord in Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV), the very last words from Jesus on earth: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

I want to note another concern. There seems to be a move among some denominations away from the inerrancy of the Bible and a slippage towards universalism. I believe the church must be on its guard. Matthew 7:13-14 (ESV) says, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." We are in a post-Christian society and the persecution of Christians is here. While it may not take the form of flogging or imprisonment, the persecution is certainly growing. This troubles me, and I wonder how this escalation of criticism and persecution will affect those who come after us—our children and grandchildren. Matthew 11:29-30 (ESV) says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." This is a promise from our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we really believe it or are we ready to acquiesce and give in to some of the worldly things around us that look easy?

By this time, you all have heard much about the special council and have read the report and recommendations that came from that meeting. You may have talked with some who attended. I was not part of the deliberations, but did meet with the leadership Group of Five after the session. The special council was assigned a task by the General Synod last year. Their assignment was to bring recommendations to this General Synod. The process continues. At this synod, you will have the opportunity to discuss the recommendations coming from the special council and make decisions regarding the RCA and how we deal with same-sex marriage and ordination. This is your opportunity to listen, learn, and discern how God is speaking to you and us regarding this issue. Please listen to those around you and especially seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is not an easy subject. The church in the past—let me be more clear—General Synods of the RCA—have not always acted in loving ways, nor have we been grace-filled when addressing this. You now have an

opportunity to do just that. No matter where you fall on this, you can be loving. You can act as a Christian should. This can be a peaceful process if we live and love like Jesus.

I certainly have heard plenty of discussion both before and after the special council. I am thankful that this event produced healthy discussion in local churches and classes. Personally, I have seen my classis spend an entire evening in presentations and discussion around the topic of same-sex relationships. In my home church, we spent two different sessions during discipleship hour reviewing and talking about the discussions held at the special council. This has been very educational and enlightening for a lot of people, including me.

It is quite possible that some churches will not agree with the decisions of this synod. It is very difficult to find common ground when people read the same Bible but interpret and apply it differently. This may even lead to discussions of leaving the RCA. We have polity and process that allows that to happen. If you are faced with this within your church or your classis, I pray and plead with you to use that polity and process in the way it was designed. That is, to have a complete process with all parties being heard, with all others truly listening—and if there is still no resolution, to proceed in a way that shows the world that we are still acting as Jesus taught us. That would be to structure a separation that is loving and peaceful.

Let me talk a few minutes about my personal journey this year. First, I must tell you that God has driven me to my knees so often in this year of tension in the RCA. That is a good thing, but was not always easy. I, like many of you, would like to go and take care of things on my own. But I have no answers for the situation we have been in as a denomination, so I must depend on God. There have been many times when I have asked "Why me, Lord?" I never got an answer to that—but since I did not volunteer for this job, I have had to believe that I was called to it. My prayer has always been that God would reveal himself to me when I need to hear him, and I believe that my Lord has been faithful in that.

Every Easter is special to me, but this year God spoke to me in a stronger way. Yes, we had a blessed Easter service on that day in my church with a sermon that was moving and challenging. A couple of weeks after Easter, a group from Northwestern College led our service. This group went through the Easter story almost verse by verse, from the end of Luke 22 into Luke 24. As they recited the verses they added the actions. Do you ever think about where you would have been had you been living at that time 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem? That really hit me during this presentation. If I had been a disciple, I would have been sleeping too. If I had been in Peter's shoes, I would have denied Christ too. I can see myself being in that crowd watching and crying out "Crucify him," and "Barabbas." I can even see myself as one of the Roman soldiers spitting on Christ, whipping him, and pushing down that crown of thorns. Even more, I picture myself holding up that crude hammer of stick and stone and driving a big, ugly spike into his hands and feet. You and I did that to our Lord with our sin. And then I can see myself looking into Jesus' face and hearing these words, "I love you and am doing this for you."

We all claim that Jesus is our Lord. We all say we want to follow him. My prayer is that we remember this well as we spend the next days together in worship, celebration, and deliberation.

*Upon recommendation of the Committee of Reference, P-1 was referred to the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business for consideration. See p. 174 for the resulting recommendation, R 16-37.*

## REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY
## "Being the Church"
### Tom De Vries

In 1859, the Port of Yokohama in Japan was opened to western nations. Within three days, the RCA had missionaries on the ground in that country: Guido Verbeck, S.R. Brown, and Duane B. Simmons. They began to share the love of Christ in a country where being a Christian was punishable by death.

This is an example of Transformed & Transforming from a century and a half ago!

On a personal transformation level, Verbeck performed the first Protestant baptism in modern Japan. A samurai warrior discovered a New Testament floating in the bay and recovered it and read it. He then went to Verbeck to get his questions answered, and eventually came to faith in Christ. Verbeck baptized the warrior behind closed doors and shuttered windows because of the threat of the death penalty.

This baptism was the first of many—and it led to the beginning of the modern Protestant church in Japan. Verbeck also laid out the road map for Japan's entry into global relationships around the world. He was a trusted advisor to the Japanese government as it opened itself to western nations. And he provided direction for the development of Japanese modern education.

The trust and relationships established by these first missionaries eventually brought about the elimination of the death penalty for becoming a Christian in Japan. A door opened, faithful mission coworkers walked through it, and God provided a transformational harvest—personally, locally, nationally, and globally.

I'm grateful to Russ Gasero, our archivist, who shares stories like these regularly with our staff to provide glimpses of transformation that are not just for today, but are part of our history and heritage. These stories are foundational for our future together. (You can read the whole story in Gordon Laman's book, *Pioneers to Partners: The Reformed Church in America and Christian Mission with the Japanese*, part of the RCA Historical Series.)

When the United States Secretary of State John Kerry visited Bahrain in April of this year, he lauded the U.S. and Bahraini relationship, and attributed it to trade and economic agreements. In response to Secretary Kerry, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of Bahrain, said:

> The historic relationship between our two nations was born not from agreements between governments but from friendship between peoples. It began when, in 1893, a group of courageous Americans traveled to a distant land and set up a hospital that continues to serve our people to this day. In the following decades, this relationship flourished, and today it encompasses security, economic and cultural ties that continue to develop year after year (*Gulf Daily News*, Bahrain, April 8, 2016).

One of those courageous Americans was Samuel Zwemer, an RCA mission coworker ordained by the Classis of Iowa, who rented a room in the Old Souk—the city market—and in 1893 began a medical dispensary in Manama, Bahrain. That dispensary has grown into an RCA hospital with four additional clinics, and His Majesty the King of Bahrain has just donated an additional four acres to the hospital for further expansion.

Transformed & Transforming is bringing the love of Christ to our world in tangible ways—

not for commercial reasons, but for help and healing that brings transformation across the street and around the world. "Mission that transforms" is still how the RCA is serving and equipping in our world today, both locally and globally.

But what if our journey of transformation is disrupted?

What would it be like if disagreement led to separation, leading to dilution of effort and diminishment of impact?

What would the civil rights movement have looked like if Martin Luther King, Jr., had believed he could achieve justice for all by working only from the steps and pulpit of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama? Could a single church, a single pastor, accomplish more than a movement of people who were committed to uniting together to bring the change needed in our world?

How would William Wilberforce have banned slavery throughout the British Empire if he had resolutely and singularly chosen to be the lone voice for change? If he had remained a lone spokesperson rather than joining with future Prime Minister William Pitt and other key leaders to create a movement for justice?

Would change have been possible if Helen Keller was a single voice for the blind and deaf, instead of the catalyst for a movement that looked to the needs of others, especially of those with disabilities?

How many people would have been reached if Mother Teresa was the lone worker in the slums of Calcutta, instead of the leader of the Missionaries of Charity movement? Today, there are 4,500 Missionaries of Charity sisters serving in Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Europe, and Australia. It began with 12 sisters who were committed to serving, in the words of Mother Teresa, "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, or uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone."

What would the Reformation have been if John Calvin was the only voice speaking for justification by faith—preaching on our guilt, God's grace, and our gratitude in response? If there were no other voices of faith that could unite to create a movement that would change Christianity and change the world? If there had not been like-minded and unified voices and leaders from Zurich and Strasbourg and Wittenberg who cried for a movement of faith and reform that was centered on Scripture?

We do not stand at a crossroads in our life together in order to plead against the action of separation. We do not stand at a place where we call for unity simply for the sake of unity. We are bound together as a covenantal community—men and women who have made covenants before God and with one another to minister to the total life of all people and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It brings us to this question: What is the difference that RCA churches, and the Reformed Church in America as a denomination, make in the world?

Whether it be in Japan or Bahrain—or Highland Park or Fresno or Brantford or Sheboygan—the impact that has been made and is being made is great. And it will grow greater—not if we try to do it alone, but if we journey together as God's people who have been called for God's purposes.

We are one church—not to be another social institution on the North American landscape,

but to be the church of Jesus of Christ. We are not trying to get more people to go to church. We are not trying to just "do church." We are not building an ecclesiastical bureaucracy. We are not working to establish prescriptive rules for how Christians gather, learn, or serve.

We are joined together as followers of Jesus Christ to invite people into an eternal love relationship with God, through Christ. We are walking into the dark and broken places of our world to offer help and healing in Jesus' name. We are working to offer reconciliation and redemption in the inadequate structures that humanity has tried to construct and that often create distrust, division, and destruction. We are faithfully and courageously moving out to live and love like Jesus in a world that has yet to discover the hope of the gospel that we offer.

Our commitment is to bring God's offer of transformation—personally and corporately—to our world. It is a vision of redemption that is both for individual human hearts and for the communities in which we live.

"Christians are called to redeem entire cultures, not just individuals," Chuck Colson has said. This statement reflects our reformed worldview. Reformed Christians have a vision of the gospel that is greater than just the fall and redemption. Instead we talk about creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. We recognize that the gospel touches every area of our lives and that not one part of our world can remain untouched by the transformative power of the gospel.

Jesus is truly Lord of all. And we bring our faith and our actions into every realm of our world: media, arts, education, government, business, the social sector, and the church. But we are living in a day where the church is becoming increasingly marginalized. The place of Christians in the public square is often an unwelcome voice.

Part of our marginalization comes from an increasingly pluralistic society that views Christians as exclusive, extreme, judgmental, and irrelevant. For some Christians, this is the price to be paid for being part of a counter-cultural movement that was started by a leader, Jesus Christ, who was a radical revolutionary and iconoclast—whether with the religious establishment or with the governmental powers and authorities. For other Christians, this is a lamentable transition as those who once had great societal influence now watch from the margins.

But there is another influence in how culture views Christians, Christianity, and the gospel message we share. It comes from how we interact with each other, how the love of God we espouse is applied in our own relationships and conversations, and whether the testimony we give is united or fractured.

And therefore: Is it credible?

The polarized positioning of the church of Jesus Christ in North America today not only dilutes our gospel message while diminishing our ministry impact, but it also invalidates our message when our actions toward one another and the love we wish to share is perceived as lacking credibility.

In an increasingly divided world, all we have to do is look to the U.S. election cycle and the political process for verification. A divided church is just another example of words that lack action and authenticity.

Q Ideas, an organization founded by Gabe Lyons, recently sponsored a study on faith and cultural engagement. The results were just released this past April. And while their information is based on the American populace, I'm sure our Canadian RCA family can find application as well. Some of their findings were provocative, some were discouraging,

and some call us to speak up and speak out as Christians, rather than watch from the sidelines. (For the entire study, see http://qideas.org/research.)

They discovered a number of things:

First, almost half of all Americans (49 percent) believe that the amount of service and charitable work in the U.S. would not decline if all religious organizations ceased to exist.

Let that sink in for a moment. The contribution of the church today is being seriously questioned—not just as a spiritual movement, but also as a contributor to the moral and social framework of modern society.

They also learned that 42 percent of Americans believe that "people of faith" are part of the problem, not the solution, when it comes to significant issues in the direction of the country. And an even higher figure, 46 percent, believes that "religion" is part of the problem.

Part of the problem—not part of the solution? We are starting with the presumptive understanding that Jesus is not the answer for the issues and challenges that face our world today. And then you add the internal divisiveness that separates, condemns, and criticizes. Rather than offering a unifying voice for the way of Christ that can bring help and healing to a polarized populace, we stand at a place where opposing views and polarity of rhetoric is not viewed as positive—and that the arguments and disagreements can deteriorate to personal confrontation and even attack, which is not helpful.

The study also showed that 95 percent of Americans agree that "people on opposite sides of an issue demonize each other so severely that they make finding common ground impossible."

Division in the world should not carry over into the church and our life and ministry together. We should look toward what unites us as far greater than what divides us:

- One Lord, one faith, one baptism.
- Grace that is greater than all our sin.
- The power of the gospel that is capable of transforming the most broken and healing the greatest pain.
- Faith, not in ourselves but in our sovereign God.
- Redemption, salvation, and reconciliation.
- Unity because we are united in Christ—Jesus the Savior of the world that God so dearly loves.

The center of who we are as Reformed Christians draws us together deeply, personally, covenantally, and eternally. It affirms our deepest convictions and commitments and provides a common purpose that we all share and engage in together.

This is not just a case of "Why can't we all just get along?" It is not so that we can have more influence in the public square. It is so that we can have greater influence for Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel in our world. So that we can bring reconciliation and redemption into places of division and brokenness.

So we can do more together than we can separately for the kingdom of God. So we can offer greater good into a world that is not convinced that they need us. And so that through our good works we will be able to glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).

This is what it means to be salt and light in our world. It is what we have been called

and commissioned to be as followers of Jesus Christ. And in the midst of some of the greatest tension in the history of the RCA, we are seeing some of the greatest ministry impact through Transformed & Transforming. We have come together as a denomination and found agreement around mission.

Transformed & Transforming is a vision that has been discerned collectively, through a denomination-wide process with thousands participating. It is a vision that is catalyzing transformation in the lives of people individually, in congregations corporately, and in communities collaboratively. It is a vision where more and more RCA churches are not watching from the sideline, but are opting to get in the game—to use their gifts, passions, resources, and calling in active ways to show and share Christ's love.

It is a vision which now has 392 RCA congregations participating in some form of Transformed & Transforming in one of the three strategic priority areas:

- Cultivating transformation in Christ
- Equipping emerging leaders of today and tomorrow
- Engaging in Christ's kingdom mission

New partnerships have been created with World Vision, Leadership Network, World Renew, and the Christian Reformed Church in North America to facilitate greater capacity for equipping congregations and for increased impact.

In the transformational experiences priority:

- We have launched three Discipleship Pathway learning communities. One is focused on next generation faith formation. One is focused on Sticky Faith and on how we pass on the faith to the next generation, in partnership with the Fuller Youth Institute. And one is focused on church multiplication with church planters in the California Classis.
- A two-year leadership community finished this past April and a new leadership community focused on disciple-making will launch in October. If you or your church is interested in being part of this awesome Leadership Community, connect with Jill Ver Steeg, our coordinator for transformational equipping.
- More than 800 women have engaged in connection events, sponsored by our Women's Transformation and Leadership initiative, led by Liz Testa. The largest event was a gathering of 150 Hispanic women leaders in Southern California.
- We have 20 churches that are currently engaged in Faithwalking.

We are excited in the coming year to expand our training and equipping in this area to help churches engage even more at the personal transformation level. Our goal is to help congregations to see the pre-discipleship and evangelism phase as a place of sharing the good news of the gospel in ways that are personally and eternally transforming.

Under our leadership development priority:

- We just completed a two-year leadership community with eight churches participating in this equipping experience.
- 25 churches have participated in six connection events as they explore new on-ramps to Transformed & Transforming.
- A new African American/Black Council learning community was launched last month in New York City.
- We will be starting two new Asian Next Generation leadership collaboratives this fall—one for Chinese young leaders and one for Korean young leaders.
- We will be launching six new learning communities this fall as part of the Reformed

Leadership Initiative—a partnership with the Christian Reformed Church and funded with a $1 million Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation grant. A number of them will be racially and ethnically focused, as well as being multiracially focused.

- We are also partnering with classis leaders in developing elder and deacon training that not only encompasses the responsibilities of the office, but recognizes the leadership role that elders and deacons exercise in the ministry of a local church.
- We continue to partner with Western Theological Seminary in Ridder Church Renewal. There are currently 64 RCA churches involved as well as one pilot chaplains group. An additional 32 Christian Reformed Church congregations are also journeying with us in this process of personal and corporate renewal. A total of 115 pastors are participating, and 696 pastors and congregational leaders are involved.
- This spring, 120 leaders from the Regional Synod of the Heartland gathered in Sioux Falls to launch a new Ridder module. These leaders represented 15 churches and are excited about starting the process of renewal both personally and congregationally. Five churches in Canada have also been involved over the last two years and will now be moving to module two.
- We launched the Ezra Project, a leadership development experience for African American pastors and churches in partnership with the African American/Black Council, and sponsored by a $25,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment.
- We began the Congregational Vitality Pathway, a church renewal strategy that is especially effective in the RCA's Far West region and is spreading to other regional synods.
- A new coaching system is providing trained catalytic coaches who offer encouragement and accountability for pastors and leaders participating in leadership and learning communities.
- A special experience called First Call is focused on new pastors who are in their first ministry call. We are learning and growing in how we support new and young pastors in the RCA.

In the area of mission:

- A new process for training and equipping global mission teams and committees in local churches has been developed. Called Re:Forming Missions, it discusses the biblical mandate for mission, explores a congregation's passion for mission, identifies geographic areas for involvement, and offers ways to engage through compassion and justice, education and leadership development, and evangelism and church planting.
- Two connection events were launched this spring, and we are excited about congregations that desire to expand their missional imagination and increase their missional footprint. You can connect with Megan Hodgin, coordinator for congregational mission engagement, if your global mission team would like to be part of a new learning community launching this fall or an upcoming connection event.
- Local Missional Engagement has just completed its first two-year leadership community, with tremendous effectiveness. We will be launching a new local missional engagement leadership community this fall, helping churches build a bridge from their congregation into their community. You can connect with Eliza Cortés Bast, coordinator for local missional engagement, if you would like your church to be a part of these transformative equipping experiences.
- We are seeing wonderful impact in places like Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where Bethany Reformed Church is working to bring 10,000 blessings into its community to tangibly live and love like Jesus. Not far away, in Brown Deer, Wisconsin, Trinity Reformed Church partnered with the city and the police department to provide safe alternatives for celebrating Christmas and to provide resources for under-resourced families to experience the joy and gift-giving of the Christmas season. This was the first time that Trinity had done something like this, and the impact in the community and on the congregation was overwhelming and wonderful.

- Missional Mosaic has had 11 connection events: six helping churches focus on cultural agility and ministry in transitioning and changing communities, and five focused on advocacy and issues of injustice—including two that helped congregations reach out and minister more effectively regarding disability concerns.
- Missional Mosaic has also sponsored five refugee events to help RCA congregations welcome the stranger in our midst and live and love like Jesus for those who are displaced because of evil, conflict, and terror.
- We will also be launching a learning community related to It's Time, our journey to eradicate racism as a denomination, and to bring reconciliation and healing in the aftermath of the events in Ferguson, Baltimore, and Staten Island. We encourage pastors to be in conciliatory groups for deep and honest conversation about our fears and hopes regarding racism and our vision to be a multiracial denomination.

With our volunteer engagement initiative this year:

- We have deployed 1,075 volunteers locally and globally to respond to disasters and to help serve with mission coworkers, pastors, and churches in the U.S., Canada, and around the world.
- We have sent 2,408 volunteers since the beginning of Transformed & Transforming.
- We have 34 international sites and 51 domestic sites where your group can volunteer to serve. Additional new sites for your youth group mission trip, an intergenerational trip, and a disaster response trip are coming online this year. You can contact Stephanie Soderstrom, associate coordinator for volunteer engagement, to get your church connected.

What I am especially excited about regarding RCA volunteer engagement is our commitment to make this a discipleship experience for all participants—an opportunity to grow intentionally and spiritually—and also to provide resources that help teams to not just give but receive and learn as they engage personally, mutually, and beneficially for all involved. And we are using the Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission—something rare, unique, and formative for your church as it serves in mission with the RCA.

I invite you to visit www.rca.org/volunteers to find or plan a trip with the RCA that will be memorable and life-changing. There you can explore more than 85 opportunities around the world.

And finally, in our church multiplication initiative:

- We have started 50 new churches since we began Transformed & Transforming. 19 have been organized and we have added nearly 1,000 new members through these congregations.
- More than 50 percent of these new churches have been racial/ethnic or multiracial church plants.
- This past April we had our first Hispanic church planter gathering, with more than 45 Hispanic leaders participating. And the Hispanic Council has a great new vision to start 50 new Hispanic churches by the year 2020.
- We are beginning to start churches in places that are not historically RCA places of presence, such as Nashville, Tennessee; St. Louis, Missouri; and Houston, Texas.

In sharing these metrics, I hope to demonstrate that we are starting strong both in defining the vision of Transformed & Transforming, and also in beginning to launch teams, equipping experiences, and opportunities for growth and development that can help churches live and love like Jesus.

We will share more stories on Friday evening, and offer praise to God for how God is working in the life of the RCA and beyond in ways that are transformational. You won't want to miss seeing Transformed & Transforming come alive through this wonderful event that gives a dynamic update of many of the places where our vision is being lived out as we radically follow Christ in mission together.

But with all of this significant ministry work, the cost and resourcing of our vision continues to grow.

The General Synod Council is not bringing forth an assessment increase—and for all the impact, we are still seeing existing churches declining and losing members. In the past year or so, 343 RCA congregations have added new members or grown in their worship attendance, and we have added close to 1,000 new members through new church starts. But our overall membership continues to decline.

We need to reverse this trend that started in 1966 and has continued annually for 50 years. Fifty years of losses—that's more than a biblical generation! Many of us have never lived in the RCA when it was not declining in membership. We need to recognize that the growth of the RCA is not achievable through biological growth any longer, but instead must be the desire and impetus of congregations, pastors, and church leaders who move outside church walls and engage in local ministry in ways that bless others and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The threat of churches leaving hangs over our conversations this week, but our focus must be on how we reach out and welcome, how we invite our neighbors, friends, and family into our congregations, how we embrace the stranger, the marginalized, the poor, our coworkers, our Little League coach, our workout partner at the gym.

Our future must be about spiritual growth—about seeing the bruised and broken, the helpless and hurting, get connected with the transformational power of Jesus Christ. We are transformed in Christ so we can be transforming in our world. That is what will make a difference and what will bring change.

The impact of the loss of assessment support is more than $187,000—and assessments make up just 35 percent of our income. While assessments may feel burdensome for some congregations, imagine if what you received in the offering plate on Sunday mornings only covered one-third of your budget. That is the case for the work of the General Synod.

The loss of resources does impact the level of ministry and mission we are able to engage in together. It impacts how many congregations can be equipped in disciple-making. It impacts how many leaders can be trained. It impacts how many new churches can be started. It impacts how many leadership teams can catch a vision for outwardly focused ministry that is making a difference locally and globally.

And yet, God is continuing to provide. I am grateful to Ken Neevel and our development staff who are working hard to fill the gap, as well as many RCA churches and members who are stepping up and giving to support our Transformed & Transforming vision.

We have launched Called: the RCA's Campaign for Transformed & Transforming. It is a $6.5-million capital campaign that we have been quietly working on for more than a year; it just went public this spring. And today we have gifts and commitments of $5.7 million toward that $6.5 million goal. We are 88 percent of the way there!

God may move some of you to participate with us in this campaign; more than 90 percent of

our RCA GSC staff is giving financially toward this vision. Those who are working for the vision are making it happen. And many of you are as well—thank you! We're almost there.

But when we strip it all down, it isn't just what we do, but who we are that makes the difference.

We are the church of Jesus Christ. We aren't *doing* church—we are *being* the church.

The church in mission.

The church that brings compassion and justice and mercy into our world.

The church that offers hope and healing.

The church that chooses to be salt and light.

The church that loves one another.

The church that is kind, tender-hearted, and patient toward each other.

The church that isn't united for the sake of unity, but, as Jesus prayed, is one for the world.

Doing ministry alone proves nothing.

Doing ministry alone cannot accomplish the Great Commission or the Great Commandment.

Doing ministry alone will not change our world.

Doing ministry alone will not bring transformation.

Doing ministry alone will not fulfill Christ's prayer in John 17, or the vision the disciple John had for how we ought to interact together in 1 John 4:7-8 (NIV): "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

In these next days, you will have a significant opportunity to love—to show you have been born of God and to express that you know God. To not just check the box on the form next to the word "Christian," but to be people who really live and love like Jesus.

Love does not dishonor, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, does not delight in evil.

Love is patient and kind; it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love figures it out.

Love perseveres: we have been a denomination that has persevered for almost four centuries—through disagreement, through differences, and through conflict. I believe it is because we are a people who don't just do church—we understand what it means to *be* the church. We know it isn't our church; it is Christ's church.

Being the church means being more committed to finding *God's* solution to our disagreements than it is making sure our side wins.

Being the church means we are willing to admit we may not always be completely correct, or that our personal preferences may be wrong—and that the only opinion that matters is God's.

Being the church means we realize the church isn't for our benefit, but for God's glory.

Being the church means we are not part of the church to be socially acceptable, professionally employed, or politically powerful, but instead to be the body of Christ, engaged in God's mission in the world. To be people who have been called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the very presence of Christ in our world. To be people who love, and who love one another first.

Love figures it out.

Loving your neighbor as yourself is as much an inward journey with one's self as it is an outward journey with the other person. Love recognizes that resolution and reconciliation are not possible unless people are willing to take risks to restore relationships.

Love figures it out.

Where is a place that brings benefit for all, and not loss? A place that does not condemn, but instead redeems, transforms, and saves?

We have been a church where love figures it out, and that is the place we are called to stand today, this week, and in the months ahead.

You—General Synod—you need to lead, you need to love—you need to be the church.

## Report of the General Synod Council Serving As the Executive Committee of the General Synod

The Son of God gathers, protects, and preserves the church by his Spirit and his Word (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 54). The church exists to announce, teach, and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church speaks and it acts. For those of us in the Reformed tradition, the church governs its life and determines how best to carry out its mission through its assemblies.

God seeks certain characteristics, and the world also watches to see if those characteristics are evident in our life and work together. Our ability to go forth and preach the gospel is supported by the work of our congregations, classes, and synods. Together we are a body of committed believers in covenant with one another. Christ's mission is enhanced when the Word of God and our love for each other are the foundation for order, discipline, and effectiveness. This Reformed understanding of the church and the manner through which we govern our life together is foundational.

Our prayer throughout the year and as we meet as a General Synod body is that our unity and attention to governance will glorify God.

> The General Synod Council is established by and responsible to the General Synod. It shall act as the executive committee of the General Synod and it shall administer the affairs of the Reformed Church in America between the sessions of the General Synod. It shall implement decisions, policies, and programs of the General Synod through proper channels and agencies. It shall support, strengthen, and coordinate 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 (*BCO,* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 7, Section 1; 2015 edition, p. 69).

The General Synod Council serves "as the Executive Committee of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, as the Committee of Reference at meetings of the General Synod, and as the Board of Trustees of the General Synod as may be required by law" (*BCO,* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 6a; 2015 edition, p. 106).

For a full listing of the responsibilities of the General Synod Council, delegates will want to refer to the Bylaws of the General Synod (*Book of Church Order,* Chapter 3, Part 1, Article 3, Section 6; 2015 edition, p. 106). These bylaws are available at the front of the General Synod Workbook.

The work of the General Synod Council, as directed by previous General Synods, is reported to this General Synod in two areas:

1) Matters of governance: the work the General Synod Council (GSC) has done with respect to a) the meeting of the General Synod, b) matters of its own organization, including its oversight and stewardship of the financial resources given to it, c) its support and supervision of denominational staff and the general secretary, d) the work of its committees, teams, and racial/ethnic councils, and e) a general overview of the work of the church as reported by the GSC in its role as the General Synod Executive Committee.

2) The work the GSC has done with regard to the oversight of the mission and ministry assigned to it by the General Synod under the rubric of Transformed &

Transforming, the General Synod's 15-year goal, and which is reported by the GSC in its role as the General Synod's program agency. Referrals addressed to the GSC from previous General Synods are dealt with throughout this report.

**Review of Regional Synod Minutes**

The General Synod Office has received and read the 2015 minutes of the regional synods of Albany, Canada, the Far West, the Great Lakes, the Heartland, Mid-America, the Mid-Atlantics, and New York.

**GENERAL SYNOD MEETING**

**Referral of Business**

The business of General Synod was assigned to the appropriate committees as presented in the General Synod Workbook.

**R 16-1**
**To approve the agenda and schedule of the General Synod as presented in the General Synod Workbook. (ADOPTED)**

**General Synod Offering**

The General Synod received offerings at the opening worship on Thursday and at the closing worship on Tuesday. The offerings have been designated by General Synod president Evan Vermeer to support the ministry of Setshabelo Family and Christian Services (SFCS) in Botshabelo, South Africa, a new RCA mission partner. SFCS works with orphans and vulnerable children in Botshabelo to get them into a loving family home situation through in-community adoptions and foster care.

**The Seating of Delegates**

The Bylaws of the General Synod require that a classis be current in the payment of its General Synod assessments before its delegates may be seated as members of the General Synod (*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 1, Section 1a; 2015 edition, p. 103). The general secretary reported on classes' payments of General Synod assessments and reported that there were no any delegates who could not be seated because of irregularities.

**Amendments to the *Book of Church Order***

The General Synod of 2015 adopted and referred to the classes for approval two amendments to the *Book of Church Order*. The amendments are recorded in the *2015 Minutes of the General Synod* as noted. One classis did not register a vote.

| | *Book of Church Order* Amendments | Disapproved | Approved |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **Elder Delegates to Classis**<br>(*MGS 2015*, R-40, p. 186)<br>*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 3, Sec. 1; 2015 edition, p. 30 | 1 | 42 |
| **2.** | **Classis Determination regarding Ministry Experience for Other Candidates**<br>(*MGS 2015*, R-56, p. 264)<br>*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 12, Sec. 4b*;* 2015 edition, p. 48 | 0 | 43 |

The 2015 General Synod also approved in first reading for recommendation to the 2016 General Synod two amendments to the Bylaws of the General Synod:

*Racial/Ethnic Presence on the General Synod Council—BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3; 2015 edition, p. 104 *(MGS 2015*, R-42, pp. 192-193)

*Responsibilities of the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education—BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 12; 2015 edition, p. 116 (*MGS 2015*, R-38, pp. 168-169)

**R 16-2**
**To declare amendments 1 and 2 to be approved for incorporation into the 2016 edition of the *Book of Church Order*; and further,**

**To declare the above two amendments to the Bylaws of the General Synod adopted by the 2015 General Synod to be approved for incorporation into the 2016 Bylaws of the General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

**Appointment of the General Synod Treasurer and Assistant Secretary**

In accordance with its corporate bylaws, the General Synod must annually appoint a treasurer of the General Synod corporation (Corporate Bylaws of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, Article V).

**R 16-3**
**To appoint Jillisa Teitsma as treasurer of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)**

In accordance with its corporate bylaws, the General Synod may elect or appoint such other officers as the needs of the corporation may from time to time require (Corporate Bylaws of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, Article V). In order for Paul Boice, chief operating officer, to have authority to sign legal documents for the corporation of the General Synod, it was necessary to approve the following recommendation:

**R 16-4**
**To appoint Paul Boice assistant secretary of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)**

**General Synod Planning**

Responsibility for planning the agenda and schedule for the annual meeting of the General Synod is assigned to the General Synod Council (GSC) in its capacity as the General Synod Executive Committee. Planning the annual meetings begins shortly after the conclusion of the current meeting and involves the General Synod officers, the general secretary, staff from the General Synod Office, and numerous others. At the fall meeting of the General Synod's commissions and the GSC, moderators of the commissions, the moderator of the GSC, senior staff, the general secretary, and officers meet to consider anticipated business from all of these entities for the next year's meeting. Initial plans for the annual meeting are discussed at the fall meeting of the GSC. Prior to the start of the General Synod meeting, the GSC reviews and approves the schedule and agenda.

The selection of General Synod worship leadership and the preacher is a prerogative of the General Synod president. A worship planning team works with the president and the

selected preacher to develop all of the worship liturgies for the synod. This year's worship planning team was coordinated by Travis and Juliana Else. Travis is lead pastor and Juliana is director of worship at First Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa.

In 2011, the General Synod moved away from providing a printed agenda and reports except by special request. The equipment that supported the 2016 meeting was purchased in 2011 jointly by the RCA and the Christian Reformed Church in North America to support meetings of both denominations. Technology staff support was present to assist delegates throughout the meeting. The transition to electronic reporting has reduced synod's expenses for paper and shipping and lessened the environmental impact of the meeting.

Simultaneous translation and enhancements to support people with various disabilities were provided based on the needs expressed by delegates and guests when they registered. The meeting space was equipped with a hearing loop for those with a hearing disability. The synod leadership and staff take this opportunity to thank RCA Disability Concerns for its advocacy for these enhancements. Thanks are also expressed to those delegates who volunteered to assist those with disabilities.

**General Synod Meeting Location**

The proposed location for the next annual meeting of the General Synod in 2017 is Hope College in Holland, Michigan. The General Synod is able to respond to invitations from the assemblies of the church to meet in other locations. Planning for the meeting requires invitations to be submitted at least two years in advance of the proposed meeting. The next meeting is set for June 8–13, 2017. The 2018 meeting of the General Synod will take place on the campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in tandem with the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The dates for the 2018 General Synod are June 7–12.

## OVERVIEW OF THE GSC'S WORK ON MATTERS OF ITS INTERNAL GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The General Synod Council operates internally according to a not-for-profit governance practice known as "policy governance" developed by Dr. John and Miriam Carver. Policy governance allowed the GSC to enhance its ability to monitor the various "ends" and objectives that were established to fulfill the General Synod's directives regarding Our Call, the General Synod's ten-year goal for mission and ministry that ended in 2013. In October 2014, the GSC adopted new ends and objectives to fulfill the directives of the new goal adopted at General Synod 2013, Transformed & Transforming. Policy governance has also enhanced the GSC's ability to both support and monitor the work of its general secretary and staff through a series of "limitations" policies. The GSC has also established and holds itself accountable for its own work through polices concerning its own internal governance and its relationships with the general secretary and staff.

The Ministerial Formation Certification Agency and the Board of Benefits Services also operate in accordance with the principles of policy governance. This work required extensive discussion over a period of two years to clarify the governing relationship of these agencies with the GSC in its capacity as the executive committee of the General Synod.

**RCA Salary Structure for FY 2016**

In 2006 the General Synod Council adopted policies to govern its work and to establish clear guidelines for oversight of its staff. The GSC policy pertaining to staff compensation states: "With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits and recognition of employees, consultants, contract workers, and volunteers, the General Secretary will not

cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity or to public image or decisions that are unrelated to the relevant market" (GSC Policy EL-8).

Upon the instruction of the general secretary, the human resources department completed a study of the compensation methodology of the GSC in the fall of 2006. The director consulted with The Employers' Association, based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to develop the current compensation system. Two key factors were considered in the development of the system. First, an evaluation system was utilized to ensure that internal equity was established for all positions based on their contribution to the RCA's mission and vision. Secondly, positions were benchmarked against comparable external positions through the use of salary compensation surveys in the non-profit and church sectors.

This system allows for the evaluation of positions based on the essential requirements and responsibilities of the job as defined in the job description. Job descriptions are created together by the manager, employee, and human resources department. As responsibilities change, the system allows for reevaluation of positions to ensure that they are classified in the correct range. The system incorporates geographical differentials to recognize variances in distinct regions.

This system incorporates a model that utilizes fourteen ranges. The ranges span grades 10 to 23; Grade 10 represents the most entry level positions and Grade 23 represents the highest range, held by the general secretary.

Staff are evaluated annually by their managers. Any increases or adjustments in wages are approved by the general secretary. The general secretary is evaluated by the General Synod Council. Executive staff reporting to the Board of Benefits Services, the Church Growth Fund, and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency are evaluated by their respective boards.

The following tables represent the ranges that were used for fiscal year 2016. The ranges are utilized to establish base wages and annual compensation and do not represent the actual salary of any individual employee. The system, when reviewed and updated regularly, should serve the church well as it seeks to advance God's kingdom.

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

**2015-2016**

| | ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GRADE** | **LOW** | **25%** | **MID** | **75%** | **HIGH** | **SPREAD** |
| **10** | **$22,811** | **$24,441** | **$26,070** | **$27,699** | **$29,329** | **25%** |
| **11** | **$26,005** | **$27,863** | **$29,720** | **$31,578** | **$33,435** | **25%** |
| **12** | **$29,304** | **$31,889** | **$34,475** | **$37,061** | **$39,646** | **30%** |
| **13** | **$34,143** | **$37,155** | **$40,168** | **$43,181** | **$46,193** | **30%** |
| **14** | **$40,583** | **$44,888** | **$49,192** | **$53,496** | **$57,801** | **35%** |
| **15** | **$45,398** | **$51,072** | **$56,747** | **$62,422** | **$68,096** | **40%** |
| **16** | **$53,862** | **$60,595** | **$67,328** | **$74,061** | **$80,794** | **40%** |
| **17** | **$63,633** | **$71,587** | **$79,541** | **$87,495** | **$95,449** | **40%** |
| **18** | **$74,914** | **$84,278** | **$93,642** | **$103,006** | **$112,370** | **40%** |
| **19** | **$84,658** | **$96,947** | **$109,236** | **$121,525** | **$133,814** | **45%** |
| **20** | **$98,423** | **$112,711** | **$126,998** | **$141,285** | **$155,573** | **45%** |
| **21** | **$112,605** | **$128,951** | **$145,297** | **$161,643** | **$177,989** | **45%** |
| **22** | **$128,435** | **$147,079** | **$165,723** | **$184,367** | **$203,011** | **45%** |
| **23** | **$140,449** | **$163,857** | **$187,265** | **$210,673** | **$234,081** | **50%** |

## CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

**2015-2016**

| ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRADE | LOW | 25% | MID | 75% | HIGH | SPREAD |
| 10 | $24,864 | $26,640 | $28,416 | $30,192 | $31,968 | 25% |
| 11 | $28,345 | $30,370 | $32,395 | $34,419 | $36,444 | 25% |
| 12 | $31,941 | $34,759 | $37,578 | $40,396 | $43,214 | 30% |
| 13 | $37,216 | $40,499 | $43,783 | $47,067 | $50,351 | 30% |
| 14 | $44,236 | $48,928 | $53,619 | $58,311 | $63,003 | 35% |
| 15 | $49,483 | $55,669 | $61,854 | $68,040 | $74,225 | 40% |
| 16 | $58,710 | $66,049 | $73,388 | $80,726 | $88,065 | 40% |
| 17 | $69,360 | $78,030 | $86,700 | $95,370 | $104,040 | 40% |
| 18 | $81,656 | $91,863 | $102,070 | $112,277 | $122,484 | 40% |
| 19 | $92,277 | $105,672 | $119,067 | $132,462 | $145,857 | 45% |
| 20 | $107,282 | $122,855 | $138,428 | $154,001 | $169,574 | 45% |
| 21 | $122,740 | $140,557 | $158,374 | $176,191 | $194,008 | 45% |
| 22 | $139,995 | $160,316 | $180,638 | $200,960 | $221,282 | 45% |
| 23 | $153,089 | $178,604 | $204,119 | $229,634 | $255,149 | 50% |

## NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

**2015-2016**

| ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRADE | LOW | 25% | MID | 75% | HIGH | SPREAD |
| 10 | $25,777 | $27,618 | $29,459 | $31,300 | $33,141 | 25% |
| 11 | $29,386 | $31,485 | $33,584 | $35,683 | $37,782 | 25% |
| 12 | $33,113 | $36,035 | $38,957 | $41,878 | $44,800 | 30% |
| 13 | $38,581 | $41,986 | $45,390 | $48,794 | $52,198 | 30% |
| 14 | $45,859 | $50,723 | $55,587 | $60,451 | $65,315 | 35% |
| 15 | $51,299 | $57,712 | $64,124 | $70,537 | $76,949 | 40% |
| 16 | $60,865 | $68,473 | $76,081 | $83,689 | $91,297 | 40% |
| 17 | $71,905 | $80,893 | $89,881 | $98,869 | $107,858 | 40% |
| 18 | $84,652 | $95,234 | $105,815 | $116,397 | $126,979 | 40% |
| 19 | $95,663 | $109,550 | $123,437 | $137,323 | $151,210 | 45% |
| 20 | $111,218 | $127,363 | $143,508 | $159,652 | $175,797 | 45% |
| 21 | $127,244 | $145,715 | $164,186 | $182,656 | $201,127 | 45% |
| 22 | $145,132 | $166,199 | $187,267 | $208,335 | $229,402 | 45% |
| 23 | $158,707 | $185,158 | $211,609 | $238,061 | $264,512 | 50% |

**NEW YORK, NEW YORK**
**2015-2016**

| | ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GRADE** | **LOW** | **25%** | **MID** | **75%** | **HIGH** | **SPREAD** |
| 10 | $26,689 | $28,596 | $30,502 | $32,408 | $34,315 | 25% |
| 11 | $30,426 | $32,599 | $34,772 | $36,946 | $39,119 | 25% |
| 12 | $34,285 | $37,311 | $40,336 | $43,361 | $46,386 | 30% |
| 13 | $39,947 | $43,472 | $46,997 | $50,521 | $54,046 | 30% |
| 14 | $47,483 | $52,519 | $57,555 | $62,591 | $67,627 | 35% |
| 15 | $53,115 | $59,755 | $66,394 | $73,033 | $79,673 | 40% |
| 16 | $63,019 | $70,896 | $78,774 | $86,651 | $94,529 | 40% |
| 17 | $74,450 | $83,757 | $93,063 | $102,369 | $111,676 | 40% |
| 18 | $87,649 | $98,605 | $109,561 | $120,517 | $131,473 | 40% |
| 19 | $99,050 | $113,428 | $127,806 | $142,184 | $156,562 | 45% |
| 20 | $115,155 | $131,872 | $148,588 | $165,304 | $182,020 | 45% |
| 21 | $131,748 | $150,873 | $169,997 | $189,122 | $208,247 | 45% |
| 22 | $150,269 | $172,083 | $193,896 | $215,709 | $237,522 | 45% |
| 23 | $164,325 | $191,713 | $219,100 | $246,488 | $273,875 | 50% |

**ORANGE CITY, IOWA**
**2015-2016**

| | ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GRADE** | **LOW** | **25%** | **MID** | **75%** | **HIGH** | **SPREAD** |
| 10 | $21,671 | $23,219 | $24,767 | $26,314 | $27,862 | 25% |
| 11 | $24,705 | $26,469 | $28,234 | $29,999 | $31,763 | 25% |
| 12 | $27,839 | $30,295 | $32,751 | $35,208 | $37,664 | 30% |
| 13 | $32,436 | $35,298 | $38,160 | $41,022 | $43,884 | 30% |
| 14 | $38,554 | $42,643 | $46,732 | $50,821 | $54,911 | 35% |
| 15 | $43,128 | $48,519 | $53,910 | $59,301 | $64,692 | 40% |
| 16 | $51,169 | $57,565 | $63,962 | $70,358 | $76,754 | 40% |
| 17 | $60,451 | $68,008 | $75,564 | $83,120 | $90,677 | 40% |
| 18 | $71,168 | $80,064 | $88,960 | $97,856 | $106,752 | 40% |
| 19 | $80,425 | $92,100 | $103,774 | $115,449 | $127,123 | 45% |
| 20 | $93,502 | $107,075 | $120,648 | $134,221 | $147,794 | 45% |
| 21 | $106,975 | $122,504 | $138,032 | $153,561 | $169,089 | 45% |
| 22 | $122,014 | $139,725 | $157,437 | $175,148 | $192,860 | 45% |
| 23 | $133,426 | $155,664 | $177,902 | $200,139 | $222,377 | 50% |

**PARAMOUNT, CALIFORNIA**
**2015-2016**

| | ANNUALIZED SALARY RATE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GRADE** | **LOW** | **25%** | **MID** | **75%** | **HIGH** | **SPREAD** |
| **10** | **$25,320** | **$27,129** | **$28,938** | **$30,746** | **$32,555** | **25%** |
| **11** | **$28,866** | **$30,927** | **$32,989** | **$35,051** | **$37,113** | **25%** |
| **12** | **$32,527** | **$35,397** | **$38,267** | **$41,137** | **$44,007** | **30%** |
| **13** | **$37,899** | **$41,242** | **$44,586** | **$47,930** | **$51,274** | **30%** |
| **14** | **$45,048** | **$49,825** | **$54,603** | **$59,381** | **$64,159** | **35%** |
| **15** | **$50,391** | **$56,690** | **$62,989** | **$69,288** | **$75,587** | **40%** |
| **16** | **$59,787** | **$67,261** | **$74,734** | **$82,207** | **$89,681** | **40%** |
| **17** | **$70,632** | **$79,461** | **$88,291** | **$97,120** | **$105,949** | **40%** |
| **18** | **$83,154** | **$93,548** | **$103,943** | **$114,337** | **$124,731** | **40%** |
| **19** | **$93,970** | **$107,611** | **$121,252** | **$134,893** | **$148,534** | **45%** |
| **20** | **$109,250** | **$125,109** | **$140,968** | **$156,827** | **$172,686** | **45%** |
| **21** | **$124,992** | **$143,136** | **$161,280** | **$179,424** | **$197,568** | **45%** |
| **22** | **$142,563** | **$163,258** | **$183,953** | **$204,647** | **$225,342** | **45%** |
| **23** | **$155,898** | **$181,881** | **$207,864** | **$233,847** | **$259,830** | **50%** |

**REPORT OF THE GSC MODERATOR ON THE COMMISSION REVIEW PROCESS**

At the August meeting of the General Synod officers, the moderator of GSC announced that one of the goals of this year's work would be to fulfill the mandate of the *BCO* to conduct a full review of the commissions. A GSC review of the commissions is not only a directive of the *BCO*, it is also part of the mandate of the 2013 General Synod when it adopted Transformed & Transforming.

The first step of the review process in 2015-2016 was to introduce a document entitled "Commission Future Questions" for consideration during the joint meeting of the GSC and commissions in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on October 24, 2015. The questions asked the commissions to look at their work in the context of Transformed & Transforming as follows:

*Commission Future Questions Document*

1) Specific responsibilities of the General Synod Council in connection with the overall mission and ministry of the RCA and Transformed & Transforming:

> To act as the agent of the Reformed Church in America to enable its participation in God's work in the world and to equip congregations and assemblies for mission and ministry. As such, it shall establish and review policies for such programs as fulfill these purposes. General Synod Council Staff shall implement and administer such programs. It shall work with other agencies, commissions, institutions, and offices of the church to which the General Synod assigns specific responsibility, and as the General Synod directs. (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 6b; 2015 edition, p. 106)

- How does your commission see itself working with the GSC, other commissions, institutions, agencies, and offices of the church in order to enable participation in God's work in the world, to equip congregations and assemblies for mission and ministry, and to help regional synods, classes, and local congregations engage in Transformed & Transforming?

2) General Synod 2013's instruction to the General Synod Council regarding the work of Transformed & Transforming:

> R-10
> To instruct the General Synod Council, working with the boards, institutions, agencies, and commissions of the General Synod:
> - To develop a clear implementation plan with measurable ends and goals for Transformed & Transforming: Radically Following Christ in Mission Together;
> - To report this plan to the 2014 General Synod;
> - To share this plan widely throughout the greater church;
> - To report progress on the plan to General Synod annually thereafter. (*MGS 2013*, p. 72)

Specific responsibilities of the General Synod Council regarding the work of commissions:

> To support, strengthen, and coordinate the work of the 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. (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 6f; 2015 edition, p. 107)

To review all General Synod commissions at least once during each five-year period and to recommend to General Synod a continuation of, a reconstitution of, or a discontinuation of such commissions, with the understanding that the necessity for continuation shall not be assumed. (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 6g; 2015 edition, p. 107)

- How is the commission structure increasing the effectiveness of the mission and witness of the RCA?
- How is your commission contributing to the increased effectiveness of the mission and witness of the RCA?
- How could the GSC help you by supporting and strengthening the efforts of your commission in order to live out the responsibilities of your commission and the task of greater mission effectiveness and greater witness of the church?

3) One of the complaints regarding denominations in the 21st century focuses around effectiveness and efficiency. Author and seminary professor Thom Rainer, listing eight reasons people are leaving denominational churches for nondenominational churches, states, "Denominations have inefficient systems and organizations. They are too bureaucratic."

- What are some of the places of effectiveness and efficiency in the RCA denominational system?
- How is your commission contributing to increased effectiveness in the RCA denominational system?
- What are some of the places of ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the RCA denominational system? What steps could be taken for greater improvement and impact?

4) One of the challenges in our current system is collaborative alignment, providing for an economy of effort and resources with people and processes pulling in the same direction and for the same purpose. Though Transformed & Transforming was affirmed at the 2013 General Synod, it is taking significant time to help bring the different actions and activities of the RCA system into a united and coordinated effort so we can carry out the purposes and priorities directed by the General Synod.

- How is the work of your commission supporting greater coordination for the mission and purpose of the RCA in living out Transformed & Transforming?
- What is the attitude of your commission toward autonomy, independence, and self-sufficiency, seeing yourself as part of a family and faith community that is responding to God's leading through the higher assembly of General Synod, and helping us move into a collaborative and connected mission future through Transformed & Transforming?
- Do you see the work of your commission as directing the work of General Synod or do you see your existence as serving the General Synod by accomplishing the work it initiates and designates?
- How do you bring a balance of initiation and implementation to your commission's purpose and mandate as stated in the *Book of Church Order*?
- What process of evaluation would your commission suggest to the General Synod Council in order to help it do the work of evaluation and review with which it has been tasked?

*GSC Meetings with the Commissions*

Immediately following the introduction of the Commission Future Questions on October 24,

GSC members participated in roundtable discussions with commission members who were present at the meeting. GSC members then debriefed the content of those discussions. We quickly realized that the morning's discussion was a good first step toward inviting the commissions to process with us, but that much more time was needed for both the GSC and the commissions to both digest and process what the document was asking us to consider.

The moderator took three actions in response to this debrief:

- Asked each commission to take time at its next scheduled meeting to discuss the Commission Future Questions.
- Asked one GSC member who lives near each commission's winter 2016 meeting to attend the meeting as a visitor, working to increase the relational connection between GSC and the commissions.
- Scheduled a meeting in the New York area with any commission moderators able to attend to discuss the relational connection between the GSC and the commissions.

The commission moderators also met with the General Synod officers over lunch at the end of the fall joint meeting on October 24, 2015. The purpose of that meeting was to inform each other of the work of our respective bodies. During that meeting, the GSC moderator announced that the above actions would be taken in response to the GSC's morning debrief.

In November 2015, the GSC moderator contacted each of the commission moderators, thanking them for their work and service and then beginning to coordinate having GSC members attend commission meetings as visitors. GSC's goal was twofold: a) to increase the relational connection between the GSC and the commissions, in direct response to the communicated desire of both the commissions and the GSC, and b) to coordinate and field continued feedback to the Commission Future Questions during the commission meeting.

Between January and March 2016, GSC members were able to attend all or part of the regular meetings of seven of the ten regular commissions. (GSC did not attempt to attend a meeting of the Commission on Judicial Business as they do not have a regular schedule and their work is based on whether or not judicial proceedings are before the Synod.) We were very pleased with our ability to attend the regular meetings of the Commissions on Christian Action, Christian Unity, Church Order, History, Nominations, Race and Ethnicity, and Theology. A GSC member was unable to attend the Commission for Women's meeting because no GSC member lived close to the meeting location. We did not attend the meeting of the Commission on Christian Worship because the logistics did not work out. In addition, while we had a GSC member scheduled to attend the meeting of the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education, the member was unable to attend due to weather.

On January 20, 2016, the GSC moderator and vice moderator met with the moderators of the Commissions on Christian Action, Christian Unity, History, and Race and Ethnicity in New York City. The purpose of that meeting was to take the first step toward increasing coordination and work among the moderators. All involved in the meeting appreciated the time spent and the fruitfulness of the discussion.

GSC members' attendance at and participation in commission meetings was received with overwhelmingly positive responses from the commissions themselves. GSC members made the following observations from their experiences at commission meetings and from discussions around the Commission Future Questions:

- Many commission members expressed concern over the loss of the advisory committees at General Synod.

- Many of the commissions expressed skepticism about the relationship of the GSC and their respective body. There appears to be much suspicion and misunderstanding about the role of GSC in coordinating the work of General Synod with the commissions. One commission used the platform of the Commission Future Questions to evaluate GSC and its responsibilities to carry out this assignment.
- In several commissions, there was a general sense of resistance to providing the requested response to the Commission Future Questions. One moderator said, "The idea of being asked to answer these questions hit a nerve with some."
- Multiple commissions suggested that a meeting of the moderators should be held in August or September to coordinate the work of the GSC and commissions. This was also discussed at the moderator meeting on January 20. Another suggestion that came out of the latter meeting was that a moderator meeting would also provide opportunity for training and relational connection for all the moderators.
- Several commissions noted that one of the strengths of the current structure and role of the commissions is their independent voice and their ability to speak both to the process of General Synod and to the church at large.
- Another general concern that surfaced from some commissions was the perceived lack of follow-through on referred work. The concern is that some work is lost in the referral process from one synod to the next.
- Many commissions commented on the best way to do the work of evaluation. Some of the key questions suggested to help with the evaluation included:
    - Is the commission fulfilling its mandate and calling?
    - Is the commission aligned with Transformed & Transforming?
    - Is the commission still necessary to the work of the General Synod?
- One commission noted that there is a flaw in the system of allowing commission members to serve a second three-year term if they so choose. Six consecutive years of service on a commission yields a lot of influence and blocks other willing persons from being able to volunteer. In addition, those who have served the longest on the commissions have been the most reticent to embrace the new direction and alignment of Transformed & Transforming and have actively tried to pull the work of synod and the commission back to a previous way of doing business.
- Many commissions commented on the importance of long-term staff support for the work of the commission. Commissions that had long-term support noted that their work was more effective, and commissions that were experiencing turnover noted that efficiency and continuity was lacking.
- Several commissions noted that one of the strengths of the commission structure is the representative diversity of the denomination. One commission put it this way: "Commissions are one of the few structures in the RCA that are committed to including voices of those that were traditionally marginalized either because of gender or race. The commissions are far more diverse than the General Synod, and thus provide a better picture of the diversity of the denomination. In this way, if the commissions were deemed unnecessary and dismantled, the church would be losing a vital place where the diversity of the church can and does have a voice and an impact on the ministry of the RCA."
- One of the universal frustrations and complaints of the commissions is the perception of poor communication between the different bodies of the church at large, and especially among the commissions themselves and GSC.
- Many commissions noted that they regularly generate work in response to their understanding of their General Synod mandate when there is a lack of direction or engagement from General Synod. Some noted that this often creates a dynamic where the commissions are directing General Synod rather than being responsive to it.

*Work of the GSC in 2016-2017*

1. Continue building on the first steps taken this year of intentionally changing the relationship of the GSC with the commissions from one of skepticism to one of mutual collaboration by increasing relational connection between GSC and the commissions.
2. Establish a review schedule and criteria for establishing alignment with Transformed & Transforming.
    - There are several examples of stops and starts in GSC's attempt to fulfill the mandate to review the commissions in both the minutes of the General Synod and of the GSC over the past ten years.
    - It is clear that this responsibility needs to become a more valued part of the role and responsibility of the GSC than it has been in the past.
3. Schedule a meeting of all the moderators in August or September in order to coordinate General Synod work, and offer training and equipping for moderators.

## REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF FINANCE

The Office of Finance provides centralized finance and accounting services to the denominational corporations, including the General Synod, the General Synod Council, the Board of Benefits Services, and the Church Growth Fund. The Office of Finance strives to ensure financial systems, procedures, and controls are in place to support the mission and ministry of these entities and to assist the officers and directors of the corporations to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities. The finance staff is available to respond to financial questions from local congregations, classes, and regional synods as together we strive to manage the financial resources with which we have been blessed.

### 2015 Annual Audits

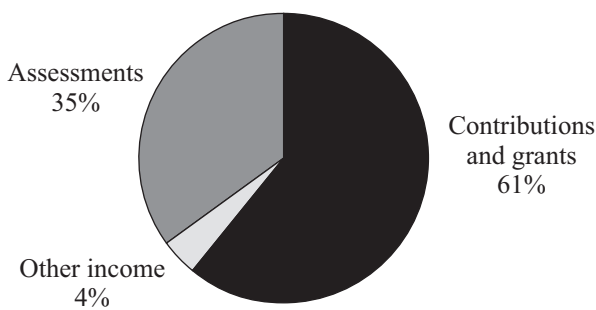
The 2015 financial statements of the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services Retirement Program and General Fund, and Church Growth Fund were audited by Capin Crouse LLP, certified public accountants. All corporations received unqualified (or "clean") audit opinions. The audited statements are available at www.rca.org/finance. The General Synod Council Audit and Risk Management Committee reviewed the audited financial statements of each entity and the management comment letters from the auditors and reported the audit results to the boards of the respective corporations. Financial highlights of each organization are presented below.

*Financial Summaries—Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2015*

General Synod Council

Funding for the work of the General Synod, including the operating budget and all other designated funds, is presented in the following chart:

**2015 GSC Audited Income Sources ($19.6 million)**



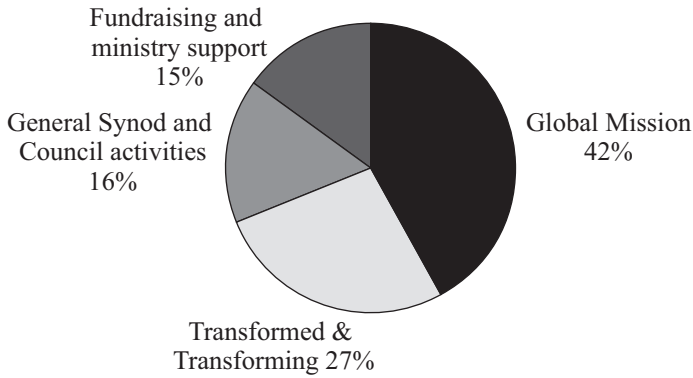

The generosity of donors—churches, individuals, and foundations—provided more than 60 percent of the costs of carrying out the work of General Synod.

Assessments provided 35 percent of income and continue to be consistently paid to GSC by classes. In 2015, $4,600 was granted in assessment relief by the General Synod Council for specific relief needs. Every assessment dollar provided to the GSC is allocated in the following ways: 24 cents for General Synod, General Synod Council, commissions, and task forces; 33 cents for partially funding the work of Transformed & Transforming; 29

cents for general administration (legal, finance, technology, etc.); 11 cents for theological education; and 3 cents for the retired pastors assistance fund. See chart on p. 55.

The funds provided to GSC are spent on Global Mission (42 percent); Transformed & Transforming priorities (27 percent); General Synod, commissions, and General Synod Council (16 percent); and fundraising and ministry support (15 percent), as represented in this chart:

**2015 GSC Expenses (18.6 million)**




The data source for these charts is the audited financial statements, which are available at www.rca.org/finance.

Board of Benefits Services—Retirement Programs

As of September 30, 2015, the date of our most recent audit, $379 million was set aside for participants in the 403(b) and retirement plans. Participant and employer contributions to the plan in fiscal year 2015 were $9.5 million. BOBS staff continues to work with pastors, congregations, and classes to obtain necessary information to monitor compliance with Formulary 5 requirements, specifically the requirement to contribute 11 percent of eligible salary to the pastor's retirement fund. At September 30, 2015, $2.5 million was owed to the retirement accounts of RCA pastors by their local congregations. In fiscal year 2015, distributions to participants totaled $17 million. For additional information about the retirement plan, see the report of the Board of Benefits Services and the audited financial statements available at www.rca.org/finance.

Board of Benefits Services—General Fund to Administer Retirement Programs

The Board of Benefits Services General Fund administers the retirement programs, life and long-term disability insurances, and assistance and retiree chaplains programs for active and retired RCA ordained ministers, their dependents, and surviving spouses. The General Fund is financially strong, with $4.5 million in unrestricted, undesignated net assets as of September 30, 2015. The General Fund ended fiscal year 2015 with a net surplus of $183,000.

Administration costs for the retirement plans are covered primarily by a 29 basis point fee (0.29 percent), a decrease of 3 percent from the previous year. The fee is levied on employer contributions to the 403(b) and retirement plan accounts and totaled $1.1 million in 2015.

Support for the assistance programs came from a General Synod assessment, designated contributions, a portion of the administrative fees charged to retirement plan participants' accounts, and annual investment income from endowment funds. Assistance program expenses, including grants and the retiree chaplains program, were $595,000 in 2015.

Church Growth Fund

The Church Growth Fund provides an investment opportunity for RCA members and related organizations to purchase savings certificates that are invested in loans to RCA congregations for building projects. In fiscal year 2015, the Church Growth Fund continued its plans to grow and service more RCA congregations, reaching $72 million in total assets.

As of September 30, 2015, the Church Growth Fund had $25 million in cash and $49 million in loans to churches, which were funded by $31 million in savings certificates and $42 million in net assets. Net income was strong despite a low interest rate environment; it totaled $595,000 after providing a $400,000 grant to the GSC to be used for making grants to new churches and providing scholarships for volunteers.

The Church Growth Fund has very strong liquidity, capital, and cash flow when compared to standards set by the North American Securities Administrators Association.

**Investments**

The investments of the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services, and Church Growth Fund are managed by professional investment managers. Performance and compliance with defined investment policy statements are monitored twice a year by the Investment Advisory Committee, which is made up of representatives from the boards of each corporation and at-large members currently working with investments.

*Excess Operating Cash*

The operating cash of the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services, and Church Growth Fund is invested with Standish in an actively managed portfolio of fixed income securities. The benchmark for investment returns is the Barclays 1-5 Year Government/Credit A+ Index. The total amount invested in fixed income at Standish is $44 million.

*RCA Endowment Fund*

The General Synod Council manages $15.2 million in funds provided by donors or set aside by management to be invested long-term. Some of the endowed gifts entrusted to the General Synod Council date back to the mid-1800s. The investment proceeds from endowed gifts are used for donor-designated purposes while preserving and growing the dollar value of the original gift. These investments are managed by LVM Capital Management, Ltd. The benchmark for investment returns is 70 percent S&P 500 and 30 percent Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-10 Year Government/Corporate Bond Index.

In addition to the General Synod Council, Board of Benefits Services, and Church Growth Fund, the endowment pool includes amounts designated for local congregations and RCA seminaries and colleges. In fiscal year 2015, the RCA Endowment Fund distributed $390,000 to the General Synod Council, $20,000 to the Church Growth Fund, $10,000 to the Board of Benefits Services, and $192,000 to RCA-affiliated organizations. If you are interested in setting up an endowment, please contact the development office.

*RCA Retirement Plans*

Fidelity Investments provides recordkeeping and investment management services for the Board of Benefits Services retirement programs. Mutual fund options available to retirement plan participants include target retirement date funds based on a participant's retirement age as well as 20 diversified mutual funds, with socially responsible options. As of September 30, 2015, 90 percent of RCA participant funds are invested in target-retirement-date funds.

Fidelity has made changes in the active investment strategy of its target-retirement-date funds. These changes have had positive results, with Fidelity outperforming peer funds in the overall market. The Investment Advisory Committee meets twice annually and continues to monitor the performance and overall investment offering from Fidelity, thus meeting its fiduciary responsibility for the benefits of RCA ministers and lay staff invested in the RCA retirement program.

As a result of the Request for Proposal conducted in 2015, Fidelity Investments has partnered more closely with the Board of Benefits Services to offer additional services and guidance to better prepare our ministers for retirement. Personalized investment advisory services, referred to as PASW, are now available to participants in the RCA retirement program.

The Board of Benefits Services launched a new reallocation project last summer that allows eligible participants in the retirement program to reallocate funds from the RCA retirement plan, resulting in greater flexibility at retirement.

Together as a denomination we, through decisions of General Synod, have agreed to contribute 11 percent of the eligible salaries of ministers of Word and sacrament to their retirement accounts each year. Currently an estimated $2.5 million has not been paid into participant accounts from local congregations for benefits owed between January 1, 2009, and September 30, 2015. Full-time ministers of Word and sacrament should review their quarterly statements to see that 11 percent of their eligible salary is being contributed. Elder delegates to synod should ask questions in their local congregation to ensure that their congregation is providing this important benefit for their pastor(s).

*Planned Giving Programs*

The General Synod Council manages various planned giving programs, including charitable gift annuities, totaling $1.5 million. The Barnabas Foundation provides investment management and recordkeeping services for these programs. The investments include equities and fixed income to provide cash flow to cover the required payouts.

*Church Growth Fund Investments*

The Church Growth Fund invests a portion of excess operating cash in an equity investment strategy managed by Captrust and two other pools of funds—one in equities and one fixed income—managed by LVM Capital Management, Ltd.

*Socially Responsible Investments*

The General Synod Council and Board of Benefits Services participate with and pay dues to the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). Recently celebrating its 40th year, the ICCR remains the pioneer coalition of active shareowners who view the management of their investments as a catalyst to promote justice and sustainability in the world.

Composed of nearly 300 organizations with collective assets totaling more than $100 billion, ICCR members help shape corporate policy on a host of environmental, social, and economic justice concerns.

The General Synod Council also invests a portion of excess operating cash with Oikocredit, one of the world's largest sources of private funding to the microfinance sector.

All investment policy statements for each pool of investments require the investment manager to avoid investments in the securities of companies whose principal business involves gambling or the production or distribution of tobacco or alcohol.

Retirement funds may be invested, at the discretion of the participant, in socially responsible funds screened for the above restrictions.

**2016 Budget Process and Assessment Proposal for GSC, BOBS Assistance Grants, and Theological Education**

*Alignment of Resources with Transformed & Transforming*

Delegates to the 2013 General Synod addressed the direction of the RCA as the final step in a three-year discernment process that had broad and significant input from across the denomination. A 15-year goal, called Transformed & Transforming, was adopted by those delegates. This year, synod delegates will read and hear about progress that has been made and ways that individuals and congregations can connect with this communal goal.

In August 2013, the General Synod officers, regional synod leaders, and General Synod Council staff, as well as several non-staff, gathered to define how to carry out Transformed & Transforming's three priorities: Cultivating Transformation in Christ, Equipping Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow, and Engaging in Christ's Kingdom Mission. Ten projects were identified along with specific goals, timelines, and potential staff and budget resources.

The 2016 budget process included initiative plans for each priority and initiative leader. These plans, originally determined in 2013 and 2014 with the launch of Transformed & Transforming, defined a purpose statement; the destination of what will be accomplished over the course of the 15-year goal, including how much will be accomplished by certain points in time; five-, ten-, and 15-year check-in points along with one-year and 90-day markers of progress; and definitions of the metrics to be used along the way.

Portions of each initiative were included in the capital campaign that began in calendar 2015. The 2016 budget includes funding the initiatives from both current year operating income and from campaign funds as available. For 2016 enough funds were raised by the beginning of the fiscal year to spend almost $500,000 from campaign funds.

The following priorities framed the allocation of resources for the 2016 budget:

- Asking ourselves how our efforts grow disciples and ministry that create transformation from a stewardship perspective.
- Equipping churches as one of the main metrics.
- Naming sustainability in our efforts as essential (being a river, not a reservoir).
- Focusing on outcomes rather than outputs.
- Developing opportunities for congregations to learn and share together.
- Focusing on goals and strategies before defining line items.

- Beginning with pilot projects and building on successes.
- Seeking God's will in carrying out all of our plans.

Aligning staff with the Transformed & Transforming priorities has been a high priority for the leadership team. The budget process for the first fiscal year of Transformed & Transforming included a deep focus on defining the staff positions, responsibilities, and skills needed to carry out the ten initiatives and to assign staff to the ten teams. The result has been that total dollars for base salaries for all General Synod Council staff for the last year of the work on Our Call (2013) and the third year of work on Transformed & Transforming (2016) is the same total dollars, adjusted for merit increases. In terms of full-time equivalents (FTE), program staff has increased by 3.3 FTEs between 2013 and 2016 and support staff has decreased by 2.5, for a net overall increase of 0.8 FTEs.

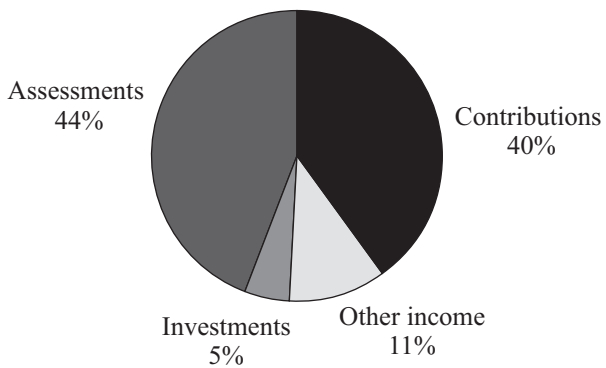
The 2016 budget was finalized by determining amounts available from assessments, contributions, investments, and other income, less staff dollars needed for the previously defined roles. The remaining funds were allocated to administrative and support functions and program costs. Project managers were provided funds to allow them to move their assigned projects forward while seeking partnerships to enhance and carry out the work.

*General Synod Council Operating Budget Process*

GSC staff will prepare the 2017 operating budget in late summer 2016. It will be based on the direction provided and decisions made by delegates of the 2016 General Synod and will continue to align staff and resources to fulfill the three interconnected priorities of Transformed & Transforming.

The 2016 General Synod Council operating budget is funded by assessment income, which includes only the General Synod assessment and is 44 percent of all operating income. Contributions provided from donors and congregations for supporting missionaries and for the RCA Ministry Fund make up 40 percent of available financial resources. Other income includes services provided to the Board of Benefits Services and the Church Growth Fund and investment income.

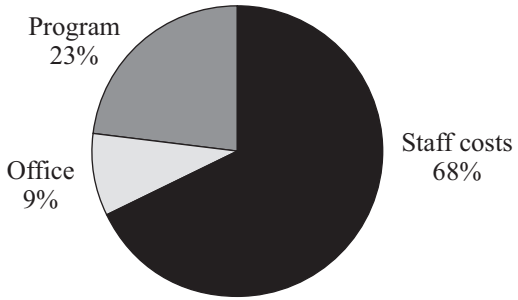
**2016 GSC Budget: Sources of Funds**
**(total of $14.5 million)**




Budgeted operating expenses for carrying out the work of General Synod include staffing (68 percent) and program and office costs (32 percent). Program expenses include meeting costs for the GSC, commissions, and General Synod, as well as missionary travel and

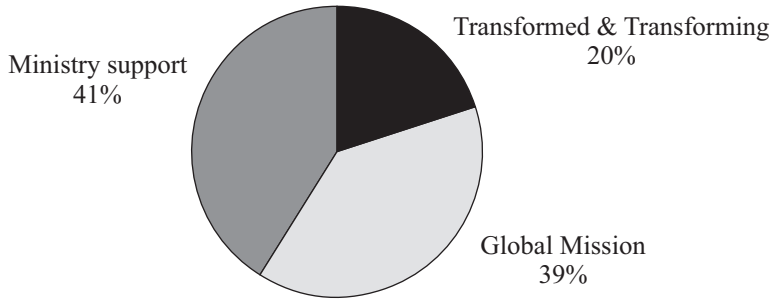
work-related costs. Also included in program costs are the expenses of launching the 11 initiatives for Transformed & Transforming.

**2016 GSC Operating Budget**
**Uses of Funds (by type of expense)**
**Total of $14.8 million**




Another view of the operating budget is by purpose of expense, shown in the next graph. This view shows that 20 percent is spent on salaries and program expenses for Transformed & Transforming, 39 percent on the work of Global Mission, and 41 percent on supporting the work through the General Synod, General Synod Council, and administrative staff.

**2016 GSC Budget**
**Uses of Funds (by area of expense)**
**Total of $14.8 million**




The 2016 budget was prepared assuming a draw on reserves of about $335,000 for office upgrades and the continued launching costs of Transformed & Transforming.

More than 390 churches are engaged in Transformed & Transforming so far. The assessment amount provided in 2016 enabled the General Synod Council and staff to come alongside those churches in many ways, including:

**Transformational Experiences**

- Three discipleship pathway learning communities
- One leadership collaborative
- Hundreds of women engaged through connection events and leadership collaboratives
- 20 churches are using Faithwalking as a means of personal transformation

**Emerging Leaders**
- Six churches in leadership community
- 25 churches attended six connection events
- New African American/Black Council learning community
- Reformed Leadership Initiative—six new learning communities
- One next-generational, multiethnic leadership collaborative
- Development of elder/deacon training

**Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches**
- 62 churches and 112 pastors in Ridder Church Renewal
- One Ezra Project

**Global Missional Engagement**
- New engagement process developed and piloted in spring 2016

**Local Missional Engagement**
- One leadership community
- Three learning communities
- One connection event with 20 church leaders

**Missional Mosaic**
- Nine connection events
- Two connection events with Commission on Race and Ethnicity
- Two connection events with disability concerns
- Three learning communities

**Volunteer Engagement**
- 1,075 volunteers sent out this year

**Disability Concerns**
- 26 rising disability advocates
- One learning community in partnership with Missional Mosaic

**Multiplication**
- 19 church plants, with a goal of 25 by General Synod; eight congregations of color

In addition to the operating budget, generous gifts from donors and foundations will provide additional funding for specific designated projects including disaster relief, Global Mission projects, an initiative to address the financial health of pastors, and a joint leadership initiative with the CRC. Funds raised through the Called Campaign are also available in addition to the operating budget and are being used to fulfill the three priorities of Transformed & Transforming.

The 2017 budget plan will begin in midsummer and continue after General Synod 2016 in response to feedback and direction from General Synod delegates. The focus will continue to be on aligning staff, support services, and programs to fulfill the priorities of Transformed & Transforming in impactful and measurable ways.

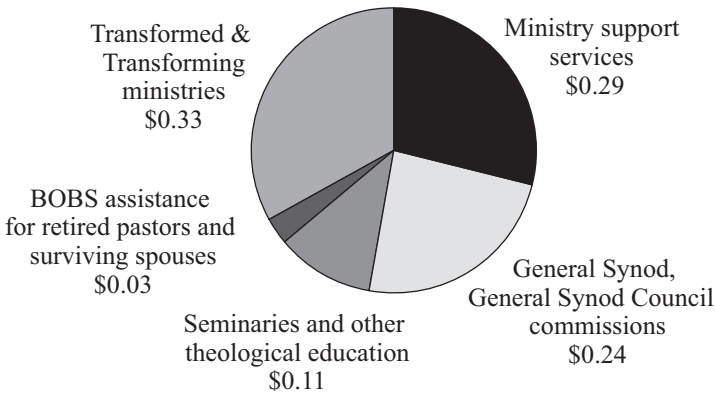
*2017 General Synod Assessment Amount*

The proposed 2017 per-member General Synod assessment amount keeps the GSC assessment the same, with no adjustment for potential changes in membership or cost of living changes, removes the one-year amounts added during the 2015 General Synod, and adjusts

the theological education amount based on the formula approved by General Synod in 2013.

Each dollar of the General Synod Council assessment is used in the following ways:

**How Each Dollar of GSC Assessment Is Used**




The general secretary and the Executive Leadership Team prepared a budget for the current fiscal year using the $44 per-member amount approved by the delegates of the 2015 General Synod for staffing the three strategic priorities of Transformed & Transforming and providing initial investments in developing 11 specifically defined initiatives as highlighted previously in this report. The general secretary and the Executive Leadership Team are committed to using the resources provided from the General Synod Council assessment along with capital campaign funds to balance the 2017 budget and move forward with the priorities of Transformed & Transforming.

Staff realizes there will likely be fewer dollars available from assessments for the 2017 budget, depending on the number of confessing members reported. We understand General Synod's concerns about the impact on local congregations of increasing the per-member assessment amount. The General Synod Council, general secretary, and Executive Leadership Team realize the tremendous blessing and responsibility we have been given to manage the past and present funds entrusted to us by donors and congregations. The GSC will also rely on donations provided by the Called campaign to resource the goals and outcomes of the three strategic priorities.

*2017 Board of Benefits Services Assistance Grant Assessment*

In 2015, the Board of Benefits Services' assistance program for active and retired participants, spouses, and dependents provided $425,000 to retirees and active participants experiencing financial distress. Types of assistance for retirees may include hearing aids, other medical devices not covered by insurance or Medicare, medical insurance premium payments, modest contributions to living expenses, retirement contributions for ministers of Word and sacrament who are disabled, and funeral grants to the surviving spouse of an RCA minister of Word and sacrament.

The BOBS assistance program also provides for 25 retiree chaplains who connect with more than 1,000 retired RCA ministers of Word and sacrament to tend to the spiritual,

financial, and relational needs of those who have served the church. Many retired ministers no longer live near an RCA congregation or are not able to connect with their classis.

The assessment to support the assistance program has remained at $1.50 for 25 years. The remainder of the funds required to sustain this program are provided through annual contributions, a portion of the administrative fees charged to retirement plan participants' accounts, and annual investment income from the Ed and Luella Mulder Pastor Assistance Endowment Fund and other endowment funds. The Board of Benefits Services is requesting an assessment increase of $0.50 per member for 2017, bringing the requested assessment to $2.00.

*2017 Theological Education Assessment*

The 2013 General Synod approved a recommendation from the Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group about funding for theological education and the allocation of that funding. This group is charged with reviewing the standards for ministerial preparation, coordinating the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the seminaries and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA), providing a forum for collaboration among the seminaries and the MFCA, formulating and updating an ends statement with GSC that focuses the use of the assessment for theological education, assisting the GSC to triennially review the overall assessment amounts for theological education, and sharing best practices among congregations and classes in their discernment of the call and care of ministerial candidates. The formula for allocating the theological education assessment approved in 2013 is as follows:

> To allocate an assessment for theological education to the RCA seminaries and to the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA) at the level of $840,000 for a period of three years, with this amount not to decrease but to increase at a percent equal to potential GSC assessment increases during this period; and further, to allocate the proposed funding in the following manner: an initial $55,000 to be allocated to MFCA to cover their unique costs with the remaining funding to be divided among the seminaries and the MFCA in the following manner:
>
> i) 75 percent of the funding to be divided equally among the seminaries and the MFCA to recognize and fund the cost each agency bears in oversight of the certificate of ministry process.
>
> ii) 20 percent of the funding to be divided among the seminaries and the MFCA based upon the number of students enrolled in each agent who are under care of a classis and pursuing ordination in the RCA as of December 31 of the previous calendar year.
>
> iii) 5 percent of the funding to be used in collaborative projects, including the meeting of the General Synod professors, the meeting of the future collaborative group for theological education, and other collaborative projects (*MGS 2013*, R-23, p. 128).

The 2017 per-member assessment for theological education includes an increase of 1.5 percent, or $0.09, to maintain the funding at $840,000. The increase of 1.5 percent is based on an estimated decrease in membership. In 2016, funds will be allocated as follows: $317,000 to the MFCA; $287,000 to Western Theological Seminary; $210,000 to New Brunswick Theological Seminary; and $40,000 for the General Synod professorate and collaborative work.

**R 16-5**
**To approve the General Synod Council 2017 assessment of $44.00 per confessing member. (ADOPTED)**

**R 16-6**
**To approve the assessment of $2.00 per confessing member for the Board of Benefits Services to provide assistance funding for retired pastors who have a demonstrated need. (ADOPTED)**

**R 16-7**
**To approve the assessment of $5.95 per confessing member for theological education. (ADOPTED)**

To fulfill the request from the report from the Commissioned Pastor Summit:

**R 16-8**
**To approve the $0.14 per member assessment to fulfill R 16-26 to fund a joint meeting of the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team and the Board of Trustees of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency. (ADOPTED)**

To fulfill the request from the Report of the Commission on Christian Action:

**R 16-9**
**To approve the $0.08 per member assessment to fulfill R 16-45 to fund a meeting of people interested in the study of mass incarceration. (ADOPTED)**

To fulfill the request from the Report of the Commission on Christian Worship:

**R 16-10**
**To approve the $0.03 per member assessment to fulfill R 16-48 to commit $5,000 to conduct a survey on worship practices. (ADOPTED)**

To fulfill the request from the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business in response to Overture 10:

**R 16-11**
**To approve the $0.03 per member assessment to fulfill R 16-36 to make regional synod executives corresponding delegates to the General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

*Change in Assessment from 2016 to 2017*

The chart below summarizes the General Synod assessment amounts for 2016 and the General Synod Council proposed amount for 2017.

**General Synod Council**
**Proposed Per-Member Assessment Amount**

| Name of Assessment | *MGS* references | Per-Member 2016 | Proposed 2017 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Amounts brought from GSC** | | | | |
| General Synod Council | | $44.00 | $44.00 | - |
| BOBS | | 1.50 | 2.00 | 0.50 |
| Theological education | | 5.86 | 5.95 | 0.09 |
| | | $51.36 | $51.95 | $0.59 |
| **Amounts added during Synod** | | | | |
| Interreligious understanding | 2015, R-15 | 0.20 | | (0.20) |
| Diaconal assemblies | 2015, R-16 | 0.12 | | (0.12) |
| Pathway forward | 2015, R-56 | 2.03 | | (2.03) |
| Joint meeting re: commissioned pastors | 2016, R 16-8 | | 0.14 | 0.14 |
| Meeting re: study of mass incarceration | 2016, R 16-9 | | 0.08 | 0.08 |
| Survey on worship practices | 2016, R 16-10 | | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| Regional synod executives as delegates | 2016, R 16-11 | | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| | | $53.71 | $52.23 | ($1.48) |

## REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

The RCA development team created a new purpose statement this year, which says: "Our purpose is to develop relationships that make the mission of the RCA known, inspiring financial partnerships that make the ministry of the RCA possible."

The development team's responsibility is to encourage churches and individuals to generously give their financial resources to support the ministry and witness of the Reformed Church in America. It coordinates all GSC fundraising efforts, including support for RCA Global Mission, Transformed & Transforming, and the Church Growth Fund.

Development team members raise financial support through outright gifts, bequests, life income plans, and grants. Gifts may be designated for a specific ministry area or left undesignated for the greatest need. Undesignated gifts are typically assigned to the RCA Ministry Fund, a fund that supports the specific areas of Transformed & Transforming. The development team also assists with raising resources through Church Growth Fund savings certificates, Partner-in-Mission shares, estate planning, and special project funding. Gifts to the RCA enable and empower ministry throughout the church, transforming lives both at home and around the world.

The mission and ministry of the RCA is only possible because of the generosity of God's people. In fiscal year 2015, 50 percent of the RCA's total income came from voluntary support. Only 32 percent was derived from assessments. The funding structure of the RCA relies heavily on gifts received from individual donors and from churches that give above and beyond assessments. A copy of the 2015 Annual Report to Donors is available on the RCA website and will be distributed in hard copy at General Synod.

The development team represents the GSC throughout the RCA, but individual staff members work primarily in these regions:

Randy Bohl: Canada, Colorado, and northern Michigan. Randy is also the RCA's planned giving and church relations specialist

Amanda Bruehl: Coordinator of direct appeals

DeWayne Cook: Southern California, Michigan, northern New Jersey, metro New York City, and Ohio

Larryl Humme: Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin

Ken Neevel: Central California, Florida, Michigan, central New Jersey, and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Troy Van Beek: Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota

Additionally, as coordinator and facilitator for Global Mission development and engagement, Scott Engelsman is responsible for defining missionary and mission project support needs, the communication of those needs, and for guiding Global Mission fundraising.

With the introduction of Transformed & Transforming also came instructions from General Synod to partially resource the strategic priorities through a capital campaign. Called: The

RCA's Campaign for Transformed & Transforming was launched in the summer of 2015 with a goal of raising $6.5 million. Significant progress toward this goal has been made during the quiet phase of the campaign. The campaign became public in late spring of 2016.

To give a gift in support of the RCA's ministry and mission, please visit the RCA website at www.rca.org/give, or contact the development staff member for your region.

**REPORT OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK COUNCIL**

This has been a very exciting year—a year of great progress for the African American/Black Council (AABC). This year we:

- Restructured how the council functions to provide more support to our congregations.
- Launched the Ezra Project.
- Coordinated with the office of the director of strategic leadership development and coordinator of Hispanic ministries to start leadership training for African American congregations in New York City.
- Continued talks with Bethany Christian Services, the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to partner with African American churches to serve children in New York.
- Helped develop the It's Time initiative for the RCA.

The primary function of the AABC is to provide a voice of advocacy for African Americans and blacks in the RCA. We realize that we can have a stronger voice if we have stronger congregations. To that end, the AABC has restructured itself into an ongoing learning community, utilizing resources from the denomination to strengthen our congregations. The business meeting of the AABC will still focus on speaking out on issues important to African Americans and blacks, but the majority of time will be spent in a two-year learning cycle designed to help our congregations grow and serve their communities. Strong, service-minded congregations have a stronger role when they advocate in the RCA. The first two-year learning cycle for our AABC learning community will focus on helping our congregations develop ministries to and with young adults and the next generation.

The Ezra Project is an intensive training initiative for a select group of African American RCA pastors. The AABC selected the pastors to participate in this year-long training. The pastors participating in the Ezra Project visited four congregations across the U.S. that met the following criteria:

- African American/black congregation in a white denomination
- Congregation started with less than 50 members
- Congregation has more than 500 members in attendance on Sunday morning

This intensive education process has already resulted in new ministries launched by the participating pastors in their congregations, as well as increased membership. This initiative is supported by a Lilly grant and the work of Andy Bossardet, coordinator for equipping thriving congregations.

The AABC established an important partnership with Transformed & Transforming to start a learning community on leadership led by Eddy Alemán, director of strategic leadership development and coordinator of Hispanic ministries. The New York area churches also

identified a desire to serve the children of New York in mission. The council has been working with several nonprofits, foundations, and government agencies to identify best practices and resources to carry out this work.

The It's Time initiative was started by general secretary Tom De Vries. It began in response to the deaths of unarmed African American males over the last few years. The purpose of the initiative is to create better black–white relationships and better police–community relationships. The initiative has three components:

1. Discipleship training for African American males.
2. Advocacy training for local congregations to produce better police–community relationships.
3. Restorative circles, beginning with a group of white and African American clergy, to start a process of better understanding between blacks and whites in the RCA.

It has been both a full and exciting year.

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR HISPANIC MINISTRIES

The *Book of Church Order* states that "the General Synod Council shall have racial/ethnic councils which express the collective vision and voice of racial and ethnic congregants and congregations as they develop ministries and advocate for policies of racial and ethnic inclusion, economic, social, and racial justice, both within the Reformed Church in America and ecumenically" (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 2b; 2015 edition, p. 105). To that end, the Council for Hispanic Ministries shall continue to express the collective vision and voice of our constituents, as well as advocating for the rights of our people while ensuring that we speak up and work together on positive strategies to resolve issues that separate us all as God's people.

The Council for Hispanic Ministries had its 41st annual meeting in Los Angeles, California, on August 28–29, 2015. The theme for that meeting was "Celebrating the Past and Embracing the Future." We had a great meeting of worship, celebration, and fellowship. The highlight of that meeting was the launching of a second-generation gathering on August 28. Many young Hispanic emerging second- and third-generation leaders gathered with the first-generation pastors and leaders to worship and learn from one another. This is the first time such a gathering has taken place and because of its success it will continue to be part of future assembly meetings.

The executive committee and the director of strategic leadership development are presently working in several areas:

### 1. Restructuring the Council for Hispanic Ministries

The council is fully committed and actively involved in helping RCA Hispanic churches in the U.S. and Canada to live out the vision of Transformed & Transforming. To that end, the assembly voted unanimously to restructure the council to align with Transformed & Transforming and with the current reality of the Hispanic population in North America. The executive committee added some more Hispanic leaders, including second generation, to form a group of 12 that will be working with Eddy Alemán, the director of strategic leadership development and coordinator of Hispanic ministries, to restructure the council.

These leaders are:

From southern California: Andres Serrano, pastor of Iglesia La Senda in Corona, and Dario Ventura, pastor of The Bridge en Español in Chino.

From central/northern California: Noemi Carvajal, copastor of Koinonia Worship Center in Fresno, and Ana Bautista, copastor of Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel in Sacramento.

From New York: Pedro Agudelo, pastor of Iglesia de Cristo La Roca in Queens, and elder Barbara Pimentel from Church of the Redeemer in Brooklyn.

From Arizona: Israel Camacho, pastor of Iglesia Nueva Esperanza in Gilbert.

From Michigan: Benito Aguilera, pastor at Christ Memorial Church in Holland, and Jose Duran, pastor of La Casa de Mi Padre in Holland.

From Florida: Luis Perez.

From New Jersey: Carlos Corro, student at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton.

From Canada: Alberto Salazar, pastor of La Senda del Amor in Toronto, Ontario.

This group of 12 is charged with restructuring the council and presenting a plan of action to the 2016 assembly for approval. They will be working on the following five shifts:

*Shift #1: Purpose—from advocacy to mission*

The council's main purpose needs to shift from advocacy to mission. The Council for Hispanic Ministries needs to lead the way in missional engagement. We need to work more closely with local classes and regional synods in reaching the Hispanic community in their regions. In comparison with the population growth, the Reformed Church in America is way behind in reaching the Hispanic population. In Canada, for example, we only have one Hispanic church in the whole country. We have no Hispanic churches in states like New Mexico (which is 46.3 percent Hispanic), Nevada (26.5 percent Hispanic), Connecticut (13.8 percent Hispanic), North and South Carolina, and many other places. In states with a predominantly Latino population we only have a few very small ministries. We need a more missional focus, learning to live and love like Jesus in our communities. There are major cities in the U.S. and in Canada where we need to plant more Hispanic churches.

*Shift #2: Leadership—from a committee to a team of visionary regional leaders*

We need to reevaluate how leadership is established in the council. For the past 41 years, since its inception, the council has had an executive committee formed of pastors and other leaders who give of their personal time to serve for three-year terms with the option of a second term. Their time is limited to actually engage in serious ministry all over the U.S. and Canada. This is the right time to start thinking differently in regard to leadership. We need a team of regional visionary leaders who are practitioners and who can work closely with the executive committee and with the director of strategic leadership development and Hispanic ministries. These regional leaders would be the ones on the front lines making things happen in every region. There would be seven regions in total: six in the U.S. and one in Canada.

These regional leaders would be the ministry team working with the executive committee and the director of strategic leadership development and Hispanic ministries. They would be practitioners with a regional vision for ministry working closely with local classes and regional synods. They would be in charge of coordinating several events and ministries in the regions:

- Host Transformed & Transforming connection events
- Organize events for women, men, youth, and children
- Establish vision and strategy for Hispanic church planting
- Lead the Hispanic pastoral networks
- Serve different classes as consultants for Hispanic ministries

*Shift #3: Meeting format—from business to equipping*

We need to revise how we run our annual assembly meetings. For way too long the assembly has spent a lot of time doing a lot of business. It's time for a new way of doing things when we are together. The annual assembly meeting needs to be different in several areas:

- It needs to be bilingual. We need to be more intentional in working with the second, third, and fourth generations of Hispanic leaders.
- We don't have to spend a lot of time doing a lot of "business." We need to leave all business to the local classes, regional synods, and the General Synod.

In the future every assembly meeting will be focused on three main areas:

- Equipping (developing leaders for intentional ministry)
- Vision alignment (Transformed & Transforming)
- Fellowship

*Shift #4: Language—from Spanish only to bilingual (English and Spanish)*

We need to do a better job of incorporating the second-generation, English-speaking Hispanic leaders in the Reformed Church in America. We will continue to have a second-generation gathering in connection with the annual assembly. The annual assembly needs to be intentionally bilingual to include those Hispanic pastors and leaders who only speak either Spanish or English. Every communication from the Office of Hispanic Ministries will also be bilingual.

*Shift #5: Finances—from meetings to ministry*

All of the money assigned to the council is presently used to have meetings. These resources need to be reallocated to include some ministry expenses. In reality we cannot do the work we need to do without the necessary funding in place.

**2. RCA Hispanic Church Planting Summit in Orlando, Florida**

Research shows that the Hispanic population is growing exponentially in the U.S. and Canada. Hispanics are influencing many areas of the North American society. Demographic projections in the U.S. show that the Hispanic population represents one out of every six adults today, and will continue to grow in the coming decades. This segment of the U.S. population is already impacting the country's landscape and will increasingly do so in the future. And, according to Statistics Canada, Spanish continues to be Canada's most spoken foreign language. Spanish was the fastest-growing foreign language spoken by Canadians since 2001, followed by Tagalog and Punjabi.

We believe that the Reformed Church in America needs to pay closer attention to this reality and be more intentional in reaching this growing segment of the population in the U.S. and Canada. We need to be more intentional in planting churches among first- and second-generation Hispanics. We need to continue to plant monolingual Spanish-speaking congregations, bilingual congregations, and English-speaking Hispanic congregations all over the U.S. and Canada.

On April 25, 2016, the Council for Hispanic Ministries, in collaboration with the RCA Church Multiplication Team, hosted an RCA Hispanic church planting summit as a pre-conference event in connection with Exponential East. Exponential is the largest gathering of church planters in North America. The purpose of this RCA Hispanic church planting summit was to bring together three different groups for vision-casting and networking: 1) potential RCA parent churches; 2) Hispanic church planting leaders; and 3) the group of 12 that is working on the restructuring of the council. This event was a prophetic event that launched a bi-national Hispanic church planting movement.

**3. Theological Education for RCA Hispanic Leaders**

We strongly believe that theological education is crucial for effective ministry. It is very unfortunate that, for many Hispanic leaders, access to theological education is very limited. For some it is a language issue, for others it is a time issue, and for still others it is a financial issue. We believe that in order to establish strong Hispanic churches and ministries in the Reformed Church in America, we need to be intentional in addressing the need of theological education for our Hispanic pastors and leaders. We hope to see the day very soon when our seminaries (WTS and NBTS) will offer full degree programs in the Spanish language. We are glad to see the efforts that the MFCA has been doing over the years to offer graduate-level courses in Spanish, and for that we are thankful. Several Hispanic leaders have completed their program of study and are now or will soon be ordained ministers of Word and sacrament in the Reformed Church in America.

We are happy to report that we have several RCA Hispanic leaders studying at WTS and NBTS. These students are either distance-learning students or in residence. All of their education is in the English language; for those who only speak Spanish, for now we are working with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in their Spanish-speaking program. There are limitations with this program of study, but that's the only choice we have for now to provide graduate-level education to our leaders in Spanish. We continue to seek different ways to provide the best theological education possible for our Hispanic leaders.

**4. Immigration**

The United States and Canada are two of the top countries of choice for new immigrants from many different parts of the world. Every year thousands of people come to North America. Immigration (legal and illegal) is a reality we need to face every day. The Council for Hispanic Ministries believes it is time for the Reformed Church in America to be more involved in the process of helping new immigrants settle in their new land. We believe that RCA churches need to be more involved in issues of justice and reconciliation related to immigration. Our churches should be beacons of light in their communities to support and help new immigrants.

As Hispanics in the U.S. and Canada, immigration is an issue very close to our hearts. Many of our Hispanic constituents that worship in or lead Hispanic churches in the RCA are first-generation Hispanics who have gone through the struggles of adapting to a new land and learning a new language. Many of our young emerging leaders are Hispanics who either came as infants or have been born in this country. In one way or another all

of our Hispanic people have to deal with the issue of immigration. We continue to offer support to our Hispanic pastors in the RCA who are dealing with this reality in their local communities. The council is doing its best to help them become agents of transformation in their communities.

**5. Transformed & Transforming Initiatives**

The Council for Hispanic Ministries is doing its best to help RCA Hispanic churches all over the U.S. and Canada to better understand different ways to be engaged and live into Transformed & Transforming. In 2015 the council scheduled five "Explore and Engage" events in different places. The purpose of these events was:

1. To teach all Hispanic pastors and leaders of the RCA the vision of Transformed & Transforming.
2. To encourage all Hispanic pastors and leaders to be actively involved in the initiatives of this vision.

We are happy to report that we had great success in these events and that many RCA Hispanic pastors are now engaged in different aspects of Transformed & Transforming.

**6. Hispanic Pastoral Networks**

The purpose of these Hispanic pastoral networks is to create an atmosphere of collaboration and fellowship among Hispanic pastors and leaders in the RCA. According to a research study done by the Pulpit & Pew Research Project, one of the most important pastoral qualities of successful pastors is participation in a pastoral network. We believe that this is at the heart of Transformed & Transforming. Proverbs 27:17 says, "You use steel to sharpen steel, and one friend sharpens another" (*The Message*). To be successful in ministry we need to sharpen one another.

These Hispanic pastoral networks are a blessing to the Hispanic churches in the RCA in the U.S. and Canada. Currently we have started two Hispanic pastoral networks, one in Michigan and one in the New Jersey/New York area. Later in 2016 we will be launching three more networks: in southern California; central/northern California; and Phoenix, Arizona.

**7. Reformed Leadership Initiative**

The Reformed Leadership Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), the RCA, Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS), and Western Theological Seminary (WTS). Both denominations need leaders at all levels who are grounded in a biblical vision of church and kingdom, personally formed and growing in the image of Christ, and competent to lead thriving congregations in contextualized and mission-focused ministry. The Reformed Leadership Initiative launched six Congregational Leadership Learning Networks (CLLN) in the first six months of 2016. These CLLNs will serve as the first steps in developing diverse networks for leadership training aimed at serving the local church while that local church engages in mission and ministry.

Among the CLLNs that were launched are a Korean-language network in New Jersey; a Spanish-language network in southern California; and four other networks in New Jersey, Ontario, central Iowa, and central California. Each CLLN has a balance of RCA and CRCNA congregations. We have eight RCA Spanish-speaking churches participating in this CLLN.

Each network is expected to pursue four outcomes:

- Innovate, create, and engage new leadership development practices that equip leaders, change cultures, and impact the world through local congregations.
- Learn how to prepare leaders of all ages for leadership in diverse environments.
- Evaluate and learn together from what they implement.
- Help all four partners (CRCNA, CTS, RCA, WTS) develop processes that are scalable and sustainable in all regions of our denominations.

This process will help every congregation to design and implement leadership development pathways that are appropriate to its size, situation, and context. Each congregation is encouraged to develop and implement equipping processes using three key dimensions of leadership development: personal leadership, organizational leadership, and reproducing leadership.

Four values will undergird the processes in each congregation:

- In-ministry formation: hands-on ministry within the context of the local church as the principal location for leadership development.
- Competency-based equipping: providing tools and skills to be more effective in one's ministry call and context.
- Missional context: a vision of the church as a covenant community in mission, raising up workers for the harvest.
- Lifelong learning: cultivating and growing one's leadership takes a commitment that lasts a lifetime.

**8. Hispanic Pastors Study Tours to Israel**

In collaboration with Light for the World/Peace Project, the Council for Hispanic Ministries is coordinating yearly study tours to Israel for RCA Hispanic pastors. We believe these study tours will help our Hispanic pastors enrich their understanding of the Bible as they visit biblical and historical sites. They will also enhance their understanding of the current political situation in Israel/Palestine. The first study tour to Israel is scheduled to take place in March 2017.

**Concluding Comments**

With much love and prayers we submit this report to you. We are thankful for the work the general secretary, the director of strategic leadership development and coordinator of Hispanic ministries, and the General Synod Council have done for the Hispanic people of the Reformed Church in America. We know and understand that there is a long way to get where we want to be but we are going in the right direction.

We believe that Transformed & Transforming is giving us focus for ministry effectiveness. We pray for God's blessings and for the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be with us as we continue on this journey of transformation to live and love like Jesus.

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR PACIFIC AND ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES

The Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries (CPAAM) has successfully completed 37 years of ministry so far. We thank all the Executive Committee members of CPAAM for the work that they have put into our ministry. We also appreciate the General Synod Council (GSC) staff for spending endless hours in making the transitions that are needed to carry out the work of Transformed & Transforming.

The RCA's current vision to be a mosaic and to equip and empower the next generation fits well in the agendas of most CPAAM churches, since many of them are starting their second-generation congregations. At our annual consultation meeting at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, we discussed Transformed & Transforming with church leaders through an Explore and Engage session. With all the different ethnic and language groups within CPAAM, we are trying to contextualize the ideas of Transformed & Transforming according to the different cultures and stages they are at in ministry.

We created a space in our vision for the next generation leaders. We extended an invitation to the next generation for our annual CPAAM Consultation in 2015. We are grateful that Tom De Vries and other General Synod Council staff attended and led us in helping the second generation better understand the RCA and in listening to the needs of our emerging leaders. Overall, Transformed & Transforming provides our ministries with a common theme to work toward, despite our many differences.

### Cultivate Transformation in Christ

The pastors of Korean churches in New Jersey currently meet weekly to pray for ministry revival. They pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the local churches, classes, and the denomination. It is crucial to make prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit the precedent in building up God's kingdom.

CPAAM churches have always implemented efforts such as small group meetings and early morning prayers to cultivate transformation in our lives.

Meanwhile, the second generation is searching for different models to create pathways for the transformation of next-generation congregations. There is a huge cultural gap (value systems, world perspectives, spiritual attitudes, etc.) between the first and second generations. Our younger-generation leaders believe that being coached by an RCA-trained coach would be helpful in discovering God's plan for their lives and ministries. Coaching will provide a healthy pathway for personal spiritual growth within younger generation members in CPAAM.

> ***Recommendation 1 to GSC***:
> We recommend that GSC direct Tom De Vries to provide resources and staff for coaching training for these second-generation groups.

### Equip Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow

The "Jesus Retreat" is our youth retreat in the New York/New Jersey area. In the past, this retreat was for the youth groups of our Korean churches. However, in 2015, we invited other non-Korean youth groups to join the retreat. This year, we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary, and in doing so, we will be adjusting the purpose of the retreat to identifying and empowering potential leaders and providing resources for the next generation to reach spiritual maturity before they go to college.

We also connected with college campus ministries such as KCCC (Korean Campus Crusade for Christ) to partner with local churches. The goal of this is to enhance leadership development while students are in college so they can be better equipped to serve when they return to their local churches.

Currently, we are creating a core group for our next generation leaders. The goal here is to support, encourage, and provide accountability to emerging leaders. Many second generation members are serving in churches, but do not have the proper level of personal growth, organizational skills, and the ability to reproduce future leaders. CPAAM would like to create a way to invest in these people by giving them resources, such as leadership collaboratives.

> ***Recommendation 2 to GSC***:
> We recommend that GSC direct Tom De Vries to provide resources and staff to work alongside this process of creating a core learning community of emerging leaders in CPAAM to journey together in our context.

**Engage in Christ's Kingdom Mission**
CPAAM churches in the New York/New Jersey area have been going on mission trips to Native American missions in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and upstate New York. In the first few years, we concentrated on building relationships with the local people. In the next several years, we will focus on identifying indigenous leaders and their willingness to be open to the gospel. Hopefully, this will help us see the possibilities of ministry in the future.

Many CPAAM churches are involved in global mission engagement (church plants, education and healthcare, evangelism, etc.) in and out of the RCA. These missions are based on their nationalities and relationships. Many of our churches are fruits of the missional work in the past, and now it is time for our churches to extend their blessings through further missions. We hope our missional work can be better networked in the denomination.

> ***Recommendation 3 to GSC***:
> We recommend that GSC direct Tom De Vries to send staff from the Global Mission engagement team to connect with our individual churches. The purpose of this would be to listen to the activities and needs concerning global mission as well as to discern and, if necessary, restructure practices and processes.

## REPORT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATION

"*I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind*" (1 Corinthians 1:4-5).

Since its origins in 1628, the RCA has given testimony to the goodness and faithfulness of God. Now, as we live into Transformed & Transforming, we continue to share stories of how God is at work in our midst. We also share ideas, goals, concerns, prayer needs, and other information and resources. This happens in a wide variety of ways, utilizing tried-and-true communication channels along with new ones.

**Supporting Transformed & Transforming**

Over the last year, GSC staff have worked to raise awareness of Transformed &

Transforming, the denomination's vision to engage in transformation, leadership development, and mission. Stories of transformation have taken the form of magazine and website features, tweets, Facebook posts, and video testimonies. A worship resource toolkit was created to help interested congregations incorporate themes of Transformed & Transforming into worship.

Transformed & Transforming initiatives were designed in response to needs expressed by churches and leaders. As those initiatives took shape, congregations and leaders were invited to take their next step in order to better fulfill God's call for them. A plethora of learning and equipping opportunities are available. The RCA communication team has supported each initiative in sharing these opportunities and in developing related resources where needed.

**Coordinating Communication**

Communication trends are in constant change, reflecting changes in our world, our homes, and our churches. GSC staff strategically provide communication tools that align with the needs of RCA members. To best serve the diversity in the RCA, communication happens both in print and electronically through social media, email, and the RCA website, www.rca.org. With the blessings of a more ethnically diverse denomination, there is also the need and opportunity to communicate in a number of languages. Communication efforts are coordinated across these various channels and languages to connect with RCA members most effectively and meet their communication needs.

**Changing Electronic Communication Meets the Needs of Leaders, Members, and Seekers**

The RCA web team manages an array of websites and social media interactions online. A growing number of people have seen, shared, and interacted with content on RCA Facebook and Twitter accounts in the last year. In 2016 we also branched out to Instagram and grew our video presence on Vimeo.

In 2015, the RCA was awarded a Google AdWords grant of $10,000 per month in free advertising. Initial ad campaigns have focused on helping searchers find an RCA church nearby, highlighting seasonal worship resources, and promoting the Gift of Hope Christmas campaign for RCA Global Mission.

Since 2014's mobile-friendly redesign to the RCA website, we have seen a jump to 40 percent of web traffic coming from mobile devices. Similarly, 40 percent of emails we send are now read on mobile devices. To further improve the experience of mobile users, a new mobile-friendly online donation system was introduced in the past year.

**Print Pieces Continue to Serve the Church**

While technology allows communication to take place in a number of ways, there is still a need for print communication. Within the RCA, this medium includes *RCA Today* magazine, which is produced three times a year for each RCA household. *RCA Today* continues to support Transformed & Transforming by communicating stories of church and individual transformation, leadership development, and mission. A bulletin insert, also called *RCA Today*, shares RCA ministry stories and increases connection with RCA mission work around the world.

To better marry new technology with print communication, a new app-based digital edition of *RCA Today* magazine was launched in conjunction with the spring 2016 issue.

**Translation Efforts Increase**

As the RCA grows in diversity, the need for translated materials also grows. In addition to offering the 2015 *Book of Church Order* in Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin, the *RCA Today* bulletin is produced in Spanish and Korean each month. Select Transformed & Transforming resources have also been translated, including a multi-year leadership development curriculum. Several church multiplication resources are being translated into Spanish for the growing number of Spanish-speaking church planters in the RCA.

In order to make these resources available to the largest audience, the majority of the translated material is posted on the web in lieu of printing. This is cost-effective and allows translated material to be made available more quickly. This momentum will continue as we look to bring RCA communications into the languages in which our members worship the Lord.

**Report on the Faith Alive Christian Resources Partnership**

The RCA continues to work with Faith Alive Christian Resources as a partner in distributing resources. RCA staff meet regularly with Faith Alive leadership to ensure the partnership is working well and supporting the resource needs of both the RCA and the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Staff cooperation between Faith Alive and the RCA is strong. The RCA receives revenue from the Reformed Church Press materials sold through Faith Alive, and that revenue is then used to produce additional resources to support the RCA and other Reformed congregations throughout the United States and Canada.

**The Office of Historical Services**

What is as tall as the Burj in Dubai and is an irreplaceable memory?

If you guessed, "The RCA Archives!" you would be right. Imagine a pile of paper stacked up for more than a half mile in the sky and you have a sense of the volume of paper in the RCA Archives. But it's more than that—it's also photographs, videotapes, CDs, cassette tapes, hard drives, floppy discs, and LP records.

The RCA Archives maintains the long-term memory of the RCA. On its shelves and on its hard drives are stored the stories of all those who have engaged in the ministry of the church and built a strong foundation for where we are today. The archives looks forward as it gathers, preserves, and makes available the stories of a past generation so that tomorrow has a yesterday.

The office of historical services assists in the proclamation of the gospel over time. The acts of remembering allow today's people to be inspired and encouraged by yesterday's mission. The RCA has left a significant historical footprint in its more than 385 years of life and ministry. That footprint is found in the missionary correspondence and represents many stories of transforming and transformation.

The office is staffed by Russell L. Gasero and preserves records from congregations, classes, regional synods, the General Synod, our mission fields, and staff offices in order to assure that a strong future is built upon a solid understanding of the past. The primary goal of the archives in this process is to offer stability and relevance to the long-term mission of the church. To learn more about the archives and its role, please visit www.rca.org/archives.

*Records Storage*

This year marks the end of Margaret Kapteyn's volunteer efforts to collect and organize the records of the Reformed Church in Canada. Her efforts have helped preserve important congregational records as well as the records of the regional synod and classes for the future. She has undertaken the ministry of memory as a labor of love. We wish Margaret and her husband, John, all the best in their retirement.

The archives continues its ongoing digitization process. Approximately 100 reels of microfilm and nearly 10 cubic feet of paper records have been digitized and transcribed for inclusion online with Ancestry.com. This year the archives completed digitizing the minutes of the GSEC, the GPC, and the GSC. The ongoing work continues on agenda documents and the minutes of the Board of Foreign Missions.

*Historical Series*

The archivist also assists with the publication of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America and serves as its production editor. The archivist works closely with the general editor and the Commission on History in the promotion and production of the volumes in the series by designing and typesetting the books and assisting in photo research and fact checking. A full list of the more than 80 volumes can be found at www.rca.org/series.

*The Wider Reach of the Archives*

The RCA Archives assists many congregations as they celebrate their anniversaries and seek to challenge the present with their rich heritage. The archivist advises on retention of records and facilitates transfer to the denominational archives. When churches have disbanded, the archives receives the records for permanent preservation.

The archivist also assists Christian Churches Together by collecting and storing its records with the RCA Archives.

The archivist continues to serve the professional archival community through active involvement, participation, and presentation of papers at the Society of American Archivists and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archivists Conference. He also serves on the steering committee of the Lone Arrangers Roundtable of archivists working in small repositories, is the secretary for the Archivists of Religious Collections section and continues as a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists.

This office recognizes its important position in the ministry of memory as it continues in its stewardship of our shared heritage. Preserving our memory is an important task, and our historical footprint continues to increase as we travel the path from yesterday to tomorrow.

**GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL'S REPONSE TO GENERAL SYNOD 2015 REFERRALS**

**Response to *MGS 2015*, R-26 to R-30, pp. 101-107, Special Council on Human Sexuality**

The following motion was made and supported from the floor:

> **R 16-12**
> **That we allow Holy Scripture to be used by the body without time restraint, to allow the Holy Spirit to give us guidance in our discussions. (NOT ADOPTED)**

**VOTED:** To not adopt R 16-12.

**SPECIAL COUNCIL REPORT FROM THE "GROUP OF FIVE"**

Responding to a recommendation by General Synod president Greg Alderman, General Synod 2015 passed the following recommendations:

R-26
That the General Synod form a special council to meet for the express purpose of describing a constitutional pathway forward for the Reformed Church in America to address the questions of human sexuality as it relates to ordination and marriage, and to empower this council to bring recommendations to General Synod 2016.

R-27
That a "Wise Council" of Five will be formed from among past General Synod presidents, including Carol Mutch, Brad Lewis, Irving Rivera, Chuck Van Engen, and Tony Vis. They will convene the special council referred to in R-26 and have the following responsibilities:

- Set the time for the meeting(s)
- Prepare the meeting(s)
- Prepare the members
- Officiate the meeting(s)
- Inform the church of the results

R-28
That members be sent to the special council referred to in R-26 who will represent Jesus Christ above all and reflect the rich diversity of the RCA: one selected by each classis (forty-four) and thirty at-large members selected by the "Wise Council" to ensure that the full counsel of the Holy Spirit is present from the church with special attention that the entire delegation include diversity of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, region, expertise, and offices of the church.

The "Wise Council," choosing to refer to themselves as the Group of Five, began to interact with one another in mid-July of 2015; their first conference telephone call took place on August 13, 2015. The general direction of their task was mutually understood, and a letter was drafted to be sent to classes' stated clerks, urging each classis to begin thinking about whom they might name as their council participant.

An in-person meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, took place on September 22-23, 2015. At

the meeting the Group of Five agreed upon the need for a consultant to come alongside them to assist them in formulating a process for the meeting of the special council. Bob Logan of Logan Leadership was invited to fill that position, agreed to take it, and served as a valuable resource person through to the end of the council's gathering. The dates of April 15-18, 2016, were set for a meeting of the special council at the Sheraton Chicago O'Hare Airport Hotel.

Realizing that the selection of the 30 at-large participants to ensure the diversity desired by the General Synod would be a major task, the Group of Five reached out to various constituencies and leaders in the RCA for suggestions. Suggested participants were asked to fill out a brief profile form to assist the Group of Five in the final selection process.

The Group of Five met again in Grand Rapids on December 8-10, 2015. They selected the 30 participants who would fill General Synod's diversity mandate and began planning the process for the meeting of the special council. The planning and finalization of the process happened over the ensuing months leading up to the meeting of the special council.

The special council met April 15-18 in Chicago. In attendance were 74 participants (44 individuals selected by their classes, and an additional 30 persons selected by the Group of Five to provide diversity of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, region, expertise, and offices of the church, as mandated by the 2015 General Synod). The participants were reminded that they did not represent any ecclesiastical body or group. They were not delegates to a legislative assembly, but rather were present as individuals called to "represent Jesus Christ above all and to reflect the rich diversity of the RCA."

The participants were:

> Eddy Alemán, David Annand, Jennifer Bendelius, Anna Bishop, Clyde Bradley, Denny Brand, Randy Bremmer, Shari Brink, Greg Brower, Pete Burrill, Leonor Caballero, Paul Campbell, Eric Carpenter, Tony Chapman, Scott Christiansen, Jeff Chu, Ron Citlau, Charlie Contreras, Caitlyn Conway, Alfred Correa, June Denny, Perry DeGroot, EJ de Waard, Travis Else, Alejandro Evangelista, Mike Gafa, Tom Goodhart, Kenita Harris, Nancy Hoag Rasweiler, Carly Hubers, Sandeep Jadhav, Lynn Japinga, Laura Jonker, Seth Kaper-Dale, Jes Kast-Keat, Hyongsang Ko, David Landegent, Jim Lester, Shirley Lin, Noah Livingston, Jeff Ludington, Darren Major, John Messer, Kate Meyer, Sherri Meyer-Veen, Bev Miller, James O'Connell, Neal Ooms, Ron Opmeer, Marilyn Paarlberg, Nolan Palsma, Jen Petersen, Barbara Pimentel, Jim Poit, Lee Pranger, Phillip Pratt, Nathan Pyle, Bob Reid, Annie Reilly, Tim Schaaf, Richard Schuler, Tom Smith, Jill Sweet, Greg Town, Chris Vande Bunte, John VandenOever, Cameron Van Kooten Laughead, Scott Van Oostendorp, Janet Van Wyk, Susan Vincent-Cox, Dennis Voskuil, Susanah Wade, Bob Wierenga, and Imos Wu.

The special council was called to be a deliberative gathering of Christ's followers to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit as together they sought a "constitutional pathway forward." The three-and-a-half days that the 74 specially invited persons were together was a time of listening, talking, praying, reflecting together, and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Participants were asked to leave behind their positions, perceived power, and personal agendas, and to focus on sharing their personal experience, perspectives, and wisdom—and to listen to the personal experience, perspectives, and wisdom of others.

In preparation for the special council, participants were sent links to the RCA website where they could access relevant documents, current and historical, including video links

to the pertinent discussions on the floor of General Synod 2015. The Group of Five also sent them the following:

**The Guiding Principles of the Special Council**

This special council has been charged by the 2015 General Synod of the Reformed Church in America with the express purpose of dialoguing and processing together to describe and recommend to the 2016 General Synod a constitutional pathway forward to address the questions of human sexuality, particularly same-gender relationships as they relate to ordination and marriage.

Because this is a volatile topic—one that engenders in many people deep passion and strong opinions, it is extremely important that we come into this special council aware of the Biblical injunction to "live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose" (1 Corinthians 1:10, NLT). With that as our guideline, we covenant together to abide by these standards of conduct:

- We are brothers and sisters in Christ, each of us image-bearers of God, and therefore we honor and respect each other.
- We are called to represent Jesus Christ above all in our interactions and recommendations.
- We acknowledge our differences in attempting to interpret God's Word faithfully, and humbly realize that because none of us are right all of the time, no one can speak unequivocally on God's behalf.
- We commit to making our time together a safe place, totally confidential, where participants can share personal experiences and beliefs without fear that what they say will be used against them or shared with others outside the special council without their permission.
- We remember that we stand within the historical witness of the Reformed Church in America, a denomination that highly values the covenantal relationship we have with God and with each other. We value walking together.
- We are aware that how we live and interact together as followers of Christ speaks volumes in our witness to the world. We will conduct ourselves individually and collectively in such a manner that we reflect the Light.

**21 Days of Prayer, Fasting, and Devotion throughout the RCA**

Prior to the start of the special council, the denomination invited all members of RCA congregations to engage in 21 days of prayer, fasting, and devotion. Daily devotionals were provided along with the opportunity to be part of a prayer team undergirding the preparation and proceedings of the special council.

**Convening the Special Council**

When the council convened on April 15, 2016, participants were assigned to ten groups of seven or eight, with particular attention given to ensuring that each group was diverse with respect to age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, offices of the church, and region. Early on, the assigned groups met for almost three hours during which each individual was given 15 minutes of uninterrupted time to tell his or her own story. These groups met together regularly throughout the entire event.

Beginning on Friday evening, the participants were asked to write their thoughts on response

cards, both individually and as a group. All responses were then typed up and handed out on paper to every participant at the next time they gathered. This system of responding and reading all other responses provided a way for all 74 participants to know something of what everyone else was thinking. Many participants expressed their appreciation for this part of the design of the special council gathering. The names of those writing the cards were not disclosed in the typed comments shared with the group.

The aim was to create an environment conducive to listening to God and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit by incorporating elements of worship, communion, times of silence, corporate prayer, individual prayer, and meditation on Scripture.

A number of relevant presentations were made to the whole group on the following subjects:

1. Dennis Voskuil reviewed how the RCA has resolved conflicts in the past.
2. Chuck Van Engen led a study of the original Jerusalem Council chronicled in Acts 15.
3. Tom De Vries outlined how the RCA has dealt with this issue since 1972.
4. Tony Vis led a session on RCA polity focusing on the concept of a "constitutional pathway."
5. Tom De Vries preached during Sunday morning worship.

Each of these sessions included a question and answer time.

The final recommended actions that the council will present to General Synod were determined through a small-group process that took place over the course of the council. Each group began by brainstorming ideas, which were gradually sifted, synthesized, and prioritized: a bottom-up process. In the last stage, each group was asked to propose no more than three possible recommended actions. These recommended actions are listed below:

*Group 1*

- Because of the rich diversity within the RCA, we recommend that the General Synod 2016 reaffirm that authority on these matters (marriage and ordination of LBGTQ people) rests with the consistory/classis. We recommend that a reasonable time frame be given (with accountability to General Synod that this process be completed within the given time frame) for consistories and classes to be educated and discern these matters, culminating in a decision for each classis to state their position: open and affirming, traditional, or no position.

*Group 2*

- The RCA takes no constitutional position on the topic of human sexuality. Authority and responsibility are held at the classis and church level on the matters of marriage and ordination.
- The RCA makes constitutional the 2002 marriage liturgy. Candidates for ordination will affirm and embody the RCA's constitutional marriage liturgy in ministry and practice and in personal life either through Christian marriage or celibacy.
- Both recommendations would also include:
  - The ability to establish affinity classes.
  - Establishment of a plan for a gracious departure for churches and classes that cannot live in good conscience with this denominational position.

*Group 3*

- Hold the course; reiterate our polity, i.e. consistory and classis. Continued moratorium at GS level and the issue is discussed at the church and classis level for the next five years and during that time, clear, succinct, short information be published and distributed from the classis level and distributed to the 44 classes.
- Recommend that the RCA continue the invitation to the denomination, classes, and churches to reflect deeply on what welcoming looks like, and what it should look like, and graciously repent any thought, belief, or actions that deny Christ's love and grace.
- Implore the RCA on how to standardize a process for working through present and future conflicts and theological differences based in Biblical model and righteous respect at the classis and GS levels.

*Group 4*

- Recommend to change the *BCO* to affirm a traditional view of marriage and ordination as it pertains to homosexuality.
- Reaffirm that authority on these matters rest with consistory/classis—by adding words to the *BCO*.
- Establish affinity classes and/or conscience clauses to ensure and allow relationship and mission within disagreement.

*Group 5*

- We recommend that each classis be offered two marriage liturgies and asked to vote to constitutionalize one of the two. One would define Christian marriage as between "one man and one woman," the other "two people." A learning packet would be offered to aid the congregation and classis votes.
- A graceful pathway to leave the RCA would be offered to any church which could not in good conscience live with whatever liturgy is constitutionalized.
- If these options are not doable we recommend the current status quo—reaffirming that authority on these matters rests with consistory/classis.

*Group 6*

- Vote GS up/down for denomination (traditional/progressive) then to classes for vote. No passage results in...
- Reaffirm that authority on these matters rests with the consistory/classis by *BCO* codification of a conscience clause.
- In both cases, allow this to be lived out for five years, then grace-filled and orderly separation as needed while continuing to allow churches to petition their classis for withdrawal from the denomination according to the provisions of the *BCO*.

*Group 7*

- Recommend a vote to affirm a view of marriage as between two persons and ratify the liturgy accordingly. If this vote fails, we will then vote to affirm a traditional view of marriage and ratify the liturgy accordingly (the result is that, if both are voted down, we are clear that we continue to live in the tension).
- Reaffirm that authority on these matters rests with the consistories and classes and provide a conscience clause that protects various views on these matters.

*Group 8*

- Reaffirm the authority on these matters rests with consistory/classis by adding words to the *BCO*, with a conscience clause.
- Vote for a traditional view of marriage and ordination.
- Establish affinity classes for relationship and mission and live this out for five years leading to continued partnership or an orderly and gracious separation.

*Group 9*

- GS would simultaneously approve two amendments to our marriage liturgy or constitutional statements for the classes to vote on. One defines marriage as "between a man and a woman" and the other using the language of "persons."
- Provide a local option for marriage and ordination to be determined at the classis and consistory level. We believe this needs a conscience clause.
- A desire for 5-7 year covenant together would accompany any decision.

*Group 10*

- To reaffirm that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and that we seek to be inspired by Christ and Spirit while we wrestle together in real history concerning questions around human sexuality. Because we believe our unity is in Christ, and that we trust God will speak through inspired readings of scripture, we commit to living our faith together; and to let decisions of same-sex ordination and marriage remain under the authority of classes and consistories, respectively; and to create a process for churches and students of ministry to transfer classes if they are unable to adhere to a classis's current position. To allow a grace-filled and orderly separation of churches and classes that cannot pursue ministry in this context.
- To do an up-down vote on a traditional view of marriage. This includes celibate LGBTQ people being ordained and much pastoral grace. To allow a grace filled and orderly separation of churches and classes that cannot pursue ministry in this context.

**Recommendations Compiled by the Group of Five**

Drawing from the work of each small group as listed above, the Group of Five compiled what appeared to be consensus recommendations and presented them to the entire special council for their affirmation. There were two themes that appeared in the above recommended actions that bear mention. However, these were seen as issues of implementation rather than recommended action. Those were:

- The creation of a conscience clause if appropriate.
- A call for grace-filled, orderly separation over a period of time, if needed.

After discussion and deliberation, the following recommended actions emerged as the conceptual framework for further deliberation by the General Synod 2016. In the weeks to come, the Group of Five will put these recommended actions into an appropriate General Synod format.

RECOMMENDED ACTION OF GENERAL SYNOD: To reaffirm:

- That authority and responsibility on ordination of ministers of Word and sacrament rests with the classis by adding clarifying words to the *BCO*.

- That authority and responsibility on marriage rests with the consistory and classis by adding clarifying words to the *BCO*.

  ***Observation from the Group of Five*:** This recommendation appears to have a higher level of consensus from among the ten groups. Nine groups mention this recommendation and seven mention the liturgy changes below. The difference is slight, but should be noted.

RECOMMENDED ACTION OF GENERAL SYNOD: To change the constitution through amendments to the liturgy.

- General Synod would approve an amendment to our marriage liturgy defining marriage as "between a man and a woman" and send it to the classes for ratification.
- General Synod would approve an amendment to our marriage liturgy defining marriage as "between two persons" and send it to the classes for ratification.
- Candidates for ordination will affirm and embody the RCA's constitutional marriage liturgy in ministry and practice.

  ***Observation from the Group of Five:*** We believe the council was aware that the first two liturgy recommendations might appear to be contradictory. However, by offering both of them, the General Synod and the church, through its classes, will either declare marriage is "between a man and a woman" or "between two persons." If neither receives the necessary 2/3 support of the classes, the RCA is not prepared to constitutionally mandate either.

RECOMMENDED ACTION OF GENERAL SYNOD: That Synod establish at least one affinity classis that includes people and congregations regardless of their perspective on human sexuality to ensure and allow relationship and mission together.

> ***Observation from the Group of Five:*** This recommendation did not receive the frequency of mention as the others above. However, it might provide a way for those with differing interpretations of Scripture to remain in the RCA. While we do not see it as having the level of consensus of the others, the idea was frequently mentioned throughout the meeting of the council. We believe it worthy of General Synod attention and would suggest it may also be seen as an issue of implementation.

**Additional Recommendation from the Group of Five**

In addition to the constitutional recommendations listed above, it was clear to the Group of Five that there was another implementation concern that was voiced by many of the participants and needed to be dealt with in a timely manner. Implicit in the recommendations from the ten assigned small groups was a common concern that if it were not possible for some congregations and classes to stay together with the RCA after whatever actions are taken, there would be a way for grace-filled, orderly separation over time from the RCA. Therefore, believing that we speak to the spirit and intent of the special council participants, the Group of Five offers this additional recommendation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION OF GENERAL SYNOD: That Synod instruct the General Synod Council to appoint a task force to explore and articulate the options and consequences within the RCA for grace-filled and orderly separation over time, should the different perspectives regarding human sexuality keep us from remaining as one, for report back to the 2017 General Synod.

**Final Comment from the Group of Five**

Many participants shared that they came to the special council wondering if there might be discord and angry arguments, but what they experienced together at the special council was dramatically different. They felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. In their small assigned groups they listened intently to each other and heard personal stories and perspectives that affected the way they viewed each other. They realized that the divide is wide on the topics of same-gender marriage and ordination of non-celibate LGBTQ persons, but when they shared their stories, they experienced respect, graciousness, empathy, love, and concern, even from those who disagreed with them. They affirmed that personal relationships are vitally important in the RCA and to the Christian faith. The guidelines established at the outset by the Group of Five were lived out by council participants, demonstrating that followers of Jesus Christ, in spite of their differences, can conduct themselves individually and collectively in a manner that reflects the love of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Lewis, Carol Mutch, Irving Rivera, Chuck Van Engen, and Tony Vis

## ADDENDUM TO THE RCA SPECIAL COUNCIL REPORT FROM THE "GROUP OF FIVE"

**Recommendations to the 2016 General Synod**

After further discussion of their summary recommendations at the end of the special council report, the Group of Five agreed to present the following recommendations to the 2016 General Synod in an effort to describe a constitutional pathway forward for the Reformed Church in America to address questions of human sexuality as they relate to ordination and marriage. While some of the recommendations below offer different ways to address these questions, the Group of Five is hopeful that these choices will give the General Synod some significant help in discussing the paths that we may take.

**Authority of the Classis to Ordain Ministers**

The first summary recommendation in the report of the special council reads: "To reaffirm that authority and responsibility on ordination of ministers of Word and sacrament rests with the classis by adding clarifying words to the *BCO*" (p. 77).

The *Book of Church Order* leaves no doubt that the ordination of ministers of Word and sacrament is the responsibility of the classis: "The classis shall ordain, install, commission, transfer, suspend, depose, declare demitted, declare inactive, and declare retired ministers" (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2, Section 9; 2015 edition, p. 30). However, that does not mean that the classis has the authority to ordain any candidate, since the ordination process is regulated by the RCA Constitution. The *Book of Church Order* contains standards for ordination, and requires a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to be granted by an agent of the General Synod for every candidate. In addition, our Disciplinary and Judicial Procedures (*BCO* Chapter 2) allow the decision of a classis to ordain a candidate to be challenged by the filing of a complaint.

The question behind this first recommendation is whether or not the classis has the authority to ordain a person living in a committed, same-gender relationship, in light of the statements that the General Synod has made on the subject of homosexuality. The authority of those statements has been central to the debate. The commissions of the General Synod

have been working to define what is "constitutional" and to define the role that the General Synod policy statements have in providing guidance for the church. (See the paper from the Commissions on Christian Worship, Church Order, and Theology on the subject of constitutionality, *MGS 2013*, pp. 354-364, and the paper, "General Synod Authority on Doctrine and Interpretation of Scripture," *MGS 2014*, pp. 240-242.) The Commission on Theology is currently working on a paper on human sexuality (*MGS 2015*, pp. 242-246).

The question continues to be debated: What role and authority does the General Synod have in our conversations regarding human sexuality? The bottom-line issue is whether the matter of personal practice (between consenting adults) with regard to human sexuality is a cultural, ethical, and personal matter (and thus an issue for local classes and consistories to deal with), or a biblical and theological matter (and thus the purview of General Synod to speak to the whole church). Since this question has deep theological implications for the life of the church, it would be helpful for the Commission on Theology to reflect on the theology of our polity and to clarify the authority of the General Synod statements regarding the expression of human sexuality.

> R 16-13
> To instruct the Commission on Theology to engage in a discussion of the theology behind our understanding of church order, and in particular, the authority of the General Synod statements on human sexuality, and to report to the 2017 General Synod.

*The advice from the Report of the 2016 All-Synod Advisory Committees Summarizing Team was to vote against R 16-13.*

A motion was made and supported from the floor to substitute the following for R 16-13:

> R 16-13a
> To instruct the Commission on Theology, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order, to develop a category of General Synod statement that has an enforceable authority, for presentation to the 2017 General Synod. They might model their work on the "synodical pronouncements" of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, which are defined as follows: "Synodical pronouncements on doctrinal and ethical matters are subordinate to the confessions and are 'considered settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order.' All office bearers and members are expected to abide by these decisions."

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not substitute R 16-13a for R 16-13.

R 16-13 was again before the body.
A motion was made and supported from the floor to substitute the following for R 16-13:

> R 16-13b
> To direct the Commission on Theology, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and the president of the General Synod, to prepare a statement on the theology undergirding our church order,

with special attention to the scope and authority of General Synod statements on sexuality, and to report to the 2017 General Synod.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

A point of order was raised regarding the number of delegates eligible to vote. The president confirmed the number of voting delegates.

**VOTED:** To substitute R 16-13b for R 16-13.

R 16-13b was presented to the house. It reads as follows:

**R 16-13b**
**To direct the Commission on Theology, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and the president of the General Synod, to prepare a statement on the theology undergirding our church order, with special attention to the scope and authority of General Synod statements on sexuality, and to report to the 2017 General Synod. (NOT ADOPTED)**

The following motion was made and supported from the floor.

To postpone R 16-13b until after consideration of R 16-17.

**VOTED:** To not adopt the motion to postpone.

**VOTED:** To not adopt R 16-13b.

The following motion was made and supported from the floor.

To declare that the General Synod of 2016, trusting in the sovereignty of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to work in and through all assemblies of the RCA, affirms the authority of every classis over the formation and care of all churches and ministers within its bounds, and the local authority of every consistory over the worship and life of the congregation entrusted by God to its care.

The president ruled to table the motion until the end of the discussion of all recommendations in the Addendum to the RCA Special Council Report from the "Group of Five." See p. 87 for the General Synod's actions regarding this motion.

**Authority of the Consistory to Approve Marriages**

The second summary recommendation in the report reads: "To reaffirm that authority and responsibility on marriage rests with the consistory and classis by adding clarifying words to the *BCO*" (p. 78). In the opinion of the Group of Five, this recommendation is consistent with R 16-32 coming before this year's General Synod, which proposes to amend the *Book of Church Order* to include the statement: "The consistory or governing body shall determine what marriages may be solemnized in a church or congregation." Consideration of this recommendation was postponed from the 2015 General Synod; the report, entitled "*BCO* Change Regarding Marriage," is found on pp. 160-165.

**Constitutional Liturgies for Marriage**

In the special council summary report (p. 78), the third and fourth summary recommendations read:

- "General Synod would approve an amendment to our marriage liturgy defining marriage as "between a man and a woman" and send it to the classes for ratification.
- General Synod would approve an amendment to our marriage liturgy defining marriage as "between two persons" and send it to the classes for ratification."

One path forward would be for the RCA to adopt a constitutional liturgy for marriage. Currently, none of the orders for marriage on the RCA website (www.rca.org/liturgy) are part of the Constitution. The constitutional liturgies cover the sacraments, church membership, and ordination and installation to church office, including orders for baptism and profession of faith, Communion, and the ordination and installation of deacons, elders, and ministers of Word and sacrament. (For a discussion of the role that the Liturgy plays in the Constitution, see the paper "'Constitutionality' in the Reformed Church in America," *MGS 2013*, pp. 354-364.)

If the General Synod chooses to adopt one of the orders in R 16-14 or R 16-15 below, it will give the classes the opportunity to decide whether or not a Christian marriage should be defined as "between a man and a woman" or "between two persons." In order for a liturgy to become part of the Constitution, it requires approval from two-thirds of the classes. Adopting either Order for Christian Marriage as constitutional would require its sole use as the only marriage liturgy approved for use in the RCA. Using another liturgy could lead to disciplinary action.

In 2002, the General Synod voted to approve a new "Order for Christian Marriage" and commend it for use in the church (*MGS 2002*, R-39, p. 192). This liturgy includes the statement that "Christian marriage is a joyful covenanting between a man and a woman" (*MGS 2002*, p. 182).

In order to put two options before the General Synod, the Group of Five decided both to recommend approval of the 2002 Order for Christian Marriage, and to ask the Commission on Worship to provide a new order for Christian marriage that would state that marriage is "between two persons." The text of both of the liturgies mentioned below can be found at the end of this report (R 16-14 refers to Appendix A and R 16-15 refers to Appendix B).

> R 16-14
> To adopt the "Order for Christian Marriage" that was approved and commended for use in the church by the 2002 General Synod (*MGS 2002*, pp. 181-192) for recommendation to the classes for approval as part of the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America.

*The advice from the Report of the 2016 All-Synod Advisory Committees Summarizing Team was to vote in favor of R 16-14.*

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-14 as follows (additions are underlined):

> To adopt the "Order for Christian Marriage" that was approved and commended for use in the church by the 2002 General Synod (*MGS 2002*, pp. 181-192), which is in alignment with the Word of God from the book of Genesis as God intended in the beginning one man and one

> woman; for recommendation to the classes for approval as part of the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not amend R 16-14.

R 16-14 in its original form was again before the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to substitute the following for R 16-14:

> R 16-14a
> To insert the following into the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2:
>
> Responsibilities of the Consistory
>
> *Sec. 20*. The consistory shall assure that all weddings performed by their pastor and/or in their church are between one man and one woman.

In response to a question from the floor the president ruled that the proposed substitute for R 16-14 was out of order because it was not germane.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to appeal the ruling of the president.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To uphold the ruling of the president.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to substitute the following for R 16-14:

> R 16-14b
> General Synod 2016 recommends to our classes for approval: any marriage liturgy used must define marriage as between one man and one woman.

**VOTED:** To not substitute R 16-14b for R 16-14.

R 16-14 in its original form was again before the house.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-14.

The final text of R 16-14 as adopted reads as follows:

**R 16-14**
**To adopt the "Order for Christian Marriage" that was approved and commended for use in the church by the 2002 General Synod (*MGS 2002*, pp. 181-192) for recommendation to the classes for approval as part of the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America. (ADOPTED)**

**R 16-15**
**To adopt the "Order for Christian Marriage" as provided by the Commission on Worship that defines marriage as between two persons for recommendation to the classes for approval as part of the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America. (NOT ADOPTED)**

*The advice from the Report of the 2016 All-Synod Advisory Committees Summarizing Team was to vote in favor of R 16-15.*

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

The president denied a vote to cease debate due to the limited amount of debate that had occurred. Debate resumed. Thereafter a motion was again made and supported from the floor to cease debate.

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not adopt R 16-15.

A fifth bulleted recommendation appears in the report of the special council: "Candidates for ordination will affirm and embody the RCA's constitutional marriage liturgy in ministry and practice." After further discussion, the Group of Five believes that this recommendation is not necessary, since the Declaration for Ministers of Word and Sacrament already includes the statement: "I will conduct the work of the church in an orderly way and in accordance with the Liturgy and the *Book of Church Order*" (*BCO*, Formulary No. 3; 2015 edition, p. 130).

**Affinity Classes**

In the special council report, the Group of Five recommended "that Synod establish at least one affinity classis that includes people and congregations regardless of their perspective on human sexuality to ensure and allow relationship and mission together" (p. 78).

Given that an affinity classis may cross significant geographical boundaries, the regional synods and General Synod would need to agree to cooperate with this recommendation, since only the regional synod has the authority to "form, combine, and disband classes, and may transfer churches from one classis to another within its bounds" (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part III, Article 2, Section 3; 2015 edition, p. 61). The General Synod may "form regional synods. It may make changes in their boundaries, and may transfer classes and churches from one regional synod to another" (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2, Section 3; 2015 edition, p. 65).

**R 16-16**
**To instruct the General Synod Council, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and the regional synods, to explore the establishment of one or more affinity classes that may include**

**people and congregations regardless of their perspective on human sexuality to ensure and allow relationship and mission together. (NOT ADOPTED)**

*The advice from the Report of the 2016 All-Synod Advisory Committees Summarizing Team was to vote against R 16-16.*

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not adopt R 16-16.

**Orderly Separation**

The final recommendation in the report of the special council arises from a concern that it may not be possible for some congregations and classes to stay together in the RCA after whatever actions are taken. If that is so, it would be best to find a way for a grace-filled, orderly separation over time (p. 78).

**R 16-17**
**To instruct the General Synod Council to appoint a task force to explore and articulate the options and consequences within the RCA for grace-filled and orderly separation over time, should the different perspectives regarding human sexuality keep us from remaining as one, for report back to the 2017 General Synod. (NOT ADOPTED)**

*The advice from the Report of the 2016 All-Synod Advisory Committees Summarizing Team was to vote against R 16-17.*

A motion was made and supported to substitute the following for R 16-17:

R 16-17a
To instruct the General Synod Council to appoint a task force to develop a plan to implement a grace-filled and orderly separation that will result in giving each congregation within the RCA the choice of becoming part of one of two denominations that will meet in separate assemblies and judicatories, but may share some organizational ties for the purpose of ministry, mission, and benefit services, for report back to the 2017 General Synod.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not substitute R 16-17a for R 16-17.

R 16-17 was again before the body.

**VOTED:** To not adopt R 16-17.

The following recommendation was presented to the body through the Report of the 2016 All-Synod Advisory Committees Summarizing Team:

R 16-18
To develop a process of denomination-wide discussion centered on the hermeneutical methods involved in understanding Scripture, developing resources that will be available for use by the church by the time of General Synod 2017.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-18 as follows (deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

" . . . by the time of General Synod ~~2017~~2019."

**VOTED:** To not amend R 16-18.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-18 as follows (deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

To develop a process of denomination-wide discussion centered on ~~the hermeneutical methods involved in understanding~~ a Reformed understanding of the nature, purpose, authority, and interpretation of Scripture~~,~~; and further, to identify existing and/or develop new~~developing~~ resources ~~that will be available for use by the church by the time of General Synod 2017~~ in support of this process, for report to the 2017 General Synod.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To amend R 16-18.

R 16-18 as amended was presented to the body.

A motion was made and supported to substitute the following for R 16-18 as amended.

R 16-18a
To instruct denomination-wide commissions, committees, and assemblies, that the only acceptable hermeneutical method that can be used in making decisions regarding the life and practice of the church, is a hermeneutic that says that the holy scripture is the word of God.

**VOTED:** To not substitute R 16-18a for R 16-18 as amended.

R 16-18 as amended was again before the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend R 16-18 as follows (additions are underlined):

To direct the GSC, in consultation with the professors of theology, to develop a process . . ."

**VOTED:** To further amend R 16-18.

R 16-18 as further amended was presented to the body.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-18 as further amended.

The final text of R 16-18 as amended and adopted reads as follows:

**R 16-18**
**To direct the GSC, in consultation with the professors of theology, to develop a process of denomination-wide discussion centered on a Reformed understanding of the nature, purpose, authority, and interpretation of Scripture; and further, to identify existing and/ ordevelop new resources in support of this process, for report to the 2017 General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

The following motion, made earlier and tabled until the end of the discussion of all recommendations in the Addendum to the RCA Special Council Report from the "Group of Five," was placed before the body.

**R 16-19**
**To declare that the General Synod of 2016, trusting in the sovereignty of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to work in and through all assemblies of the RCA, affirms the authority of every classis over the formation and care of all churches and ministers within its bounds, and the local authority of every consistory over the worship and life of the congregation entrusted by God to its care. (NOT ADOPTED)**

A motion was made and seconded from the floor to cease debate.

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not adopt R 16-19.

**APPENDIX A**

**ORDER FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

This marriage service is brief and may be used in a variety of settings, although a Christian marriage service should be held in the church. Where alternatives are given (prayers, declarations of intent, affirmations, lessons, vows, ring exchange, declaration, and dismissal), the minister together with the couple may select the portions to be used.

As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the consistory.

As people gather, music appropriate to the praise of God may be offered. At the appointed time the bride, groom, and other members of the wedding party stand before the minister. The families of the bride and groom may stand with the couple.

During the entrance of the wedding party, the people may stand and sing a hymn, an anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

PREPARATION

SENTENCES

The minister calls the people to worship, either before or after the entrance, using one or more of the following, or another appropriate verse from Scripture.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

*Psalm 124:8*

**Amen.**

God is love,
and those who abide in love,
abide in God,
and God abides in them.

*1 John 4:16b*

This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*Psalm 118:24*

SALUTATION

Grace and peace be yours in abundance,
through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

*2 Peter 1:2 (NIV)*

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

After the people have been seated, the minister may state the gift and purpose of Christian marriage, using the following or similar words:

We have come together in the presence of God
for the marriage of *N*_____ and *N*_____,
to share their joy,
and to promise them our support and love.

Christian marriage is a joyful covenanting
between a man and a woman.
In this covenant they proclaim,
before God and human witnesses,
their commitment to live together
in spiritual, physical, and material unity.
In this covenant they acknowledge
that the great love God has shown for each of them
enables them to love each other.
They affirm that God's gracious presence
and abiding power are needed
for them to keep their vows,
to continue to live in love,
and to be faithful servants of Christ in this world.
Human commitment is fragile and human love imperfect,

but the promise of God is eternal
and the love of God can bring our love to perfection.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,
as you gladdened the wedding at Cana
by the presence of your Son,
so by your Spirit bring joy to this day.
Let the love we celebrate today
be a sign of your eternal love.
As we honor the union of a man and a woman,
draw us into unity with you,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or

Gracious God,
who gives the covenant of marriage,
be with us now
as we celebrate the marriage of *N*_____ and *N*_____.
Give them your blessing,
and help us support them with our love. Amen.

DECLARATIONS OF INTENT

A

The minister addresses the groom:

*N* (*Christian name*), do you take *N*_____ to be your wife?

The groom says:

**I do.**

Will you love her, comfort her, honor and protect her,
and forsaking all others, be faithful to her
as long as you both shall live?

The groom says:

**I will.**

The minister addresses the bride:

*N* (*Christian name*), do you take *N*_____ to be your husband?

The bride says:

**I do.**

Will you love him, comfort him, honor and protect him,
and forsaking all others, be faithful to him
as long as you both shall live?

The bride says:

**I will.**

Or

B

The minister addresses the groom:

*N* (*Christian name*), will you receive *N*_____ as your wife
and bind yourself to her in the covenant of marriage?
Will you promise to love and honor her in true devotion,
to rejoice with her in times of gladness,
to grieve with her in times of sorrow,
and to be faithful to her
as long as you both shall live?

The groom says:

**I will, with the help of God.**

The minister addresses the bride:
grant them happiness and long life together,

*N* (*Christian name only*), will you receive *N*_____ as your husband
and bind yourself to him in the covenant of marriage?
Will you promise to love and honor him in true devotion,
to rejoice with him in times of gladness,
to grieve with him in times of sorrow,
and to be faithful to him
as long as you both shall live?

The bride says:

**I will, with the help of God.**

AFFIRMATIONS OF FAMILIES AND CONGREGATION

Affirmations may be made at the discretion of the minister in consultation with the couple. It is important to consider use of affirmations when there are children from previous relationships. The minister may address the parents:

Will you, the parents of *N*_____ and *N* (*Christian names only*)
give your blessing to this new family?
Will you support it with your love and care?

**We will, with the help of God.**

The minister may ask children of the bride or groom:

*N*_____*(s)*, will you accept and support this marriage?

**We will.**

The minister may address the bride and groom:

*N*_____ and *N*_____,
will you be faithful and loving parents
to *N/s*_____?

**We will.**

The minister may ask the congregation:

Will you, their friends and family,
support this couple now,
and in the years ahead?

**We will.**

The families return to their places and the minister continues:

**THE WORD OF GOD**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O Lord our God,
give us grace to receive your Word in faith and love,
that we may be obedient to your will
and live always for your glory;
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

One or more lessons from Scripture shall be read.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

*Genesis 1:26-28, 31a*

Then the Lord God said,
"It is not good that the man should be alone;
I will make him a helper as his partner."

So out of the ground
the Lord God formed every animal of the field
and every bird of the air,
and brought them to the man
to see what he would call them;
and whatever the man called every living creature,
that was its name.
The man gave names to all cattle,
and to the birds of the air,
and to every animal of the field;
but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man,
and he slept;
then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man
he made into a woman
and brought her to the man.
Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken."
Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother
and clings to his wife,
and they become one flesh.
And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

*Genesis 2:18-25*

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love all the wealth of his house,
it would be utterly scorned.

*Song of Solomon 8:6-7*

Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
So you will find favor and good repute
in the sight of God and of people.
Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

*Proverbs 3:3-6*

Trust in the Lord, and do good;
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.
Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

*Psalm 37:3-6*

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters,
by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.
Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,
so that you may discern what is the will of God—
what is good and acceptable and perfect.
Let love be genuine;
hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;
love one another with mutual affection;
outdo one another in showing honor.
Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.
Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.
Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.
Bless those who persecute you;
bless and do not curse them.
Rejoice with those who rejoice,
weep with those who weep.
Live in harmony with one another;
do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;
do not claim to be wiser than you are.
Do not repay anyone evil for evil,
but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.
If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

*Romans 12:1-2, 9-18*

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters,
I do not want you to be uninformed.
But strive for the greater gifts.
And I will show you a still more excellent way.
If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels,
but do not have love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
And if I have prophetic powers,
and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains,
but do not have love,
I am nothing.
If I give away all my possessions,
and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,
but do not have love,
I gain nothing.
Love is patient; love is kind;
love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.
It does not insist on its own way;
it is not irritable or resentful;

it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never ends.
But as for prophecies, they will come to an end;
as for tongues, they will cease;
as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

*1 Corinthians 12:1, 31–13:8a*

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
clothe yourselves with compassion,
kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.
Bear with one another and,
if anyone has a complaint against another,
forgive each other;
just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
Above all, clothe yourselves with love,
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
to which indeed you were called in the one body.
And be thankful.
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;
teach and admonish one another in all wisdom;
and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms,
hymns, and spiritual songs to God.
And whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*Colossians 3:12-17*

Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
Whoever does not love does not know God,
for God is love.
God's love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world
so that we might live through him.
In this is love, not that we loved God
but that he loved us and sent his Son
to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
Beloved, since God loved us so much,
we also ought to love one another.
No one has ever seen God;
if we love one another, God lives in us,
and his love is perfected in us.
By this we know that we abide in him and he in us,
because he has given us of his Spirit.
And we have seen and do testify
that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.
God abides in those who confess
that Jesus is the Son of God,
and they abide in God.
So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them.

*1 John 4:7-16*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain;
and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.
Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

*Matthew 5:1-10*

He answered, "Have you not read
that the one who made them at the beginning
'made them male and female,' and said,
'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother
and be joined to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh'?
So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
Therefore what God has joined together,
let no one separate."

*Matthew 19:4-6*

And one of them, a lawyer,
asked him a question to test him.
"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"
He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind.'
This is the greatest and first commandment.
And a second is like it:
'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

*Matthew 22:35-40*

On the third day
there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee,
and the mother of Jesus was there.
Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.
When the wine gave out,

the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."
And Jesus said to her,
"Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?
My hour has not yet come."
His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."
Now standing there were six stone water jars
for the Jewish rites of purification,
each holding twenty or thirty gallons.
Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water."
And they filled them up to the brim.
He said to them, "Now draw some out,
and take it to the chief steward."
So they took it.
When the steward tasted the water that had become wine,
and did not know where it came from
(though the servants who had drawn the water knew),
the steward called the bridegroom and said to him,
"Everyone serves the good wine first,
and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk.
But you have kept the good wine until now."
Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee,
and revealed his glory;
and his disciples believed in him.

*John 2:1-11*

As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you;
abide in my love.
If you keep my commandments,
you will abide in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and abide in his love.
I have said these things to you
so that my joy may be in you,
and that your joy may be complete.
This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command you.

*John 15:9-14*

SERMON

After Scripture is read, a brief sermon shall be preached. A hymn, psalm, or other appropriate music may follow.

THE MARRIAGE

VOWS

The minister addresses the couple:

*N*_____ and *N*_____,

join hands,
and in faith make your promises to each other.
The bride and groom face each other, join hands, and say their vows to each other.

I, *N*_____, take you, *N*_____, to be my wife/husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish
as long as we both shall live.
To this covenant I pledge myself,
truly, with all my heart.

Or

I, *N*_____, take you, *N*_____, to be my wife/husband.
I promise,
before God and these witnesses,
to be your loving and faithful husband/wife,
in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
in sickness and in health,
as long as we both shall live.

Or

Before God and these witnesses
I, *N*_____, take you, *N*_____, to be my wife/husband.
I promise to love you,
and to be faithful to you,
as long as we both shall live.

Or

I take you, *N*_____,
to be my wife/husband from this day forward,
to join with you and share all that is to come.
I promise to be faithful to you
until death parts us.

GIVING AND RECEIVING OF RINGS

If rings are to be exchanged, the minister may say to the groom:

What do you bring as a sign of your promise?

The minister shall receive the ring for the bride from its bearer and may pray:

Bless, O Lord, the giving of this ring,
that he who gives it and she who wears it
may live in love and faithfulness all their days,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the groom places the ring on the bride's finger, he says:

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a sign of the covenant
we have made today,
in the name of the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

Or

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a symbol of our marriage.
With all that I am
and all that I have
I honor you.

Or

This ring I give you
in token and pledge
of my constant faith and abiding love.

Or

I give you this ring in God's name
as a symbol of all we have promised
and all that we shall share.

Then the minister may say to the bride:

What do you bring as a sign of your promise?

The minister shall receive the ring for the groom from its bearer and may pray:

Bless, O Lord, the giving of this ring,
that she who gives it and he who wears it
may live in love and faithfulness all their days,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the bride places the ring on the groom's finger, she says:

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a sign of the covenant
we have made today,
in the name of the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

Or

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a symbol of our marriage.
With all that I am
and all that I have
I honor you.

Or

This ring I give you
in token and pledge
of my constant faith and abiding love.

Or

I give you this ring in God's name
as a symbol of all we have promised
and all that we shall share.

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

The minister addresses the congregation:

*N*_____ and *N*_____ (Christian names)
have made their covenant of marriage together
before God and all here present,
by solemn vows,
with the joining of hands
and the giving and receiving of rings.
Therefore, I declare that they are husband and wife;
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Following the nuptial kiss/embrace, the minister continues:

Let no one come between
those whom God has joined together.

Or

Those whom God has joined together,
let no one separate.

*Matthew 19:6*

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

The couple may kneel or remain standing and face the minister.

Let us pray.
Eternal God,
creator and preserver of all life,
author of salvation, and giver of all grace:
look with favor upon the world you have made and redeemed,
and especially upon *N*_____ and *N*_____.

Give them wisdom and devotion
in their life together,
that each may be to the other
a companion in joy,
a comfort in sorrow,
and a strength in need.

Give them the grace,
when they hurt each other,
to recognize and confess their fault,
and to seek each other's forgiveness
and yours.
Make their life together
a sign of Christ's love
to this sinful and broken world,
that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy conquer despair.

Give to them, if it is your will,
the gift of children,
and the wisdom to bring them up
to know you,
to love you,
and to serve you.

Enrich with your grace
all husbands and wives, parents and children,
that, loving and supporting one another,
they may serve those in need
and be a sign of your kingdom.

Grant your Spirit to unite all your children
so that your peace and justice may fill the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or

Eternal God,
without your grace no promise is sure.
Strengthen *N*_____ and *N*_____
with patience, kindness, gentleness,
and all other gifts of your Spirit,
so that they may fulfill the vows they have made.
Fill them with such love and joy
that they may build a home of peace and welcome.
Guide them by your Word
to serve you all their days.

Gracious God,
you are merciful and forgiving.
Grant that *N*_____ and *N*_____,
their families, and all who care for them
may accept your generous love.
Heal their memories, comfort them,
and send them all from here
renewed and hopeful.

Help us all, O God,
to do your will in each of our homes and lives.
Enrich us with your grace

so that, supporting one another,
we may serve those in need,
hastening the coming of peace, love, and justice on earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or

Eternal God, creator of us all,
we praise you for all the ways
in which your love comes into our lives,
and for all the joys
that can come to men and women through marriage.

Today we especially pray for *N*_____ and *N*_____
as they begin their married life.
We thank you for the love and care of their parents,
which has guided them to maturity
and prepared them for this day.

Give them strength
to keep the vows they have made,
and to be loyal and faithful to each other.
May they support each other always,
bearing each other's burdens
and sharing each other's joys.
Help them to be honest and patient with each other;
may they be wise and loving parents,
and welcome both friend and stranger.

In their future together
may they enjoy each other
and grow through the love they share,
until, at the end of this life,
you receive us all into your eternal kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Or

Eternal God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
bless *N*_____ and *N*_____,
that they may live together in marriage
according to the vows they have made before you.

Bless them with your love,
that their love for each other
may grow ever deeper,
and their love for you may shine forth
before the world.

Bless them with your mercy,
that they may be patient and caring,
willing to share each other's joys and sorrows,
to forgive and to be forgiven,

in their life together and in the world.

Bless them with your peace,
that they may be calm and sure,
trusting in you with confident hearts.
May they live in harmony and concord
within their family and among all people.

Bless them with your presence,
that within their hearts and home
Christ may reign as head.
May they confess Christ
with praise and thanksgiving,
now and through all their life together,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

A hymn or other appropriate music may follow.

BENEDICTION

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord be kind and gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace. Amen.

*Numbers 6:24-26, adapted*

Or

The grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you,
the Holy Spirit keep you,
that you may live in faith,
abound in hope,
and grow in love,
both now and forevermore.

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
The love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you. Amen

*2 Corinthians 13:14*

**APPENDIX B**

## ORDER FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

This marriage service is brief and may be used in a variety of settings, although a Christian marriage service should be held in the church. Where alternatives are given (prayers, declarations of intent, affirmations, lessons, vows, ring exchange, declaration, and dismissal), the minister together with the couple may select the portions to be used.

As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the consistory.

As people gather, music appropriate to the praise of God may be offered. At the appointed time the wedding couple, and other members of the wedding party stand before the minister. The families of the wedding couple may stand with them.

During the entrance of the wedding party, the people may stand and sing a hymn, an anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

### PREPARATION

### SENTENCES

The minister calls the people to worship, either before or after the entrance, using one or more of the following, or another appropriate verse from Scripture.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

*Psalm 124:8*

**Amen.**

God is love,
and those who abide in love
abide in God,
and God abides in them.

*1 John 4:16b*

This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*Psalm 118:24*

### SALUTATION

Grace and peace be yours in abundance,
through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

*2 Peter 1:2 (NIV)*

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

After the people have been seated, the minister may state the gift and purpose of Christian marriage, using the following or similar words:

We have come together in the presence of God
for the marriage of *N*_____ and *N*_____,
to share their joy,
and to promise them our support and love.

Christian marriage is a joyful covenanting
between a loving couple.
In this covenant they proclaim,
before God and human witnesses,
their commitment to live together
in spiritual, physical, and material unity.
In this covenant they acknowledge
that the great love God has shown for each of them
enables them to love each other.
They affirm that God's gracious presence
and abiding power are needed
for them to keep their vows,
to continue to live in love,
and to be faithful servants of Christ in this world.
Human commitment is fragile and human love imperfect,
but the promise of God is eternal
and the love of God can bring our love to perfection.

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,
as you gladdened the wedding at Cana
by the presence of your Son,
so by your Spirit bring joy to this day.
Let the love we celebrate today
be a sign of your eternal love.
As we honor this union,
draw us into unity with you,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or

Gracious God,
who gives the covenant of marriage,
be with us now
as we celebrate the marriage of *N*_____ and *N*_____.
Give them your blessing,
grant them happiness and a long life together,
and help us support them with our love. Amen.

DECLARATIONS OF INTENT

A

The minister addresses one member of the couple:

*N* (Christian name), do you take *N*_____ to be your husband/wife?

One says:

**I do.**

Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, honor and protect him/her,
and forsaking all others, be faithful to him/her
as long as you both shall live?

One says:

**I will.**

The minister addresses the other member of the couple:

*N* (Christian name), do you take *N*_____ to be your wife/husband?

The other says:

**I do.**

Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, honor and protect him/her,
and forsaking all others, be faithful to him/her
as long as you both shall live?

The other says:

**I will.**

Or

B

The minister addresses the one member of the couple:

*N* (Christian name), will you receive *N*_____ as your husband/wife and bind yourself to him/her in the covenant of marriage?
Will you promise to love and honor him/her in true devotion,
to rejoice with him/her in times of gladness,
to grieve with him/her in times of sorrow,
and to be faithful to him/her
as long as you both shall live?

One says:

**I will, with the help of God.**

The minister addresses the other member of the couple:

*N* (Christian name), will you receive *N*_____ as your wife/husband
and bind yourself to him/her in the covenant of marriage?

Will you promise to love and honor him/her in true devotion,
to rejoice with him/her in times of gladness,
to grieve with him/her in times of sorrow,
and to be faithful to him/her
as long as you both shall live?

The other says:

**I will, with the help of God.**

AFFIRMATIONS OF FAMILIES AND CONGREGATION

Affirmations may be made at the discretion of the minister in consultation with the couple. It is important to consider use of affirmations when there are children from previous relationships. The minister may address the parents:

Will you, the parents of *N*_____ and *N* (Christian names)
give your blessing to this new family?
Will you support it with your love and care?

**We will, with the help of God.**

The minister may ask children of the couple to be wed:

*N*_____*(s)*, will you accept and support this marriage?

**We will.**

The minister may address the couple:

*N*_____ and *N*_____,
will you be faithful and loving parents
to *N/s*_____?

**We will.**

The minister may ask the congregation:

Will you, their friends and family,
support this couple now,
and in the years ahead?

**We will.**

The families return to their places and the minister continues:

**THE WORD OF GOD**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O Lord our God,
give us grace to receive your Word in faith and love,
that we may be obedient to your will

and live always for your glory;
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

One or more lessons from Scripture shall be read.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

*Genesis 1:26-28, 31a*

Then the Lord God said,
"It is not good that the man should be alone;
I will make him a helper as his partner."
So out of the ground
the Lord God formed every animal of the field
and every bird of the air,
and brought them to the man
to see what he would call them;
and whatever the man called every living creature,
that was its name.
The man gave names to all cattle,
and to the birds of the air,
and to every animal of the field;
but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man,
and he slept;
then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man
he made into a woman
and brought her to the man.
Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken."
Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother
and clings to his wife,
and they become one flesh.
And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

*Genesis 2:18-25*

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,

passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love all the wealth of his house,
it would be utterly scorned.

*Song of Solomon 8:6-7*

Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
So you will find favor and good repute
in the sight of God and of people.
Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

*Proverbs 3:3-6*

Trust in the Lord, and do good;
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.
Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

*Psalm 37:3-6*

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters,
by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.
Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,
so that you may discern what is the will of God—
what is good and acceptable and perfect.
Let love be genuine;
hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;
love one another with mutual affection;
outdo one another in showing honor.
Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.
Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.
Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.
Bless those who persecute you;
bless and do not curse them.
Rejoice with those who rejoice,
weep with those who weep.
Live in harmony with one another;
do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;
do not claim to be wiser than you are.
Do not repay anyone evil for evil,

but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.
If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

*Romans 12:1-2, 9-18*

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters,
I do not want you to be uninformed.
But strive for the greater gifts.
And I will show you a still more excellent way.
If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels,
but do not have love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
And if I have prophetic powers,
and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains,
but do not have love,
I am nothing.
If I give away all my possessions,
and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,
but do not have love,
I gain nothing.
Love is patient; love is kind;
love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.
It does not insist on its own way;
it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never ends.
But as for prophecies, they will come to an end;
as for tongues, they will cease;
as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

*1 Corinthians 12:1, 31–13:8a*

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
clothe yourselves with compassion,
kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.
Bear with one another and,
if anyone has a complaint against another,
forgive each other;
just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
Above all, clothe yourselves with love,
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
to which indeed you were called in the one body.
And be thankful.
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;
teach and admonish one another in all wisdom;
and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms,
hymns, and spiritual songs to God.
And whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*Colossians 3:12-17*

Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
Whoever does not love does not know God,
for God is love.
God's love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world
so that we might live through him.
In this is love, not that we loved God
but that he loved us and sent his Son
to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
Beloved, since God loved us so much,
we also ought to love one another.
No one has ever seen God;
if we love one another, God lives in us,
and his love is perfected in us.
By this we know that we abide in him and he in us,
because he has given us of his Spirit.
And we have seen and do testify
that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.
God abides in those who confess
that Jesus is the Son of God,
and they abide in God.
So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.
God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them.

*1 John 4:7-16*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain;
and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.
Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

*Matthew 5:1-10*

He answered, "Have you not read
that the one who made them at the beginning
'made them male and female,' and said,
'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother
and be joined to his wife,

and the two shall become one flesh'?
So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
Therefore what God has joined together,
let no one separate."

*Matthew 19:4-6*

And one of them, a lawyer,
asked him a question to test him.
"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"
He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind.'
This is the greatest and first commandment.
And a second is like it:
'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

*Matthew 22:35-40*

On the third day
there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee,
and the mother of Jesus was there.
Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.
When the wine gave out,
the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."
And Jesus said to her,
"Woman, what concern is that to you and to me?
My hour has not yet come."
His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."
Now standing there were six stone water jars
for the Jewish rites of purification,
each holding twenty or thirty gallons.
Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water."
And they filled them up to the brim.
He said to them, "Now draw some out,
and take it to the chief steward."
So they took it.
When the steward tasted the water that had become wine,
and did not know where it came from
(though the servants who had drawn the water knew),
the steward called the bridegroom and said to him,
"Everyone serves the good wine first,
and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk.
But you have kept the good wine until now."
Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee,
and revealed his glory;
and his disciples believed in him.

*John 2:1-11*

As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you;
abide in my love.
If you keep my commandments,
you will abide in my love,

just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and abide in his love.
I have said these things to you
so that my joy may be in you,
and that your joy may be complete.
This is my commandment,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command you.

*John 15:9-14*

SERMON

After Scripture is read, a brief sermon shall be preached. A hymn, psalm, or other appropriate music may follow.

THE MARRIAGE

VOWS

The minister addresses the couple:

*N*_____ and *N*_____,
join hands,
and in faith make your promises to each other.

The couple face each other, join hands, and say their vows to each other.

I, *N*_____, take you, *N*_____, to be my wife/husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish
as long as we both shall live.
To this covenant I pledge myself,
truly, with all my heart.

Or

I, *N*_____, take you, *N*_____, to be my wife/husband.
I promise,
before God and these witnesses,
to be your loving and faithful husband/wife,
in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
in sickness and in health,
as long as we both shall live.

Or

Before God and these witnesses

I, *N*_____, take you, *N*_____, to be my wife/husband.
I promise to love you,
and to be faithful to you,
as long as we both shall live.

Or

I take you, *N*_____,
to be my wife/husband from this day forward,
to join with you and share all that is to come.
I promise to be faithful to you
until death parts us.

GIVING AND RECEIVING OF RINGS

If rings are to be exchanged, the minister may say to one member of the couple:

What do you bring as a sign of your promise?

The minister shall receive one of the rings from its bearer and may pray:

Bless, O Lord, the giving of this ring,
that he/she who gives it and he/she who wears it
may live in love and faithfulness all their days,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the one member of the couple places the ring on the other's finger, he/she says:

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a sign of the covenant
we have made today,
in the name of the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

Or

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a symbol of our marriage.
With all that I am
and all that I have
I honor you.

Or

This ring I give you
in token and pledge
of my constant faith and abiding love.

Or

I give you this ring in God's name
as a symbol of all we have promised
and all that we shall share.

Then the minister may say to the other member of the couple:

What do you bring as a sign of your promise?

The minister shall receive the other ring from its bearer and may pray:

Bless, O Lord, the giving of this ring,
that he/she who gives it and he/she who wears it
may live in love and faithfulness all their days,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the other places the ring on the one's finger, he/she says:

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a sign of the covenant
we have made today,
in the name of the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

Or

*N*_____, I give you this ring
as a symbol of our marriage.
With all that I am
and all that I have
I honor you.

Or

This ring I give you
in token and pledge
of my constant faith and abiding love.

Or

I give you this ring in God's name
as a symbol of all we have promised
and all that we shall share.

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

The minister addresses the congregation:

*N*_____ and *N*_____ (Christian names)
have made their covenant of marriage together
before God and all here present,
by solemn vows,
with the joining of hands
and the giving and receiving of rings.
Therefore, I declare that they are a married couple;
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Following the nuptial kiss/embrace, the minister continues:

Let no one come between
those whom God has joined together.

Or

Those whom God has joined together,
let no one separate.

*Matthew 19:6*

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

The couple may kneel or remain standing and face the minister.

Let us pray.
Eternal God,
creator and preserver of all life,
author of salvation, and giver of all grace:
look with favor upon the world you have made and redeemed,
and especially upon *N*_____ and *N*_____.

Give them wisdom and devotion
in their life together,
that each may be to the other
a companion in joy,
a comfort in sorrow,
and a strength in need.

Give them the grace,
when they hurt each other,
to recognize and confess their fault,
and to seek each other's forgiveness
and yours.

Make their life together
a sign of Christ's love
to this sinful and broken world,
that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy conquer despair.

Give to them, if it is your will,
the gift of children,
and the wisdom to bring them up
to know you,
to love you,
and to serve you.

Enrich with your grace
all married people, parents and children,
that, loving and supporting one another,
they may serve those in need
and be a sign of your kingdom.

Grant your Spirit to unite all your children
so that your peace and justice may fill the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or

Eternal God,
without your grace no promise is sure.
Strengthen *N*_____ and *N*_____
with patience, kindness, gentleness,
and all other gifts of your Spirit,
so that they may fulfill the vows they have made.
Fill them with such love and joy
that they may build a home of peace and welcome.
Guide them by your Word
to serve you all their days.

Gracious God,
you are merciful and forgiving.
Grant that *N*_____ and *N*_____,
their families, and all who care for them
may accept your generous love.
Heal their memories, comfort them,
and send them all from here
renewed and hopeful.

Help us all, O God,
to do your will in each of our homes and lives.
Enrich us with your grace
so that, supporting one another,
we may serve those in need,
hastening the coming of peace, love, and justice on earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Or

Eternal God, creator of us all,
we praise you for all the ways
in which your love comes into our lives,
and for all the joys
that can come to men and women through marriage.

Today we especially pray for *N*_____ and *N*_____
as they begin their married life.
We thank you for the love and care of their parents,
which has guided them to maturity
and prepared them for this day.

Give them strength
to keep the vows they have made,
and to be loyal and faithful to each other.
May they support each other always,
bearing each other's burdens

and sharing each other's joys.
Help them to be honest and patient with each other;
may they be wise and loving parents,
and welcome both friend and stranger.

In their future together
may they enjoy each other
and grow through the love they share,
until, at the end of this life,
you receive us all into your eternal kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Or

Eternal God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
bless *N*_____ and *N*_____,
that they may live together in marriage
according to the vows they have made before you.

Bless them with your love,
that their love for each other
may grow ever deeper,
and their love for you may shine forth
before the world.

Bless them with your mercy,
that they may be patient and caring,
willing to share each other's joys and sorrows,
to forgive and to be forgiven,
in their life together and in the world.

Bless them with your peace,
that they may be calm and sure,
trusting in you with confident hearts.
May they live in harmony and concord
within their family and among all people.

Bless them with your presence,
that within their hearts and home
Christ may reign as head.
May they confess Christ
with praise and thanksgiving,
now and through all their life together,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

A hymn or other appropriate music may follow.

BENEDICTION

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord be kind and gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace. Amen.

*Numbers 6:24-26, adapted*

Or

The grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you,
the Holy Spirit keep you,
that you may live in faith,
abound in hope,
and grow in love,
both now and forevermore.

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you. Amen.

*2 Corinthians 13:14*

## REPORT OF THE 2016 ALL-SYNOD ADVISORY COMMITTEES SUMMARIZING TEAM

Members: Cathy Gumpert, Shirley Lin, Kent McHeard, Sarah Palsma, Van Rathbun, and Scott Van Oostendorp

### Introduction

Responding to a recommendation by General Synod president Greg Alderman, General Synod 2015 passed the following recommendations:

> R-26
> That the General Synod form a special council to meet for the express purpose of describing a constitutional pathway forward for the Reformed Church in America to address the questions of human sexuality as it relates to ordination and marriage, and to empower this council to bring recommendations to General Synod 2016.
>
> R-27
> That a "Wise Council" of Five will be formed from among past General Synod presidents, including Carol Mutch, Brad Lewis, Irving Rivera, Chuck Van Engen, and Tony Vis.

They were charged with convening a special council with the following instructions:

> R-28
> That members be sent to the special council referred to in R-26 who will represent Jesus Christ above all and reflect the rich diversity of the RCA: one selected by each classis (forty-four) and thirty at-large members selected by the "Wise Council" to ensure that the full counsel of the Holy Spirit is present from the church with special attention that the entire delegation include diversity of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, region, expertise, and offices of the church.

Undergirded by the process of 21 days of prayer, fasting, and devotion engaged throughout the RCA, this special council of 74 individuals, comprised of 44 people selected by their classes, and an additional 30 people selected by the Group of Five to provide diversity of gender, sexual orientation, age, race, region, expertise, and offices of the church, as mandated by the 2015 General Synod, met April 15-18, 2016, in Chicago. The participants were reminded that they did not represent any ecclesiastical body or group. They were not delegates to a legislative assembly, but rather were present as individuals called to represent Jesus Christ above all and to reflect the rich diversity of the RCA." This group of 74 was divided into 10 groups, with great care given to establishing as much diversity as possible within each group. These groups each developed their own "recommended actions," which were reported back to the larger group. From there, the Council of Five met again to develop final recommendations to describe a constitutional pathway forward, as instructed to by R-26, as noted above.

### The Advisory Group Process

The all-synod advisory committees, composed of the delegates of 2016, met to consider the five recommendations from the "Addendum to the RCA Special Council Report from the Group of Five," which included R 16-13 to R 16-17. The groups were invited into prayerful discussions with one another to respond to those recommendations in the space

of small groups. Each of the 18 all-synod advisory committees met three times over three days. We entered first into a time of listening to one another's personal journeys of faith, sharing to the extent we were comfortable about how this issue of sexuality has impacted us or those we know, and what the others in the group needed to understand from our perspectives. All of us, including the moderators, entered into this process. Many of us believe that this created the sacred space needed to be able to deepen our discussions. The second day consisted of prayerful questioning and considering our reactions to each of the recommendations, the possible results that would come from our response to these recommendations, the questions that would need to be addressed, and the outcomes that might result. Based on the feedback from several advisory committees, adjustments were made to the schedule of the third day to allow for more time and further discussion.

After the final session was complete, the committee moderators met to begin synthesizing the information that came out of the groups. This involved a review of the outputs of all 18 groups with a focus on their responses to the recommendations in the form of this matrix: Yes/No/Amend/None of the Above. Six people from the group of 18 moderators agreed to compile the material and prepare this final report, which was presented to the full group of 18 for their affirmation. As we began our work on this process, we drew on the guiding principles the advisory committees generally followed, including the call for us to represent Christ above all in our interactions. We also developed three more guidelines:

1. We would live into the weight of this responsibility as office bearers, recognizing the prayers we sensed upholding us.
2. We agreed to be honest with our feelings, attuned to our exhaustion, and to live within those tensions and frustrations.
3. We would season our work with prayer.

As we sorted through the feedback provided by each of the advisory committees, we listened for the many voices that were speaking out of the committees. Six pairs of eyes reviewed every piece of data we received, looking for common themes, anxieties, comments, wisdom, and also for concerns voiced. All of the response card data (the yellow cards) was compiled; that data is attached as an appendix. Due to time constraints, two groups did not fill out comment cards. As this report is being compiled we are working on ways for their individual voices to be heard as well.

The writing team was repeatedly struck by the breadth of diversity within the denomination. The delegates also expressed a love for Christ and the church, the passion to be disciples in a world that is broken, a lament for what we might lose, and a desire for peace. Here are some of the comments that we heard in the scribal reports that speak to the spirit of the conversation in committees:

- "We honor the struggle."
- "Acknowledge our grief."
- "Anxiety over losses."
- "What happens when the next big issue comes along?"
- "Desire to move on."
- "Sad and mourning because I don't see hope or resolution."
- "Loved the group, but frustrated by the process."
- "The process seems painfully incomplete."
- "This is not the Reformed Church, this is God's church. Be ready for a ride."
- "If the RCA were to be gone tomorrow what would be lost?"

As we listened to the spirit of the conversation the writing team acknowledged that this is a struggle. We consolidated specific feedback under each recommendation that would help

to clarify, amend, or substantiate each recommendation. This is the reasoning behind the advice we will offer, based on input supplied by the groups:

In terms of R 16-13, the committees voiced confusion and frustration over this recommendation. Strong themes that came out of advisory committee responses included the following: the desire to have the Commission on Church Order involved in this task, as it relates to our polity and what authority the classes hold; the desire for clarification on the authority of GS statements, as some people thought GS had already spoken on this matter many times, rendering this recommendation redundant; a desire
to remove the words "human sexuality" from this statement.

In terms of R 16-14 and 16-15, as the advisory committees discussed these marriage liturgies, a common theme that arose was the constitutionality of these liturgies. Many groups responded with concern about elevating the marriage liturgy to the constitutional status reserved for the liturgies of baptism, communion, and the ordination of ministers of Word and sacrament. The preponderance of the feedback we received indicated a preference for the language of the liturgy indicating that marriage is between a man and a woman.

The special council was mandated to make a constitutional pathway forward. The majority of all-synod advisory committees seemed to think that the constitutionality of the liturgy should be made at the classical level. There is a benefit to sending both liturgies for consideration: It gives classes the opportunity to have a serious discussion around this topic, with an invitation for every board of elders to weigh in on this discussion. This may appear to delay making a decision; that is not our intent. Since this discussion has never gone to the classes for a vote, this will move the discussion forward in a decisive way. The summarizing team also noted that there would be great value in having members of the classes go through a process of facilitated listening and discussion. Listening to one another's stories is a way to create sacred space for difficult conversations.

In terms of R 16-16, there is recognition that affinity classes could provide a way for us to coexist in our strong differences of opinion. The overwhelming response from the advisory groups, however, was not in favor of forming affinity classes because affinity classes based on differing theology have the potential to be divisive, which could lead to further disunity. Also, the formation of affinity classes appears to be premature.

In terms of R 16-17, there was great struggle and sorrow among us regarding the need for providing a way toward separation of churches. Separation is a painful process. It highlights that our decisions here have real consequences for our denomination, congregations, and communities. The desire of the advisory committees is to frame the discussion around relationship and ministry, and not around the distribution, disposal, and disposition of real property. Any separation, even one that is grace-filled, defeats our greater desire for seeking unity in Christ. These sentiments are reflected in the comments from the committees: some groups believed this was a premature discussion. Others were concerned about valuing property disposition over the struggle to try to stay in covenantal relationship with one another. Others called for a denominational split. Others pointed out that there is already a process for orderly separation outlined in the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part 2, Article 10, and therefore there is no need for a task force.

We recognize that the whole church laments the continuation of this conversation. We grieve the possible loss of one another. This frustration was made manifest in the desire by one group to vote no to all of the recommendations and move into a stance of "none of the above." We also recognize that these recommendations did not address the question of ordination of people with various sexual orientations and practices. Since that particular issue did not surface in these discussions very much, [these recommendations were not

framed in a way that led to the discussion], we encourage future conversation surrounding this issue.

We appreciate the prayerful efforts of so many people as we wrestle together with this topic.

We ask God's blessing on this all-synod advisory committee process, and yearn for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Regarding R 16-13:
The advisory committee advises General Synod to vote no on R 16-13.

Regarding R 16-14:
The advisory committee advises General Synod to vote yes on R 16-14.

Regarding R 16-15:
The advisory committee advises General Synod to vote yes on R 16-15.

Regarding R 16-16:
The advisory committee advises General Synod to vote no on R 16-16.

Regarding R 16-17:
The advisory committee advises General Synod to vote no on R 16-17.

We realized there was a great deal of confusion concerning interpretation of Scripture and biblical hermeneutics underlying the conversation, and also bring the following recommendation:

> R 16-18
> To develop a process of denomination-wide discussion centered on the hermeneutical methods involved in understanding Scripture, developing resources that will be available for use by the church by the time of General Synod 2017.

*See pp. 80-87 for the General Synod's actions on R 16-13 through R 16-18.*

We invite the body of Christ in the RCA into a season of intentionally building relationships with congregations who may hold different positions regarding this issue, and who are held together by their love of Christ, with the hope of reconciliation.

**APPENDIX**
All Synod Advisory Committee Response Cards

*Note: Due to time constraints, advisory committees 5 and 11 did not fill out response cards.*

**Committee #1**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 1 response
2 – 1 response
3 – 1 response
4 – 1 response
5 – 12 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?

1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 10 responses
5 – 5 responses

Input for moderators:

- I believe we are in a process of procrastination because the alternative is too painful and disruptive to consider. The Holy Spirit will prevail.
- Try to include the *reality* of what it might look like to diminish/divide the resources of the RCA (financial, personal, historical…) b/c of a split—the enormous *cost*.
- I am afraid we are continuing to delay the inevitable.
- The Heidelberg Catechism—Lord's Days 23 and 32 and 41.

**Committee #2**
What is your personal level of support for your committee's response?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 1 response
3 – 2 responses
4 – 7 responses
5 – 5 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 2 responses
4 – 6 responses
5 – 7 responses

Input for moderators:

- I recommend that the GS vote for a definition of marriage as between a man and woman and put in a new section of the *BCO*.
- Would like this year's synod to vote (apart from placing in liturgy) concerning the biblical truth that God's initial and persisting design for human sexual intimacy is one man and one woman united first in the covenant of marriage. I would also like synod to address the issue of promiscuity.
- Emphasize that the root of our disagreement stems from the hermeneutical methods we use to interpret scripture, and without substantive discussion about this, we will not move forward.
- Don't summarize to homogenize. Be clear that there will still be dissent no matter what you do. Look for common language. When does R-15-41 come before the body again? Our moderator was a very fair, on-task moderator.
- The process was a significant and useful opportunity for sharing and listening.
- I recommend that the GS vote that marriage is between a man and woman and put it in a new section of the *BCO*.
- I encourage the synod to take note of the existing papers on constitutionality from the Commission of Theology (2013), on the authority of scripture from the Commission on Church Order (2014), and on why we cannot define marriage in the *BCO* from the Commission on Church Order (2015).
- Please do what can be done to encourage churches to stay within the RCA. I realize that some churches want to leave no matter what is done.
- I appreciated our moderator!!

- I did not have a problem with putting liturgies in constitution. That's what amendments are for.
- Thanks you all for your work. Use prayer and spiritual leading to put this all together.
- The process was good and helpful.

**Committee #3**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 1 response
4 – 6 responses
5 – 8 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 2 responses
4 – 5 responses
5 – 8 responses

Input for moderators:

- Find the broad center—and allow people space to disagree
- You all are a gift to us and I am grateful for you
- Please focus our attention on the subjects with centrality and greatest consensus. Leave splits and affinity groups till the end.
- Please be prayerful
- Pray!
- Listen listen listen listen!!
- Thank you
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to show them the way

**Committee #4**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 1 response
2 – 0 responses
3 – 2 responses
4 – 6 responses
5 – 1 response

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 1 response
2 – 0 responses
3 – 4 responses
4 – 8 responses
5 – 1 response

Input for moderators:

- How essential is the prescriptive elements of the Liturgy to my ministry setting? Can I still have a place here? I also would need 15 to be for the book.
- This is not perfect, but it is something. For whatever it is worth.
- Nowhere near enough time. Accountability is not addressed.

- If we do not move forward to be the body of Jesus, full of grace and truth, I believe we will not look at all like the denomination we are today. These two things exist fully and completely in the person of Jesus Christ (and the gospel). We just need to *be Jesus Christ*, and hold each other accountable to that. John 8 (woman caught in adultery) "Who condemns you? Go and sin no more!" John 14:6. We need to establish clarity regarding God's Word on this matter (to know his word of grace and truth…and then *live* it (authenticity/genuinely/and with accountability to his Word).
- There is a need to be more clear in our stance…
- I'll be praying for you all.
- While it may be imperfect, R 14 is our best hope for both polity and unity.
- I want my money back
- I feel that at points we went in circles. I felt ill at the end. Some points of unity, but no real agreement.
- We don't really like to use the Liturgy for this purpose, but we don't see any other way forward.
- Please bring us to actionable steps. The congregations are weary and frustrated with seemingly endless studies, commissions, referrals, etc!
- I believe 16-14 is ineffective, and misguided, and will have no real effect, but for the sake of my fellow members, I will say yes to maintain church unity.
- Thank you to our moderator for leading us through a fruitful discussion. Honest, raw, authentic describe our time.

**Committee #6**
What is your personal level of support for your committee's response?
1 – 1 response
2 – 1 response
3 – 2 responses
4 – 7 responses
5 – 4 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 8 responses
5 – 7 responses

Input for moderators:

- Regarding implementing two denominations—I feel the majority group should retain the RCA denomination. That would be decided by a vote going to classis (to affirm if marriage is between a man/woman or 2 persons) and 2/3 majority would stay at RCA denomination.
- In all the focus on same-sex marriage I think we are missing 1) love can say no, so saying no to same-sex must be done in love, and 2) for all the folks who do not fit "traditional" family (single, married man/woman with no children), can we as God's people encourage celibacy and spiritual friendship as a welcome and support to LBGT people, a la Wesley Hill's books Watched and Waiting and Spiritual Friendship?
- All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well. (Julian of Norwich)
- 17 I voted for expediency and not necessarily two denominations. Churches or classes could in many directions.

- Under the surface and constant calls for unity there has been a growing divide which revolves around a different view of scripture growing from radically different hermeneutic the gospels held by the different groups are not longer the same and if our unity is in the gospel, differences such as this mean unity cannot happen and calls for it are akin to saying "peace peace where there is no peace."
- Still not sure the "implement two denominations" is what the group meant or even envision some new denomination being formed. Whoever may leave will most likely join an existing denomination.
- Justifications given for R14 and R15 "on biblical grounds" but still within the group there are multiple interpretations of what the Bible teaches on marriage. One book but using two different dictionaries.
- The input given is all personal reasons for each individual and not the reason of the classis we represent. We need to remember that we represent Jesus Christ first of all at GS, then we represent our respective classis or council. I believe strongly in R16-32's authority of the classis in all issues. I also see a need to discuss the authority of constitutional liturgies and ramifications thereof.
- Good luck. May God give you insight in order to merge these ideas that we all bring forth.
- I think our amendment to R17 to split into 2 denominations is the only way forward but in practicality I think would be near to impossible. Only if God wills it and blesses it.
- Recommend for vote: To affirm that authority and responsibility on ordination rests with classis and marriage with consistory by adding clarifying words to the *BCO*.
- R13 and R17 should be completed before R14 and 15.
- Moderators completed process very well.
- Thank you moderators! Great job with difficult task.
- It's not quite showing up in our statement but I sensed significant support (more than 6/15) that would desire *BCO* clarity re: authority of classis over ordination and authority of consistories over marriage (implementing #1 consensus of special council).
- Moderators did a tremendous job. I strongly dissented with most of the recommendations. I would like to believe it is possible to stay together as a denomination. However, most disagree. So many perceive that we can't "live and let live" because they believe that more progressive stances are "not biblical."

**Committee #7**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 2 responses
3 – 1 response
4 – 2 responses
5 – 11 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 3 responses
5 – 13 responses

Input for moderators:

- Note the new recommendation group #7 has offered
- I still think we need some process to offer for classes with churches wanting to leave.
- The voice of our group was that the theology of unity must live alongside our exegetical and hermeneutical interpretations of Scripture.
- Our committee's response seems to negate the intense work and thought put in by the special council that met in Chicago.
- Our moderator did an excellent job. People were respectful despite differing perspectives.
- Without passing R-14 I cannot fathom a scenario in which my church will not leave thedenomination. And if the classis keeps our property we will die, without a doubt.
- The input I have is that when considering the responses that there is a clear and concise stance that love is the message for this denomination.
- Above all, we value unity in Christ. Despite our different perspectives on human sexuality, we acknowledge Christ's authority and pray he will bless our decisions if they align with his will.

**Committee #8**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 1 response
3 – 2 responses
4 – 8 responses
5 – 4 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 5 responses
4 – 9 responses
5 – 1 response

Input for moderators:

- I really don't see where anything was gained by this process, sorry.
- Thank you to the moderator.
- I strongly urge the GS to recommend a "conscience clause" similar to the one used in the "women's issue" of the 70s. This would allow for the unity the Bible recommends while allowing for the diversity of opinions regarding the facets of a homosexual lifestyle and orientation.
- Drink caffeine and get some Kleenex. Brownson has a great recommendation written that he may present—let's do that.
- May the Lord be with you. Thank you for the process and the opportunity and for our excellent (obviously well-trained) moderator. I wish that there was more space for unity in our process/discussions.
- There was a strong desire in our group for a general, definitive statement of what we believe on this issue to come from—I'm not sure where it would come from. The charge to the special council was to find a *constitutional* way forward. These recommendations get at this and by voting on them we *will* get at what we believe as a denomination.

- I know you are aware that there are strong feelings on the surface. So, I am trusting sensitivity will be used.
- We need (and there are) alternative strategies, but the advisory committee process had no room for these.
- I would advise a yes vote on R-14 in hopes that it will set the tone as to where we stand as a denomination. This process has not yielded many results and a lot of frustrations.
- Main issue/difference I had with group is R 16-14 and 15. I feel the GS needs to make a decision and take a stand approving or not approving is making no decision at all. Constitution and *BCO* aside we need to do what is biblical and right in the sight of God. I will vote for 16-14.

**Committee #9**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 6 responses
5 – 9 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 2 responses
5 – 14 responses

Input for moderators:

- Clarify that the use of liturgy is not meant to dictate/limit wedding ceremonies but is the only available means for entering marriage definition into RCA Constitution
- More info on biblical issues
- *Pray*—as I know you will. I will!!

**Committee #10**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 1 response
3 – 1 response
4 – 0 responses
5 – 12 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 5 responses
5 – 9 responses

Input for moderators:

- It is important that the moderators be honest and present a synthesis that truthfully reflects the group.

- We did not get the special council's real report. The recommendations, thus were not representative of the special council.
- Please represent what the committees have said in an authentic and truthful manner. Thank you!
- Our "a-ha" moment was that everyone has their own views. The deeper question is how much can we give to and get along with those with differing views. Can we live with and respect those with different views?
- May the Lord give you great wisdom
- Thank you for your efforts!
- It seems to me that a fundamental question that we were not explicitly asked to address, but that underlies all others is this—"What would it take for me to be in full fellowship with you, if you continue to disagree with me about these issues of homosexuality, marriage and ordination?"

**Committee #12**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 1 response
4 – 9 responses
5 – 5 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 8 responses
5 – 8 responses

Input for moderators:

- Their original recommendations are the wrong ones. We've accomplished very little.
- We have addressed liturgy and process, but in our group we haven't given our opinion of the core question.
- Please try to respect and include minority opinions.
- I would hope that, like the Supreme Court, there would be minority opinions published along with majority. The group had some interest in offering an alternative since we were hermeneutically divided but one in spirit but were not given latitude to do that.
- Unity is valuable, I would vote against final rec as I do not believe we should make statements about
- Marriage is *not* a sacrament and does not belong in the Constitution.
- The process itself did not allow the group to truly share the consensus that was emerging, because that consensus was substantially different than the 5 recommendations. The consensus was for *unity*.

**Committee #13**
What is your personal level of support for your committee's response?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 4 responses
4 – 4 responses
5 – 7 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 3 responses
4 – 4 responses
5 – 8 responses

Input for moderators:

- It was an acceptable "process" BUT it made the week too full and overwhelming. It needs to be longer if this was to be included. I also feel this process didn't help anything.
- Moderator was awesome! I felt really listened to.
- Council should have dealt with and disseminated pertinent biblical and confessional passages/interpretations. I was sorely disappointed with this. It would have more helpful to GS.
- Please come with a recommendation. We must make decisions.
- The lack of scriptural study on this issue during the advisory committees as well as during the special council is baffling to me! Why was this not the first step???
- The process was also much too rushed for the gravity and weight of this issue.
- Although it seems necessary for any constitutional change, the process of classical approval has a built-in inequity in the vastly diverse size of the classes.
- "It's time to make a decision and be willing to live with the consequences." I would like to ask that the moderators who decide what is listened to would read everything and allow the Holy Spirit to guide and lead. Even if there is not consensus. If someone from your team sees something that is fresh and from the HS in the team would consider that comment. It is clear if we were honest with ourselves that there is a small number of people that hold the marriage between two people in comparison with the people that believe that marriage is between man and woman. I fear that if we vote for the idea that marriage is for two people, we will have a fracturing of our denomination that will be hard to recover from. I believe if this happens it will decimate the RCA and the mission of Christ's church.
- Authority of scripture and the Belgic confession should be impact statemented on every recommendation. Online notebook should allow comment, debate and response prior to General Synod.
- I appreciate the hard work the GSC put into this! Our moderator was great.
- The way we join Jesus in his mission of restoration in our world matters more than we know how to say. I don't believe that we've done the work required of us to discern his heart. I don't believe that we have ever been trusted to study the Bible as we've assembled to discernment. I suspect we don't always trust each other to read or teach Scripture with integrity. But until we've done the discernment through Scripture, we've not done any useful discernment at all. Jesus is heartbroken today as an act of domestic terror has been carried out against people in a "gay bar" in Orlando. We will fail to know his heart and join his mission if we distrust each other to study Scripture well. The Spirit still speaks. The word still cuts. People's minds and hearts still change. I implore the council to do nothing until we actually let the study of the word be the center of the process. Thank you for your work. I respect you and honor Christ's image in you!
- R 16-13: I feel we do not need to debate the authority of these statements. They are advisory documents as I understand them. R 16-15: I like this but don't want to elevate marriage to level of a sacrament, which making it part of Liturgy does. R 16-16: I don't like affinity classes because I feel like they're convenient and that we would be tempted to not care for the RCA neighbors who are geograph-

ically closest to us. R 16-17: If passes, add 5-year waiting period. Emphasis on relationships not $ or property. I would like to propose new recommendations, if possible—don't know how. R16-A: Let elders/consistories decide who to marry. R16-B: Bring back the Conscience Clause (I can hear the groans, but I feel that in the end it worked). My final note: I really believe that God loves gay people. What does it mean to show love to each other? Prohibiting those who love each other and want to be committed does not seem to show love. We shouldn't "judge" gay people who want to get married. We should help them do it and live in Christian fellowship. This also makes sense to the "Nones."

- I feel that process should have included biblical interpretation, not just feelings or experiences of people. If we have a difference of interpretation, then show that! Theology should be considered! Both sides!

**Committee #14**

What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 1 response
2 – 3 responses
3 – 1 response
4 – 7 responses
5 – 4 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 4 responses
4 – 6 responses
5 – 6 responses

Input for moderators:

- Marriage liturgy does not deserve constitutional weight nor inclusion
- Moderator did a great job!
- Good job moderating a difficult conversation
- Even after all this time, some group members do not understand the process that got us here.
- This process was tough and possibly caused more separation. The RCA will look different by Monday night.
- "Constitutionality" of Liturgy is an important issue—*not* a tool for discipline.
- Was pleased with moderator and his keeping us on task.
- Because of the consequences of passing particular language as having constitutional weight for our marriage liturgy—suggest/recommend voting first on whether should vote for R 16-14/15 based on considering the constitutional weight it would hold i.e.—recommend not voting for either
- I believe there are better/more fitting ways forward. I would like to see more creativity in finding a way, but we are not listening to each other. We need more time, but maybe we can't avoid the unavoidable.
- I'm praying for the moderators and I am so thankful for their *very* hard work.
- Our group as a whole was against LGBT marriage and ordination and I think a majority would want to pull out of the denomination if there were a *ruling* from the G.S. or judicially that upholds those 2 things.

**Committee #15**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 2 responses
3 – 2 responses
4 – 5 responses
5 – 4 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 3 responses
4 – 6 responses
5 – 4 responses

Input for moderators:

- I hope our work in committees will, somehow, facilitate the proceedings in plenary session.
- I believe we could have gone straight to floor votes and saved much stress from being suffered by delegates. Fortunately our group related very well.
- I don't feel as though the "group consensus" listened to the few voices that were in dissonance or disagreement, using the dominant voices as "gospel." I can't in good conscience stand behind what we have written, and cannot use "Scripture" as grounding for exclusion. I vote to affirm R 16-15 and reject R 16-14.
- God be with you!
- I'll be praying for you. This is a huge and significant task.
- Deck was stacked. But I'm sure that they would say the same if the results were more towards what I wanted and believed [as so]
- A very kind group. A problematic individual left halfway through which made things smoother. Our moderator was an awesome moderator.

**Committee #16**
What is your personal level of support for the response your committee has put together?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 3 responses
5 – 12 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 0 responses
4 – 1 response
5 – 14 responses

Input for moderators:

- Moderators are "to moderate" at meetings. Our "moderator" has done an excellent job "moderating" at our meetings!
- Regarding 16-13—Rather than asking about whether GS statements have what authority, I would ask to create a category of statement that does have an enforce-

able authority. Then we wouldn't need to make debatable additions to *BCO* or Liturgy. CRC apparently has such statements.
- Please recognize that our group strongly favored marriage as being called out, by Scripture, as being between one man and one woman, hence the emphatic "yes" on R 16-14 and "no" on R 16-15. Please faithfully recognize this. Make sure that this all aligns with the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also do this with much prayer.
- That no action is still taking action—also a clarification of Constitutional and what is permitted as [Constitute].
- Bear in mind that we focus on what the word of the Lord said. The Bible is the final authority and does not endorse homosexuality etc.
- Not enough time to write out amendment
- The peace and unity we shared as a group, even when we disagreed, should be modeled.
- I would add that a confession of faith might be a better place than liturgy for these decisions.
- Be prayerful, be discerning, be gracious, be [reverential]
- The time allotted did not allow for amendment creation but many in afterthought started to think of amendments or suggested fragments. Our moderator rocks!
- Keep within the Spirit.
- Encourage us to vote "yes" on either R 16-14 or R 16-15 so we take a stand one way or the other.

**Committee #17**
What is your personal level of support for your committee's response?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 3 responses
4 – 7 responses
5 – 5 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 0 responses
3 – 1 response
4 – 5 responses
5 – 8 responses

Input for moderators:

- Our moderator was amazing!!
- By having an affinity classis, more problems would be created.
- Our moderator did an excellent job.
- It is with sadness that the group felt the option to divide was needed. This sadly is not my heart.
- Our moderator was very effective in keeping us on task.
- We are now a "lukewarm" church that needs to get going or our "lamp stand" will be taken. Not a threat a promise! Get your Bibles out!
- Based on this process I do not validate signing this card but for the love of my Group
- R13 and 17 give the impression of delay and this raises great suspicion. Amendments should be considered.
- Again we are cornered into a process that may not allow the specific voice

- In some cases I feel that several people didn't fully understand the recommendations. Our moderator did a good job.

**Committee #18**
What is your personal level of support for your committee's response?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 2 responses
3 – 3 responses
4 – 9 responses
5 – 4 responses

To what degree do you feel it represents the consensus of the committee?
1 – 0 responses
2 – 1 response
3 – 2 responses
4 – 11 responses
5 – 4 responses

Input for moderators:

- In listening to our group a concern was raised that the question of ordination was not fully addressed. I think a new recommendation should be written and sent to classes that clearly what their thoughts are regarding the ordination of openly gay ministers.
- Additional recommendation: Classes may ordain those who meet current specified requirements and who are living in celibacy or in a heterosexual marriage.
- Keep the tension and confusion. We don't have all the answers. Every single person is striving to carry out their individual and communal call to follow God and care for God's people. This have never been nor will it ever be an easy task.
- R16 add in commentary that affinity classes are currently allowed within the RCA. We need recommendations equivalent to R 16-14 and R 16-15 to provide a constitutional pathway forward (i.e. binding on classes seminaries, MFCA) with respect to the ordination of homosexuals in (a) committed, respectful relationships (i.e. marriages if allowed by law) or (b) non-practicing. Either it is specifically included or excluded within the RCA constitution.
- To reaffirm that the authority and responsibility on ordination of ministers of Word and sacrament rests with the classis; if the way to do this is to add clarifying words to the *BCO*, so be it. My opinion is that the *BCO* is clear now.
- Need additional recommendations similar to 14 and 15 regarding ordination liturgies.
- It is important that the synod try to make a definitive statement. However that statement to be binding, must have full support of the classes. A process forward must include a directed process for churches and classes.
- Ordination of ministers is not adequately addressed in these recommendations. An additional recommendation, similar to R14/15, should be made regarding ordination.
- Advise the synod to submit to the classes the question (vote) regarding the ordination or not of practicing gays and or lesbians.
- Need to crystallize (make very clear) ordination of those in active homosexual relationships…and complete the RCA denominational position and authority by General Synod 2017.
- I recommend that similar recommendations to R-14 and R-15 be presented regarding the ordination of those living in a committed, same-gender relationship,

i.e., the recommendations denying and affirming be presented that would be recommended be passed on to classes for a vote.

- I do not support the idea floated in this group to have another recommendation regarding "ordination" that is similar in nature to marriage liturgy. Meaning: let's just let the further dissection about ordination *rest* for this year.
- There is great confusion around polity and history and how these recommendations fit into the big pictures. While I believe there was consensus, there is also still clearly tension in the committee.
- We need to add a recommendation regarding ordination of LGBT candidates which is authoritative in classes, seminaries, and MFCA.
- I think we already know what authority theological statements have at the synod level. They are papers to guide and inform, but are not binding. The authority rests with classes because they are the ones doing the work of ministry. They know best how to proceed on matters of life and ministry. I'm struggling to see how making the marriage liturgy (either version) constitutional helps in this particular instance. So many pastors take the liberty to use liturgies/words that best suit their needs in their particular location—case by case, person by person. We are split on this. There is no clear consensus on any of these recommendations, making this very difficult for all to hear/discern how God is speaking and leading us.

**Response to *MGS 2015*, R-35, p. 164, Coalition on Mass Incarceration**

To direct the coalition of Commission on Christian Action, Commission on Christian Unity, Commission on Race and Ethnicity, and Commission for Women members working on the subject of mass incarceration to submit a report on its work to the General Synod for the next three years.

The coalition's report can be found as part of the report of the Commission on Christian Action on pp. 230-240.

**Response to *MGS 2015*, R-39, p. 181, Task Force on Interreligious Understanding**

To instruct the general secretary, in consultation with the Commission on Christian Unity, to establish, for a period of three years, a General Synod task force on interreligious understanding and relations, in order to explore the challenges and opportunities of relationships and evangelism between Christians and people and groups of other religions, with the understanding that this task force should work closely with the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee of the Christian Reformed Church and other ecumenical partners already involved in interfaith discussions and work, both in North America and globally; and further,

To include in the mandate of this task force the need to make recommendations to the General Synod regarding where and how this work should be permanently lodged within the RCA structure and staffing; and further,

To ask the task force to report annually to the General Synod for the duration of its work.

In January, Tom De Vries extended to 12 individuals across the RCA an invitation to participate in the Task Force on Interreligious Understanding commissioned by General Synod 2015. To date, eight people have accepted the invitation. In late February, a second round of invitations was extended to ensure diverse geographical and generational

representation on the task force and to increase participation to 10 to 12 members. Monica Schaap Pierce, ecumenical associate for the RCA, is providing staff support. John Hubers is serving as moderator. The task force will hold an initial electronic meeting in May and will have an in-person meeting in October.

**Response to *MGS 2015*, R-51, p. 242, Task Force on Diaconal Assemblies**

> To direct the General Synod Council, in consultation with the Commission on Theology, to create a task force of no more than ten members—consisting of members of the Commission on Theology, the Commission on Church Order, the Commission on Christian Action, diaconal leaders, and others as appropriate—to bring a proposal to General Synod for changes to the *Book of Church Order* regarding the creation of diaconal assemblies at the classis level; and further, that the task force report on subsequent action that may be needed at the regional synod and General Synod levels.

Members of the Diaconal Assemblies Task Force are John Young and Sarah Schreiber (Commission on Theology); Larry Schuyler (Commission on Church Order); Bill Hertlein (Commission on Christian Action); Chris Jacobsen (GSC); and Karla Camacho, Dianne Chapman, Steven DeYoung, and Hellen Harvey (deacons).

The task force held an initial conference call to discuss the scope of its work and review some of the work that has been done by previous working groups. The task force met again on May 13–14 in Grand Rapids to continue this work and is optimistic that it will have recommendations for General Synod 2017 to consider.

## GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO GENERAL SYNOD 2014 REFERRALS

**Response to *MGS 2014*, R-14, pp. 101-102, Ad-Hoc Committee on Alternate Plan for General Synod**

> To instruct the General Synod Council to create an ad-hoc committee of no more than eight persons, half of whom are delegates to the 2014 General Synod, for the purpose of preparing a concrete plan for General Synod that incorporates clearly both a revised means for doing business and provisions for learning and visioning around mission and ministry, using the values and feedback expressed by the all-synod advisory committees of the 2014 General Synod to guide its work; and further;
>
> To bring to the 2015 General Synod a specific plan, the costs and impact on the budget and assessment, and the changes needed in the *Book of Church Order*; and further,
>
> To refer R-12 and R-13 to the ad-hoc committee.

## REPORT OF THE ALTERNATE PLAN FOR GENERAL SYNOD TASK FORCE

What needs to happen for General Synod to continue to be a place that engages in sharing the gospel and sharing in God's grace with one another? What would it look like for the business of General Synod to be a life-breathing instead of a life-draining event? What would it mean for the business of General Synod to be a setting that not only expresses the values of our shared vision in Transformed & Transforming, but also equips the leaders of the church to move this vision into action?

Two years ago the General Synod met in advisory committees to discuss proposed amendments to the *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*) that would accommodate a biennial General Synod model (*MGS 2014*, R-12 and R-13, pp. 85-95). Delegates of the 2014 General Synod pondered the state of our current reality as a General Synod and how we might move into God's preferred future for the Reformed Church in America.

In the fall of 2015, the following persons were appointed to serve on the R-14 Task Force: Dan Gillett, who served as chair; Steven Germoso, Sarah Palsma, Don Poest, Kyle Small, Marijke Strong, and Imos Wu. Liz Brand served as the staff support. The task force met four times (three times electronically and once in person) this year to prepare a plan for General Synod that incorporates clearly both a revised means of doing business and also provisions for learning and visioning around mission and ministry, as directed in R-14.

**Considering Our Current Reality**

Someone once said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. The consideration of biennial General Synod meetings has been a topic of discussion for the denomination since 1909. Yet, in all this time, the RCA has not approved nor fully engaged in this model. Most often the reasoning behind a recommendation to move to a biennial synod model has been for financial reasons. However, the value of meeting together has continually outweighed the insignificant cost savings. It should also be noted that R-14 was approved after the phrase "two year cycle" had been stricken from the recommendation (*MGS 2014*, p. 101). Therefore, the group decided to step back from a biennial or two-year cycle model and explore a modified annual model.

The group spent time reading and remembering the values, feedback, and conversations that came out of the 2014 all-synod advisory committees. The feedback from the advisory committees voiced much frustration with how business is currently done at General Synod. A few examples of this included the length and tediousness of the business, the confining nature of current structures, too much information in a short amount of time, the division and politicking, and the lack of representation of the fullness of our diversity as a denomination. Despite these frustrations, the advisory committees expressed both the value and the excitement of sharing what God has done and is doing in RCA mission and ministry. The overarching theme from the discussions of the advisory committees was this: We value the annual opportunity to share in the gospel together, but we cannot continue to do business as usual. Something needs to change.

**A Preferred Future**

The task force spent time dwelling on past experiences at General Synod and other denominational and ecumenical events, asking the question, "What occurred at these events that made them life-giving?" The group identified four common themes:

- **The atmosphere**: Those leading have a non-anxious presence. The location is a hospitable environment for everyone in attendance.
- **The input**: The focus is on the sharing of the gospel. Everything from business, to worship, to training events is centered on the Word of God.
- **The relationships**: There is an overall sense of belonging; time to connect with old and new friends, to share our common experiences, and engage in new experiences.
- **The vision**: There is an awareness of being a part of something bigger than one's individual experience.

During this discussion and the analysis of past reports on this subject, the group discovered that the work of the General Synod seems to be most beneficial and unifying when it serves to help us live into our Christian community as the RCA body of Christ and understands that our belonging is in Christ and not primarily in our ideologies, when it integrates decision-making processes with worship and prayer, and when the work ties to the shared vision of the RCA, whether that vision is Our Call or Transformed & Transforming.

General Synod is less beneficial and disruptive to our shared life in Christ when mistrust of General Synod staff, GSC, regional synods, or classes drives the agenda; when commissions forget to consider their work in light of the shared vision of the RCA; when agendas are report-driven; and when the agenda is organized according to upholding the status quo rather than frontloading the most prevalent ecclesial unity conversations and decisions.

In light of these understandings, the task force pondered the following question: How do we organize our annual gathering to honor the history and tradition outlined in the *BCO*, yet infuse a spirit of resurrection and courage outlined in the spirit of Pentecost and the life of the early church? In answer to this question, the task force identified the following goals for the preferred future of General Synod gatherings:

- A multicultural and multilingual gathering that celebrates the history of the RCA and the current vision, while giving diligence to the business and organizational matters of the RCA.
- Honor the "Special Rules of Order of the General Synod" as stipulated in the *BCO* as the guidelines for stewarding the church's life as a "living communion."
- Worshipful and devotional engagements that share story and equip and empower leaders (delegates) to join God's work through their local ministries.

**A Proposed Way Forward**

As a way forward, the task force proposes a modified annual General Synod gathering. The order of General Synod is scripted in our polity (*BCO* Chapter 3, Part II, Article 1; 2015 edition, p. 123), yet the ardor of General Synod is constituted by the life of Christ and the power of the Spirit at Pentecost. This is the foundation from which our proposal arises.

We propose the following shifts with the corresponding rationales:

- **Refresh the order and spirit of the annual gathering according to the shared mission of the RCA**: "[T]o minister to the total life of all people by preaching, teaching, and proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and by all Christian good works" (*BCO*, Preamble; 2015 edition, p. 1). The atmosphere and agenda of General Synod needs primary attention in setting the agenda toward the delegate participants. The refreshing of the business includes attention to balancing the hours of organizational and business work with the hours of worship, devotion, and biblical discernment.

- **Adjust General Synod from a five-night, six-day event to a three-night, four-day gathering**: This is even more of a challenge for us to reconsider how we do business. The shortened time frame challenges the GSC and staff to do business differently and engage in different ways of reporting and disseminating information, such as video reports from the commissions that enable the synod to visualize the work of each commission. This adjustment would also set aside time at the beginning of the annual gathering for a festival of renewal and worship, similar to past events like Spring Sabbath, Mission 2000, and Conversations,

which anyone who wishes (not just delegates) would be able to attend. The possibilities for this festival time are endless, but could consist of equipping and training activities, worship and testimonial sharing, engaging speakers, etc.

- **Focus on worship, rest, and relationships**: Organize the order of the General Synod around the core practices of a Christian community that have the ardor of Pentecost. The days together will elevate the practice of worship and Christian community as a matter of encouragement and empowerment for delegates. The worship will celebrate the long history of the RCA and the emerging faith communities of the RCA, including the global character of the church's witness.
- **Consider hosting General Synod in major cities**: This has the potential to reduce the time and cost of travel and logistics for delegates. This also locates housing in climate-controlled, individualized rooms. Additionally, as the RCA seeks to be a multicultural community, the relocation to major cities creates a culture of hospitality for people of all diverse backgrounds to participate.

The task force recognizes the need for more study to consider the full financial impact of these shifts. At the present time we do not anticipate the need for any changes to the *BCO*. There are many details to work through, but the task force is willing to put the time and energy into transforming these proposals into reality. The hope is that this new modified annual business model would be implemented by the 2018 General Synod gathering.

**Response to *MGS 2014*, R-15, pp. 113-114, Task Force to Assess RCA Governance with Five-Fold Test**

> To direct the General Synod Council to create a task force to assess the RCA's governance utilizing the Five-Fold Test and make recommendations for changes to its order that are consistent with the tenets of the Belhar Confession and that will aid the RCA's transition to becoming a more multicultural denomination that is freer from racism; and further,
>
> That the task force include the general secretary, the racial/ethnic council presidents, the General Synod president or vice president, the GSC moderator, a representative of the Commission on Church Order, and a number of additional members necessary to create a membership that is at least 50 percent people of color and contains experts in cultural competency in the RCA's most populous racial/ethnic groups; and further,
>
> That the task force make an interim report to General Synod 2015 and a final report to General Synod 2016.

The task force met via conference call on March 28 (scheduling challenges prevented them from meeting earlier) to discuss its mandate and steps for accomplishing its work. One of its planned next steps is to consult with the White Privilege Task Force that recommended the creation of the current task force. A conference call has been set up with Shari Brink, moderator of the previous task force. The Five-Fold Test Task Force is also reaching out to the Evangelical Covenant Church to consult with that denomination on how it has used the Five-Fold Test to great effect to become more multiracial and freer from racism. Because of this, the task force has asked General Synod Council for an extension to complete its work. It anticipates being able to complete its work within the budget it was initially given.

**Response to *MGS 2014*, R-16, p. 114, Using Five-Fold Test in Regional Synods and Classes**

> To encourage the General Synod Council to experiment with at least one regional

synod and at least five classes with the use of the Five-Fold Test as a means to assist these assemblies in fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined in the *Book of Church Order* in a multiracial and multicultural context, for report to the 2015 and 2016 General Synods on the efficacy of the tool and any recommendations for further use.

In September 2014, the General Synod Council, through its moderator, extended an invitation to the clerks of all RCA regional synods and classes, asking them to consider partnering with the GSC in implementing the Five-Fold Test in their assembly. One regional synod and one classis committed to participate at that time; several others responded that they prayed about the opportunity but ultimately declined. Due to the low response rate, GSC extended a second invitation to classes in early June 2015, urging them to consider participating and offering assistance from a person experienced with the Five-Fold Test to any classis that was interested in participating but needed help getting started with the tool. Recognizing that each classis had the authority to decide to participate or decline the invitation, GSC hoped that the potential and vision of this important recommendation would move classes to commit to participate. Two additional classes agreed to participate in response to this second invitation.

The Regional Synod of Canada worked through the tool in 2015 and provided the GSC with its resulting plan to increase diversity in the region. In 2016, the regional synod provided additional thoughts and reflections on the use of the tool. Of the three classes that committed to participate, two responded to GSC's requests for feedback, and one of those, while it did work through the tool in the classis context and share those results with GSC, did not share reflections on its use. If GSC receives any additional reflections before General Synod, they will be added to the report.

The Regional Synod of Canada offered the following observations:

> The Five-Fold Test was a useful tool for the Regional Synod of Canada even though its implementation has been slow. Our goal regarding population was to diversify our executive committee (board) to be younger and more non-Caucasian. Classes appoint ministers and elders to our board although [the regional synod does] make recommendations. We have a vacancy and, along with his classis, we have invited a young, non-Caucasian minister to join the board. He is hesitant as he is relatively new in his church but we believe he will be on board soon.
>
> At our last annual meeting, we held an open forum with couples from our Chinese-speaking church and Portuguese-speaking church and had a fruitful discussion about how to strengthen our relationships with their churches. We learned that we built stronger relationships with them by our involvement with visioning process and/or conflict resolution.
>
> We have also called a younger woman, Marijke Strong, to our executive secretary position.
>
> In summary, the test helped our synod to be more intentional in being diverse both in how we conduct our business and how we relate to churches.
>
> One recommendation is that a webinar or short video might be helpful to make churches, etc. aware of the need for diversity and how we can take steps in that direction.
>
> I would recommend this to other regional synods and classes with the understanding that this is just one step in a long process.

The Classis of California offered the following observations:

> The use of the tool was approved by the classis in September 2015. The use of the tool has not gained a lot of traction throughout the classis; out of 40 churches, maybe three to four are using it. We can't mandate its use, but we have constantly reminded classis leaders of its availability and potential.
>
> The tool is being employed at the Classis Servant Team (executive) level. It is utilized as a measurement and reminder tool; it encourages us to ask and address diversity issues when making decisions.
>
> When consulting with churches and consistories about multicultural ministry, we always refer to the Five-Fold Test and encourage its use.
>
> Its use is less than what we had hoped for, but we will keep plugging away to promote how valuable this tool is and how it can bring positive change and direction to church ministry at all levels.

GSC is grateful for the work of the regional synod and classes that participated, and would like to encourage other regional synods and classes to use the tool. GSC looks forward to the future report of the Five-Fold Test Task Force, as its work will shed light on further application of the tool in the life of the RCA.

**Response to *MGS 2014*, R-56, p. 267, Study of Commissioned Pastors in the RCA**

> To instruct the General Synod Council, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order, the Commission on Theology, Commission on History, Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team, and any other commissions, task forces, and relevant resource people across the RCA to:
>
> - detail the original purpose and subsequent history and evolution of the commissioned pastor in the life of the RCA,
> - explore the theological foundations of office in the RCA as they pertain to the commissioned pastor, and
> - engage the relational tensions that the subject of commissioned pastors has produced in the church
>
> In order to imagine a coherent vision of what the commissioned pastor should be within the RCA, congruent with Transformed & Transforming; and further,
>
> To propose any necessary changes to the *Book of Church Order*, with report back to General Synod no later than 2016.

## REPORT FROM THE COMMISSIONED PASTOR SUMMIT

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10, ESV).

Commissioned pastors have been a vital part of the RCA's life and witness since the designation was established in the early 2000s. As we move further into Transformed & Transforming, many suspect that the impact of the commissioned pastor designation and those who serve within it will continue to grow. However, even as we've celebrated the wonderful impact of commissioned pastors, we've struggled to know how to best include them fully in the life, mission, and structures of our denomination.

In 2014, after a recommended *Book of Church Order* change (*MGS 2014*, R-55, p. 265-267) raised significant discussion on the floor of General Synod around whether commissioned pastors should be included with elder or minister classis delegates for purposes of a quorum, the synod directed the General Synod Council (GSC) to "detail the original purpose and subsequent history and evolution of the commissioned pastor in the life of the RCA, explore the theological foundations of office in the RCA as they pertain to the commissioned pastor, and engage the relational tensions that the subject of commissioned pastors has produced in the church" (*MGS 2014*, R-56, p. 267).

Recognizing that understandings of the role and function of a commissioned pastor vary across the RCA, and that those varying understandings can sometimes cause tension, General Synod invited a conversation in order to "imagine a cohesive vision of what the commissioned pastor should be within the RCA, congruent with Transformed & Transforming" (R-56). The Commission on History began foundational work on this recommendation last year, bringing several papers to the 2015 General Synod around the histories of the commissioned pastor role and the understanding of office in the RCA (*MGS 2015*, pp. 197-211).

From March 14–16, 2016, the summit on commissioned pastors took place at the Embassy Suites in Tempe, Arizona. Gathered together were servants from across the RCA who came representing various commissions, councils, and regions, and who brought with them a diversity of experiences and attitudes regarding the commissioned pastor designation. The participants were Eddy Alemán, Ryan Bajema, Serena Beckman, Ben Brooks, James Brumm, Jim Brownson, Richard Caballero, Ken Eriks, Dan Gillett, Mike Hayes, Lynn Ann Huizingh, Gary Jarvis, Keith Korver, James Lankheet, Jeff Ludington, Carol Mutch, Pamela Otten, Chip Sauer, Scott Treadway, Hugo Vasquez, Jan Price, Larry Schuyler, and Yolanda Stewart.

The participants engaged in the following four primary areas of inquiry as required by R-56:

1. Detail the original purpose and subsequent history and evolution of the commissioned pastor in the life of the RCA.
2. Explore the theological foundations of office in the RCA as they pertain to the commissioned pastor.
3. Engage the relational tensions that the subject of commissioned pastors has produced in the church.
4. Help the RCA to imagine a cohesive vision of what the commissioned pastor should be within the RCA, congruent with Transformed & Transforming.

The following is our report back to General Synod on the above four areas.

**1. Detail the original purpose and subsequent history and evolution of the commissioned pastor in the life of the RCA.**

In 2001 General Synod proposed to convene a one-time summit to study the concept of lay pastoral ministry in the RCA in order to meet the need for pastoral leadership in churches unable to afford or attract full-time ministers of Word and sacrament and to equip gifted lay leadership being called by God into the mission of the church. Concern in the RCA was growing about a possible shortage of ministers of Word and sacrament for existing churches and new church starts.

The General Synod approved the convening of this summit, with a report back to the General Synod of 2002.

In 2002, the participants of the summit reported back to the General Synod. In the report, the summit participants identified four leadership-related problems to be addressed:

1. Many pastoral openings in various congregational settings are not being filled by our current supply of ordained ministers of Word and sacrament because of the location of the opening, the financial limitations of the churches, or a lack of interested candidates.
2. There is a shortage of trained ministers of Word and sacrament to expand the RCA's ministry to include more church starts, enhanced youth ministry, new staff positions, and emerging fields of ministry.
3. People who are raised up by their congregations (for example, racially/ethnically diverse, rural, and small-membership churches) and are clearly called by God to lead their church are sometimes unable to complete in-residence theological training due to family obligations, finances, age, or the need to stay in an already-established ministry.
4. Some potential leaders in our midst—gifted, dedicated, knowledgeable laity within the RCA who are called by God to serve—have no clear, attainable pathway to receive training nor a clearly defined position within the denomination to reach for.

The participants of the summit determined that these four problems could be addressed by the creation of a designation of "'commissioned pastor,' which would require an intermediate level of professional theological training available close to home, and provide the credentials to serve within the bounds of a classis" (*MGS 2002*, p. 292). The General Synod voted to adopt this new ministry designation.

For a more complete history of the commissioned pastor designation, please refer for the Commission on History's 2015 paper entitled "Commissioned Pastors in the Reformed Church in America: A Historical and Contextual Survey" (*MGS 2015*, pp. 197-203).

More briefly, commissioned pastors have been serving and leading in the RCA in a variety of ways since General Synod voted to adopt the ministry designation. They serve functionally, not only as ministers of Word and sacrament, but also as outreach pastors, youth pastors, worship leaders, directors of spiritual formation, directors of street ministries and homeless ministries, and in a number of other specialized ways.

But was this the original intent of commissioned pastors, or has this designation morphed into something unforeseen? There doesn't seem to be a consensus answer to this question. Some accounts suggest that the original intention was that commissioned pastors would serve alongside, and under supervision of, ministers of Word and sacrament, but that they

were never intended to replace or serve as a substitute for a minister (or serve on their own). Other accounts suggest that solo pastoring was always within the scope of the vision for commissioned pastors, as this designation would be able to address the shortage of ministers the RCA was experiencing.

It is worth noting that there was agreement among the summit participants that however the commissioned pastor designation has evolved or is still evolving, commissioned pastors are serving a vital role in the RCA and will continue to do so more and more as we live into Transformed & Transforming. One might expect to hear the sentiment that we should consider utilizing this designation less or de-emphasize its role in the RCA. However, that opinion was totally absent in our discussion. Instead, the diverse voices gathered agreed that the commissioned pastor designation needs to continue to develop, grow, and be given better alignment within the RCA.

**2. Explore the theological foundations of office in the RCA as they pertain to the commissioned pastor.**

At General Synod 2014, R-20 was adopted: "To direct the Commission on Church Order to propose changes to the *Book of Church Order* to allow commissioned pastors to serve as delegates to General Synod and regional synods, paying particular attention to the proposed addition to Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 1 as expressed in Overture 3 from the Classis of the Southwest, with report back to General Synod 2015" (*MGS 2014*, p. 124).

However, questions related to the proportion of elders to ministers of Word and sacrament were raised when the implementation of the above was considered. Further questions arose when R-55 was adopted and thus, R-56 was adopted, which created this summit and outlined our responsibilities.

There was consensus among the summit participants that there would be more work to be done in this area. Currently, commissioned pastors serve under the office of elder. This has been the case since the creation of this designation. The rationale for having commissioned pastors serve under the office of elder can be summarized as follows:

1. Having commissioned pastors as elders helps to ensure that we are equipping those lay leaders who are tested leaders and who already have influence in our congregations.
2. Because elders share in all of the governance of the church, commissioned pastors can easily be authorized to share in the performance of sacramental duties and participate in congregational governance.
3. Since elders are not certified by any RCA agent outside of the local church (such as MFCA or our seminaries), there is no need to have an outside agent certify commissioned pastors. This provides freedom and flexibility to classes to equip, train, examine, and commission these leaders based on the needs and realities of their context.

Still, there remains an inherent awkwardness in having someone serve under the office of elder but in functions more closely related to minister of Word and sacrament. One of the ways we understand the theology of ecclesial office is through its function within the life of the church. This raises the question: what is the function of a commissioned pastor? Does she or he function like an elder or a minister of Word and sacrament/specialized minister?

Most would lean toward the latter. Yet we still have them serve under the office of elder. This doesn't make much sense. However, because there is sufficient flexibility within the

office of elder and because it allows for classes, rather than denominational agents, to train, examine, and commission these leaders, the office of elder has been seen to be a pragmatic fit.

Some have wondered if pursuing a fifth office might provide the best way forward. Still others contend that the complications that would arise from this would inevitably re-muddy the waters we're seeking to make clear.

Regardless, it is clear that commissioned pastors have had to occupy unusual space within the RCA while they serve as elders who function as ministers of Word and sacrament. This has created two limitations for commissioned pastors:

1. Limited portability: a commission cannot be transferred from one classis to another.
2. Limited participation: a commissioned pastor is not able to attend the higher synodical assemblies as a voting delegate.

Without being able to completely answer all of the questions we had about the theology of office, we believe that changes to the *Book of Church Order* could be helpful in providing some clarity and resolution.

These changes would be beneficial in the following ways:

It makes sense to be clearer about what is already true and practiced: that commissioned pastors are members of classis, like ministers of Word and sacrament. They are sent from classis to local congregations, whereas elders are members of local congregations who are sent to classes.

When a classis sends elders and ministers to higher assemblies, it is sending "members" (ministers and, with the proposed changes, commissioned pastors) and "delegates" (elders).

Rather than sending a certain number of "elders" and "ministers," the changes above would ask classes to send the same number of "delegates" that it currently to sends as elders, and the same number of "members" that it currently to sends as ministers.

Further, the above allows for commissioned pastors to have both voice and vote at our higher assemblies. Their exclusion has been at best confusing and at worst offensive to many. It was anecdotally noted that Carol Mutch was elected General Synod president in 2000 as an elder. After serving the RCA in this role, she later became a commissioned pastor. In the process she received great theological education and training for ministry. If anything, she was now better equipped for service in the church. However, because she was now both an elder and a commissioned pastor, she was no longer eligible to attend higher assemblies as a voting delegate. Someone we'd elected as our General Synod president was now no longer fit to even attend our higher assemblies because she was a commissioned pastor? These changes ensure that this ludicrous circumstance can't be repeated. Additionally, the summit noted the proportion of our commissioned pastors who are ethnic minorities. We believe that it is a matter of both wisdom and justice that their voices be included at all levels of the RCA.

We recommend the following changes to the *Book of Church Order*:

R 16-20
To adopt the following changes to the *Book of Church* Order for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 1

The classis is an assembly and judicatory consisting of all the members ~~enrolled ministers of that body~~ (both enrolled ministers and commissioned pastors) and the elder delegates who represent all the local and organizing churches within its bounds. The classis is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through committees. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the classis, as well as commissioned pastors.

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2

*Sec. 2.* The classis shall exercise a general superintendence over its enrolled ministers, commissioned pastors, and preaching elders, and over the interests and concerns of the congregations within its bounds, and shall enforce the requirements of the Government of the Reformed Church in America.

*Sec. 8*. The classis shall examine students of theology for licensure, and licensed candidates for the ministry for ordination, as well as candidates for commissioned pastor and preaching elder.

*Sec. 9*. The classis shall ordain, install, commission, transfer, suspend, depose, declare demitted, declare inactive, and declare retired ministers.

*Sec. 10*. The classis shall approve and disapprove calls, and effect and dissolve the relationship between ministers and churches.

*Sec. 11*. The classis shall commission preaching elders or commissioned pastors, and effect and dissolve the relationship between commissioned pastors or preaching elders and churches.

*Sec. ~~11~~12*. The classis shall exercise all ecclesiastical functions in accord with the Government of the Reformed Church in America which are not specifically delegated to other assemblies.

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 4

*Sec. 1.* Stated sessions of classis shall be held at least annually at such times as the classis may determine. All classis sessions shall begin and end with prayer. There shall be a sermon preached, or a devotional service, or both, at each stated session. The presence of (a) a majority of elder delegates ~~and commissioned pastors,~~ and (b) a majority of those ministers and commissioned pastors who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis is required.

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9

*Sec. 2*

e. The final action of the classis to dissolve a consistory shall require a two-thirds vote. The classis shall have a quorum present consisting of (a) a majority of elder delegates ~~and commissioned pastors,~~ and (b) a majority of those ministers and commissioned pastors who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis.

*Sec. 3.* When the classis has superseded a consistory, it shall have the authority, in the exercise of its discretion and in accordance with the laws of the state in which the church is located, to:

a. Terminate whatever authority the consistory or any other body has as trustees of the church property.
b. Take the church under its direction by appointing such trustees as are required for the protection, preservation, management and ownership of the property during such time as the classis shall determine.

All actions of the classis under this section shall require a two-thirds vote. The classis shall have a quorum present consisting of (a) a majority of elder delegates ~~and commissioned pastors~~, and (b) a majority of those ministers and commissioned pastors who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis.

*Sec. 4.* The classis shall have the authority to reconstitute the consistory of a church when, in the judgment of the classis, sufficient growth has been achieved or suitable stability created so that the church can continue ministry without classis administration. The classis shall guide the consistory selection process (Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 14). All actions of the classis under this section shall require a two-thirds vote. The classis shall have a quorum present consisting of (a) a majority of elder delegates ~~and~~

~~commissioned pastors~~, and (b) a majority of those ministers and commissioned pastors who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction of the classis.

Chapter 1, Part III, Article 1

*Sec. 1*. The regional synod is an assembly and judicatory consisting of ~~ministers~~classis members and elders delegated by each of the classes within the bounds determined for it by the General Synod. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those ~~minister~~classis member delegates who are actively serving under the jurisdiction or with the approval of the classis.

Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 1

The General Synod is the highest assembly and judicatory of the Reformed Church in America. It consists of two ~~minister~~classis member delegates and two elder delegates from each of the classes having four thousand or fewer confessing members on the roll of its churches, and one ~~minister~~classis member delegate and one elder delegate for each 2,000 confessing members, or fraction thereof, from each of the classes having more than 4,000 confessing members on the roll of its churches as computed in accordance with the Bylaws of the General Synod; one ~~elder or minister~~ delegate from each of the regional synods synods; five General Synod professor delegates, drawn from each of the theological seminaries of the Reformed Church and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency; a number of furloughing missionary and chaplain delegates; and corresponding delegates provided for in the Bylaws of the General Synod. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those ~~minister~~classis member delegates who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction or with the approval of an assembly. The General Synod is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through the General Synod Council, commissions, and agencies.

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was as follows:

**R 16-21**
**To refer R 16-20 to the Commission on Theology for further discussion, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team, for report back to the 2017 General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

R 16-22
To direct the Commission on Church Order to review the entire *BCO* and to propose further changes consistent with the above as needed.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to refer R 16-22 as follows:

**R 16-23**
**To refer R 16-22 to the Commission on Theology for further discussion, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team, for report back to the 2017 General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

R 16-24
To direct the Commission on Church Order to develop a definition of commissioned pastor for the appropriate section of the *BCO*, in light of the report from the Commissioned Pastor Summit. The participants of the Commissioned Pastor Summit offer to the commission the following as a starting place and ask that the commission engage with it to the extent that it aids them in the above task:

> Commissioned pastors are those elders who have been commissioned by the classis to ministries that extend beyond the normal role of elders, overlapping to a large extent with the roles typically exercised by ministers of Word and sacrament. As such, commissioned pastors are members of the classis during the period of their commissioning, and during that time are amenable in matters of discipline to the classis. The ministry designation of commissioned pastor allows classes to discern particular needs and concerns in local ministry, and to move gifted people into those ministries without the processes and requirements of ordination to minister of Word and sacrament.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to refer R 16-24 as follows:

**R 16-25**
**To refer R 16-24 to the Commission on Theology for further discussion, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order and the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team, for report back to the 2017 General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

**3. Engage the relational tensions that the subject of commissioned pastors has produced in the church.**

Our mandate to "engage" the relational tensions within the realm of commissioned pastors afforded our task force the latitude to determine how to do this. Our process involved the summit participants hearing from a number of commissioned pastors and other leaders who have been in the trenches in ministry and have experienced the significant relational tensions that are a part of our current reality. We sought to affirm their experiences, learn from them, and apply what we learned to our conversation and the subsequent recommendations. While we don't have any clear fixes or solutions to these tensions, we believed that naming them is one way to begin to address them and better manage them. Some of these tensions stem from very real issues while others are assumed, and still others are possibly feared or imagined. Many of them, though significant, are not unexpected for anybody moving through a season of change.

The following, though not exhaustive, is an attempt to express the content of these tensions as best as we can:

1. Commissioned pastors don't feel like they fit well within the RCA.
2. Commissioned pastors wonder if they're acknowledged and honored within the RCA.
3. We don't believe we've figured out how we can best welcome new people into the RCA who come from other faith traditions and/or ethnic backgrounds other than white and Reformed.
4. Some are concerned that we're effectively lowering the educational standards for clergy in the RCA. Others are concerned that their educational experience is being dismissed because it's nontraditional from an RCA standpoint.
5. Some people are leery of how the commissioned pastor designation will affect the job security and salary levels of RCA clergy.
6. Some minority commissioned pastors have encountered cultural challenges as they've moved into the RCA. They feel as though they have been told they're not good enough and that their denomination is suspicious of their backgrounds.
7. Some worry that we're undervaluing other methods of leadership development from different cultures. Perhaps our approach to theological training has become too Eurocentric and our practical assumption is that our cultural methods are the only ones to be trusted.
8. Finally, other people are simply a bit uncomfortable with change in general and aren't sure what to do with "the strange new animal in our midst."

Our summit was encouraged to learn that we are not the only group asking these questions and that others within the RCA are seeking to help resolve this tension. Presently, the Church Leadership Center is planning to hold regional social events that are aimed at helping classes and congregations engage these and other tensions in a meaningful way.

**4. Help the RCA to imagine a cohesive vision of what the commissioned pastor should be within the RCA, congruent with Transformed & Transforming.**

The summit participants were able to identify a number of ways that commissioned pastors are already being effectively enfolded into the RCA and Transformed & Transforming. For example, the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team (CPAT) has been very effective. The CPAT was created in 2005 to assist classes and regional synods as they provide training and evaluation for commissioned pastors. The CPAT has become a forum where best practices are shared, common problems addressed, and creative solutions conceived. The summit participants believed that some such practices needed to be continued and enhanced while other practices needed to be started in order to ensure that commissioned pastors continue to fit and function effectively in Transformed & Transforming. Therefore, we recommend the following:

R 16-26
To direct the GSC to fund a joint meeting of the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team and the Approved Alternate Route Committee of MFCA to clarify a more seamless path from commissioned pastor training to the Approved Alternate Route process, with sensitivity to the particular needs of racial and ethnic minorities.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-26 as follows (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

> To direct the GSC to fund a joint meeting of the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team and the MFCA Board of Trustees~~Approved Alternate Route Committee of MFCA~~ to clarify a more seamless path from commissioned pastor training to the Approved Alternate Route process, with sensitivity to the particular needs of racial and ethnic minorities.

**VOTED:** To amend R 16-26.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend R 16-26 as follows (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

> **. . .** a more seamless path from commissioned pastor training to the Approved Alternate Route process~~, with sensitivity to the particular needs of racial and ethnic minorities~~.

**VOTED:** To further amend R 16-26.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-26 as amended.

The final text of R 16-26 as amended and adopted reads as follows:

> **R 16-26**
> **To direct the GSC to fund a joint meeting of the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team and the MFCA Board of Trustees to clarify a more seamless path from commissioned pastor training to the Approved Alternate Route process. (ADOPTED)**
>
> **R 16-27**
> **To affirm the mandate of the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team to:**
>
> 1. **Advise the GSC regarding denominational policy and polity pertaining to commissioned pastors.**
> 2. **Facilitate the sharing of best practices in the training and support of commissioned pastors.**
> 3. **Engage appropriate agencies and resource organizations to encourage the development and continuing education of commissioned pastors.**
> 4. **Maintain a clearinghouse for information on commissioned pastor support in the RCA.**
>
> **And further, to instruct the General Synod Council to:**
>
> 1. **Review the makeup of the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team to ensure that the experiences of commissioned pastors and a diverse variety of persons within the RCA are on the team and contributing to its work.**
> 2. **Ensure that there is adequate staff support and**

**funding for the Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team. (ADOPTED)**

**GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO GENERAL SYNOD 2013 REFERRALS**

**Response to *MGS 2013*, R-10, p. 72, Transformed & Transforming Implementation Plan**

To instruct the General Synod Council, working with the boards, institutions, agencies, and commissions of the General Synod:

- To develop a clear implementation plan with measurable ends and goals for "Transformed & Transforming: Radically Following Christ in Mission Together";
- To report this plan to the 2014 General Synod;
- To share this plan widely throughout the greater church;
- To report progress on this plan to General Synod annually thereafter.

The GSC finalized ends policy statements regarding Transformed & Transforming at its fall 2014 meeting. The monitoring reports on each of these policy statements included on pp. 176-216 report on the implementation of the priorities of Transformed & Transforming.

**Response to *MGS 2013*, R-30, pp. 135-136, Reestablish Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group**

**REPORT OF THE CALL, CARE, AND STANDARDS COLLABORATION GROUP**

As a response to the recommendations of the Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group (CCSC), the 2013 General Synod decided:

R-30
To direct the General Synod Council to reconstitute the Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration (CCSC) group for a period of three years, to be funded through the General Synod assessment for theological education and to be constituted according to the following membership criteria:

- The presidents of each of the seminaries and the director of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA).
- Two individuals appointed from the General Synod professors.
- One individual appointed by the MFCA board.
- Six members appointed by the GSC, with at least one current member of the GSC.
- The whole membership must reflect "the rich diversity of the church" and include those who care deeply about theological education;

and further,

to direct the general secretary in consultation with the CCSC to determine the scope of its responsibilities…" (*MGS 2013*, pp. 135-136)

Responsibilities agreed upon for the CCSC were as follows:

1. In consultation with the professorate, coordinate regular review of the standards and propose needed revisions to the General Synod through the report of the GSC.
2. Facilitate appropriate resources, support, and sharing of best practices among congregations and classes in their discernment of the call of ministerial candidates and in their care of ministerial candidates in the ordination process.
3. Provide a forum for collaboration among the seminaries and the MFCA regarding ministerial formation as it relates to RCA church order and the mission of the church.
4. Assist the GSC in formulating and updating an ends statement that focuses on the use of the assessment for theological education.
5. Assist the GSC in conducting a triennial review of the overall assessment for theological education, considering both the total amount and its division in light of RCA church order and the mission of the church, as expressed through appropriate GSC ends statement(s).
6. Coordinate the evaluation of overall effectiveness of the seminaries and the MFCA in assisting candidates to meet the standards established by the RCA.

It was decided that the CCSC would offer a report of its progress at the convening of each General Synod, and the group would be funded from the proportion of the General Synod assessment for theological education earmarked for collaborative projects.

In fulfillment of this recommendation, the CCSC offers this report to the General Synod, including three recommendations.

**Review of General Synod Assessments**

The CCSC reviewed the size and division of the General Synod assessment for theological education approved by the 2013 General Synod. As a quick review, the amount of the assessment for this past year was $851,000 and was divided in the following manner:

- An initial $55,000 given to the MFCA to cover expenses and to account for their lack of ability to raise funds compared to an educational institution.
- 75 percent of the remaining funds are to be split evenly among the three agents for theological education (Western Theological Seminary [WTS], New Brunswick Theological Seminary [NBTS], and the MFCA).
- 20 percent distributed per capita of students within each agency who are formally in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process.
- 5 percent to cover the cost of the meetings of the CCSC and the General Synod professors, and collaborative efforts among the respective agents.

After much discussion, it is evident that the MFCA cannot afford to operate within the division of the theological assessment noted above. Yet each of the other agents also have need for financial support given through the assessment for theological education. It was also discussed that there is a surplus of money within the above-noted five percent set aside for collaborative projects at the moment. Thus, it seems beneficial to redirect some of that money to help the MFCA meet their current budget needs. At the same time, we will urge the GSC to develop a long-term solution to funding for the MFCA—addressing fundraising, reserve funds policy, and the mission of the MFCA—prior to us developing a longer-term proposal for the allocation of the theological education assessment.

Therefore, the CCSC makes the following recommendation:

**R 16-28**
**To redirect $32,000 per year for the next two years to the MFCA from prior restricted funds from both the surplus and the current year's five percent portion of the General Synod assessment for theological education allocated for collaborative work. (ADOPTED)**

**Continuing Work of the CCSC**

*Continuation of the CCSC*

The work of the CCSC has been valuable but is not complete. The process of the review of the standards for theological education and how they are assessed continues to be explored. Additionally, both candidates for ministry and classes continue to look for ways to best move students through the ministerial formation process. Continued maintenance of the candidate care website as well as a resource for the three agencies for theological education and classes are needed for developing and continuing best practices regarding the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry and pastoral formation. Furthermore, the CCSC has provided the table for conversations among representatives from the seminaries, the MFCA, commissioned pastors, and other elders regarding what is needed for pastoral leadership in today's church. Continued conversations will only help further these relationships. Finally, the amount and division of the assessment for theological education needs continued review. We think that the Pastoral Formation Coordinating Committee (PFCC) proposed below is the most effective place to house this review.

The financial resources for the PFCC will come from the 5 percent of the General Synod assessment for theological education designated for collaborative work, so the reconstitution of the CCSC as the PFCC will have no impact on General Synod assessments. Therefore, the CCSC makes the following recommendation to the General Synod:

**R 16-29**
**Reconstitute the Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group under the new name of Pastoral Formation Coordinating Committee (PFCC). The PFCC will meet for a period of two years, and its funding will come from the General Synod assessment for theological education. At the completion of this two-year period, the PFCC will propose to the General Synod a permanent committee, along with appropriate staffing and budget. The PFCC's responsibilities will include:**

1. **In consultation with the professorate, coordinate regular review of the standards and propose needed revisions to the General Synod. In conjunction with this process, coordinate the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the certification processes in assisting candidates to meet the standards established by the RCA.**
2. **Facilitate appropriate resources, support, and sharing of best practices among congregations and classes in their discernment of the call of ministerial candidates and in their care of ministerial candidates in the ordination process.**
3. **Provide a forum for collaboration among the seminaries and the MFCA regarding ministerial**

**formation as it relates to RCA church order and the mission of the church.**

4. **Assist the GSC in conducting a triennial review of the overall assessment for theological education, considering both the total amount and its division, in light of RCA church order and the mission of the church. (ADOPTED)**

*Discussions Regarding the Granting of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry*

The CCSC has noted that there is frustration among both students and classes in the granting of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry (CFM). Each agent (WTS, NBTS, and the MFCA) has different methodologies, both in content and in the process of granting the CFM. Therefore, the CCSC would anticipate engaging in conversation around this CFM process through a number of activities, including:

1. The development of a document laying out the CFM process for each agent of the General Synod, possibly including greater consultation with the classes. These documents were reviewed by the professorate at its March meeting. Then we will try to find a way to meet with key people from eight to ten classes that supervise the greatest number of RCA students, using the documents as a basis for further conversation, asking what is missing, what classes may disagree with, and what surprises classes.
2. Engaging further conversation with RCA staff about consultation regarding first call, and how this can feed back constructively into the CFM process.
3. Understanding how perceptions or allegations regarding Reformed orthodoxy or biblical authority in higher education can be constructively addressed in the denomination as a whole, in our classes, and in seminary education, particularly in conversation with those classes that have concerns about these issues. The agents of the General Synod (i.e., the seminaries and the MFCA) will initiate these conversations.

*Standards and Preparation for Theological Education in the RCA*

As noted in our 2015 report to the General Synod, the CCSC attempted to initiate a conversation between seminaries and local congregations on the nature of congregational versus seminary preparation of candidates for ministry. However, due to theological tensions and scheduling conflicts, this intended meeting did not happen. The CCSC thinks it is still prudent for the church for this conversation to take place. If reconstituted as proposed, the PFCC will continue to seek to organize a dialogue among these partners.

At the 2015 General Synod, the CCSC facilitated a forum on the eight standards for theological education. Participants at the meeting noted their approval of the eight standards. However, they also prominently discussed a desire to see a focus placed on leadership development. Participants articulated the need to engage both with the language of this standard as well as with the effectiveness of its implementation. The proposed PFCC intends to continue this important dialogue for the church.

Finally, the CCSC has noted the growing discussions around its table regarding the collaboration among the three General Synod agents of theological education. One particular area that excites the CCSC involves a discussion around a potential collaborative project among the agents to provide distance learning courses in Spanish. With the various agents dividing the course load, it is possible that this could be an effective contribution to the RCA for seminary students and commissioned pastors, as well as those who are seeking

ordination through the Approved Alternate Route. The PFCC would follow up with the appropriate RCA staff to continue such conversations.

*Candidate and Classis Best Practices*

In addition to the discussions regarding the CFM and the standards noted above, the CCSC continues to facilitate best practices between classes and the candidates under their care. This continues to be done through the classis best practices website, which continues to grow in use.

*Changes to the* Book of Church Order

Finally, the CCSC has discussed the difficulty, in certain instances, that students encounter entering into the CFM process. Current church order does not provide adequate access to the way in which current students experience their calls to ministry.

Over the years the RCA has increasingly struggled to attract and integrate fully educated and talented potential ministerial candidates because they have not had access to an RCA congregation and thus the support of a consistory. Lacking this access, they have found themselves without an entry point to the process for receiving the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry and thus the RCA ordination process. Many individuals come from outside the RCA and experience the call to ministry through parachurch organizations, campus ministries, camps, and conference centers. In addition, a significant number of students at non-RCA seminaries, located nowhere near an RCA congregation, are drawn to the RCA. All three agents of the RCA report that more than 50 percent of candidates come from outside the denomination; for the MFCA it is as high as 70 percent. The Classis of Holland reports a large number of Western Theological Seminary students who establish a temporary and instant membership in an RCA church in order to enter the CFM process after encountering the call to ordained ministry while pursuing the M.Div. degree at Western.

This situation has become more acute as we have moved into efforts focused on the 15-year vision of Transformed & Transforming. RCA leaders have recruited gifted individuals from various regions and seminaries, including the Boston area (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary), North Carolina (Duke Divinity School), Southern California (Azusa, Fuller, and Talbot Seminaries), and New York (Union, New York, and Alliance Seminaries). A number of the individuals recruited are from racial and ethnic minority groups, such as African Americans, Koreans, and Hispanics. Many are identified as gifted church planters and leaders.

These individuals fit many of the requirements the RCA has identified as crucial to the future of the denomination. Very few, if any, have a connection to the RCA or a local congregation. It is for that reason that we recommend some slight alterations to the *Book of Church Order*. The recommended changes would maintain the integrity of the process and our Reformed understanding of call, while also:

- Allowing a person who is new to the RCA and is not a confessing member of a congregation in the Reformed Church in America and who desires to be a minister to apply directly to a classis.
- Providing permission and a means for a classis to admit such an individual and provide care and oversight, and also providing access to the CFM process with one of the RCA's theological agents.
- Taking seriously the roles that a consistory and local congregation traditionally play in the life of a candidate and assigning the classis to walk in a similar manner as a consistory with the candidate who does not have a consistory to sponsor him

or her in the process. The proposed changes take special interest in cases where discipline might be necessary.

With the proposed changes, there would remain a dual-track process where the classis and the agent of the General Synod work cooperatively yet separately in the formation and preparation of candidates.

Therefore, the CCSC recommends the following:

**R 16-30**
**To adopt the following changes to the *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, for submission to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):**

***Article 11. Supervision of ~~Students of Theology~~Candidates for Ministry***

***Sec. 1.*** **A confessing member of a congregation in the Reformed Church in America who desires to become a minister shall apply to the classis with jurisdiction over the church in which membership is held to be enrolled as a candidate for the ministry. This application shall be made through the consistory of the church in which membership is held.**

***Sec. 2.*** **A person who is not a confessing member of a congregation in the Reformed Church in America who desires to become a minister shall present to a classis a letter of recommendation from the ruling body of the church in which membership is held. The letter of recommendation shall contain at least the information required by the classis from an RCA consistory.**

***Sec. ~~2.~~3.*** **Upon the consistory's or ruling body's recommendation, the candidate shall appear in person before the classis or its committee for examination in order to be considered to be taken under care. The classis or its committee shall inquire into the applicant's character and behavior; physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and educational qualifications; and the motives which led the applicant to seek the ministry as a vocation. If the classis is satisfied by the examination, the applicant shall be received under its care and enrolled as a candidate for the ministry.**

***Sec. ~~3.~~4.*** **Immediately following the enrollment of a candidate for the ministry, the classis, through its stated clerk, shall petition the General Synod on behalf of the candidate for a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry. Such a petition must be received a minimum of twenty-four months prior to the time it is to be given final disposition by the General Synod through its agent (the board of trustees of an RCA seminary or the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency). However, in instances**

**where completion of theological training takes place prior to the required period of twenty-four months, the classis may petition the appropriate agent of the General Synod to substitute a period of ministry supervised by the General Synod agent for all or part of its twenty-four-month requirement. The agent shall report its actions to the next General Synod.**

***Sec. ~~4.~~5.*** **The candidate shall be under the supervision of the classis while in seminary~~, but~~,**

- **a. Candidates who are members of an RCA congregation shall remain subject to the ecclesiastical discipline of the board of elders of the church in which membership is held.**
- **b. Candidates who are not members of an RCA congregation shall be subject to the ecclesiastical discipline of the classis as well as to the church in which membership is held.**
- **c. The classis shall show a continuing sympathetic interest by ~~appointing a committee for each candidate to guide the candidate's study program and practical training~~providing appropriate mentoring, direction, and support to each candidate under its care.**
- **d. The classis may evaluate and discontinue the enrollment of any candidate at any time.**

***Sec. ~~5.~~6.*** **If the candidate's membership is transferred to an RCA church under the jurisdiction of another classis, enrollment shall likewise be transferred to that classis. However, upon completion of seminary training, the candidate shall be examined for licensure and ordination by the classis that received the candidate under care~~in which church membership was held upon entering seminary studies~~, unless in the judgment of ~~said~~that classis it is appropriate for examination for licensure and ordination to be administered by the classis in which the candidate is presently enrolled. The approval of both classes shall be required to permit the classis in which the candidate is enrolled to administer the examinations.**

*[Subsequent sections renumbered.]*
**(ADOPTED)**

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was to refer R 16-30 as follows:

**R 16-31**
**To refer R 16-30 to the Commission on Church Order in consultation with the Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group (CCSC) or its successor, the Pastoral Formation Coordinating Committee (PFCC), for report back to General Synod 2017. (NOT ADOPTED)**

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not adopt R 16-31.

R 16-30 was before the house.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-30 as follows (highlighting reflects amendment, deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

> …*Sec. 2.* A person who is not a confessing member of a congregation in the Reformed Church in America, and for whom it is geographically impractical to do so, who desires to become a minister shall present to a classis a letter of recommendation from the ruling body of the church in which membership is held. The letter of recommendation shall contain at least the information required by the classis from an RCA consistory…

**VOTED:** To not amend R 16-30.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-30.

**Conclusion**

The CCSC thanks the General Synod for allowing us to engage in these important conversations, and we look forward, if the General Synod desires, to continuing our work together.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Pierce, moderator, on behalf of the CCSC

Anne Mead, sitting in for Miriam Ippel Barnes
Jim Brownson
Charlie Contreras
John Coakley
Cor Kors
Paul Lee
Jo Anna Lougin
Gregg Mast
Scott Treadway
Maudelin Willock

## POSTPONED BUSINESS FROM GENERAL SYNOD 2015

In 2015, the Commission on Church Order offered a proposed change to the *Book of Church Order* that General Synod decided to postpone. General Synod 2015 voted: "To postpone consideration of R-41 to the 2016 session of General Synod" (*MGS 2015*, p. 192). In keeping with the vote of the 2015 General Synod, these proposed changes are before the body for consideration this year.

***BCO* Change Regarding Marriage (*MGS 2015*, pp. 188-192)**

The 2014 General Synod acted:

> To instruct the Commission on Church Order to incorporate a definition of marriage into the *Book of Church Order* as between one man and one woman, and to report back to General Synod 2015 (*MGS 2014*, R-27, p. 135).

The commission spent a lot of time exploring ways a definition of marriage might be made to fit in the church order. In the end the commission could not find a way to make a definition fit the church order but did arrive at a possible regulation. This report contains an account of the commission's deliberations.

*Considerations Regarding the Synod's Instruction*

A definition?

The commission faced two problems with the incorporation of a definition into the *BCO*. The first is that compliance would introduce a new and strange element into the church order. The only definitions in the church order concern the church as an institution. The church order defines "membership" in the Preamble (page 3). The church order defines "congregation" and "local church" in its opening section (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Section 1; 2015 edition, p. 11). It further defines the offices (e.g., *BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Sections 5 and 6; 2015 edition, pp. 20-23), as well as the assemblies (although these are rather described than defined: see *BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 1 [2015 edition, p. 29]; Chapter 1, Part III, Article 1, Section 1 [2015 edition, p. 61]; and Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 1 [2015 edition, p. 65]). The church order does not define such things as the sacraments, for example.

The second problem with defining marriage (in any sort of way) is that it would regulate nothing. The church order consists of behavioral regulations. A definition would simply "sit there" within the church order.

After much consideration, the commission could not find a way to fit a definition of marriage into the *BCO*. A definition (a) would not be appropriate or intelligible in the *BCO* given the sorts of things the church order contains and does not contain, and (b) could not be effectual in disciplining behavior or belief in the church on account of the fundamental uncertainty about what a definition would mean in the *BCO*.

What about a description of a prohibition?

The problem with definition, however, does not exhaust the difficulties with inserting even a description of marriage into the church order. It appears to this commission as though the church would be attempting to adjudicate a moral issue by placing something like a prohibition within the church order. This action would codify a desire that a particular behavior be identified as sinful, and single out one behavior among many. But other sins might just as easily be debated and included in the church order. Why not include, for example, the participation of Christians in war or acts of racial discrimination? The commission notes that the General Synod's advisory committee on overtures and new business also drew this conclusion when the synod declined to add just this sort of prohibition in 2010 (*MGS 2010*, p. 177).

What about a regulation of prohibition?

A problem in placing a similar regulation in the church order is that there is little consensus in the church concerning same-sex marriage. In fact there is considerable debate concerning its biblical status. While this commission does not take a position on whether same-sex marriage is allowable (and acknowledges strong arguments on both sides), it seems unwise to make a regulatory constitutional change when a matter is still working itself out throughout the church.

It also seems unwise because creating a prohibiting regulation changes the substance of the issue. At present, deliberations in the church concern whether certain actions pertaining to marriage involve sin *with respect to marriage*. Creating a regulation in the church order turns the issue into one not of sin with respect to marriage, but of one's being in order or out of order. The two are meaningfully different kinds of offense. For example, a regulation regarding marriage would regulate some in the church out of order. In the present situation, it seems unlikely that those churches that have begun to allow same-sex marriage will cease. Then, should a regulation be placed in the church order, the church runs a considerable risk of the church order simply being ignored. This devalues the church order itself and can only promote disintegration of the church.

Moreover, this commission deems it unwise to put the matter before the entire church as a prohibiting regulation in the Constitution because no matter who "wins," there will be a large portion of the church that will "lose." This would only divide the church, and the entire church would thereby "lose." It is not that the church has not been divided on social issues before, but there has been no attempt to resolve such issues through a regulation in the church order. In our history, the church has struggled mightily, in other contexts, on issues surrounding marriage and has not seen fit to include a prohibition in the order. Consider the historic debates over whether those pregnant without marriage should be allowed to have their children baptized or whether divorced persons should be allowed at the Lord's Table. These issues worked their way through the church without being codified in the *Book of Church Order*. The church has more appropriate means for adjudication. The church order already provides the regulatory framework by which the church, in obedience to its Lord, resolves such matters.

Finally, it is the commission's perception that this matter is already being decided in the church, in any number of consistories and boards of elders in political jurisdictions where there are Reformed churches and where same-sex marriage is legal. With that significant observation, and after working through the above considerations, the commission turned its attention toward a constitutional change that could fit the church order and might be an effectual regulation.

*The Commission's Recommendation*

It is clear to the commission that the church, through its General Synod, is seeking guidance on this matter as well as a way to conceive of and maintain Christian unity along the way, within the Reformed Church in America's constitutional framework.

What kind of regulation seems appropriate?

The church order functions to delineate lines of authority and to stipulate who has authority to make which decisions in the church. Insofar as the church order can serve unity, difference, and truth in the church, it does so through those functions. The commission notes an example relevant to its recommendation: that the discipline of the church gives to the judicatories the responsibility of determining whether a particular action is to be

considered an offense (*BCO* Chapter 2, Part I, Article 2, Section 1; 2015 edition, p. 77). The recommendation below seeks to fit this form by stipulating who has authority to decide what marriages may happen in the church: the consistory. Indeed, every Christian marriage has aspects that call for consideration by the consistory.

Where does it belong?

While no local church is complete by itself, all that is needed to be church—the body of Christ—is present in the local church, with its people of God gathered in living congregation, with its offices gathered in consistory to provide for the ministry of Word and sacrament, and with its lines of relationship to the wider church catholic. For this reason authority and responsibility to provide for worship is rightly given to the consistory of the local church when the *BCO* in Section 10 of Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2 says, "The consistory shall provide services of worship…for the spiritual benefit and growth of Christ's people (2015 edition, p. 15)."

The solemnization of Christian marriage is a service of worship. The opening rubric of the Order for Christian Marriage (2002) recognizes it as such: "As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the consistory" (*Worship the Lord,* p. 84).

The commission therefore sees that the appropriate place for a regulation regarding marriage is among the responsibilities of the consistory. Records of weddings are already kept by officers of the consistory under the article governing consistories (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 18; 2015 edition, p. 18). Section 11 of this same article lists regulations regarding services of worship. The commission sees Section 11 as the most appropriate place for a regulation regarding the solemnization of marriage.

*Comments*

1. Just as this regulation properly belongs among the responsibilities of the consistory, neither does it infringe on the prerogatives of the classis or synods. Those assemblies may still offer their wisdom to the church, exercise their appellate authority, and—in the case of classes—supervision of ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors.
2. The commission realizes that some in the church will wish also for a regulation for ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors, since they are authorized by the state to solemnize marriages. Indeed, it is common to say that ministers "perform" marriages. While it is true that ministers represent the state in terms of the civil aspects of marriage, they represent Christ in terms of Reformed church order, ecclesiology, and polity when it comes to Christian marriage. Furthermore, it is the whole congregation, in the presence of God, that bears witness to the covenant of Christian marriage, in the context of Christian worship (even if the ceremony takes place outside the church building). In truth, it is the locally gathered body of Christ, including those married, together with God who "perform"—that is, solemnize—a marriage, in a service of congregational worship. It follows, then, that from the church's perspective, and regardless of the wide variety of actual practice and common understanding, no minister in the Reformed Church in America is ever a "freelance" agent of the state. As the church order and liturgy understand it, solemnizing the covenant of Christian marriage is an act of the church. While the state authorizes ministers to solemnize marriages more generally than that, the church order and liturgy cannot contemplate marriages in general, and the idea of a "freelance" minister in the Reformed Church in America is unintelligible to the church. The church order can govern only those matters pertaining to the church's role in marriage, not the state's.

3. The commission believes that the *BCO* already implies that responsibility and authority regarding this matter belong to the consistory. However, the commission also understands that the church needs its church order to be clearer and more obvious. The commission also believes that the proposed regulation could help ministers and consistories relate to each other more properly and effectively when it comes to the solemnization of all Christian marriages. To the extent that the church could benefit from a deepening understanding of what the solemnization of Christian marriage is, the commission sees the proposed regulation as needful and beneficial.
4. For those in the church concerned with weighing the disciplinary and legal risks of favoring or opposing same-sex marriage, the commission notes that the proposed regulation offers improved clarity and a significant measure of protection to both those who favor and those who oppose same-sex marriage. For those who desire a constitutional provision to shield them from civil prosecution, the proposed regulation meets that need.

R 16-32
To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):

Chapter 1, Part 1, Article 2

*Sec. 11*. The consistory shall be guided by the following requirements in their provision of services of worship:

*[subsections a-f remain unchanged]*

g. <u>The consistory or governing body shall determine what marriages may be solemnized in a church or congregation.</u>

A motion was made and supported from the floor to substitute the following for R 16-32:

R 16-32a
To approve the following change in the *Book of Church Order* for submission to the classes for ratification:

1.II.2. Sec. 11 (renumber following item): The classis shall have final authority to determine what restrictions, if any, shall be placed on the types of marriages that may be solemnized by the ministers of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastors included in its membership, based on the classis' interpretation of Scripture. The classis may delegate this authority to its members and/or to the churches under its superintendence.

*[subsections a-f remain unchanged]*

A motion was made and supported to cease debate.

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not substitute R 16-32a for R 16-32.

R 16-32 was again before the body.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to substitute the following for R 16-32:

> R 16-32b
> To amend the *Book of Church Order* by adding the following to Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2:
>
> *Sec. 20*. The consistory shall be assured that all weddings performed by their pastor and or their church are between one man and one woman.

A motion was made and supported to cease debate.

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To substitute R 16-32b for R 16-32.

R 16-32b was referred to the Committee of Reference for further referral or disposition as appropriate. The Committee of Reference reviewed R 16-32b and offered the following substitute recommendation:

> **R 16-32c**
> **To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):**
>
> **Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2**
>
> ***Sec. 11.*** **The consistory shall be guided by the following requirements in their provision of services of worship:**
>
> ***[subsections a-f remain unchanged]***
>
> **g. The consistory or governing body shall assure that marriages solemnized in a church or congregation are between a man and a woman. (ADOPTED)**

A motion was made and supported from the floor to postpone consideration of R 16-32c until General Synod 2017.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not adopt the motion to postpone consideration of R 16-32c until General Synod 2017.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-32c.

The final text of R 16-32c as adopted reads as follows:

> **R 16-32c**
> **To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken out):**

**Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2**

***Sec. 11.*** **The consistory shall be guided by the following requirements in their provision of services of worship:**

*[subsections a-f remain unchanged]*

**g. The consistory or governing body shall assure that marriages solemnized in a church or congregation are between a man and a woman. (ADOPTED)**

*The foregoing actions regarding R 16-32 to R 16-32c were taken following the General Synod's consideration of and actions regarding all recommendations presented to it through the Addendum to the RCA Special Council Report from the "Group of Five" and the Report of the 2016 All Synod Advisory Committees Summarizing Team.*

The following motion was made and supported from the floor:

R 16-33
No matter what position we as Christians have taken on the moral status of same-sex behavior, we reject all forms of mockery, degrading words and thoughts, economic oppression, abuse, threats, and violence made against members of the LGBTQ+ community, and we call on anyone involved in such behavior to repent and immediately begin walking in obedience to Jesus' command to love.

The president declared the motion out of order because he considered it to be new business and the final opportunity to introduce new business had already passed.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to appeal the ruling of the president (that the motion constituted new business).

**VOTED:** To overrule the ruling of the president.

R 16-33 was again before the body.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-33.

**R 16-33**
**No matter what position we as Christians have taken on the moral status of same-sex behavior, we reject all forms of mockery, degrading words and thoughts, economic oppression, abuse, threats, and violence made against members of the LGBTQ+ community, and we call on anyone involved in such behavior to repent and immediately begin walking in obedience to Jesus' command to love. (ADOPTED)**

## Overtures

**Insurance Coverage for Specialized Transition Ministers and Ministers between Calls/Contracts**

1. **The reverend Classis of Albany respectfully overtures the General Synod of 2016 to instruct its Board of Benefits Services to provide a mechanism by which specialized transition ministers (formerly called specialized interim ministers) may keep their denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance between assignments.**

Reasons:

1. Specialized transition ministers are vitally important to the process of healthy new pastoral searches for many congregations.
2. There is, in many regions of the RCA, a shortage of available transition ministers, and regional synods and classes are regularly encouraging ministers of Word and sacrament to consider specialized transition ministry as a vocation.
3. At the same time, the current rules for denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance require that the insurance be purchased by a congregation where the insured is serving, which means that transition ministers lose that insurance between assignments. Ministers are not currently allowed to pay for their own life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.
4. Between those assignments, specialized transition ministers are often traveling to meet with churches considering them for service as well as continuing to attend meetings and doing work for the classes in which they are members as well as their regional synods and, sometimes, the General Synod's commissions, boards, and agencies. This is considered unpaid work—yet not entirely voluntary, since ministers are amenable to their classes and pledged to support the work and witness of the Reformed Church in America. When engaged in this work and travel, these ministers are subject to the exact same risk as actively serving ministers, yet they are not allowed to maintain this insurance.

2. **The reverend Classis of Montgomery respectfully overtures the General Synod of 2016 to instruct its Board of Benefits Services to provide a mechanism by which specialized transition ministers (formerly called specialized interim ministers) may keep their denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance between assignments.**

Reasons:

1. Specialized transition ministers are vitally important to the process of healthy new pastoral searches for many congregations.
2. There is, in many regions of the RCA, a shortage of available transition ministers, and regional synods and classes are regularly encouraging ministers of Word and sacrament to consider specialized transition ministry as a vocation.
3. At the same time, the current rules for denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance require that the insurance be purchased by a congregation where the insured is serving, which means that transition ministers lose that insurance between assignments. Ministers are not currently allowed to pay for their own life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.
4. Between those assignments, specialized transition ministers are often traveling to meet with churches considering them for service as well as continuing to attend meetings and doing work for the classes in which they are members as well as their regional synods and, sometimes, the General Synod's commissions, boards,

and agencies. This is considered unpaid work—yet not entirely voluntary, since ministers are amenable to their classes and pledged to support the work and witness of the Reformed Church in America. When engaged in this work and travel, these ministers are subject to the exact same risk as actively serving ministers, yet they are not allowed to maintain this insurance.

3. **The reverend Classis of Rochester respectfully overtures the General Synod of 2016 to instruct its Board of Benefits Services to provide a mechanism by which specialized transition ministers (formerly called specialized interim ministers) may keep their denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance between assignments.**

Reasons:

1. Specialized transition ministers are vitally important to the process of healthy new pastoral searches for many congregations.
2. There is, in many regions of the RCA, a shortage of available transition ministers, and regional synods and classes are regularly encouraging ministers of Word and sacrament to consider specialized transition ministry as a vocation.
3. At the same time, the current rules for denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance require that the insurance be purchased by a congregation where the insured is serving, which means that transition ministers lose that insurance between assignments. Ministers are not currently allowed to pay for their own life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.
4. Between those assignments, specialized transition ministers are often traveling to meet with churches considering them for service as well as continuing to attend meetings and doing work for the classes in which they are members as well as their regional synods and, sometimes, the General Synod's commissions, boards, and agencies. This is considered unpaid work—yet not entirely voluntary, since ministers are amenable to their classes and pledged to support the work and witness of the Reformed Church in America. When engaged in this work and travel, these ministers are subject to the exact same risk as actively serving ministers, yet they are not allowed to maintain this insurance.

4. **The reverend Classis of Columbia-Greene respectfully overtures the General Synod of 2016 to instruct its Board of Benefits Services to provide a mechanism by which ministers may keep their denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance between calls/contracts.**

Reasons:

1. The current rules for denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance require that the insurance be purchased by a congregation where the insured is serving, which means that ministers lose that insurance between calls/contracts. Ministers are not currently allowed to pay for their own life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.
2. Between calls/contracts, ministers are often traveling to meet with churches considering them for service as well as continuing to attend meetings and doing work for the classes in which they are members as well as their regional synods and, sometimes, the General Synod's commissions, boards, and agencies. This is considered unpaid work—yet not entirely voluntary, since ministers are amenable to their classes and pledged to support the work and witness of the Reformed Church in America. When engaged in this work and travel, these ministers are subject to the exact same risk as actively serving ministers, yet they are not allowed to maintain this insurance.

**11. The Regional Synod of Albany respectfully overtures the General Synod of 2016 to instruct its Board of Benefits Services to provide a mechanism by which specialized transition ministers (formerly called specialized interim ministers) may keep their denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance between assignments.**

Reasons:

1. Specialized transition ministers are vitally important to the process of healthy new pastoral searches for many congregations.
2. There is, in many regions of the RCA, a shortage of available transition ministers, and regional synods and classes are regularly encouraging ministers of Word and sacrament to consider specialized transition ministry as a vocation.
3. At the same time, the current rules for denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance requires that the insurance be purchased by a congregation where the insured is serving, which means that transition ministers lose that insurance between assignments. Ministers are not currently allowed to pay for their own life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.
4. Between assignments, specialized transition ministers are subject to the same risks as other ministers. Yet they are still amenable to their classes and serve the church in their office. To be excluded from participating in the insurance unduly burdens them in being able to serve congregations as a specialized transition minister.

In response to Overtures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

**R 16-34**
**To instruct the Board of Benefits Services to continue developing a mechanism by which specialized transition ministers (formerly called specialized interim ministers) and ministers who are between calls or contracts may keep their denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance; and further,**

**To investigate how our Formula of Agreement partners are dealing with this issue. (ADOPTED)**

Reasons:

1. The current rules for denominational life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance require that the insurance be purchased by a congregation where the insured is serving.
2. Between those assignments, specialized transition ministers and ministers who are between calls or contracts are often traveling to meet with churches that are considering them for service as well as continuing to attend meetings and doing work for the classes, synods, commissions, boards, and agencies. When engaged in this work and travel, these ministers are subject to the exact same risk as ministers who are actively serving.
3. The Board of Benefits Services is to be commended for the work that it has been doing in this regard; however, there is still work to be done to more fully protect these ministers.

**Revise General Synod Statement on Christian Zionism; Prepare Statement on Two-State Solution for Israel/Palestine**

**5. The Classis of British Columbia overtures the General Synod to request the Commission on Theology to revise or rewrite the 2004 General Synod statement on Christian Zionism, with supporting exegetical and theological notes.**

Reasons:

1. The 2004 statement is helpful insofar as it points out the weaknesses of dispensational Zionism as taught in some other denominational settings. However, it is of limited use as it narrows its focus almost exclusively on this one and rather recent version of Christian Zionism. For a statement to be useful in our own denomination, it should primarily address Reformed forms of Christian Zionism (see reason 5).
2. The term "Zionism" as used in much of the RCA has rather negative connotations as it is often associated more with a political than a biblical point of view. It would be better if we could avoid the use of the term "Zionism" altogether and focus on the real subject, which is the answer to the question: How do we best understand the promises God made to the Jewish people? The Bible presents the prophetic vision of Israel as a chosen people to whom (still) "belong … the covenants … and the promises" (Romans 9:4). The statement's rather definitive rejection of the continuing validity of these covenants and promises to Israel seems at odds with the apostle Paul's passionate expectation of an end-time role for the people of Israel (Romans 9–11).
3. The eschatology (doctrine of "last things") held by those in the Reformed tradition who are *not* represented in the 2004 statement is inclusive rather than exclusive, allowing for a "both-and" rather than an "either-or" interpretation of the prophetic texts in Scripture, i.e., both the plain and original meaning of the texts as applying to Israel, as well as the further, spiritual interpretation. This, and not dispensationalism, is the most serious challenge to the theology of the statement. Furthermore, a future statement or paper should make an effort to refrain from using language such as calling this eschatology an "ideology" and a "carnal" interpretation of Scripture, and using shadow arguments, such as accusing all "Zionists" of holding certain questionable views that are actually held mostly by dispensational Zionists.
4. The 2004 statement, with supporting papers, is based on a theology very similar to the discredited replacement theology (i.e., the church has replaced Israel as God's people) which has dominated both the Western and Eastern churches for more than a millennium and, in spite of its troubled anti-Semitic history, has enjoyed a recent revival of sorts in various, more appealing versions. Under the heading of "anti-Zionism," these versions still claim that God's sworn promises of Israel's "return to Zion" no longer apply to the Jewish people, either because they have been fulfilled in Jesus' first coming, or because they should be exclusively interpreted in a "spiritual" sense. Romans 11 alone should be sufficient to refute these claims. Martin Luther King Jr. considered anti-Zionism as just another form of anti-Semitism!
5. A critical review of the 2004 statement should engage the views of Christian scholars of the past and the present who believe that Israel as a nation still has a future in God's plan. At a minimum, a future statement or paper should explain for what exegetical and theological reasons the RCA would not agree with the conclusions of the 1970 position paper of our own mother church, the Netherlands Reformed Church, called "Israel: People, Land, and State." This paper concluded that it cannot be denied that God's promises to the Jewish nation, including their return to the land, are still valid.

6. The 2004 statement makes an unwarranted jump from theology to politics by stating that "Christian Zionism" represents "an impediment to achieving a just peace in Israel/Palestine." This amounts to circular reasoning and begs the question. A theology is justified, or not, by its supporting exegetical and hermeneutical rationale, not by a judgment on its perceived political application.
7. We are not dealing here with a minor theological squabble on which we can agree to disagree. All Christians, whether called Zionists or anti-Zionists, agree on the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. But the disagreement on the present and future of God's still unrepentant chosen people Israel cuts to the heart of Reformed understanding of the sovereignty of God, the nature of election, and the authority of the Word of God. In the light of the existential threats to the survival of the tiny nation of Israel, any statement of the RCA on the subject of Israel should seriously wrestle with the possibility that if it errs in its exclusive, spiritual/symbolic-only interpretation of the pertinent Old and New Testament texts, it may very well be on the wrong side of God when it comes to the judgment of the nations that seek to destroy Israel (see Joel 3:2, Zechariah 12–14, etc., applied in the New Testament to the time of the second coming). For this reason alone, the need for a more balanced statement is extremely urgent.

**6. The Classis of British Columbia overtures the General Synod to ask the Commission on Christian Action to prepare a statement on our church's stand on a solution to the current Israel/Palestinian Authority impasse, revising or rewriting the relevant section of the current statement on Christian Zionism.**

Reasons:

1. The 2004 statement on Christian Zionism includes a clear commitment to a "two-state solution" for the Israel/Palestinian Authority conflict. Since the subject and background of the statement are mainly theological, it would make sense to write a separate statement on a subject that needs a realistic, justice-oriented, political rationale.
2. The present statement is unclear about the connection, if any, between the theology of "anti-Zionism" and the specific political plan to create a Palestinian state next to a reduced Israel. If it is implied that there is one, it should be made explicit.
3. RCA support for this plan, as articulated in the current statement, seems unconditional. But even if some form of a "two-state solution" would be the only realistic way forward out of the current impasse, our church's support for this or any other proposal should not be unconditional. For example, our support for the current plan implies support for a Jew-free Palestine (no Jew in East Jerusalem, Bethlehem, etc.). Also, we are aware of the repeated statements by Islamic leaders that a "two-state solution" is seen by them only as a step toward their final solution that leaves no room for Israel at all. Furthermore, the current sufferings of the Palestinian people may very well worsen in a Palestine that will inevitably be threatened by ISIS or Hamas. All three of these reasons and other major concerns for Christians should at least be acknowledged in order to arrive at a more nuanced commitment. Blind support for a two-state solution would be as bad as blind support for Israel. A new, more balanced statement could put in words both our church's fervent desire for a just solution and our conditions for supporting a specific political solution.

In response to Overtures 5 and 6, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

**R 16-35**
**To deny Overtures 5 and 6. (ADOPTED)**

Reason:

The 2004 statement is in line with the position the RCA has taken over the years, and based on the information provided, the members of the advisory committee do not see a sufficient reason to revisit it at this time.

**Regional Synod Executives as Corresponding Delegates to General Synod**

**7. The Regional Synod of the Heartland overtures the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to amend the Bylaws of General Synod, *Book of Church Order* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 9, Section 11 (2015 edition, p. 120), to include the following:**

**c. The regional synod executive, or their appointee, shall be a corresponding delegate.**

Reasons:

1. Many persons with experience and expertise from across the denomination are invited to become corresponding delegates (college and seminary students, presidents, and professors; members of commissions, boards, and agencies, etc.).
2. Corresponding delegates are appropriately invited into the complete life of the General Synod—to sit at tables with delegates, participate in advisory committees, and speak on the floor of Synod during plenary sessions. Voting privileges are, also appropriately, reserved for regular delegates.
3. Regional synod executives bring additional experience and expertise to the General Synod that can provide valuable insight, not just in speaking on the floor of Synod, but also during table conversations and advisory committees.
4. Regional synod executives will have the opportunity to relay the actions of the General Synod back to their region, not as an observer, but as a participant in the General Synod.

**8. The Regional Synod of the Far West overtures the General Synod to amend the *Book of Church Order*, changing Chapter 3, Part I, Article 9, Section 11 (2015 edition, p. 120), by adding a new subparagraph "c" as follows:**

**c. The regional synod executive, or other person appointed by the regional synod to fill their role, shall be a corresponding delegate to the General Synod.**

Reasons:

1. Regional synod executives are informed middle judicatory leaders who have a unique and special awareness about, and are engaged in, many of the common issues facing RCA pastors, elders, deacons, churches, classes, commissions, etc.
2. Regional synod executives do not have a voice, yet they have oversight responsibilities, roles, and perspectives that the whole of the General Synod is unable to benefit from.
3. Corresponding delegates, through participation, can give voice to the General Synod (but cannot vote, make motions, or be elected to office per *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 9, Section 1; 2015 edition, p. 119) just as other vital people and institutions can do who are recognized, valued, and invited to General Synod as corresponding delegates.

4. While each regional synod has the opportunity to send to General Synod one young adult and two women as corresponding delegates to participate and share their unique perspectives on behalf of women and young adults, they are not fully aware of the spectrum of issues in the regional synod as a whole.
5. While one elder or minister is appointed from each of the regional synods as a regular delegate, it seems inappropriate and disenfranchising to regional members for that person to always be the regional synod executive, keeping others from full participation as a regular delegate.
6. Regional synod executives voluntarily meet three times a year with the general secretary and a number of Transformed & Transforming initiative leaders for input and feedback, and to coordinate next steps to best serve our local congregations through classes, synods, and the denomination. Each regional synod commits financial resources and time to these gatherings, which gives each one a greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity and unity we have as we align with Transformed & Transforming and all of the RCA's purposes. These understandings and collaborative interactions can be insightful to the General Synod.

**9. The Regional Synod of the Great Lakes overtures the General Synod to amend the *Book of Church Order*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 9, Section 11 (2015 edition, p. 120), to include the regional synod executives as corresponding delegates, or another person appointed to fill their role by each regional synod.**

Reasons:

1. The regional synod executives play a key role in providing alignment of purpose throughout the denomination and are often at the General Synod meetings.
2. Appointing the regional synod executives as corresponding delegates would provide greater ability for collaboration between the General Synod and the regional synods by providing a voice for their particular concerns.
3. Corresponding delegates fully participate in General Synod but cannot vote, make motions, or be elected to office (*BCO*, Chapter 3, Part I, Article 9, Section 1; 2015 edition, p. 119).
4. Currently corresponding delegates include General Synod professors, the presidents of the RCA colleges, two students from each of the colleges, two students for each RCA seminary, two students from the MFCA, the RCA general secretary, the members of the General Synod Council, one representative from each of the General Synod commissions, the presidents of the RCA seminaries, a member from the board of trustees of the seminaries and the MFCA, up to 11 ecumenical delegates appointed by the Commission on Christian Unity, the president of the Board of Benefits Services, the president of the board of the RCA Church Growth Fund, one woman appointed by the Commission for Women, a racial/ethnic minority member appointed by the Commission on Race and Ethnicity, and a young adult appointed by the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education.
5. Each regional synod is given the responsibility of appointing two women as corresponding delegates, and one young adult may be appointed as a corresponding delegate by each regional synod.
6. Although one elder or minister is appointed from each of the regional synods as a regular delegate, this person is not usually a regional executive.

**10. The Regional Synod of New York overtures the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America to amend the Bylaws of General Synod, *Book of Church Order* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 9, Section 11 (2015 edition, p. 120), to include the following:**

**c. The regional synod executive, or their appointee, shall be a corresponding delegate.**

Reasons:

1. Many persons with experience and expertise from across the denomination are invited to become corresponding delegates (college and seminary students, presidents, and professors; members of commissions, boards, and agencies, etc.).
2. Corresponding delegates are appropriately invited into the complete life of the General Synod—to sit at tables with delegates, participate in advisory committees, and speak on the floor of Synod during plenary sessions. Voting privileges are, also appropriately, reserved for regular delegates.
3. Regional synod executives bring additional experience and expertise to the General Synod that can provide valuable insight, not just in speaking on the floor of synod, but also during table conversations and advisory committees.
4. Regional synod executives will have the opportunity to relay the actions of General Synod back to their region, not as an observer, but as a participant in the General Synod.

In response to Overtures 7, 8, 9, and 10, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business recommended:

**R 16-36**
**To approve the following amendment to the Bylaws of the General Synod in the *Book of Church Order* for submission to the 2017 General Synod for final approval (additions are underlined):**

**Chapter 3, Part I, Article 9, Section 11**

**c. The regional synod executive shall be a corresponding delegate to the General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

Reason:

Regional synod executives are informed middle judicatory leaders who have a unique and special awareness about, and are engaged in, many of the common issues facing RCA pastors, elders, deacons, churches, classes, and commissions. Granting them corresponding delegate status allows regional synod executives to be more fully included into the life of the General Synod—to sit at tables with delegates, participate in advisory committees, and speak on the floor of General Synod during plenary sessions.

**FROM THE REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND NEW BUSINESS**

Upon recommendation of the Committee of Reference, P-1 from the Report of the President, p. 21, was referred to the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business.

In response to the president's proposal P-1, the Advisory Committee on Overtures and New Business presented:

> **R 16-37**
> **To direct the General Synod Council to formulate a structured procedure to connect financially stable churches with those churches working in economically deprived areas that need both financial and human resources to meet the needs and grow the mission in those areas, facilitating these connections across classis and regional synod lines; and further,**
>
> **To bring the first report on this procedure to the 2017 General Synod. (ADOPTED)**

Reasons:

1. This recommendation is consistent with the priorities of Transformed & Transforming.
2. Many of our churches are engaged in mission across their regions, North America, and the world. Formulating a structured procedure would help connect RCA churches with each other in ways that will enhance our bonds as a denomination and further the work of Christ in the world.

**GENERAL SYNOD COUNCIL'S REPORT REGARDING NEW BUSINESS**

One item of new business was presented and referred to the Committee of Reference as follows:

> To amend the by-laws of the General Synod, under "Article 8. Advisory Committees," as follows:
>
> *BCO* 3.I.8, section 3.a.: The president shall ordinarily appoint the delegates to the advisory committee~~s of their choice~~ as needed, according to the gifts of the delegates to that Synod. All changes, with rationale, shall be reported to the General Synod Council, which shall approve the advisory committee appointments.
>
> And further, to amend the special rules of order of the General Synod, under "Article 1. Order of Business," as follows:
>
> *BCO* 3.II.1, sec. 1: ~~k. Approval of Advisory Committee Appointments~~

*Reason for submission as new business*:

This allows for the business of the Synod to be done efficiently under the current schedule without requiring the delegates to vote on something that has already occurred before the Synod has been formed.

In response to the new business, the Committee of Reference offered the following recommendation:

R 16-38
To approve the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order* for submission to the 2017 General Synod for final approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

Chapter 3, Part I, Article 8, Section 3

a. The president shall ordinarily appoint the delegates to the advisory committees ~~of their choice~~ as needed, according to the gifts of the delegates to that Synod. ~~All~~The appointments and any changes~~, with rationale,~~ shall be ~~reported~~submitted to the General Synod Council for approval.

Chapter 3, Part II, Article 1, Section 1

~~k. Approval of Advisory Committee Appointments~~

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-38 as follows (deletions are stricken):

a. The president shall ~~ordinarily~~ appoint the delegates to . . .

**VOTED:** To not amend R 16-38.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-38.

The final text of R 16-38 as adopted reads as follows:

**R 16-38**
**To approve the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order* for submission to the 2017 General Synod for final approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):**

**Chapter 3, Part I, Article 8, Section 3**

a. **The president shall ordinarily appoint the delegates to the advisory committees ~~of their choice~~ as needed, according to the gifts of the delegates to that Synod. ~~All~~The appointments and any changes~~, with rationale,~~ shall be ~~reported~~submitted to the General Synod Council for approval.**

**Chapter 3, Part II, Article 1, Section 1**

**~~k. Approval of Advisory Committee Appointments~~ (ADOPTED)**

# Report of the General Synod Council on Cultivating Transformation in Christ

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for Cultivating Transformation in Christ follows.

**ENDS POLICY E-2: CULTIVATING TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST**

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.

**GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus' command to make disciples is the church's mandate to help all people grow and deepen their faith as they live it out in everyday life. Transformed disciples become more like Christ as they read and reflect on God's Word, pray and listen to God, spend time in community with other Christ followers, and engage in Christ's mission. The RCA's commitment is to help in providing accessible environments, processes, resources, and relationships that can be used by local congregations to foster, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, more fully devoted followers who willingly and boldly live and love like Jesus.

The discipleship pathways uniquely created by congregations will foster transformation in both hearts and minds, exhibited in changed actions in the lives of equipped and empowered disciples. These growing disciples will make contributions as leaders, teachers, and people of influence within their congregations. Transformation will be manifest in our relationships with one another, our increasing love for each other, our sacrifice for the cause of Christ, our willingness to influence our world for the gospel, and how we advocate for justice with compassion in communities where we live and serve. As we live and love like Jesus, it will impact how we reach out to those who live on the margins, to those who have been disempowered in our society, and to those who have no voice in the broken world in which we reside.

**Synopsis**

A Transformational Experiences team has been meeting regularly for two and a half years. Jill Ver Steeg assumed leadership of the team on October 1, 2015. This team currently includes ten people—seven RCA staff members and three other RCA members.

The team is focusing on developing learning communities of congregations in which congregations learn from and with one another as they create discipleship pathways for the people God entrusts to them. There are already six learning communities in progress.

*Holistic Discipleship Leadership Communities*

Teams of three to five staff and leaders from RCA congregations engage a two-year process; each leadership community will have up to 11 congregations, drawn from all geographic regions of the RCA. Teams from the pilot group of eight RCA congregations completed

their two-year process at the end of April 2016. Reports from all eight congregations are extremely positive. There are tentative plans for RCA staff to launch another holistic discipleship leadership community in the fall of 2016.

*Discipleship Pathway Learning Communities*

A discipleship pathway learning community is a cluster of three to five RCA congregations in relatively close geographical proximity that each commit a team of three to five people, including the pastor. Each congregation in the learning community will develop its own unique pathways through which people will be transformed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into passionate, outwardly focused followers of Jesus that live for the sake of others.

*Faithwalking Learning Communities*

Faithwalking is the personal transformation component of Ridder Church Renewal. Many RCA congregations lead Faithwalking experiences with neighboring congregations as one dimension of their discipleship pathway. A long-term goal will be to expand Faithwalking to non-Ridder congregations through the development of learning communities.

*3DM Learning Communities*

Learning communities of ten to twelve RCA, CRC, and other neighboring congregations gather four times over the course of two years, implementing what they learn between gatherings. Each congregation will learn and employ the 3DM missional community process as a primary way to focus on multiplying disciples, leaders, and mission.

*VantagePoint3 Learning Communities*

This is a one-year learning community of three to five RCA congregations in which each congregation will learn from and with one another as they employ VantagePoint3's primary introductory resource, *The Journey*, which focuses on discipleship and leadership development.

*Sticky Faith Learning Communities*

Sticky Faith is a process that helps a congregation more fully integrate youth and young adults into all aspects of that congregation's life and work, including discipleship, using an intergenerational approach. In a Sticky Faith learning community, congregations that are currently employing the Sticky Faith process will meet with and assist congregations that want to implement it. The new coordinator for next generation engagement will implement both learning communities and coaching related to Sticky Faith.

**Goals**

*One-Year Goals (by June 2016)*

- Launch a new holistic discipleship leadership community with eight to ten RCA congregations participating.
- Five discipleship pathway learning communities will be meeting, involving a total of 15 or more RCA congregations.
- At least 25 RCA congregations will employ Faithwalking as a primary means of personal transformation. The director of transformational engagement and the coordinator for equipping thriving congregations will explore the development of Faithwalking learning communities.

- A 3DM learning community will be launched and will include 10 to 12 RCA, CRC, and other neighboring congregations.
- One new VantagePoint3 learning community that includes three to five RCA congregations will begin.
- One new Sticky Faith learning community will begin.
- Women's Transformation and Leadership will pilot and launch a one-year transformational learning community that brings together female leaders (both clergy and laity) from different area churches, with support from their senior leadership, to explore the possibilities and challenges of women's discipleship and leadership in the church. Targeted geographic areas for the pilot are northwest Iowa and the greater New York metropolitan area.
- The Transformational Experiences team will hold six to eight connection events.
- Women's Transformation and Leadership will partner with regional leaders and congregations to offer seven to ten connection events that facilitate RCA female lay leaders and clergy being better connected with each other and with Transformed & Transforming, with the overarching goal to ensure that women are equipped and empowered for their gifts and influence to be fully included in all areas of the church.

*Five-Year Goals (by June 2018)*

- 16 RCA congregations have completed a two-year leadership community in holistic discipleship and are serving as resources to other congregations as requested.
- 10 to 15 RCA congregations have participated in a discipleship pathway learning community and are implementing their own unique disciple-making pathway in their congregation.
- 50 to 65 RCA congregations are engaged in Faithwalking as a core process for cultivating transformation in Christ.
- 10 to 12 RCA congregations have participated in a joint RCA and 3DM learning community and have launched missional communities focused on discipleship, leadership, and missional living.
- 10 to 15 RCA congregations have participated in a VantagePoint3 learning community and are using VantagePoint3 resources to develop disciples and equip leaders.
- 15 to 20 RCA congregations have engaged in learning communities to explore and discern women's leadership as a core process for cultivating a culture shift that embraces the full inclusion of women's gifts and influence to strengthen and build Christ's church.
- 10 to 15 RCA congregations have participated in learning communities to develop intentional leadership training and mentoring processes for empowering women.
- More than 2,000 women will have been positively impacted by denomination-wide connection events and leadership collaboratives. These women, from diverse contexts (geographical areas, racial/ethnic, urban/suburban/rural, etc.), will have gained barrier-free access to exploring and living into their gifts and callings, thereby strengthening the body of Christ for mission in the world.

**Progress**

- Eight RCA congregations are completing our first holistic discipleship leadership community. Participating congregations are Reformed Church of Corinth in Byron Center, Michigan; Faith Reformed Church in Dyer, Indiana; Liberti Center-City in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Living Springs Community Church in Glenwood,

Illinois; Our Lord's Community Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Prairie Ridge Church in Ankeny, Iowa; The River in Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Trinity Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa.

- Three discipleship pathway learning communities are meeting. One is focused on next generation ministry, one is focused on Sticky Faith, and one is focused on church planters. A connection event is planned to explore a potential learning community in southwest Michigan, which would launch before summer 2016.
- At least 20 congregations are currently employing Faithwalking as a primary means of personal transformation.
- A 3DM huddle is currently meeting, with the expectation that it will be the foundation of a 3DM learning community.
- An RCA staff member is coaching RCA congregations around Sticky Faith.
- Women's Transformation and Leadership has partnered with regional leaders, congregations, and seminaries on a number of events:
    - Women's Sankofa journey through New York; 32 women participated, representing 15 churches (12 of them RCA) from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and South Dakota.
    - Women's connection dinner at General Synod 2015 in Palos Heights, Illinois; more than 80 women (and five men) attended.
    - Women's Transformation and Leadership workshop at General Synod 2015; 16 male and female delegates from across the denomination attended.
    - Connection meetings with the pastors and female lay leaders of Peace Reformed Church in Eagan, Minnesota.
    - First-ever RCA Hispanic women's conference was hosted by Emmanuel Reformed Church in Paramount, California. Six RCA churches from southern California and Arizona were represented by the more than 150 women in attendance.
    - Ecumenical women's gathering hosted by Church on the Hill (RCA) in Flushing, New York; more than 80 women attended, mostly from RCA churches and three ecumenical partners.
    - Honoring Our Stories women's event hosted by First Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa; 13 area churches were represented (ten of them RCA) by the more than 80 women in attendance.
    - Women's global experiences trip to Al Amana Centre in Muscat, Oman; the all-female group of nine included clergy, Christian educators, church staff, lay leaders, and a retired missionary, and hailed from New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Colorado, Illinois, and St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.
- A number of additional Women's Transformation and Leadership events are scheduled to take place before June 2016:
    - Women's connection event in the Classis of Brooklyn, New York.
    - Second annual Celebrating Women's Leadership in the Church event at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan.
    - Third annual women's Sankofa journey through New York.
    - Women's connection event in Mid-Hudson Classis, New York.
    - Women's connection and equipping event in Chicago, Illinois.
    - Women-focused Holy Land trip led by pastors from Holland, Michigan.

# Report of the General Synod Council on Equipping Emerging Leaders

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on progress on the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for Equipping Emerging Leaders follows.

**ENDS POLICY E-3: EQUIPPING EMERGING LEADERS**

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 with regard to such things as gender, age, race, ability, and cultural backgrounds, with a special emphasis on youth.

**GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION**

"Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7).

Women and men who are open to being used by God help guide the church as they actively pursue God's purpose for congregations and ministries. Leaders willingly and passionately live out their calling and giftedness to accomplish a missional vision that brings a gospel of grace and hope to a lost and broken world.

The RCA's commitment is to help develop leaders, based on a foundation of discipleship, who:

- Know how to lead themselves (their leadership is focused on their inward journey).
- Know how to lead others (they are equipped to lead and influence in a God-ordained direction, increasing their leadership gift).
- Know how to reproduce new leaders (they view leadership development as a key component of their call to be a leader).

This commitment to leadership development requires environments and accessible opportunities for growth and learning that will help lead RCA congregations forward in mission.

The RCA vision for leadership sees the leadership potential in all followers of Jesus Christ. It helps to raise up servant leaders who develop a courage and competence to lead in the church and the world in a multiplicity of environments and with an openness to equipping and empowering all people to be influencers for Christ's kingdom. This leadership vision has a special focus on empowering people who may not have leadership positions, privilege, power, or even access to such things, but who have been called and gifted by God to serve boldly. It is a vision that especially is committed to the next generation and to developing leaders for the church of the future.

**OVERVIEW**

Two initiative teams work within the Equipping Emerging Leaders strategic priority: Emerging Leaders, which focuses on leadership mobilization and development; and Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches, which focuses on supporting the spiritual transformation and health of the leadership teams of RCA congregations.

## EMERGING LEADERS

The Emerging Leaders team has ten members—nine are RCA staff and one is a young RCA pastor who graduated from Western Theological Seminary in May 2015 and was ordained to the office of minister of Word and sacrament by the Classis of Holland in the summer of 2015. The work of the Emerging Leaders team is to increase the awareness that God is calling all people—youth, young adults, and adults—to become leaders in the church, and to help local RCA congregations develop and design leadership development processes uniquely fitted to their own context and need. We believe that through this process RCA congregations will thrive and be spiritually renewed and transformed and young emerging leaders of today and tomorrow will be identified, developed, equipped, and mobilized to impact their local communities and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Leadership Development Connection Events

A leadership development connection event is an informational gathering of either one full day or just a few hours. Its purpose is to introduce pastors and congregational leaders of a region or classis to ways in which they might get involved in developing leaders in their local congregations. The desired outcome for these gatherings is for pastors and congregational leaders to join a learning community or participate in a leadership collaborative.

### Leadership Development Leadership Communities

Leadership development leadership communities consist of up to eleven congregations from all geographic regions of the RCA that are already engaged in leadership development and want to further increase their effectiveness. Each congregation commits a team of three to five staff members, pastors, and leaders to participate in a two-year process. Leadership development leadership communities are offered in partnership with Leadership Network of Dallas, Texas. The first cohort of seven RCA congregations is completing the process in June 2016.

### Leadership Development Learning Communities

Groups of three to six RCA congregations in different geographical areas will gather for six one-day meetings over the course of two years to learn from one another about different areas of leadership. Each congregation will develop its own leadership development process uniquely fitted to its own context and need. Each participating congregation will form a leadership development learning community team of three to five people, including the pastor. When forming their teams, congregations will be encouraged to include a variety of people with regard to gender, age, ethnicity, etc.

### RCA Leadership Collaboratives

Clusters of 12 leaders from RCA congregations in relatively close geographical proximity will commit to a 12-month, 18-month, 24-month, or 36-month leadership collaborative to deepen their personal leadership skills. This experience will provide learning, support, and accountability for each participant's leadership journey. It is a commitment to grow, to invest, to share, and to change. The focus for these leadership collaboratives will be on personal leadership development for greater kingdom impact in their local context, helping participants grow in their leadership skills, discern God's call for their lives, and clarify their next steps in ministry. The leadership collaboratives will be varied in focus; possible focuses include children and family ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, multicultural ministry, and developing a strategic ministry plan.

This process will include in-person gatherings and video conference calls. Each participant will commit to personally contributing to the process and to peer coaching.

These collaborative groups will focus on three key areas of leadership:

1. Personal leadership: leading from the inside out and developing the capacity to lead oneself before leading others.
2. Organizational leadership: providing the competencies and skills required of effective leaders.
3. Reproducing leadership: helping leaders develop more leaders, not just followers.

**Reformed Leadership Initiative**

The Reformed Leadership Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), the Reformed Church in America (RCA), Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS), and Western Theological Seminary (WTS). Both denominations need leaders at all levels who are grounded in a biblical vision of church and kingdom, personally formed and growing in the image of Christ, and competent to lead thriving congregations in contextualized and mission-focused ministry.

The Reformed Leadership Initiative launched six congregational leadership learning networks (CLLN) in the first six months of 2016. These CLLNs will serve as the first steps in developing diverse networks for leadership training aimed at serving the local church while that local church engages in mission and ministry.

CLLNs that are already launched include a Korean-language network in New Jersey; a Spanish-language network in southern California; and four other networks in New Jersey, Ontario, central Iowa, and central California. Each CLLN has a balance of RCA and CRCNA congregations.

CLLNs are led by a local team of coleaders, one CRCNA and one RCA. These leaders are supported by two codirectors, one from each denomination: Ken Eriks for the RCA and Denise Posie for the CRCNA. An implementation team that includes members of both denominations and both institutions offers additional support to the project and the congregations. The coleaders of the CLLNs have an external, paid coach to assist them in their leadership of these networks.

Each network is expected to pursue four outcomes:

- Innovate, create, and engage new leadership development practices that equip leaders, change cultures, and impact the world through local congregations.
- Learn how to prepare leaders of all ages for leadership in diverse environments.
- Evaluate and learn together from what they implement.
- Help all four partners (CRCNA, CTS, RCA, WTS) develop processes that are scalable and sustainable in all regions of our denominations.

Every congregation in a CLLN agrees to design and implement leadership development processes that are appropriate to its size, situation, and context. Each congregation will focus on one or more of the following groups: councils or consistories, church staff, emerging leaders, people who lead congregational ministries, people who lead ministries in their local communities, and others.

Each congregation is encouraged to develop and implement equipping processes focused on

the same three key dimensions of leadership development mentioned under the leadership collaboratives: personal leadership, organizational leadership, and reproducing leadership.

Four values will undergird the processes in each congregation:

- In-ministry formation: hands-on ministry within the context of the local church as the principal location for leadership development.
- Competency-based equipping: providing tools and skills to be more effective in one's ministry call and context.
- Missional context: a vision of the church as a covenant community in mission, raising up workers for the harvest.
- Lifelong learning: cultivating and growing one's leadership takes a commitment that lasts a lifetime.

**Goals**

*One-Year Goals (by June 2016)*

- Launch three pilot learning communities in different areas of leadership development.
- Launch the Reformed Leadership Initiative with 60 RCA and CRC congregations.
- Have seven RCA congregations complete the leadership development leadership community process in connection with the Leadership Network in Dallas, Texas.
- Coordinate four leadership development connection events in different regions of the RCA.
- Launch three leadership collaborative cohorts.
- Collaborate with seven classis leaders to create an elder/deacon leadership training process.

*Five-Year Goals (by June 2018)*

- 30 congregations will have participated in a two-year learning community and are now actively engaged in identifying, equipping, and developing leaders for the work of ministry in the local church and in the world. These congregations will have a clear pathway to develop leaders that is unique to their local need, context, and vision.
- Seven RCA congregations will have completed a two-year leadership development leadership community and are engaged in replicating the process with other RCA congregations.
- 20 congregations are fully participating in an RCA leadership development leadership community, with 20 pastors and 100 church leaders fully engaged in creating leadership development processes to help churches identify, develop, and mobilize young, emerging, and current leaders.
- 60 RCA and CRC congregations are participating in the Reformed Leadership Initiative in six congregational leadership learning networks of 10 congregations each. One of these CLLNs will be in Korean and one will be in Spanish.
- 120 pastors and church leaders of diverse gender, age, ethnicity, and context will have participated or will be participating in a leadership collaborative.
- 75 congregations from different regions will have participated in a leadership development connection event.
- In collaboration with seven classis leaders, the Emerging Leaders team will have created an elder/deacon leadership training process. This will be a resource for RCA congregations to equip elders and deacons as leaders in the church.

**Progress**

- Six RCA congregations are currently participating in the first leadership development leadership community. Their first gathering took place in Dallas, Texas, on December 3–5, 2014, and the last meeting will take place in Paramount, California on June 6–8, 2016. Participating congregations are:
  - Emmanuel Reformed Church, Paramount, California
  - Iglesia La Senda, Corona, California
  - Grace Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, Michigan
  - Good News Community Church, Okoboji, Iowa
  - Orchard Hill Reformed Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa
  - Sunnybrook Community Church, Sioux City, Iowa
- Five RCA Hispanic congregations are currently participating in a leadership development learning community in West Michigan. This will be a 20-month process; it began in July 2015 and will end in November 2016. Participating congregations are:
  - Alas Conexion, Grand Rapids, Michigan
  - La Casa de Mi Padre, Holland, Michigan
  - La Casa de Mi Padre, Wyoming, Michigan
  - Iglesia Alas de Aguila, Allendale, Michigan
  - Iglesia Alas de Aguila, Wyoming, Michigan
- 25 RCA congregations have participated in six leadership development connection events in different regions:
  - February 21, 2015, in Phoenix, Arizona
  - August 22, 2015, in Queens, New York
  - September 19, 2015, Detroit, Michigan
  - November 6, 2015, in Chowchilla, California
  - November 15, 2015, in Sterling, Illinois
  - December 12, 2015, in Astoria, New York
- Four more leadership development connection events will take place later in 2016.
- Seven African American RCA congregations in the New York area will be participating in a two-year leadership development learning community that will launch on May 14, 2016.
- Two additional leadership development learning communities will be launched in 2016.
- Six Reformed Leadership Initiative cohorts with 10 to 12 congregations each will be launched in the first months of 2016.
- 15 RCA Hispanic pastors are currently participating in two leadership collaboratives taking place in West Michigan and in the New York/New Jersey area.
- Three more Hispanic leadership collaboratives will be launched later in 2016 in Arizona, southern California, and central/northern California.
- A multiethnic leadership collaborative consisting of young people between the ages of 18 to 25 and from four different ethnic groups (African American, Hispanic American, Caucasian, and Asian American) will be launched in 2016.
- Seven classis leaders have confirmed their participation in an effort to develop a process to equip elders and deacons as leaders in the church. These classis leaders will be working with the Emerging Leaders team to develop a process based on the following principles:
  - Grassroots
  - Research-based
  - Easy to contextualize

- Field-tested
- User-friendly
- Flexible

The seven classis leaders working on this process are:
- Jeff Ludington, Classis of California
- Randy Bremmer, Classis of Muskegon
- Chris Godfredsen, Classes of East and West Sioux
- Fred Bates, Classis of Southwest
- Lyle Zumdahl, Classis of Wisconsin
- Dale Assink, Classis of Central Plains
- Tim Truesdell, Classis of Illinois

**THRIVING LEADERS, THRIVING CHURCHES**

Andy Bossardet took over leadership of this team as the coordinator for equipping thriving congregations in December 2014. The team has nine members—seven are RCA staff members and two are RCA pastors. The team's focus is to empower leaders, ministry teams, and congregations toward greater missional vitality through high-impact coaching, learning communities focused on personal and corporate transformation, support systems for pastors and congregations in transition, and equipping for vision discernment.

**Ridder Church Renewal**

Ridder Church Renewal is a partnership of Western Theological Seminary, the RCA, and the CRCNA that helps leaders develop the tools to confront unhealthy models that hinder personal and congregational growth. Ridder is comprised of two intensive 30-month modules; congregations commit to one module at a time. Each module consists of five retreats, each about six months apart, with coaching and homework between retreats. Participating congregations choose a leadership team of four to six congregants plus the pastor. Five regions will participate in modules one and two of Ridder Church Renewal, and two regions are entering the process at module one.

**Maximizing First-Call Potential**

To maximize first-call potential, pastors in their first call engage with a mentor and a peer group in self-directed learning based on challenges and opportunities in the ministry context. Covenants of support and accountability are drawn up between congregations and pastors to empower the first-call pastors in their learning. The first-call process lays the foundation for thriving congregational and pastoral ministry. This work is done in partnership with the Lilly Endowment Pastoral Excellence Network. A variety of methods for learning communities are being pursued to provide support, ongoing equipping, and accountability.

**Pastors and Congregations in Transition**

The Thriving Leaders, Thriving Churches team is developing new, more effective ways to serve churches and pastors in the midst of a ministry transition. This will include training and certification mechanisms for transitional ministers, vocational assessment for pastors between ministries, and clarification about the role that each partner in the RCA plays in helping ministers and congregations through transitions. For now, the focus has been on classes and providing training and resources for classis supervision.

**Coaching**

The team is developing a catalytic coaching network that will be made up of all the coaches who work with the various learning community pilots. We will put together a catalog highlighting best practices, coaching models, and training for the coaches.

The team also plans to maximize current content-neutral training through better tracking and assessment of coaches. By tracking relationships, we will be able to more easily assess coaches and provide ongoing training and accountability for desired ministry outcomes across the RCA. Salesforce will provide a great platform for helping coaches succeed.

**Congregational Vitality Pathways**

Congregational Vitality Pathways (CVP) is a tool created by the Evangelical Covenant Church and used by the Far West Region to help congregations discern and live into God's vision for their church. Health and vitality are measured by ten markers. CVP uses assessment tools, events, and an empowered vitality team to help a congregation move toward its goals. RCA congregations engaging CVP are intended to do so in a learning community format.

**The Ezra Project**

The Ezra Project is a learning community designed to empower and encourage African American pastors in the RCA. The learning community involves five pastors who spend time with African American pastors in thriving ministries, learning personal, organizational, and reproducing leadership content over the course of a year. Ezra graduates will then become facilitators and teachers for the next cohort of Ezra pastors.

**Goals**

*One-Year Goals (by June 2016)*

Focus on equipping in the following areas, developing processes for training and growth:

- Ridder Church Renewal
- Maximizing first-call potential
- Ministry transitions
- Coaching
- Congregational Vitality Pathways
- The Ezra Project

*Five-Year Goals (by June 2018)*

- 150 RCA congregations are actively engaging in the Ridder Church Renewal process (module one or two), and 50 RCA congregations have completed both modules and continue to cultivate personal transformation and deepen their missional impact.
- 20 first-call pastors (from all three theological agencies) are being supported each year as they begin their ministry in 20 first-call congregations (solo pastor and associate pastor positions) through a process that lays the foundation for thriving congregational and pastoral ministry, for a total of 100 pastors and congregations over the course of five years.
- A partnership of classes, regional synods, and GSC staff have engaged 50

congregations in the midst of pastoral transitions, focusing on mission and vision discernment, congregational culture change, and calling a pastor.
- A newly developed equipping process for specialized transition ministers (STMs) has raised up 15 STMs who have assisted 30 congregations through a pastoral/ministry transition.
- 20 RCA congregations have participated in a transformational learning community, experiencing growth in all four dimensions of the love of God.
- A catalytic coaching system supports all of the learning and leadership communities in each of the three strategic priorities.
- 40 congregations in the Far West Region and 10 congregations outside the Far West Region are engaging in Congregational Vitality Pathways.
- 20 African American pastors have participated in the Ezra Project, engaging in leadership development and congregational transformation processes.

**Progress**

- Currently, 112 pastors representing 96 congregations are participating in Ridder Church Renewal; 62 are RCA congregations. Those congregations are split across seven regions, representing 10 learning communities. Additionally, there is a team of RCA chaplains participating in Ridder in the Great Lakes (a first for Ridder).
- Recruitment has begun for a learning community for First Call pastors in the Regional Synod of Albany. Connection events with seminary students have been held at Western Theological Seminary and a similar connection event was held on February 7, 2016, for New Brunswick Theological Seminary students and graduates.
- As a result of the March 2015 congregational transition gathering, a team is in the final stages of creating a training guide and resources for classis supervisors to guide congregations through transition. Three regional synods (New York, Mid-America, and Far West) have already requested the training. Similarly, a team is working on improving the RCA search team manual.
- Pastors and regional leaders in three regions (Heartland, Great Lakes, and Mid-America) have indicated interest in Congregational Vitality Pathways, with classes looking to recruit pilot learning communities in the near future. There are also churches in the Regional Synod of Canada who have shown interest.
- Through a contract with Bob Logan, a team is assembling and generating training materials and a feedback system for catalytic coaching (content-specific coaching for learning communities). That coaching system is expected to roll out before General Synod. The same team is working to help build an effective feedback loop for all learning communities in Transformed & Transforming.
- Six pastors have completed phase one of the Ezra Project, with an expected phase two being formed to deepen the learning of phase one and provide ongoing support for the various initiatives begun by the phase one pastors. Depending on the success of phase two, a third phase (including new leaders) will be carried out. Spinoff projects from the Ezra Project are expected.
- A pilot learning community of at least four churches (in the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes) has been formed to pursue Transformational Church, an assessment tool and facilitated process created by Lifeway. They began the one-year process on March 5, 2016.

**RETIRED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

During 2015, 56 ministers of Word and sacrament retired from active service. Those who retired are being recognized by General Synod through its endorsement of appreciation for their years of faithful and dedicated ministry in the church.

**R 16-39**
**To adopt the following resolution:**

**These have loved Christ and fed his sheep. They have devoted themselves to spreading the Word and equipping the saints for the work of ministry.**

**Their contribution to a needy world is rich beyond measure; their record is on high.**

**The Reformed Church in America, with admiration, deep affection, and overflowing thanks to God, celebrates their lifelong service.**

**Ronald Ahrens**
**Three Oaks, Michigan**

**James Alley**
**Port Ewen, New York**

**Andrew Atwood**
**Grand Rapids, Michigan**

**William Boersma**
**Holland, Michigan**

**Herbert Bollman**
**Lanark, Illinois**

**Wendell Brenneman**
**Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

**Judith Broeker**
**Zellwood, Florida**

**H. Curtis Bush**
**Holland, Michigan**

**Brigido Cabrera**
**Palm Harbor, Florida**

**John Cherry**
**Barnegat, New Jersey**

**Byung Il Chung**
**Palisades Park, New Jersey**

**David Corlett**
**Selkirk, New York**

**Benson Den Hartog**
**Fulda, Minnesota**

**Jack Donahue**
**Cutchogue, New York**

**Victor Downing**
**Portage, Michigan**

**Leon Fikse**
**Banning, California**

**Janet Fries**
**Kintnersville, Pennsylvania**

**David Grissen**
**Bend, Oregon**

**Donald Hammond**
**East Garrison, California**

**Donald Heringa**
**Wingdale, New York**

**Harvey Hertz**
**Kentwood, Michigan**

**Vernon Hettinga**
**Hudsonville, Michigan**

**James Hibma**
**Pella, Iowa**

**Robert Hitchcock**
**Grand Haven, Michigan**

**Craig Hoffman**
**Scotia, New York**

**Jan Hoffman**
**Scotia, New York**

**Wayne Hoglin**
**El Monte, California**

**Daniel Hoogheem**
**Mohawk, New York**

**Allen Jager, Jr.**
**Glenmont, New York**

**Robert James**
**Arlington, Tennessee**

**Raphael Johnson**
**New York, New York**

**Sanjiv Kattekola**
**Bayonne, New Jersey**

**Byung Chul (Brian) Kim**
**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

**Seok Won Kim**
**Orlando, Florida**

**Peter Je Chul Ko**
**Northvale, New Jersey**

**Dirk Kramer**
**Harrison, Ontario**

**Henry Kroondyk**
**Grand Rapids, Michigan**

**Theodore Lindman**
**Waupun, Wisconsin**

**Mark Nieuwsma**
**Grand Haven, Michigan**

**James O'Connell, Jr.**
**Walden, New York**

**Roy Paterik**
**Murfreesboro, Tennessee**

**Stanley Perea**
**Aurora, Colorado**

**Curry Pikkaart**
**South Haven, Michigan**

**Donald Plantinga**
**Spicer, Minnesota**

**Samuel Pomper**
**Annandale, New Jersey**

**P. Okke Postma**
**Rushville, New York**

**Allen Pruis**
**Eagan, Minnesota**

**Michael Talaga**
**Frankfort, Illinois**

**Larry Terlouw**
**Holland, Michigan**

**Calvin Vande Zande**
**Grapevine, Texas**

**Charles Van Engen**
**Holland, Michigan**

**Irwin Van Leeuwen**
**Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

**Craig Wagner**
**Des Moines, Iowa**

**Paul Wesselink**
**Ada, Michigan**

**Stephen Wing**
**Holland, Michigan**

**David Wygmans**
**Ada, Michigan (ADOPTED)**

**NECROLOGY**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Donald Anno Lam | January 1, 2015 | 94 |
| Marvin Charles Beukelman | January 2, 2015 | 79 |
| Donald James Vuurens | January 10, 2015 | 82 |
| Adrian John Newhouse | January 17, 2015 | 99 |
| Dorothy Hostetter | January 26, 2015 | 81 |
| Edwin Albert Martin | January 28, 2015 | 83 |
| Herman Hubert Dragt | January 29, 2015 | 88 |
| Charlotte Mae Heinen | February 8, 2015 | 77 |
| Victor William Ebert | February 9, 2015 | 84 |
| John Peter Ekema | February 11, 2015 | 88 |
| Richard J. Skoog | March 12, 2015 | 90 |
| Roger Paul Hendricks | March 17, 2015 | 89 |
| Gordon Eugene Alderink | March 31, 2015 | 87 |
| Robert Harold Schuller | April 2, 2015 | 88 |
| Robert Allen Vande Vord | April 30, 2015 | 58 |
| Richard Volney Coffill | May 16, 2015 | 83 |
| Curtis Ross Liesveld | May 16, 2015 | 64 |
| George Glenn Beukema | June 5, 2015 | 81 |
| Gerald Dwaine Heemstra | June 12, 2015 | 85 |
| Carol Cortelyou Cruikshank | June 16, 2015 | 92 |
| Bernice Tegeler | June 21, 2015 | 92 |
| Brook B. Stephens | July 24, 2015 | 84 |
| William McIntosh Cameron, Jr. | July 26, 2015 | 80 |
| Robert James De Young | August 25, 2015 | 78 |
| Albert Thurman Elswick | August 31, 2015 | 71 |
| Robert Patrick Meyer | September 18, 2015 | 71 |
| David J. Vander Laan | October 7, 2015 | 59 |
| Peter James Breen | October 25, 2015 | 96 |
| Richard Alan Miller | November 8, 2015 | 75 |
| James Garth DeWitt | November 11, 2015 | 78 |
| Donald P. Buteyn | November 30, 2015 | 91 |
| Dean Ray Meeter | December 3, 2015 | 68 |
| Donald Secor Pangburn | December 7, 2015 | 81 |
| John Nyitray, Sr. | December 16, 2015 | 88 |
| John Raymond deVelder | December 17, 2015 | 71 |
| Richard Pruiksma | December 30, 2015 | 85 |

**Donald Anno Lam**

Donald Anno Lam was born on March 18, 1920, in Holland, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1949. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1952.

Mr. Lam was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1952 and ordained by the Classis of West Sioux the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Montclair of Denver, Colorado, from 1952 to 1958; Saint Thomas, Virgin Islands, from 1958 to 1963; Calvary of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1963 to 1977; and Raritan, Illinois, from 1977 to 1985. He also served as the president of the Classis of Kalamazoo and, in his retirement, as a minister of calling at Bethany of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1994 to 1997.

Mr. Lam died on January 1, 2015, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was 94 years old.

**Marvin Charles Beukelman**

Marvin Charles Beukelman was born on September 8, 1935, in Monee, Illinois. He studied at Western Washington University, from which he graduated in 1957. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1961.

Mr. Beukelman was licensed by the Classis of Cascades in 1961 and ordained by the Classis of East Sioux the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First of Melvin, Iowa, from 1961 to 1966; Westwood Heights of Omaha, Nebraska, from 1966 to 1970; Roseland of Blomkest, Minnesota, from 1970 to 1981; Otley, Iowa, from 1981 to 1990; Sixth of Holland, Michigan, from 1990 to 1995; and Calvary of Holland, Michigan, from 1995 to 2000. Following his retirement he served as pastor of congregational care at Beechwood of Holland, Michigan.

Mr. Beukelman died on January 2, 2015, in Holland, Michigan. He was 79 years old.

**Donald James Vuurens**

Donald James Vuurens was born on November 1, 1932, in Holland, Michigan. He studied at Davenport College and then at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1963. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966.

Mr. Vuurens was licensed by the Classis of Holland in 1966 and ordained by the Classis of Illinois the same year. He pastored congregations in Baileyville, Illinois, from 1966 to 1970 and Forest Home of Muskegon, Michigan, from 1970 to 1974. He was engaged in specialized ministry with World Vision from 1974 to 1976 and dismissed to the Methodist Church in 1976.

Mr. Vuurens died on January 10, 2015, in Muskegon, Michigan. He was 82 years old.

**Adrian John Newhouse**

Adrian John Newhouse was born on December 4, 1915, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He began his undergraduate studies at Western Michigan University in 1934 and then studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1938. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1941.

Mr. Newhouse was licensed by the Classis of Kalamazoo in 1941 and ordained by the Classis of East Sioux the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First of Sibley, Iowa, from 1941 to 1943; Prairie View, Kansas, from 1943 to 1947; Hingham, Wisconsin, from 1947 to 1950; First of Sheldon, Iowa, from 1950 to 1955; Bethel of Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1956 to 1960; First of Zeeland, Michigan, from 1960 to 1971; and Grant, Michigan, from 1971 to 1981.

Mr. Newhouse died on January 17, 2015, in Grant, Michigan. He was 99 years old.

**Dorothy Hostetter**

Dorothy Hostetter, a retired RCA mission coworker, was born in Alliance, Ohio. She earned a B.M. in violin from Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester and a Bible certificate from Moody Bible Institute. She earned a Ph.D. in psychology from Michigan State University.

She was married to Paul Hostetter in 1969. In 1973, they moved to Mexico to work with the Ch'ol people in Chiapas. Upon leaving Chiapas they moved to California and then to Michigan, where she worked at Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids.

Mrs. Hostetter died on January 26, 2015, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She was 81 years old.

**Edwin Albert Martin**

Edwin Albert Martin was born on May 4, 1931, in Paterson, New Jersey. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1954. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1957. He also received his M.C.E. from WTS in 1972.

Mr. Martin was licensed by the Classis of Paramus in 1957 and ordained by the Classis of Rochester the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Ontario, New York, from 1957 to 1959; Bethany of Flint, Michigan, from 1959 to 1963; Dunningville of Allegan, Michigan, from 1963 to 1969; and Southridge of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1969 to 1972. He served in specialized ministry as a youth worker in Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1972 to 1997.

Mr. Martin died on January 28, 2015, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was 83 years old.

**Herman Hubert Dragt**

Herman Hubert Dragt was born on March 30, 1926, in Chicago, Illinois. He studied at Elmhurst College, from which he graduated in 1953. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1955.

Mr. Dragt was licensed by the Classis of Chicago in 1955 and ordained by the Classis of Germania the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First of Monroe, South Dakota, from 1955 to 1958; Trinity of Fulton, Illinois, from 1958 to 1963; Riverside Park of Hammond, Indiana, from 1963 to 1968; Community of Lafayette, Indiana, from 1968 to 1977; Emmanuel of Clinton, Wisconsin, from 1977 to 1986; and Elim of Kings, Illinois, from 1986 to 1991.

Mr. Dragt died on January 29, 2015, in Williamsport, Indiana. He was 88 years old.

**Charlotte Mae Heinen**

Charlotte Mae Heinen was born on March 29, 1937, in Lima, Iowa. She graduated from Central College. She was the first woman admitted to Western Theological Seminary, from which she graduated with a master's degree in Christian education in 1965. Charlotte received her Ph.D. from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkley, California, in 1984.

Ms. Heinen was ordained as a minister with the Reformed Church in America in 1982. She served churches in Michigan, Iowa, and Florida as director of Christian education. She was minister of children's ministries at Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, from 1969 to 1972, and at Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Lompoc, California. She was a Christian education consultant for churches and organizations, including David C. Cook Publishing Company, from 1972 to 1985.

Ms. Heinen died on February 8, 2015, in Juneau, Alaska. She was 77 years old.

**Victor William Ebert**

Victor William Ebert was born on January 23, 1931, in Waupun, Wisconsin. He studied at Fond du Lac College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1964. He also received a B.S. in 1958 and an M.S. in 1959, both from the University of Wisconsin.

Mr. Ebert was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin in 1964 and ordained by the Classis of Kalamazoo the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Twin Lakes of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1964 to 1968; First of Hamilton, Ontario, from 1968 to 1970; and Calvary of New Berlin, Wisconsin, from 1970 to 1986. He then served as an RCA chaplain at Mayo Foundation Hospital, Rochester, Minnesota, from 1986 until his retirement.

Mr. Ebert died on February 9, 2015, in Northfield, Minnesota. He was 84 years old.

**John Peter Ekema**

John Peter Ekema was born on December 20, 1926, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1964. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966.

Mr. Ekema was licensed by the Classis of Zeeland in 1966 and ordained by the Classis of West Sioux the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Free Grace of Middleburg, Iowa, from 1966 to 1982; Eden of Herman, Minnesota, from 1987 to 1990; Faith Community of Eddyville, Iowa, from 1990 to 1995; and Newton-Zion of Erie, Illinois, from 1995 to 1997. He also served as stated supply at Matlock, Iowa, from 1982 to 1987 and as interim pastor at First of Knoxville, Iowa, from 1998 to 1999.

Mr. Ekema died on February 11, 2015, in Hartselle, Alabama. He was 88 years old.

**Richard J. Skoog**

Richard J. Skoog was born on March 26, 1924, in New York City, New York. He began his undergraduate studies at the New York State Maritime Academy and completed them at New York University, from which he graduated in 1948. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953. Mr. Skoog also received an M.A. from New York University in 1953.

Mr. Skoog was licensed by the Classis of Westchester in 1953 and ordained by the Classis of New York the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Union of High Bridge, New York, from 1953 to 1957 and Park Hill of Yonkers, New York, from 1957 to 1964. He also served Baptist Park Hill Church of the Redeemer in Yonkers, New York, from 1964 to 1977 and was coordinator of the West Department of Correction in New York from 1977 to 1986.

Mr. Skoog died on March 12, 2015, in New York City, New York. He was 90 years old.

**Roger Paul Hendricks**

Roger Paul Hendricks was born on June 26, 1925, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953.

Mr. Hendricks was licensed by the Classis of Grand Rapids in 1953 and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Falmouth, Michigan, and Moddersville, Michigan, from 1953 to 1957; Redeemer of Royal Oak, Michigan, from 1957 to 1969; and First of Decatur, Michigan, from 1969 to 1985. He then served as a specialized interim minister for the Regional Synod of the Great Lakes from 1985 to 1989 and associate pastor at First of Portage, Michigan, from 1989 to 1998. In his retirement he was a visitation pastor at Grace of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He also served as a chaplain in the United Stated Air Force Reserve from 1964 to 1970.

Mr. Hendricks died on March 17, 2015, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was 89 years old.

**Gordon Eugene Alderink**

Gordon Eugene Alderink was born on June 28, 1927, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He began his undergraduate studies at Calvin College and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1950. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1953. He also studied at Michigan State University in 1964 and received a Th.M. from Western Theological Seminary in 1978.

Mr. Alderink was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon in 1953. He pastored the following congregations: Olivet of Muskegon, Michigan, from 1953 to 1957; Spring Valley of Fulton, Illinois, from 1957 to 1962; Archer, Iowa, from 1965 to 1969; Fennville, Michigan, from 1969 to 1980; and Marbletown of Stone Ridge, New York, from 1981 to 1990.

Mr. Alderink died on March 31, 2015, in Zeeland, Michigan. He was 87 years old.

**Robert Harold Schuller**

Robert Harold Schuller was born on September 16, 1926, in Alton, Iowa. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1947. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1950.

Mr. Schuller was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux in 1950 and ordained by the Classis of Chicago the same year. His first pastorate was at Ivanhoe of Chicago, Illinois, from 1950 to 1955. He began preaching at a drive-in theatre in Orange County, California, and founded and pastored the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, where he served from 1955 to 2012.

Mr. Schuller died on April 2, 2015, in Orange, California. He was 88 years old.

**Robert Allen Vande Vord**

Robert Allen Vande Vord was born on October 30, 1956, in Detroit, Michigan. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1989.

Mr. Vande Vord was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Southwest Michigan in 1989. He pastored the following congregations: Third of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1989 to 1995; First of Hospers, Iowa, from 1995 to 1997; and Silver Creek, Minnesota, from 1998 to 2004.

Mr. Vande Vord died on April 30, 2015, in Kalamazoo. He was 58 years old.

**Richard Volney Coffill**

Richard Volney Coffill was born on January 2, 1932, at Brooklyn, New York. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1954. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1957.

Mr. Coffill was licensed by the Classis of South Long Island in 1957 and ordained by the Classis of Raritan the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Harlingen of Belle Mead, New Jersey, from 1957 to 1963; Netherwood of Plainfield, New Jersey, from 1963 to 1968; and Deerpark of Port Jervis, New York, from 1968 to 1993. He also served as the president of the Particular Synod of New York in 1976.

Mr. Coffill died on May 16, 2015, in Holland, Michigan. He was 83 years old.

**Curtis Ross Liesveld**

Curtis Ross Liesveld was born on February 4, 1951, in Lincoln, Nebraska. He studied at the University of Nebraska, from which he graduated in 1973. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1976. He also received an M.A. from the University of Nebraska in 1988.

Mr. Liesveld was licensed and ordained by the Classis of West Central in 1976. He pastored the following congregations: First of Mitchell, South Dakota, from 1976 to 1986; and Hope of Lincoln, Nebraska, from 1987 to 1999. His remaining years were spent as a consultant to Gallup.

Mr. Liesveld died on May 16, 2015, in Lincoln, Nebraska. He was 64 years old.

**George Glenn Beukema**

George Glenn Beukema was born on July 6, 1933, in Chicago, Illinois. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1963. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1966. He received a D.Min. from Western Theological Seminary in 1982.

Mr. Beukema was licensed by the Classis of West Central in 1966 and ordained by the Classis of Lake Erie the same year. He pastored Calvary Reformed Church in Cleveland, Ohio, from 1966 to 1975 and then served as the field secretary for urban ministry of the Particular Synod of Michigan from 1975 to 1983. He founded Heartside Ministry, which serves the homeless community in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Mr. Beukema died on June 5, 2015, in Belmont, California. He was 81 years old.

**Gerald Dwaine Heemstra**

Gerald Dwaine Heemstra was born on March 29, 1930, in Sheldon, Iowa. He began his undergraduate studies at Northwestern College and completed them at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1955. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1958. He received a Ph.D. from the California Graduate School of Theology in 1976.

Mr. Heemstra was licensed by the Classis of West Sioux in 1958 and ordained by the Classis of Dakota the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Litchville and

North Marion, North Dakota, from 1958 to 1961; Carmel of Rock Valley, Iowa, from 1961 to 1966; Faith of Norwalk, California, from 1966 to 1973; and Mayfair Community of Lakewood, California, from 1988 to 1997. He served as the assistant pastor at Bethel of Bellflower, California, from 1974 to 1980.

Mr. Heemstra died on June 12, 2015. He was 85 years old.

**Carol Cortelyou Cruikshank**

Carol Cortelyou Cruikshank was born on September 17, 1922 in Brooklyn, New York. She studied at Vassar College, from which she graduated in 1943. She received an M.A. from Columbia University in 1948 and a certificate from Columbia's East Asian Institute in 1952. Her theological education was received at Fuller Theological Seminary, from which she graduated in 1986. She undertook her clinical pastoral education (CPE) at Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1980 and at the Memorial Medical Center in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1981.

Ms. Cruikshank was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Mid-Hudson in 1992. She served as pastor at the Reformed Church in Woodstock, New York, and was a summer minister in residence at Mohonk Lake, New Paltz, New York, from 1996 to 1999.

Ms. Cruikshank died on June 16, 2015, in New Paltz, New York. She was 92 years old.

**Bernice Tegeler**

Bernice Tegeler was born on March 5, 1923, in Fenton, Illinois.

Ms. Tegeler first entered missionary service to work with the Mescalero Apaches in New Mexico from 1945 to 1951. She then went to serve in Winnebago, Nebraska, from 1951 until her retirement in 1988. The Winnebago Tribe told Bernice that she could live in Winnebago as long as she wished and that the tribe would provide her a free home as long as she chose to stay, which ended up being 65 years.

Ms. Tegeler died on June 21, 2015, in Winnebago, Nebraska. She was 92 years old.

**Brook B. Stephens**

Brook B. Stephens was born on July 30, 1930, in Los Angeles, California. He studied at Kansas University, from which he graduated in 1952. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1960.

Mr. Stephens was licensed by the Classis of Illinois in 1960 and ordained by the Classis of Pleasant Prairie the same year. He pastored the following congregations: First of Waterloo, Iowa, from 1960 to 1967; Carmel of Rock Valley, Iowa, from 1967 to 1975; Newhall of Wyoming, Michigan, from 1975 to 1986; and Bethany of Lynwood, Illinois, from 1986 to 1995.

Mr. Stephens died on July 24, 2015, in Sioux Center, Iowa. He was 84 years old.

**William McIntosh Cameron, Jr.**

William McIntosh Cameron, Jr., was born on November 17, 1934, in Cleveland, Ohio. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1957. His theological education was

received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1960. He also received an M.A. from the State University of New York at Albany in 1981.

Mr. Cameron was licensed by the Classis of Lake Erie in 1960 and ordained by the Classis of Albany the same year. He began his ministry as the associate pastor at First Church in Albany, New York, where he served from 1960 to 1981. He also served as the stated supply at Christ Reformed Church at Watervliet, New York, from 1975 to 1981. He then pastored First Reformed Church in College Point, New York, from 1981 until his retirement in 2000.

Mr. Cameron died on July 26, 2015, in Albany, New York. He was 80 years old.

**Robert James De Young**

Robert James De Young was born on July 11, 1937, in Muskegon, Michigan. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1959. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1963.

Mr. De Young was licensed by the Classis of Muskegon in 1963 and ordained by the Classis of Schenectady the same year. He served as an intern at the Garden Grove, California, church from 1961 to 1962 and then as associate pastor at Bellevue Reformed Church in Schenectady, New York. He then served Christ Community Church in Clifton Park, New York, from 1965 until his retirement in 2002.

Mr. De Young died on August 25, 2015, in Pella, Iowa. He was 78 years old.

**Albert Thurman Elswick**

Albert Thurman Elswick was born on September 6, 1943, in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He studied at South Connecticut State College, from which he graduated in 1966. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1968.

Mr. Elswick was ordained by the Fairfield Association of the United Church of Christ in 1968 and received by the Classis of Orange the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Shawangunk of Wallkill, New York, from 1968 to 1977; and Onesquethaw of Feura Bush, New York, from 2000 to 2005. He was dismissed to the United Church of Christ in 1981 and received back to the Classis of Albany in 2000.

Mr. Elswick died on August 31, 2015, in Ripplemead, Virginia. He was 71 years old.

**Robert Patrick Meyer**

Robert Patrick Meyer was born on March 17, 1944, in Jersey City, New Jersey. He was a non-traditional student with some college prior to entering seminary in his retirement. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 2008.

Mr. Meyer was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Orange in 2001. He pastored Community Church in Wurtsboro, New York, from 2008 to 2014.

Mr. Meyer died on September 18, 2015, in Wurtsboro, New York. He was 71 years old.

**David J. Vander Laan**

David J. Vander Laan was born on July 21, 1956, in Greeley, Colorado. He studied at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1978. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1994.

Mr. Vander Laan was ordained by the Classis of East Sioux in 1994. He pastored First of Rotterdam Junction, New York, from 1994 to 2001; and Hope of George, Iowa, from 2001 to 2011. He served as minister under contract at Salem of Little Rock, Iowa, from 2012 to 2013 and First of Melvin, Iowa, from 2013 to 2015.

Mr. Vander Laan died on October 7, 2015, in George, Iowa. He was 59 years old.

**Peter James Breen**

Peter James Breen was born on September 2, 1919, in Coopersville, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1949. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1952.

Mr. Breen was licensed by the Classis of Muskegon in 1952 and ordained by the Classis of South Grand Rapids the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Corinth of Byron Center, Michigan, from 1952 to 1957; Fremont, Michigan, from 1957 to 1967; Calvary of Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1967 to 1979; and Fourth of Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1979 to 1984. He served Orthodox Reformed congregations from 1984 to 1991 and was dismissed to the Protestant Reformed Church in 1993.

Mr. Breen died on October 25, 2015. He was 96 years old.

**Richard Alan Miller**

Richard Alan Miller was born on July 11, 1940, in the Bronx, New York. He studied at Central College, from which he graduated in 1962. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1965. He also received his CPE at the Post Graduate Center for Mental Health in New York City in 1975 and an S.T.M. from New York Theological Seminary the same year.

Mr. Miller was licensed by the Classis of Bergen in 1965 and ordained by the Classis of Raritan the same year. He served as the pastor of Stanton Reformed Church in Stanton, New Jersey, from 1965 to 2002. He also served as a prison chaplain in Flemington, New Jersey, from 1972 to 1984.

Mr. Miller died on November 8, 2015, in Novato, California. He was 75 years old.

**James Garth DeWitt**

James Garth DeWitt was born on April 17, 1937, in Zeeland, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1959. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1962.

Mr. DeWitt was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon in 1962. He pastored the following congregations: Ferry Memorial of Montague, Michigan, from 1962 to 1966; Hope Community of Orlando, Florida, from 1966 to 1972; Rosewood of Jenison, Michigan, from 1972 to 1979; Calvary of Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1979 to 1994; and Mohawk, New York, from 1994 to 2002.

Mr. DeWitt died on November 11, 2015, in Walker, Michigan. He was 78 years old.

**Donald P. Buteyn**

Donald P. Buteyn was born on November 10, 1924, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1948. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1951.

Mr. Buteyn was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin in 1951 and ordained by the Classis of Holland the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Jamestown, Michigan, from 1951 to 1954; Midland, Michigan, from 1954 to 1958; and First of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1958 to 1964. He was dismissed to the Presbyterian Church in 1964.

Mr. Buteyn died on November 30, 2015, in Holland, Michigan. He was 91 years old.

**Dean Ray Meeter**

Dean Ray Meeter was born on June 20, 1947, in Corsica, South Dakota. He studied at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1969. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1973.

Mr. Meeter was licensed and ordained by the Classis of Dakota in 1973. He pastored the following congregations: Bethel of Leota, Minnesota, from 1973 to 1977; Hope of Montevideo, Minnesota, from 1977 to 1987; and Community of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, from 1987 to 1999. He completed his CPE and began teaching CPE while serving part-time at Wild Flower Presbyterian Church. During his last 14 years of active ministry he worked at Eastside Presbyterian Church and Bethesda Christian Counseling.

Mr. Meeter died on December 3, 2015, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He was 68 years old.

**Donald Secor Pangburn**

Donald Secor Pangburn was born on September 28, 1934, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1956. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1959. Mr. Pangburn also received his J.D. from Rutgers University Law School in 1977.

Mr. Pangburn was licensed by the Classis of Ulster in 1959 and ordained by the Classis of North Long Island the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Far Rockaway, New York, from 1959 to 1961; Parkway Community of Hicksville, New York, from 1961 to 1964; St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, from 1964 to 1966; New Lots of Brooklyn, New York, from 1967 to 1974; New Utrecht of Brooklyn, New York, from 1974 to 1978; Greenbush of East Greenbush, New York, from 1978 to 1985; Amity of Vischer's Ferry, New York, from 1985 to 1986; Helderberg of Guilderland Center, New York, from 1986 to 1987; and Bellevue of Schenectady, New York, from 1987 to 2001. He also served as the executive director of United Urban Ministry in Troy, New York, from 1978 to 1987 and as president of the Regional Synod of Albany from 1994 to 1995.

Mr. Pangburn died on December 7, 2015, in Altamont, New York. He was 81 years old.

**John Nyitray, Sr.**

John Nyitray, Sr., was born on December 27, 1926, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1952. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1955.

Mr. Nyitray was licensed by the Classis of Kalamazoo in 1955 and ordained by the Classis of Muskegon the same year. He pastored the following congregations: East Fruitport of Fruitport, Michigan, from 1955 to 1962; Fourth of Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 1962 to 1967; Second of Little Falls, New Jersey, from 1967 to 1984; and Second of Marion, New York, from 1984 to 1989.

Mr. Nyitray died on December 16, 2015. He was 88 years old.

**John Raymond deVelder**

John Raymond deVelder was born on October 17, 1944, in Vellore, India. He studied at Hope College, from which he graduated in 1965. His theological education was received at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1968. He received his certification as a supervisor from the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education in 1981 and his D.Min. from New York Theological Seminary in 2000.

Mr. deVelder was licensed by the Classis of New Brunswick in 1968 and ordained by the Classis of Palisades in 1971. He pastored Faith-Van Vorst of Jersey City, New Jersey, from 1971 to 1975; and United of Jersey City, New Jersey, from 1973 to 1975. He served as a hospital chaplain in Hartford, Connecticut, from 1975 to 1978 and as associate pastor and director of parish CPE at Zion's Reformed United Church of Christ of Greenville, Pennsylvania, from 1978 to 1983. He then served as chaplain and director of pastoral care and CPE at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey, from 1983 to his retirement in 2014. Mr. deVelder also served as president of the Classis of New Brunswick from 2000 to 2002 and was the president-elect of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy from 1998 to 2000 and president from 2000 to 2002.

Mr. deVelder died on December 17, 2015, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He was 71 years old.

**Richard Pruiksma**

Richard Pruiksma was born on January 10, 1930, in Clifton, New Jersey. He studied at Bloomfield College, from which he graduated in 1954. His theological education was received at Western Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1957. He also received a M.Th. from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1972.

Mr. Pruiksma was licensed by the Classis of Passaic in 1957 and ordained by the Classis of Greene the same year. He pastored the following congregations: Athens, New York, from 1957 to 1962; Kiskatom, New York, from 1957 to 1962; Trinity of Rochester, New York, from 1962 to 1975; and Second of Coxsackie, New York, from 1977 to 1984. He served as a chaplain at Coxsackie Correctional Facility from 1984 to 1992 and as a contract pastor at First of Athens, New York, from 1993 to 1998 and at New Baltimore, New York, from 2000 to 2004.

Mr. Pruiksma died on December 30, 2015. He was 85 years old.

## Report of the General Synod Council on Engaging in Christ's Kingdom Mission

Each spring the general secretary is required to report to the General Synod Council (GSC) on the progress of the various ends policies established by the GSC. The monitoring report for Christ's Kingdom Mission follows.

### ENDS POLICY E-4: CHRIST'S KINGDOM MISSION

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

### GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTERPRETATION

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations" (Psalm 67:1–2).

Mission becomes a way of life when we reach out to people with the gospel, meeting needs in neighborhoods, cities, and throughout the world. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we boldly give witness to the hope within us and willingly serve others by becoming the hands and feet of Christ in every corner of the world. The RCA commitment is to respond with God's love to meet spiritual and individual needs around the globe. It envisions the people of the RCA as a movement of faithful followers who live and love like Jesus as they radically follow Christ in mission together.

Individuals and churches experience transformation as they open themselves to be used by God and reach out in giving and receiving, learning and sharing, and extending the kingdom of God through missional engagement. It means bringing the good news of God's grace in Jesus Christ to those who have never heard the message, mobilizing RCA congregations to connect with global partners for greater kingdom impact, and providing resources to volunteers for the purpose of expanding involvement in mission efforts—extending compassion, mercy, and justice in places of discrimination, poverty, famine, disaster, and injustice. In a world of brokenness and need, we offer help, hope, and tangible expressions of God's love.

### OVERVIEW

Five initiative teams work within the Christ's Kingdom Mission strategic priority: Church Multiplication, focused on reaching the spiritually disconnected with new churches that proclaim the gospel; Equipping Congregations for Global Missional Engagement, which equips congregations to increase their global mission impact; Equipping Congregations for Local Missional Engagement, which helps congregations express the gospel of Christ in transformational ways in their local community; Missional Mosaic, which is focused on equipping congregations for cultural agility and empowering them to advocate on behalf of the marginalized; and Volunteer Engagement, which provides opportunities for volunteers of all ages to engage in service for Christ. RCA Disability Concerns also falls under the umbrella of the Christ's Kingdom Mission strategic priority.

### CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

The RCA will continue to start new churches that further the gospel—reaching the spiritually disconnected, bringing them into a community of authentic relationships, and introducing them to the God of grace who transforms lives and eternities.

The RCA will foster a sustainable movement of church multiplication by starting new congregations and missional communities. An environment for church multiplication is created through an intentional system and process: it begins with prayer and empowering through the Holy Spirit. "Then [Jesus] said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest'" (Matthew 9:37–38).

A multiplication movement is built on a solid foundation of assessment and evaluation of church planters and church planting locations, and then strengthened through training and equipping. It is life-giving for the ongoing ministry of church planters and new churches by providing coaching relationships and networks of planters for learning, support, and accountability. It expands as new congregations reproduce and established churches catch a vision to partner in the multiplying of new churches.

RCA Church Multiplication serves to give voice and inclusion to those not yet found among the churches and Christians who make up the Reformed Church in America, seeking those worshipers the Father is still looking for (John 4:23, Luke 15).

Seven strategic benchmarks fill out the multiplication vision statement and 15-year strategic plan. We seek to increase both the quantity and the quality of our church plants every year to 2028. One central qualitative benchmark is to organize our new congregations within five years after their launch date; at the time of organization the church will be thriving, missional, reproducing, self-supporting, and self-governing. Another benchmark is that more than 40 percent of our new plants will be congregations of color or multicultural from the start. We will pursue a high goal for conversion growth: more than 50 percent of the growth of these congregations will come from new professions of faith and adult baptisms.

We are thoroughly pursuing movement dynamics, working intensely with the innovators and most energized partners we can find. Intentional factors include anticipating change and growth, creating pathways for leadership capacity, cultivating the spiritual giftedness of movement leaders, gospel foundations, incarnational practices, and Holy Spirit empowerment. All of these contribute to an expanding, exponential movement as opposed to the maintenance of current patterns and structures as a goal in itself. These culture shifts in alignment with the global kingdom of God have encouraged an environment of risk and reward in church multiplication.

**Goals**

*One-Year (by June 2016)*

- 25 new congregation plans will be approved.
- 10 of the approved new congregation plans will be congregations of color, congregations that are intentionally multicultural, or congregations that are led by a female planter.
- 12 churches will be organized.
- Host Mission Catalyst Coalition work group for up to ten of our highest-capacity parent churches who will support each other to plant a new church every year, every other year, or every third year with the goal of growing our number of high-capacity churches by 5 percent every year.
- Expand the number of Kingdom Enterprise Zones to 13 throughout the U.S. and Canada, and start eight Together in Mission pilots.
- Coordinate a church multiplication coaching system with the developing Transformed & Transforming coaching system for alignment, synergy, mutual learning, and greater capacity.

*Five-Year (by June 2018)*

- 136 new RCA congregations planted in all eight regional synods, reflecting increasing church multiplication momentum and effectiveness.
- 73 congregations organized that are thriving, missional, and reproducing.
- 54 intentionally ethnic/multiethnic/multiracial church plants or congregations of color or that are led by a female planter.
- 5,400 new disciples of Jesus Christ engaged in new church plants.

**Progress**

- With four months to go, we have 19 approved New Congregation Plans toward the goal of 25. Eight of those are congregations of color or intentionally multicultural toward our goal of ten. We have one newly organized church, but with six extra approved last year beyond our goal, the cumulative results put us at seven organized churches toward a goal of 12 this year. Two of the four planter residencies in progress this year are female leaders of color, and two are male leaders of color.
- In January 2016, a second group of 26 leaders and 22 high-capacity parent churches met in Orlando. (A larger group will meet again next January 24 to 26, 2017, in Orlando.) Nine practical questions on how to plant every year and every other year were worked through in teams and 18 pages of wonderful training content were generated. This is shared with the wider circle of about 45 RCA and CRC churches committed to consistent, effective church planting. Out of the work of this group, a plan is in action for CRC churches in Canada to plant 100 new churches in the next ten years, starting now with four anchor churches.
- Our fifth wave of Kingdom Enterprise Zones has started; they engage Los Angeles and the Denver/Front Range region of Colorado. This collaborative effort of church multiplication in partnership with the CRC has totaled 15 major metro areas in Canada and the U.S. with dozens of new churches started and close to another 100 capacity-building initiatives. A partial list of urban contexts engaged so far: San Francisco and Sacramento, California; Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; Orlando and Miami, Florida; Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska; Seattle, Washington; Vancouver, British Columbia; Toronto, Ontario; New York City, New York; Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Lynden, Washington.
- Content-rich coaching for planters is being developed further with a dozen RCA-trained, experienced, certified coaches who use the storyboard tool.
- In April 2016, we hosted the Hispanic Summit ¡Aviva el Fuego! ("Fanning the Flame") in Orlando with a dozen new regional leaders for our Hispanic church planting work. Other churches participating in this vision-casting and training event tied together with Exponential over four days are looking to host or plant a new Hispanic congregation. We brought potential, assessed Latino planters to the gathering as well.

**EQUIPPING CONGREGATIONS FOR GLOBAL MISSION ENGAGEMENT**

For more than 150 years RCA Global Mission has been bringing the Word of God to people around the world. Hundreds of mission coworkers and volunteers have left the comforts of their own communities to be present in distant places, all in an effort to live and love like Jesus. We are excited to continue to live out that goal while we more closely engage with congregations.

The Global Mission Engagement initiative is focused on engaging and equipping congre-

gations to serve Christ by serving our international neighbors around the world. Through service, congregations will have transformational experiences that will equip them to become agents of transformation to the indigenous populations with whom they serve in our global community.

This team is focused on providing clear pathways to help congregations explore their call from God in a global context, to develop the capacity to live out that call, and to develop partners (other congregations and mission organizations) in order to carry out God's call for mission.

This initiative has three areas of focus:

1. Church equipping: developing, implementing, and working with individual congregations and clusters of congregations to provide consulting services, learning communities, and leadership communities to expand the work of RCA congregations around the world in quantity, quality, and impact.
2. Global strategies: the Global Mission Engagement team will develop strategic goals for RCA mission in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe that have measurable outcomes over the next five years. These goals will lead to ministries of transformation that will bring congregations and indigenous populations closer to Christ.
3. Restructuring: developing and identifying mission coworkers and mission partners that will work with our congregations to achieve our strategic goals.

The Global Mission Engagement staff team underwent transition in the past year. A new coordinator for congregational mission engagement, Megan Hodgin, was hired in November 2015. She joins Claudette Reid, the facilitator of global engagement, to complete this team, which is called to consult with and equip congregations for deeper global impact.

**Goals**

*One-Year (by June 2016)*

- Develop a global mission engagement process that assists congregations in the evaluation of their current missions paradigms, developing gospel-centered values and strategies for missions, and implementing a mission action plan that is in alignment with their values and vision (estimated completion date as of this writing: February 2016).
- Establish relational connections with at least 30 congregations in an effort to provide consultation, identify needed resources, and provide tools that equip them for global mission engagement that transforms.
- Launch pilot global mission engagement connection events (Re:Forming Missions, phase one) in three regions, engaging three to five congregations each in an assessment process and equipping them to develop a mission action plan (estimated completion date: May 2016).
- Develop a global mission engagement learning community (Re:Forming Missions, phase two) that will equip five congregations for the implementation of their mission action plans (estimated completion date: congregations will be recruited by June 1, 2016).

*Five-Year (by June 2018)*

- 60 congregations have completed the first phase of the global mission engagement process (Re:Forming Missions) and 75 percent of these congregations have

elected to commit to the second phase. (Note: this number is based on the estimate that ten congregations will participate in the pilots and an additional 50 will participate in ten events that will be held over the 24 months between June 2016 and June 2018.)

- 150 new partnerships have been created between RCA congregations and global partners or projects that last at least one year, with a retention rate of more than 75 percent beyond the first year.
- 35 new areas of focus have been developed that consist of current partnerships and new projects and partnerships.
- 20 student/teacher/professor exchanges between the United States and Canada and Israel/Palestine have been facilitated.
- 5 learning communities have equipped 35 RCA congregations in global mission engagement, facilitating the implementation of a mission action plan and addressing specific skills needed to move toward an expanded missional imagination and global mission strategies that transform.
- 20 new locally owned and operated businesses will be developed, generating enough income to support three viable, local projects on the global field, in partnership with RCA marketplace leaders who can advise, encourage, and mentor.

**Progress**

- Re:Forming Missions, a two-phase process, has been developed to guide churches through an assessment of their global engagement practices, equip them with biblical and historically proven mission principles, and guide them through the implementation of a mission action plan that aligns their vision, values, and goals. Several groups were key collaborators with the global missional engagement team in the development of this process:

    - Pastors and lay leaders representing churches of varying sizes (including church plants) and geographical regions, from the east coast to the west coast.
    - Objective professionals who are engaged in the nonprofit sector.
    - The executive leadership of each of the regional synods who interact regularly with the broad diversity of classes and congregations throughout the RCA.

    Other RCA staff and mission coworkers were also consulted in the development of the process.

    Phase one of Re:Forming Missions is a connection event that involves collecting data from the congregation and staff to help define the current reality of missions in the congregation. Participants explore the biblical mandate for missions and gospel centered, foundational mission principles and strategies. As phase one concludes, participants identify strategies that will grow their congregation's understanding of global mission and create readiness in preparation for the next steps of discernment, alignment, and restructuring. A follow-up gathering via video conference will allow participants to report on the progress they are making in the implementation of their strategies.

    Phase two of Re:Forming Missions leads participants through a process of mission action planning in order to increase effectiveness and better align their mission efforts with their theology of mission and congregational values. Phase two concludes with goal-setting, accountability, and follow-up segments.

- Two pilots of Re:Forming Missions phase one were held in April and June of 2016 in two different regional synods. Evaluations of these events are being processed in order to inform any necessary edits before officially launching the Re:-Forming Missions process in the fall of 2016.
- Participants in the two Re:Forming Missions phase one pilot events have been invited to participate in phase two and will be confirming their participation by August 2016.
- Since the fall of 2014, the Global Mission Engagement team has established relational connections with 35 congregations and provided consultation around global mission strategies.
- As part of the Peace Project, 40 Palestinian Christian children participated in a four-day arts camp held in Beit Sahour (West Bank) last summer, hosted by Joel Schoon-Tanis and others from West Michigan in collaboration with RCA mission coworkers Marlin and Sally Vis.
- In November 2015, a group of female clergy and lay leaders traveled to Oman to learn from those serving there, including Ken Bradsell at the Protestant Church of Oman and Doug Leonard and Justin Meyers at the Al Amana Centre (Leonard has since become a member of RCA staff). In May 2016, Megan Hodgin and Dustyn Keepers led a group of men and women on an Israel/Palestine engagement tour that highlighted the stories of women, past and present.

**EQUIPPING CONGREGATIONS FOR LOCAL MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

The Local Missional Engagement initiative is focused on equipping RCA congregations to live and love like Jesus in ways that transform communities. Our commitment is to encourage, resource, and support local pastors and churches to express the gospel of Jesus Christ with the community by working together for reconciliation, justice, and hope for all people. Our prayer and deep desire is to see churches embrace local communities with good news and good works that grow out of a graceful fervor and an eager expectation around the kind of transformation that matters most to God.

One way to accomplish this is through leadership communities—small groups of congregations that are practicing local missional engagement and pursuing common ministry outcomes. Together they share ideas, develop strategy, and measure benchmarks in the context of authentic relationships. The ultimate goal of local missional engagement leadership communities is to accelerate the learning, knowledge, and application of innovative approaches to local missional engagement. Specific outcomes include:

- A significant increase in the number of church volunteers in a congregation's various external ministries.
- A significant increase in the number of people served by external ministries.
- Development of collaborative relationships with other innovative RCA church leaders.
- Development of externally focused tools and resources that serve the broader church.

**Goals**

*One-Year (by June 2016)*

- Launch pilot Local Missional Engagement leadership community.
- Launch pilot learning community in partnership with Global Mission.
- Hold five connection events that offer opportunities to learn more about local

missional engagement and help congregations get connected to Transformed & Transforming.

*Five-Year (by June 2018)*

- 100 RCA congregations will be equipped for increased local missional engagement with tangible missional impact, reflecting sacrificial service, authentic relationships, and spiritual transformation.
- 50 congregations have engaged in substantial and quantifiable local missional engagement.

**Progress**

- Currently, six RCA churches are engaged in the pilot Local Missional Engagement leadership community through Leadership Network, a nonprofit leadership organization in Dallas, Texas.
- Three Local Missional Engagement learning communities have been launched. Seven congregations in West Michigan make up one of the learning communities, a second involves five Hispanic pastors and congregations in central California, and a third involves six congregations in Michigan and Indiana in collaboration with RCA/CRC Disability Concerns.
- A successful local missional engagement connection event for East/West Sioux Classes was attended by more than 20 church leaders, and there is strong interest in beginning a learning community.

**MISSIONAL MOSAIC**

Missional Mosaic focuses on helping congregations to live more fully into the biblical vision of *shalom* and the human hope of the beloved community.

The ancient Hebrews spoke the word *shalom* both at greeting and parting. The word meant "peace," but conveyed more, including life without discord and life with complete wholeness wherever one lived, worked, and worshiped.

The beloved community grows naturally out of Jesus' own hunger for the felt unity of his followers that mirrored the unity he shared with the Father (John 17:20–23). That unity expresses a readiness to engage everyday life at the levels of close friendship and for actively taking stands when life, including systems, places burdens that block access to the abundant life for people and places God created.
Missional Mosaic offers congregations two pathways as they strive for *shalom* and the beloved community, helping congregations:

1. Increase their cultural agility.
2. Advocate by addressing public policy.

One of the main ways that congregations will be helped along these two pathways is through learning communities. Missional Mosaic learning communities are small clusters of congregations (each represented by three to five people, usually including the pastor) who meet together on a matter of shared interest, both in and out of their ministry contexts, and who share their learnings with each other.

The outcomes are sustainable changes in the life and cultures of participating congregations and society at large.

*Increasing Congregational Cultural Agility*

Tangible increases in congregational cultural agility are crucial because of the wide changes God and people are bringing about in our communities. Inter- and intranational immigration, increasingly multiracial contexts, and the impact of young adult culture and patterns are all deeply changing the ministry contexts many RCA congregations face.

Many RCA congregations are in communities whose demographics have already changed radically; others are in areas where those demographics will change radically in the next 15 years. These changes often mean congregations need to realign their outreach ministries to achieve greater missional impact.

Additionally, many of our congregations rent space to congregations of other cultures, sometimes forging strong and beautiful ministry relationships with them, oftentimes experiencing challenging cross-cultural conflicts.

Still other congregations are already multiracial and/or multicultural, or their members are of one ethnic or cultural group and their pastor is of another. Such congregations might find greater ministry fruitfulness within their worshiping communities as they incorporate good or best practices around cultural agility.

With these God and human patterns in view, our congregations must step up into fresh challenges in order to live more fully into the prophetic vision of Revelation 7:9-10: "After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"

Helping congregations increase their cultural agility is a Transformed & Transforming approach to engage that prophetic vision. Missional Mosaic focuses on three areas:

1. Increasing understanding of bias and managing biases.
2. Increasing cultural agility or capacities to make kingdom-of-God space for people whose cultures differ from the congregation's own.
3. Growing practices of God's hospitality and congregational culture change within the congregation.

As congregations increase in these three areas, they will see tangible, kingdom-of-God growth in their missional outreach efforts and in their worshiping populations.

A number of scriptural grounds undergird the focus on increasing cultural agility. In John 17:20–23, Jesus prayed shortly before his arrest that all his followers would be one as he and the Father were one. He hoped that our *complete unity* not only served us, his followers, but would testify to the world of a primary, substantive experience they did not see replicated in their own societies. When those who did not know Jesus and those who hated him asked how our complete unity was possible, Jesus prayed we would point to him and to the Father who sent him and loved us.

Leviticus 19 focuses on moral holiness, giving guidance on living with "neighbors" and "aliens," as well as with decisions, words, and actions that are just.

Isaiah 2 is a prophetic vision about a day to come when all nations will go to the mountain of God for teaching, resourcing, and decisions about proper communal living that funda-

mentally result in universal peace brought on by the hospitality of God.

Second Corinthians 5 crafts key tenets of the ministry of reconciliation: that Christ died for all, requiring us to live for him rather than ourselves; that we are to regard no one from a worldly or human point of view; and that God has entrusted us with God's ministry of reconciliation.

Additionally, the Belhar Confession clarifies that since the principles of unity, reconciliation, and justice are deeply embedded in the character of God, these principles must also be deeply embedded in the character of God's followers. The Belhar gives the RCA a clear confessional basis for continuously transforming itself so that people of any culture can find themselves at home in the RCA.

*Advocacy through Addressing Public Policy*

Through Missional Mosaic lenses, RCA members will live with and speak up for poor, vulnerable, and marginalized people and advocate for compassionate justice on behalf of children, families, and communities, ensuring that they are able to experience the abundant life that Jesus intended for them.

Churches often have many ministries of compassion. Many churches are excellent at "giving a person a fish" or the adage of "see a need, fill a need." Food pantries are examples of that. Many churches do well with "teaching a person to fish" or equipping a person with needed knowledge, skill, or ability. Financial stewardship ministries are examples of that.

An additional ministry response to compassion can occur when congregations ask, "Why do so many need to receive a fish, or need to learn to fish in this particular way?" Responses to such a question pave the way for adding advocacy to a congregation's compassion ministry toolbox.

Advocacy seeks out the systemic supports that undergird injustices and addresses them at that level. Normally, that level involves addressing public policy. Addressing public policy:

1. Reduces or eliminates harmful effects caused or sustained by policy.
2. Creates or enhances opportunities for people affected by policy to increase their capacity for having greater and beneficial charge over their own lives.

The approaches of "giving a fish" or "teaching people to fish" tend to reach a relatively small number of people, families, or communities. Advocacy can serve hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of people.

There is ample scriptural support for advocacy around public policy:

- "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31:8–9).
- "Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God … who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry" (Psalm 146:5–7).
- In Isaiah 58:1–12, God makes clear that fasting and worshiping that pleases God fuses devotion with justice. "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the

homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?" (v. 6–7)
- In Mark 8:1–10, before he fed the 4,000, Jesus told his disciples that he had compassion for the crowd and did not want to send them away hungry.

The Belhar Confession also clarifies that, since the principles of unity, reconciliation, and justice are deeply embedded in the character of God, these principles must also be deeply embedded in the character of God's followers. The Belhar gives the RCA a clear confessional basis for continuously transforming itself in ways that help people and congregations find fresh and effective ways to stand with children, families, and communities who suffer under burdensome societal pressures.

**Goals**

*One-Year (by June 2016)*

- Launch two pilot learning communities to refine materials for future learning communities, with involvement through practical engagements and in different ministry and cultural contexts.
- Partner with Church Multiplication initiative team to develop cultural agility equipping for new church starts.
- Establish relationships with regional executives and develop launch strategy for three connection events and two additional learning communities beginning in fall 2015.
- Equip ten RCA congregations to participate in World Vision advocacy training.
- Equip seven RCA congregations to participate in advocacy for peace and justice connected to the RCA Peace Project.
- Launch one disability advocacy learning community.

*Five-Year (by June 2018)*

- 50 congregations have participated in cultural agility connection events in all eight regional synods.
- 50 congregations have participated in learning communities and have developed culturally agile outreach ministries and more diverse worshiping communities.
- 150 congregations have been trained to participate in and have conducted public policy advocacy campaigns.
- 25 youth groups have been trained to participate in and have conducted public policy advocacy campaigns.
- At least 30 congregations have participated in five learning communities focused on targeted public policy campaigns and have collaborated in launching a local campaign.

**Progress**

- In conjunction with the Woodrick Diversity Learning Center, the Mid-America cultural agility learning community, which included a team from Western Theological Seminary, had completed all six sessions by February 2016. The Mid-Atlantics cultural agility learning community completed the six sessions by April 2016.
- As of the end of February, nine connection events have taken place since the launch of Transformed & Transforming. Regional synodical executives were involved with most of them. Topics include World Vision advocacy training (1),

responding to the global refugee emergency (1), potential launching of new cultural agility learning communities (5), and training on cultural agility and leadership for 2015 General Synod delegates and for new GSC, commission, and staff members (2).

- In partnership with the Commission on Race and Ethnicity, two connection events on cultural agility in congregational life took place in March 2016.
- In partnership with Terry DeYoung, coordinator for disability ministries, two connection events around disabilities took place in April 2016 in the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics.
- In partnership with New Brunswick Theological Seminary, one connection event on addressing hunger through food security took place in April 2016.
- In partnership with World Vision and the regional synodical executives of New York and Albany Synods, two connection events on Israel-Palestine took place in April.
- In partnership with Megan Hodgin and with support from regional executives in Canada and the Heartland, two connection events on responding to the global refugee emergency took place in May.
- In discussion with the Classis of California on launching a cultural agility learning community in the spring of 2016.
- In discussion with World Vision on an Israel-Palestine peace advocacy connection event at their office in Washington D.C. in May.
- There is a preliminary agreement to hold two to three connection events on immigration and on building a culture of diversity in leadership in the Classis of the Southwest.
- In discussion with congregations in and around the Classis of Central California to launch a learning community focused on advocacy regarding the safety of people in the custody of police, courts, and corrections systems. This effort is in response to Tom De Vries' "It's Time" call, in which he responded to grand jury decisions to acquit police for killing unarmed black men.
- In discussion to launch a cultural agility learning community in West Michigan in October or November.
- In discussion with two congregations to pilot a hybrid learning community experience that borrows heavily from the Sankofa model. We anticipate two launches, one in the summer and the other in September.
- In discussion with New Brunswick Theological Seminary to cosponsor an interethnic, interdenominational, interfaith cultural agility learning community.

**VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**

The Volunteer Engagement initiative is focused on empowering, equipping, and engaging RCA volunteers of all ages in service for Christ through mission volunteer opportunities that have a transforming impact on individuals, congregations, and the partner communities in which they serve. We believe that as volunteers serve in the name of Christ, whether in their local community or around the world, that service can have long-term impact on all participants.

This team is focused on supporting congregations and equipping volunteers for service with RCA mission coworkers and mission partners. We work with volunteers throughout the planning process, providing support on the field and helping ensure effective debriefing and follow-through.

**Four Areas of Focus**

1. Mission trips: Working with local, long-term ministries, mission teams can help meet needs, build relationships, and share the hope of Christ. Mission trips are available for teams of all ages.
2. Disaster response: When disaster strikes, RCA volunteers can help provide much-needed support in the months and years that follow. Individual and group opportunities are available.
3. Individual volunteer opportunities: Opportunities are available for students and adults to serve for a few weeks or up to two years alongside RCA mission coworkers and partners.
4. Church equipping: We will offer resources, training, and equipping processes to help RCA churches take their next step in volunteer engagement. These equipping resources will be available to churches that serve through the RCA and those that do not.

Many RCA churches have been sending volunteers in mission for years. Our vision is to become a value-add for these churches as well as churches that are new to engaging volunteers in mission. Additionally, we will seek to involve individuals, especially the next generation, in dynamic volunteer opportunities and internships that allow volunteers to utilize their unique gifts and contribute to the long-term goals of our mission partners.

**Goals**

The RCA will engage all generations of volunteers in service for Christ through binational and global mission volunteer opportunities that will have a transforming impact on individuals, congregations, and the partner communities where they serve.

*One-Year (by June 2016)*

- Engage 800 RCA volunteers in the next year in service with RCA missionaries and mission partners.
- Support 50 RCA congregations in the next year through volunteer equipping processes or mission volunteer opportunities.
- Engage 40 volunteers in service through partnership with World Vision in Chicago, Illinois, and develop a plan for expansion in 2016-2017.
- Engage five congregations in rapid disaster response volunteering in partnership with World Renew Disaster Response Services.
- Develop and pilot a short-term mission connection event to equip local church leaders with the Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission (www.soe.org).
- Begin to collect stories of transformation.

*Five-Year (by June 2018)*

- Engage 2,000 volunteers annually with measurable impact on youth and adult participants, sending congregations, and partner communities. Minimum participation to include 850 in disaster response; 1,100 serving with RCA mission personnel and mission partners; and 50 individual volunteers and interns.
- Support 150 congregations through volunteer equipping processes or mission volunteer opportunities.
- Become fully accredited with the Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission and develop tools to help volunteers, congregations, and mission partners align with the standards.

- Recruit and train eight volunteer leaders—one in each RCA region—to recruit volunteers, train leaders, and evaluate opportunities in their region.
- Have a collection of stories of transformation.

**Progress**

- 1,075 volunteers were engaged in service with RCA missionaries and mission partners from June 1, 2015, through May 31, 2016.
- 49 RCA congregations were supported from June 1, 2015, through May 31, 2016, through group mission volunteer opportunities.
- 38 volunteers were engaged in service through partnership with World Vision in Chicago, Illinois. Additional weeks were developed for teams to serve in Chicago as well as the opportunity for a pilot in Washington, D.C. in 2016–2017.
- Seven congregations were engaged in volunteering with rapid disaster response in partnership with World Renew Disaster Response Services.
- A short-term mission connection event was developed to equip local church leaders with the Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission. A connection event was held in October 2015 in Orange City, Iowa, and 12 congregations participated.
- Eight RCA churches and 26 individuals were supported through scholarships from the Next Generation Missional Engagement Fund.

**DISABILITY CONCERNS**

Scripture's vision of the kingdom is a unifying embrace of the love and grace of Jesus Christ that reaches all people—every race, tribe, people, and language, every disability and special need. Raising awareness and making our churches accessible to people with disabilities establishes a needed foundation, but our own attitudes require even greater transformation, so that ministries to and for people with disabilities grow into ministries with and by people with disabilities. The vision of RCA Disability Concerns is to welcome and engage the gifts of all people in Christ's ministry—becoming accessible, inclusive, missional churches where everybody belongs and everybody serves.

**Goals**

*One-Year (by June 2016)*

- Complete learning community on local missional engagement with people with disabilities that leveraged partnership with CRC Disability Concerns (three RCA and three CRC congregations).
- Host Disability Concerns leadership conference.
- Lead two classis connection events focused on disability concerns.

*Five-Year (by June 2018)*

- 40 churches have conducted an accessibility audit or adopted a church disability policy so that substantive changes are made in their welcome of people with disabilities.
- 200 churches have identified a church disability advocate who is empowered to champion the full welcome and engagement of people with disabilities so that disability awareness is deepened and people with disabilities are engaged.
- 15 churches have engaged in local mission efforts, volunteer engagements, or public advocacy campaigns that address issues that are harmful in some way

to people with disabilities so that people with disabilities can flourish as active community members.
- One leadership community has been established for churches that are engaging people with disabilities exceptionally well.

**Progress**

- In August 2015, hosted a two-day RCA–CRC Disability Concerns leadership conference that equipped 26 RCA disability advocates. The conference incorporated presentations by six churches in a learning community on local missional engagement with people with disabilities and included a four-hour session that modeled the asset-based community development model for local mission.
- Led a classis connection event during Ontario Classis' October 2015 stated session on churches becoming compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- In March 2016, the coordinator for disability concerns led a classis connection event in British Columbia Classis around churches welcoming and engaging people with disabilities.

**ADDITIONAL GLOBAL MISSION REPORTING**

**PIM Shares**

Global Mission staff is grateful for the faithfulness of congregations and individuals in their support of the RCA's ministries with the global church. As the RCA's outreach to the world, Global Mission has partnered with national churches and organizations to express the RCA's support for their outreach to a broken world. PIM (Partnership-in-Mission) shares pledged by congregations and individuals are the major source of financial support for RCA mission personnel, providing mission personnel with adequate resources to fulfill their ministries. Global Mission staff gives thanks to God for the faithfulness of RCA congregations and individual members.

General Synod 2015 set the value of a PIM share for 2016 at $6,300; we are recommending an increase of $100 in the value of a PIM share for 2017.

**R 16-40**
**To set the value of a Partnership-in-Mission (PIM) share for 2017 at $6,400. (ADOPTED)**

**Global Mission Statistics**

The Reformed Church in America, through the Global Mission program, impacts the church of Jesus Christ around the world through the work and witness of 51 RCA employees and 41 workers employed by RCA global partners, supported by RCA congregations through Partnership-in-Mission shares. Together these 92 mission personnel serve and relate to 72 national churches and Christian service agencies.

**Transitions in Mission Personnel**

**Larry and Linda McAuley** have retired after 35 years of serving as mission coworkers with the Reformed Church in America. Larry and Linda have faithfully served alongside mission partners in Africa for 37 years, starting as volunteers and then serving as mission coworkers starting in 1981. Larry and Linda trained countless leaders in Kenya, Mala-

wi, Mozambique, and Zambia over the years, contributing to the shift within the African church from being primarily a receiver of missionaries to a sender of missionaries to communities all over Africa. The contributions of those equipped by Larry and Linda to the advancement and growth of the church are immeasurable.

**R 16-41**
**Whereas Larry McAuley, a native of Burlington, Iowa, and a graduate of Kansas State University and Covenant Theological Seminary with bachelor's and graduate degrees in agronomy and theology, and Linda McAuley, a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, a graduate of Sterling College, and a qualified elementary and Christian educator, obeyed the call of God to serve in mission; and**

**Whereas after completing two-year volunteer teacher internships in Dembi Dollo, Ethiopia, and serving with the Rev. Robert and Morrie Swart with the Daasanech along the Omo River, they became RCA mission personnel and traveled to Alale, Kenya, to serve with the Africa Inland Church (AIC) as pioneer mission coworkers to the unreached Pokot people group from 1981 to 1997, with hosts of other RCA volunteers and mission personnel; and**

**Whereas Larry and Linda served as country consultants in Malawi with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee from 1998 to 2012, providing quality leadership and training in the area of sustainable Christian development, leadership, and management; and**

**Whereas the McAuleys returned to Kenya in January 2013 and served faithfully as community development mission coworkers by equipping AIC leaders in western Kenya at Bishop Birech College and assisting the more than 24 growing Pokot congregations, Alale In–Patient Center and Clinic, Kameris Primary School, Girls Secondary School, and their communities to promote self-sufficiency and sustainable Christian community development;**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 210th session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 9 through 14, 2016, at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, with gratitude to God for their life and witness, honors Larry and Linda McAuley with a prayer of thanksgiving and a token of our esteem. (ADOPTED)**

**Bruce and Laurie Hawley** have retired after 20 years of service to the Reformed Church in America as mission coworkers. Bruce and Laurie began their journey as RCA mission coworkers in 1996 when they accepted God's call to become mission associates in Oman, working with the Al Amana Centre and also the Protestant Church in Oman.

Over the last 16 years the Hawleys have guided and equipped thousands of people to heed God's call to help those in need around the world by leading groups as mutual mission facilitators. The Hawleys have helped lead work groups and helped emphasize spiritual development for groups serving in places from New Jersey to Niger. Before becoming RCA mission coworkers, Bruce and Laurie lived in Delmar, New York, where they raised their family and were active in their church.

**R 16-42**
**Whereas Bruce and Laurie Hawley heeded God's call on their life into mission in 1996 with an initial call to Oman; and**

**Whereas after three and a half years in Oman they began a ministry working with RCA church work groups around the world, which has made a physical and spiritual impact on the lives of thousands of volunteers with thousands more impacted by the work done; and**

**Whereas Bruce and Laurie Hawley have served faithfully for 20 years alongside thousands of short-term missionaries and partners;**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 210th session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 9 through 14, 2016, at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, with gratitude to God for their life and witness, honors Bruce and Laurie Hawley with a prayer of thanksgiving and a token of our esteem. (ADOPTED)**

**New Mission Assignments**

Olivia Holt will be working in Nicaragua with RCA mission partners the Moravian Church in Nicaragua and the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua. Olivia will serve as a liaison between mission teams and volunteers, allowing staff in Nicaragua to fully dedicate themselves to their ministry while connecting volunteers to God's work in Nicaragua and how they can impact others and be impacted themselves.

Jennifer Lucking is shifting from a role on the staff of RCA Global Mission to become an RCA mission coworker. Jennifer has been called to come alongside those who have been exploited and enslaved around the world. She is collaborating with organizations and RCA congregations to serve the needs of victims of human trafficking and help congregations to recognize the victims in their own backyards.

Joshua Vis has been appointed as an RCA mission coworker to Israel/Palestine. Joshua will be helping to guide RCA congregations and groups on study tours of the Holy Land, exposing them to both the historical and current realities of the land and the people.

**New Staff**

Doug Leonard began his new role as director of Global Mission on April 15, 2016. Doug had previously been serving in the Sultanate of Oman, where he was the director of the Al Amana Centre. Prior to his time in Oman, Doug was the pastor of Reformed Church of Cortlandtown in Montrose, New York. Doug is a graduate of the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, and earned his Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Megan Hodgin began her new role as coordinator for congregational mission engagement on November 1, 2015. Megan came to the Global Mission staff from Fellowship Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan. She is a graduate of Northwestern College and holds a Master of Divinity from Western Theological Seminary. Megan's primary role is to help equip congregations to live out the call that God has placed on each of us to reach the world through the love of Jesus. Megan leads a team that would love to engage with your congregation to help maximize your mission impact around the world.

**Deaths**

Anna Mae Dekker, age 91, passed away on February 6, 2016. Along with her husband, Wilbur (Bill) Dekker, she served as an RCA mission coworker in Bahrain from 1951 to 1969.

Bernice Tegeler, age 93, died on June 21, 2015. Bernice served as an RCA mission coworker from 1945 to 1990, first at Mescalero Reformed Church in New Mexico and then at Winnebago Reformed Church in Nebraska from 1951 through her retirement in 1990.

Dr. Ted Herbelin died on October 3, 2015. Ted and his wife, June, served as RCA medical mission coworkers in the Middle East from 1985 to 1987.

## Report of Words of Hope

Words of Hope is an international media ministry founded and owned by supporting classes of the Reformed Church in America. Words of Hope's mission is to build the church in the hard places by equipping indigenous Christian churches and ministries to proclaim the gospel, especially through the use of media.

The areas where Words of Hope does ministry are difficult to reach with the gospel, either because of poverty, diversity of language, geography, or social antagonism toward Christianity. In order to enable local Christians to expand their witness in their own heart languages in these hard places, Words of Hope provides training, equipment, and financial resources. This allows indigenous Christians to undertake media ministry efforts in their own cultural context. Words of Hope maintains ongoing relationships with these indigenous ministries to support their efforts, help them grow in effectiveness, and preserve accountability. Having ministry take place from within each region allows for local follow-up efforts that connect individual listeners to local churches.

Currently, Words of Hope's ministry fields include Albania, the Arab world, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Niger, North America, South Sudan, Tibet, Turkey, and Uganda. Each ministry field requires its own media approach. Depending on the available resources and preferences in a given region, an assortment of radio programs, CDs, DVDs, text messages, Internet, Skype, Facebook, print materials, and satellite television are used to proclaim the gospel.

Highlights of the past year include partnership and growth opportunities in Turkey, language and studio expansion in South Asia, and the addition of the Kup-Sabiny language broadcast in Uganda.

The partnership between Words of Hope and Reformed Church in America Global Mission in outreach to Turkey is an exciting one. Words of Hope's Turkish ministry director and his wife are now employed by RCA Global Mission. Since our director's wages and insurance costs are covered by the RCA, Words of Hope is able to channel more funding toward the expansion of Turkish radio broadcasts and the hiring of additional personnel. We believe that together Words of Hope and RCA Global Mission will be able to reach more individuals for Christ than either organization could alone.

Words of Hope has also partnered with Radio Shema in Turkey for the past 14 years. Now,

thanks to the support of generous donors, Words of Hope has been able to help Radio Shema purchase a second radio station in Turkey, which will be used to reach a part of the country that previously had no access to local Christian broadcasting. A new producer has also been hired to prepare additional Words of Hope Turkish programs. This producer, who is an elder in a local Turkish church, is gearing his programs toward reaching children. These programs combine Bible stories with sound effects and dramatization to bring the truth of the Scriptures to life in engaging new ways.

Under the leadership of A.K. Lama, Words of Hope's ministry presence in South Asia continues to expand as well, in partnership with Back to God Ministries International. In 2015 Lama helped to create the Drukpa Educational Society in the country of Bhutan. This initiative is advancing our outreach opportunities in the region, as we anticipate introducing three additional Bhutanese language broadcasts there in the near future. A newly constructed recording studio in the area will be operational later this year as well.

In the country of Uganda, Words of Hope is pioneering a radio broadcast in the Sabiny language, which is geared toward reaching a tribe living in isolation in the mountains. This people group has been known to embrace the tradition of female genital mutilation. Words of Hope broadcasts, produced by a woman who was able to escape this tradition and obtain an education, will work to educate the Sabiny people about the dangers of female genital mutilation using both biblical and medical arguments.

From Turkey to South Asia to Uganda, Words of Hope continues to employ unique strategies and partnerships in order to share the hope of Christ in the heart languages of the world's peoples.

Words of Hope is deeply grateful for the support of many RCA churches that has allowed this outreach ministry to grow. In 2015, contributions from RCA congregations totaled $534,775. These dollars mean that lives have been eternally changed for Christ. Thank you for helping Words of Hope reach out to the ends of the earth.

## Report of the Church Growth Fund

The Reformed Church in America Church Growth Fund, Inc. (CGF) is a nonprofit corporation that functions under the supervision of the General Synod. The CGF supports the work of the denomination by making affordable-rate loans to RCA churches and related agencies for the purchase, construction, and improvement of buildings and other properties used in their ministries. The CGF loan programs offer unsecured loans up to $100,000 and secured borrowing up to $5 million.

As a primary source of funding for loans, the CGF sells interest-bearing investments called savings certificates. The CGF offers two types of savings certificates:

1. Term savings certificates, which are available in maturities from one to ten years.
2. Demand savings certificates, which allow the investment of additional funds and the redemption of amounts in the certificate (subject to the limits described in the CGF Offering Circular).

As a way to further support the denomination, the CGF contributes a portion of its earnings annually to the General Synod Council (GSC), which awards the funds as grants to support RCA Church Multiplication. In 2014, as a way to support Transformed & Transforming, the CGF began making additional contributions to the GSC for the Next Generation Missional Engagement Scholarship Fund. This fund provides scholarships to middle-school–aged children through post-college young adults to cover the cost of mission trips, internships, disaster response work, vision and study tours, and missional training experiences.

More specific information on CGF loans and how to invest in savings certificates is available on the CGF website, www.rca.org/cgf.

**Assets**

In the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015 (FY15), assets grew by $1.1 million (1.6 percent) to $72.5 million. CGF assets at the end of FY15 consisted primarily of loans of $49 million and cash and investments of $24.6 million. Loans during FY15 increased by $1.8 million (3.8 percent) as the CGF funded $7.6 million in new loans to 16 churches and received principal payments of $5.8 million from existing borrowers.

With improving economic conditions and growth in ministries, the CGF in FY15 financed $2.6 million for the construction and improvement of several RCA church buildings. The CGF also refinanced $3.8 million of loans that churches had with local financial institutions, using more favorable interest rates and repayment terms.

The overall financial health of CGF church borrowers is strong as the U.S. economy continues its steady growth. This has resulted in few delinquent loans in the CGF portfolio and contributed to the CGF continuing its long history of never having experienced a loan principal loss. There are a few church borrowers who are challenged to repay their loans and the CGF works in partnership with these affected congregations by restructuring debt repayment terms to ensure a viable continuance of their ministries.

**Savings Certificates**

At year end FY15, savings certificate investment was at $30.5 million, representing an increase of $544,905 (1.8 percent) over the previous year. Savings certificate investors continue to recognize the favorable return received on their funds as well as how their

investment supports the mission of the CGF. Funds received from investments in savings certificates are used primarily by the CGF to make loans to RCA congregations throughout the United States, its territories, and Canada.

CGF savings certificates are state-regulated securities. Currently the CGF is authorized to sell savings certificates in 30 states, which are listed on its website at www.rca.org/cgf. Rates of interest paid on savings certificates, along with other information on the CGF and how to invest in savings certificates, can also be found on the website.

**Earnings**

In FY15 the CGF showed net earnings of $994,815 before making its annual contribution to the GSC for Church Multiplication grants and Next Generation Missional Engagement scholarships. Net earnings in FY15 decreased by $334,933 (25 percent) from the previous year. As a result of loan growth, the CGF increased its interest income by $134,025 (7 percent), but this was offset by unrealized losses in the CGF investment portfolio as the overall stock and bond markets dropped during the year.

**Ministry Grants**

In 1999 the CGF began contributing a portion of its earnings to the GSC to be used for grants to new church plants in support of the RCA's denominational goal, Our Call. With Our Call now complete, the CGF has continued its support of RCA church planting initiatives that will continue through Transformed & Transforming. Since 1999 the CGF has contributed $4.5 million to support RCA Church Multiplication; grants have been made from those funds to 243 church plants. In FY15 the CGF contributed $350,000 for church plant grants.

In FY15 the CGF also contributed $50,000 to the GSC to be used for the Next Generation Missional Engagement Scholarship Fund. The CGF has committed to giving $150,000 over three years in support of this program.

**Financial Strength**

One measure of the financial strength of an entity is its level of net assets, also known as capital or equity. As of September 30, 2015, the CGF had capital of $41.8 million, which represents its accumulation of earnings and contributions received over its years of operations.

The funds received from savings certificates are used by the CGF primarily to make loans to RCA churches. The ability of the CGF to repay savings certificate investors is based upon its level of capital as well as repayment of the loans funded from certificate investment dollars. CGF loans typically are secured by first mortgages on church facilities. The CGF follows strict guidelines to make sure congregations can sustain such loan payments. While past performance is no guarantee of future events, the CGF has never experienced a loss of principal on any loan, and no CGF savings certificate investor has ever experienced a loss of investment or missed receiving an interest payment.

**Financial Highlights**

| | FY 2014 | FY 2015 |
|---|---|---|
| Total assets | $71,342,645 | $72,466,423 |
| Net assets (capital) | $41,197,866 | $41,792,681 |
| Savings certificates outstanding | $30,026,578 | $30,571,483 |
| Number of churches with loans | 97 | 99 |
| Dollar amount of loans outstanding | $47,209,851 | $49,028,419 |
| Number of loans funded in year | 14 | 18 |
| Dollar amount of loans funded in year | $9,018,871 | $7,685,435 |
| Net earnings before Church Multiplication grant | $1,329,748 | $994,815 |
| Contributions to GSC for ministry grants | $373,000 | $400,000 |

**Future CGF Activity**

The CGF will continue to follow its primary mission of providing affordable-rate loans to RCA churches for the purchase, construction, and improvement of buildings used in ministry. The CGF has also set as a goal the ability to contribute increasing amounts to the GSC for ministry grants to support the growing church planting initiative and the anticipated popularity and requests for next generation scholarships.

To meet the goal of larger contributions to the GSC, the CGF needs to increase earnings, which can be done primarily by growing its loan portfolio. A larger loan portfolio needs to be funded primarily from growth in the sale of savings certificates.

The CGF will continue to implement marketing programs as a way to create a greater awareness within the denomination of the organization, its products, and how borrowing churches and investors can benefit through them.

## Report of the Board of Benefits Services

The Board of Benefits Services (BOBS) was established by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and incorporated and approved by Act of the Assembly of the State of New York on April 16, 1923.

The purpose of the Board of Benefits Services is to provide retirement security, assistance grants, and other benefits for eligible RCA ordained ministers and their dependents and for certain employees of RCA congregations, classes, regional synods, and other RCA-affiliated boards and agencies.

The board met in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on October 20–21, 2015, and again in Tempe, Arizona on March 7–8, 2016. The volunteer board consists of 17 members including pastors and professionals from business, finance, investments, and law. Board membership also includes the officers of General Synod Council and the general secretary.

**Review of Services and Ministries**

*Fidelity Investments and Fund Management*

As a follow up to the Request for Proposal completed in spring 2015, staff has been working with Fidelity on a number of initiatives.

1. In its continual effort to improve administrative process and drive down the cost of administration, staff and Fidelity have been inviting churches to transmit funds electronically through a Fidelity online portal. The response and participation from churches has been limited at this time. The manual submission of contributions as churches know it now will not be available as a payment method beyond 2017. Staff will be focusing on preparing churches to move to the electronic system in 2016. Full cooperation from treasurers is needed to make this transition successful.
2. On August 17, the Fidelity Portfolio Advisory Service at Work (PAS-W) program was rolled out to participants in the RCA retirement program. PAS-W is an optional service that provides professional management of a participant's plan account for advisory fee of a maximum of 0.50 percent, billed quarterly. Investment professionals create an investment strategy that aligns with the personal goals of an individual and will monitor those investments and adjust the strategy based on the market or life changes of the participant. This investment service is optional. Enrollment campaigns are held annually to allow a participant to enroll at a discounted price in order to test the program.
3. New participants have been enrolling online through Fidelity as of November 2015. Participants are now able to list and update their beneficiaries, change their employee contributions, talk with guidance consultants, and use financial planning tools that are available through the Fidelity NetBenefits website.
4. As a result of the new fee and performance agreement with Fidelity, effective January 1, 2016, plan administration fees were reduced by 3 percent—from 30 basis points to 29 basis points annually.

In collaboration with the Investment Advisory Committee (IAC), in its fiduciary role, BOBS monitors the performance of the investment options (funds) available under the two retirement programs. BOBS and the IAC are assisted in this task by outside investment consultants. Lockton Financial Advisors, our external financial advisers, continue to assist the Board of Benefits Services in monitoring the investment performance and administrative expenses associated with the plans.

*RCA 403(b) Retirement Correction Project*

In 2015, staff continued to collect the necessary information from RCA employers for the 403(b) correction project. As reported in prior years, the correction project was initiated in 2012 to audit the participation and payment of the required employer contributions related to the retirement accounts of eligible ministers under call or contract. Many employers were out of compliance with the plan document and the *Book of Church Order* and had not contributed the required 11 percent of compensation to eligible RCA ministers' retirement accounts.

As a result of the correction project, nearly 1 million dollars has been added to the retirement savings accounts of RCA ministers. Nine churches have reported they will not contribute the outstanding funds ($183,429) to the 403(b) accounts of their pastors. A number of churches have not responded to the requests for payment or have only provided the basic information requested by staff to perform the review.

By housing the Retirement Security Form alongside the Consistorial Report Form, the necessary information for 2015 has been collected for more than 75 percent of churches and ministers as of March 15, 2016. BOBS staff appreciate the cooperation of treasurers and consistory members in providing this information. Thank you.

At General Synod 2015, final approval was given for part-time ministers to be covered under the 403(b) plan unless explicitly elected out by their consistory and classis. This option needs to be formally documented by completing the Part Time Minister Opt Out Form and submitting it to the Board of Benefits Services. To obtain a copy of this form, email retirement@rca.org.

Outside auditors annually review the project and have commented positively on the progress made. In the 2015 audit, they expressed that the same controls need to be extended to lay employees participating in the RCA 403(b) plan.

To participate in the 403(b) plan, employers need to complete and submit an adoption agreement to the Benefits Services office. This is a compliance document that can allow a consistory some flexibility in defining the terms of its participation in the RCA 403(b) retirement program. The agreement recognizes the RCA 403(b) plan as the retirement plan of the employer. If an employer submits funds on behalf of its ministers, the board recognizes this action as evidence that the employer has adopted the agreement. Staff will continue to request adoption agreements from employers as required by the plan. The adoption agreement should be completed annually, or whenever there are staff or contribution changes. The agreement can be downloaded from the church treasurers' page on the RCA website, www.rca.org/resources/church-treasurers-and-administrators.

*Reallocation Project*

The Board of Benefits Services' non-qualified retirement plan holds funds for 1,939 participants with a market value as of December 31, 2015, of more than $250,000,000. This plan was closed to new participants and contributions as of December 21, 2004. The plan has advantages and disadvantages. Staff feels that the potential disadvantages are compelling enough to open the opportunity for participant funds to be transitioned out of the RCA retirement plan and into the 403(b) retirement plan.

Following approval at the 2015 General Synod, the legal plan document of the RCA retirement plan was amended to allow the reallocation of participant funds from the RCA retirement plan to the RCA 403(b) retirement plan. The Board of Benefits Services implemented

a process in the summer of 2015 to reallocate retirement savings from the RCA retirement plan to the RCA 403(b) plan. This reallocation was a two-step process that required participants to provide relevant information to confirm their eligibility and determine the amount that could be reallocated for the 2014 tax year. Staff worked closely with Fidelity Investments in the process and the review was completed in strict compliance with the IRS 415(c) rules. Participation was optional.

On September 22, $6,693,615 was reallocated from one plan to the other. This process will take place again in the summer of 2016, for tax year 2015, for eligible participants in the retirement program.

*Insurance Programs*

Benefits Services continues to partner with the Reformed Benefits Association (RBA) to provide benefits to eligible participants of the RCA. The point of entry for acquiring benefits through the RBA is by enrolling in their medical insurance plan. Life insurance is available to those participating in the medical plan. Long-term disability (LTD) insurance is available through the RBA for lay employees.

Since group life and group long-term disability insurance are required for RCA ordained ministers according to Formulary 5 in the *Book of Church Order*, the Board of Benefits Services offered open enrollment for these insurances. BOBS provides an option for ordained ministers to enroll in group life and LTD insurance for churches that chose not to enroll in medical coverage through the RBA. Churches are billed quarterly for these policies. If the bill is outstanding at the end of the quarter, a Notice of Cancellation is sent to the pastor, the treasurer, and the classis. The loss of coverage is a violation of the *Book of Church Order* and put these employers out of compliance. More importantly, this loss of coverage puts the participants at financial risk should an uncovered insurance event happen. We continue to work with the classis to ensure proper insurance coverage is available and provided to all eligible RCA ministers. A summary of ministers without life and LTD insurance is communicated to each classis stated clerk prior to termination of the policy.

As of February 2016, 385 RCA ministers were provided with basic life coverage and 731 RCA ministers were enrolled in LTD insurance coverage through the Board of Benefits Services.

*Retiree Chaplains Ministry*

Benefits Services currently employs 25 retiree chaplains who call and visit more than 1,000 retired pastors and surviving spouses across the U.S. and Canada. Staff are recruiting for two vacancies. The retiree chaplains' goal is to see each retired pastor once per year and to call or mail them at least three times per year. This ministry assists in helping retired pastors remain connected to the RCA after a life of service. Retiree chaplains also serve as a bridge to connect retirees who are experiencing significant financial needs with the assistance program. The annual retiree chaplain meeting will take place on April 26–27 in Holland, Michigan.

*Assistance Program*

The assistance program provides more than $300,000 in grants to retirees, spouses, and dependents who are experiencing financial crisis. Grants assist with medical needs, insurance premium payments, and living expenses. Full monthly medical premiums and retirement contributions are made for disabled ordained ministers, and funeral grants are provided to the surviving spouse of an RCA minister.

An endowment fund, the Ed and Luella Mulder Pastor Assistance Fund, was established to support the assistance program thanks to a donation from Ed and Luella Mulder.

**Communication**

Benefits Services publishes a quarterly newsletter providing readers with information about BOBS and benefits in general. The Benefits Services website, www.rca.org/benefits, has been redesigned and has useful information, tools, and forms available for both employer and participant use.

BOBS hosted one-on-one meetings with a Fidelity planning and guidance consultant for participants located in West Michigan on November 11 and 12, 2015. Twenty-four participants registered for a 30-minute face-to-face consultation with a Fidelity consultant to review their investment choices and to manage their retirement savings goals. The event was very well received. This opportunity will be available at General Synod 2016, and we plan to offer it again in West Michigan and in other regions as requested. It has proven helpful to engage participants on an individual basis.

Compliance-related documents (e.g., adoption agreements or retirement plan investment changes) are reviewed either by the RCA's general counsel, the legal department of Fidelity Investments, or our external attorneys prior to distribution to employers, supervising entities, and participants.

Future communication strategies will encourage participants to be actively involved in their investments by using the resources available on the Fidelity website, with the ultimate goal of reaching retirement in a financially sound position.

Participants are encouraged to contact retirement@rca.org with any questions.

**Staffing Changes**

Jeanenne Spencer, life and LTD administrator, resigned from her position in October 2015. The position has not been replaced.

**Proposed Amendments to the Constitution and Rules**

The Board of Benefits Services held a full review of its Constitution and Rules. Proposed amendments to the Constitution and Rules were prepared by board member and attorney Jason Schnelker and RCA general counsel Paul Karssen, presented to the board at its meeting in early March, and approved by the board at a subsequent meeting by a vote of at least two thirds of the members present. The proposed amendments are now presented to the General Synod for their approval in accordance with Section 10.1 of the Constitution and Rules.

**R 16-43**
**To approve the following amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the Board of Benefits Services, effective July 1, 2016 (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken out):**

**Foreword**
**The General Synod has delegated to The Board of Benefits Services the responsibility to ~~provide,~~ manage~~;~~ and administer the retirement and insurance programs**

**required by the Reformed Church in America *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*) Formulary #5, ~~income,~~ the Reformed Church in America funded assistance ~~programs-grants, and insurance benefits~~, and to also ensure the availability of appropriate life insurance benefits, long-term disability benefits, and any other programs or services related to the financial and physical wellbeing ~~for all~~of eligible ordained ministers and their ~~dependents-families~~, and ~~for~~of other employees of agencies, assemblies, and institutions of the Reformed Church in America. Fulfilling that responsibility is the purpose of The Board of Benefits Services, and it does so in accordance with the rules prescribed herein.**

**1.3 Without limiting or modifying any other provision of this document or the Corporation's act of incorporation (or any amendments thereto), the purpose of The Board of Benefits Services is to ~~provide,~~ manage~~,~~ and administer the retirement ~~income, assistance grants, and insurance benefits~~ and insurance programs required by *BCO* Formulary #5, the Reformed Church in America funded assistance programs, and to also ensure the availability of appropriate life insurance benefits, long-term disability benefits, and any other programs or services related to the financial and physical wellbeing ~~for~~of eligible~~all~~ ordained ministers and their dependents~~families~~, and ~~for~~of other employees of agencies, assemblies, and institutions of the Reformed Church in America.**

**2.1 The board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services shall consist of at least nine and not more than seventeen directors. The composition of the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services shall be as follows: the president and vice president of the General Synod, the moderator of the General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America, a New York not-for-profit corporation ("General Synod Council"), the general secretary of the General Synod, and at least five and no more than thirteen directors-at-large who shall be nominated and elected in the manner set forth in *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 4. Eligibility for at-large membership on the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services, the method for election or appointment to such at-large membership (including the filling of vacancies occurring by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise), and the term of office for such at-large membership shall be as provided for General Synod agencies in the *BCO*. The terms of office on the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services of the president and vice president of the General Synod shall be limited to their terms of service as such president and vice president, respectively, of the moderator of the General Synod Council shall be limited to his or her term of service as such moderator, and of the general secretary of the Gen-**

**eral Synod shall be limited to his or her term of service as such general secretary. The Commission on Nominations should strive to assure that no more than one third of the at-large member terms expire annually. The at-large directors shall have such experience, qualifications, and professional backgrounds as are necessary or appropriate to ensure that the board of directors is properly equipped to monitor the performance of the Executive Director and effectively represent the various constituencies in the RCA that have an interest in the proper and effective functioning of The Board of Benefits Services, and may include one or more ordained ministers, dependents of ordained ministers or employees of institutions or agencies of the Reformed Church in America who are participants in the plans and programs that are managed and administered by The Board of Benefits Services at the date of their nomination. No more than one half of the board of directors shall be dependents of ordained ministers or employees of institutions or agencies of the Reformed Church in America. The general secretary shall use every opportunity to bring the work of The Board of Benefits Services before the Reformed Church in America.**

**2.4 The Board of Benefits Services may fulfill its purposes and responsibilities by delegating to its Executive Director (as provided in Article V~~Section 3.1~~, below) in writing such power and authority as the Board may from time to time deem necessary or appropriate.**

**V. ~~EMPLOYMENT AND TERMINATION~~DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**~~The Executive Director shall be employed by the Board.~~ The Executive Director shall be an officer of the Corporation, but not a member of its board of directors. The Executive Director shall have such duties, responsibilities, power, authority, and limitations as the board of directors of The Board of Benefits Services may establish from time to time.**

**6.1 The Board of Benefits Services shall hold at least two regular meetings of the board of directors each year or as called by the president of The Board of Benefits Services. The presence at a meeting of more than one half of the~~Nine~~ members of the board of directors~~present at a meeting~~ shall constitute a quorum. An affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of the board of directors shall be necessary to take any action, but a lesser number present may adjourn the meeting to a later date. (ADOPTED)**

*The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was to vote in favor of R 16-43.*

# Report of the Commission on Christian Action

The Commission on Christian Action has focused on following up on the recommendations of the 2015 report to the General Synod, completing a joint paper with the Commission on Theology, and discussion of two social concerns brought to the attention of the commissioners just prior to General Synod 2015.

**Referral of Overture on Reorientation/Reparative Therapy**

R-14 was referred to the Commission on Christian Action (CCA) by the 2015 General Synod. R-14 states, "To declare that the RCA does not support the use of reorientation/reparative therapy" (*MGS 2015*, p. 88). This recommendation was in response to Overture 4 from the Classis of New Brunswick.

The CCA was asked to take a look at reorientation/reparative therapy and provide guidance on whether to make such a declaration. A discussion among the commissioners about the use of reorientation/reparative therapy led us to know that it was only in seeking the guidance and wisdom of the Lord through prayer, discernment, and research of the issue that we could arrive at a recommendation to the church.

Reorientation/reparative therapy is treatment aimed at changing the sexual orientation of homosexual men and women and is defined as psychotherapy or other interventions aimed at eliminating homosexual desires. "Reparative therapy" has been rejected by mental health, medical, and scientific organizations. These therapies are conducted in various settings including private offices, inpatient units, residential facilities, and boarding schools. The treatments may include individual and group therapy; behavior therapies involving electrical shocks to the hands, torso, and genitals while exposing the client to homoerotic images; covert sensitization, which involves imagining erotic circumstances and pairing this with something frightening or revolting or administering emetics; performing exorcism; subjecting the individual to isolation and restraints; and engaging in other therapies designed to modify gender behavior to be more hetero-congruent (sports training and coaching for males and cosmetics application for females).[1]

Aside from the ethical principles of autonomy, justice, and beneficence that these practices violate, these therapies have questionable outcomes regarding effectiveness in actually changing a person's sexual orientation. In fact "reparative" or "conversion" therapies have not supported authentic change in sexual orientation itself. In cases where homosexual behavior changed to heterosexual behavior, the behavioral changes were short-lived. Sexual orientation itself was not changed because the complex set of attractions and feelings that constitute sexual orientation had not changed.[2]

The history of conversion therapy dates back to Sigmund Freud, who stated that homosexuality could sometimes be removed through hypnotic suggestion.[3] Freud wrote that changing homosexuality was difficult and possible only under unusually favorable conditions, observing that "in general to undertake to convert a fully developed homosexual into a heterosexual does not offer much more prospect of success than the reverse."[4] Success meant making heterosexual feeling possible, not eliminating homosexual feelings.[5] During the three decades between Freud's death in 1939 and the Stonewall riots in 1969, conversion therapy received approval from most of the psychiatric establishment in the United States.[6]

In the 1960s many mental health professionals, clergy, and politicians supported the idea that homosexuality was a mental health disorder that could be cured through some combination of prayer and therapy which included electroshock therapy, masturbatory reconditioning, and

giving patients nausea-inducing drugs while forcing them to view homosexual erotica.

The Stonewall riots were a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations by members of the gay community against police raids that took place in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, located in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City.[7] They are widely considered to constitute the single most important event leading to the gay liberation movement and the modern fight for LGBT rights in the United States.[8]

The social transformation of society in the 1970s was the impetus for the American Psychiatric Association voting to remove homosexuality from its list of mental health disorders.

The 1990s witnessed a resurgence of "ex-gay" therapy. Joseph Nicolosi played a significant role in the development of conversion therapy with his first published work in 1991, *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality.*[9] The term "reparative" refers to Nicolosi's hypothesis that same-sex attraction is a person's rational and unconscious attempt to "self-repair" feelings of inferiority.[10,11] In 1992, Nicolosi, with Charles Socarides and Benjamin Kaufman, founded the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), an organization that opposes the mainstream medical view of homosexuality and aims to "make effective psychological therapy available to all homosexual men and women who seek change."[12] Nicolosi's website states:

> For many years, I have been assisting men and women—mostly, persons who are still at a crossroads about their sexual identity—to reduce their same-sex attractions and explore their heterosexual potential. I am a licensed clinical psychologist who shares your vision of humanity. I believe that our bodies tell us who we are, and that our bodies have made us for heterosexuality. Perhaps you experience same-sex attractions, but you believe you were not destined to be gay. You believe that these feelings do not represent "who you really are." If this is your belief, then we may be able to help you. I have helped many men reduce their unwanted same-sex attractions, so that they lose their compelling, life-disrupting power, and assisted them in exploring and developing their heterosexual potential.[13]

In the late 1990s, Christian rights groups such as the Family Research Council, a conservative Christian group and lobbying organization that promotes what it considers to be traditional family values and lobbies for socially conservative policies, and the American Family Association, a nonprofit organization promoting fundamentalist Christian values, spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in advertising and promoting conversion therapy.[14] The ex-gay movement was founded in 1973 when Love in Action became the first contemporary ex-gay ministry. Such ministries as Exodus International, Love in Action, JONAH (Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality), Courage International for Catholics, North Star for the LDS Church, and Joel 2:25 International for Catholic and Protestant Christians proliferated. Love in Action, Exodus International, and JONAH have since ceased operation.

Exodus International director Alan Chambers resigned in 2013 and has since denounced the practice of reparative therapy, apologizing to those who had been harmed by the methods of Exodus. In his resignation, he made the following statement:

> I am sorry for the pain and hurt many of you have experienced. I am sorry that some of you spent years working through the shame and guilt you felt when your attractions didn't change. I am sorry we promoted sexual orientation change efforts and reparative theories about sexual orientation that stigmatized parents.[15]

In October 2015, Albert Mohler, a Southern Baptist theologian, spoke out against "the use of psychological counseling aimed at turning gay people straight."[16]

Love in Action has changed its name and focus to a Christian discipleship ministry that exists to restore those trapped in sexual and relational sin. On June 25, 2015, in the first-ever trial of conversion therapy in the United States, a New Jersey jury found JONAH guilty of consumer fraud for promising to be able to change its clients' sexual urges and determined its commercial practices to be unconscionable. Conversion therapy is now outlawed in California, Oregon, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia.

In 2000, the American Psychiatric Association made the following position statement on therapies focused on change of sexual orientation:

> Psychotherapeutic modalities to convert or "repair" homosexuality are based on developmental theories whose scientific validity is questionable. Furthermore, anecdotal reports of "cures" are counterbalanced by anecdotal claims of psychological harm. In the last four decades, "reparative" therapists have not produced any rigorous scientific research to substantiate their claims of cure. Until there is such research available, the American Psychiatric Association recommends that ethical practitioners refrain from attempts to change individuals' sexual orientation, keeping in mind the medical dictum to first, do no harm.
>
> The potential risks of reparative therapy are great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient. Many patients who have undergone reparative therapy relate that they were inaccurately told that homosexuals are lonely, unhappy individuals who never achieve acceptance or satisfaction. The possibility that the person might achieve happiness and satisfying interpersonal relationships as a gay man or lesbian is not presented, nor are alternative approaches to dealing with the effects of societal stigmatization discussed.[17]

Additionally, fifteen other national psychological, educational, counseling, and social work associations made similar statements denouncing reorientation/reparative therapy.

There has been no data found for the widespread and long-term effectiveness of reparative therapy. However, there is documentation of the adverse effects of reparative therapy. Three states and the District of Columbia have outlawed the practice of reorientation/reparative therapy. As a denomination that stands on biblical principles, any approach to minister to our brothers and sisters attracted to members of the same sex must be sensitive, caring, filled with grace, and in line with biblical teaching.

Therefore, the Commission on Christian Action recommends:

> R 16-44
> To direct the General Synod Council to remove all statements on the website supporting the use of reorientation/reparative therapy and to declare that the RCA does not support the use of reorientation/reparative therapy.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-44 as follows (additions are underlined):

> To direct the General Synod Council to remove all statements on the website supporting the use of reorientation/

reparative therapy and to declare that the RCA does not support the use of reorientation/reparative therapy and direct the Commission on Discipleship and Christian Education to develop online/print/seminar resources for ministry to persons experiencing unwanted same-sex attraction.

**VOTED:** To not amend R 16-44.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-44 as follows (additions underlined):

To direct the General Synod Council to remove all statements on the website supporting the use of reorientation/reparative therapy and to declare that the RCA does not support the use of reorientation/reparative therapy but does affirm the power of the Holy Spirit to transform all lives.

**VOTED:** To amend R 16-44.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-44 as amended.

The final text of R 16-44 as amended and adopted reads as follows:

**R 16-44**
**To direct the General Synod Council to remove all statements on the website supporting the use of reorientation/reparative therapy and to declare that the RCA does not support the use of reorientation/reparative therapy but does affirm the power of the Holy Spirit to transform all lives. (ADOPTED)**

**Mass Incarceration Coalition**

The coalition studying mass incarceration was asked to submit a report to General Synod for the next three years.

The mass incarceration coalition agreed that efforts need to be focused at the local church and classis levels. The following is a summary of the coalition's work over the past year.

1. The coalition contacted each of the regional synods to request information on classes and churches in order to connect ministers and churches whose ministry focus is supporting those who are incarcerated, their families, victims of violence and crime, and reentry for prisoners. We hope to form a learning community around this important work. Lindsay Bona is developing a database of information in order to connect people around the country.
2. Members of the coalition attended a webinar put on by the National Council of Churches on the issue of mass incarceration.
3. Work continues through the coalition and the Commission on Christian Action on a strategic plan for bringing the issue of mass incarceration to the RCA.
4. The coalition recommends reading the book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander as a seminal work related to the issue of mass incarceration.

The coalition offers the following recommendation:

**R 16-45**
**To direct the General Synod Council to host a meeting of people interested in the study and work of mass incarceration as the beginning of a learning community. (ADOPTED)**

To decrease cost, this meeting could take place during the October meeting of commissions and the General Synod Council.

**Webpage for Mass Incarceration Resources**

R-36 (2015) directed the creation of a webpage for resources related to mass incarceration. The webpage has been created (www.rca.org/resources/advocacy/resources-related-mass-incarceration) and resources have been added. Additional information for the page will consist of:

- A directory of RCA churches involved in ministries around mass incarceration
- Worship resources related to mass incarceration, one of which will be the CCA and Commission on Theology exhortation on the church and criminal justice introduced later in this report
- CCA papers on the issue of mass incarceration
- Additional links to educational resources

Populating the webpage will be an ongoing process. RCA members with pertinent information they want to have posted to the page are encouraged to submit such information to the CCA through its moderator, Patricia Sealy (patsealy@verizon.net).

**Joint Paper on Mass Incarceration**

The 2014 General Synod of the Reformed Church in America received a paper from the Commission on Christian Action titled "Mass Incarceration in the United States." The paper named mass incarceration as a critical social issue of our time. Citing statistics, the paper said that mass incarceration will have significant and long-lasting impact both on American society and, more particularly, on communities of color.

For a more complete account of mass incarceration in our time, delegates are encouraged to read the original 2014 paper (images.rca.org/docs/mgs/2014MGS-ChristianAction.pdf). For a thumbnail sketch of its realities, however, here are some statistics and facts:

- Although the U.S. has just 5 percent of the global population, it has 25 percent of the world's incarcerated people.
- The prison population in the U.S. is racially disproportionate. African Americans make up 39.4 percent of the prison population, but only 13.6 percent of the general population. Together, African Americans and Hispanics make up 59.4 percent of all prisoners, even though these groups only make up approximately 25 percent of the population.
- One in every 28 children in the United States has an incarcerated parent. In terms of race, one in nine African American children, one in 28 Hispanic children, and one in 57 white children have an incarcerated parent.
- State spending on corrections reached $52.4 billion in fiscal year 2012. Estimates are that the state and federal governments combined spent $80 billion on corrections in 2010.
- Privatized prisons have become both a major enterprise and source of political spending, thus setting into action a vested interest in this growing problem.

- The War on Drugs campaign is responsible for the majority of incarcerations of non-violent offenders. Current drug policies have led to an overburdened and over-saturated incarceration system that disproportionately affects minorities. Mandatory sentencing laws enacted in the mid-1980s have also substantially increased incarceration rates.
- Children of incarcerated parents are invisible victims or collateral damage because of disruption to their homes, educations, and economic support, or even movement into the foster care system.

In response to the 2014 Commission on Christian Action paper "Mass Incarceration in the United States," the General Synod directed the Commission on Christian Action, in consultation with the Commission on Theology, "to develop a paper on God, justice, and compassion for those who are incarcerated, victims of incarceration, families of the incarcerated, and returned citizens that addresses the church's role in being the beloved community of God" (*MGS 2014*, R-45, p. 193). In response to R-45, the Commission on Christian Action, in consultation with the Commission on Theology, has written the following exhortation.

In this brief paper, we offer a theological response to the critical social issue of mass incarceration in the form of lamentations and affirmations that may help us live more deeply into the church's role in being the beloved community of God. These are things we can lament and affirm together with and on behalf of those who are incarcerated, victims of incarceration, families of the incarcerated, and returned citizens, as well as those who work in the prison system and those who are working to address injustices.

To be clear, we are not offering a new confession of the church, but our hope in offering a response to R-45 in this format is that individual churches and our denomination as a whole might find a biblical and theological entry point toward further discussion, action, and healing within this most critical social issue of our time.

## THE CHURCH AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: A BRIEF EXHORTATION

**In the spirit of the Psalms, these things we lament:**

- **We lament the cries of suffering and despair rising from the criminal justice system—from victims in and outside of prison, from the incarcerated, their families and communities, the wrongly convicted, returned citizens, and those who work in the system.**

  "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:22-23).

- **We lament the social harm incarceration causes.**

  "We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are like widows" (Lamentations 5:3).

- **We lament injustices that remain unnoticed and unaddressed.**

  "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

- **We lament the overuse of incarceration; we lament punishment as revenge or retaliation.**

  "Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees,
  who write oppressive statutes,
  to turn aside the needy from justice
  and to rob the poor of my people of their right,
  that widows may be your spoil,
  and that you may make the orphans your prey!" (Isaiah 10:1-2).

- **We lament the evils of racism and the harm it perpetuates in individuals, in communities, and in systems of power. We lament that racism infects the whole system of criminal justice in our time. We lament the inequities that result in an unequal meting out of justice and incarceration.**

  "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

  "In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (Colossians 3:11).

  "But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors" (James 2:9).

- **We lament incarceration as a profit-making industry.**

  "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but an accurate weight is his delight" (Proverbs 11:1).

- **We lament the spirit of fear that can inform our view of enemies, strangers, and policy-making with regard to crime.**

  "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:18-19).

  "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:43-45).

- **We lament any imagination that informs our view of the accused as "other" or the guilty as evil people, and we recall that we are a people marked by the cross and a savior who was himself viewed as a criminal.**

  "When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again'" (John 8:9-11).

- **We lament that the reentry process into society for returning citizens is an oppressive process leading to stigmatization; to difficulty finding employment and housing; and to poverty, marginalization, and recidivism.**

  "Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right…" (Isaiah 10:1-2).

- **We lament the lack of the Reformed Church in America's awareness and involvement in this critical issue of our time.**

  "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but do not see, who have ears, but do not hear" (Jeremiah 5:21).

**These things we affirm:**

- **We affirm the biblical witness to God's rich vision of love and justice for all humanity.**

  "…For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
  and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
  He shall judge between the nations,
  and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
  they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
  and their spears into pruning hooks;
  nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
  neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:3-4).

- **We affirm that there is nothing we can do to place ourselves out of God's providence.**

  "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

- **We affirm that Jesus himself was in the prison system.**

  "…I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25:36).

- **We affirm the mark of the cross on our lives, where Jesus himself was treated as a criminal, and we affirm his charge to tend to the cries of the most vulnerable among us.**

  "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

- **We recognize the need for a criminal justice system, even as we affirm the need to strive for a system that is humane, fair, and appropriately limited.**

  "For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13:4, NIV).

- **We affirm that as Christians our entire outlook on life and our role in being the beloved community of God—including issues of justice and incarceration—is one shaped by the prodigal grace and mercy of God in Jesus and the recognition of our own sinfulness and proclivity to do evil.**

  "Remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. … So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:12, 17-18).

- **We affirm that we are called upon to remember and pray for those in prison. We affirm the work of individuals, congregations, and organizations ministering to, for, and with prisoners, families of prisoners, and returning citizens.**

  "Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured" (Hebrews 13:3).

- **We affirm the invitation of Scripture to identify with the incarcerated like Joseph, Jeremiah, John the Baptizer, Peter, Paul—and Christ himself. We affirm the gift of persons such as Guido de Bres, A.J. Muste, Corrie ten Boom, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King Jr., and countless other followers of Christ who have been imprisoned.**

  We affirm and proclaim the good news of Christ:

  "'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
  because he has anointed me
  to bring good news to the poor.
  He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
  and recovery of sight to the blind,
  to let the oppressed go free,
  to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

  And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing'" (Luke 4:18-21).

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, for our sake you were condemned as a criminal: Visit our jails and prisons with your pity and judgment. Remember all prisoners; bring the guilty to repentance and amendment of life according to your will, and give them hope for their future. When any are held unjustly, bring them release; forgive us, and teach us to improve our justice. Remember those who work in these institutions; keep them humane and compassionate, and save them from becoming brutal or callous. And since what we do for those in prison, O Lord, we do for you, constrain us to improve their lot. All this we ask for your mercy's sake. Amen (From the *Book of Common Prayer*).

Finally, we affirm the good work of those in the Reformed Church in America who are already working in various ways within the current prison system and with those affected by

it, as well as those working to rectify current injustices. We invite the Reformed Church in America to join together in this work, to continue confessing in word and deed the role of the church in being the beloved community of God, and in praying for a day when justice will "roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). *For we affirm in Christ that the final work of God is ultimately toward restoration, reconciliation, and healing.*

"I have seen their ways, but I will heal them;
I will lead them and repay them with comfort,
creating for their mourners the fruit of the lips" (Isaiah 57:18).

"See, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

**R 16-46**
**To encourage the church to use the document "The Church and Criminal Justice: A Brief Exhortation" as a liturgical resource, and further;**

**To direct the General Synod Council to make the document available to the church. (ADOPTED)**

**Other Work**

The Commission on Christian Action was asked to assign a member to the task force studying diaconal assemblies and willingly complied with the request.

In 2015 the issue of drone warfare was brought to the attention of the commission. A commissioner attended and gave a report on the conference of the Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare and the interfaith statement that was sent to President Barack Obama in May 2015.

Several troubling aspects of militarized drones were presented to the commission:

- The unreported nature of the weapons and their activity, since they are under the CIA and special operations units, leading to a high level of secrecy
- The high levels of civilian causalities, most of which go unreported
- Post-traumatic stress experienced by the operators of drones
- Assassinations of targeted and non-targeted persons
- The possibility of breaking international law

The Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare is comprised of national, regional, and local denominational and faith group headquarters; denominational advocacy offices in Washington, DC; national ecumenical and interfaith organizations; regional judicatories; state ecumenical and interfaith agencies; local congregations; ecumenical and interfaith bodies; and campus ministries. The network has compiled a list of national, regional, and local strategies to work on the issue of lethal drones and targeted killings. The Commission on Christian Action will review and discuss the work of the network during our next meeting in October to determine how to direct the church in this matter.

Additionally in 2015, the commission was apprised of the issue of socially responsible investing. The commission met with RCA minister John Paarlberg of Albany, New York, to gain a clearer understanding of the issue. Following that meeting a decision was made to pursue the issue and contact staff regarding adding the language of screening to the RCA's investment portfolio, particularly as it relates to for-profit prisons. This discussion led us to

the recommendation the commission made in 2014 "to direct the General Synod Council to examine RCA investments to ascertain whether the RCA has any investments in private prison corporations and to divest of any such holdings as soon as possible" (*MGS 2014*, R-42, pp. 192-193. R-42 was divided into two parts, R-43 and R-44. R-43 was adopted ["To direct the General Synod Council to examine RCA investments to ascertain whether the RCA has any investments in private prison corporations."], and R-44 was referred to the GSC ["To divest of any investments in private prison corporations as soon as possible."]).

RCA investments were examined, and it was determined that the RCA holds no investments in private prison corporations.

**R 16-47**
**To direct the General Synod Council to add screening language to the RCA's investment policies, particularly as it relates to for-profit prisons. (ADOPTED)**

As we continue this work of the Commission on Christian Action, we are ever mindful of the need to hold close to Scripture, seek the will of the Lord, and pray without ceasing. We are humbled that the majestic God we serve has called us to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly before our God.

**Endnotes**

1 Beckstead, A.L., and S.L. Morrow. "Mormon Clients' Experiences of Conversion Therapy: The Need for a New Treatment Approach." *The Counseling Psychologist* 32, no. 5 (2004): 651-690.
2 Herek, G.M., "Reparative Therapy." Retrieved from psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_changing.html.
3 Freud, Sigmund. *On Sexuality: Volume 7* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).
4 Ibid.
5 Drescher, Jack. "I'm Your Handyman: A History of Reparative Therapies." *Journal of Homosexuality* (June 1998): 19-42.
6 Ibid.
7 Carter, David. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004).
8 "Obama inaugural speech references Stonewall gay-rights riots." North Jersey Media Group Inc., January 21, 2013.
9 Nicolosi, Joseph. *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality: A New Clinical Approach.* (Jason Aronson, 1997).
10 Hicks, Karolyn Ann. *"'*Reparative Therapy': Whether Parental Attempts to Change a Child's Sexual Orientation Can Legally Constitute Child Abuse*." American University Law Review 49*, no. 2 (1999): 505-547.
11 Bright, Chuck. "Deconstructing Reparative Therapy: An Examination of the Processes Involved When Attempting to Change Sexual Orientation." *Clinical Social Work Journal 32,* no. 4 (December 2004): 471-481.
12 "What We Offer," *retrieved from* http://narth.org.
13 Retrieved from josephnicolosi.com.
14 Merritt, Jonathan. "How Christians Turned Against Gay Conversion Therapy." *The Atlantic (*April 15, 2015).
15 Lovett, Ian. "After 37 Years of Trying to Change People's Sexual Orientation, Group to Disband." *New York Times*, June 21, 2013. A12.
16 Schreiner, Bruce. "Reparative Therapy Criticized by Southern Baptist Theologian." The Big Story, *Associated Press*, October 15, 2015.
17 American Psychiatric Association. "Position Statement on Therapies Focused on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation (Reparative or Conversion Therapies)," May 2000.

# Report of the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education

The Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education has four amended mandates approved unanimously at General Synod 2015. These are now pending a second approval at General Synod 2016, as required by *Book of Church Order* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 11; 2015 edition, p. 121, before being incorporated into the Bylaws of the General Synod in the 2016 edition of the *BCO*. These amended responsibilities (listed below) maximize the relevance of the work of the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education.

- The commission shall develop and advocate for strategies for people of all ages to be fully included in the mission and life of the RCA.
- The commission shall monitor, evaluate, and report on the RCA's progress in ministries of education and discipleship with children, youth, adults, and families.
- The commission shall collaborate with RCA staff, assemblies, agencies, and institutions to promote and strengthen the next generation in discipleship within RCA congregations.
- The commission shall advocate for the ongoing preparation of those who carry out the church's teaching ministry.

We began our work this fall and continued it at our winter meeting, spending considerable time on the spirit and core for each amended mandate. This resulted in placing our focus on two mandates in particular as our priorities.

First, we wanted to put a spotlight on our first mandate, seeking to develop commonalities and themes for faith formation in the twenty-first century. Ministry is rapidly changing. The culture around us is moving at an even faster rate of change. It is for this reason that the Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education is working toward being well informed on current and diverse practices within RCA congregations in order to faithfully explore this mandate as a commission. Stories of transformative moments or shaping practices arose in our conversations.

The giggles and wiggles of childhood: they matter.

The incessant coughing and runny noses of cold season: they matter.

The off-beat clapping of those who lack rhythm: they matter.

They matter because they are signs of life. They matter because they are a vital part of the community gathered in worship—with all of its noises, commotions, struggles, learning, and play. It matters.

And when all of us come together, the body of Christ is more fully embodied and embraced. When *we* are present together, we are coming together as the family of God where all are welcome, where we share in the Word and sacrament together, where all are gathered and sent. It matters.

**Kent's Story**

Our report to General Synod last year included the statement "CCDE affirms that children are not the future of the church, children are the church." Many people have said "children are the future of the church"—it may be in response to an aging congregation, positing that

the presence of children in the church gives solace to aging congregations as an indication that the younger generations will one day fill their empty places. The CCDE would argue that children are part of the church now, not only sometime in the future when they "grow up."

CCDE member Kent McHeard, pastor of First Reformed Church of Rotterdam in Rotterdam Junction, New York, brought this concept back to his congregation. During a children's sermon, Kent went around to all of the children in the sanctuary and laid his hand on each of their heads, reciting the blessing that Aaron used to bless the children of Israel in Numbers 6. When he finished, he proclaimed that children are *not* the future of our church. He waited, listening to the audible gasps and seeing the looks of disappointment, then continued, stating, "Children are our church right now. They are every bit a part of the church, just as each of you are."

Today this same welcoming declaration is made for each baptized child taken under care. This declaration in a children's sermon has become a catalyst for First Reformed to invite baptized children who have completed instruction and who have been received into membership to participate in the selection of consistory candidates, voting in all matters of the church life, and serving on church committees. This church is actively a living witness of all ages being fully included in the church and they have been given a voice—and a vote.

It is the hope of CCDE that this story may serve as an example of how our first mandate is being lived out. Further, we would like to solicit your stories and experiences of people of all ages being fully included in the mission and life of the RCA. Stories can be emailed to Dennis Colton, moderator of the CCDE, at dennisc@calvaryop.org.

The second focus we worked diligently on was our fourth mandate, "The commission shall advocate for the ongoing preparation of those who carry out the church's teaching ministry." We observed that, while many classes mandate continuing education money and study leave for ordained staff, it is far less common for other paid staff in the ministry of Christian discipleship and education to receive this kind of continuing education. Therefore, the CCDE urges churches to provide continuing education money and study leave for all paid staff in the ministry of Christian discipleship and education and urges classes to include time and money allotments for continuing education in their published guidelines for congregational positions.

Our commission is excited about the unparalleled intersect of this mandate with the values of Transformed & Transforming. It is of great delight and encouragement to see how our mandates are at the very core of this denominational momentum. Through our work, we look forward to ways in which we can further collaborate and make progress on these important conversations and transformative approaches. Due to the plentiful overlap of these shared initiatives with Transformed & Transforming, we encourage the RCA to develop learning communities around the faith formation of 1) children's ministry and 2) youth ministry as a way to further collaborate.

# Report of the Commission on Christian Unity

The General Synod is responsible for the ecumenical relations of the Reformed Church in America (*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2, Section 5; 2015 edition, pp. 65–66). In response to the full sweep of Scripture toward the unity of believers, and to fulfill its constitutional responsibility, General Synod has constituted the Commission on Christian Unity to oversee ecumenical commitments, to present an ecumenical agenda to the church, and to carry out ecumenical directives given by the General Synod. Since its creation in 1974 (*MGS 1974*, R-6, pp. 201–202) and its adoption by General Synod in 1975 (*MGS 1975*, R-4, pp. 101-102), this commission has served General Synod by coordinating a range of ecumenical involvements reaching all levels of mission in the RCA as defined by the *Book of Church Order* (Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 3b; 2015 edition, p. 110) in this way:

1. The commission shall initiate and supervise action with respect to the Reformed Church in America's membership in or affiliation with ecumenical bodies.
2. It shall engage in interchurch conversations and appoint ecumenical delegates to other church bodies.
3. It shall inform the church of current ecumenical developments and advise the church concerning its ecumenical participation and relationships.

The commission also seeks to educate the RCA on ecumenical matters and advocates for actions and positions consistent with RCA confessions and ecumenical practices as outlined in "An Ecumenical Mandate for the Reformed Church in America," adopted by General Synod in 1996 (*MGS 1996*, R-1, p. 197). General Synod may also refer ecumenical matters to the commission for study and implementation.

**RCA Ecumenical Involvement: An Overview**

The RCA holds a historical commitment to active involvement in ecumenical conversation and cooperation with churches throughout North America and around the world. It is both a charter member and active supporter of historic ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches and a driving force behind bold and needed new ecumenical initiatives like the Global Christian Forum and Christian Churches Together. In this work, the RCA is variously represented by staff and by ministers, elders, and members—elected or appointed, paid or volunteer—who have committed both their gifts and time to promote a greater witness to the unity Christians have in Christ as they share in the witness and grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ with believers from around the corner or around the world. Periodically through the year, and especially following participation in ecumenical events or meetings, these appointees provide brief reports to the Office of the General Secretary and to the Commission on Christian Unity.

This ecumenical work the commission does on behalf of the RCA is, for us, clearly anchored in and shaped by the direction of the whole of the RCA. In this complex and changing time for the church, in which so many, locally and globally, are trying to figure out how best to witness to the gospel of Christ, and in which we in the RCA are seeking to invest our whole selves into the work of Transformed & Transforming, we believe deeply in our clearly stated commitment of "working with all the partners that God provides," as the RCA has spoken to the world in its framing of Transformed & Transforming. The commission is committed to advancing the work and ministry of the RCA through this commitment of partnership; moreover, the commission believes the witness and influence of the RCA can be similarly transforming globally at this point in history.

This commission assumes the task of synthesizing this material into its own comprehensive report, which it presents each year to General Synod. This first portion of the report of the commission provides an overview and summary of the RCA's formal ecumenical work worldwide through conciliar groups and its impact on the ministry and witness not only of these groups, but on the work and witness of the Reformed Church in America. You will hear both the promise and significant impact of ecumenical work worldwide, and you will hear the challenges of a movement that struggles to find ways to welcome the new Christians of the global South.

*World Council of Churches*

The largest and oldest organized expression of the modern worldwide ecumenical movement, the World Council of Churches (WCC) "is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ. It seeks to advance towards this unity, as Jesus prayed for his followers, 'so that the world may believe'" (John 17:21).

The WCC gathers its community from 345 churches in 110 countries representing more than 500 million Christians worldwide. Member churches (or denominations) consist primarily of those from the historic Protestant churches and the Orthodox Church, including most of the world's Orthodox churches; scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed churches; as well as many United and independent churches. While the bulk of the WCC's founding churches were European and North American, today most member churches are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific. Major parts of world Christianity, including churches from Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions, however, have little or no relationship to the WCC. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, but participates in various theological dialogues and cooperates in some other ways. Financial support for the WCC has decreased dramatically in the past decade, so the organization faces the challenges of managing programmatic expectations within available resources. The RCA has maintained its historic support of the WCC throughout this time.

The WCC's highest legislative body, its assembly, meets approximately every seven years; it gathered most recently in Busan, South Korea, in October 2013, under the theme "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." The Central Committee is the continuing body that implements WCC policies enacted at the assemblies, reviews and approves programs, establishes the budget and secures financial support, and generally oversees the work of the WCC between assemblies. The commission commends and thanks RCA general secretary Tom De Vries for his membership on the Central Committee. Tom's commitment to this work continues the unbroken record of every RCA general secretary serving on the WCC Central Committee and illustrates both the historic and current commitments of the RCA to a worldwide ecumenical witness.

The work of the WCC is not simply programmatic or related to formal initiatives. At times, it is to provide a Christian witness in ways that perhaps no other group in the world can do. *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* is one example. This comprehensive study seeks both to affirm and challenge the church's biblical and trinitarian commitment to mission and evangelism even as it sets our efforts in the rapidly changing contemporary context, the relevance of marginalized peoples to mission, and the larger purposes of mission and evangelism in God's own mission of love to the world. It is available directly from the WCC, and could be an excellent study resource for congregations.

Olav Fykse Tveit, an ordained pastor in the Church of Norway, is general secretary of the WCC. For more information on the work and mission of the WCC, see www.oikoumene.org.

*World Communion of Reformed Churches*

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council merged to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) in June 2010. The RCA was a charter member of the former World Alliance of Reformed Churches and enthusiastically worked to support the coming together of these two ecumenical bodies into one.

This renewed fellowship of Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Waldensian, United, and Uniting churches is a network of 230 Protestant churches in 108 countries with a combined estimated membership of 80 million people that, in its words, is "called to communion, committed to justice, that all may experience the fullness of life in Jesus Christ."

The WCRC may be best known worldwide for the Accra Confession, a groundbreaking statement issued at the General Council of the then–World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Accra, Ghana, in 2004, declaring that Christians are called by biblical teachings to be advocates of social, economic, and ecological justice. The text of the Accra Confession can be found at wcrc.ch/accra.

The WCRC also carries out considerable work through regional councils; the RCA is a member church of the Caribbean and North American Area Council (CANAAC). CANAAC has unique challenges as it attempts to bridge two very diverse regions: the United States and Canada, and the several islands in the Caribbean where there is a Reformed presence. RCA minister Lisa Vander Wal is chairperson of the steering committee of CANAAC and also, then, a member of the executive committee of the WCRC. Language differences and the inherent isolation of islands present significant communication issues. Additionally, visas are difficult to obtain for many Caribbean nationals for travel between islands and to the U.S. and Canada. Still, the commitment to working together for economic and ecological justice compels us to become aware of the inequities that exist within the region. Some of the issues currently being addressed are communication and building relationships among the member churches in the council, human trafficking, and relationship and leadership development among youth. One exciting new development is the possibility of opening up relationships with the Reformed churches in Cuba, which are experiencing new growth and vitality. CANAAC has historically benefitted from collaboration with Cuban theologians and churches and looks forward to greater ease of relationships with Reformed Christians there. The WCRC executive secretary for justice and partnership is Dora Arce-Valentin, a citizen of Cuba.

Like other historic ecumenical bodies, the WCRC has faced significant budget pressures in the past decade. As one response, the organization has relocated its offices from Geneva, Switzerland, to Hanover, Germany, in space at the Calvin Centre owned by the Evangelical Reformed Church of Germany. Phil Tanis, formerly of the RCA staff, serves as the executive secretary for communications for the WCRC.

Preparations are underway for the 26th General Council of the WCRC to take place in Leipzig, Germany, in June 2017 with the theme, "Living God, renew and transform us." The council will deal with issues of justice, church unity, and world renewal. More than a thousand delegates, observers, staff, and invited guests will gather in Leipzig, making it the largest international ecclesial event in Germany during the Reformation Jubilee (commemorating 500 years since Martin Luther ignited the Reformation). The RCA's Lisa Vander

Wal is chair of the General Council planning committee. The commission wishes to publicly commend Lisa for the important leadership she is providing to the worldwide church through her multifaceted work with the WCRC.

For more information on the WCRC and its work, see www.wcrc.ch.

*Global Christian Forum*

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) is a prominent example of a new form of worldwide ecumenical dialogue and influence, drawing for the first time world leaders from Evangelical, historic Protestant, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Catholic, and African Instituted churches into a new place of relational, rather than structural, fellowship. Begun quietly in the 1990s, with RCA involvement from the very beginning, it is responding to the rapid shift in global Christianity marked by new vitality and growth in the churches in the global South, often in Pentecostal and Evangelical expressions that have no links to broader ecumenical bodies. It defines its guiding purpose in this way: "To create an open space wherein representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and inter-church organizations, which confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as perfect in His divinity and humanity, can gather to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges." From the start, the WCC, the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, and others have been supportive of the GCF's work. RCA general secretary emeritus Wesley Granberg-Michaelson continues to serve on its steering committee and has participated in supporting the development of the Global Christian Forum.

In its document *Our Unfolding Journey with Jesus Christ*, which reflects on nearly two decades of work, the GCF recounts the founding of the organization and then looks forward around a commitment to "engage in theological reflection in areas of mutual concern" among its diverse membership:

> We experience the open space in the Global Christian Forum as a gift of God. In a fragmented world and church, this unique expression of unity … is a source of inspiration and hope. … We know that God's Spirit draws the body of Christ into unity for the sake of God's mission in the world. So we commit ourselves to nurture the Global Christian Forum, as the Spirit leads, as witness to God's saving and transforming love.

From November 1 to 5, 2015, the GCF held a major consultation, "Discrimination, Persecution, Martyrdom: Following Christ Together," in Tirana, Albania. From churches around the world, many experiencing persecution and martyrdom, 145 representatives came to learn, pray, and plan how to respond to the current tensions. The full text of the consultation message (in English, French, and Spanish), with images, stories, and video footage, can be accessed at resources.globalchristianforum.org.

The most recent committee meeting was held in Moscow in February 2016, hosted by the Russian Orthodox Church. The committee decided to hold the third global gathering of the Global Christian Forum in early 2018, most likely in Cuba in order to support emerging developments of the churches in that country. Ongoing work on mission and proselytism between Evangelical, Pentecostal, Catholic, and Orthodox communities will also be developed further in the coming period.

Larry Miller is executive secretary of the Global Christian Forum. More information on the GCF can be found at www.globalchristianforum.org.

*National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.*

Since its founding in 1950, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC) has been a visible presence for ecumenical cooperation among Christians in the United States. The 37 NCCC member communions—from a wide spectrum of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Evangelical, historic African American, and Living Peace churches—include 45 million people in more than 100,000 local congregations in communities across the nation. The RCA was a charter member of the NCCC.

By necessity, the work of the NCCC has evolved in dramatic ways over the last decade in response to a precipitous decline in revenue. NCCC general secretary and president James E. Winkler presides over a very differently structured organization than the one that existed a generation ago. Still, the NCCC continues to offer an important witness to the power of a shared voice among Christians. The theme at its national gathering in May 2016 was "Fear Not: God's Love in an Anxious Age." It also continues to respond to urgent issues that face the U.S. and Christians worldwide with the same moral voice it has expressed throughout its history. The RCA has placed members on the NCCC's Interreligious Relations and Collaboration Convening Table and Advocacy for Justice and Peace Convening Table, and thanks Norma Coleman-James and Monica Schaap Pierce (RCA ecumenical associate) for their service.

The website of the NCCC is www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us.

*Christian Churches Together*

Formed in 2007, Christian Churches Together (CCT) is the broadest Christian fellowship in the United States. It represents members from the Catholic, Orthodox, historic Protestant, historic Black, Evangelical, and Pentecostal families of Christian churches. In addition, its membership includes six national organizations: the American Bible Society, Bread for the World, Evangelicals for Social Action, Habitat for Humanity, Sojourners, and World Vision. It's this mix of churches and religious organizations that makes the CCT unique among North American ecumenical organizations. CCT calls itself and its member churches "to celebrate a common confession of faith in the Triune God; to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer and theological dialogue; to provide fellowship and mutual support; to seek better understanding of each other by affirming our commonalities and understanding our differences; to foster evangelism faithful to the proclamation of the gospel; to speak to society with a common voice whenever possible; and to promote the common good of society."

The 2016 annual convocation of Christian Churches Together was held in Arlington, Virginia, on February 17–19 with the theme "What God Can Do When We Come Together: The Tenth Anniversary of CCT." Speakers and participants engaged in dialogue over the focal issues of the last ten years' convocations: racism, hunger and poverty, evangelism, mass incarceration, and the impact of new immigrants in American Christianity. General secretary Tom De Vries headed the RCA delegation, which included Earl James, Stacey Duensing, Jodie Wu, and Monica Schaap Pierce.

RCA delegates lauded the convocation, one of the many benefits of participating in CCT, as an opportunity to build personal relationships with people across the church in the U.S., to come to a more nuanced understanding of the differences and commonalities between communions, to grow together in Christ, to deepen spiritual wisdom, to identify new possibilities for a shared witness, and to act as a unified voice in speaking to contemporary culture on issues of spirituality, life, justice, and peace.

Carlos Malave is the executive director of CCT, which has its offices in Indianapolis, Indiana. The CCT's website (www.christianchurchestogether.org) provides additional information about its mission and activity. There you will also find common statements on poverty, immigration reform, racism, and evangelism.

*RCA–Formula of Agreement Relationships*

In 1997, the Reformed Church in America, in conjunction with its Reformed ecumenical partners the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ, approved a historic agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America known as the Formula of Agreement. This landmark agreement brought the four churches—already partners in a number of ministries both in North America and around the world—into full communion with each other.

Since that agreement, the working relationships between the churches have remained close and vibrant, if not always very public. For example, Lisa Vander Wal serves as a member of the church council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and representatives from the Formula of Agreement churches serve as corresponding delegates to this body each year. While the commission regularly looks for means of cooperation between the partner denominations, it also acknowledges that, in fact, much ecumenical work between these denominations happens at the local level, where Reformed and Lutheran congregations join in ministries of worship, education, and service. Behind the scenes, denominational staff from the respective churches meet both to support each other in their work and to plan for possible joint historic streams of Protestant Christianity at a time when their common witness makes the gospel of Jesus Christ more available to more people in more places.

*Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue*

The eighth round of the Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue began in 2013. Included in the dialogue are representatives from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and the Reformed Church in America. The RCA is represented by Allan Janssen, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, and Monica Schaap Pierce.

Following the prospectus prepared by the previous dialogue and approved by the participating communions, including the RCA, this dialogue focuses on ecclesiology, and in particular on ministry. The first gathering divided the issue into four areas, each to be guided by a subgroup. The four areas are: mission and identity, unity and diversity, authority and episcopacy, and ministry and ordination. The commission continues to monitor this dialogue and its extraordinary conversations, and will present a full report to the General Synod in 2018 after the dialogue completes its summary paper on ministry and the church.

**Ongoing Work of the Commission**

The commission continues to focus time at each meeting on exploring the explosive growth of Christianity in the global South—the continents of Africa, South America, and Asia, where the Christian church is growing at a remarkable pace. As a commission, we believe that the witness of Christianity in the global South has much to teach us in North America and in the Reformed Church in America, and we are committed to discussing this reality and its possible impact on and lessons for the RCA. Just as the RCA was at the forefront of the ecumenical movements of the 20th century, the RCA also needs to be deeply involved in these new realities for the 21st century.

The commission remains committed to the biblical mandate of unity in Christ, in whatever form, and in joining with the work of the Holy Spirit as the gospel continues to cross boundaries of geography, society, and culture. What is also clear, however, is that ecumenism in this new reality is not the work of the commission alone, or simply the work of a denomination. These changing patterns of global Christianity have produced the unexpected opportunities of "glo-cal" (global + local) ecumenical work.

Many of the communities in which the RCA has congregations are now home to new immigrant Christian gatherings, the result of a global movement that brings millions of immigrants to the United States and Canada each year—75 percent of whom are Christian. Many of the groups have ties to churches in their country of origin, but not here. The ecumenical challenge, then, rests not only in formal groups or structures, but also locally, even reaching into each congregation with this challenge: to engage ecumenically in our own communities by exhibiting both the meaning and importance of practicing radical Christian hospitality. In practicing such hospitality, local churches often find themselves recipients of remarkable grace and compassion. The commission will continue to hold this need before the church.

Additionally, many ministers of Word and sacrament, along with their congregations, participate in local ecumenical expressions such as ministerial associations and councils of churches. Many such associations are longstanding, offer member pastors support on many levels, and engage together in mercy and justice projects. Historically, the Commission on Christian Unity has not engaged those local expressions. In the future, the commission might connect with those associations and councils to promote and enhance learning, identify opportunities for wider impact, and explore together how the denominational mandate for the commission can serve local Christian unity efforts, perhaps especially given the enormous glo-cal trends, emergencies, and climate.

Reflecting on its mandate for Christian unity, the commission is concerned about fissures of disunity within and among local churches and in the RCA as a whole. Diversity of thought is realistic and healthy. Diversity is realistic because the church is comprised of a multiplicity of people with sundry gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Diversity is healthy because through these diverse gifts, creativity emerges, and with it fresh approaches to upholding sacred traditions as well as addressing new issues in changing times. Diversity is not inimical to unity. Rather, the unity that has already been established in Christ comes to its fullest expression through the various gifts of the faithful, which are unified in their service to the gospel.

The Reformed Church in America has a long history of collaborating with other Christians of diverse cultures, histories, gifts, and beliefs. Whether in hospitals founded by missionaries, in a local vacation Bible school hosted with neighboring churches, or in dialogue with other communions, we partner with other believers in order to advance Christ's mission on earth. Our common, unifying work is a response to Jesus' prayer that we "may all be one" (John 17:21). In the Bible, Christian unity is described as a *gift* and a *call*. It is a gift that has already been realized by Jesus Christ, who has broken down the dividing walls of hostility (Ephesians 2:14). It is a call to bear one another's burdens so as to make visible to all a unity that God already sees (Galatians 6:2).

Yet, within our denomination, we have turned away from the gift of oneness. Stymied by fear and pride, we have fallen short of our call to manifest the unity that we have in Christ. Rather than modeling wholeness within the Reformed Church in America, we have allowed walls to be built up and allowed hostilities to fester. The ecumenical pursuit of Christian unity is deficient without internal concord. It is inconsistent for us to reach out in ecumen-

ical relationships while failing to reach across our own denomination to extend hospitality and strive for compromise.

The urgent work of reconciliation and cooperation within our denomination requires renewed strength and courage, which we can only find in God. It necessitates trust in, and openness to, the Spirit. It demands an unqualified, intentional, and prayerful commitment to heal the brokenness of the body of Christ. As a commission, we prayerfully urge our denomination to seek a deeper and more authentic expression of oneness that we have in Christ. For Christian unity—while universal in God's promise—must begin at home.

**Encouragement to Review "Scripture and Moral Discernment"**

The commission also wishes to encourage delegates to review "Scripture and Moral Discernment" (*MGS 2013*, pp. 281–291), a report that came out of the consultation on the interpretation and use of Scripture in moral discernment and ethical decision making involving the RCA, the ELCA, the PC(USA), the UCC, and the CRCNA. The report was presented to the 2013 General Synod, which voted to commend the document to RCA churches and urge consistories and classes to use it to guide scriptural study and discernment.

**Acknowledgments**

The commission wishes to formally acknowledge and express its appreciation for the work of two members completing their terms of service. Norma Coleman-James will have completed two full terms and one year as CCU's moderator. Mitchell Kinsinger will leave his commission work after five years. Lisa Vander Wal will assume the role of moderator of the commission for the 2016-2017 work year.

Finally, the commission warmly received and welcomed its newly appointed staff member, ecumenical associate Monica Schaap Pierce.

# Report of the Commission on Christian Worship

The Commission on Christian Worship met in Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 22–24, 2015, in conjunction with the joint meetings of all the General Synod commissions and General Synod Council (GSC). The commission also met February 12–14, 2016, in New York City.

The commission is pleased to provide updates on our ongoing projects.

***Directory for Worship*** **Revision and Survey of Worship Practices in the RCA**

Last year the commission reported on its preliminary work anticipating a revision to the *Directory for Worship*. We are convinced this is a worthwhile project, as a refreshed *Liturgy* and *Directory* might better articulate and embody our fundamental unity in Christ while reflecting in a richer way the broad variety of cultural expressions found in the RCA and in the world.

Yet we are unsure how a new *Directory* will be received in congregations of the RCA. There remain significant questions regarding the constitutionality of our worship documents (see "'Constitutionality' in the Reformed Church in America," *MGS 2013*, pp. 354-364). Furthermore, those who plan and lead worship draw upon a much broader range of published and online materials (musical, liturgical, homiletical) than ever before. We wonder if a new *Directory* would be welcomed by most of our congregations. Furthermore, we realize that in order to continue to equip the emerging worship leaders of today and tomorrow we need to know what churches are already doing in their worship services that is cultivating transformation in Christ, and what resources they sense are lacking.

We therefore were pleased when the Commission on History requested in October 2015 that we conduct a survey of worship practices in the RCA. Such surveys have been undertaken regularly in the past, most recently in 1997 and 2004. We believe that a survey—carefully prepared and administered—could help us discern how best to fulfill our mandate to prepare liturgical and educational materials for the denomination, and whether and how a *Directory* refresh might fit into that mandate.

Following the recommendation adopted by General Synod 2014 that the RCA and CRC "act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel us to act separately," we approached the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship (CICW) and the affiliated Center for Social Research to help develop both a survey instrument and a mechanism for deploying it and analyzing the data. That work has now passed beyond the preliminary phases. We are grateful for the collegiality and expertise of our partners. We are persuaded that this survey will provide us with important information to guide our work in future years. We expect to have the survey results ready by General Synod 2017.

The Commission on Christian Worship therefore requests $5,000 to contribute to this common work. This figure represents a small percentage of the total costs, the remainder being borne by our generous partners.

**R 16-48**
**To commit $5,000 to help fund a survey on worship practices in the RCA in partnership with the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship. (ADOPTED)**

**Bible Translation**

In 2011 the commission was asked to consider a new translation of the Bible—the Common English Bible (CEB). According to its preface, the Common English Bible was produced out of a "concern for accuracy and accessibility in one translation that the typical reader or worshipper would be able to understand." Several denominational publishers, including two of the RCA's Formula of Agreement partners, sponsored the CEB: Westminster John Knox Press (Presbyterian Church, USA), and Pilgrim Press (United Church of Christ). The publishers utilized the work of over 120 Bible scholars from 22 different faiths, including one of our very own General Synod professors, Carol M. Bechtel.

A couple of things that set the CEB translation apart from other translations, such as the New International Version or the New Revised Standard Version, are that the CEB translation has an easy readability and also an emphasis on inclusive language throughout the biblical text. We acknowledge that some renderings can be problematic. (A good example is the term "Son of Man," which is changed in the CEB to "The Human One." This helpfully eliminates the overtones of sexism, but also sacrifices the canonical echoes of the eschatological title.) However, the commission commends the Common English Bible for use in devotion, study, teaching, and prayer. The commission hopes this translation may enhance the church's dedication to Scripture.

**Communion Elements: Gluten-Free Bread**

In the RCA communion liturgy, the presider at the Lord's Supper offers the elements of the table to the congregation with these words: "These are the gifts of God for the people of God." Unfortunately, not all are able to partake of these gifts—not for spiritual reasons, but for physical reasons. For those who have Celiac disease or have a gluten intolerance it is physically harmful to take a wafer, a piece of bread, or any other element representing the body of Christ that contains gluten. These individuals are left with several alternatives: refrain from taking the bread, arrange for a gluten-free alternative, or do not participate in receiving the Lord's Supper.

The commission encourages the church to be hospitable with communion elements and have a gluten-free alternative present at the table whenever the Lord's Supper is celebrated. The commission also encourages the church to have pastoral conversations with those who participate in the sacramental life of the church and have a gluten intolerance. Furthermore, we recommend that a gluten-free loaf be served for the whole congregation for those who find it theologically troubling to have two separate loaves present on the table.

**Guidelines for General Synod Worship**

At our joint commissions and GSC meeting in October 2015, the Commission for Women asked the Commission on Worship to provide practical and theological guidelines for those preparing to lead worship at General Synod. A previous document, addressing issues of Scripture translation and inclusive language, needed updating.

Our commission therefore produced the following, which we respectfully submit, commending it not only to those who prepare worship for General Synod, but also to congregations across the RCA, who may find it helpful. The document incorporates insights gleaned from resources commended in the 2015 report of the Commission on Christian Worship.

## GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL SYNOD WORSHIP

Worship at General Synod is unlike worship at a local congregation or a Christian conference. General Synod is a unique gathering of men and women who are given the responsibility to both respond to the current particularities of the Reformed Church in America and to anticipate God's desires for our future. Thus our worship together seeks to graciously reflect both who we are and what we believe God calls us to be. Yet "who we are" is a shifting reality. We come together with a wide range of worship practices and expectations. We come with a diversity of cultural sensibilities and expressive styles. The challenge is to forge many "I" voices into a common and authentic "we"—to become, by the grace of God, the body of Christ, assembled to listen to God's Word, to discern God's will for fulfilling our ongoing mission, and to pray for the lost and broken world God loves so much.

Preparation for General Synod worship begins when the incoming president appoints a worship leader or worship planning team. They work closely with those responsible for the agenda, schedule, and overall plan for the annual meeting. In addition, through the staff member to the Commission on Christian Worship (currently Troy Van Beek), members of the Commission on Christian Worship are available to help prepare or lead the service, or to answer any questions you may have.

The following guidelines, prepared by the Commission on Christian Worship, are intended to help prepare worship that is faithful, vital, and hospitable.

*Structure*

Worship at General Synod should follow a common pattern for Christian worship, encompassing a variety of activities (see under "Song" below). Three patterns to consider:

- **Three-Fold: Approach, Proclamation, Response**
  The RCA's *Directory for Worship* identifies three primary movements in worship: Approach to God, Proclamation of the Word, and Response to God. This shape follows the dynamic of salvation: Guilt, Grace, Gratitude.
- **Daily Prayer: Praise, Psalm, Proclamation, Prayer**
  Your service could also follow the long-established pattern of the church's daily prayer: Praise, Psalm, Proclamation, Prayer. This is appropriate for worship in the morning or evening during the week; it is a way to frame everything else we do at General Synod as prayer. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
- **Four-Fold: Gathering, Preaching, Communion, Sending**
  It is especially fitting for the concluding service to follow a four-fold order for the Lord's Day, centering on God's Word in proclamation and sacrament. The four movements are these: Gathering, Preaching, Communion, Sending.

Regardless of which pattern you choose, avoid the temptation to allow worship to devolve into a theologically and liturgically less robust pattern: "singing-talking-singing."

In addition, please remember that General Synod schedules are extremely tight. It is imperative that worship leaders and preachers plan carefully to remain within the scheduled timelines.

If you have questions regarding these patterns, please contact either the CCW staff person (Troy Van Beek) or a member of the Commission on Christian Worship.

*Scripture and Speaking*

- **The preferred translation of the Bible for all Synod publications and worship is the NRSV.** Likewise, please use ecumenically accepted texts to music, liturgies, creeds, and confessions whenever possible.
- **Scripture should be read clearly and with expression.** As the living, active Word of God, it is not merely a jumping-off point for later commentary.
- **Be attentive to issues of inclusivity, community, and faithful imagination.** Be intentional about avoiding sexist, discriminatory, or potentially offensive language when preparing worship and/or sermons.
    - For example, reserve masculine pronouns for use with people who are actually male. Using "man" or "men" when referring to women or mixed-gendered groups of people suggests something we don't believe about the relative importance of masculine and feminine humanity.
    - It is not always possible (nor poetically acceptable) to avoid all pronouns for God. The *occasional* use of the masculine pronouns for God is acceptable, but it should be balanced by language taken from Scripture that expands our sense of who God is, that stretches and breaks the imaginative idols our language can sometimes create.
    - If you have questions regarding appropriateness, please contact the staff to the RCA's Commission on Race and Ethnicity (Alina Coipel Robinson), Commission for Women (Liz Testa), or Commission on Christian Worship (Troy Van Beek).

*Song*

- The RCA document *The Theology and Place of Music in Worship* (www.rca.org/resources/theology-and-place-music-worship) emphasizes two points with regard to the use of music in worship.
    - **First, music serves the liturgy.** Singing is an artistic or expressive action. It becomes liturgical when that singing in worship is done to serve some God-related activity: praise, lamentation, confession, dedication, testimony, etc. Be sure that artistic expression is disciplined to serve the purposes of worship. It is helpful when worship planners ask, "What does this song *do*?" and "How can we help the congregation experience this song as confession (or as testimony or as thanksgiving, etc.)?"
    - **Second, music serves the people.** Carefully consider the use of anything that leans in the direction of "performance" and leaves the congregation mute. The role of choirs or lead singers, of musicians playing guitars or organs or drums or violins is to aid the whole people of God in their worship.
- **Music should be led *hospitably*.**
    - Select and lead music that is accessible to a wide range of congregants. Test your assumptions in conversation with others.
    - Where possible, provide both lyrics and music, securing appropriate permission to print or project.
    - Do not overwhelm the worshipping community with too much unfamiliar material in a single service. If necessary, teach new music before worship begins. A good rule of thumb is this: 75 percent of the time, at least 75 percent of your congregation should be familiar with a given song.
    - Make use of music from a variety of sources—both geographic and temporal—to make plain our connection with God's saints of all times and places.

*Prayer*

- **Pray on behalf of others, thoughtfully and carefully.** In prayer, the church expresses its priestly function, standing in God's presence and re-presenting the whole world to the Living One. Leading prayer is an exercise in thinking beyond one's usual horizons to gather up and articulate the praise and the concerns of others.
- **Speak thoughtfully, never carelessly**, whether prayers are offered extemporaneously or written out beforehand.
- **Prayers are offered in the church by individuals *on behalf of* the whole congregation.** Therefore, be sensitive to use inclusive language, and language that emphasizes "we" rather than "I." Be sensitive when praying about political or other issues about which Christians disagree. You are praying on behalf of everyone, not just those who agree with you.
- **Praise and petition should focus on God.** A rich biblical pattern for prayer is the *berakah*, which begins focusing on God—offering praise or blessing or thanksgiving for what God has done. Petitions follow, grounded in in God's demonstrated grace, power, and love. So, for example, one might bless God for gifting Daniel with courage, or Deborah with leadership, and then petition God for those same gifts.
- **Don't try to say everything in one prayer.** Prayer has a number of functions, including adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and intercession. It is colored by both lament and praise. Seldom can a single occasion of prayer in a given service do everything or say everything we wish to say to God.
- **Silence can be as powerful as spoken words.**
- **Congregational responses can help congregations "own" prayers.** The prayers of the people are deepened when the entire congregation is allowed not just to listen, but to give their assent, speaking or singing an "Amen" or "Lord, hear our prayer" or "Your will be done." These words can be spoken, sung, gestured, etc.
- For more on public prayer, see these two articles: "The Role of Prayer in Public Worship" (worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/the-role-of-prayer-in-public-worship) and "Praying Together in Worship" (worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/praying-together-in-worship).

*Preaching*

- The Reformed tradition places great importance on the preaching of the Word. The specific content of the sermon will be determined by what is heard in the text for the day, what is in the heart of the preacher, and what is found in the context into which the sermon is preached. But some general guidelines can help to shape a strong, engaging proclamation of God's good news. **In sum, the best sermons do the following:**
    - They emerge from exploring and listening to a single biblical text.
    - They speak primarily about God (rather than about you, us, or the history of the Jebusites).
    - They proclaim the gospel—that is to say, even in the midst of lament or rebuke, God speaks a word of good news.
    - They explore where the gospel and real lives intersect—declaring not just abstract truths about God who can do anything, but concrete examples of God who does specific things.
    - They attend to the Christian community's experience of the gospel, both what they think and what they feel along the way.
    - They are clear and focused, not rambling and disjointed.
    - They employ language that is thoughtful, appropriate, and sometimes beautiful.

- They are delivered confidently and authentically.
- They teach, delight, and persuade.
- The Word of God always provokes a response, and it is the preacher's responsibility to identify an appropriate response and choose some act of worship (prayer, silence, song, etc.) to embody it.

*Sacrament*

- An approved sacramental liturgy shall be used for celebrations of the Lord's Supper, as per the *Book of Church Order*. Approved orders are the standard (which can be found at www.rca.org/liturgy) and supplemental (images.rca.org/docs/worship/Liturgy-OccasionalCommunion.pdf).
- However the elements are to be distributed, it is helpful for the presider at the table to employ large symbolic gestures when offering the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving.
- An alcohol-free and a gluten-free option should be made available for those with food sensitivities.

*Psalm*

- **The Psalms are the prayer book of the people of God.** Their regular use in worship is invaluable in shaping the spiritual life of the congregation.
- The Reformed tradition is known for its embrace of the Psalms, making these ancient prayers our own, speaking them in words, songs, actions, images, etc. The Psalms teach us deep in our bones the fundamental moods and modes of prayer.
- The psalm for the day might take us deeper into our own experience of God in and for the world. Or it might knock us off center and remind us of others for whom God cares. We might consider, for instance, how the words of a particular psalm are especially fitting as the prayer of someone outside our normal circles of contact (e.g., a Syrian refugee), and pray the psalm on their behalf.

*Symbol*

- **Show-and-tell**
  The richest worship is characterized by careful use of language in both proclamation and prayer. It is also characterized by non-verbal meaning-making activities—by the generous use of symbols and ritual actions. These attend to our embodied nature as humans, making use of a wide range of physical postures (standing, hands outstretched), gestures (dipping hands in a font), and other tangible, sensory, ritual actions (clasping hands, lighting a candle, washing feet, smearing with ashes, eating bread and wine, etc.) that employ the daily *stuff* of embodied lives. All of this points to the whole world (not just church) as a place of sacramental encounter with God. And they remind us that worship is not just "tell," but "*show*-and-tell."

*Suppositions*

Christian worship should be:

- **Biblical:** The best worship is guided by Scripture, shaped by its patterns, rooted in its truth, saturated with its language, follows its narrative contours, and focuses where it does: on the living Word.
- **Covenantal:** Services are a conversation between God and us in which we renew the covenant of grace, hearing God's faithful promises and making our own.
- **Trinitarian:** In worship, we engage the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. God is not merely the object of our worship; God actively prompts, perfects, and receives the worship we bring.

- **Transformative:** When we worship, we do more than express ourselves; we encounter the living God. This cannot help but leave us changed—energized, admonished, comforted, and empowered to live out our worship in the world.
- **Participative:** Worship leaders are not performers, but facilitators, encouraging the full, conscious, active participation of the congregation (not "audience").
- **Sacramental:** God is Spirit, yet in worship, God condescends to communicate to us as physical beings, through material means: tactile, audible, visible, tangible signs that point to and convey God's grace and glory.
- **Holistic:** We bring all of our selves to worship: old and young, body and soul, mind and heart, doubt and belief, lament and joy.
- **Expansive:** We make creative use of words, music—and more!—from many times, places, peoples, and cultures to enlarge our vision of the reign of God and situate ourselves properly within it.
- **Excellent:** Our worship should be the most generous and excellent outpouring of praise and prayer we can offer—not because God requires it, but because God deserves it.
- **Reverent:** Even when playful, our worship acknowledges that it is a mysterious and holy God with whom we deal when we gather together.
- **Spirit-directed:** We are led by the Holy Spirit in form and in freedom, both in prayer-filled planning and in the surprising moments of worship.
- **Expectant:** The Spirit blows where the Spirit will, so we worship with our sails raised, expecting great things of God, and enjoying, rather than engineering, a contagious spiritual energy.

**Additional Related Recommendation Regarding General Synod Worship**

Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 4, Section 4 of the *Book of Church Order*; 2015 edition, p. 68, specifies that "Each morning meeting of the synod shall have its first half-hour devoted to prayer and praise to God." We believe this 30-minute period of prayer and praise should be specifically tailored to the nature of a day's activities at General Synod. The dynamics involved in spiritual discernment as a group may require different spiritual practices than those traditionally associated with corporate "worship." For instance, dialogical interaction and communal prayer may be more appropriate than a "set" of praise music, a monological sermon, or an intercessory prayer spoken by only one individual.

A multitude of prayerful activities may be creatively employed to prepare delegates for faithful and fruitful conversation throughout the day. Moreover, there are many gifted members of the RCA who are trained to facilitate this kind of prayerful preparation. They are able to create space for the Holy Spirit to work with individuals and groups to alleviate obstacles that stand in the way of healthy discernment, all the while avoiding the desire to engineer a preferred outcome. We have advised the current president, general secretary, and the entire GSC (and here advise all future GSCs) to make use of these gifted people for these times of morning "prayer and praise." The members of the Commission on Worship are happy to offer further advice or clarification.

**Thanks**

The commission feels revitalized by the addition of new members Drew Poppleton and Agustin Hubert. The commission also wishes to express its gratitude to Paul Thè, who is leaving the commission at the completion of his term, and Ron Rienstra, who concludes his service as member and moderator of the commission. Paul is pastor of The Bridge in Chino, California. Ron is associate professor of preaching and worship arts at Western Theological Seminary.

# Report of the Commission on Church Order

The Commission on Church Order (CCO) met October 22–24 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and again February 2–4 in New York City. Communication also occurred through a plethora of emails and phone calls. In addition to work assigned to it by the General Synod and work generated out of its own life as a commission, the CCO worked with other commissions of the General Synod. The commission received and provided advisory responses to requests for interpretation of the *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*).

**Referrals from the 2015 General Synod**

*Regional Synod Responsibilities*

The 2015 General Synod acted:

> To direct the Commission on Church Order to review the provisions of the *BCO* that empower the regional synods to form, combine, and disband classes, and to transfer churches from one classis to another; to determine if changes in the *BCO* are appropriate; and to report to the General Synod of 2016 (*MGS 2015*, R-16, p. 91).

The commission discussed R-16 with representatives from the Council of Synod Executives. The commission offers the following recommendation to the General Synod:

> R 16-49
> To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):
>
> Chapter 1, Part III, Article 2, Section 3
>
> The regional synod shall, after reasonable and timely consultation with all parties involved, form, combine, ~~and~~ or disband classes.~~,~~ The regional synod, after reasonable and timely consultation with all parties involved, ~~and~~ may also transfer churches from one classis to another within its bounds.

*The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was to vote in favor of R 16-49.*

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-49 as follows (highlighting reflects amendment, deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

> . . . Sec. 3. The regional synod shall, after reasonable and timely consultation with all classes~~parties~~ involved, form, combine, ~~and~~ or disband classes.~~,~~ The regional synod, after reasonable and timely consultation with all parties involved, ~~and~~ may also transfer churches from one classis to another within its bounds.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend R 16-49 as follows (highlighting reflects amendment, deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

> . . . Sec. 3. The regional synod shall, after reasonable and timely consultation with all classesparties involved, form, combine, and or disband classes.; The regional synod, after reasonable and timely consultation with all classesparties involved, and may also transfer churches from one classis to another within its bounds.

**VOTED:** To not adopt the further amendment to R 16-49.

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

**VOTED:** To cease debate.

**VOTED:** To not adopt the initial amendment to R 16-49.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-49 as follows (highlighting reflects amendment, deletions are stricken, additions are underlined):

> . . . Sec. 3. The regional synod shall, after reasonable and timely consultation with all assembliesparties involved, form, combine, and or disband classes.; The regional synod, after reasonable and timely consultation with all assembliesparties involved, and may also transfer churches from one classis to another within its bounds.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to refer R 16-49 back to the Commission on Church Order for further discussion.

**VOTED:** To not adopt the motion to refer.

**VOTED:** To not amend R 16-49.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-49.

The final text of R 16-49 as adopted reads as follows:

> **R 16-49**
> **To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):**
>
> **Chapter 1, Part III, Article 2, Section 3**
>
> **The regional synod shall, after reasonable and timely consultation with all parties involved, form, combine, and or disband classes.; The regional synod, after reasonable and timely consultation with all parties involved, and may also transfer churches from one classis to another within its bounds. (ADOPTED)**

*Postponed Action Regarding Consistory or Governing Body Responsibilities*

The commission offered R-41 to the 2015 General Synod, which proposed an amendment to *BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 11 (2015 edition, p. 15), adding the following as a new sub-section (g): "The consistory or governing body shall determine what marriages

may be solemnized in a church or congregation." In response, the 2015 General Synod voted "to postpone consideration of R-41 to the 2016 session of General Synod (*MGS 2015*, R-41, p. 192).

The commission confirmed its understanding that the wording of the General Synod's action regarding R-41 (which says that the General Synod voted "[t]o postpone consideration of R-41 to the 2016 session of General Synod") results in the commission's recommendation automatically being a matter of business that will be included on the agenda for the 2016 General Synod. The General Synod office confirmed that the postponed action on R-41 means that the GSC will present R-41 to the 2016 General Synod. The Commission on Church Order requested that the paper that originally introduced R-41 accompany the presentation of the postponed recommendation.

*Task Force Regarding Diaconal Assemblies*

The 2015 General Synod acted:

> To direct the General Synod Council, in consultation with the Commission on Theology, to create a task force of no more than ten members—consisting of members of the Commission on Theology, the Commission on Church Order, the Commission on Christian Action, diaconal leaders, and others as appropriate—to bring a proposal to General Synod for changes to the *Book of Church Order* regarding the creation of diaconal assemblies at the classis level; and further, that the task force report on subsequent action that may be needed at the regional synod and General Synod levels (*MGS 2015*, R-51, p. 242).

The commission agreed that commission member Larry Schuyler will be the member of the Commission on Church Order that serves on the task force described in R-51.

*Commissioned Pastor Summit*

The 2014 General Synod acted:

> To instruct the General Synod Council, in consultation with the Commission on Church Order, the Commission on Theology, Commission on History, Commissioned Pastor Advisory Team, and any other commissions, task forces, and relevant resource people across the RCA to:
>
> - detail the original purpose and subsequent history and evolution of the commissioned pastor in the life of the RCA,
> - explore the theological foundations of office in the RCA as they pertain to the commissioned pastor, and
> - engage the relational tensions that the subject of commissioned pastors has produced in the church
>
> in order to imagine a coherent vision of what the commissioned pastor should be within the RCA, congruent with Transformed & Transforming; and further,
>
> to propose any necessary changes to the *Book of Church Order*, with a report back to General Synod no later than 2016 (*MGS 2014*, R-56, p. 267).

The moderator of the commissioned pastor summit requested that a representative from the Commission on Church Order participate in the planned summit. The commission agreed that commission member Larry Schuyler will participate in the summit.

**Commissions and Task Force Collaborations**

*Candidates for Ministry Who Are Not Members of a Local Church*
The commission met with a representative of the General Synod's Call, Care, and Standards Collaboration Group to discuss possible ways in which access to the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process can be improved. The collaboration group requested a modification to the *BCO* that would permit a candidate who is not a member of a local RCA church to apply for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry. The commission assisted the collaboration group with language for the *BCO*. The Call, Care, and Standards Group will recommend an amendment to the General Synod to address this issue.

*Appointment of Candidates to Churches without Installed Minister or Minister under Contract*

The commission reviewed a communication from the director of the General Synod's Ministerial Formation Certification Agency regarding *Book of Church Order* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Sections 7 and 8; 2015 edition, p. 34. The MFCA has experienced instances when the current wording has excluded consultation with MFCA from the classis or the local church considering a student candidate for placement in a church. The current wording doesn't specify which seminary is to provide approval for the placement. The current *BCO* language precedes the formation of the MFCA and the current Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process. The proposed wording provides for the appropriate General Synod agent to provide oversight for the involvement of candidates who may assist a congregation. The commission offers the following recommendation:

> R 16-50
> To adopt the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):
>
> Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7
>
> *Sec. 7.* The classis may appoint a candidate enrolled in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process ~~theological student~~ to a church without an installed minister or minister under contract, to furnish the service for which the candidate ~~student~~ is qualified. Before the appointment is made, the candidate ~~student~~ must secure the approval of the appointment by the RCA seminary or the Reformed Church agent that supervises the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process ~~the student attends~~.
>
> *Sec. 8.* A consistory or governing body shall not enter into a contract with a minister, a licensed candidate, or a candidate for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry ~~student~~ except by approval of the classis. Between sessions of classis the approval may be given by the president and the clerk of classis.

The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was to amend R 16-50 as follows (additions and deletions that are part of the advisory committee's amendment are highlighted).

To adopt the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):

*Sec. 7.* The classis may appoint a candidate enrolled in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process ~~theological student~~ to a church without an installed minister or minister under contract, to furnish the service for which the candidate ~~student~~ is qualified. Before the appointment is made, the candidate ~~student~~ must secure the approval of the ~~appointment by the RCA seminary or the Reformed Church~~General Synod agent ~~that supervises~~ supervising the candidate's Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process~~the student attends~~.

*Sec. 8.* A consistory or governing body shall not enter into a contract with a minister, a licensed candidate, or a candidate for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry ~~student~~ except by approval of the classis. Between sessions of classis the approval may be given by the president and the clerk of classis.

**VOTED:** To amend R 16-50.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-50 as amended.

The final text of R 16-50 as amended and adopted reads as follows:

**R 16-50**
**To adopt the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken):**

**Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7**

***Sec. 7.*** **The classis may appoint a candidate enrolled in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process ~~theological student~~ to a church without an installed minister or minister under contract, to furnish the service for which the candidate ~~student~~ is qualified. Before the appointment is made, the candidate ~~student~~ must secure the approval of the General Synod agent supervising the candidate's Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process~~appointment by the seminary the student attends~~.**

***Sec. 8.*** **A consistory or governing body shall not enter into a contract with a minister, a licensed candidate, or a candidate for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry ~~student~~ except by approval of the classis. Between sessions of classis the approval may be given by the president and the clerk of classis. (ADOPTED)**

The commission noted that amendments similar to the foregoing may be appropriate for inclusion in the articles in the *BCO* (Chapter 1, Part II, Articles 16 and 17; 2015 edition, pp. 56-59) addressing preaching elder and commissioned pastor candidates. The commission will consider this work in its future agendas.

*Method of Calculating Membership for General Synod Council*

The commission discussed a communication from the General Synod's Commission on Nominations regarding its efforts to implement properly the General Synod Council membership requirements set forth in *BCO* Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3, Section 2; 2015 edition, p. 105. The Commission on Nominations inquired which membership sum should be used to determine "half of the membership" or "one third of the membership." The word "membership" would seem to include the whole body, but the Commission on Nominations doesn't enlist nominees for all positions on the GSC. How does the commission anticipate the election of the vice president of General Synod in the composition of the membership of GSC? The commission offers the following recommendation:

**R 16-51**
**To approve the following amendments to the *Book of Church Order* for submission to the 2017 General Synod for final approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):**

**Chapter 3, Part I, Article 3**

***Sec. 2. Composition***
**One-half of the membership of the General Synod Council (GSC) shall be elders and one-half shall be ministers and no fewer ~~not less~~ than one-third of the membership shall be women. For purposes of the composition requirements of the preceding sentence, the vice-president, the nonvoting member from the ELCA, and the general secretary of the General Synod shall be excluded. The Commission on Nominations shall… (ADOPTED)**

*The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was to vote in favor of R 16-51.*

**Inquiries and Replies to Requests for Interpretation of the *BCO***

*"Inactive" vs. "Without Charge"*

The commission discussed an inquiry regarding the distinctions (if any) between the terms/classifications "inactive" and "without charge" when used in the *Book of Church Order* and denominational records. "Inactive" is a recognition by the classis of the minister's inability to function in the office of minister of Word and sacrament. "Without charge" is an administrative term used when a minister is not currently serving in a ministry approved by the classis.

*Church Membership*

The commission discussed an inquiry that raised questions regarding the membership status of individuals who are members of a church that is being disbanded by a classis. The commission offers the following recommendation:

**R 16-52**
**To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):**

**Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 2**

**d. The determination of the membership status of all persons affiliated with the church, followed by a determination of the process for transfer or other disposition of the memberships. (ADOPTED)**

*The advice of the Advisory Committee on Church Order and Governance was to vote in favor of R 16-52.*

*Formulary 5*

The executive director of the Board of Benefits Services met with the commission to discuss possible revisions to Formulary 5 and other parts of the *Book of Church Order*. The revisions would be for two purposes: first, to properly align requirements of the *Book of Church Order* regarding certain insurance benefits (including long-term disability and group life) with that which is in fact available from third-party insurers, and second, to revise Formulary 5 regarding reimbursement of premiums paid by ministers for medical insurance when the minister's employer does not offer a group medical insurance plan. The commission agreed that the revisions regarding reimbursement of premiums should, if possible, (a) eliminate the concept of "reimbursement" and (b) result in similar financial consequences for all ministers regardless of the method by which they obtain or receive the insurance coverage described in Formulary 5. The commission offers the following recommendations:

**R 16-53**
**To adopt the following amendment to the *Book of Church Order* for recommendation to the classes for approval (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):**

**Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 7**

**A consistory shall fulfill the provisions of the call form (Appendix, Formulary No. 5) for retirement and insurance for all ministers serving the church under call or contract unless (a) regarding retirement, the minister is covered by the retirement plan sponsored by the Regional Synod of Canada or the retirement plan of the communion where the minister's membership is held, ~~or~~ (b) the classis determines that the minister is serving the church part-time, as defined by the Board of Benefits Services, and that circumstances warrant that the consistory be exempt from this requirement, or (c) the minister is serving less than part-time as defined by the Board of Benefits Services.**

**Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 3**

***Sec. 3*. The classis shall be responsible for the pastoral care of each enrolled minister and the minister's immediate family. Pastoral care shall be exercised by such means as the classis deems appropriate, which shall be reported to the classis annually in order to assess its adequacy and**

**effectiveness. The classis shall assure that the provisions of the call form (Appendix, Formulary No. 5) for retirement and insurance are fulfilled for all of its ministers serving in congregations or employed by an assembly, institution, or agency of the Reformed Church in America under call or contract, unless (a) regarding retirement, the minister is covered by the retirement plan sponsored by the Regional Synod of Canada or the retirement plan of the communion where the minister's membership is held, ~~or~~ (b) the classis determines that the minister is serving the church or other assembly, institution, or agency part-time, as defined by the Board of Benefits Services, and that circumstances warrant that the consistory or employing assembly, institution, or agency be exempt from this requirement, or (c) the minister is serving less than part-time as defined by the Board of Benefits Services.**

**Appendix, Formulary No. 5, Paragraph 5**

**We promise you in the name of this church all proper attention, love, and obedience in the Lord. We promise and oblige ourselves to encourage you in the discharge of the duties of your important office, and to free you from worldly avocation while you are dispensing spiritual blessings to us, to pay you the sum of $_____ in _____ payments yearly and every year, and to consider annually whether such payments are adequate, as long as you continue to be the minister of the church, together with (here insert particulars which refer to a parsonage or residence, or other emoluments). As long as you continue to be the minister of this church, we also promise to pay the stipulated contributions to the Reformed Church retirement plan and ~~the premiums for~~ provide benefits including group life insurance, ~~and~~ long-term disability insurance, and ~~the cost of group~~ medical insurance for you ~~as stipulated by the Board of Benefits Services if group medical insurance is elected. If not electing to offer a group medical insurance plan, we promise to reimburse you the cost of the premiums paid for medical insurance for you~~ and your immediate family.* Such ~~medical~~ insurance coverages shall meet or exceed the minimum standards stipulated by the Board of Benefits Services. ~~The foregoing shall not apply where~~ If you and your immediate family elect medical coverage through your spouse's employer-sponsored group plan, we will not be required to provide medical insurance. In addition we promise to provide a minimum of one week and a stipend equal to not less than the equivalent of 1/52 of the minimum cash salary established by the classis for a study program mutually agreed upon by you and us for your professional development, for each year in service with our congregation. By mutual agreement this time and money may be**

**accumulated to a maximum equivalent of four years of service. We hereby bind ourselves and our successors for the performance of all the foregoing by the underwritten signatures of the consistory members to this instrument.**

***"Immediate family" is understood to mean those dependents eligible for family medical insurance according to the insurance plan document of the Reformed Benefits Association.* (ADOPTED)**

*The advice of the Advisory Committee on f Church Order and Governance was to vote in favor of R 16-53.*

*Who May Bring a Charge in a Higher Judicatory?*

An inquiry sought clarification on the question of who may bring a charge in a higher judicatory. May a member of a local church file a charge in a classis against a minister? The commission agreed that the most effective way to address the issue is by revising Explanatory Note 11, which appears at the end of the Chapter 2 of the *BCO* (in the section captioned "Explanatory Notes on Chapter 2: The Disciplinary and Judicial Procedures"; 2015 edition, p. 96). Specifically, the commission agreed that the current text of Explanatory Note 11 should be replaced with the following:

> A person not subject to the discipline of the judicatory may bring an *accusation* to the responsible judicatory. The accusation must meet the requirements set forth for a charge in Section 1 of this article. The judicatory forwards the accusation to the appropriate committee of the judicatory that will assess the accusation as outlined in Section 4 of this article. The committee will determine whether the accusation is of sufficient merit to become a charge. The committee shall, in turn, introduce the charge and move it forward. The factual foundation for the charge(s) must be the same whether the charge(s) is brought by an individual or by a committee of the judicatory.

The foregoing change to Explanatory Note 11 does not involve a change to the constitution of the RCA or the bylaws of the General Synod. Consequently, the commission simply informs the 2016 General Synod that it is being made.

**Commission-Initiated Work**

BCO *Revisions to Correct Erroneous Cross-References*

The commission has noticed incorrect citations of or references to various sections of the *Book of Church Order (BCO)*. The errors appear to be caused by the addition, deletion, or relocation of various sections in the *BCO* and the resulting re-numbering of subsequent sections. The commission has also noticed that citations to the *BCO* in the *BCO* as well as in other materials that reference the *BCO* (such as minutes, reports, etc.) appear in various formats.

The commission has carefully reviewed the *BCO* to verify the accuracy of all citations in it, and now reports to the General Synod that the following non-substantive, editorial corrections to the *BCO* will be made in the 2016 edition to (a) correct the accuracy of certain citations to other sections of the *BCO*, and (b) cause all citations in the *BCO* to be in a consistent format (additions are underlined; deletions are stricken):

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 1, Section 3: "…Ministers shall ordinarily be confessing members of only the Reformed Church in America, except as otherwise provided in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15~~12~~, Section 1 and in Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 4…"

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 3: "…(For the form of the call to a minister, see Appendix, Formulary No. 5.)…"

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 5: "…(On the "assistant minister," see Chapter 1, Part I~~H~~, Article 2~~7~~, Section 8~~9~~.)…"

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 7: "A consistory shall fulfill the provisions of the call form (Appendix, Formulary No. #5) for retirement and insurance for all ministers serving the church under call or contract unless…"

Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 9: "…(See Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15~~12~~, Section 8.)…"

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 10: "…This relationship may be approved only if the ordination meets the requirements of the Government of the Reformed Church in America, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14~~12~~, Section 1."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8, Section 1: "Pursuant to Chapter 1, Part II, Article 2, Section 4 ~~of this Part~~, a classis shall regularly consider the ministry of starting new churches…."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8, Section 4c: "Determine that the organizational document of the church includes a provision substantially in the form of Appendix, Formulary No. 15."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8, Section 5b: "…so that the provisions of Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 14g ~~of the *Book of Church Order*~~ are met."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8, Section 6: "…Since a classis is composed of "all the churches within its bounds" (Chapter 1, Part II, Article 1), normally an organizing church shall…"

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9, Section 2(a)(3): "A statement that the consistory must appear at the meeting identified in Section 2~~13~~(a)(2) and show cause why it should not be dissolved."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9, Section 2d: "…consistory for the church is reconstituted (Chapter 1, Part II, Article 9~~7~~, Section 4~~15~~)."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 7d: "…provision substantially in the form of Appendix, Formulary No. 15."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 13, Section 1: "Upon classis approval of an examination for licensure and ordination, the candidate shall sign the *Declaration for Licensed Candidates* (~~see~~ Appendix, Formulary No. 1) and shall…"

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 13, Section 5: "…A certificate of ordination (Appendix, Formulary No. #4), signed by…"

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Section 5a: "…determine whether, in its judgment, the minister is able to meet the requirements set forth in ~~the *Book of Church Order*~~Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14~~11~~, Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4 ~~above~~. The committee's…"

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 1e: "…shall be determined by ~~the *Book of Church Order*~~, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 7, Section 2k."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 4a: "All ministers shall be responsible to a classis which shall oversee their function as pertains to the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament (see also Section 2 and Section 6 in Article 15~~12~~)."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 4b: "When ministers move from one classis to another, they shall sign the formulary (Appendix, Formulary No. #3) "Declaration for Ministers of Word and Sacrament" in the classis which they join."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 8: "…The supervising minister shall attest such application and shall deliver it to the classis with a written report (Appendix, Formulary No. #8)."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 14: "A person who has been declared demitted from the office of minister of Word and sacrament may seek reordination to a form of ministry which meets the requirements of Chapter 1, Part II, Article 13~~10~~, Section 4 ~~above~~…."

Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Section 15: "…whose ordination meets the criteria of Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14~~11~~, Section 1, whose good standing…"

Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 8, Section 4: "…During the service of installation, the General Synod professor shall subscribe to the form of the *Declaration for a General Synod Professor* (~~see~~ Appendix, Formulary No. 7)."

Chapter 2, Part I, Article 2, Section 3: "Not withstanding Chapter 2, Part I, Article 1, Section 2, notorious and scandalous offenses require…"

Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3, Section 2: "…such other discipline as may be imposed in accordance with Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3, Section 1 ~~of this article~~."

Chapter 2, Part I, Article 4, Section 1: "…(For the form of the charge, see Appendix, Formulary No. 12)…."

Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5, Section 1: "…shall issue a citation (for the form of the citation to an accused person or consistory, see Appendix, Formulary No. 13) signed by…"

Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5, Section 6: "…committee of the judicatory as described in Chapter 2, Part I, Article 4, nor any person with a conflict of interest…"

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON CHAPTER 2:
THE DISCIPLINARY AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURES

Explanatory Note 2: "…such as closing the pulpit (see endnote #5 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3, Section 43b), and formal proceedings…"

Explanatory Note 2: "…face the offender (see also endnote #2021 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5, Section 7)."

Explanatory Note 3: "The requirement of notification is not new (see endnote #2829 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5, Section 14)."

Explanatory Note 6: "A minister may apply for demission (see Chapter 1, Part II, Article 1512, Section 13). However, demission is not the exercise of discipline. When demission occurs, the classis must keep a record of the facts and circumstances surrounding demission (see endnote #1314 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 4, Section 4de)."

Explanatory Note 7: "This form of appeal is not to a "higher judicatory" as Chapter 2, Part III, Article 1, Section 12.III.1.1 ("Nature of an Appeal") normally requires, but this exception is required because the trial of a General Synod Professor is the only judicial action which originates with a General Synod. Since there is no "higher judicatory," appeal must be made to the next General Synod (see Chapter 2, Part III, Article 1, Section 22.III.1.2). This is an exception allowed in the *Book of Church Order* to the principle articulated in Chapter 2, Part III, Article 2, Section 132.III.2.12, "No appeal can be taken from any decision of the General Synod." In such an appeal, all references to "the lower judicatory" in Chapter 2, Part III should be interpreted as referring to the original General Synod proceeding. (See Chapter 2, Part III, Article 1, Section 22.III.1.2) Note also that, in this case, the General Synod Executive Committee appoints a new investigative committee, which takes the place of the normal "judicial business committee" which functions in other appeals (Chapter 2, Part III, Article 2, Section 5see 2.III.2.5)."

Explanatory Note 8: "…This deletion also makes this Section 65 consistent with the other sections 1-54 in this Article 3 (see also endnote #2425 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5, Section 11e)…."

Explanatory Note 9: "…A new Formulary 12 (see Appendix, Formulary No. 12) is the form to use…"

Explanatory Note 19: "…in the imposition of discipline (see endnote #12 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 4, Section 4 and endnote #27 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5, Section 1413)."

Explanatory Note 24: "…since the trial under Chapter 2, Part I, Article 5 is an ecclesiastical proceeding and not a criminal or civil proceeding (see also endnote #8 for Chapter 2, Part I, Article 3, Section 65)…."

Explanatory Note 28: "This Section 1514 is added to clarify distribution of the decision by the judicatory. Without this Section 1514, a judicatory may be concerned about liability in the civil courts for damage to reputation of the individual disciplined. To conceal the decision may cause further harm to the church at large.

Under this Section 15~~14~~, the judicatory must…"

*Proposal Regarding Method of Citations within and to the* BCO

The commission presents an editorial addition to the *BCO* that is intended to encourage use of a uniform, consistent method of citation to the *BCO* in other written works. The following non-substantive, editorial addition to the *BCO* will be made in the 2016 edition at the end of the "Preamble," immediately preceding "Chapter 1, The Government" (additions are underlined):

When citing the *Book of Church Order* in other works, authors are encouraged to do so as follows:

Initial citation: RCA *Book of Church Order* (*BCO*), Chapter __, Part __, Article __, Section __ ([year] edition, p. __).

Subsequent citations: *BCO* Chapter __, Part __, Article __, Section __ ([year] edition, p. __).

**Selection of Moderator and Secretary; Appointment of Corresponding Delegate to 2016 General Synod**

The commission elected Larry Schuyler to serve as both its moderator and secretary for the annual period commencing July 1, 2016. The commission also appointed Larry Schuyler to serve as its corresponding delegate to the 2016 General Synod.

# Report of the Commission on History

The Commission on History was established in 1966 to advise the General Synod on the collection and preservation of official denominational records. In 1968, the commission was given oversight of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America, and the General Synod of 2003 added the instruction that the commission "offer a historical perspective, either orally or in writing, on matters being presented to the General Synod." The *Book of Church Order* (Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 5; 2015 edition, pp. 111–112) further assigns the commission to "actively promote research on, interest in, and reflection on, the history and traditions of the RCA," to "inform the Reformed Church in America of the relevance of the denomination's history and traditions to its program, and regularly review denominational resources that present the church's history," and to "provide a 'history center' by regularly reporting on the activities of the RCA's educational institutions as these relate to the history and traditions of the denomination."

Still, this is a commission formed half a century ago: how does it fit into a 21st-century church that seeks to be transformed and transforming? The people of God have always emphasized the importance of memory, both individual and collective. Memory allows us to see God's faithfulness in the past, and it allows us to learn from the good and bad of the past as we seek to be faithful to God's calling in the future. For the last half century, the commission has been chronicling God's transformative work in the life of the church in its annual reports, in papers, and in every volume of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America. This commission works in three time periods as it reflects on the past, reacts to the present, and provides for the future. This offers the whole church a perspective that is not *just* a historical perspective, but a perspective informed by historical insight to create a common understanding on which transformation can be built.

To do this work, the commission met October 22 to 24, 2015, in Grand Rapids, Michigan (concurrently with the other commissions and the General Synod Council); in Hillsborough and New Brunswick, New Jersey, on February 5, 2016; and in an online session on February 26, 2016.

**Reflecting on the Past**

The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America is now in its 48th year. Donald J. Bruggink, general editor of the series since its inception, continues his capable, invaluable work. We expect to see, in addition to the festschrift in honor of John Coakley, which is to be presented at this General Synod, three other new books:

- *KEMP: The Story of John R. and Mabel Kempers, Founders of the Reformed Church in America Mission in Chiapas, Mexico*, by Pablo A. Deiros
- *A Commentary on the Minutes of the Classis of Holland, 1848-1876: A Detailed Record of Persons and Issues, Civil and Religious, in the Dutch Colony of Holland, Michigan*, by Earl Wm. Kennedy
- *In Peril on the Sea: The Forgotten Story of the William & Mary Shipwreck*, by Kenneth A. Schaaf

This is the longest-running series of histories produced by any American denomination. It has continued, grown, and prospered under the careful stewardship of its general editor, taking a small initial investment that was meant to be short-lived and creating a revolving fund that continues to do good work. More information on the revolving fund is below.

As general editor and therefore a consultant to the commission, Donald Bruggink has been

continuously on the roster for at least 48 of the commission's 50 years. In February, he missed what living historians estimate was his third meeting in that time, another detail in his impressive record of service to the church. Because of that, the commission offers its first recommendation:

**R 16-54**
**WHEREAS the Commission on History of the Reformed Church in America is marking its 50th year in existence, and**

**WHEREAS the Rev. Dr. Donald J. Bruggink has been general editor of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America since its inception in 1968, serving as a consultant to the commission that entire time, and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Bruggink has faithfully stewarded the growth of both the series and its revolving fund so that they might be of continual service to the whole church, and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Bruggink is continuing that stalwart ministry,**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOVED that the 210th General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, June 9 through 14, 2016, gives thanks to God for the faithful ministry of the Rev. Dr. Donald J. Bruggink as teacher of the church, consultant to the Commission on History, and general editor of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America, and prays God's blessings on his continued ministry for as long as Dr. Bruggink is blessed to do so. (ADOPTED)**

**Providing for the Future**

A significant portion of the commission's work since the last synod has involved providing for the future. George Brown, Jr., who has been the associate general editor of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America since that position was created in 2007, and who also helped create and has served as editor of the Congregational Histories sub-series, is struggling with serious respiratory illness and has begun palliative care. Upon George's recommendation, the commission has appointed Matthew van Maastricht as associate editor of the Congregational Histories sub-series; he will work with George, who will continue as long as he feels able to do so. James Hart Brumm has been appointed as associate general editor of the Historical Series. At its October meeting, the commission spent time in prayer with George.

Another transition is coming in the archives' Canadian operations. Because of various issues with having records cross international boundaries, the Regional Synod of Canada maintains an archive that is part of the archives of the Reformed Church in America. Since the RCA's archives has a paid staff of one, the Regional Synod of Canada archives are tended by a volunteer, with the support and assistance, as needed, of RCA archivist Russell Gasero. Margaret Kapteyn began assisting John Drost in that work in 2009, and has been the archivist for the Synod of Canada since 2011 as a volunteer. She is now retiring from that work.

**R 16-55**
**WHEREAS the maintenance of an archive for the Regional Synod of Canada requires the loving, devoted service of volunteers, and**

**WHEREAS Margaret Kapteyn has faithfully served in that capacity since 2011, carefully cataloging, maintaining, and accessing as needed the records of the regional synod, her classes, and her congregations to help the church have a perspective with historical insight upon which healthy transformation can be built, and**

**WHEREAS she is now retiring from this particular ministry,**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 210th General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, June 9 through 14, 2016, gives thanks to God for the faithful ministry of Margaret Kapteyn as archivist for the Regional Synod of Canada, and prays God's continued blessings on her life and new ministries in the years ahead. (ADOPTED)**

**A Special Act of Providence**

There have been archives of the RCA housed in Gardner Sage Library at New Brunswick Theological Seminary since Sage Library was built in 1875, and there were probably archival materials kept in the seminary library long before that. Indeed, the combination of the RCA archives and the NBTS library creates an invaluable and irreplaceable resource on the history of the church. When a professional archivist was first appointed for the RCA in 1978, his offices were also housed in Sage Library, and have been there ever since. The multicultural environment of the New York metropolitan area helps the archives be not just a Dutch-American history resource, but a well of information for all of the cultural expressions which now make up the RCA.

Our rapidly-changing information age both makes it possible and requires the archives to disseminate information in ways it never has before. Physical records must still be maintained, but researchers no longer need always to be physically in New Brunswick to access them. The possibilities for putting our history to work for us in new ways and the needs for technology that does so are vast. In recognition of this, and to affirm and strengthen the historic ties between seminary and archives, the trustees of NBTS have pledged an annual grant of up to $10,000 for each of ten years, to be matched by the General Synod Council, to expand the work of the archives in partnership with the seminary and its Reformed Church Center and give it a more stable and secure base into the future.

The GSC responded to this challenge during its April meeting. The commission, at its February 5 meeting, affirmed the plan, noted that it reflects just the sort of new thinking, partnering, and imagining advocated by our general secretary as part of the Transformed & Transforming denominational goal, and sent the following resolution to the GSC:

> The Commission on History commends Gregg Mast and the trustees of New Brunswick Theological Seminary for their wise and insightful commitment to the RCA Archives and continuing shared work in New Brunswick, and we encourage the General Synod Council to commit to this plan. Because the commission appreciates the financial constraints under which the GSC operates, we will commit up to $10,000 from the Historical Series revolving fund for the GSC share for fiscal year 2016-17, with the

understanding that this will be revisited each year through consultation between the commission and the GSC with a mind toward preserving the strength and integrity of the revolving fund.

It should be noted that it is possible for the commission to commit such a sum from the interest generated by the revolving fund because of the faithful stewardship of members of the commission, of authors and editors and others who worked for the Historical Series without remuneration, and especially of Donald Bruggink, general editor since 1968. They have been faithful, to borrow a phrase from the story of Esther, "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14, NLV). The commission looks forward to working with the GSC in making the most of this gift for the whole church while preserving and building the revolving fund for future times such as this.

**Reacting to the Present**

The commission has continued its work of offering the church a historical perspective on matters before it. Last year, the commission offered two papers on the history of how the church understands and lives out both ministry and office, and the General Synod of 2015 referred both of those papers to classes and consistories for reflection, along with questions for discussion and response (*MGS 2015*, R-44, pp. 211-212). The commission received a generous number of responses from synod delegates, consistories, and even a classis or two. Grateful for the time and thought put into those, your commission discussed, collated, and synthesized the responses, and we present an admittedly brief summary here.

1. **How does our understanding of ecclesiastical office impact how the church lives out its mission?**

   Responses indicated that living into a serious understanding of the offices as building blocks of the church and of a consistory is both a blessing and a challenge. Churches wrestle not only with filling slots, but looking for people who seem called and gifted for these particular offices. One small congregation in Montgomery Classis reported: "Yes it has been a struggle to appoint...but God be praised, this struggle has forced us to deeply search the Scriptures and [we] noticed we need to spend more energy on discipling, raising, and equipping elders and deacons, grounding them in deep theological truths that [are] evident in character and obedience (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)." They report that this has led to growth in the congregation's mission of worship and discipleship.

2. **What are the implications of understanding the assemblies of the church as gatherings of the offices rather than as representatives from the congregations?**

   By far the most common response was that the implication was, when an assembly gathers as offices rather than as representatives from the congregation, there was a fundamental shift in the understanding of the delegates. If one gathered as an officeholder one might very well vote in a way that a pure representative would not feel free to vote, as she or he would be largely voting as a proxy for the wishes of the body she or he represented. A single survey commented that when one gathered as a group of people representing churches that one of two regrettable things tend to happen. Either the assembly becomes a convention, with much time spent on presentations, events, and instruction, or the assembly becomes a contest between political factions with less concern for the mind of Christ.

**3. How is the designation "Commissioned Pastor" similar to and different from "Comforter of the Sick," "Approved Alternate Route," and "Preaching Elder"?**

It was commonly understood that "Approved Alternate Route" was a viable means to obtain the full authority of a minister of Word and sacrament, and that the ordination is *transferable*. The least commented-on ministry of the four was "comforter of the sick," which was generally understood as not transferable, the appointment is made by the consistory, and the role is limited to the boundaries of the title. It was often commented that the roles of preaching elder and commissioned pastor were not transferable, but approved for a specific place and term. It was generally understood that preaching elders were not permitted to administer sacraments (baptism, communion) or conduct weddings. The "commissioned pastor" responses clearly identified a hot-button issue, largely crystallized in one specific response:

> [The commissioned pastor] is filling a spot—rightly, or wrongly—that fully-ordained ministers do not want to fill—limited income, alternate ministries. [The c]ost of compensating an ordained minister is unworkable for the small congregation…[The commissioned pastor] has a better understanding of shepherding of the community itself. There's been a reason why the ordained staff leader doesn't work. We see the church employing alternate means of leadership or going out of business.

**4. What is at stake in the church's understanding of ecclesiastical office?**

As is often the case with open-ended questions intended to promote discussion, this question seemed to leave respondents unclear about whether we were talking about office in general or the four offices recognized by the RCA Constitution. Fully 20 percent of the responses received didn't even address the question. One even questioned whether it was necessary to know: "If we can't identify the differences in office, then are the differences important and why?" Of those that did, however, most seemed to recognize that the Reformed tradition has historically seen offices as essential to the existence of the church. Other saw it in a pragmatic or political context, thinking that office begets power, while others felt the offices emphasized the importance of education. Among almost all of the responses was the strong sense, even among people who weren't clear just how "office" works, that we must be clear about what we all mean when using that term and how the four offices we have are meant to work together before we tinker with the status quo.

**5. What is the best way to engage the entire church or a broad representation of the church in a discussion of the nature of ecclesiastical office?**

Generally, however, it was seen that classes and consistories would be the best place to have such a discussion, as these two assemblies are really where the "rubber meets the road." There were also some concerns about education: that is, if people who don't have a good theology of office discuss office, then what benefit is that? So education on ecclesiastical office is very important to lay the groundwork. Other ideas included providing *accessible* resources on the RCA website and in other communications, and perhaps having a Conversations-type event (like that which began Transformed & Transforming).

A more complete discussion of the responses summarized here or the complete, unedited data is available from the RCA archivist (rgasero@rca.org). The commission, in cooperation with the Reformed Church Center at NBTS, took part in a discussion event entitled "Office:

What It Means, Why It Matters" at NBTS in February. The video of the presentations at that event has been made available by the Reformed Church Center (https://vimeo.com/154809328, https://vimeo.com/154774668, https://vimeo.com/154648263). Because the cost of educating and paying ministers is seen to have an impact on these discussions, the commission is currently looking at the history of how the church has paid for ministry and education of ministers.

October 31, 2017, will mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing 95 theses, or questions for debate, to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. While this is truly the beginning of the Lutheran reformation, and our anniversary dates are somewhat different—the commission continues to work with our Christian Reformed counterparts looking toward the 400th anniversary of the Great Synod of Dordt in 2019—it is 2017 that is popularly seen as the Reformation anniversary. To help the church begin to prepare for this teachable moment, the commission presents the following paper, which will also be made available in more popularly accessible formats on www.rca.org.

**WHAT WAS THE REFORMATION?**

The event called the Reformation of the 16th century has great importance for the Reformed Church in America. We remember and celebrate it as one of the foundations on which we stand, and we cherish the insights into the Christian faith that it has handed down to us.

What, then, *was* the Reformation?

Historians treat the Reformation as a broad, complex movement with many social, political, and economic aspects as well as religious ones, and they debate the question of when it can truly be said to have begun. But no one doubts that its famous public beginning point occurred in 1517, when the theologian Martin Luther published his so-called "95 Theses" against the selling of what were called "indulgences." And the insights that Luther expressed at that moment still serve, for us, as a key to understanding the Reformation.

At the heart of Luther's thinking was his conviction that God's saving forgiveness of sinful human beings was *God's* action, not ours—that it comes to us, that is, by God's "grace alone" (*sola gratia*), and is not contingent on anything that we do, or that the church does, but rather that we receive it passively, by "faith alone" (*sola fidei*), that is, by trusting God (this was his critique of "indulgences," whereby the Catholic Church itself had claimed a role in dispensing God's forgiveness).

Luther's central insight that our salvation comes only through God's grace, and not through our own works, was not a new insight. Luther himself had, of course, found it in the Scriptures, especially in the letters of Paul. And indeed this was an insight that had not been forgotten in the many centuries that separated Paul from Luther. The great church father Augustine of Hippo, most famously, had stated it very powerfully in the fifth century in his debates with the so-called "Pelagians," who had by contrast ascribed to humans an active role in their own salvation. Augustine's influence in this as in other respects remained strong within Catholic tradition, making its appearance in many contexts and with varied implications over time.

What was new, then, in Luther? What caused the sensation and upheaval in the years that followed in the wake of his publication of the Theses? The cause was not *only* his conviction—shared soon by others—of the principle of salvation by grace alone, received by faith, but the *combination* of this conviction with another increasingly shared conviction, one that in fact, in Luther's case, took a little while longer to clarify and had particular significance in his political and social context, where patterns of power in society were

shifting. This was the conviction that the authoritative source of Christian truth was to be found in the "Scripture alone" (*sola scriptura*) as distinct from the church traditions that had interpreted it. In the case of indulgences and the theological understanding behind them, Luther was saying, the church had strayed from the truth that was in Scripture. This meant that the traditions of the church could in fact be wrong, and its authority thrown into question. It was this conclusion, as Luther and others would embrace it, that underlay the enormous changes in Christendom that were to follow, and to which we give the name Reformation.

So the Reformation stands as a fundamental and revolutionary *rethinking of the question of religious authority.* Those who came soon to be called "Protestants"—who included Luther and his immediate followers but also many others as well—elevated the Bible, as the Word of God, above all other presumed authorities, which they regarded as merely human. It is hard for us to grasp the significance of this rethinking. For it was not that the Catholic Church had ever rejected the authority of Scripture. On the contrary, the ancient Catholic tradition had established and conserved the "canon," that is, the list of books that constituted the Scripture. And the church, in continuity with that tradition, considered the Scripture, so constituted, as having been entrusted by Christ himself to his apostles and their successors—that is, to the church itself—as its guardian and interpreter. Thus the authority of the Scripture was of a piece with the authority of the church. And this conception of religious authority was part of the foundation of the very order of European society. What the Reformation did, in elevating Scripture above Church, was to undermine that foundation, and consequently that order: thus the upheaval.

The implications of this rethinking of religious authority were huge. For, once the authority of Scripture was elevated above that of the church, the obvious next question was: Who then decides what the Scripture means? Who interprets it? Indeed, a variety of groups and movements—"Protestants" of many stripes—emerged almost immediately, each claiming to interpret the Scripture definitively and differing not only from what they thought of now as the "Roman" Catholic Church (i.e., as *one* Christian tradition, indeed for them a false one), but also from each other, in matters small and large. The ostensible unity of Christendom was now destroyed. And even the Catholic Church, though it resolutely maintained its historic conception of itself in relation to Scripture, participated in this rethinking of religious authority, for, in reasserting its traditional doctrines at the Council of Trent (1545–63) and in a certain resurgence of its vitality in the years that followed, the Catholic Church implicitly acknowledged the new role that individual assent would have to play in the acceptance of these, within the new situation of a plurality of beliefs.

For us in the Reformed Church in America, the great legacy of the Reformation lies in this fundamental revision of the notion of religious authority that it brought about, and more particularly—to return to the concerns of Luther at its outset—in its guarantee of the great doctrine of salvation by grace alone, received by faith alone, and founded on Scripture alone. This doctrine has come down to us, not precisely through the legacy of Luther and his immediate followers the "Lutherans," who were concentrated in central Germany and Scandinavia, but rather through the so-called "Reformed" tradition, which began separately in the cities of Switzerland and spread to, among other places, the Netherlands, and with some distinctive traditions of its own—but which affirmed the same fundamental and scripturally based doctrine of salvation.

We remember and accept that doctrine of salvation as the Reformation's great legacy. But it is important to note, in closing, that we also acknowledge a *tragedy* of the Reformation, namely its violence. The plurality of religious groups that it engendered led to devastating "wars of religion," as the historians call them, which lasted through the middle of the 17th century. For though the Reformation inevitably raised the *question* of "who decides what

the Scripture means?" it did not manage to find an answer that would allow adversaries to live together in peace. That is: in the time of the Reformation there was not yet (or there were only the barest glimmerings of) an idea of religious toleration. Such an idea was to take hold only later—in our case, especially in some developments in the Netherlands and in America in the centuries that followed, which we also remember and celebrate. But that is another story.

As the paper notes there are things to acknowledge, repent, and mourn about the Reformation, as well as things to celebrate. Our churches exist in communities with Christian sisters and brothers from traditions that remember the Reformation very differently from us. In October 2015, this commission met with the Commission on Christian Unity to discuss how this anniversary might be observed with sensitivity to all our neighbors. We make the following recommendation to this General Synod:

**R 16-56**
**That the 2016 General Synod instruct the General Synod Council, in consultation with the Commissions on History and Christian Unity, to plan a time of commemoration and reflection regarding the 500th anniversary of the 16th-century Reformation during the General Synod of 2017. (ADOPTED)**

Recent contentious debates within the RCA have raised, for some people, the possibility of schism, of breaking up the denomination. Many are alarmed at this prospect. The commission thought this would be a good time to remind the church that such arguments, and even fractures, have occurred before. With this in mind, the commission presents the following paper.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF SCHISM AND SEPARATION IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA ALONG WITH A SUMMARY OF THE CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS AS STATEMENTS OF UNITY

*The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;*
*She is his new creation by water and the Word.*
*From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;*
*With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.*

### Introduction

Not everyone decries ecclesiastical discord. For many, living up to the Reformed Church in America's (RCA) motto *Eendracht Maakt Macht* ("Concord Makes Strength") comes at too great a price.[1] In *Loyalty and Loss: The Reformed Church in America, 1945-1994*, Lynn Japinga makes a distinction that "the most divisive conflicts in the Reformed Church did not arise between fundamentalists and modernists, because the denomination had very few modernists."[2] While acknowledging the "limits of labels," Japinga posits three distinctive partisan groups within the denomination that form a useful model for comprehending the process and outcomes of the RCA's polemics.

On one side there are the "purists" that consider themselves "truly reformed," though their theology tends to be shaped more by American fundamentalist views of the Bible and church than by Reformed tradition.[3] On the other side of the aisle are the "moderates." Japinga identifies the moderates as:

> …profoundly shaped by Reformed theology, polity, and liturgy. They valued the Bible but were not literalist in their reading of it. They were ecumenical, because they

> believed that God had not entrusted the whole of the gospel to the Reformed Church in America. They trusted that God brought the church into being and that God would protect it, so Christians did not need to be so anxious about its purity.[4]

Lying between these poles are the "conservatives," those who were theologically conservative but tended toward ecumenism and could therefore live with the ambiguity of less than full agreement. It is necessary to keep in mind that each of these nomenclatures encapsulates a complex belief system, full of nuance and rife with exceptions. For instance, to assume that any particular geographical area is the locus of one party or the other falls very short of realizing the richness of our history. For our congregations in all areas wrestled with, and continue to wrestle with, issues that set neighboring churches apart and have even divided congregations.

It is instructive to consider James W. Van Hoeven's opening words in his preface to *Word and World: Reformed Theology in America:*

> Christian theology exists in the context of history. This means that Christian theology is necessarily dynamic and developing, is shaped in each new age by the interaction of the biblical Word with the contemporary world…Thus no church, properly speaking, can claim that its theology is original; in every period Christian theology is in some sense "mottled." [5]

Perhaps, then, we should be advised that ecclesiastical discord is no more or less the growing pains of a church Transformed and Transforming, but a necessary dialogue for a church with a history and a future.

The following paper will summarize three rancorous events of schism within, and in two cases secession from, the RCA. The first is the Coetus and Conferentie schism that raged for more than 15 years. Even after the Plan of Union was signed in 1771, the hostilities continued incarnate in the Tory and Rebel alliances during the American Revolution. Moreover, after the war and subsequent constitution of a new American denomination, a group from the Hackensack Valley of New Jersey seceded in 1822 under the self-imposed moniker of the "True Dutch Reformed Church." This somewhat bizarre chapter in church history will be the subject of the second event discussed. The third event will be the schism (with theological roots in the Hackensack Valley secession) that emboldened a handful of individuals from Grand Rapids, Michigan, to withdraw from the RCA in 1856 to form the Christian Reformed Church. The exodus from the RCA intensified in 1882 over the issue of freemasonry and continued to assert a deleterious effect on church growth, as new immigrants eschewed the RCA to join the decidedly less-Americanized Christian Reformed Church. A brief discussion of the nature and contexts of three unity statements, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Belhar Confession, will conclude this paper. Finally, five verses of the hymn "The Church's One Foundation" are interposed between subject headings for the reader's reflection.[6]

**Competing Theologies**

In the 1730s a controversy arose in the Dutch Reformed Church in the American colonies when a movement known as the Great Awakening swept through the mid-Atlantic on the wings of men like Dutch Reformed itinerant preacher Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen (1691-1747).[7] Since the arrival of the Dutch in Manhattan in the 1620s, nothing in more than 100 years had rocked the pristine Synod of Dort's orthodox theology. Indeed, its practice so geographically distant from the mother church had endowed it with a particular status and exigency. Not even the conquest of the British in 1664, though having a deep and lasting impact on the Dutch Reformed Church institution, could diminish the church's

entrenched Calvinism. Nevertheless, the theological roots of this controversy can be traced to the rivalry between strict Calvinists and the Arminians during the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. As Donald J. Bruggink and Kim N. Baker summarized in *By Grace Alone: Stories of the Reformed Church in America,* opposing groups, called conventicles, were formed, with the Arminian side emphasizing the "personal religious experience" of its members and the strict Calvinist side stressing the "rational examination of scripture and its meaning."[8]

John W. Beardslee's chapter in *Word and World* summarizes the post-Frelinghuysen shift in theology as follows:

> One of the basic theological problems that surfaced after Frelinghuysen's arrival, and which has troubled the Dutch church from that day forward, concerned the nature of the Christian church. Because the formal definition of the church was not in dispute, this problem churned beneath the surface. It is best reflected in a popular eighteenth century textbook on dogmatics written by Johannes á Marck, and taught to future clergy of the Reformed Church at New Brunswick Seminary. In his dogmatics, Marck lists the marks of the church, those visible signs by which the true church could be recognized in the world. He recognized at least five marks: the classical three of Reformed theology (pure preaching, legitimate administration of the sacraments, and Christian discipline), plus holiness of life and fraternal love. Marck gives as his preference a two-fold structure: purity of doctrine as "a priori" and "antecedent," and holiness of life as "a posteriori" and "consequent." The shift in the Reformed Doctrine of the church is obvious in this: The church of the word and sacrament was becoming the church of the word and personal holiness. The influence of pietism on mainstream Reformed orthodoxy was being felt.[9]

While it is tempting to say more about the nature and impact of Frelinghuysen's preaching, I am resigned in a short paper to say that regarding the Dutch Reformed Church in America, the die had been cast between those favoring orthodoxy and a close union with the Church in the Netherlands, and those whose unique American brand of piety and evangelistic fervor would fly in the face of that tradition. Later we shall see how the Rev. John Henry Livingston (1746–1825) draws these seemingly diametric tendencies together in a prodigious act of unity.[10]

*Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth;*
*Her charter of salvation, "One Lord, one faith, one birth!"*
*One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,*
*And to one hope she presses with every grace endued.*

**The Coetus and Conferentie Schism**

A source of consternation among the Dutch clergy in America centered on the slow and cumbersome process of dealing with the distant Classis of Amsterdam. Disputes often took months to settle. Consequently, issues of discipline festered without a local power to intervene. An even greater concern was for the many vacant pulpits that could be supplied only by ministers who were educated, examined, and ordained in the Netherlands. Thus, if a local candidate was found, he would be required to undergo the journey to the Netherlands to prepare and be ordained in ministry, then journey back to be installed. Oceanic travel was long and perilous.[11] Furthermore, that individual would be away for several years, a luxury many believed the church could not afford.

The suggestion to form a fraternal clerical organization in America to instill better communication was made as early as 1662 by Domine Johannes T. Polhemus (1598–1676) of Flatbush, New York. In 1706 Gualterus Dubois (1666–1751), Vincentius Anthonides

(1670–1744), and Henricus Beys (born c. 1680) made a formal request to the Classis of Amsterdam to allow Dutch clergy in colonial America to hold a formal gathering once a year. In 1709 the Classis of Amsterdam summarily denied the request by saying that "the formation of a classis among you, to correspond to ours at home, is yet far in the future."[12]

Yet, after a protracted period of correspondence over the Frelinghuysen disputes, the Classis of Amsterdam lifted its injunction. In 1738, the first meeting of the fraternal organization of clergy in America known as a Coetus took place with 10 of the 14 Dutch ministers residing in colonial New Jersey and New York in attendance.[13] Although the measure did nothing to abrogate the authority of the Classis of Amsterdam over the Dutch clergy in the New World, the four ministers who had absented themselves from the first meeting did so because they feared the members of the Coetus had designs on forming an independent classis. In their estimation, such a measure may be interpreted by the British Crown as a violation of the Charter of 1696 granting the Dutch Church ecclesiastical liberty in colonial America as long as it remained under the control of the Classis of Amsterdam. The four dissenting ministers became representatives of an opposing group called the Conferentie, who shared a concern for preserving the high standards of education and orthodoxy among the ministry and for leaving judicial matters in the hands of the Classis of Amsterdam.[14]

The members of the Conferentie were correct that the Coetus would put forth a plan to become an independent classis. That action came in 1754 and incited a bitter dispute lasting 15 years.[15] By the 1760s division between the opposing Coetus and Conferentie parties had reached a state of crisis in which the rancor resulted in hostilities between neighboring churches and even dividing some congregations. Arie Brouwer makes this colorful summary:

> The controversy was fierce. Both sides published pamphlets filled with acrimonious personal attacks. As the dispute became public knowledge, allegiance to the Classis of Amsterdam was sometimes seen as disloyalty to the British crown. Neighboring ministers spurned one another; congregations divided, some alternating Sundays in the same sanctuary and others locking the doors against the opposing side. When some of the Coetus party met at Poughkeepsie for an ordination, the Conferentie group seized the church building and barred the door. The ordination proceeded under a large tree in the church yard. In other places, particularly in the Hackensack Valley, even husbands and wives, parents and children sometimes opposed each other. [16]

Archibald Laidlie (1727–79), a Dutch Reformed minister in New York who was the first to preach in English and a member of the Coetus party, convinced John Henry Livingston (1746–1825) to help bring peace to the fractured Dutch Reformed Church. A native-born American, Livingston learned the Dutch language and traveled to Utrecht, Holland, to receive his theological education and ordination. During this time he met with the Classis of Amsterdam to apprise them of the situation and to lay out a plan of resolution. In 1768 he submitted a plan of union to the colonies.[17] Although his first plan failed to gain support, his second plan containing 35 articles was approved by a quorum of 22 Coetus and Conferentie American clergymen in 1771 and ratified by the Classis of Amsterdam in 1772.[18] The plan permitted the American church to educate and ordain its own ministers, satisfying the Coetus. Likewise, the plan appeased the Conferentie by having retained the authority of the Classis of Amsterdam and the Synod of North Holland to review all decisions made in America and to appoint the American professor of theology.[19]

The Coetus had secured a charter for Queens College (now Rutgers) in 1770 to be a school for training the ministry of the Dutch churches in America. In 1773 at the Convention in Kingston, it was resolved to ask the Classis of Amsterdam to send a professor of theology from Holland. The classis consulted with the theological faculty at Utrecht and agreed

to recommend Livingston instead. He would have been appointed in 1775, but the war broke out. In 1784, Livingston was unanimously elected seminary professor, marking the beginning of New Brunswick Theological Seminary.[20]

Arie Brouwer summarizes, "On the whole, the Coetus sought to expand the church through renewal and evangelism; the Conferentie sought to preserve the church by conserving the tradition."[21]

*Though with a scornful wonder, we see her sore oppressed,*
*By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed,*
*Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, "How long?"*
*And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song!*

**The True Dutch Reformed Church (TDRC) Secession of 1822**

The early days of a new country and a new denomination didn't necessarily bring harmony to every hamlet. The dividing lines of the Coetus and Conferentie schism, though nominally settled with Livingston's plan of union in 1771, continued to be played out in terms of Tory and Rebel sympathies during the American Revolution.[22] After the war, concerns over doctrinal purity arose as the newly christened Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in America forged ecumenical ties with other communions as per the Articles of Correspondence with the Presbyterian and Associate Reformed Churches in 1785. With incorporation came a new constitution assigning classes that enjoined, in some cases, neighboring churches that had been on opposing sides during the war. Even a new English language hymnal compiled for the denomination by John Henry Livingston caused a furor, as many speculated their new American denomination had become too American.[23] According to Arie Brower:

> The lingering animosity resulting from the controversies may well have been the decisive factor which kept the Reformed Church from realizing the potential of the great American expansion that followed the Revolutionary War. The church could not organize to act. Vital energies were consumed with petitions, complaints and quarrels. Livingston himself was able to fuse the theology and piety of a tradition with a passion for the unity and expansion of the church. The church he served could not.[24]

Such was the case in the two neighboring Bergen County, New Jersey, churches of Hackensack and Schraalenbergh, who were at one time united under the care of Antonius Curtenius.[25] In 1748, Johannes Henricus Goetschius was called to be a colleague of the aging Curtenius. While both ministers were at that time members of the Coetus, Curtenius and several followers became ardent objectors to the party when the Coetus proposed becoming a classis in 1753. Party lines were drawn between Curtenius and Goetschius factions, signified by the two churches forming separate consistories.[26]

For Solomon Froeligh, the time seemed right to quell the animosities between the two churches when he was called to Hackensack in 1786. Warmoldus Kuypers, pastor at Schraalenbergh, was receptive to Froeligh's overtures for reconciliation, and indeed the churches cooperated long enough to build a union church in 1790–95. Some thought it divine providence when in 1795 the union church was struck by lightning, causing the stone above the church door reading *Een dracht Maakt Macht* ("Union Makes Strength") to be broken in two.

The hostilities resurfaced from the consistory at Schraalenbergh after the death of Kuypers (1797), causing Froeligh to surrender his hope of union.[27] As president of the two consistories (one corporation), he cast the deciding vote in an ensuing circus of motions blocking consistory members at Schraalenbergh from attending classis meetings, and more

egregiously, that delayed the appointment of Jacobus Van Campen Romeyn (1765–1840) to fill the pulpit at Schraalenbergh. The regional synod stepped in to confirm the appointment of Romeyn and in 1800 placed the churches in separate classes[28].

In spite of the synod's action to separate the churches by classis, the singular corporation of the two church consistories ensured a feud that lasted for the next 22 years. The two churches vied over properties held in common and fought over where and when to build new churches and parsonages for a growing constituency. Classis intervention was commonplace in the years leading up to 1818, when Froeligh was required to appear before the Classis of Paramus for permitting members to irregularly pass from the Schraalenbergh church to his, and for baptizing the children of the disaffected members.[29]

In 1822, Solomon Froeligh seceded from the church along with five other ministers to form the True Dutch Reformed Church (TDRC).[30] The group charged that the RCA had become Hopkinsian[31] and thus had surrendered its true Calvinistic roots. Theological differences aside, Froeligh's exit was most likely the result of the pressures he brought to bear in his contumacy, and the subsequent classical deliberations and sanctions he endured. Corwin has even suggested that contributing to Froeligh's departure may have been his disappointment over having not been elected president of New Brunswick Theological Seminary.[32] John Beardslee makes a broader stroke when he posits that the descendants of the Coetus-Whig party in Northern New Jersey had long sought to get out of the denomination.[33] Having been appointed by the General Synod as an assistant professor of theology in 1792, Froeligh was answerable to the General Synod in matters of discipline. He was tried *in absentia* in 1822 after his departure from the denomination and was subsequently suspended from his professorship and from the ministry.

The 40 or so years of organization under the TDRC banner attracted few new adherents in the eastern U.S.[34] Furthermore, some of the ministers who had united with the TDRC eventually reunited with the RCA. Dr. Froehligh did not return to the RCA and thus remained the TDRC's spiritual head until his death in 1827. The secessionist church published a magazine called *The Banner of Truth,* which served both as an organ for attacks on the RCA and as a vehicle to spread the TDRC's theological vanguard.[35] In the 1860s the TDRC began an official correspondence with the "True Holland Reformed Church." A union was effected in 1877 and a full merger in 1890 under the newly chosen name of Christian Reformed Church (CRC). [36]

*'Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,*
*She waits the consummation of peace forevermore,*
*Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,*
*And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest*.

**The Secession of 1856-1857 That Produced the Christian Reformed Church**

Shortly after William I became the King of Netherlands in 1815 he reorganized the state church. The reorganization brought with it a prevailing wind of rationality that imposed tolerance even among the teachers of private religious schools.[37] For some, William I committed a grave act of interference when he introduced a new hymnal in place of the traditional psalter and imposed the requirement to sing at least one hymn at every service.[38]

In 1834 Hendrik De Cock (1801–1842) seceded from the state *Hervormde Kerk* (Reformed Church) after having been suspended for publicly lambasting clergy and government officials. Under the *Afscheiding* (secession) banner, the protest gained traction in Groningen under De Cock, in Utrecht and Noord Brabant under Hendrik P. Scholte (1806–1868), in Gelderland under Anthony Brummelkamp (1811–1888), in Friesland under Simon Van

Velzen (1809–1896), in Noord Brabant under Georg Gezelle Meerburg (1806–1855) and in Overijssel under Albertus C. Van Raalte (1811–1876).[39] Thus the bedrock was laid for what Donald J. Bruggink and Kim N. Baker call an "irascible spirit" that arrived in a great Dutch immigration to the American Midwest in the mid-19th century.[40]

This irascible spirit caused Hendrik P. Scholte to form a separatist religious colony in Pella, Iowa.[41] However, Albertus C. Van Raalte, after having founded the Holland, Michigan, colony in 1847, readily united with the RCA in 1850. In *Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Churches of the 19th Century*, Elton Bruins and Robert Swierenga trace a pattern of dissention that led to the 1857 exodus of about 10 percent of those who had associated with the RCA.

The controversy stems from the diametric mindsets they herein encapsulate: "The Dutch immigrants from the outset were of two minds, one separatist and oriented to the Christian Seceded Church in the homeland, and the other ecumenical and desirous of reaching out to fellow Reformed believers in the new homeland."[42]

Accusations of heretical teachings were made by some, with Van Raalte himself being the target of slanders regarding his embrace of the American denomination. Others, recalling the hymnal imposed by William I, resented the 800-page compendium of English hymns published by the RCA. On the whole one can attribute the schism to the Bruins and Swierenga "two minds" summary that equates the particular indoctrinations of those in the Homeland (by geography and association) with a desire to be either a separatist Dutch community in a strange land or to become an integral part of the American fabric.

The schism reached a climax under the leadership of Gijsbert Haan (1801–1874). Haan arrived at the Holland, Michigan, colony in 1849 after having spent time in the East observing the conditions in New York City, in Troy, and at the home of the Western church benefactor and pastor of the Second Reformed Church of Albany, Isaac N. Wyckoff (1792–1869). In Holland and in surrounding communities he spread the word that the denomination they had joined was "modernistic" (today we use the term liberal), and that he had observed pastors in the East who did not believe in predestination, choirs who disrupted worship with hymn singing, and an elder in Paterson, New Jersey, who did not present his own children for baptism, saying that he wanted them to decide for themselves.[43] In time Haan became a leading elder and member of the Classis of Grand Rapids. He raised concerns over the RCA's failure to follow the Church Order of Dort and to observe festival days (especially Pentecost). He railed before the General Synod claiming the Lord's Supper was indiscriminately offered to members of other communions. Moreover, he charged Albertus C. Van Raalte, pastor in Holland, and Cornelius Van Der Meulen (1800-1876), pastor at Zeeland, with disseminating Richard Baxter's (1615–1691) *A Call to the Unconverted* tract.[44] Citing literature from the 1822 Hackensack secession he had obtained during his stay in the East, Haan voiced a concern over hymn singing and recounted a controversy in Grand Rapids over the election of an elder.[45]

Haan, with a handful of others, seceded from the RCA in October 1856. The following year Hendrik G. Kleijn (1793–1883), Haan's pastor in Grand Rapids, along with the Rev. Koene Van Den Bosch (1818–1897) of Noordeloos (North Holland) and the consistories at Graafschap and Polkton (Coopersville) also exited. The consistory at Graafschap gave the following reasons for uniting with the Separate Reformed Church in the Netherlands:[46]

- The collection of 800 hymns, introduced contrary to church order.
- Inviting [men of] all religious views to the Lord's Supper, excepting Roman Catholics.

- Neglecting to preach the Catechism regularly, [to hold] catechetical classes, and [to do] house visitation.
- That no religious books are circulated without the consent of other denominations, directing your attention to the Sabbath booklet, with the practice by J. Van Der Meulen, in 1855.
- And what grieves our hearts most in all of this is that there are members among you who regard our secession in the Netherlands as not strictly necessary, or [think that] it was untimely.
- In the report of Rev. Wyckoff he gives us liberty to walk in this ecclesiastical path.

Albertus C. Van Raalte believed the secession was based on "un-Reformed" principles and offered this scathing comment:

> "Is the fruit of a lust for schism already for a long time manifested by a few leaders, against which there is no weapon, which will do us less damage outside of the church than inside of it. ... Nevertheless, he is constrained with his whole soul to testify against this conduct that tears asunder the church of God, and warns each and every one against such a reckless course of conduct, which will bring ruin upon our posterity. … the whole affair … is a mixture of ignorance, sectarianism, and a trampling under foot of the brethren.[47]

The 1857 exodus resulted in about 750 people leaving Holland Classis. In Grand Rapids 100 members joined the new church, in Graafschap 113 members, in Vriesland 15 or 16, and in Noordeloos and Polkton about 20 persons each. Donald J. Bruggink and Kim N. Baker make this observation: [48]

> The real wonder is that the numbers of those who left in 1856-57 were so small (Haan and Kleijn later returned to the Reformed Church). Undoubtedly the leadership of Van Raalte and those of like spirit played a part. For the great majority, the unity of the church (and kindness experienced from the members of the Reformed Church in the East) was more important than the issues.

**The Freemason Controversy**

By 1880, the fledgling church had only 39 congregations. However, a single issue would have a far-reaching consequence on the ensuing rise in membership of the CRC denomination and, conversely, hinder the growth of the RCA in the Midwest. In 1853, the Classis of Holland condemned Masonic membership as among the "works of darkness" and declared it unlawful for a church member to belong to a Masonic lodge.[49]

Maintaining a European view of Freemasonry, the CRC banned membership in the lodge by synodical order in 1867.[50] The RCA Classis of Wisconsin requested the General Synod follow the lead of the CRC and also ban Masonic membership. However, the General Synod voted to take no action. In 1869 the Classis of Holland joined the Classis of Wisconsin in a new overture that the General Synod assigned to a special committee. In 1870 the General Synod declared that membership in a secret society was "not a good practice" and that church members should not belong. However, the General Synod did not go so far as to ban membership (a thinly-veiled concealment of denominational people in high places who were Masons) and stated further they would not institute a new test for membership, as this would infringe on consistorial power. [51]

Upon the death of Van Raalte in 1876 (who had stemmed the tide of discontent over the Masonic issue), the subsequent hard economic times for Hope College (that weakened the

resolve of some as to the viability and good judgment of the RCA on the whole), and with one rabble-rousing expatriate Freemason named Edmond Ronayne (who lectured against Freemasonry in Holland in 1879), anxieties reached a fevered pitch. In 1880, a renewed overture to the General Synod from the classes of Holland and Wisconsin, joined by the classes of Grand River and Illinois and the Particular Synod of Chicago, was met with a tactical response that "no communicant member, and no minister of the Reformed Church in America ought to unite with or to remain in any society or institution, whether secret or open, whose principles and practices are anti-Christian, or contrary to the faith and practice of the Church to which he belongs."[52]

The resultant losses of RCA members and churches to the CRC in the years immediately following the 1880 General Synod response were staggering. In 1882 eight congregations left the RCA over Freemasonry. Between 1880 and 1882, the Classis of Holland alone lost 400 families, including a majority of its flagship congregation at Pillar Church.[53]

**Residual Losses are the CRC's Gains**

By 1900, the CRC had swollen to 144 congregations. Expectantly, they had been joined by the remnants of the Hackensack secession in 1890. But new immigrants to the Midwest were also more inclined to join the CRC than the overtly Americanized RCA. The theological indoctrination of their native secessionist church, the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk*, had predisposed them to the orthodoxy of the CRC. Furthermore, upon the merger of the *Gereformeerde Kerk* with "the highly sophisticated and powerful theological structure" of Abraham Kuyper's (1837–1920) *Doleantie* (sorrowing secession) in 1892, the church became endowed with a profoundly literate and education-minded constituency.[54] According to Arie Brouwer, "The immigrants who valued theological orthodoxy above all else or who regarded themselves as radical separatists affiliated with the CRC. Those who placed a premium on piety were sometimes attracted to the RCA, which had assimilated more of the hymns, literature, and beliefs of American fundamentalism."[55]

*Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three-In-One,*
*And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won;*
*O happy ones and holy, Lord, give us grace that we,*
*Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee*.

**Guidance from Our Statements of Unity**

*The Belgic Confession*

Our four confessions—the Canons of Dort, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Belhar Confession—each came about after a costly struggle for religious freedom.[56] Also known as our standards of unity, the documents say as much about what we embrace as what we exclude, and from them we can glean crucial guidance in maintaining unity while addressing our differences today. Such was the case when Guido de Bres (1522-1567) penned the 37 articles of the Belgic Confession amidst Phillip II's (1527-1598) pogrom against the fledgling church. By the 1570s the Belgic Confession had become the cornerstone of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands. "Article 27: The Holy Catholic Church" makes this eloquent statement of unity:

> We believe and confess one single catholic or universal church—a holy congregation and gathering of true Christian believers, awaiting their entire salvation in Jesus Christ being washed by his blood, and sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit. This church has existed from the beginning of the world and will last until the end, as appears from the fact that Christ is eternal King who cannot be without subjects. And this holy

> church is preserved by God against the rage of the whole world, even though for a time it may appear very small in the eyes of men—as though it were snuffed out.
>
> For example, during the very dangerous time of Ahab the Lord preserved for himself seven thousand men who did not bend their knees to Baal [1 Kings 19:18].
>
> And so this holy church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or certain persons. But it is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world, though still joined and united in heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith.[57]

*The Heidelberg Catechism*

The 129 questions of the Heidelberg Catechism were the handiwork of Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583) and Caspar Olevianus (1536–1587) when called upon by Frederick III (1515–1576), Elector Palatine of the Rhine, to settle a schism between Lutherans and Calvinists in his region. The catechism is truly remarkable for its thorough treatment of the tenets of Calvinism (that range from the foundations of faith in Jesus Christ to the meaning of the sacraments) and for its pastoral tone. The so called "short catechism," most often in print today, is divided into three main sections: "Man's Misery," "Man's Deliverance," and "Man's Gratitude." In the "Man's Deliverance" section are two questions and answers that are particularly relevant to issues of unity:[58]

> **Q54**: **What do you believe concerning the "holy catholic church"?**
> **A**: I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith. And of this community I am and always will be a living member.
>
> **Q55: What do you understand by "the communion of saints"?**
> **A:** First, that believers one and all, as members of this community, share in Christ and in all his treasures and gifts. Second, that each member should consider it his duty to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members.

*The Belhar Confession*

The Belhar Confession was adopted as the fourth standard of unity (or confession) by the RCA in 2010 after three years of provisional use. Originally written in Afrikaans in 1982, the confession is a Reformed statement of faith and, at its inception, a protest against a segregated society that was levied through the church. When the apartheid ended in 1994 and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) was formed, the unity that the confession professed as "both a gift and an obligation for the church" took on a much greater meaning than desegregation. The unity now has become a clarion call to justice for any person or group that has been wronged or ignored. Thus, God is the God of all people: rich, poor, underprivileged, or suffering in any way. Social segregation for any reason is sinful as it is the church's obligation to care for all of God's people.

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ, that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, and that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 5:9; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21-22).

**A Final Word**

Whatever our differences may be, we are called upon to make peace and live in unity by our God, who has guaranteed us salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God alone holds the power of judgment. We keep in tension our unique aspect of being both Reformed and ecumenical. While it is sometimes a source of derision, it is more often something to be celebrated. If the above is but a history of the "growing pains" alluded to at the onset of this paper, then we shall get through the next debate as well, whatever it may be about. As Reformed people we are transformed through the loving grace of God, and are called as a transforming agent in God's name.

1 The RCA acronym will be used throughout to identify the Reformed Church in America, even when referring to points in history when the denomination was known as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.
2 See Lynn Japinga, *Loyalty and Loss: The Reformed Church in America, 1945-1994*, p. 18.
3 Ibid, p. 18.
4 Ibid, p. 19.
5 See James W. Van Hoeven, *Word and World: Reformed Theology in America*, p. xi.
6 See Erik Routley, ed., *Rejoice in the Lord: A Hymn Companion to the Scriptures*, p. 394. The text is by Samuel J. Stone (1839–1900).
7 The pietistic revivalism preaching of Frelinghuysen and a group of itinerant preachers such as James Davenport (1716–1757), Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), Gilbert Tennent (1703–1764) and George Whitefield (1714–1770) issued a direct challenge to the theological primacy of Calvinism in America.
8 See Donald J. Bruggink and Kim N. Baker, *By Grace Alone: Stories of the Reformed Church in America*, p. 121.
9 See John W. Beardslee's chapter in *Word and World*, pp. 10–11.
10 For further investigation of the impact of the "Great Awakening" and Theodorus Frelinghuysen on the Dutch Reformed Church the following books are recommended: Randall H. Balmer's *A Perfect Babel of Confusion: Dutch Religion and English Culture in the Middle Colonies*; Joel R. Beeke, editor, *Forerunner of the Great Awakening: Sermons by Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen (1691-1747)*; and Leon van den Broeke, Hans Krabbendam, and Dirk Mouw, editors, *Transatlantic Pieties: Dutch Clergy in Colonial America*.
11 See Bruggink and Baker, By Grace Alone, p. 54. Theodorus Frelinghuysen, the son of the famous Raritan itinerant preacher, was captured at sea and detained six months after attending a Dutch ordination. Two of his brothers were drowned at sea while returning to America from their own ordinations.
12 Ibid, p. 51.
13 The articles of incorporation can be found in Corwin's *A Digest of Constitutional and Synodical Legislation*, pp. 147-149. The minutes of this body from 1755 to 1771 are reprinted in Volume V of the *Ecclesiastical Records, State of New York*. It is in itself a comment on how slow communications came from the Classis of Amsterdam that the final approval for forming the Coetus wasn't received until 1747, nine years after the request had been made.
14 By 1765 the Conferentie had ten members but was still a minority.
15 See *Digest of Constitutional and Synodical Legislation*, pp. 141-142, for the articles of incorporation as a separate classis.
16 See Arie R. Brouwer, *Reformed Church Roots*, p. 62.
17 The plan proposed a professorship of theology at Princeton, a measure likely influenced by Livingston's contact in Utrecht with Princeton president-elect John Witherspoon (1723-1794). Opposing the professorship at Princeton was Domine Johannes Ritzema (1710-1788), who had served as Coetus secretary but seceded to the Conferentie because he had wanted to establish the theology professorship at King's College (now Columbia University). It appears Ritzema had self-interest in this design by inveigling friends to supply his name as the intended theology professor at King's College. Ritzema's plot was unveiled and became a source of personal embarrassment. An account of Ritzema's role in the Coetus/Conferentie schism can be found in Corwin's *Manual of the Reformed Church in America*, in the "History" section and the "Ministry" component under Ritzema's name.
18 John Henry Livingston presided over the peace convention that took place in New York City. See *Digest of Constitutional and Synodical Legislation*, p. 142.

[19] Categorically the plan called for: a) the internal arrangement and government of the churches and the organization of superior church judicatories for the establishment of a professorship for the education of ministers, and for the founding of schools; b) the healing of dissensions in the various churches and; c) correspondence with the Church in Holland. It was provided that the minutes of the ecclesiastical courts be provided to the Classis of Amsterdam, and that the classis, or if need be, the Synod of Holland, might be appealed to in cases of difficulty.

[20] See John W. Coakley's *New Brunswick Theological Seminary: An Illustrated History*, 1784-2014.

[21] See Arie R. Brouwer, *Reformed Church Roots*, p. 62.

[22] See John W. Beardslee, III, "The Reformed Church and the American Revolution" in Van Hoeven, ed. Piety and Patriotism. The members of the Coetus, who had brought about an independent classis and who were ultimately the framers of the new Reformed Church in America's constitution, were most likely to support the cause for freedom from British rule. Conversely, those in the Conferentie generally sided with the Tories, as they were largely content with the English rule, the English Charter of 1696, and continued to recognize the Netherlands as their spiritual home and ecclesiastical authority. Donald Bruggink and Kim Baker point out in By Grace Alone that of 41 Dutch Reformed ministers who were active at the time of the American Revolution, eight were either Tory or sympathetic to the British cause.

[23] For an excellent treatment of the impacts felt and alliances made by the Constitution of the Reformed Dutch Reformed Church in the United States of America, see Daniel J. Meeter, *Meeting Each Other in Doctrine, Liturgy and Government*.

[24] See Arie R. Brouwer, *Reformed Church Roots*, p. 64.

[25] See Edward Tanjore Corwin, *Manual of the Reformed Church in America*, under "The Ministry" entries for Antonius Curtenius (1698-1756), Johannes Henricus Goetschius (1718-1774), Solomon Froeligh (1750-1827), and Warmoldus Kuypers (1732-1797). See also Taylor's *Annals of the Classis of Bergen*, "History of the Churches of Hackensack and Schraalenbergh," pp. 170-248, and Brinkerhoff, *A History of the True Dutch Reformed Church in America*.

[26] The two consistories were still one corporation. By and large, the consistory of Hackensack aligned with the Coetus and the consistory of Schraalenbergh with the Conferentie. An era of dissention and untoward competition ensued as votes were cast strictly along party lines.

[27] Froeligh's sentiments turned sour, evidenced by his once preaching on the text of Jeremiah 15:19-21, equating his congregation at Hackensack with "the precious" and those at Schraalenbergh with "the vile."

[28] The Classis of Hackensack was dissolved and the Classes of Paramus and Bergen were formed in its place. The synod placed Hackensack under the care of the Classis of Paramus and Schraalenbergh with the Classis of Bergen.

[29] See Benjamin C. Taylor, *Annals of the Classis of Bergen*. A lengthy series of actions and appeals between the two classes was subsequently elevated to the particular synod resulting in a stalemate on Froeligh's alleged "unconstitutional" behavior. Froeligh's deferral to his consistory as the ruling body who approved the new members and baptisms certainly muddied the waters of the case against him and raised important questions about the nature and reach of consistorial power.

[30] The other ministers who seceded from the RCA were Abram Brokaw (1793-1846), Sylvanus Palmer (1770-1846), John C. Toll (1799-1848), Henry V. Wyckoff (1771-1835), and Cornelius Demarest (1804-1862). Demarest, a former student of Froeligh and pastor of the English Neighborhood Church, was suspended for tampering with the minutes of the Classis of Bergen over the Froeligh affair. Demarest was surely Froeligh's biggest advocate, as can be gleaned from the apologetic text he authored titled *Lamentations over Froeligh*.

[31] A modified form of Calvinism put forth during the Second Great Awakening by Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), also known as New Divinity or Edwardseanism (after Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758). The position is known as three-and-a-half-point Calvinism, which denies original sin and teaches that depravity is less than total. Instead, Hopkins stressed a concept founded in humanism known as "disinterested benevolence," in which one denies self-interest or religious aim to perform charitable acts as a social mandate. This notion became an essential building block of the Social Gospel movement in the 19th century.

[32] See Edward Tanjore Corwin, *Manual of the Reformed Church in America* (1879), p. 276. John Henry Livingston was unanimously elected president in 1810.

[33] See James W. Van Hoeven, *Piety and Patriotism*, p. 24.

[34] The TDRC had a greater influence on the church in the Midwest and was a factor in the Graafschap and Polkton secession highlighted in the next part of this paper.

[35] Volume IV is available on Google Books. See also *True Dutch Reformed Church Acts and Proceedings, Oct 1822-June 1865*.

[36] See Janet Sheeres, *Minutes of the Christian Reformed Church*. The former TDRC churches in New Jersey were assigned to the Classis of Hackensack of the Christian Reformed Church.
[37] See Karel Blei, translated by Allan J. Janssen, *The Netherlands Reformed Church, 1571-2005*.
[38] See David M. Tripold, *Sing to the Lord a New Song: Choirs in the Worship and Culture of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, 1785-1860*, p. 23.
[39] See Elton J. Bruins and Robert Swierenga, *Family Quarrels in the Dutch Reformed Churches in the 19th Century*, pp. 22-23. A very accessible summary of VanRaalte's life and work can be found in Jeanne M. Jacobson, Elton J. Bruins, and Larry J. Wagenaar, *Albertus C. Van Raalte: Dutch Leader and American Patriot*.
[40] See Bruggink and Baker, *By Grace Alone*, pp. 118-124.
[41] See Heideman, Eugene P., *Hendrik P. Scholte: His Legacy in the Netherlands and in America*.
[43] *Family Quarrels*, pp. 63-64.
[43] *Family Quarrels*, p. 78.
[44] The tract contains Arminian overtones of universal grace.
[45] See *Family Quarrels*, pp. 78-80.
[46] See Arie R. Brouwer, *Reformed Church Roots*, p. 126.
[47] Ibid, pp. 126-127.
[48] See Donald J. Bruggink and Kim N. Baker, *By Grace Alone*, p. 139.
[49] It is helpful to note that Masonic membership in Europe was in effect a rational effrontery to the church. Members were often atheist, deist, or agnostic. Thus, lodge members had largely exchanged religious faith for rational humanism. In the United States, Masonic membership was not necessarily in contradiction with religious beliefs. In fact, as it was widely known that George Washington was a Mason (along with other founding fathers), it was considered patriotic to join a lodge. For many, especially in the East, church membership and Masonic membership was seen as the harmonious rendering of oneself to God and country.
[50] The True Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in Hackensack had done the same in 1831.
[51] *Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, 1870*, pp. 96-97.
[52] See Donald J. Bruggink and Kim N. Baker, *By Grace Alone*, p. 141.
[53] For a discussion of the impact of freemasonry on the membership and clergy of Pillar Church see Elton J. Bruins, *The Americanization of a Congregation*, second edition, pp. 29-35.
[54] See Donald J. Bruggink and Kim N. Baker, *By Grace Alone*, p. 142. A definitive biography by James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuypers: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat*, was published by Eerdmans in 2013.
[55] Arie R. Brouwer, *Reformed Church Roots*, p. 127.
[56] See *Our Faith: Ecumenical Creeds, Reformed Confessions, and Other Resources*. See also *Liturgy and Confessions*. The Canons of Dort will not be discussed in this paper as the document does not make a statement of unity.
[57] *Liturgy and Confessions*, "Confessions," p. 29.
[58] Ibid, "Heidelberg Catechism," p. 9.

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

**R 16-57**

**To encourage the church to use the document "A Brief History of Schism and Separation in The Reformed Church in America along with a Summary of the Creeds and Confessions as Statements of Unity" as a resource; and further,**

**To direct the General Synod Council to make the document available to the church. (ADOPTED)**

## Report of the Commission on Judicial Business

The Office of the General Synod received two complaints and three appeals since the 2015 session of the General Synod. All five matters arise out of the same general set of facts. The parties to them include (but are not limited to) the Rev. Victor Singletary ("Singletary"), the Classis of Queens ("Queens Classis"), the Regional Synod of New York ("Regional Synod"), Ms. Winsome Kpana ("Kpana"), and Ms. Veronica Webber ("Webber").

The five matters are as follows:

1. Complaint filed by Singletary regarding a July 15, 2015, action by the Regional Synod's Judicial Business Committee dismissing a complaint filed by Singletary with the Regional Synod against the Rev. Amy Nyland ("Nyland"). Nyland serves as the Regional Synod's executive minister. The complaint was received on August 20, 2015, and will be referred to herein as the "August 20 Complaint."
2. Complaint filed by Singletary regarding a September 9, 2015, action by the Regional Synod dismissing a complaint filed by Singletary with the Regional Synod against the executive committee of Queens Classis. The complaint was received on September 18, 2015, and will be referred to herein as the "September 18 Complaint."
3. Appeal filed by Singletary regarding a September 19, 2015, action by the Regional Synod denying the recommendation of its Judicial Business Committee and thereby upholding certain actions taken by the Queens Classis. The appeal was received on October 2, 2015, and may be referred to herein as the "Singletary Appeal."
4. Appeal filed by Kpana regarding the same September 19, 2015, action by the Regional Synod denying the recommendation of its Judicial Business Committee and thereby upholding certain actions taken by the Queens Classis. The appeal was received on October 14, 2015, and may be referred to herein as the "Kpana Appeal."
5. Appeal filed by Webber regarding the same September 19, 2015, action by the Regional Synod denying the recommendation of its Judicial Business Committee and thereby upholding certain actions taken by the Queens Classis. The appeal was received on October 16, 2015, and may be referred to herein as the "Webber Appeal."

Each of the foregoing matters was referred to the General Synod's Commission on Judicial Business ("CJB") for review, recommendation, and report to the 2016 General Synod. Following receipt of the matters the CJB requested from the Regional Synod the original record of all proceedings pertaining to them. Those materials were received from the Regional Synod and promptly forwarded to all CJB members.

The CJB convened by conference call on Tuesday, October 27, 2015; Tuesday, November 17, 2015; and Tuesday, April 12, 2016. It also met in person on Sunday and Monday, February 28 and 29, 2016.

**Disposition of August 20 Complaint**

The CJB determined that the filing of the August 20 Complaint by Singletary was not proper because (a) the Regional Synod lacks the authority to engage in any formal disciplinary action against Nyland in the manner requested in the underlying complaint that was filed by Singletary with the Regional Synod Judicial Business Committee and (b) Singletary is not a member of the Regional Synod and therefore may not file a complaint against it (*Book of*

*Church Order* [BCO] Chapter 2, Part II, Article 1, Section 4; 2015 edition, p. 87). Because the filing of the August 20 Complaint was not proper, the CJB voted not to hear the matter, and therefore took no further action regarding it.

**Proceedings regarding September 18 Complaint, Singletary Appeal, Kpana Appeal, and Webber Appeal**

The CJB determined that the notice of intent to complain for the Singletary Complaint and the notices of intent to appeal for the Singletary Appeal, Webber Appeal, and Kpana Appeal all were given properly and within the time periods specified in *BCO* Chapter 2, Part II, Article 2, Section 1 and Chapter 2, Part III, Article 2, Section 1, respectively (pages 88 and 92, respectively, of the 2015 edition). The CJB also determined for the Singletary Complaint, Singletary Appeal, Webber Appeal, and Kpana Appeal (collectively, "Cambria Heights Matters") that (a) all were filed within the time periods specified in *BCO* Chapter 2, Part II, Article 2, Section 2 and Chapter 2, Part III, Article 2, Section 2, respectively (pages 88 and 92, respectively, of the 2015 edition), and (b) for each matter the case and its attendant papers appeared to be in order as required by *BCO* Chapter 2, Part II, Article 2, Section 4 and Chapter 2, Part III, Article 2, Section 4, respectively (pages 88 and 92, respectively, of the 2015 edition). (In its initial pre-hearing order the CJB raised limited questions regarding the completeness of the record insofar as minutes of Regional Synod meetings were concerned, and those questions were addressed and resolved by the Regional Synod's clerk.)

The CJB consolidated the Cambria Heights Matters for briefing and consideration as a single judicial proceeding. This included consideration of the records of the respective cases, as well as any additional arguments that were submitted. For the Singletary Appeal, Kpana Appeal, and Webber Appeal, the Queens Classis was an original party to the case.

All parties were invited by the CJB to submit briefs setting forth any arguments they deemed appropriate to their respective cases. Briefs were submitted by Singletary, Kpana, and Webber. The Synod of New York Judicial Business Committee gave notice that it would not submit a brief but would respond to all briefs at the hearing on the appeal.

A hearing of the Cambria Heights Matters was conducted on Monday, February 29, 2016, at the Renaissance Newark Airport Hotel near Newark International Airport. Singletary, Kpana, and Webber were present personally. Regional Synod was represented by Richard Lavorata, Jr. and the Rev. Conrad J. Strauch. Queens Classis was represented by the Rev. Neil Margetson and the Rev. Marianne Lin.

**Discussion**

The record in the Cambria Heights Matters shows that the consistory of the Cambria Heights Community Church ("CHCC") was superseded by Queens Classis in March 2014. Singletary served as an installed minister of Word and sacrament at CHCC at that time. The consistory was replaced by a supersession team. In March 2015, Queens Classis voted to reconstitute the consistory of CHCC on the basis that the grounds for supersession had been resolved. The supersession team was reconstituted as an election "supervisory team" consisting of the Rev. William Hanousek and the Rev. Lynn Hanousek. An election was held on April 19, 2015. All of the allegations in the Cambria Heights Matters appeals and complaints arise out of this election.

The Regional Synod Judicial Business Committee ("Regional Synod JBC") issued a written recommendation in this matter (Record of the Case at B300006-B300010) dated July 17, 2015. The CJB agrees with Regional Synod JBC that Singletary has standing to file a complaint and pursue an appeal in this matter. The CJB specifically makes no ruling on

the standing of Webber or Kpana in this matter since their appeals are effectively rendered moot by the recommendation on the Singletary appeal in this matter.

Regional Synod JBC concluded and made recommendations as follows:

> As a result of the foregoing the committee recommends to the Regional Synod of New York to reverse the decision of the Queens Classis which permitted/conducted and confirmed the results of the objected election and permitted the installation/ordination of the nominees. We would further recommend that the elections and the installations/ordinations be deemed void and without effect.

Regional Synod voted on September 19, 2015, to deny this recommendation and uphold the action of Queens Classis to dismiss the complaint of Singletary.

The crux of the Cambria Heights Matters is the validity of the April 19, 2015, elections to reconstitute the consistory of CHCC. The *BCO* sets forth the method for conducting elections (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 14; 2015 edition, p. 17). The *BCO* allows churches in existence to pick from several methods of choosing elders and deacons (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 14c; 2015 edition, p. 17). CHCC chose the method set forth in its bylaws, which were approved by Queens Classis (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 14c(4); 2015 edition, p. 17). The method employed by a church cannot be changed except by permission of classis (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Section 14d; 2015 edition, p. 17). The record herein shows CHCC has bylaws setting forth the method of elections (B300036-B300041). The CJB understands that in attempting to reconstitute a consistory, compliance to the letter of the bylaws may be difficult because most bylaws do not anticipate the consequences and aftermath of supersession. However, nothing in the record indicates that there was any attempt to comply with the CHCC bylaws. It is clear the bylaws were not followed and there is no evidence that the Queens Classis approved an alternate method.

At the hearing Queens Classis representatives acknowledged they may not have followed the bylaws but stressed the need for the church to get a consistory in place. Testimony at the hearing confirmed that although the consistory was elected on April 19, 2015, it has not taken any action or acted as the governing body of CHCC. Additionally, the Queens Classis has maintained oversight of CHCC during this entire dispute. The effect of voiding the election, therefore, will simply maintain Queens Classis' direct supervision of CHCC. Regional Synod representatives testified that the Regional Synod was concerned about the erosion of the authority of the classis in deciding not to follow the recommendation of the Regional Synod JBC and to affirm the actions of the Queens Classis.[59] The CJB shares that concern; however, here the Classis will maintain authority over CHCC while a new process for reconstitution of a consistory goes forward—this time with at least attempted compliance with the approved CHCC bylaws.

There was testimony at the hearing that proceedings to dissolve the call between Singletary and CHCC had recently occurred and that the call had been dissolved by the Classis. The CJB requested that documents regarding that proceeding be provided to the CJB to determine if that proceeding had any bearing on the issues in this matter. The CJB has reviewed the documents provided and has determined there is nothing in those documents affecting the recommendations herein. The Classis maintains direct supervision of CHCC and may take any action necessary regarding the church following proper procedures.

The CJB finds that it is manifestly unjust not to require the method chosen for selection of elders and deacons by CHCC in its bylaws and approved by Queens Classis to be followed and notes that the result of the recommendation of the CJB is to leave the Classis in direct

supervision of CHCC until elections reasonably compliant with CHCC's bylaws can take place.

**Recommendation**

Based upon the foregoing discussion and findings, the CJB makes the following recommendation to the 2016 General Synod:

**R 16-58**
**To reverse the decisions of the Regional Synod of New York and Queens Classis and remand this matter to Queens Classis for the purpose of supervising the reconstitution of a consistory of Cambria Heights Community Church (CHCC) pursuant to the method prescribed in the bylaws of CHCC to the extent possible under the circumstances. Nothing in this decision shall in any way limit the authority of the Queens Classis to oversee all affairs relating to CHCC until such time as a new consistory may be elected.**
**(ADOPTED)**

# Report of the Commission on Nominations

The Commission on Nominations met in person on October 22–23, 2015, and January 19, 2016; and teleconferenced on February 16, March 15, April 5, April 26, and May 4, 2016. Throughout the year members of the commission actively sought qualified candidates, solicited completed profile forms (a brief two-page document), and checked references of those who were interested in serving on a commission or agency of the General Synod or on the board of directors or trustees of an RCA-related institution. In these ways the commission sought to fulfill its responsibilities as stated in the Bylaws of the General Synod—namely, "in consultation with the general secretary, [the commission] shall search the denomination for suitable nominees. In making nominations it shall consider the geographic location, occupation, and record of previous service to the denomination of persons suggested by classes, regional synods, and other sources. It shall consider this and other pertinent data in light of each commission's or agency's responsibilities, membership needs, suggested nominees, and place and schedule of meetings" (*Book of Church Order* [*BCO*] Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 8.c.2; 2015 edition, p. 114).

The commission seeks to nominate individuals for service on agencies, commissions, and boards of directors on the basis of their spiritual gifts, interests, heart (or passion), abilities, personality, experience, and special leadership abilities, and when possible, seeks to involve young adult members of the RCA (so they can be nurtured and encouraged to serve the RCA in a variety of ways in the future). Through its efforts, the Commission on Nominations has proactively fulfilled its responsibility to "search the denomination" and believes those nominated have traits that make them well-suited for the work of the positions to which they are being nominated. The commission is pleased to report once again that it has, to the best of its ability, fulfilled its responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the *Book of Church Order* are upheld.

When the number of qualified candidates from which to choose increases, the commission's work is enhanced and the work of the General Synod's agencies and commissions is carried out more effectively. Consequently, the commission encourages anyone interested in serving to submit a completed profile form to the Commission on Nominations as indicated on the form. Profile forms are available from Laura Tarbous, staff to the Commission on Nominations, at 908-812-7897 or ltarbous@rca.org, or through the "Profile Form and Commission Information" link on the General Synod page of the RCA website (www.rca.org/profile).

To help focus on the new RCA goal, the Commission on Nominations voted to add the following to the profile form:

> "Transformed & Transforming: Radically Following Christ in Mission Together" is the RCA's 15-year strategy for mission and ministry. It's our commitment to cultivate transformation in Christ, equip emerging leaders of today and tomorrow, and engage in Christ's kingdom mission. How do you see your gifts and passions being applied to Transformed & Transforming?

**Nominations**

Nominees identified by the Commission on Nominations are as follows (* indicates a final term and # indicates an official nomination from the assembly, institution, or agency listed):

**General Synod Council**
Class of 2020
*James Kuplic
*Rev. Benjamin Lin
*Barbara Pimentel
*Erma Rolle (Regional Synod of New York)#
*Kenneth Shepard
*Clare VanDis (Regional Synod of the Heartland)#

**Commission on Christian Action**
Class of 2017
Vacancy – ELCA ecumenical observer (to be named by the Commission on Christian Action)
Class of 2018
Rev. Carlinda Peoples
Class of 2019
Rev. Scott DeLeeuw
*Rev. Patricia Sealy
Robin Suydam

**Commission on Christian Discipleship and Education**
Class of 2018
John Chen
Class of 2019
*Rev. Kent McHeard
*Jane Schuyler

**Commission on Christian Unity**
Class of 2018
Dena Robins
Class of 2019
Rev. Sun Jong Ju
*Rev. Lisa Vander Wal

**Commission on Christian Worship**
Class of 2018
Rev. Drew Poppleton
Class of 2019
*Rev. Katherine Baker
Rev. Robert Fretz
Rev. Dennis TeBeest

**Commission on Church Order**
Class of 2019
*Rev. Larry Schuyler

**Commission on History**
Class of 2019
Rev. Lynn Japinga
*Rev. Douglas Van Aartsen

**Commission on Judicial Business**
Class of 2019
*Arthur Casey (Regional Synod of Albany)#
Thomas Terpstra (Regional Synod of the Far West)#
*John Van Slambrouck (Regional Synod of the Great Lakes)#

**Commission on Nominations**
Class of 2018
Rev. Micheal Edwards (Regional Synod of New York)#
Class of 2019
Rev. Gregory Alderman (Regional Synod of the Far West)#
*Israel Camacho (Council for Hispanic Ministries)#
*Lee DeYoung (Regional Synod of the Great Lakes)#
*David Walsh (Regional Synod of Albany)#

**Commission on Race and Ethnicity**
Class of 2019
Rev. Jessica Bratt
Rev. Kyunghoon Suh (Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries)#

**Commission on Theology**
Class of 2019
Rev. Dawn Boelkins
*Rev. Jaeseung Cha
*Tony Chapman
Rev. Stephen Shaffer

**Commission for Women**
Class of 2019
Rev. Dwayne Jackson
*Deidre Johnston
*Maudelin Willock

**Board of Benefits Services**
Class of 2018
Vacancy
Vacancy
Class of 2019
*Mark Kamper
*Robert Nykamp
Vacancy
Vacancy
Vacancy

At the request of the Board of Benefits Services, the Commission on Nominations is not seeking nominations for the vacancies on this board at this time.

**Church Growth Fund Board**
Class of 2019
Larry Koops
*Gregory Robinson

**Ministerial Formation Certification Agency Board**
Class of 2017
Rev. Frances Nelson
Class of 2019
Vladimir Diaz-Ochoa
*Carol Jones
Bradley Lewis
Rev. Jacob Marvel

**New Brunswick Theological Seminary Board of Trustees**
Class of 2017
Vacancy (Regional Synod of Mid-America)
Class of 2019
*Rev. Gregory Jackson
*Rev. Fernando Jensen
*Catherine Lewis (Regional Synod of Albany)

**Western Theological Seminary Board of Trustees**
Class of 2019
Rev. Eddy Alemán
Kermit Campbell
Chris Crawford
*Kris DePree
Sandra DeYoung (RSMAt)
Rev. Gail Ebersole
Douglas Honholt
Carol Van Andel
Vacancy (RSA)

**Central College Board of Trustees**
Class of 2020
Daniel DeCook
Martin Heerema
Rev. John Schmidt

**Hope College Board of Trustees**
Class of 2020
Rev. Jeffrey Allen
Barbara DePree
Rev. Kenneth Eriks
James Jurries
John Knapp

**Northwestern College Board of Trustees**
Class of 2019
Rev. Robert Bouwer

**R 16-59**
**To elect the above-named nominees to the General Synod commissions and agencies and the boards of directors or trustees of RCA-related educational institutions as indicated. (ADOPTED)**

**R 16-60**
**To elect Lee DeYoung as moderator of the Commission on Nominations for the 2016–2017 term. (ADOPTED)**

# Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnicity

Members of the Commission on Race and Ethnicity (CORE) include Alfonzo Surrett Jr. (moderator), Karla Camacho, Amilcar Castillo, Rick DeBruyne (vice moderator), Yong Bok Kim, Jo Anna Lougin, Gerri Yoshida (secretary), and Alina Coipel Robinson (RCA staff).

The commission met October 22–24, 2015, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and had conference calls on July 14 (with Eddy Alemán); August 19 (Tony Campbell); September 8; September 25; November 11 (Tony Campbell); December 1 (Earl James); January 26, 2016; February 24 (quarterly connect with Eddy Alemán, Tony Campbell, En Young Kim); and March 1. The spring meeting was held at Lincoln Avenue Community Church (RCA) in Pomona, California, February 1–3, 2016.

**Official Responsibilities of CORE**

The *Book of Church Order* names the responsibilities of the commission in Chapter 3, Part I, Article 5, Section 7b; 2015 edition, p. 113:

1. The commission shall advise the church on policies and initiatives that address issues of institutional racism and the commitment of the Reformed Church in America to become a fully multicultural and multiethnic denomination.
2. The commission shall serve as an advocate for transformation of the Reformed Church in America in regard to its multiracial and multiethnic life.
3. The commission shall recommend policies, objectives, guidelines, and strategies to assist the Reformed Church in America in its effort through all of its agencies, commissions, institutions, and other affiliated bodies to become a fully multiracial and multiethnic church.
4. The commission shall monitor, evaluate, and report on the Reformed Church in America's progress in achieving multiracial and multiethnic objectives.

The General Synod has further instructed the Commission on Race and Ethnicity "to monitor the successful implementation of recommendations proposed by the R-91 Task Force on White Privilege and adopted by the 2013 and 2014 General Synods; and further, to include this information in their reports to General Synod for the next five years" (*MGS 2014*, p. 116).

**R-91 Task Force on White Privilege Recommendations**

General Synod 2014 adopted two recommendations from the R-91 Task Force on White Privilege:

> R-15
> To direct the General Synod Council to create a task force to assess the RCA's governance utilizing the Five-Fold Test and make recommendations for changes to its order that are consistent with the tenets of the Belhar Confession and that will aid the RCA's transition to becoming a more multicultural denomination that is freer from racism; and further,
>
> that the task force include the general secretary, the racial/ethnic council presidents, the General Synod president or vice president, the GSC moderator, a representative of the Commission on Church Order, and a number of additional members necessary to create a membership that is at least 50 percent people of color and contains experts in cultural competency in the RCA's most populous racial/ethnic groups; and further,

that the task force make an interim report to General Synod 2015 and a final report to General Synod 2016.

R-16
To encourage the General Synod Council to experiment with at least one regional synod and at least five classes with the use of the Five-Fold Test as a means to assist these assemblies in fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined in the *Book of Church Order* in a multicultural and multiracial context, for report to the 2015 and 2016 General Synods on the efficacy of the tool and any recommendations for further use (*MGS 2014*, pp. 113-114).

The 2014 General Synod also approved assessment funding for these two recommendations: 20 cents per member for the task force to assess RCA governance established in R-15 and six cents per member to use the Five-Fold Test in at least one regional synod and five classes as directed in R-16.

Both R-15 and R-16 have to do with the Five-Fold Test, a tool that has been used very effectively by the Evangelical Covenant Church to become a more multicultural denomination that is freer from racism. The tool can help the RCA to the same effect. For more information on the Five-Fold Test, see *MGS 2014*, p. 112.

CORE is concerned that since June 2014, when these two recommendations were passed at General Synod, very little has been accomplished to carry out the mandates. The task force to assess the RCA's use of the Five-Fold Test met March 28, 2016, but that is not enough time to accomplish its work. This seems to indicate a lack of interest and intentionality on the part of GSC. Furthermore, it appears that no one familiar with the Five-Fold Test is a part of the task force. CORE recommends that the work of this task force needs to be extended for another year or two and that a trained facilitator be called in to help them understand how to use the tool. At some point someone from the Evangelical Covenant Church should be consulted to explain how the Five-Fold Test was used effectively and how the top leadership was motivated to implement the test throughout their denomination.

CORE is also concerned that only the Regional Synod of Canada and two classes have volunteered to use the Five-Fold Test in their assemblies as stipulated in R-16. The GSC needs to make training available so that churches and classes will know how to use the Five-Fold Test. The results are needed to establish benchmarks so that strategies can be developed to move the RCA at all levels of governance to more diversity and inclusiveness. Creating an online reporting form would also encourage people to share their results of the Five-Fold Test.

CORE would like to know how the assessment for R-15 and R-16 (20 cents for the task force and 6 cents for testing in the regional synods and classes) has been spent. It appears that the lack of action by the GSC in the last two years indicates that eradicating racism and promoting diversity is not a top priority of the RCA.

Members of CORE took the Five-Fold Test from the perspective of our churches and found that sharing results stimulated fruitful and thoughtful reflections on each congregation's efforts to be multiracial and multicultural.

**Mass Incarceration**

CORE continues to support the initiatives on mass incarceration presented by the Commission on Christian Action. At the October meetings, Lindsay Bona shared information on their progress. CORE's moderator, Alfonzo Surrett Jr., serves on that coalition to get

regular updates. For a more details, please see the coalition's report, included in the report of the Commission on Christian Action.

**Racial/Ethnic Councils**

CORE monitored the work of the racial/ethnic councils by having quarterly conference calls with Tony Campbell (director of mission engagement, who serves as staff to the African American/Black Council), Eddy Alemán (director of strategic leadership development and coordinator of Hispanic ministries), and En Young Kim (supervisor of RCA mission in Asia and the Pacific and coordinator for Pacific and Asian American Ministries). CORE recognizes that the reorganization of leadership gives the racial/ethnic coordinators direct access to the general secretary through the monthly meetings of the Executive Leadership Team. However, CORE is concerned that lack of administrative staff impedes effective communication and coordination with the local racial/ethnic churches and pastors. CORE also notes that the work of the racial/ethnic councils is moving from advocacy to empowering the local churches to be effective agents for change in their local communities.

**Monitoring Diversity**

For the first time, CORE asked for statistics from the Commission on Nominations to determine the racial diversity on the General Synod Council and all commissions. Overall it is encouraging to see that more racially and ethnically diverse people are serving on most commissions and on GSC. CORE thanks the Commission on Nominations for its diligence and the persistence of its ongoing efforts toward inclusivity. However, CORE recognizes that the Commissions on Church Order, History, and Judicial Business need to welcome more racial/ethnic members. CORE encourages more people of racial/ethnic diversity to fill out the online Talent Bank form (www.rca.org/profile) to volunteer their services, interest, and expertise.

CORE also looked at the diversity statistics for General Synod Council staff. CORE would like to get statistics on the diversity of delegates to General Synod and to encourage GSC to find more ways to include more racial/ethnic delegates at this annual decision-making assembly. CORE continues to perform its task of monitoring the racial/ethnic makeup of special committees and task forces, such as the special council, to make sure that all voices are heard. CORE recognizes that progress is being made when task forces such as the one reviewing diaconal assemblies approach CORE for names of racially and ethnically diverse people to serve.

**Listen and Learn**

At the October 2015 joint GSC and commissions meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, CORE sponsored a Listen and Learn lunch to introduce CORE's objectives and to hear concerns from GSC and members of other commissions. CORE would like to see commissions work together on common objectives and also be responsive to the needs of local pastors and churches.

**Electronic and Social Media**

As a follow up to the Listen and Learn lunch, CORE has developed a Facebook page to stay in touch and communicate with the rest of the RCA (www.facebook.com/RCACORE). CORE also now has an eblast, "Embracing Our Multiracial Future Freed from Racism," that will be sent several times a year with information on upcoming events, stories, and practical tools.

CORE will be posting information on the history and work of the commission on the RCA website. CORE has also made the Five-Fold Test readily available on the website and has made the resource list developed by the R-89 Understanding White Privilege Task Force accessible (images.rca.org/docs/gsc/WhitePrivilegeResources.pdf).

**Webinars**

CORE and Earl James, coordinator of congregational Missional Mosaic and advocacy, partnered to present three free webinars to equip churches with cultural agility skills to help with multicultural ministry. The themes were "Churches Sharing Spaces: Moving from Landlord-Tenant to Vital Ministry Partnerships" (February 24, 2016); "ABCs of Successful Multicultural Congregations: Some Good to Best Practices for All Members to See Your Church as Home" (March 3, 2016); and "Church in/to/with Community: Breathing Vitality into Church Outreach Ministry" (March 17, 2016).

This was in response to the Listen and Learn lunch, where several participants expressed interest in learning ways to improve ministries that promote diversity, multicultural outreach, and inclusiveness. All webinars are recorded and will be available on the RCA website.

**Resources**

CORE will be researching the experiences and contributions of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American peoples in the RCA and developing short vignettes and other low cost resources to share with and engage the church. The commission's hope is to have a number of these available by 2020.

CORE will also be working to update the resource list developed by the R-89 Understanding White Privilege Task Force in 2013 that is posted on the RCA website. There should be an effort every two years to add new books, DVDs, and other resources and to check the availability of older resources.

Finally, CORE will be working to develop a list of racially and ethnically diverse preachers and speakers who can speak to churches about multiracial issues and experiences. This list will include a brief biography and contact information. The list will be available online and updated once a year to keep it current. The list of available speakers will be arranged regionally to cut down on travel costs.

**Native American Ministry**

Although the Native American and Aboriginal people do not presently have a racial/ethnic council to represent, serve, and advocate for them, CORE continues to show its concern by receiving a well-thought-out report from Nick Miles, coordinator of Native American/Aboriginal ministries, reporting on the activities and persons involved with RCA churches and missions serving the Native American community.

**Racial Makeup of CORE**

CORE will be working with the Commission on Church Order to develop a recommendation for General Synod 2017 to change the bylaws regarding the racial makeup of CORE so that it includes at least one Native American and two Asian Americans (one from the executive committee of the Council for Pacific and Asian American Ministries).

**Giving Thanks**

The Commission on Race and Ethnicity thanks Yong Bok Kim for completing two terms of faithful service, as well as Eunice Ruiz, who served two years. The commission also thanks Alina Coipel Robinson, our staff person, who has worked tirelessly and been invaluable in accessing information, organizing meetings, and faithfully serving CORE in many ways.

# Report of the Commission on Theology

The Commission on Theology met October 22–24, 2015, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in conjunction with the annual joint meeting of all General Synod commissions and the General Synod Council (GSC), and January 22–23, 2016, in Chicago, Illinois.

Our work gives us much joy, as we feel Christ's presence in our gatherings and a conviction that our efforts matter to the church. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve in this way. All of our work this year was assigned to the commission by the General Synod. Furthermore, all of it in one way or another is directed toward the first strategic priority of Transformed & Transforming, our responsibility to participate in cultivating transformation in Christ.

**Consulting Work and Other Items**

A few items assigned to our commission designate the Commission on Theology as a consultant or secondary partner.

The 2015 meeting of the General Synod, in response to a recommendation from this commission, directed the GSC, "in consultation with the Commission on Theology, to create a task force … to bring a proposal to General Synod for changes to the *Book of Church Order* regarding the creation of diaconal assemblies at the classis level" (*MGS 2015*, R-51, p. 242). GSC has convened a task force to address this referral, and has invited two members of the Commission on Theology, Sarah Schreiber and John Young, to be part of that task force. We understand these efforts to come under the second strategic priority of Transformed & Transforming, that of "Equipping Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow."

At its 2014 meeting, the General Synod directed the Commission on Christian Action, in consultation with our commission, "to develop a paper on God, justice, and compassion for those who are incarcerated, victims of incarceration, families of the incarcerated, and returned citizens that addresses the church's role in being the beloved community of God" (*MGS 2014*, R-45, p. 193). That collaboration, in which our commission was represented by member Jill Carattini, has concluded with the completion of this directive by the Commission on Christian Action, which presents the paper, "The Church and Criminal Justice: A Joint Confession," in its own report. We see this work as an expression of the third strategic priority of Transformed & Transforming, "Engaging in Christ's Kingdom Mission."

Likewise in 2014, after a recommended *Book of Church Order* change (*MGS 2014*, R-55, pp. 265-267) raised significant discussion on the floor of General Synod around whether commissioned pastors should be included with elder or minister classis delegates for purposes of a quorum, the synod directed the GSC to "detail the original purpose and subsequent history and evolution of the commissioned pastor in the life of the RCA, explore the theological foundations of office in the RCA as they pertain to the commissioned pastor, and engage the relational tensions that the subject of commissioned pastors has produced in the church" (*MGS 2014*, R-56, p. 267). The moderators of the Commissions on Theology, History, and Church Order were included in early conversations related to this directive to GSC. Following the Commission on Theology's January 2016 meeting, the GSC moved forward on convening a summit in March 2016 concerning the role and function of the commissioned pastor. The commission was invited to send a representative to this summit who would offer a presentation designed to stimulate group discussion around issues of the commissioned pastor designation. Regrettably, the relatively short notice as well as a member's recent surgery meant that this commission was unable to send a representative. Even so, we applaud these efforts, which fall under the second strategic priority, "Equipping Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow," and we stand ready to assist.

Finally, our commission had stimulating and appreciative discussions of the RCA's ongoing efforts to live into the vision articulated by Transformed & Transforming. We noted the variety of projects and initiatives being developed and deployed in response to the three rubrics. However, we would note an underutilized and seemingly under-appreciated gift within an RCA that seeks to be transformed and likewise to be instruments of Christ's transforming work. This gift is our theological seminaries and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA). Under the strategic priority of leadership in Transformed & Transforming, there is no mention of theological education. Perhaps as a result, our seminaries have not been invited into conversations about this priority. We find this highly regrettable. Consequently, we encourage the GSC and staff to seek ways to include our theological agencies and institutions in conversations and activity directed toward this strategic priority.

**Human Sexuality**

Like all the commissions, the Commission on Theology is accountable to the General Synod. The work of the commission is rightly expected to be responsive to the synod and supportive of the synod's own work. Usually the projects of the commission derive from directives of the General Synod. Sometimes the projects are initiated by the commission. But even in those rare circumstances, such self-initiated projects arise from a desire to help the synod and, ultimately, the congregations, classes, and agencies of the Reformed Church in America.

All the members of the Commission on Theology take very seriously the trust placed in them by the delegates and officers of the General Synod. They are mindful of their obligation to be responsive to the synod, and they joyfully seek to fulfill that obligation.

In the light of all that, our commission is in the unusual situation of having to report that we have not yet done something that a previous General Synod directed us to do. We wish to explain why, and to ask for further direction.

In 2013, the General Synod directed the commission "to draft a paper on human sexuality from a Reformed perspective to be presented to General Synod 2015" (*MGS 2013*, R-54, p. 181). The Commission on Theology began its response to this directive by presenting to General Synod 2015 "The Word Became Flesh: Setting the Context for the Church's Discussion of Issues involving Sexuality." This paper was explicitly offered as a first step toward satisfying the 2013 directive. It seeks to offer "a theological statement articulating some core principles concerning human sexuality—one we hope will be broadly accepted within the Reformed Church in America. There is wisdom, we expect, in preparing for difficult conversations about our differences by first stating what we have in common" (*MGS 2015*, p. 243). The synod acted "to accept with appreciation" the paper "as a resource for further reflection on human sexuality" (*MGS 2015*, R-53, p. 246).

General Synod 2015 also established the formation of a special council, to be convened with members from across the denomination. It was also given the authority to bring recommendations directly to the General Synod of 2016. Such recommendations can include proposals for changes to the RCA Constitution that would make clear and binding the acceptable practices in the RCA regarding same-sex marriage and ordination of non-celibate homosexual persons.

As the Commission on Theology considers its directives and responsibilities, we are mindful of the work of the special council, which, at the time of our commission's meetings, had yet to convene. As we submit this report, many are waiting and wondering what steps the special council will propose in the form of recommendations it may bring to the General Synod.

We on the commission cannot predict what the special council will do. However, we are convinced that any substantive paper on human sexuality offered by our commission to this General Synod would be viewed through political lenses and perceived as either an inappropriate undercutting of the work of the special council or an inappropriate boost of its work. Our efforts would, in either case, likely disrupt the reception of the special council's report and make it impossible for a paper of ours to receive a proper hearing.

In connection with the formation of a special council, General Synod 2015 also called for a "season of restraint," as expressed here:

> R-25
> To implore the congregations, office holders, and assemblies of the RCA to exercise a season of restraint. This call of restraint includes refraining from performing same-sex marriages, ordaining practicing homosexuals, initiation of judicial actions related to these matters, and separating from the denomination (*MGS 2015*, p. 103).

The commission is not itself in a position to engage in any of the activities named in R-25. Yet we wonder whether we might act in a way that fits the spirit of the implored season of restraint. Perhaps for our commission the season of restraint means that we hear the Lord's call to pause and wait.

This is what we believe we are called to do at this moment: to let the special council do its work, and to give the delegates to this General Synod the space to consider the special council's report fully and prayerfully.

We would also seek further direction from this General Synod on our own next steps. It is our sense that the response of last year's synod (2015) to our earlier paper was unclear. Discussion of the paper by that synod was quite brief, leaving the commission uncertain about further work on the 2013 directive.

Toward that end, we invite the delegates to look again at "The Word Became Flesh: Setting the Context for the Church's Discussion of Issues Involving Sexuality," the paper we presented to last year's General Synod. That paper is contained in last year's report of the commission on pp. 243-246 (images.rca.org/docs/mgs/2015MGS-Theology.pdf). By referring to this resource, it is our hope that we might receive some additional direction regarding its usefulness to the Church.

At this time, the commission suspends its work on the 2013 directive (that is, on a comprehensive paper on human sexuality). We invite a new directive from the General Synod, one that might well be formulated in light of the synod's response to the recommendations of the special council.

Our hope is that all our work is of service to the General Synod and brings glory to the triune God.

**Acknowledgments**

In closing, the commission offers thanks to Daniel Griswold, a pastor from Rochester, New York, whose enthusiastic and attentive service to the commission (including two years as moderator) is ending, and to Terry DeYoung, staff to the commission, for his constant and effective guidance of our work.

## Report of the Commission for Women

The Commission for Women works toward the full participation and influence of women in the life and ministry of the church and in the world. The work of the commission is not for the sole benefit of clergywomen, nor is the work of the commission solely to benefit women in the church. Rather, the work of the commission benefits the whole church and its mission to the world. The body of Christ is at its best when all its members—women and men—are nurtured, cultivated, and sent to lead, preach, and serve, wherever God calls. Thus, the commission's work seeks to ensure that women have access to unencumbered opportunities to serve in the church for the sake of the world.

The commission met three times in the past year. The commission met in person in conjunction with the meetings of the General Synod Council and the other General Synod commissions in Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 22–24, 2015; by conference call on November 24, 2015; and again in person in Sonoita, Arizona, February 5–7, 2016.

**Clergywomen Survey**

One of the tasks of the commission is to "prepare studies and develop policies for recommendation to the General Synod." Over the past year, the commission devoted the bulk of its time and energy to developing and conducting a survey of clergy in the RCA. Through the survey results, the commission will ascertain a clearer picture of the state of clergywomen in the RCA. By administering the survey to both clergywomen and clergymen, the commission hopes to distinguish challenges that all ministers face from challenges that are unique to clergywomen. The commission hopes that this survey will provide more data to supplement the previous survey. In addition, the survey results will benefit the commission in its future work as well as the work of the RCA's Office of Women's Transformation and Leadership.

As a follow-up to the survey conducted by our commission and reported on at General Synod 2012, the commission, working in cooperation with Isolde Anderson, a communications professor at Hope College, developed and conducted a new survey. Serving as a consultant to the commission, Anderson brings previous experience developing and conducting surveys on this topic, as she has performed similar studies in her own denomination, the Evangelical Covenant Church. Working in partnership with Anderson also fulfills our responsibility to "develop and maintain relationships with similar groups in other denominations, exchanging ideas and materials regarding issues affecting women." This new survey was conducted in the spring of 2016. Initial findings may be included in the oral report at General Synod 2016, with complete results being submitted as part of the commission's report to General Synod in 2017.

**Appointments and Nominations**

In fulfillment of the commission's responsibility to "participate and provide information for appointments to committees, commissions, agencies, and staff positions to insure partnership of men and women in the professional and decision-making leadership of the denomination," the commission assisted the Group of Five past presidents planning for the special council on human sexuality by nominating women to serve as participants in the special council. In conjunction with the Office of Women's Transformation and Leadership, the commission has also worked toward increasing the participation of women at General Synod. The commission has accomplished this by contacting each regional synod and encouraging them to send two female corresponding delegates. In addition, the commission is working to encourage women to actively participate in General Synod by speaking to the recommendations on the floor.

**Women in Higher Leadership in the RCA**

Over the past few years, a shift has begun throughout the denomination. The so-called stained-glass ceiling in the church is steadily being cracked. Of the eight regional synod executives, three are now women. The commission commends general secretary Tom De Vries and his commitment to hiring ordained RCA clergywomen into leadership positions at the denominational staff level. The commission sees these steps as significant progress as more and more women serve in a variety of leadership positions throughout the denomination.

**Faithful Service**

The commission gives thanks for Nolan Palsma and Jennifer Vander Molen for their faithful and fruitful service to the commission. Nolan served on the commission for the last six years, bringing much wisdom and institutional knowledge to the group. The commission is grateful for his service. In addition, the commission would like to thank Jennifer Vander Molen for her hospitable and diligent work as the commission's staff person. As Jennifer pursues a new career opportunity, her work as staff person will be missed. The commission welcomed its new staff person, Liz Testa, coordinator for Women's Transformation and Leadership, at its winter meeting.

**Recommendations**

The commission brings the following recommendations to General Synod 2016.

> R 16-61
> To encourage all classes to develop and adopt family leave policies, commensurate with other professional positions in society, for ordained clergy serving in churches within their geographical boundaries, as soon as practicable.

Reasons:

1. Whether it is care of infants, sick children, or elderly parents, the burden of caregiving can disproportionately fall upon women. A family leave policy would allow both women and men to share in this caregiving ministry during times of significant life change or upheaval.
2. Family leave allows ministers to better care for their families without the added worry and stress of negotiating a fair period of leave.
3. Family leave policies provide clarity and guidance to both ministers and churches.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to amend R 16-61 as follows (deletions are stricken):

> To encourage all classes to develop and adopt family leave policies, commensurate with other professional positions in society, for ordained clergy serving in churches within their ~~geographical~~ boundaries, as soon as practicable.

**VOTED:** To amend R 16-61.

A motion was made and supported from the floor to further amend R 16-61 as follows (additions are underlined):

To encourage all classes to develop and adopt family leave policies, commensurate with other professional positions in society, for ordained clergy and staff serving in churches within their boundaries, as soon as practicable.

**VOTED:** To not further amend R 16-61.

**VOTED:** To adopt R 16-61 as amended.

The final text of R 16-61 as amended and adopted reads as follows:

**R 16-61**
**To encourage all classes to develop and adopt family leave policies, commensurate with other professional positions in society, for ordained clergy serving in churches within their boundaries, as soon as practicable. (ADOPTED)**

**R 16-62**
**To encourage churches to post all job openings, especially pastoral positions or ministerial opportunities, on the RCA's Employment Opportunities webpage, ensuring that all people have access to opportunities by which to pursue their callings. (ADOPTED)**

Churches can post ministry job openings at www.rca.org/employment.

Reasons:
1. Without a central place for people to search for employment opportunities within the RCA, options become limited for women, persons of color, and those who currently live in geographically far-flung areas.
2. Equal opportunity means that everyone needs equal access to those opportunities.
3. Advertising an open position only through a personal network or a specific classis results in "insider knowledge" that prevents qualified candidates from hearing about available opportunities and deprives them of the opportunity to apply for such positions.

**R 16-63**
**To direct the GSC to develop processes and guidelines for forming future special councils and RCA-wide groups so that the full diversity of the church may be accurately seen and represented. (ADOPTED)**

Reasons:
1. In selecting individuals to send to the special council meeting, the vast majority of classes submitted the names of men, despite the fact that the majority of the denomination is comprised of women.
2. Without a uniform process for nominating or choosing delegates, each classis employed a different method for choosing their representative, resulting in confusion, frustration, and a lopsided delegate demographic.
3. Due to the fact that the majority of delegates put forward were men, the Group of Five past presidents planning for the special council was compelled to search for and invite at-large delegates who would more accurately reflect the diversity of the body, including women, persons of color, and LGBTQ persons.

## Report of New Brunswick Theological Seminary

*"Take nothing for the journey…"*

The words of Jesus to his disciples as he sent them out two by two feels like the direction a seminary often does not follow. Seminaries are regularly expected to provide all of the wisdom and leadership skills a candidate needs to be successful in a lifelong calling. In spite of this expectation, we want teachers and learners to understand that what we carry into this process of formation often needs to be left behind so God can use us to do a new thing! God provides all of us what we need for the journey—partners to support us and hold us accountable along the way, a purpose far greater than our individual lives, and a power that can finally exorcise demons and lead us in divine paths.

**A New Strategic Direction**

New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) is completing a ten-year strategic plan that has radically changed our physical campus as well as our identity. In the past decade, we have sold more than half of our property, which provided the resources to build a new seminary building and construct a significant parking opportunity in the center of a major university. We are now halfway through a two-year planning process that will identify five new strategic directions for the next five years. How can we build on a debt-free, technologically smart, ecologically sensitive building in the middle of the city of New Brunswick? What does it mean to be the only seminary in the United States to be located in the heart of a state university? Who will be called to our classrooms since we are surrounded by the languages and ethnicities of the world within 50 miles of our doors? When our seminary is filled with older students who are often bivocational or pursuing a second career, how can we make NBTS not only multiethnic, multilingual, and multidenominational, but also multigenerational? We know these concerns represent some of the important questions we must face as we follow the call and command of Jesus to go into all the world "taking nothing for the journey!"

**New Partners**

Just as the disciples were sent out two by two, we have an abiding commitment to seek and embrace new partners in God's mission for us. We are delighted to share that with the construction of our new building two years ago, the number of community, state, regional, and national groups using our facilities has doubled, and then doubled again. Our location in the heart of Rutgers University, just a five-minute walk from the railroad station with a 100-space parking lot adjacent to our building, has been an attractive meeting place for congregational retreats, training sessions, lectures, dinners, and celebrations. Almost half of the patrons who use our facility are a part of Rutgers, which has given us a welcome opportunity to nurture new relationships. Yes, we discern that those who use our new facility are potential partners in our mission.

In addition, we are honored that the National Baptist Convention has named NBTS its seminary of choice; the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey has identified us as a missional partner in New Jersey; the Al Amana Centre in Muscat, Oman, has become a great resource to prepare our students for ministry in a multi-faith world; our growing commitment to become an inclusive, anti-racist institution has made us a partner with a number of communities that are seeking to do the same; our annual Underwood Symposium in Seoul, Korea, has nurtured our global network; and the presence of RCA staff, pastors, and parishioners visiting the RCA offices and holding meetings in our space has inspired a new and creative relationship of mission and ministry in this time of Transformed &

Transforming. These represent just a taste of the new life that new and historic partners bring to our mission.

**New Resources and Strategies**

In January 2014, the seminary initiated an $8 million comprehensive campaign, the largest in its history, to grow our endowments so we can imagine a mission that stretches another 230 years into the future. We are deeply thankful that to date we have surpassed $7 million in gifts and pledges as we work faithfully to complete the campaign in this coming year. We are grateful to old and new friends who have given sacrificially so this remarkable goal is now within sight.

In addition, we have sought the approval of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) to expand our use of technology so that we can make theological education more accessible not only to those who live in the heart of the New York metropolitan region but also to those who live around the world. Again and again our global partners have explained that the greatest need in the developing world, where the church is growing the fastest, is not for money or personnel, but for education so indigenous leaders can be formed for ministry that is sensitive to their context. New Brunswick Seminary is deeply committed to making this Macedonian call an essential part of our mission.

We have also received word from ATS that a new 39-credit Master's in Professional Ministry degree has been approved. We expect that the new degree will make theological education more available to those who are already ordained in traditions that don't require an M.Div. degree or those who seek to serve the church in non-ordained roles.

**Nomination of Jaeseung Cha as a General Synod Professor**

**R 16-64**
**WHEREAS the Rev. Dr. Jaeseung Cha has become a tenured faculty member at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and serves as the associate professor of constructive and foundational theology; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Cha has theological degrees from Western Theological Seminary and the Free University of Amsterdam; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Cha has served as a lecturer in theology at the Ministry Training Center in Vanuatu, at Anyang University and Torch Trinity School of Theology in South Korea; and as an adjunct professor at Soongsil University in South Korea and the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in the Philippines; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Cha has brought a wealth of wisdom and experience through these global teaching experiences; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Cha has served in numerous leadership roles in the Reformed Church in America and a number of organizations and professional guilds in the United States, Korea, and globally; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Cha is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America, fulfilling all of the requirements of the *Book of***

**_Church Order_ for a General Synod professor, and holds the church in great love and affection in his vocation and in his faith,**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 210th regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 9 through 14, 2016, in Palos Heights, Illinois, declares Dr. Jaeseung Cha a General Synod professor. (ADOPTED)**

**A Resolution of Gratitude for John Coakley**

**R 16-65**
**WHEREAS the Rev. Dr. John W. Coakley has taught at New Brunswick Theological Seminary since 1984 and as the L. Russell Feakes Memorial Professor of Church History since 1995, not only inspiring generations of students in the study of church history, but also being a pastoral presence to many as they found their way into their vocation as ministers of Christ's church; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Coakley served as the first director of the Reformed Church Center and consequently was instrumental in establishing a locus for the study of the Reformed Church in America as well as the broader Reformed tradition; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Coakley has served as a General Synod professor since 1995, serving the church not only in the preparation of candidates for the ministry of Word and sacrament, but on the boards, commissions, and committees of the Reformed Church in America; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Coakley has contributed substantially and frequently as a scholar of church history; and**

**WHEREAS Dr. Coakley has served as a faithful, encouraging, and delightful colleague not only in the administrative and pedagogical affairs of the seminary, but as a friend who carries the best interests of both individuals and the seminary at heart,**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 210th regular session of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting June 9 through 14, 2016, in Palos Heights, Illinois, expresses its deepest gratitude to Dr. Coakley for his years of service, and offers its prayers for a fulfilling retirement along with his wife, Margaret;**

**AND BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that Dr. John Coakley be declared a General Synod professor emeritus as of June 15, 2016. (ADOPTED)**

## Report of Western Theological Seminary

The mission, identity, and vision statements of Western Theological Seminary (WTS) guide its life together:

**Mission Statement**: The purpose of Western Theological Seminary is to prepare Christians called by God to lead the church in mission.

**Identity Statement**: Western Theological Seminary is an evangelical and ecumenical community of faith and learning in the Reformed tradition that serves the church of Jesus Christ. In covenant with the Reformed Church in America, Western equips men and women for Christ-centered, biblically based, theologically integrated, culturally competent, mission-oriented Christian leadership.

**Vision Statement**: By 2020, Western Theological Seminary will be a nationally recognized center that forms leaders to empower, renew, and plant congregations and ministries that participate in God's ongoing redemptive work in the world.

**UPDATES ON THE LIFE AND WITNESS OF WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**Strategic Plan**

Western adopted a strategic plan in 2014 to achieve goals in these five areas:

1. Teaching and learning for culturally engaged leadership
2. Diversity and cultural competence
3. Partnerships for church planting, empowerment, and renewal
4. Resourcing a 21st-century seminary
5. Facility expansion and renovation for living into the vision

The seminary has made substantial progress in all five areas, as detailed below.

*Teaching and Learning for Culturally Engaged Leadership*

One of the seminary's goals in this initiative was to create a certificate program for ministry to and with people with disabilities. In the fall of 2016, students will begin taking courses toward a new Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry. Western is the first North American seminary to offer a course of study and certification in this ministry area. The seminary's interests here run deep, as it built the nation's first Friendship House, where seminarians live side by side with adults who have cognitive disabilities, in 2007. Under the leadership of Benjamin Conner, associate professor of Christian discipleship, the Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry greatly expands our offerings and positions Western as a leader in this field.

*Diversity and Cultural Competence*

Over the past several months, the faculty, staff, and student body of WTS have engaged in cultural competence training, workshops, and discussion. Larger racial/ethnic membership on the seminary's board of trustees has been accomplished, and as this report is written Western is considering two racial/ethnic minority finalists for its vacant academic dean and vice president of academic affairs position.

*Partnerships for Church Planting, Empowerment, and Renewal*

Among the goals in this initiative were continued growth and enhancement of Ridder Church Renewal. In partnership with both the RCA and CRC, the Ridder program has continued to grow exponentially, with churches participating in Ridder across several regional synods, from New York to Iowa and Ontario to British Columbia.

*Resourcing a 21st-Century Seminary and Facility Expansion and Renovation for Living into the Vision*

The seminary is poised to launch a capital campaign to support an extensive construction project that will result in the replacement of the seminary's library tower, the building of a new entrance and office suites, and renovation of much of the remaining building. This project will cost just under $15 million. Simultaneously, Western is also about to launch a $10 million capital campaign that supports the seminary's endowment in three areas: student scholarships, faculty positions, and building maintenance. At the time of this writing, neither campaign has been officially initiated, but $8.2 million has been committed to the building project and an additional $4.5 million has been committed to the endowment side. The campaigns are expected to be launched this summer; a successful completion of each is anticipated.

**Financial Support**

Western Theological Seminary enjoyed another strong year of giving in 2014–2015. Overall giving to the seminary topped $5 million for the fourth consecutive year. Nearly $1 million of that amount was realized through bequests. As the seminary works to increase its endowment in order to provide more funds for student scholarships and operational support, bequest gifts become important as they are a proven way for an institution to grow its endowment. Western Theological Seminary is grateful for donors who include the seminary in their estate plans.

**Enrollment**

Overall enrollment is up slightly from last year's count of 272. During the 2015–2016 academic year, a total of 279 students were enrolled: 102 candidates in the residential Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program, 71 candidates in the distance-learning M.Div. program, and 29 in the Newbigin House cohort. There were 118 RCA candidates enrolled in all M.Div. programs. Students were also enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program, the Master of Theology program, the Master of Arts program, and the Graduate Certificate in Urban Pastoral Ministry program, and also as non-degree-seeking students. In May 2016, 10 students represented the first graduating class of the WTS–Newbigin M.Div. degree program, which focuses on church planting, revitalization, and center city renewal.

**Lilly Grant on Student Debt**

As reported last year, Western is one of 67 seminaries that received a $250,000 grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. to address economic challenges facing future ministers. This is often referred to as the "Student Debt Project," because addressing student debt is essential to the grant; however, the grant has a wider scope than just student debt.

In the second year of this grant, the seminary implemented financial literacy as part of the formation for ministry curriculum for in-residence M.Div. students. Twenty percent of the students who took the financial literacy training also accepted the offer of financial counsel-

ing, and 23 percent of those who took the class stopped taking student loans the following academic year.

Beyond the issue of debt, Western is seeking to train students in organizational leadership, budgeting, fundraising, and thinking theologically about money.

The seminary is encouraged by support of its students from the wider church. RCA classis support doubled in the last two years, and 70 individual churches partnered to aid 85 students. It is hoped that all of these efforts will combine to improve the financial well-being of future pastors of the RCA.

**Lilly Grant on Preaching**

Western Theological Seminary is one of nine seminaries supported by Lilly Endowment, Inc. with a $500,000 grant to strengthen the quality of preaching. The seminary's grant is being implemented through its Bast Preaching Initiatives, which seek to encourage preachers and students by inspiring them to dwell, craft, and proclaim the Word of God. Participants use a peer learning model where group members are encouraged to go deeper in preaching and wider in relationships. There are three types of groups: Dwell groups for pastors, Discover groups for seminary students, and Discern groups for college students. In 2015, there were five Dwell groups involving 35 pastors; in 2016, participation grew to seven groups involving 50 pastors. These groups meet multiple times during the year and follow a 12-module pathway around the outline of Dwell, Craft, Proclaim. Seminary (Discover) groups help students hone their passion for preaching. "The Pulpit" Discover group is a space for female students to hear the stories of female preachers who have gone before them and imagine the possibility of a preaching vocation, and the "Fearless Feedback" Discover group is a safe space for students to practice preaching and hear feedback from their peers. Discern groups for college students are spread over four college campuses and are designed to help students investigate a call to ministry. In these many different contexts, locations, and life stages, Bast Preaching Initiatives hosted more than 50 gatherings of people in 2015 in the name of preaching and peer learning, and have experienced continued momentum and growth in 2016.

**Seminary Events**

*Stoutemire Lecture*

Western held the fifth annual Leonard F. Stoutemire Lecture in Multicultural Ministry in September 2015. Daisy Machado, professor of American church history at Union Theological Seminary, presented "Faith in the Public Square and the Challenge of Immigration." Machado examined what Christianity can offer today's public discourse about immigration and discussed an alternative way of thinking and talking about immigration that can lift up Christianity's long-held vision of a common humanity as it also calls Christians to boldly embrace the claims of faith to see justice for all. The goal of the annual Stoutemire lecture is to equip seminarians, faculty, staff, alumni, and local congregations with resources for increased intercultural competence for greater effectiveness in Christian ministry.

*Bast Preaching Festival*

The theme of the 2015 Bast Preaching Festival was "Crafting the Word: The Poetry and Playfulness of Preaching" and featured Anna Carter Florence, the Peter Marshall associate professor of preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary. Florence is known for her creative storytelling, careful use of language, and love of Scripture. Her sessions were creative, thought-provoking, and interactive. Artist Joel Schoon-Tanis (of Holland, Mich-

igan) invited participants to craft a painting layered with beloved Scripture passages. He made the final touches on the painting during the closing chapel, a superb conclusion to the preaching festival. This collaborative artwork now hangs in Western's Journey office.

*Osterhaven Lectures*

This year's Osterhaven Lectures featured Katherine Sonderegger, William Meade chair in Systematic Theology at Virginia Theological Seminary. Her lectures focused on "Mere Monotheism," "The One Triune Lord," and "The Mission of the Divine Son." Sonderegger is a member of the American Academy of Religion, Kampen-Princeton Barth Consultation, Karl Barth Society of North America, American Theological Society, and Society for the Study of Theology. Since 2004 she has been the co-chair for the Reformed Theology executive committee. She is the author of *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's "Doctrine of Israel"* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1992).

*"Voices of Western Seminary" in* Perspectives

The March/April 2016 edition of *Perspectives*, a journal of Reformed thought, featured essays and poetry written by faculty, staff, students, and graduates of Western Theological Seminary: Jeff Munroe, I. John Hesselink, Kristen Deede Johnson (with co-author Bethany Hanke Hoang), Duane T. Loynes Sr., Han-luen Kantzer Komline, Grace Miguel Cipriano, Annalise Kort Radcliffe, April Fiet, and Chuck DeGroat.

*Celebrating Women in Church Leadership*

For the second year in a row, Western partnered with the RCA to host a one-and-a-half day event to celebrate, honor, and explore women's stories; gain new wisdom and insights; and encourage, equip, and empower women to live fully into their God-given callings and become agents for change.

*Writer-in-Residence*

Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, author of more than a dozen books including *A Faithful Farewell*, *What's in a Phrase*, and *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* was the seminary's second annual writer-in-residence in March. During her time on campus, McEntyre taught an intensive course for students, preached in chapel, met with local pastors, and, with support from Western's Cook Endowment in Christianity and Literature, presented an evening of poetry and discussion focused on her books *In Quiet Light*, *Drawn to the Light*, and *The Color of Light*, which were inspired by paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Van Gogh. McEntyre has a Ph.D. in comparative literature and teaches medical humanities at the UC Berkeley–UCSF Joint Medical Program.

*"La Iglesia Responde al Problema de Violencia Domestica"*

Western hosted "La Iglesia Responde al Problema de Violencia Domestica" ("The Church Responds to Domestic Violence") in April, featuring Faculty Fellow Dynna Castillo Portugal. The event, presented in Spanish, was attended by members of the local Hispanic community and students at the Instituto Biblico Ebenezer (IBE), a Hispanic theological training institute headquartered in Chicago that holds classes at the seminary.

*Transition into Ministry (T.I.M.) Summit*

Western Theological Seminary is committed to preparing and supporting healthy leaders for the church and the world and empowering them to sustain life in ministry. One of the

opportunities provided to graduates in their first five years of ministry is the annual T.I.M. Summit. For the first time this year, alumni participated in a Faithwalking retreat led by Edie Lenz (WTS alum) and Mike DeRuiter. Faithwalking is a spiritual formation journey toward an integrated, missional, and authentic life with God and in community.

*140th Commencement*

On May 9, 2016, Western celebrated its 140th commencement, graduating 49 M.Div. students (the largest M.Div. class in history) and a total of 64 graduates in all degree programs, including Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, Master of Theology, and Doctor of Ministry. Dennis Voskuil, Marvin and Jerene DeWitt professor emeritus of church history, gave the commencement address. Voskuil served as Western's president from 1994 to 2008. Commencement day is also Alumni Day at the seminary. Melvin DeVries, class of 1953, was honored as this year's Distinguished Alumnus. His service to the church was marked by his heart for evangelism and diversity, and by planting three congregations that have all celebrated more than 50 years of ministry.

*Summer Institute on Theology and Disability*

Western partnered with Hope College to host the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability in May 2016. Ben Conner, associate professor of Christian discipleship and director of Western's Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry, led the seminary's involvement, which included a session on how working with people with disabilities is transforming theological education. The seminary's Ralph and Cheryl Schregardus Friendship House, the on-campus residence where seminarians live side by side with adults who have cognitive disabilities, was also featured.

**Academic Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs**

Leanne Van Dyk, professor of Reformed theology and academic dean and vice president of academic affairs, accepted the position of president of Columbia Theological Seminary effective July 1, 2015. A search committee completed a thorough process, and identified two candidates for campus interviews. The finalist will join the WTS faculty on July 1, 2016.

James Brownson, James and Jean Cook professor of New Testament, served as interim academic dean and vice president of academic affairs during the 2015–2016 academic year while the search for Van Dyk's successor was completed.

**Faculty and Staff Appointments**

Dynna Castillo Portugal served as one of the seminary's two Faculty Fellows for the 2015–2016 academic year. Originally from Mexico City, Castillo Portugal came to the U.S. in 2002 to study at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since graduation, she has worked as a hospital chaplain and church leader, and was ordained in 2007 as an associate pastor at Templo Evangelica Gethsemani in Mexico City. Castillo Portugal completed her Ph.D. at Luther Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 2015. Her dissertation focused on ministering to victims of domestic violence in Mexico. As a Faculty Fellow at Western, she taught the distance-learning class Practice of Counsel and Care. She also presented "La Iglesia Responde al Problema de Violencia Domestica" ("The Church Responds to Domestic Violence") in April in Spanish for members of the local Hispanic community and students in the Instituto Biblico Ebenezer (IBE).

Duane Loynes, a doctoral candidate at Marquette University, also served as a Faculty Fellow. Loynes earned his bachelor's degree in communication and organizational leadership

at Trinity International University, his Master of Arts in Theology from Wheaton College, and his master's degree in philosophy from Northern Illinois University. He is now in a doctoral program at Marquette University, finalizing his dissertation, which examines the way Christian theology makes space for racism. At Western, Loynes taught a church history class, served on the Master of Theology committee, and worked on diversity initiatives. In April, Loynes led a campus-wide "Big Read" of Ta-Nehisi Coates's book, *Between the World and Me*.

Former Faculty Fellow Han-luen Kantzer Komline was promoted to assistant professor of church history and theology on July 1, 2015. Komline earned her doctorate in May 2015. She won a two-year post-doctoral fellowship from the Louisville Institute at Louisville Theological Seminary, which will allow her to teach and become vocationally formed to better respond to the needs of faith communities and their future leadership. Her mentor is colleague Suzanne McDonald.

Suzanne McDonald was granted tenure and became professor of historical and systematic theology on July 1, 2015.

After completing his Ph.D. in October 2015, Ron Rienstra was promoted to associate professor of preaching and worship arts.

David Komline was appointed visiting assistant professor of church history for 2015–2016. He has degrees from Wheaton College, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the University of Notre Dame. He has deep family roots in the RCA, has taught in Germany and China, and has a passion for both the global and local body of Christ.

Theresa Latini, professor of practical theology and pastoral care, was appointed associate dean of diversity and cultural competency for the 2015–2016 academic year. In this role, she led initiatives related to the seminary's strategic plan goal to grow in diversity and cultural competency. Latini chaired the diversity committee, developed a one-day workshop for faculty and staff with Michelle Loyd-Paige, executive associate to the president for diversity and inclusion and professor of sociology of Calvin College, initiated community conversations and the spring "Big Read," and served on the President's Council.

C.J. Kingdom-Grier, assistant to the president for racial initiatives, joined Latini on the President's Council. Grier's work has identified and implemented areas of growth and change for WTS in the area of diversity and cultural competency.

In a decision by the president and academic dean to utilize gifts most effectively, Kyle Small and John Brogan exchanged roles as of June 1, 2015. Small now serves as dean of formation for ministry and Brogan serves as associate academic dean.

Pam Bush, associate director of Journey (discipleship) and instructional assistant of Hebrew, began an additional role as associate director of student care in the Formation for Ministry office. Bush is responsible for the pastoral concerns of residential and distance learning students during times of crisis and discernment.

**Celebrating Faculty Accomplishments**

Chuck DeGroat, associate professor of pastoral care and counseling, authored *Wholeheartedness: Busyness, Exhaustion, and the Healing of the Divided Self* (Eerdmans, 2016).

Kristen Johnson, associate professor of theology and Christian formation, released *The Justice Calling: Where Passion Meets Perseverance* (Brazos Press, 2016) with co-author

Bethany Hanke Hoang of International Justice Mission's Institute for Biblical Justice.

J. Todd Billings, Gordon H. Girod research professor of Reformed theology, was awarded a Louisville Institute Grant to explore the topic: What does it mean for congregations to hope in the bodily resurrection in a medicalized age? This grant will allow Billings to gather a small group of Reformed pastors currently serving congregations across the nation for three colloquies in 2016–2017 to explore and write about this question. In addition, with the help of WTS student Anna Radcliffe, Billings produced a free study guide for his latest book, *Rejoicing in Lament: Wrestling with Incurable Cancer & Life in Christ* (Baker, 2015).

Robert Van Voorst, professor of New Testament, published the ninth edition of *Anthology of World Scriptures* in print and, for the first time, in an all-digital format. The book is now the leading anthology in religious studies in U.S. higher education. Van Voorst's textbook on world religions, *RELG: World*, has been published by Cengage Learning in its third edition.

**Trustee Appointments**

Three new members joined Western's board of trustees effective July 1, 2015. Kenneth E. Harris is the founding pastor of Detroit Bible Tabernacle. He is vice president of academic affairs, academic dean, and professor of biblical studies at Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. He earned his Th.M. at Western in 1998. Cora W. Taitt is pastor of Highbridge Community Church (RCA) in the Bronx, New York. Taitt connects and works with community organizations as well as the Prison Ministry Network and the Young Urban Christian Association. Andrea Godwin-Stremler is an RCA pastor serving in military chaplain ministry in Hawaii, giving support to spouses and families.

Trustees Erin Beckerink and Jon Norton completed their terms of service on June 30, 2015.

**Petitions approved by the Board of Trustees of Western Theological Seminary**

The board of trustees approved the request from the Classis of Holland for an alternate means of meeting the biblical languages requirement for Lisa Braunius.

The board of trustees approved the request from the Classis of Holland for an alternate means of meeting the biblical languages requirement for Julie Myers.

The board of trustees approved a petition from the Classis of Holland to substitute a period of supervised ministry for the 24-month requirement of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry for Andrew Spidahl.

The board of trustees approved a petition from the Classis of Holland to substitute a period of supervised ministry for the 24-month requirement of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry for David Penning.

The board of trustees approved the request from the Classis of Holland to substitute a period of supervised ministry for the 24-month requirement of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry for Jonathan Gabhart.

The board of trustees approved a Certificate of Fitness for Ministry for James Beezley. Beezley graduated from Western Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity on December 19, 2014. At the time he was not an RCA candidate. He has since joined the RCA, come under care of the Classis of Muskegon, and is seeking ordination in the RCA.

## Report of the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency

General Synod exercises oversight of ministerial formation and the standards for preparation for ministry through its two seminaries and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA).

The MFCA possesses a deep commitment to developing faithful, educated, and evangelical Reformed leaders. Its purpose is the preparation of men and women for the ministries of Christ and Christ's church, most specifically those called to the office of minister of Word and sacrament.

The MFCA board of trustees has the following as its mission statement:

> The Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA) exists to strengthen the ministry of Word and sacrament in the Reformed Church in America by awarding Certificates of Fitness for Ministry to specific groups of candidates and working cooperatively with partners inside and outside the RCA to broaden opportunities for diverse ministerial formation.

Board Interpretation:

By the authority delegated to it by General Synod, the MFCA board, Certification Committee members, and staff continue to accomplish this mission by:

- Awarding the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry to RCA candidates graduating from non-RCA seminaries (via Reformed Candidates Supervision and Care, RCSC) or pursuing an approved alternate route (AAR);
- Through the RCSC and AAR certification committees and staff, evaluating the progress of candidates and their continuation in and completion of the process leading to the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, as their achievements dictate;
- Periodically ensuring that the RCA Standards for Preparation for Ministry are upheld in the oversight of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry and are reviewed, with recommendations made to the appropriate RCA body if the MFCA board believes changes would be appropriate;
- Providing graduate-level courses designed to meet the standards for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry;
- Collaborating with and providing counsel to congregations and classes in the care and nurturing of candidates for the ministry who are seeking the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry through the MFCA;
- Interpreting and advocating for the work of the MFCA to the larger church.

Given the continuing significant changes in the RCA and its official goals as expressed in Transformed & Transforming, current church climate, and changes in technology and the contexts of pastoral education, the MFCA will adapt and broaden its methods of accomplishing this mission, and will seek to work with all the partners God provides to accomplish this work, with special emphasis on the following:

- Adapting its operations and programs as necessary to embrace a multiracial future freed of racism;
- Arranging for instruction in Korean and Spanish to ensure that talented candidates of all backgrounds can pursue appropriate pastoral education;
- As appropriate, given our polity, working with classes and institutions to enhance educational opportunities for commissioned pastors and others and to encourage

a seamless transition to study for the ministry of Word and sacrament where possible.

By permission and approval of the General Synod Council (GSC), the MFCA board of trustees operates under policy governance. The board stays abreast of the MFCA program through the monitoring reports of the director, and there have been intentional efforts to focus on visioning and policy development.

**Enrollment and Other Statistics**

Information and statistics as of January 27, 2016, include:

- There are 85 candidates enrolled in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process, 25 (29.4 percent) of whom are pursuing an AAR.
- Enrollment in the MFCA continues to cluster in the eastern part of the U.S. Eighty-one percent (last year 76 percent) of the candidates reside east of the Rocky Mountains. Fifty-nine percent (last year 52 percent) are east of the Mississippi. Only two candidates reside in Canada, both in British Columbia.
- Just over 16 percent of the candidates are female.
- Forty-four percent of the AAR candidates represent a racial or ethnic minority group. More than one third (35.2 percent) of all our candidates represent racial or ethnic minorities.

**Future Vision for the Agency**

The MFCA board of trustees dedicated a significant portion of time at its March meeting to the future of the agency. We worked to name our present reality in light of changes occurring within and around the MFCA and to imagine God's preferred future for our ongoing work of engaging candidates for ministry. In particular, the board discussed:

a. The extent to which the MFCA contributes to the unfolding work of Transformed & Transforming.
b. Our understanding of the scope and requirements of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry and our desire for consistency in the granting of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry among the three theological agents.
c. Our effectiveness in resourcing and supporting classes with candidate care.
d. Our desire for robust ministerial formation for all MFCA candidates.
e. More financial support and accessibility for all candidates.
f. Various structural options for the agency.

Future meetings will continue to be dedicated to engaging the structure and work of the agency.

In light of the board's desire for consistency in the granting of Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, the MFCA board of trustees approved the following recommendation:

To recommend that the reconstituted Call, Care, Standards, and Collaboration group, now named the Pastoral Formation Certification Committee (PFCC), engage in a directed conversation about the scope and the requirements of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry as it relates to the *Book of Church Order* and the General Synod's Standards for the Preparation for Ministry in order to provide clarity for candidates and the church at large.

Reasons:

1. Differing practices among the General Synod agents are creating confusion for candidates and the church at large.
2. The *Book of Church Order* provides a specific outline for the classis in its role in the oversight of candidates for minister of Word and sacrament and commissioned pastor. In the case of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, the *Book of Church Order* merely mentions the M.Div. degree and a "prescribed course of theological studies," with no specifics.
3. The scope, courses, and competencies of the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, as overseen by the theological agents, are not defined in the *Book of Church Order.*

**Budgets and Finances**

The MFCA has run significant deficits the last number of years, requiring a number of cost-cutting measures that resulted in less than ideal consequences, such as:

- Decreasing support staff hours and salaries by almost 20 percent.
- Curtailing new initiatives that would increase costs.
- Adding online courses in place of in-person courses.
- Decreasing travel costs, resulting in fewer candidate "in-person" meetings.
- Offering limited scholarships and financial aid to candidates.
- Eliminating assistance for candidates traveling to intensives and interviews.
- Charging for room and board for those participating in intensives and interviews.
- Discontinuing further reduction of fees and tuition.

The director continues to argue that the average cost per candidate, which is approximately $4,000, should be reduced significantly. Most RCSC candidates bring significant student debt with them; some report amounts over $100,000. Some potential candidates, both AAR and RCSC, do not enter the process because the current fee schedule is prohibitive.

The majority of the MFCA budget income comes through our percentage of the theological education assessment. We are grateful for this continued support and the formula created by the CCSC, while being aware of a need for fundraising in order to sustain our current programs. The MFCA will continue to utilize reserve funds to meet our deficit as we discuss future models for structure and funding of the agency.

**Cooperative Efforts**

The MFCA has entered into several cooperative efforts this past year. One such effort is with Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services and the Dick and Betsy DeVos Family Foundation. Along with Calvin Theological Seminary, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and Western Theological Seminary, the MFCA is assisting in the development of parish-based clinical pastoral education (CPE) programs throughout North America. Participants from the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Church in America will engage CPE at various locations in North America. Karl Van Harn of Pine Rest will be facilitating the program.

The MFCA is also in conversation with Calvin Theological Seminary and its Hispanic department. Calvin has developed a successful graduate certificate program in Spanish and is in process to grow it into a master's-level program in Spanish for those who are called to pastoral ministry. The MFCA is hoping to add its success with Spanish education and to begin offering together several courses in Spanish that will serve both CRC and RCA leaders.

**Certificates of Fitness Awarded**

The Board of Trustees awarded 15 Certificates of Fitness for Ministry—12 through the RCSC process and three through the AAR process.

*Reformed Candidates Supervision and Care (RCSC)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Willard H. Barham | Classis of Rochester |
| Bethany Joi Bousema-Reeves | Classis of West Sioux |
| Daniel Robert Brunz | Classis of Dakota |
| Scott David Glasscock | Classis of the City |
| Sandeep Shashikumar Jadhav | Classis of British Columbia |
| Klarc Evan Korver | Classis of the City |
| Christopher James Meester | Classis of Pleasant Prairie |
| Craig Jasper Newendorp | Classis of the City |
| Bruce Dean Otto | Classis of Illinois |
| Clinton Robert Richardson | Classis of Dakota |
| Suzanne Marie Vogel | Classis of Central Iowa |
| Joshua Wierenga | Classis of Central California |

*Approved Alternate Route (AAR)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Fernando Arzola, Jr. | Classis of Rockland-Westchester |
| Jose Dario Camilo-Gonzalez | Classis of Central California |
| Michael Jon Daling | Classis of Zeeland |

**Alternate Means and Petitions**

*Reduction in 24-Month Requirement*: The Classis of British Columbia's request on behalf of Sandeep Jadhav to substitute a period of time to make up any deficiency of the 24 months of being in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process was approved by the board (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8, Section 3; 2015 edition, pp. 35-36). The board recognized the supervised ministry performed at New Life Community Church (RCA) in Burnaby, British Columbia.

*Reduction in 24-Month Requirement*: The Classis of Central California's request on behalf of Joshua Wierenga to substitute a period of time to make up any deficiency of the 24 months of being in the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry process was approved by the board (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 8, Section 3; 2015 edition, pp. 35-36). The board recognized the supervised ministry performed while at Western Theological Seminary and Sequoia Community Church in Fresno, California.

## Report of the Professorate

The office of General Synod professor involves representing "the living tradition of the church in the preparation and certification of candidates for its ministry," as well as exercising "the ministry of teaching within the RCA as a whole" (*BCO* Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 8; 2015 edition, p. 70). We fulfill this office both individually and collectively. Elected and installed by the General Synod, we remain amenable to the General Synod in matters of doctrine, striving at all times and in all ways to fulfill our calling faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully. This is the professorate's fifth annual report to the General Synod.

We have met twice in the past year. Our fall meeting was held on October 10, 2015, at New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Our spring meeting was held on March 18–19, 2016, at Western Theological Seminary (WTS) in Holland, Michigan.

In our fall meeting, we engaged in conversation with Tom De Vries on a number of issues. We laid preliminary plans toward the drafting of the paper that is included in this report. We planned future activities of the professorate, identified delegates to the 2016 General Synod, and spent some time discussing the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, as well as a number of issues pertaining to life in the Reformed Church in America.

At our spring meeting, we spent some time saying goodbye to John Coakley, who is retiring from New Brunswick Theological Seminary at the end of this academic year. This was his last meeting with us. Additional conversation in this meeting centered on possible topics for future work, further conversation about the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry, as well as refinements to the paper found below.

Returning to the subject of the retirement of John Coakley, it is with pride, deep gratitude, and sadness that we bid farewell to our colleague, who retires at the end of this year from NBTS. For 32 years, John has served NBTS, and for much of this time, has also served as a General Synod professor. In addition, he has served the Reformed Church in America on numerous boards, commissions, and agencies, lending his support and love of the church to the RCA over these many years.

In thanksgiving for his significant ministry and service to the RCA as a General Synod professor, the professorate supports the resolution for John Coakley presented to the General Synod by New Brunswick Theological Seminary, making him a General Synod professor emeritus.

Finally, the professorate brings the following paper to the General Synod for its consideration and the encouragement of the larger church.

### THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND THE RCA

The church is one; *unity* is essential to it. This is a fundamental truth. The New Testament witnesses to it clearly. We confess it in the Nicene Creed.

But *disunity* often characterizes the church as we know it, indeed especially among Reformed communions; despite their intentions otherwise, the continental reformers ended up founding new churches. The divisions have continued ever since, and the tendency to divide is with us still. As Eduardus Van der Borght put it, "the disunity within the Reformed tradition has become an ecclesial embarrassment."[1]

Yet unity is our calling. In our hearts we know this, and the questions haunt us: What, finally, does unity mean? How shall we embody it? What form must it take?

**Unity and the Church's Conscience**

Our history shows that even in our divisions we have been obliged to continue to acknowledge this calling to unity.

We see this in the recent departures of congregations from the RCA as a denomination, along with substantial disagreements in the church on a number of issues. Our church order does allow a congregation to withdraw from the denomination (*BCO*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 3; 2015 edition, p. 40), but *only* within the broader understanding that the "Reformed churches confess that the church of Jesus Christ in the world is *one* church," (*Preamble*, p. 2, italics ours), and that the RCA is not the only "true church" but exists "together with all other churches of Christ" (*Preamble*, p. 1). Hence, when a church withdraws, it can do so *only* "for the purpose of affiliating with another denomination" (*BCO*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 10, Section 4; 2015 edition, p. 40)—that is, only when there is another communion willing to welcome the congregation, and only after the congregation shows that in so doing that "Christ's Kingdom may best be served in the matter."

Our forebears recognized this principle as well. When the *Afscheiding*, or Separation, took place in the Netherlands—that ecclesiastical vision that occasioned the 19th century Dutch migration to this country that in turn became the historical root of a large portion of the Midwestern section of the RCA—those separating were careful to state that they were not dividing the church but that the church they were leaving had, rather, become apostate: the *Acte van Afscheiding of Wederkeering* put it that "the Netherlands Reformed Church is not the true but the false church according to the Word of God…"[2]

**Confession as Sign and Expression of Unity**

What then is the sign of unity amid the church's divisions? What is the means to realize it? For the Reformed tradition, the principal and most powerful expression has been *confession.*

From the time of the Reformation, Reformed (and Lutheran) communions have attempted to establish the unity of the church through a *common confession of faith*. Indeed, the "confessions" of the RCA[3] have been called "standards of unity" because subscription to the "standards" was what kept us together. We confessed a common faith. For example, differences of opinion could exist within the church around many matters, including many important matters. However, certain matters were deemed non-negotiable, as they manifest the *core* of faith in Jesus Christ. In writing on the unity of the church, John Calvin argued against allowing non-essential matters to divide the church. Indeed, "not all articles of true doctrine are of the same sort. Some are so necessary to know that they should be certain and unquestioned by all men as the proper principles of religion. Such are: God is one; Christ is God and the Son of God; our salvation rests in God's mercy; and the like. Among the churches there are other articles of doctrine disputed which still do not break the unity of faith."[4]

In the RCA, ministers (and professors) subscribe to the standards as "historic and faithful witnesses to the Word of God." This allows for considerable diversity of opinion over many issues that face the church, *including* understanding of the standards themselves! The confessions have functioned as an instrument of unity in the Reformed churches, giving us the opportunity to find and affirm that unity even amid our differences.

It is true that we have often missed this opportunity and indeed that Reformed churches continue to divide over confession itself.[5] One of the most telling—and painful—illustrations of this point is found in the conflict over secret societies in the late nineteenth century (membership in Masonic lodges), when a number of churches found it necessary, on the basis of what they perceived as essential to the Reformed Church's confession, to leave the church because their consciences could therefore not allow them to remain.

But the confessions still stand as our best signs of unity. Confessions themselves do not effect unity; instead the church confesses or acknowledges the One who unites them. They remind us that our unity is not to be sought in *ourselves*, in human agreement. They rather give witness to that which, beyond ourselves, makes for the unity of the church—or, should we say, to the *One* in whom the church is one.

**Unity Front and Center: the Belhar Confession**

Of all our confessions, it is the Belhar Confession—the one most recently adopted—that has the most to say about the meaning and nature of the church's unity. That is to say, it not only serves, like the other confessions, as a *standard* of unity by its content, but it also explicitly speaks of unity as a central theme of our faith.

The unity of the church, Belhar testifies, is both a "gift" and an "obligation."[6] These two qualities, taken together, express in a strong and instructive way the meaning of the unity, its importance, and what it requires of us.

*Unity as Gift*

Thus, according to the Belhar, unity is, at foundation, a gift. That is: the unity of the church is not fundamentally a human achievement, as though *we* have decided, either by some sort of social contract or individually, to become one with each other. It is, rather, the work of Christ, and accordingly not subject to our desires, preferences, or opinion.

Thus the confession opens with an allusion to the Heidelberg Catechism: "We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit."[7] The church is a product of divine action, God at work through Son and Spirit to "gather" it. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all…" (Ephesians 4:4-6, RSV). The church does not constitute itself. It is one because its origin emerges from the one place, nay, even the One living God who is triune love within Godself, now the God in action as the God is in Godself.[8]

The divine act that gathers the church is, moreover, to be understood also as God's *reconciling* action in Christ (reconciliation being the second great theme of the Belhar). The Scriptural reference here is to Ephesians 2. That text imagines the wall within the temple that divides the court of the Gentiles from the court of the Jews. Christ's death, the cross, breaches that wall, and so Christ creates "one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross" (v. 15-16, NRSV). A fundamental division within humanity is brought into one. And this is now the case in the church. (That this unity is indeed the work of Christ becomes even clearer when we observe that the term rendered "reconciliation" in English is a translation of the Afrikaans *versoening*. In Afrikaans (and in its parent language, Dutch), that term has a double meaning. It does indeed mean reconciliation. But it also can be—and often is in theological discourse—rendered as "atonement." The reconciliation that is at issue here is not simply a reconciliation that we might attempt to effect the healing of a broken human relationship. Something else has taken place to effect that reconciliation, Christ's atoning

death at Golgotha—reinforcing the idea that unity of the church, then, is made possible by God's action, not ours.

This unity, the unity granted by God through Christ's death and through the Spirit's work, is manifest in the sacraments of the church. As the Belhar puts it, we "have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup." In baptism, we are united one with another in Christ: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all…" (Ephesians 4:4-6, RSV). The Lord gathers us at one table, where we celebrate a feast of communion. As the Heidelberg Catechism has it, "through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us, we are united more and more to Christ's blessed body. And so, although he is in heaven and we are on earth, we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. And we forever live on and are governed by one Spirit, as the members of our body are by one soul" (Answer 76).

*Unity as Obligation*

If the Belhar presents unity as therefore a matter of divine and not human action, it also speaks of a particular unity: "this" unity, a unity that then makes Christ's work of reconciliation *manifest* in the church. It is here that human action enters the picture. Piet Naudé comments: "Proceeding from the Father and the Son, the Spirit creates a faith community called the body of Christ. In this community the Spirit fills the hearts of the faithful with the love of God (Romans 5:5), thus creating a sense of 'being-in-communion,' where individual members of the body find meaning in relation to others."[9] This must become a *visible* unity. The church *is* one, but in its present divided condition—an "impossible possibility"—it therefore has as its task to become manifestly and visibly what, in essence, by Christ's action, it already is! In this sense, then, unity is not only a gift but also an *obligation,* a fundamental task of the church. The confession articulates, perhaps for the first time, a confessional *commitment* to the visible unity of the church for a Reformed church, and therefore a non-negotiable responsibility.

The Belhar accordingly speaks against the common notion among Reformed folk that the church's unity is *invisible*—that is, the notion that unity is properly a characteristic only of the "invisible church" of the elect, and therefore cannot be expected of the church as we encounter it on earth. It is helpful to note the background of the Belhar Confession here. The South African policy of apartheid, while not mentioned in the confession, defined the context in which it was written. And apartheid in turn had its root in the division within the church in which whites and non-whites were separated at the sacrament of the Lord's Table.[10] This led to communities separated in worship by skin color, but the white church could still claim that the church as a whole had *unity* because of the notion that unity in Christ is *invisible*. One might say that this same sort of claim has been made by Reformed communions elsewhere. We can claim to be faithful to the unity of the church because while our unity is not visibly manifest it exists where it really counts, invisibly before God. God alone knows the number and the names of the elect. In fact, some Reformed theologians—and communions—even celebrate the manifest "diversity" of separated ecclesial communions. Such are the claims that the Belhar stands against, calling the church instead to realize its *obligation* to visible unity, and indeed to confess that its *disunity* constitutes its brokenness, its unfaithfulness, indeed its sin. This means that disunity is not simply to be seen as the unfortunate or inevitable consequence of our legitimate disagreements. Whatever its roots in human terms, it is a sin against God.

**Thinking Long and Hard about Separation**

What then, of the issues that divide us—as in those momentous 19th-century separations

within our church, as mentioned above, or the more recent issues concerning sexuality that threaten to cause new separations? If those issues reach to the heart of our very confession, as many have claimed—i.e., if they express, in the eyes of one side or the other, beliefs contrary to our confessions, can separation not be warranted, on the very grounds of the confessions as the signs of unity?

In honesty, the answer to this question must be yes: separation can be warranted on such grounds; the very logic of confession cannot rule out the possibility.

Yet what the Belhar obliges us to realize is the great tragedy of such a possibility. For it shows us that disunity is not simply, as often seems to be assumed, merely the unfortunate or inevitable consequence of our legitimate disagreements. Rather, whatever its roots in human terms, and whatever the arguments for it may be even in terms of our own convictions as to the nature of the faith we proclaim, separation is still a failure of witness to the work of Jesus Christ in the world, and a failure also to meet our fundamental obligation—and thus a sin against God.

**A Plea**

Given the seriousness of such separation and thus of disunity, we offer two considerations as a plea for second thoughts to those considering such a move. One of these has to do with Scripture, the other with uniformity.

First, about Scripture. As believers we do find and profess our unity in the gospel, and accordingly, as Reformed Protestants, we often claim that this is as we grant authority to the "Bible alone." However, as Dirkie Smit has put it, the Reformed tradition is one "that claims in radical fashion that it strives to live by the 'Bible alone'—and then admits that it has no final interpretation of that Bible and no final authority that can guarantee any interpretation, only a plural, ambiguous, and dynamic confessional tradition." And yet it is a "confessional tradition precisely because it does not strive to found the unity of the church on anything else than the truth of the gospel, the message of the sola scriptura, the Lordship of Jesus Christ."[11] The gospel, the message, then comes to us from without. Nor is it simply the "message itself." The gospel, empowered by the Spirit, points us to the Christ who has reconciled us to God, and consequently to one another. This finds its fundamental expression in the church.[12] And, as the Belhar Confession proclaims so well, it is that reconciling action of Christ, and not anything else, that constitutes our unity.

Second, as for "uniformity": unity is *not* the same as uniformity. Rather, as Belhar puts it, "the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the various languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God." Moreover, the confession goes on to say that "true faith in Jesus Christ is the *only* condition for membership of this church" (emphasis added). And this means that the church of Christ rightly incorporates those who may mutually encounter themselves as profoundly "other" in every way, including the mode of expression of belief. Just what constitutes this "otherness" is of course a question, but the gospel encourages us to cast the net very wide. The unity of the church extends beyond all human particularities, and does so because we exist in Christ. In Christ, we are united with the "other." Allusion to Ephesians 2 above (and in the Belhar) is to this point. The Gentile was the other, the outsider, and yet we (Gentiles, most of us!) are united with the "other"—the Jew—in Christ. Old Reformed thinkers would talk about the church as those elect in Christ. O. Noordmans in turn spoke of the "scandal" of election. By that he did not mean, as many of us would, that it is "scandalous" that God chose some and not others. Instead, what offends is that God chose those whom we consider not worthy, those who are "other," even "other" morally as well as culturally on the outside.[13]

A peculiarity of the Belhar, perhaps not easily noticed, is the connection of unity with justice.[14] Church unity appears to be more of an internal task of the church (with fundamental implications for mission, as we have seen) while justice has more to do with the church's prophetic vocation. It is important to note, however, that the justice as the Belhar conceives it is not just any notion of justice. This is not about human jurisprudence. This is *God's* justice, which is the justification of the sinner! This is a justice, then, that will reflect God's judgment against all that makes for disunity, that is, against "separation, enmity and hatred among people." The church's unity, then, as an accomplished reality, is a *gestalt* of the justice that God intends for all. This, then, becomes obligation as the church enters unity in freedom. It is *God* who acts and so who frees us to live out a way of justice within itself. Its prophetic vocation, then, is not simply to "speak truth to power," but to live that truth in itself.

The Belhar thus displays unity and justice in a sort of tension, held together by the middle paragraph. The upshot is that neither justice nor unity is to be sacrificed (or made an idol) at the expense of the other. God grants and commands *both* unity and justice, so that there can be no unity without justice, nor justice without unity.

**A Concluding Word**

We, the professorate, offer these reflections at a time when the unity of the church is at issue (which may be a continuing situation in the church this side of eternity), that they might encourage two attitudinal approaches to our life together—one internal to the life of the RCA and one external. Internally, it is to remind ourselves that we wrestle together to achieve a unity that is already given us. Our conversations, then, *begin* from the theological reality that we are one in Christ. This may not change the content of our discussions, or the passion that engages us in our differences. But it does acknowledge that we are sisters and brothers, not by nature, nor by inclination, but in what God has done in Christ for us at the cross.

Externally, it is to commit to engagement in achieving visible unity with other communions, not as a goal, but as a goal that has already been achieved, but which we have failed. The synod does this in its ecumenical activity.[15] Even more, however, cognizance of this reality affects how we hold internal discussions on matters of faith and life as well.

Despite the sad heritage of division among Reformed communions, this understanding nevertheless manifests the deepest convictions of the Reformed heritage: that it is God who acts in sovereign love to achieve God's intentions for God's beloved creation. And God has done so; our response is that of joyful gratitude.

Along with this paper, the professorate brings the following recommendation:

> **R 16-66**
> **To commend this paper to the churches of the Reformed Church in America for reflection and for feedback to the professorate. (ADOPTED)**

The professorate continues to be grateful for its vocation, and invites any input from the Reformed Church in America, including any input that the 2016 General Synod may wish to offer.

## Endnotes

1 Eduardus Van der Borght, ed., *The Unity of the Church: The Theological State of the Art and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 1.

2 See A.J. Rasker, *De Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk vanaf 1795* (Kampen: Kok, 1974), p. 64

3 Strictly speaking, not all the Standards are confessions.

4 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), IV.1.12.

5 What is taking place in the RCA at the present, however, is not disagreement on confession, but on matters that are not confessional, however important the issues might be.

6 Words and phrases set within quotation marks and without citation are from the Belhar Confession.

7 Heidelberg answer 54 reads: "I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith."

8 This is, in fact, a very old notion among Reformed dogmaticians. See, e.g., Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1950), p. 662: "The Church has the character of unity, *in so far as she rests on Christ* as the cause of life in all believers…" (emphasis added).

9 *Neither Calendar nor Clock: Perspectives on the Belhar Confession* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), p. 196.

10 For a full description of the history behind the Belhar, see Naudé, especially chapters 1 and 2.

11 "Confessions as Instruments of (Dis)unity?", in E.A.J.G. Van der Borght, *The Unity of the Church*, pp. 152-153.

12 The one other place in the Standards where unity becomes a theme (beside the reference we have already made to the Heidelberg) is in the Belgic Confession, Article 27, where "we believe and confess one single catholic or universal church…" This church, catholic, "spread and dispersed throughout the entire world," is "still joined and united in heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith." It could sound as though it is our "faith" that constitutes unity, and that can be read as though we are one because we agree on the fundamentals of faith. The nature of faith, though, must be understood in the context of the Belgic itself, where it is denoted only as "the instrument by which we embrace Christ, our righteousness" (Art. 22). Faith is a humble way of being that receives that which is given. It is not an achievement, but itself the work of the Spirit. It may issue in doctrinal agreement; this is not to gainsay that creedal and confessional commitments are foundational. Still, the unity is the work of the triune God.

13 O. Noordmans, *Verzamelde Werken* 2 (Kampen: Kok, 1979), p. 126.

14 The paragraph on reconciliation has a direct relation to the paragraph on justice. Justice emerges from justification, what God judges, that is effected through the atonement.

15 One of the responsibilities of the General Synod is to "maintain a friendly correspondence and cooperative relationship with the highest judicatories or assemblies of other Christian denominations and with interdenominational agencies in all matters pertaining to the extension of the Kingdom of God." (*BCO*, Chapter 1, Part IV, Article 2, Section 5; 2015 edition, pp. 65-66).

## Report of Central College

*"The highest expression of Central College's relationship to the RCA is embodied by our shared commitment to social justice and service to society."* –Mark Putnam, president

Founded in 1853, Central College of Pella, Iowa, cherishes its long-standing, strong, covenantal relationship with the Reformed Church in America. Central is a private, residential, four-year liberal arts college known for its academic rigor and strength in global experiential learning, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), sustainability education, athletics success and tradition, and leadership and service.

The Central academic community is dedicated to educating undergraduate students. Approximately 100 faculty and 300 staff members, full- and part-time, serve more than 1,300 undergraduates, who hail from Iowa, 26 other states, the District of Columbia, and nine countries around the world.

Fundamental to the reach of the church and the gospel of Christ are the ways in which we serve those around us and care for people. Central is active in serving populations both locally and around the globe, while providing meaningful experiences for students. The college is among only 16 U.S. colleges and universities to receive the finalist designation on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. Central students completed 71,850 community service hours in the past year.

**Student Leaders in Service**

*Good Works Team*

Two Central students were named to the national Good Works Team for their volunteer work: Jake Wassenaar and Jordan Saddoris. Central was the only college or university in the country across all divisions to have a student-athlete on both football and basketball honor squads this year, and it's an impressive fifth time overall that Central students have received the honor in the brief history of the program. Other previous Central football honorees include Marc Poortinga (1997), Stephen Barnes (2005), and Cory Nikkel (2011). The Good Works football team was launched in 1997 and the basketball team debuted in 2013.

Wassenaar, a senior from Pella, earned the honor from the Allstate American Football Coaches Association Good Works Team and was recognized at the Allstate Sugar Bowl in New Orleans on New Year's Day. Saddoris, a sophomore from Ankeny, is a member of the elite Allstate National Association of Basketball Coaches Good Works Team. He was honored at the NCAA Division I Final Four at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas, April 2 to 4.

An elementary education major with a 3.92 grade point average, Wassenaar is deeply involved with The Raining Season, an organization supporting orphaned children in Sierra Leone. He's also part of Central's Fellowship of Christian Athletes leadership team, has participated in a pair of two-week service trips to south Texas with Central's campus ministries program, and has helped teach English to Burmese refugees in Des Moines.

Saddoris made his fifth trip to Africa during spring break and has a sixth scheduled this summer. He has spent time in both Chad and Ghana and raises money to directly assist children and families with extreme needs he met there. He is on the board of directors for Acts 2 Collective, a combination of four 501(c)(3) charitable organizations that work in Africa: Jonathan's House, an orphanage in war-torn Central African Republic; AgriHope, which provides instruction to farm sustainably and feed villages, primarily in Zambia; Move Proj-

ect, which drills water wells and builds schools in rural eastern Ghana; and Kingdom Cares International, which cares for orphans, operates a school, and helps meet other needs in the Volta region of Ghana. Acts 2 Collective also recently began operating an adoption agency that facilitates adoptions between the U.S. and Ghana. Saddoris worked with more than 120 of Chad's top athletes and coaches in the village of Sarh for five days of basketball training and brought 600 meals packaged by Meals from the Heartland, a Midwestern anti-hunger organization, to the SOS orphanage in N'Djamena. Local officials were inspired by his actions and donated four acres of land with the request that Kingdom Hoops bring a Christian sports facility to the region.

*Student-led Initiatives*

Central student-athletes organize many service activities. Student-athletes supported the Young Women's Resource Center during NCAA Division III week by collecting more than 500 toiletry items and delivering them to the Des Moines location, which serves young women ages 10 to 21 in various capacities. In the fall, the college collaborated with several community partners to host Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week on campus. Activities included an Oxfam Hunger Banquet, a hunger dialogue, and an opportunity to explore homelessness through a student-led initiative that included a homeless camp at the center of campus by the pond. Additionally, students hosted a canned food drive where nonperishable foods were collected and distributed to local food shelters.

Two blood drives were organized in collaboration with LifeServe Blood Center in 2015. In total, 124 donors, including 44 first-time donors, attended the two events held on campus, impacting 312 hospital patients.

Central students are committed to social justice causes and also partner with Many Hands for Haiti for a mission trip each May. The students returned to Grace Covenant Ministries (formerly Jackson County Ministries) in December 2015 with a trailer full of Christmas joy for families in need. Students plan and lead activities for Angel Tree children in the Des Moines area, hosted at Meredith Drive Reformed Church and Bethany Reformed Church. Central students also lead worship and small groups, share their musical talents, and teach Sunday school at many local churches in Pella, including First Reformed, Second Reformed, Third Reformed, Trinity Reformed, and Heartland Reformed, among others.

*Discern*

For the second year in a row, Central chaplain Joe Brummel led a group of seven students through the Discern program, a cooperative program with Western Theological Seminary. This leadership training group met weekly for readings, Bible study, self-reflection, and retreat planning, and all were encouraged to find preaching opportunities.

*Service-learning*

Central provides comprehensive coordination and travel support for course-based service-learning, which combines meaningful community service with academic structure and guided reflection to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. This year, 456 students participated in service-learning; 46 courses included a service component, including Religion and Sustainability and Spirituality in the Christian Tradition; and students served alongside 82 community partners, 26 of which explicitly state expression of faith as part of their mission or affiliations, such as the Christian Opportunity Center, The Well, Pella Christian Grade School, Wesley Services, and many more.

*Fair Trade Awareness Week*

For many service-learning and awareness activities, students partner with The Work of Our Hands, a fair trade store established by the Central College Faculty Benevolent Society.

*Environmental Stewardship Projects*

On several occasions Central has sponsored or co-sponsored events related to caring for the natural environment. For example, during Welcome Week, first-year students were invited to undertake a large-scale lakeside cleanup at nearby Lake Red Rock.

*Days for Girls*

Central partners with First Unitarian Church of Des Moines to host sewing projects for the international organization Days for Girls to provide feminine hygiene products to girls and women in developing countries.

*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service*

Along with a convocation and other MLK Day activities, the college sponsored a meal-packaging event on campus through which 7,000 meals were assembled and distributed to food pantries and veterans' organizations. The college reached out to the Christian Opportunity Center to invite those they serve to participate in the project. Additionally, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack participated in the social justice service event.

*All-campus Service Day*

Central Service Day annually brings students, faculty, and staff together on projects that address community-identified needs.

*Volunteer Engagement*

Upon the recommendation of Earl James, RCA coordinator of congregational Missional Mosaic and advocacy, Central partnered with the World Christian Federation to promote leadership and camp opportunities to students. Luciano Kovacs, North American regional secretary for the World Student Christian Federation, represented the organization. On the same day, Stephanie Soderstrom, RCA associate coordinator for volunteer engagement, was on campus to help students connect with RCA and other faith-based service initiatives.

*Financial Aid*

Significant institutional funds are dedicated to community service scholarships. Awards are based on prospective students' past community engagement and their expression of future plans for engagement in and after college. The college also recognizes the importance of welcoming students who have national service experience. The Segal Education Award is matched for incoming students, and current students have the opportunity to earn an education award as part of the AmeriCorps State program, the Iowa College AmeriCorps Program (ICAP).

*Outreach to Underserved School-based Populations*

Central invites high school students served by community partners for college visits that include exposure to faculty and current students. An example of Central's holistic community partnership model is its relationship with Findley Elementary School, a 100 percent

free- and reduced-lunch school in northeast Des Moines. Findley, a Dreamer Academy, received a major grant from the I Have a Dream Foundation to provide wraparound services to support students and their families. Central adopted the third graders, who have visited campus to engage in a variety of fun academic endeavors including writing, math, and science games; creativity activities; and tulip planting. College staff, including president Mark Putnam, visit the school and participate with the third graders and other students and teachers.

For 50 years, Central also has hosted Upward Bound, one of seven TRIO programs offered through grants from the U.S. Department of Education and established by the Higher Education Act of 1965. A premiere example of Central's longstanding commitment to community engagement and academic excellence, Upward Bound works with disadvantaged high school students in Des Moines and other south central Iowa communities to encourage college access and completion. Many students will be the first members of their families to earn college degrees and will help break the cycle of poverty as brothers, sisters, cousins, and sometimes even parents follow suit. In 50 years, Central College Upward Bound has worked with more than 2,000 high school students and provided summer employment and leadership development opportunities to hundreds of Central students. Today, in addition to hosting one of the oldest Upward Bound programs in the nation, Central boasts one of the largest programs, serving 130 students each year.

**Conclusion**

Central teaches future leaders to leave campus empowered to make an impact in this world. The entire academic community is grateful for the prayers, gifts, and support of the individual churches of the RCA, all of which are vital to the heart and mission of Central.

## Report of Hope College

The mission of Hope College is to educate students for lives of leadership and service in a global society through academic and cocurricular programs of recognized excellence in the liberal arts and in the context of the historic Christian faith. We are rooted in our founding with the Reformed Church in America and share this update in gratitude for our shared history and in anticipation of our future.

The Hope College campus is beautifully maintained and proudly boasts hundreds of trees and green areas encompassing 165 acres. It is intertwined with the city of Holland such that one cannot visit one without visiting the other. The city of Holland has been labeled an "All-American College Town" and ranks second in the nation for well-being by Gallup and Healthways. It was recently named the safest mid-sized city in America in a study by State Farm. The beautiful beaches of Lake Michigan are nearby, and the area is filled with exciting opportunities for outdoor life. Downtown Holland, literally steps from the Hope College campus, is a charming area of retail shops, coffee houses, and restaurants.

**The Sesquicentennial Year**

Hope College celebrated its sesquicentennial during the 2015-2016 academic year. This anniversary milestone of our college charter provided multiple opportunities to reflect the strength and growth of the preceding 150 years and our vision and mission to serve students for decades to come. Highlighted events included the dedication and opening of the Kruizenga Art Museum and the Jack H. Miller Center for Musical Arts, as well as the groundbreaking for the Jim and Martie Bultman Student Center. These events fit the occasion perfectly—at once a celebration of the past and a commitment to the future. The sesquicentennial theme continued through several traditional and annual events as well as new events like the Day of Service, where students and alumni around the world participated in community service to demonstrate the impact members of the Hope community make globally. While events have provided multiple opportunities to celebrate the college's anniversary, two books that will provide lasting chronicles of the Hope story have also been developed this year; one is a comprehensive history of the college and the second is a history of Hope athletics.

It was a big year for Hope milestones and anniversaries in general. The arch that tops the pillars in front of Graves Hall was installed 75 years ago, and the landmark anchor on the lawn in front of Graves was dedicated 50 years ago. We hosted the 50th annual Community Day event to bring together members of the college and greater Holland area, and we presented the 75th production of Christmas Vespers. We marked the 40th anniversary of the Washington Honors Semester program, and we celebrated 50 years of partnership with Meiji Gakuin University of Japan, with commemoration events in Tokyo and at Hope. This coming summer will be the 60th anniversary of the Vienna Summer School.

**Enrollment, Financial Strength, and Academic Success**

Hope College welcomed approximately 800 students in the class of 2019 to the college last fall. We had a total of 3,407 students overall this academic year—the second consecutive year our enrollment topped 3,400—with students hailing from 41 states and 46 countries. We are pleased that our alumni continue to demonstrate the value they place on a Hope education by encouraging family members to attend and be a part of the Hope experience. Within our student body this academic year, 422 students—including 103 first-year students—had generational connections to the college. Hope's four-year graduation rate (69 percent) is second highest of all Michigan colleges and universities and in the top 10

percent nationally. Within six months of graduation, 94 percent of the class of 2015 were in the workforce or graduate school; 90 percent of those in graduate school were accepted at one of their top two preferred institutions. Hope provides several career networking opportunities for students and recent graduates to connect with professionals in their fields. As always, we take seriously our responsibility to use our resources wisely. Of the nation's top liberal arts colleges, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Hope College among the leaders in operating efficiency in 2015.

***A Greater Hope* Comprehensive Campaign Conclusion**

The largest and most successful fundraising effort in the college's history, the *A Greater Hope* comprehensive campaign, concluded with transformational changes to the college—in endowment, bricks and mortar, and annual support. The lasting difference can be seen, but more importantly it is also being felt, not only in the day-to-day learning that takes place both on campus and beyond, but also through the lives of those who are shaped—and in turn shape others—for the better. Campaign accomplishments include ten major capital projects, 182 newly endowed scholarships, ten newly endowed professor and directorships, and more than $15 million for faculty-student collaborative research. Through the generosity and dedication of more than 21,300 donors, the campaign raised more than $203 million, exceeding the original goal of $175 million, to support Hope students today and for generations to come.

**"Leading Institution" in Study Abroad**

Hope was in the top 40 nationwide among baccalaureate colleges for the number of students who studied abroad during the 2013-14 school year, according to a report released in November by the Institute of International Education (IIE). The 2015 "Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange" ranked Hope 36th in the country among four-year institutions, with 309 students having studied outside of the United States. Hope students have access to more than 200 off-campus study programs in virtually every part of the globe. Options include semester- and year-long study, as well as shorter-term May Term, June Term, and summer school programs.

**David Brooks Featured at Presidential Colloquium**

Hope College hosted *New York Times* columnist and best-selling author David Brooks for the third Presidential Colloquium series. The Presidential Colloquium is a semi-annual series that brings prominent, internationally known thinkers to Hope to share their insights on the academy, leadership, and global civic engagement. Brooks addressed the theme "The Value and Relevance of a Faith-Based Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century" and received an honorary degree (Doctor of Humane Letters) at a sold-out and livestreamed event held in September 2015 in Dimnent Memorial Chapel.

Like many first-time visitors to Hope, David Brooks was invited to experience a weekday chapel service and came away inspired. "The students just crammed this place," marveled Brooks, who is also a commentator for PBS *Newshour* and NPR's *All Things Considered*. "I just love the spirit of the place, the spiritual intensity. The music was good, and then later we got to meet the chaplains and they were just so warm. I was really struck by how the faculty and the administration think about the entire life, not just the brain."

In recognition of Hope's sesquicentennial year and the ever-changing landscape of higher education in the future, the college wanted to feature our steadfast belief that the American liberal arts model is a great way to educate students, and is perhaps more relevant today

than it has ever been. A college with a Christian mission has the additional opportunity to engage students in complex questions of faith to prepare them for an increasingly complex global society.

To underscore that belief, the colloquium included an afternoon panel discussion with President Knapp and the presidents of three other faith-rooted liberal arts institutions: Mary Dana Hinton of the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota; Robin Baker of George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon; and Michael Le Roy of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Athletic Highlights**

As of the writing of this report, Hope is in the midst of another successful athletic season. Our dual commitment to excellence in athletics and academics has provided superior opportunities for our students to compete and excel in both arenas with coaches who are as committed to the classroom as they are to the competition. A few accomplishments to report are MIAA championships in men's and women's golf and men's and women's basketball, and NCAA Tournament qualifications for those teams as well as for women's volleyball. Hope also has MIAA champion athletes in diving. Members of the women's cross country team were Great Lakes champions and qualified for the NCAA championships. Our students were recognized with 12 All-MIAA First Team athletes from seven out of eight fall sports.

**Conclusion**

The college community is thankful that Hope is thriving. From championships in multiple sports, to an abundance of cocurricular activities, to distinctive accomplishments in the classroom, to a chapel filled to near capacity four times a week, Hope students are experiencing college life at its best.

## Report of Northwestern College

**Mission**

Northwestern College is a Christian academic community engaging students in courageous and faithful learning and living that empowers them to follow Christ and pursue God's redeeming work in the world.

**Accolades and National Rankings**

Northwestern continues to score high on national college rankings:

- Northwestern College has moved up to a tie for fifth place among 96 Midwestern regional colleges in *U.S. News & World Report*'s 2016 Best Colleges guidebook and is the highest ranked Iowa college in its category. This is the ninth year in a row for Northwestern to be in the top 10 of its category.
- Northwestern has been ranked seventh among the nation's top baccalaureate colleges by *Washington Monthly*. The magazine's rankings are based on how well the schools contribute to the public good in the areas of social mobility, civic engagement, and service. Northwestern has been ranked in the top 10 nationally since the magazine began ranking baccalaureate colleges in 2010. Northwestern has also been the highest-ranked Iowa college in any category each year.
- Northwestern is ranked as one of the 25 best private colleges for merit aid and is included in a select group of best-value institutions in *Money* magazine's college rankings for 2015-2016. The rankings are based on multiple factors, such as graduation rates, early alumni earnings, and affordability—including net price of a degree and the amount of loans taken out by students and parents.
- Northwestern College is ranked as the safest college in Iowa by www.niche.com. The ranking, which includes both public and private four-year colleges and universities across the state, is based on the cumulative evaluation of key factors, including campus crime rate, local crime rate, and student reviews.
- Northwestern is ranked 33rd in Christian Universities Online's 2016 ranking of the 50 most beautiful Christian colleges and universities. The ranking is based on the continuity of campus, architectural style, signature buildings, and natural setting.

**Northwestern Awarded Lilly Grant for High School Theology Institute**

Northwestern College has been awarded a $440,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to create "Living Your Faith," a summer institute for high school students. The institute is part of the Endowment's High School Youth Theology Institutes initiative, which seeks to encourage young people to explore their religious beliefs and their concerns about contemporary challenges by studying theology and examining how faith calls them to lives of service. With funding from the grant, Northwestern will hire a half-time director and offer the first institute in the summer of 2017.

According to Dr. James Mead, professor of religion at Northwestern and author of the grant proposal, "Living Your Faith" will be a one-week summer program for rising high school juniors and seniors that will include ongoing mentoring and ministry during the following academic year. While on campus, the high school students will study Scripture and theology through lectures, discussions, and writing assignments led by the college's religion faculty. They will also participate in small groups facilitated by Northwestern students who are religion majors or campus ministry leaders.

**Master of Education Online Program Starts Strong and Adds Graduate Certificate**

In its first year, the Northwestern College Master of Education program has enrolled 90 students. The M.Ed. degree includes three tracks: early childhood, master teacher, and teacher leadership.

Northwestern College Graduate School and Adult Learning has added a 12-credit graduate certificate in teacher leadership, designed for educators who already have a master's degree or who want specialized, graduate-level training. The certificate will help teachers to be positioned for promotion to nonadministrative or district-level roles such as instructional coach or peer mentor.

**Three New Majors**

Northwestern is offering three new undergraduate majors this year: biochemistry; genetics, molecular biology, and cellular biology; and worship arts.

The biochemistry major is designed for students interested in research and intending to either enroll in graduate school or pursue a career in the field after graduating from Northwestern. "The biochemistry industry in Iowa is big and getting bigger with all of the genetic research being done, so this will serve students well who are interested in that line of work," says David Arnett, professor of chemistry.

Students majoring in genetics, molecular biology, and cellular biology (GMBCB) will be prepared for careers in research or genetic counseling or non-medical graduate programs. The major includes many courses taken by biology and health professions majors, but students in the GMBCB track will take fewer healthcare-related classes and instead be required to complete a biology department–approved research experience or internship.

Worship arts is an interdisciplinary major that will prepare students for a future career in worship design and leadership. Core and elective requirements include courses in religion, theatre, English, music, art, and communications. Drew Schmidt, assistant professor of theatre, says the program exists to serve the local church, rooted in a firm foundation of theology. "We're not just making performers; we're making disciples," he says. "We want to develop leaders of all the arts to help the church's worship."

**Juffer Athletic Fieldhouse Opens**

Northwestern's new Juffer Athletic Fieldhouse was dedicated in October. Named for Ron and Peg Juffer of Orange City, the 33,000-square-foot facility provides an indoor practice arena for baseball, softball, football, soccer, and golf, as well as strength and conditioning facilities for all student-athletes.

Ron Juffer is a Northwestern alumnus who, during his 47-year career at the college, served as a professor in the education department and coached baseball for 17 years and men's basketball for two. His wife, Peg, was an elementary school librarian who taught education courses at the college on a part-time basis, mentored students, and supervised student teachers.

The Juffer Athletic Fieldhouse includes the 6,300-square-foot Korver Athletic Performance Center with state-of-the-art Sorinex weight equipment; an area for dynamic stretching, speed work, and resistance training; a reinforced throw wall for use of weighted medicine balls; and a wall-mounted large-screen TV for teaching athletes and kinesiology students

proper technique. Use of the center is supervised by certified strength and conditioning coaches.

The Juffer Fieldhouse also contains a 3,600-square-foot golf practice room with a practice putting green featuring an undulating surface and multiple holes; a straight-line putting station; a variety of turfs for practicing chip shots to the green; and four hitting stations—including one dedicated for swing analysis through the use of a launch monitor that gauges ball speed, spin, and trajectory.

The largest part of the building, the 20,000-square-foot Dave and Anita Bomgaars Family Field, is covered in FieldTurf and marked with a 40-yard football field, an indoor soccer field, and foul lines for baseball and softball. It is enclosed with netting for baseball and softball hitting and fielding, as well as equipped with pitching mounds, backstops, and batting cages.

**A cappella Choir Tours Taiwan over Spring Break**

Northwestern College's A cappella Choir toured Taiwan during spring break. The ensemble performed at a variety of venues, including public concerts, private events, church worship services, middle schools, high schools, universities, and hospitals. They partnered with the National Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, which has many existing outreaches and established relationships in the area.

The tour performed in the capital city of Taipei as well as in the eastern area of Hualien. They presented selections of sacred music, spirituals and gospel, and virtuosic pieces, showcasing a lot of favorite, high-quality American music. They also performed some Taiwanese pieces. A highlight included rehearsing and singing with a local children's choir.

**Higher Learning Commission Reaccreditation Affirmation**

Northwestern is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Every ten years, colleges and universities must submit a comprehensive accreditation self-study that demonstrates that the institution has met the accrediting body's standards of core components. A work group has compiled Northwestern's self-study report over the past two years, and a team from HLC was on campus reviewing that work in November. Northwestern successfully met all of the criteria for continuing accreditation with no areas of concern. The HLC review process was a complete success. The next review is slated for 2025–2026.

## CLOSING

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Daniel Gillett, General Synod vice president and pastor at First Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, was elected General Synod president. Lee DeYoung, elder delegate from the Classis of Great Lakes City, was elected General Synod vice president.

## CLOSE OF GENERAL SYNOD

## WORSHIP SERVICE AND ADJOURNMENT

The closing worship service was held at the Ozinga Chapel Auditorium and began at 10:30 a.m. on June 14, 2016. The service was led by Evan Vermeer, president, and a worship team including Jon De Groot, Ian Else, Juliana Else, Nancy Vermeer, and Dave Wright. The Word was preached by Anthony Vis. An offering was received in support of Setshabelo Family and Christian Services in Botshabelo, South Africa. Russell Gasero, RCA archivist, and James Brumm, corresponding delegate from and moderator of the Commission on History, read the necrology report. The sacrament of communion was celebrated, with Thomas De Vries and Daniel Gillett (general secretary and president-elect) serving as co-celebrants. Daniel Gillett and Lee DeYoung were installed as General Synod president and vice president, respectively. Closing prayer was offered by Daniel Gillett.

The closing worship service concluded at 11:28 a.m. Thus, the 210th General Synod of the Reformed Church in America adjourned at 11:28 a.m. on Tuesday, June 14, 2016.

# STATISTICAL REPORTS OF THE CLASSES

The statistics given in the statistical tables are for the calendar year ending December 31, 2015, unless otherwise indicated. Pastors are listed as of the latest reports submitted by the classis stated clerks.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Adh—Adherents
AP—Associate Pastor
Assmnts—Assessments (General Synod, Regional Synod, Classis)
Average Worship Attend—Average Worship Attendance
Bapt—Baptisms
Bapt Mbrs—Baptized Members
Cert—Received on Certificate
Conf—Received on Confession
Conf Mbrs—Confessing Members
Congr Purpose—Congregational Purposes
CP—Commissioned Pastor
Decd—Deceased
DBA—Doing Business As
Houshld—Church Households
Inact Mbrs—Inactive Members
LP—Lay Pastor
Mbrs—Members
M/C—Minister under Contract or Assistant Pastor under Contract
No Liv Don—income from other than living donors
Offerings—income from regular or weekly offerings
Other—Other Removals from Roll
Other Contrib—Contributions for non-RCA Programs and Institutions
PC—Planting Chaplain
PE—Preaching Elder
PM—Planting Minister
Programs—income from property, programs, or associations
RCA Assem—income from RCA assemblies or institutions
RCA Contrib—Contributions for RCA Programs and Institutions
RET M/C—Retired Minister under Contract
SC—Student under Contract
SP—Senior Pastor
Spec Offering—income from special offerings
Total Mbrs—Total Membership
Trans—Transferred Out

New church starts are represented in these tables only if they have filed a denominational plan. For church plants where data is incomplete, the plant either has not started meeting yet or did not complete a consistorial report form.

## SYMBOLS

\# Financial statistics printed from a previous year.
* Membership statistics printed from a previous year.
** Union or federated church (see listing below).

See Supplement A (page 449) for changes in classis or church status or name.

See Supplement D in the *General Synod Directory* for a list of ministers of other denominations, preaching elders, commissioned pastors, and student contracts serving RCA churches.

## LIST OF UNION AND FEDERATED CHURCHES

cc (15) Shafter, New Hope Comm
A union church with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

sw (6) Los Alamos, United
A federated church with the American Baptist Church USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Moravian Church, United Church of Christ, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It maintains separate membership rolls from which statistics are obtained.

hol (7) Holland, Grace Comm/Intersection
A federated church with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. It maintains separate membership rolls from which statistics are obtained.

(9) Holland, Maple Avenue Ministries
A union church with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

(12) Holland, Pillar
A union church with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

swm (1) Battle Creek, Covenant Hope
A union church with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

dak (17) Harrison, Community
A union church with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

gpal (1) Bayonne, Bergen Point Comm (revised 8/2011)
A federated church with the American Baptist Church USA and the United Methodist Church. Statistics given are one-third of actual totals.

(2) Bayonne, First Federated
A union church with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It maintains separate membership rolls from which statistics are obtained.

(22) Hoboken, Community
A federated church with the United Methodist Church. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

(23) Jersey City, Old Bergen
A union church with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

bkln (1) Brooklyn, Bethel
A union church with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It maintains separate membership rolls from which statistics are obtained.

(6) Brooklyn, Gravesend
A union church with the Advent Lutheran Church. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

m-h (14) Millbrook, Lyall Memorial
A federated church with the United Methodist Church and the Quaker Church. It maintains separate membership rolls from which statistics are obtained.

ny (7) Manhattan, Chinese Comm
A union church with the United Church of Christ. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

(11) Manhattan, Japanese American United
A federated church with the United Methodist Church. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

orng (6) Kerhonkson, Federated
A federated church with the United Methodist Church. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

(20) Lords Valley, Hemlock Farms
A federated church with the Evangelical Covenant Church. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

que (11) Flushing, Bowne Street Comm
A union church with the United Church of Christ. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

r-w (11) Spring Valley, United
A union church with the United Church of Christ. Statistics given are one-half of actual totals.

# STATISTICAL REPORTS OF THE CLASSES

Alphabetically by classis:


| Classis | Abbreviation | Page |
|---|---|---|
| Albany | alb | 346 |
| British Columbia | bc | 358 |
| Brooklyn | bkln | 432 |
| California | cal | 364 |
| Canadian Prairies | canp | 360 |
| Cascades | cas | 368 |
| Central California | cc | 370 |
| Central Iowa | ci | 398 |
| Central Plains | cp | 400 |
| Chicago | chi | 412 |
| City | city | 372 |
| Columbia-Greene | c-g | 348 |
| Dakota | dak | 402 |
| Delaware-Raritan | d-r | 422 |
| East Sioux | es | 404 |
| Greater Palisades | gpal | 424 |
| Great Lakes City | glc | 378 |
| Holland | hol | 382 |
| Illiana-Florida | i-f | 414 |
| Illinois | ill | 418 |
| Mid-Hudson | m-h | 434 |
| Minnesota | minn | 406 |
| Montgomery | mont | 350 |
| Muskegon | musk | 386 |
| Nassau-Suffolk | n-s | 436 |
| New Brunswick | nb | 428 |
| New York | ny | 438 |
| North Grand Rapids | ngr | 388 |
| Northern Michigan | nmi | 390 |
| Ontario | ont | 362 |
| Orange | orng | 440 |
| Passaic Valley | pasv | 430 |
| Pleasant Prairie | pp | 408 |
| Queens | que | 442 |
| Rochester | roch | 352 |
| Rockland-Westchester | r-w | 444 |
| Rocky Mountains | rm | 374 |
| Schenectady | scny | 354 |
| Schoharie | scho | 356 |
| Southwest | sw | 376 |
| Southwest Michigan | swm | 392 |
| West Sioux | ws | 410 |
| Wisconsin | wis | 420 |
| Zeeland | zee | 394 |


Alphabetically by regional synod/classis:


| Regional synod/classis | Abbreviation | Page |
|---|---|---|
| ALBANY | | |
| Albany | alb | 346 |
| Columbia-Greene | c-g | 348 |
| Montgomery | mont | 350 |
| Rochester | roch | 352 |
| Schenectady | scny | 354 |
| Schoharie | scho | 356 |
| CANADA | | |
| British Columbia | bc | 358 |
| Canadian Prairies | canp | 360 |
| Ontario | ont | 362 |
| THE FAR WEST | | |
| California | cal | 364 |
| Cascades | cas | 368 |
| Central California | cc | 370 |
| City | city | 372 |
| Rocky Mountains | rm | 374 |
| Southwest | sw | 376 |
| THE GREAT LAKES | | |
| Great Lakes City | glc | 378 |
| Holland | hol | 382 |
| Muskegon | musk | 386 |
| North Grand Rapids | ngr | 388 |
| Northern Michigan | nmi | 390 |
| Southwest Michigan | swm | 392 |
| Zeeland | zee | 394 |
| THE HEARTLAND | | |
| Central Iowa | ci | 398 |
| Central Plains | cp | 400 |
| Dakota | dak | 402 |
| East Sioux | es | 404 |
| Minnesota | minn | 406 |
| Pleasant Prairie | pp | 408 |
| West Sioux | ws | 410 |
| MID-AMERICA | | |
| Chicago | chi | 412 |
| Illiana-Florida | i-f | 414 |
| Illinois | ill | 418 |
| Wisconsin | wis | 420 |
| THE MID-ATLANTICS | | |
| Delaware-Raritan | d-r | 422 |
| Greater Palisades | gpal | 424 |
| New Brunswick | nb | 428 |
| Passaic Valley | pasv | 430 |
| NEW YORK | | |
| Brooklyn | bkln | 432 |
| Mid-Hudson | m-h | 434 |
| Nassau-Suffolk | n-s | 436 |
| New York | ny | 438 |
| Orange | orng | 440 |
| Queens | que | 442 |
| Rockland-Westchester | r-w | 444 |

Summary of organized churches by regional synods ..... 446
Grand totals ..... 447
Summary of new church starts by regional synods ..... 448

# 2015 STATISTICAL TABLES

## Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF ALBANY

Stated clerk: Nancy Landrigan, 29 Elwood Rd, Delmar, NY 12054-2403, 518-439-5400
Treasurer: Robert Goodman, 28 Mountainview Ave, Albany, NY 12208-1015, 518-482-0649

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Albany, Bethany | Funderburke, Peggy | 48 | 60 | - | - | 60 | 18 | 45 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 635 | 43,871 | - | - | 123,804 | 168,310 | 6,378 | 3,500 | 6,753 | 16,631 | 151,679 |
| 2 Albany, First | Cox, Susan<br>Paarlberg, John | 131 | 190 | 172 | 49 | 411 | 22 | 99 | 10 | 2 | - | 10 | - | 7 | - | 312,000 | - | - | 232,159 | 190,032 | 734,191 | 17,495 | 25,234 | 56,777 | 99,506 | 634,685 |
| 3 Albany, Third | Behan, Rick | 35 | 41 | 3 | 2 | 46 | 11 | 34 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | - | 99,000 | 6,200 | - | 13,572 | 54,435 | 173,207 | 4,374 | 2,400 | 10,630 | 17,404 | 155,803 |
| 4 Castleton, Emmanuel | Gieser, Dirk | 79 | 118 | 152 | 33 | 303 | 32 | 74 | 7 | - | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | - | 24,626 | 43,626 | - | 30,348 | 149,638 | 248,238 | 11,026 | 10,478 | 8,502 | 30,006 | 218,232 |
| 5 Clarksville, Community | Bogerd, Eric | 58 | 67 | 37 | - | 104 | 29 | 36 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 26 | 12,180 | - | 8,200 | 67,568 | 87,974 | 6,561 | 850 | 960 | 8,371 | 79,603 |
| 6 Colonie, Community | Cornwell, Bruce | 67 | 88 | 34 | 22 | 144 | 22 | 67 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 15,540 | 3,900 | - | 323,324 | 194,960 | 537,724 | 9,932 | 902 | 2,677 | 13,511 | 524,213 |
| 7 Coxsackie, Second | Lewis, Carolyn | 38 | 65 | 75 | 17 | 157 | 57 | 40 | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | - | 78,928 | - | - | 1,493 | 44,101 | 124,522 | 6,195 | 585 | 7,228 | 14,008 | 110,514 |
| 8 Delmar | Vacant 06/15 | 188 | 284 | 351 | 105 | 740 | 163 | 173 | 12 | 1 | - | 4 | - | 8 | - | 16,675 | - | - | 54,582 | 469,598 | 540,855 | 26,243 | 27,030 | 26,197 | 79,470 | 461,385 |
| 9 Delmar, Unionville | Kendall, Thomas | 46 | 60 | 13 | 20 | 93 | 23 | 45 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 13,331 | 1,807 | - | 5,693 | 96,804 | 117,635 | 5,650 | 9,219 | 4,375 | 19,244 | 98,391 |
| 10 East Berne, Second | Van Heest, Timothy | 13 | 18 | 27 | 14 | 59 | 14 | 17 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 300 | - | 5,350 | 20,800 | 26,450 | 1,550 | 943 | 1,588 | 4,081 | 22,369 |
| 11 East Greenbush, Greenbush | Jones, David | 104 | 155 | 24 | 20 | 199 | 43 | 81 | 12 | - | - | 5 | 16 | 1 | - | 541 | 61,000 | - | 96,137 | 191,084 | 348,762 | 15,256 | 8,400 | 10,004 | 33,660 | 315,102 |
| 12 Feura Bush, Jerusalem | Hamm, Norman | 62 | 34 | 63 | 20 | 117 | 4 | 30 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 14,337 | - | - | 20,678 | 33,353 | 68,368 | 4,192 | 1,150 | 1,000 | 6,342 | 62,026 |
| 13 Feura Bush, Onesquethaw | Bogerd, Eric | 39 | 53 | - | 7 | 60 | 4 | 46 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 400 | - | - | - | 61,393 | 61,793 | 4,920 | 235 | 11,691 | 16,846 | 44,947 |
| 14 Glenmont, Community | Westman, Betsy | 20 | 24 | 13 | 5 | 42 | 6 | 25 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 2,000 | 20,073 | 15,000 | 17,955 | 21,785 | 76,813 | 3,371 | 660 | 1,600 | 5,631 | 71,182 |
| 15 Knox | Van Heest, Timothy | 41 | 53 | 20 | 16 | 89 | 17 | 42 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,655 | 5,184 | - | 17,194 | 75,238 | 99,271 | 2,685 | 26 | 1,011 | 3,722 | 95,549 |
| 16 New Baltimore | Vacant 11/15 | 21 | 30 | 10 | 8 | 48 | 11 | 19 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 43,493 | 50 | 2,498 | 4,632 | 34,583 | 85,256 | 3,642 | 5,976 | 1,945 | 11,563 | 73,693 |
| 17 Rensselaer, Blooming Grove | Brumm, James | 87 | 78 | 181 | 91 | 350 | 38 | 50 | - | - | - | 5 | - | 2 | - | 34 | 25,900 | 500 | 27,825 | 110,946 | 165,205 | 8,565 | 2,660 | 2,530 | 13,755 | 151,450 |
| 18 Selkirk, First Bethlehem | Ratmeyer, Harlan | 65 | 113 | 46 | - | 159 | 14 | 80 | 9 | - | - | 2 | - | 7 | - | 47,740 | 20,855 | - | 2,291 | 114,722 | 185,608 | 10,388 | 4,315 | 4,295 | 18,998 | 166,610 |
| 19 Westerlo | Vacant 04/09 | 19 | 32 | 16 | - | 48 | 3 | 30 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 350 | - | - | 26,100 | 40,600 | 67,050 | 2,700 | 780 | 12,250 | 15,730 | 51,320 |
| 20 Wynantskill, First | Alpaugh, Dawn May | 89 | 132 | 2 | 16 | 150 | 9 | 94 | 14 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 4,344 | 1,087 | 5,000 | 15,823 | 188,866 | 215,120 | 10,114 | 9,413 | 12,847 | 32,374 | 182,746 |
| | Organized Church Total | 1,250 | 1,695 | 1,239 | 445 | 3,379 | 540 | 1,127 | 71 | 9 | 4 | 49 | 24 | 32 | - | 675,655 | 246,033 | 22,998 | 903,356 | 2,284,310 | 4,132,352 | 161,237 | 114,756 | 184,860 | 460,853 | 3,671,499 |

**General Synod professor**
Janssen, Allan
Mast, Gregg

**Retired**
Baird, Charlene
Blahut, Eric
Cooper, David
De Beer, Leonard
Elswick, Albert
Favale, Joseph
Guinta, Frank
Hiemstra, Carl
Kendall, Thomas
Le Fevre, Benjamin
Loux, Joseph
Magee, John
Nuovo, Victor
Pruiksma, Richard
Stockhoff, Ronald
Suess, LeRoy
Tellier, Norman
Van Oort, Glenn
Van Oort, Sylvester
Westhuis, W. Ross
Wilbur, William

**Specialized ministry**
Brower, David
Krutz, Roger
Morgan, Barbara
Norton-Levering, Abigail

## Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF COLUMBIA-GREENE

Stated clerk: Gary De Witt, PO Box 473, Wallkill, NY 12589-0473, 845-895-2194
Treasurer: Linda Guntert, 521 Oak Hill Rd, Hudson, NY 12534-3705, 518-672-7604

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Athens, First | Vacant 09/15 | 31 | 42 | 65 | - | 107 | 15 | 30 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 11,502 | 1,185 | - | 2,477 | 33,770 | 48,934 | 4,312 | 1,765 | - | 6,077 | 42,857 |
| 2 | Catskill, First | Christian-Tipple, Joanna | 16 | 19 | 19 | 9 | 47 | 6 | 12 | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | - | 25,580 | 4,377 | - | 23,575 | 22,114 | 75,646 | 1,760 | 2,700 | 1,669 | 6,129 | 69,517 |
| 3 | Catskill, Kiskatom | Dorland, Nicholas | 36 | 43 | 85 | 33 | 161 | 17 | 40 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 4,373 | - | 9,263 | 58,122 | 71,758 | 4,577 | 590 | 2,739 | 7,906 | 63,852 |
| 4 | Chatham, First | Vacant 07/14 | 21 | 27 | 8 | - | 35 | 10 | 22 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 2,000 | - | - | 21,100 | 38,000 | 61,100 | 2,600 | - | 600 | 3,200 | 57,900 |
| 5 | Claverack, Dutch | Miles, Linda | 114 | 139 | 36 | 7 | 182 | 44 | 77 | 5 | - | - | 4 | - | 1 | - | 16,043 | 1,841 | - | 16,420 | 128,228 | 162,532 | 11,090 | 12,924 | 5,036 | 29,050 | 133,482 |
| 6 | Copake, West Copake | Seibert, Warren | 41 | 46 | 16 | 5 | 67 | 30 | 64 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 6 | 1 | - | 126 | 3,200 | - | - | 89,766 | 93,092 | 4,401 | - | 4,800 | 9,201 | 83,891 |
| 7 | Coxsackie, First | Vacant 06/13 | 36 | 41 | 71 | 1 | 113 | 15 | 45 | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 5,714 | 12,564 | - | 5,991 | 96,170 | 120,439 | 4,753 | 1,250 | 7,650 | 13,653 | 106,786 |
| 8 | Germantown | Tipple, David | 25 | 35 | 5 | 28 | 68 | 8 | 33 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | 36,135 | 2,000 | - | 4,181 | 46,203 | 88,519 | 3,257 | 5,100 | - | 8,357 | 80,162 |
| 9 | Germantown, Livingston Memorial | DeJager, Derek | 18 | 21 | 10 | 1 | 32 | 6 | 29 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 863 | 3,775 | 97 | 13,619 | 34,231 | 52,585 | 1,848 | 2,397 | 2,239 | 6,484 | 46,101 |
| 10 | Ghent | McClure-Long, Nancy | 33 | 49 | 57 | - | 106 | 23 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3,050 | 113,651 | 116,701 | 5,193 | 522 | 7,201 | 12,916 | 103,785 |
| 11 | Hudson, First | Mueller, Norman | 14 | 18 | 1 | - | 19 | 2 | 20 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 9,390 | - | 500 | 44,240 | 25,529 | 79,659 | 1,408 | 540 | 500 | 2,448 | 77,211 |
| 12 | Hudson, Mt Pleasant | Tipple, David | 23 | 30 | 2 | 17 | 49 | 5 | 26 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 18 | 1 | - | 536 | - | - | 6,550 | 41,990 | 49,076 | 3,697 | 3,470 | 285 | 7,452 | 41,624 |
| 13 | Kinderhook | Convis, Paige<br>Visser, Rudolph | 58 | 60 | 26 | 2 | 88 | 45 | 82 | 2 | - | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 44,318 | 2,500 | 12,247 | 161,023 | 220,088 | 5,728 | 1,000 | 9,796 | 16,524 | 203,564 |
| # 14 | Livingston, Linlithgo | Vacant 12/07 | 16 | 19 | - | - | 19 | 2 | 12 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 638 | - | - | 12,233 | 3,136 | 16,007 | 1,958 | 4,575 | 300 | 6,833 | 9,174 |
| 15 | Nassau | Van Kampen, Edward | 25 | 34 | 20 | - | 54 | 6 | 24 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 982 | - | - | 18,510 | 41,389 | 60,881 | 3,081 | 1,202 | 1,360 | 5,643 | 55,238 |
| 16 | Philmont, Second Claverack | Herrick, Daniel | 18 | 30 | 5 | 3 | 38 | - | 21 | - | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | 155 | - | - | 12,639 | 20,967 | 33,761 | 3,081 | - | 853 | 3,934 | 29,827 |
| 17 | Pine Plains, Gallatin | Vacant 05/13 | 4 | 8 | - | - | 8 | 3 | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 28 | - | - | - | 7,497 | 7,525 | 176 | - | - | 176 | 7,349 |
| 18 | Schodack Landing | Morgan, Barbara | 10 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 15 | 14 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 3,565 | - | - | 2,082 | 7,386 | 13,033 | 1,082 | - | 25 | 1,107 | 11,926 |
| 19 | Schodack Landing, Dutch Muitzeskill | Convis, Paige | 33 | 49 | 66 | 18 | 133 | 15 | 40 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5,300 | - | - | 10,300 | 60,500 | 76,100 | 4,489 | 2,950 | 5,725 | 13,164 | 62,936 |
| 20 | Stuyvesant | Convis, Paige | 10 | 14 | - | - | 14 | 3 | 13 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 204 | 2,585 | - | 500 | 27,746 | 31,035 | 1,232 | 225 | 325 | 1,782 | 29,253 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 582 | 736 | 496 | 128 | 1,360 | 270 | 649 | 16 | 6 | 6 | 28 | 28 | 11 | 2 | 118,761 | 80,218 | 3,097 | 218,977 | 1,057,418 | 1,478,471 | 69,723 | 41,210 | 51,103 | 162,036 | 1,316,435 |

**Chaplains**
Dickens Albert, Barbara

**Graduate study**
Pettit, David

**Retired**
Anderson, James
Bowen, John
Charnin, Robert
Van Kampen, Edward

**Specialized ministry**
De Witt, Gary

**Without charge**
Brady, A. Martha
Brumm, Kathleen
Mill, Dennis

## Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF MONTGOMERY

Stated clerk: Nancy Ryan, Reformed Church of Fort Plain, 165 Canal St, Fort Plain, NY 13339, 518-993-4302
Treasurer: Ken Palmer, 19 Walnut St, Mohawk, NY 13407-1311, 315-866-6253

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld | Conf Mbrs | Inact Mbrs | Bapt Mbrs | Total Mbrs | Adh | Avg Worship Attend | Conf | Cert | Trans | Decd | Other | Infant | Adult | No Liv Don | Spec Offering | RCA Assem | Programs | Offerings | Total Income | Assmnts | RCA Contrib | Other Contrib | Total Amount | Congr Purpose |
| | | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (18a) | (18b) | (18c) | (18d) | (18e) | (18) | (19a) | (19b) | (19c) | (19) | (20) |
| | **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Alexandria Bay, Thousand Isles | McIlrath, Jeffrey<br>Weldon, Kerri | 65 | 92 | 10 | 20 | 122 | 75 | 124 | 4 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 4 | - | 2,545 | 13,030 | 20,750 | 2,500 | 206,383 | 245,208 | 7,238 | 4,000 | 19,780 | 31,018 | 214,190 |
| 2 | Canajoharie | Draffen, Matthew | 44 | 68 | 16 | 24 | 108 | 49 | 58 | 5 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 58,950 | - | 3,000 | 846 | 66,745 | 129,541 | 7,394 | 8,889 | 6,549 | 22,832 | 106,709 |
| 3 | Fort Plain | Ryan, Nancy | 47 | 63 | 20 | 16 | 99 | 10 | 60 | 4 | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | 28,400 | - | 2,950 | 6,500 | 57,500 | 95,350 | 5,066 | 4,000 | 9,700 | 18,766 | 76,584 |
| 4 | Fort Plain, Ephratah | Vacant 05/90 | 9 | 14 | 8 | 1 | 23 | 10 | 16 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 500 | - | - | - | 15,908 | 16,408 | 1,990 | 72 | - | 2,062 | 14,346 |
| 5 | Herkimer | Vacant 07/14 | 36 | 80 | - | 2 | 82 | 10 | 50 | - | 1 | 7 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 4,501 | - | - | 7,347 | 83,956 | 95,804 | 6,678 | 2,500 | 21,843 | 31,021 | 64,783 |
| 6 | Mohawk | Engel, Brian | 90 | 120 | 162 | 29 | 311 | 83 | 109 | 5 | 4 | - | 11 | 15 | 4 | 1 | 403 | - | 2,500 | 42,042 | 151,155 | 196,100 | 10,314 | 2,170 | 11,030 | 23,514 | 172,586 |
| 7 | North Syracuse, Pitcher Hill Comm | Claggett, James | 65 | 104 | 16 | 6 | 126 | 3 | 59 | 3 | - | - | 7 | - | 3 | 3 | - | - | 500 | 15,793 | 118,917 | 135,210 | 9,048 | 500 | 6,415 | 15,963 | 119,247 |
| 8 | Owasco | de Waard, EJ | 62 | 46 | - | 18 | 64 | 25 | 80 | 4 | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | 280 | 28,140 | 20,000 | - | 128,888 | 177,308 | 4,794 | 8,250 | 5,350 | 18,394 | 158,914 |
| 9 | Sprakers | Vacant 12/08 | 11 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 26 | 11 | 12 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 4 | - | 12,114 | 6,039 | 622 | - | 19,824 | 38,599 | 1,266 | 675 | 9,378 | 11,319 | 27,280 |
| 10 | Sprakers, Currytown | Vacant 06/16 | 11 | 12 | 18 | 8 | 38 | 7 | 15 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11,770 | 18,479 | 30,249 | 999 | 100 | 1,260 | 2,359 | 27,890 |
| 11 | St Johnsville, St Johns | Vacant 10/01 | 17 | 19 | 16 | - | 35 | 14 | 24 | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | - | - | 5,053 | 1,500 | - | 600 | 34,171 | 41,324 | 1,718 | 3,350 | 2,900 | 7,968 | 33,356 |
| 12 | Syracuse | Cogswell, Ryan | 41 | 59 | 17 | 15 | 91 | 9 | 43 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 36,002 | - | - | 27,255 | 97,337 | 160,594 | 5,844 | 1,750 | 6,026 | 13,620 | 146,974 |
| 13 | West Leyden | Vacant 10/86 | 26 | 24 | 54 | 4 | 82 | 16 | 18 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 600 | - | - | 2,682 | 7,987 | 11,269 | 1,900 | - | 235 | 2,135 | 9,134 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 524 | 714 | 341 | 152 | 1,207 | 322 | 668 | 28 | 9 | 9 | 33 | 16 | 25 | 6 | 149,348 | 48,709 | 50,322 | 117,335 | 1,007,250 | 1,372,964 | 64,249 | 36,256 | 100,466 | 200,971 | 1,171,993 |

**Retired**
Hoaglander, Donald
Hoogheem, Daniel
Perkins, Lucille

**Specialized ministry**
Vrooman, Robert

## Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF ROCHESTER

Stated clerk: Anita Manuele, 21 Islington Way, Rochester, NY 14610-2734, 585-385-1157
Treasurer: Jay Meerdink, Trinity Reformed Church, 909 N Landing Rd, Rochester, NY 14625-1924, 585-758-7391

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | Stewardship | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Clymer, Abbe | Livingston, Kristen<br>Livingston, Noah | 86 | 157 | 56 | 23 | 236 | 11 | 120 | - | 1 | 2 | 7 | 56 | - | - | 5,000 | 28,051 | - | 37,098 | 201,538 | 271,687 | 15,994 | 25,000 | 33,741 | 74,735 | 196,952 |
| 2 Clymer, Clymer Hill | Beckerink, Erin<br>Beckerink, Michael | 68 | 101 | 48 | 49 | 198 | 93 | 234 | 9 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 19 | 5 | (488) | - | - | 2,088 | 199,567 | 201,167 | 7,681 | 34,806 | 22,328 | 64,815 | 136,352 |
| 3 Interlaken | Vacant 01/16 | 62 | 85 | 49 | 13 | 147 | 12 | 55 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 13,504 | - | - | 150 | 114,163 | 127,817 | 7,138 | 7,890 | 6,283 | 21,311 | 106,506 |
| 4 Marion, Second | White, Donald | 62 | 112 | 60 | 53 | 225 | 35 | 125 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 261,051 | 261,051 | 11,205 | 5,476 | 26,551 | 43,232 | 217,819 |
| 5 Newark, Woodlane Comm | Maag, Brian | 55 | 75 | - | 86 | 161 | 34 | 53 | 7 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 850 | - | 2,668 | 118,232 | 121,750 | 6,596 | 3,650 | 4,882 | 15,128 | 106,622 |
| 6 Palmyra | Vacant 09/07 | 28 | 39 | - | 12 | 51 | 30 | 48 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | 5,963 | 24,218 | - | 8,092 | 73,927 | 112,200 | 3,804 | 9,144 | 5,694 | 18,642 | 93,558 |
| 7 Pultneyville | Fitzgerald, Janice | 86 | 138 | - | 111 | 249 | 21 | 64 | 2 | - | 2 | 3 | - | - | - | 2,517 | 1,000 | - | 50 | 220,334 | 223,901 | 13,012 | 13,270 | 9,832 | 36,114 | 187,787 |
| 8 Rochester, Lakeview Comm | Rodriguez, Steven | 77 | 111 | 48 | 58 | 217 | 42 | 83 | - | - | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 153,665 | 153,665 | 10,753 | 3,100 | 24,197 | 38,050 | 115,615 |
| 9 Rochester, Trinity | Griswold, Daniel | 120 | 171 | 38 | 30 | 239 | 23 | 92 | - | - | - | 7 | - | 3 | - | 2,735 | - | - | 2,560 | 196,000 | 201,295 | 17,711 | 17,050 | 11,442 | 46,203 | 155,092 |
| 10 Sodus, First | Vacant 09/16 | 23 | 29 | 19 | 2 | 50 | 3 | 22 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 63 | 4,270 | - | 2,536 | 36,388 | 43,257 | 3,253 | 5,994 | 1,187 | 10,434 | 32,823 |
| 11 Waterloo, Tyre | Perchitti, Thomas | 14 | 17 | 1 | - | 18 | 12 | 16 | - | - | 11 | 1 | - | - | - | 13,854 | - | (3) | - | 25,372 | 39,223 | 2,259 | 1,568 | 2,441 | 6,268 | 32,955 |
| 12 Williamson | Superseded 10/14 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Ohio** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 Powell, New Hope | Norden, Stephen<br>Palsma, Sarah | 340 | 577 | 120 | 121 | 818 | 322 | 424 | 62 | 16 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 14 | 2 | 214 | - | 54,575 | 5,928 | 979,475 | 1,040,192 | 48,885 | 44,150 | 47,669 | 140,704 | 899,488 |
| | Organized Church Total | 1,021 | 1,612 | 439 | 558 | 2,609 | 638 | 1,336 | 81 | 20 | 19 | 38 | 74 | 40 | 7 | 43,362 | 58,389 | 54,572 | 61,170 | 2,579,712 | 2,797,205 | 148,291 | 171,098 | 196,247 | 515,636 | 2,281,569 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 Rochester, Flour City | Ryder, David | 11 | 14 | - | 6 | 20 | 4 | 18 | 9 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 31,736 | - | 11,000 | - | 8,215 | 50,951 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 48,951 |
| | New Church Start Total | 11 | 14 | - | 6 | 20 | 4 | 18 | 9 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 31,736 | - | 11,000 | - | 8,215 | 50,951 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 48,951 |
| | Grand Total | 1,032 | 1,626 | 439 | 564 | 2,629 | 642 | 1,354 | 90 | 25 | 19 | 38 | 74 | 40 | 7 | 75,098 | 58,389 | 65,572 | 61,170 | 2,587,927 | 2,848,156 | 148,291 | 171,098 | 198,247 | 517,636 | 2,330,520 |

**Missionary**
Ford, F. Peter
Otterness, Richard

**Planting minister**
Ryder, David

**Retired**
Curtis, Susan
Damsteegt, Gordon
Eichenberger, John
Hoffman, William
Kotun, John
Meyerink, Paul
Perec, Christine
Postma, P. Okke
Roberts, Eugene
Vander Weide, Nicholas

**Specialized ministry**
Hann, Robert
Hodges, Suzanne
TenClay, Timothy

**Without charge**
Carmona, Juan

## Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF SCHENECTADY

Stated clerk: Carol Troost, 7 Van Voast Ln, Scotia, NY 12302-9621, 518-372-7502
Treasurer: Jim Burnetter, 4 Arbor Ln, Clifton Park, NY 12065-5911, 518-371-2822

| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | | | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Altamont | Vacant 01/16 | 84 | 141 | 88 | 51 | 280 | 61 | 74 | 7 | - | 1 | 3 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 98,312 | 34,488 | - | - | 123,983 | 256,783 | 13,788 | 29,282 | 8,816 | 51,886 | 204,897 |
| 2 | Amsterdam, First Glenville | Faulkner, William | 49 | 78 | 75 | 31 | 184 | 22 | 48 | 2 | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | 1,488 | 2,482 | - | 20,984 | 116,816 | 141,770 | 9,100 | 4,100 | 5,871 | 19,071 | 122,699 |
| 3 | Clifton Park, Christ Comm | Bosman, Johan | 146 | 206 | 44 | 47 | 297 | 14 | 145 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 5 | - | 1 | - | 4,745 | - | - | 2,740 | 363,932 | 371,417 | 18,659 | 4,590 | 33,397 | 56,646 | 314,771 |
| 4 | Fort Edward, Fort Miller | Vacant 04/15 | 20 | 31 | 94 | - | 125 | 5 | 27 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 30,259 | 1,250 | - | 12,037 | 36,044 | 79,590 | 4,872 | 765 | 4,555 | 10,192 | 69,398 |
| 5 | Guilderland Center, Helderberg | Vacant 06/15 | 88 | 102 | 40 | 40 | 182 | 50 | 64 | 4 | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | 30,000 | - | - | 24,530 | 110,768 | 165,298 | 10,479 | - | - | 10,479 | 154,819 |
| *# 6 | Rexford, Amity | Vacant 12/13 | 46 | 69 | 19 | - | 88 | 10 | 32 | 5 | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 4,655 | 580 | - | 7,249 | 59,864 | 72,348 | 5,355 | 1,175 | 1,999 | 8,529 | 63,819 |
| 7 | Rotterdam Junction, First | McHeard, Kent | 46 | 66 | 8 | - | 74 | 7 | 68 | 5 | - | - | 2 | 11 | - | - | 7,197 | - | - | 5,101 | 120,261 | 132,559 | 7,813 | 808 | 13,365 | 21,986 | 110,573 |
| 8 | Schenectady, Bellevue | Scheenstra, Richard | 60 | 75 | 134 | 22 | 231 | 36 | 92 | 2 | - | - | 5 | - | - | 1 | 11,374 | - | - | 48,947 | 158,503 | 218,824 | 8,365 | 5,300 | 10,556 | 24,221 | 194,603 |
| 9 | Schenectady, First | Carlson, Daniel<br>Convis, Paige<br>Levering, William<br>Midge, Stacey | 310 | 502 | 178 | 74 | 754 | 119 | 212 | 13 | - | 37 | 16 | 48 | 8 | - | 589,653 | 50,105 | - | 19,348 | 1,204,531 | 1,863,637 | 43,846 | 43,350 | 248,501 | 335,697 | 1,527,940 |
| 10 | Schenectady, Lisha's Kill | Vander Wal, Lisa | 69 | 98 | 4 | 18 | 120 | 30 | 75 | - | - | - | 4 | 1 | - | - | 17,315 | - | - | 15,640 | 186,744 | 219,699 | 9,468 | 26,575 | 10,097 | 46,140 | 173,559 |
| 11 | Schenectady, Lynnwood | Szantner, Richard | 109 | 152 | 19 | 13 | 184 | 28 | 110 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | 7,886 | 9,718 | 10,000 | 13,532 | 234,141 | 275,277 | 4,608 | 3,378 | 4,735 | 12,721 | 262,556 |
| 12 | Schenectady, Niskayuna | Ferenczy, Paul<br>Fulkerson, Jason | 182 | 277 | 275 | 94 | 646 | 157 | 128 | 8 | - | 2 | 15 | 93 | 6 | - | 28,407 | - | - | 116,577 | 355,690 | 500,674 | 27,116 | 1,900 | 7,868 | 36,884 | 463,790 |
| 13 | Schenectady, Second Rotterdam | Compton, John | 37 | 48 | 10 | 6 | 64 | 17 | 40 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 39,848 | - | - | 3,596 | 53,409 | 96,853 | 4,412 | 2,933 | 4,976 | 12,321 | 84,532 |
| *# 14 | Schenectady, Trinity | Vacant 06/16 | 32 | 54 | 22 | 22 | 98 | 41 | 47 | 17 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 38,000 | 5,000 | 48,650 | 48,000 | 137,650 | 277,300 | 4,086 | - | 1,700 | 5,786 | 271,514 |
| 15 | Schuylerville, Bacon Hill | Vincent, Janet | 64 | 94 | 78 | 40 | 212 | 38 | 60 | 9 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 56,396 | - | 27,055 | 70,672 | 154,123 | 7,537 | 891 | 6,408 | 14,836 | 139,287 |
| 16 | Schuylerville, Old Saratoga | de Velder, Joyce | 69 | 48 | 79 | 46 | 173 | 24 | 50 | 2 | - | - | 3 | - | 3 | - | 9,639 | - | - | 10,597 | 80,457 | 100,693 | 4,686 | 2,478 | 5,813 | 12,977 | 87,716 |
| 17 | Scotia, First | Vacant 06/15 | 189 | 247 | 167 | 59 | 473 | 26 | 217 | 21 | 2 | - | 6 | - | 12 | - | 57,824 | 67,467 | - | 66,911 | 374,552 | 566,754 | 22,980 | 16,809 | 69,041 | 108,830 | 457,924 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 1,600 | 2,288 | 1,334 | 563 | 4,185 | 685 | 1,489 | 111 | 11 | 44 | 80 | 167 | 39 | 4 | 976,602 | 227,486 | 58,650 | 442,844 | 3,788,017 | 5,493,599 | 207,170 | 144,334 | 437,698 | 789,202 | 4,704,397 |

**Chaplains**
Marvel, Jacob
McCrossan, Thomas

**Retired**
Baird, Donald
Caley, Paul
de Forest, William
DeVries, David
Fasano, Vincent
Faulkner, William
Goldzung, Harold
Gray, Adrian
Hoffman, Craig
Hoffman, Jan
Hudak, Arthur
Jager, Allen
Kain, Lewis
Kress, Arnold
Neevel, James
Page, John
Peet, Donald
Van Kempen, Frederick
Walrath, Douglas
White, Robert

**Specialized ministry**
Busman, Kent
DeBlock, Scott
Doolittle, Benjamin
Ondra, Thomas
Reilly, Ann

**Without charge**
De Kruif, Lindsey
Schutter, William

## Regional Synod of Albany CLASSIS OF SCHOHARIE

Stated clerk: Becky Town, PO Box 42, Prattsville, NY 12468-0042, 518-779-9409
Treasurer: Sherrie Grey, PO Box 105, Fonda, NY 12068-0105, 518-853-8676

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Amsterdam, Cranesville | Vacant 01/12 | 20 | 27 | 1 | - | 28 | 1 | 25 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 775 | - | - | 5,622 | 29,074 | 35,471 | 2,472 | - | - | 2,472 | 32,999 |
| 2 Amsterdam, Florida | Alicki, Timothy | 14 | 18 | 12 | 14 | 44 | 8 | 14 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 5,000 | - | - | 21,816 | 26,816 | 1,961 | - | - | 1,961 | 24,855 |
| 3 Berne, First | Hoffman, Robert | 32 | 56 | 72 | 12 | 140 | 15 | 30 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1,500 | 2,200 | - | 430 | 95,030 | 99,160 | 4,859 | 3,700 | 1,200 | 9,759 | 89,401 |
| 4 Cobleskill, Lawyersville | Vacant 11/15 | 31 | 40 | 6 | - | 46 | 11 | 25 | - | 2 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 60,800 | - | - | 200 | 28,089 | 89,089 | 4,262 | 2,650 | 2,151 | 9,063 | 80,026 |
| 5 Fonda | Yeske, Jennifer | 80 | 114 | 67 | 59 | 240 | 49 | 102 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 10,455 | 7,985 | - | 1,432 | 193,951 | 213,823 | 9,207 | 24,620 | 14,063 | 47,890 | 165,933 |
| 6 Fultonville | Vacant 12/03 | 14 | 16 | - | 1 | 17 | 17 | 18 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 3,145 | - | - | 6,083 | 13,112 | 22,340 | 1,364 | 904 | 1,564 | 3,832 | 18,508 |
| 7 Fultonville, Glen | Vacant 01/13 | 28 | 44 | 3 | - | 47 | 10 | 29 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5,251 | 42,725 | 47,976 | 3,069 | 730 | 3,737 | 7,536 | 40,440 |
| 8 Hagaman, Calvary | Vacant 03/14 | 20 | 24 | 42 | 3 | 69 | 16 | 30 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 101,365 | - | - | 12,600 | 24,993 | 138,958 | 2,728 | 1,186 | 532 | 4,446 | 134,512 |
| 9 Howes Cave, Second | Vacant 05/01 | 14 | 23 | - | - | 23 | 3 | 25 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,800 | 18,918 | 23,718 | 1,960 | - | 1,590 | 3,550 | 20,168 |
| 10 Johnstown | Dykema, Brian | 40 | 80 | 19 | 12 | 111 | 35 | 85 | 3 | - | - | 3 | 4 | - | 3 | 283 | 1,800 | - | 800 | 76,397 | 79,280 | 7,320 | 4,700 | 100 | 12,120 | 67,160 |
| 11 Middleburgh | Kelley, Jeffrey | 33 | 51 | 81 | 20 | 152 | 37 | 46 | 2 | 2 | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | 5,000 | - | 1,500 | 1,656 | 91,629 | 99,785 | 4,262 | 1,575 | 2,756 | 8,593 | 91,192 |
| 12 Prattsville, Dutch | Town, Rebecca | 9 | 14 | 1 | 5 | 20 | 27 | 26 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,800 | - | 3,000 | - | 25,383 | 33,183 | - | 315 | 315 | 630 | 32,553 |
| 13 Roxbury, Jay Gould Memorial | Dykstra, Richard | 98 | 68 | 61 | 61 | 190 | 38 | 60 | 12 | 2 | - | 3 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 12,223 | 500 | - | 4,500 | 90,598 | 107,821 | 5,456 | 782 | 2,047 | 8,285 | 99,536 |
| 14 Schoharie | Meyer-Veen, Michael<br>Meyer-Veen, Sherri | 51 | 71 | 25 | 12 | 108 | 30 | 50 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2,165 | 128,233 | - | 11,984 | 146,147 | 288,529 | - | 7,850 | 17,070 | 24,920 | 263,609 |
| 15 Sharon Springs, Sharon | Vacant 11/15 | 14 | 26 | 6 | 13 | 45 | 11 | 18 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 10,332 | 34,645 | 44,980 | 2,114 | 200 | 2,928 | 5,242 | 39,738 |
| | Organized Church Total | 498 | 672 | 396 | 212 | 1,280 | 308 | 583 | 22 | 8 | 2 | 20 | 18 | 14 | 6 | 202,514 | 145,718 | 4,500 | 65,690 | 932,507 | 1,350,929 | 51,034 | 49,212 | 50,053 | 150,299 | 1,200,630 |

**Chaplains**
Minier-Elliott, Jennifer

**Inactive**
Craig, Stanley
Vamvas, Patricia (Pacia)

**Retired**
Ferenczy, Paul
Hesselink, Charles
Hine, Orville
Ivins, Wilbur
Van Wagenen, Jared

**Specialized ministry**
Town, Gregory

**Without charge**
Patterson, Karen

## Regional Synod of Canada CLASSIS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Stated clerk: Jim Moerman, Home Church Langley, 3383 198th St, Langley, BC V3A 7Z1, 604-514-4663
Treasurer: Ted Broekhuizen, 23-3902 Latimer St, Abbotsford, BC V2S 7L5, 604-885-6086

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **British Columbia** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Abbotsford, Bethel | Opmeer, Ronald | 40 | 62 | 10 | 16 | 88 | 13 | 57 | 1 | 4 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 624 | - | - | 44,381 | 81,862 | 126,866 | 5,020 | 638 | 7,405 | 13,063 | 113,803 |
| 2 | Burnaby, New Life Comm | Vacant 08/13 | 87 | 121 | 7 | - | 128 | 28 | 155 | 4 | - | 12 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 19,778 | 260,078 | 279,855 | 10,996 | - | 38,489 | 49,485 | 230,370 |
| 3 | Langley, Home Church | Moerman, James | 48 | 68 | 11 | 9 | 88 | 51 | 101 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | - | 2 | 126 | 7,369 | - | - | 123,295 | 130,790 | 4,443 | - | - | 4,443 | 126,347 |
| 4 | Lantzville, Woodgrove Comm | Vacant 02/13 | 36 | 21 | 3 | 21 | 45 | 24 | 35 | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5,259 | 41,475 | 46,734 | 2,072 | 330 | 3,227 | 5,628 | 41,106 |
| 5 | Parksville, Arbutus Grove | Vacant 09/10 | 29 | 38 | 69 | 15 | 122 | 15 | 42 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1,365 | - | - | 53 | 34,122 | 35,540 | 3,586 | 388 | 1,715 | 5,689 | 29,851 |
| 6 | Port Alberni, Cedar Grove | Vacant 03/08 | 17 | 25 | 2 | - | 27 | 33 | 40 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 39,249 | - | - | - | 43,354 | 82,602 | 2,571 | 1,164 | 1,769 | 5,503 | 77,099 |
| 7 | Powell River | Zomer, David | 25 | 30 | 3 | 6 | 39 | 53 | 49 | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | - | 4,539 | 1,580 | 776 | 7,409 | 50,636 | 64,940 | 1,753 | 1,869 | 1,471 | 5,093 | 59,847 |
| 8 | Richmond, Fujian Evangelical | Tsai, David | 120 | 181 | 152 | 4 | 337 | 197 | 341 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1,822 | - | - | 21,569 | 549,705 | 573,096 | 14,024 | 12,504 | 105,866 | 132,395 | 440,701 |
| 9 | Surrey, Grace Comm | Manlove, Jonathan | 22 | 35 | 2 | 10 | 47 | 5 | 39 | - | - | 1 | - | 6 | - | - | - | - | 535 | 10,496 | 72,369 | 83,400 | 3,142 | 1,164 | 4,189 | 8,494 | 74,906 |
| 10 | Vancouver, Hope | Opmeer, John<br>Opmeer, Reindert (Randy) | 28 | 36 | 8 | 3 | 47 | 23 | 30 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 42,975 | - | 582 | 18,539 | 53,025 | 115,121 | 3,618 | - | - | 3,618 | 111,503 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 452 | 617 | 267 | 84 | 968 | 442 | 889 | 8 | 9 | 19 | 20 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 90,700 | 8,949 | 1,893 | 127,484 | 1,309,921 | 1,538,944 | 51,225 | 18,057 | 164,131 | 233,411 | 1,305,533 |

**Chaplains**
Opmeer, Walter

**Retired**
Chen, Livingstone
Clark, Leslie
Hudson, William
Opmeer, John

**Specialized ministry**
Kaptein, John
King, David
Moerman, Murray
Williams, Dan

**Without charge**
Bobell, Michael
Mulder, Abraham (Brent)
Trotter, Robert
Van Ankum, Jason

## Regional Synod of Canada CLASSIS OF CANADIAN PRAIRIES

Stated clerk: John VanEden, 9420 92 St NW Apt 253, Edmonton, AB T6C 4M9, 780-250-9093
Treasurer: Case Van Herk, 9302 98th Ave, Morinville, AB T8R 1J4, 780-939-2926

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **Alberta** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Athabasca | Plat, Albert | 72 | 112 | 10 | 25 | 147 | 105 | 152 | 8 | 1 | - | 3 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 4,749 | 39,315 | 11,838 | 27,711 | 171,056 | 254,670 | 8,554 | 6,593 | 27,546 | 42,693 | 211,977 |
| 2 | Calgary, Community | Vacant 10/15 | 39 | 60 | 1 | 19 | 80 | 11 | 42 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 27,956 | 78,612 | 106,568 | 6,193 | 5,740 | 3,061 | 14,994 | 91,574 |
| 3 | Edmonton, Emmanuel Comm | Smith, John (Doug) | 50 | 60 | 2 | 20 | 82 | 45 | 73 | 4 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | 2,134 | 4,266 | 8,564 | 43,483 | 118,783 | 177,230 | 5,898 | 16,002 | - | 21,900 | 155,330 |
| 4 | Monarch | Derrick, Robert | 26 | 41 | 1 | - | 42 | 9 | 30 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 935 | 1,850 | - | 2,614 | 80,321 | 85,720 | 4,325 | 1,175 | 7,365 | 12,865 | 72,854 |
| 5 | St Albert, Christ Comm | Wulkan, David | 40 | 60 | - | 19 | 79 | 13 | 45 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 43 | 2,280 | 4,654 | 22,068 | 101,925 | 130,971 | 5,997 | 2,520 | 924 | 9,441 | 121,530 |
| | **Manitoba** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Winnipeg, Place of Grace | Vacant 10/09 | 35 | 48 | 1 | 20 | 69 | 51 | 80 | 5 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | 146 | - | - | - | 73,391 | 73,537 | 4,325 | 2,429 | 10,926 | 17,680 | 55,857 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 262 | 381 | 15 | 103 | 499 | 234 | 422 | 19 | 1 | - | 9 | 12 | 3 | 9 | 8,007 | 47,711 | 25,056 | 123,832 | 624,088 | 828,696 | 35,292 | 34,459 | 49,822 | 119,573 | 709,122 |

**Without charge**
Konynenberg, Marc

## Regional Synod of Canada CLASSIS OF ONTARIO

Stated clerk: Abram Blaak, Bethel Reformed Church, 506 West St, Brantford, ON N3R 3W7, 519-752-1114
Treasurer: David McAllister, 17 Clement Dr, Brantford, ON N3T 6H9, 519-750-0400

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld | Conf Mbrs | Inact Mbrs | Bapt Mbrs | Total Mbrs | Adh | Avg Worship Attend | Conf | Cert | Trans | Decd | Other | Infant | Adult | No Liv Don | Spec Offering | RCA Assem | Programs | Offerings | Total Income | Assmnts | RCA Contrib | Other Contrib | Total Amount | Congr Purpose |
| | | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (18a) | (18b) | (18c) | (18d) | (18e) | (18) | (19a) | (19b) | (19c) | (19) | (20) |
| | **Ontario** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Brantford, Bethel | Blaak, Abram | 86 | 118 | 8 | 41 | 167 | 17 | 85 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 130,637 | 130,637 | 11,098 | 17,205 | 16,967 | 45,269 | 85,367 |
| 2 | Cambridge, Countryside | Gouvea, Ricardo | 21 | 28 | 4 | 14 | 46 | 4 | 22 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1,177 | - | 5,818 | 31,648 | 38,642 | - | 776 | 401 | 1,177 | 37,465 |
| 3 | Chatham, First | Wynveen, Barry | 63 | 95 | 1 | 30 | 126 | 10 | 85 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 538 | 7,279 | - | 1,823 | 115,273 | 124,913 | 9,710 | 5,818 | 6,225 | 21,752 | 103,161 |
| 4 | Drayton | Vanderlaan, Duane | 186 | 344 | 28 | 176 | 548 | 45 | 350 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 6 | - | 13 | - | - | - | - | 59,112 | 486,488 | 545,600 | 29,508 | 67,768 | 145,885 | 243,161 | 302,439 |
| 5 | Exeter, Bethel | Vellenga, James | 21 | 31 | 5 | 10 | 46 | 8 | 35 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 1,025 | - | - | - | 50,961 | 51,986 | 2,995 | 656 | 2,622 | 6,273 | 45,713 |
| 6 | Grimsby, Forestview Comm | DeGiovanni, John | 65 | 114 | 3 | 58 | 175 | 54 | 154 | 4 | 2 | 1 | - | 13 | 5 | - | 6,760 | - | - | - | 322,961 | 329,721 | 9,248 | 7,772 | 41,994 | 59,015 | 270,706 |
| 7 | Guelph, Riverside Comm | DeKorte, Henry | 24 | 36 | - | 3 | 39 | 7 | 30 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 32,148 | 55,356 | 87,504 | 5,285 | 1,551 | 3,178 | 10,014 | 77,490 |
| 8 | Hamilton, Westdale | Seagren, Stanley | 109 | 182 | - | 119 | 301 | 10 | 125 | 3 | 1 | 14 | 7 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 7,447 | 253,548 | 260,995 | 16,824 | 16,987 | 25,065 | 58,876 | 202,118 |
| 9 | Kingsville, Faith | Labbé, Kenneth | 49 | 65 | 20 | 19 | 104 | 19 | 54 | - | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | 4,739 | - | - | 7,035 | 83,693 | 95,466 | 5,725 | 3,634 | 11,844 | 21,203 | 74,263 |
| 10 | Mississauga, Ebenezer | Garreton, Jose | 32 | 53 | - | - | 53 | 22 | 45 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,047 | - | 35,979 | 43,079 | 80,105 | 4,404 | 6,271 | 1,272 | 11,946 | 68,159 |
| 11 | Mississauga, New Alliance Chri | Gouvea, Ricardo | 16 | 32 | 2 | - | 34 | 33 | 55 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 71,485 | 71,485 | 2,327 | - | - | 2,327 | 69,158 |
| *# | 12 St Catharines, First | VanSlageren, Arthur | 135 | 208 | 10 | 65 | 283 | 30 | 230 | 2 | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | 4 | - | 2,982 | - | - | 8,409 | 291,821 | 303,213 | 26,002 | 16,996 | 20,562 | 63,560 | 239,652 |
| 13 | Stevensville, Faith | Saville, Michael | 56 | 88 | 6 | 14 | 108 | 56 | 105 | 4 | 4 | 1 | - | 15 | - | 1 | 122 | 16,664 | - | 2,715 | 144,649 | 164,149 | 8,368 | 3,335 | 7,747 | 19,451 | 144,698 |
| 14 | Stoney Creek, Ebenezer | Vandervelde, David | 48 | 77 | 12 | 26 | 115 | 5 | 65 | - | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | - | - | 3,403 | - | - | 738 | 100,752 | 104,894 | 7,047 | 7,791 | 3,878 | 18,716 | 86,177 |
| 15 | Thorold, Grace Comm | Boyd, R. Leslie | 48 | 61 | 3 | 4 | 68 | 15 | 86 | 6 | - | - | 13 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 10,825 | - | 13,404 | 145,632 | 169,862 | 5,549 | 7,974 | 13,962 | 27,485 | 142,376 |
| 16 | Toronto, La Senda | Salazar, Alberto | 51 | 60 | 3 | - | 63 | 25 | 76 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 8 | - | - | 1,949 | 4,162 | - | 5,973 | 53,943 | 66,026 | 3,766 | - | 1,137 | 4,903 | 61,123 |
| 17 | Toronto, New Life | Ferreira, Bruno<br>Tavares, Ceny | 110 | 138 | - | 21 | 159 | 38 | 170 | 8 | 9 | 25 | - | - | 6 | 21 | - | - | - | - | 265,550 | 265,550 | 20,435 | - | 41,441 | 61,875 | 203,675 |
| 18 | Wainfleet, Maranatha | Keefer, Barton | 74 | 114 | 30 | 34 | 178 | 15 | 75 | - | 4 | - | 4 | - | 3 | - | 177 | - | - | - | 115,197 | 115,374 | 10,398 | 8,909 | 18,993 | 38,300 | 77,074 |
| 19 | Welland, Christ Comm | Culp, Carson | 18 | 25 | 14 | 32 | 71 | 36 | 37 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 4,494 | 37,233 | 23,004 | 59,373 | 124,104 | 2,995 | 1,379 | 1,175 | 5,549 | 118,555 |
| 20 | Whitby, Emmanuel | Vacant 06/16 | 50 | 69 | 9 | 14 | 92 | 10 | 65 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 522 | - | - | 2,304 | 87,126 | 89,952 | 6,606 | 7,654 | 2,844 | 17,104 | 72,848 |
| 21 | Woodstock, Emmanuel | Burrill, Peter | 125 | 214 | 80 | 138 | 432 | 5 | 160 | 4 | - | 1 | 9 | - | 7 | 1 | - | 28,256 | - | 1,575 | 179,256 | 209,087 | 19,026 | 9,491 | 41,366 | 69,883 | 139,204 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 1,387 | 2,152 | 238 | 818 | 3,208 | 464 | 2,109 | 45 | 49 | 70 | 57 | 43 | 49 | 25 | 22,217 | 73,904 | 37,233 | 207,484 | 3,088,428 | 3,429,265 | 207,316 | 191,967 | 408,558 | 807,839 | 2,621,421 |

**Chaplains**
Arthur, John
Bylstra, Hendrik
Girard, Greg
Lopes, Humberto

**Retired**
De Jong, Peter
Kapteyn, John
Kramer, Dirk
Kroon, Willem
Lowe, Kenneth
Platteel, Christiaan
Priestley, Samuel
Ross, C. Gordon
Strik, John
Turkstra, Clifford
Van Auken, Ronald
Van Oostveen, Jon
VerHoog, John
Waterhouse, Donald
Zeilstra, Arthur

**Specialized ministry**
Dantas, Elias
Dekker, Janine
Nieuwstraten, Douglas
Strong, Marijke
Van Essen, H. Martyn
Veldman, Meine
Webster, Charles

**Without charge**
VanderMeulen, Arthur
Wensink, William

## Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF CALIFORNIA

Stated clerk: Rick DeBruyne, Lincoln Avenue Community Church, 1511 Lincoln Ave, Pomona, CA 91767-4435, 909-624-1281
Treasurer: Rick DeBruyne, Lincoln Avenue Community Church, 1511 Lincoln Ave, Pomona, CA 91767-4435, 909-624-1281

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **California** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Artesia, New Life Comm | Smalley, Juno | 285 | 220 | 104 | 178 | 502 | 571 | 387 | - | - | 15 | 13 | 35 | - | - | 531 | 43,427 | - | 141,127 | 826,947 | 1,012,032 | 29,774 | 1,283 | 58,361 | 89,418 | 922,614 |
| * 2 Bellflower, Encounter | Larsen, Mike | 70 | 108 | 19 | 27 | 154 | 22 | 135 | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | 42,159 | - | 7,000 | 50,277 | 290,887 | 390,323 | 9,569 | 2,040 | 9,963 | 21,572 | 368,751 |
| 3 Buena Park, Christ Comm | Scholten, Douglas | 129 | 171 | 21 | 44 | 236 | 72 | 210 | 4 | - | - | 6 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 186 | - | - | 72,400 | 398,000 | 470,586 | 14,363 | 18,000 | 16,300 | 48,663 | 421,923 |
| 4 Canyon Lake, Community | Vacant 01/16 | 427 | 558 | 83 | 387 | 1,028 | 216 | 762 | 53 | - | - | 19 | - | - | 23 | 169,069 | 23,466 | - | 372,510 | 1,706,403 | 2,271,448 | 47,350 | 13,700 | 137,494 | 198,544 | 2,072,904 |
| 5 Chino, Bridge | Thé, Paul | 146 | 243 | 12 | 6 | 261 | 100 | 297 | 25 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 25 | 8 | 3 | - | 37,387 | - | 44,894 | 604,807 | 687,088 | 32,056 | 4,700 | 19,297 | 56,053 | 631,035 |
| 6 Corona, la Senda | Serrano, Andres | 73 | 78 | 12 | 22 | 112 | 150 | 490 | 8 | - | 12 | - | - | 10 | 12 | - | - | - | 39,400 | 93,860 | 133,260 | 3,115 | 10,500 | - | 13,615 | 119,645 |
| 7 El Monte, Trinity | Superseded 04/16 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 4 | 26 | 6 | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2,072 | 52,942 | 32,902 | 87,916 | 1,422 | 1,804 | 3,935 | 7,161 | 80,755 |
| 8 Escondido, Infusion | Ortiz, Matt | 68 | 119 | - | - | 119 | - | 153 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 7 | - | 163,377 | - | 229,365 | 173,642 | 566,384 | 5,247 | 163,377 | 21,799 | 190,423 | 375,961 |
| 9 Garden Grove, Shepherd's Grove | Blake, Chad<br>Jacobson, Russell<br>Schuller, Robert | 780 | 984 | - | 5 | 989 | 99 | 1,088 | - | - | 4 | 36 | - | 1 | 23 | - | - | - | 831,991 | 1,884,009 | 2,716,000 | 47,136 | - | 1,056 | 48,192 | 2,667,808 |
| 10 Glendora, Living Faith | Cox, Casey | 7 | 14 | - | - | 14 | 8 | 18 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 3,000 | - | - | 2,950 | 34,233 | 40,183 | 1,138 | - | - | 1,138 | 39,045 |
| 11 Hemet, Calvary Comm | Superseded 06/13 | 20 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 60 | 35 | 77 | - | - | - | 2 | 20 | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | 4,700 | 91,271 | 95,971 | 2,993 | - | - | 2,993 | 92,978 |
| 12 Hesperia, Oasis | Hanke, Vincent | 272 | 66 | 169 | 15 | 250 | 94 | 221 | 40 | - | - | 1 | 88 | 2 | 13 | - | 19 | - | 3,160 | 337,856 | 341,035 | 14,173 | 3,871 | 4,938 | 22,982 | 318,053 |
| 13 Laguna Hills, Crossline Comm | Jones, J.P. | 312 | 623 | 4 | 151 | 778 | 825 | 1,260 | 253 | - | 4 | 3 | - | 1 | 152 | 62 | 111,584 | - | 159,601 | 3,489,397 | 3,760,644 | 98,978 | 60,000 | 160,255 | 319,233 | 3,441,411 |
| 14 Laguna Hills, Lake Hills Comm | Superseded 10/09 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15 Lakewood, Journey | Vander Baan, Timothy | 45 | 77 | 14 | 32 | 123 | 93 | 89 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 13,564 | - | 12,046 | 126,877 | 152,487 | 4,452 | 2,211 | 8,456 | 15,119 | 137,368 |
| 16 Los Alamitos, Generations | Ludington, Jeffrey | 70 | 132 | 29 | 15 | 176 | 170 | 250 | 15 | - | 25 | 10 | 35 | - | 15 | 55,000 | - | - | 99,000 | 351,000 | 505,000 | 15,015 | - | 125,000 | 140,015 | 364,985 |
| 17 Los Angeles, Abundant Mission | Vacant 03/11 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *# 18 Los Angeles, Hope Comm (Faith) | Vacant 04/15 | 100 | 120 | 4 | 15 | 139 | 20 | 132 | 5 | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | 14 | - | 219,000 | 6,000 | 57,095 | 51,925 | 334,020 | 1,800 | - | - | 1,800 | 332,220 |
| 19 Los Angeles, Park Hills Comm | Dove, Lawrence | 80 | 93 | 12 | 12 | 117 | 12 | 90 | 6 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 19,817 | - | 16,750 | 186,000 | 222,567 | 926 | 1,000 | 5,000 | 6,926 | 215,641 |
| 20 Los Angeles, R.O.C.K. | Watts, Peter | 120 | 80 | 30 | 10 | 120 | 10 | 33 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 10 | - | - | 5,500 | 8,293 | 43,283 | 57,076 | 1,300 | - | 500 | 1,800 | 55,276 |
| 21 Moreno Valley, Palm Canyon Comm | Martin, Bill | 59 | 72 | 13 | - | 85 | 300 | 375 | 11 | - | - | - | 4 | - | 12 | 1 | - | - | 1,400 | 344,061 | 345,462 | 11,940 | - | 19,864 | 31,804 | 313,658 |
| 22 Murrieta, Oak Springs Comm | Patton, Michael | 31 | 46 | - | - | 46 | 18 | 36 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 83 | - | - | - | 57,883 | 57,966 | 2,101 | 600 | 2,331 | 5,032 | 52,934 |
| 23 Norco, Turning Point | Booth, Kevin | 132 | 170 | - | - | 170 | 75 | 185 | 300 | 20 | 10 | - | 15 | - | 26 | - | 23,206 | - | 45,362 | 266,746 | 335,314 | 8,073 | - | - | 8,073 | 327,241 |
| 24 Norwalk, Faith | Spence, Ronald | 30 | 2 | 4 | 32 | 38 | 20 | 26 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 850 | - | 61,983 | 68,386 | 131,219 | 2,500 | - | 1,500 | 4,000 | 127,219 |
| 25 Palmdale, Desert Winds Comm | Plantinga, Joel | 76 | 116 | 29 | 6 | 151 | 75 | 220 | 6 | - | 6 | 2 | 10 | - | 6 | - | - | - | 13,050 | 420,893 | 433,943 | 10,220 | - | 6,300 | 16,520 | 417,423 |
| 26 Pomona, Lincoln Avenue Comm | DeBruyne, Richard | 62 | 92 | 6 | 75 | 173 | 61 | 152 | 13 | 6 | - | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 13,075 | 2,757 | 43,000 | 13,243 | 131,763 | 203,838 | 4,039 | 2,598 | 8,400 | 15,037 | 188,801 |
| 27 Redlands, Bethany | Vacant 07/15 | 60 | 75 | 5 | 2 | 82 | 14 | 75 | - | - | 1 | 5 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 14,128 | 174,825 | 188,953 | 6,913 | 5,988 | 13,738 | 26,639 | 162,314 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Redlands, Emmaus | Short, Forrest | 90 | 183 | 17 | 7 | 207 | 15 | 225 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 7 | - | 4,241 | - | - | 256,874 | 261,115 | 6,065 | - | 4,200 | 10,265 | 250,850 |
| 29 | Riverside, East Hills Comm | Schwarz, Mark | 268 | 186 | - | 101 | 287 | 113 | 347 | - | - | - | - | 9 | - | 3 | 30 | - | - | 5,250 | 732,688 | 737,968 | 25,178 | - | 67,640 | 92,818 | 645,150 |
| 30 | Riverside, Faith Comm | Bush, Deborah | 45 | 69 | 13 | 45 | 127 | 45 | 77 | 10 | 5 | 8 | 2 | - | 4 | 17 | - | - | 5,000 | - | 103,582 | 108,582 | 4,354 | - | 1,900 | 6,254 | 102,328 |
| *# 31 | San Jacinto, El Calvario | Gonzalez, Santos | 28 | 39 | 12 | 4 | 55 | 33 | 95 | 5 | - | - | - | 8 | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | 58,300 | 58,300 | - | - | 21,100 | 21,100 | 37,200 |
| 32 | Temecula, Rancho Comm | DeLeeuw, Scott | 925 | 1,000 | - | - | 1,000 | 325 | 2,661 | 44 | - | 18 | 6 | 20 | - | 162 | - | 760,128 | 7,333 | 7,230,339 | 4,267,292 | 12,265,092 | 111,116 | 11,831 | 241,084 | 364,031 | 11,901,061 |
| 33 | Winchester, Covenant Grace | Treadway, Scott<br>Cortez, Sebastian | 60 | 140 | 40 | 43 | 223 | 74 | 212 | 18 | 40 | 56 | 1 | - | 4 | 22 | - | 3,067 | 47,000 | - | 204,245 | 254,312 | 6,327 | - | 5,277 | 11,604 | 242,708 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 4,880 | 5,919 | 681 | 1,248 | 7,848 | 3,671 | 10,393 | 827 | 75 | 167 | 125 | 288 | 42 | 543 | 283,196 | 1,425,890 | 122,905 | 9,583,256 | 17,810,837 | 29,226,084 | 529,633 | 303,503 | 965,688 | 1,798,824 | 27,427,260 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **California** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 34 | Carson, Chosen Generation Fell | New Start | 10 | 20 | - | 3 | 23 | 20 | 15 | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 10,000 | 6,925 | 928 | 17,853 | - | - | 2,903 | 2,903 | 14,950 |
| !*#35 | Fountain Valley, City Lights | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#36 | Hemet, Covenant Grace | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#37 | Hesperia, Redeemer Comm | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#38 | Irvine, Orange | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#39 | Lakewood, Jardines Comunidad | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#40 | Long Beach, New Wine Comm | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 41 | Long Beach, Redemption | New Start | 43 | 56 | 8 | - | 64 | 20 | 55 | 1 | - | - | - | 8 | 2 | 3 | - | 47,750 | - | - | 141,450 | 189,200 | 5,892 | 2,400 | 54,950 | 63,242 | 125,958 |
| !*#42 | Menifee, Covenant Grace | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#43 | Mission Viejo, Disciples | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 44 | Moreno Valley, Reflections | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | 115 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | 22,000 | - | 68,015 | 90,015 | - | - | - | - | 90,015 |
| *#45 | Norwalk, Promesa | New Start | 10 | 25 | 2 | 15 | 42 | 2 | 28 | 15 | 15 | - | - | - | 10 | 15 | - | - | 2,500 | - | - | 2,500 | 100 | - | 100 | 200 | 2,300 |
| *#46 | Riverside, Reflections | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | 115 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8 | - | - | 22,100 | - | 56,421 | 78,521 | - | - | - | - | 78,521 |
| !*#47 | San Diego, Redemption | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *# 48 | San Diego, Westview | New Start | 30 | 55 | 3 | - | 58 | 6 | 50 | 55 | - | 6 | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | 10,040 | - | 58,997 | 69,037 | 750 | - | 3,600 | 4,350 | 64,687 |
| *# 49 | San Marcos, Infusion | New Start | 12 | 25 | - | 3 | 28 | 3 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 20 | - | - | 8,640 | - | 23,321 | 31,961 | 37,000 | - | 14,047 | 51,047 | (19,086) |
| !*#50 | Temecula, Dunamis | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#51 | Temecula, Rancho en Espanol | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | **Tennessee** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 52 | Franklin, Refuge | New Start | 21 | - | - | - | - | 80 | 65 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 100,000 | - | - | - | 20,000 | 120,000 | - | - | - | - | 120,000 |
| | **Texas** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 53 | Houston, Redeemer | New Start | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | 129 | 181 | 13 | 21 | 215 | 131 | 451 | 81 | 15 | 6 | - | 8 | 14 | 59 | 100,000 | 47,750 | 75,280 | 6,925 | 369,132 | 599,087 | 43,742 | 2,400 | 75,600 | 121,742 | 477,345 |
| | | Grand Total | 5,009 | 6,100 | 694 | 1,269 | 8,063 | 3,802 | 10,844 | 908 | 90 | 173 | 125 | 296 | 56 | 602 | 383,196 | 1,473,640 | 198,185 | 9,590,181 | 18,179,969 | 29,825,171 | 573,375 | 305,903 | 1,041,288 | 1,920,566 | 27,904,605 |

**Chaplains**
Cook, Bruce
Godwin-Stremler, William
Wang, Regina

**Inactive**
Garcia, Jesús
Park, Hyo Woo
Van Lant, David

**Missionary**
Alexander, David

**Planting minister**
Bai, Peter
Kim, Ezra Eun Mok
Setyawan, Samuel

**Retired**
Beadel, Ned
Bennett, William
Carpenter, Jack
Collier, Donald
De Jong, John
DeMaster, Glenn
Detrich, Richard
Draayer, Leon
Fikse, Leon
Foster, John
Haga, Henry
Hansma, Joel
Hartono, David
Henrichsen, Walter
Hoekstra, Harvey
Hoffs, Vernon
Hoglin, Wayne
Huls, Richard
Korver, Harold
Morgan, Rodwell
Ortiz, Juan
Richardson, Elzie
Simpson, Gregory
Smith, Ronald
Stevens, C. Wilburn (Bill)
Struikmans, Stephen
Tellinghuisen, Duane
Terry, Albert
Van Dyke, Peter
Van Earden, Robert
van Gessel, Douglas
Van Zee, Eugene
Vermeer, Kenneth
Wilkes, Lawrence

**Specialized ministry**
Beukelman, Roger
Bugbee, Bruce
Chavarria, Richard
Godwin-Stremler, Andrea
Hayes, Stephen
Leys, Lucas
Noordmans, Philip
Pinedo, Abner
Roozeboom, William
Scholte, John
Schuller, Robert
Soeter, J. Matthew
Soga, Keiji

**Without charge**
Baker, Edward
Blankers, Michael
Bordner, Charles
Choi, Simon
Jarvis, Bruce
Koster, William
Kwak, Sung Ryong (Daniel)
Kwon, Samuel
Lemos, Luiz
Sampson, Dunston
Son, David
Van Gorp, Daniel
Veenstra, Ralph

## Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF CASCADES

Stated clerk: Larry Martinsen, 1589 Polnell Rd, Oak Harbor, WA 98277-8603, 360-632-1287
Treasurer: Larry Martinsen, 1589 Polnell Rd, Oak Harbor, WA 98277-8603, 360-632-1287

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Idaho** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Meridian, Valley Life Comm | Katsma, Thomas | 50 | 87 | 11 | 45 | 143 | 38 | 160 | 19 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | 285,000 | 285,000 | 10,187 | 3,600 | 13,600 | 27,387 | 257,613 |
| 2 Twin Falls | Austin, Jonathon<br>Swoboda, Charles<br>Vriesman, Brian | 460 | 779 | 6 | 245 | 1,030 | 981 | 896 | 42 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 45 | 11 | 12 | 1,064 | 185,809 | - | 11,223 | 1,543,137 | 1,741,233 | 74,303 | 39,967 | 257,914 | 372,184 | 1,369,049 |
| 3 Wendell, New Life Comm | Westra, Garret | 70 | 123 | 6 | 40 | 169 | 70 | 115 | 10 | 2 | 7 | - | 1 | 4 | 2 | 112 | 337 | - | 1,120 | 240,954 | 242,523 | 12,196 | 6,692 | 3,835 | 22,723 | 219,800 |
| **Montana** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Great Falls, Christ's | Vacant 02/14 | 8 | 15 | - | 6 | 21 | - | 17 | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 70,000 | - | 10,021 | 80,021 | - | - | 1,500 | 1,500 | 78,521 |
| **Washington** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Blaine, Water's Edge | Carberry, James | 20 | 25 | 9 | 8 | 42 | 30 | 41 | 3 | 1 | 6 | - | - | 5 | 2 | 45,314 | - | 7,200 | - | 44,662 | 97,176 | - | - | 1,200 | 1,200 | 95,976 |
| 6 Edmonds, Faith Comm | Assink, Philip | 35 | 63 | 13 | 14 | 90 | 35 | 75 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 4 | - | 1 | 259 | 8,237 | 400 | 4,226 | 166,712 | 179,834 | 8,343 | 6,400 | 6,588 | 21,331 | 158,503 |
| 7 Federal Way, Lighthouse Korean | Lee, Ho Byong<br>Park, John | 19 | 22 | 37 | - | 59 | 61 | 53 | - | - | 31 | 5 | 31 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 92,469 | 92,469 | 3,500 | 1,500 | 3,000 | 8,000 | 84,469 |
| 8 Kent, Trinity Comm | Vacant 11/15 | 44 | 96 | 13 | 8 | 117 | 26 | 70 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 45 | 8 | - | 12 | 2,360 | 84,477 | 52,494 | 75,202 | 214,545 | 2,335 | - | 2,835 | 5,170 | 209,375 |
| 9 Lynden, Faith | Roskamp, Marcus | 95 | 138 | - | - | 138 | 30 | 115 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 24,942 | - | - | 6,103 | 286,968 | 318,013 | 17,350 | 22,237 | 10,965 | 50,552 | 267,461 |
| 10 Lynden, First | Bajema, Ryan | 292 | 559 | - | 314 | 873 | 18 | 494 | 36 | 25 | - | 6 | - | 10 | 1 | 127,165 | - | - | 51,969 | 951,582 | 1,130,716 | 39,112 | 12,300 | 68,769 | 120,181 | 1,010,535 |
| 11 Lynnwood, Refuge | Vacant 12/14 | 65 | 101 | 4 | - | 105 | 25 | 111 | 5 | - | 14 | - | 25 | - | - | 47 | - | - | 17,500 | 170,279 | 187,826 | 9,331 | - | 13,542 | 22,873 | 164,953 |
| 12 Nooksack, Nooksack Valley | Kleinhesselink, Charles | 139 | 274 | 6 | 131 | 411 | 24 | 280 | 7 | 3 | - | 1 | - | 10 | 1 | 22 | - | - | - | 333,533 | 333,555 | 19,698 | 1,500 | 39,503 | 60,701 | 272,854 |
| 13 Oak Harbor, First | Waite, Matthew | 177 | 300 | 21 | - | 321 | 155 | 258 | 7 | 2 | - | 10 | 21 | 4 | - | - | 12,580 | - | 15,063 | 488,140 | 515,783 | 32,505 | 6,166 | 69,998 | 108,669 | 407,114 |
| 14 Yakima, East Valley | Van Herk, William | 58 | 97 | 17 | 25 | 139 | 49 | 87 | 7 | - | 1 | - | 10 | 3 | 3 | 441 | 2,111 | - | 14,177 | 185,679 | 202,408 | 11,330 | 9,827 | 7,781 | 28,938 | 173,470 |
| | Organized Church Total | 1,532 | 2,679 | 143 | 836 | 3,658 | 1,542 | 2,772 | 144 | 46 | 71 | 36 | 182 | 55 | 27 | 199,378 | 211,434 | 162,077 | 173,875 | 4,874,338 | 5,621,102 | 240,190 | 110,189 | 501,030 | 851,409 | 4,769,693 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Oregon** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 Portland, Journey3 | Braband, Jay | 12 | 14 | - | - | 14 | 3 | 12 | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 8,400 | - | 61,311 | 69,711 | - | (3) | - | (3) | 69,714 |
| **Washington** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*# 16 Bellingham, Crossfit | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 17 Renton, Refugio | New Start | 15 | - | - | - | - | 54 | 48 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 8 | - | - | 12,000 | - | 16,900 | 28,900 | - | - | - | - | 28,900 |
| !*# 18 Seattle, Hope | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | New Church Start Total | 27 | 14 | - | - | 14 | 57 | 60 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 8 | - | - | 20,400 | - | 78,211 | 98,611 | - | (3) | - | (3) | 98,614 |
| | Grand Total | 1,559 | 2,693 | 143 | 836 | 3,672 | 1,599 | 2,832 | 144 | 46 | 71 | 36 | 184 | 57 | 35 | 199,378 | 211,434 | 182,477 | 173,875 | 4,952,549 | 5,719,713 | 240,190 | 110,186 | 501,030 | 851,406 | 4,868,307 |

**Chaplains**
Larson, Reynold (Ray)
Lightner, Keith

**Inactive**
Brower, Bernard
De Haan, John

**Planting minister**
Braband, Jay

**Retired**
Brandt, Donald
Brandt, Julius
Brown, Harold
Bruggink, Roger
Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley
Love, Frank
Raak, Perry
Reed, Catherine (Robin)
Schulze, Eric
Tamminga, Stephen
Van Manen, Norman
Van Wyk, Kenneth
Vander Aarde, Robert
Vander Voet, Richard
Wester, Arvin

**Specialized ministry**
Medina, Jason
Raak, Terika
Reynoso, Mark
Schaaf, Timothy
Schneider, Edward
Sittser, Gerald

**Without charge**
Beebe, Brandon
Haas, John
Riekse, Rebecca

## Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Stated clerk: Don Werkhoven, 4555 Barrett Rd, Carmichael, CA 95608-1107, 916-203-0965
Treasurer: Don Werkhoven, 4555 Barrett Rd, Carmichael, CA 95608-1107, 916-203-0965

| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | | | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **California** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * 1 | Brentwood, Impact Christian | With, Stephen | 20 | 18 | 30 | 13 | 61 | 55 | 90 | 11 | - | 10 | - | 22 | - | 13 | 10,000 | 8,910 | - | - | 149,924 | 168,834 | 1,500 | - | - | 1,500 | 167,334 |
| 2 | Carmichael, Christ Comm | Alderman, Gregory | 630 | 960 | 32 | 205 | 1,197 | 189 | 1,018 | 69 | - | 8 | 9 | 95 | 2 | 34 | 322 | 341,573 | - | 80,686 | 2,248,501 | 2,671,082 | 82,656 | 21,600 | 47,912 | 152,168 | 2,518,914 |
| 3 | Chowchilla, Cornerstone Comm | Scott, Michael | 147 | 274 | 15 | 99 | 388 | 195 | 427 | 4 | - | - | 3 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 192,418 | 1,141,035 | - | - | 1,473,454 | 2,806,907 | 29,900 | 45,456 | 145,565 | 220,921 | 2,585,986 |
| *# 4 | Clovis, Oak Hills | Pope, Roy | 49 | 72 | 5 | 7 | 84 | 25 | 80 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 5 | - | 46,270 | - | - | 229,202 | 275,472 | 5,480 | - | 5,400 | 10,880 | 264,592 |
| 5 | Fremont, New Hope Comm | Norman, Stephen | 42 | 57 | 7 | 7 | 71 | 28 | 53 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 85,124 | 93,074 | 178,198 | 5,850 | 80 | 6,245 | 12,175 | 166,023 |
| 6 | Fresno, Sequoia Comm | Pope, Nicholas | 80 | 30 | - | - | 30 | 100 | 81 | - | - | 5 | - | - | 4 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 1,560,000 | 1,560,000 | - | - | - | - | 1,560,000 |
| 7 | Modesto, Church of the Cross | Cowart, Donald | 61 | 85 | 8 | 18 | 111 | 17 | 86 | - | 2 | - | 1 | 10 | - | - | 95 | - | - | 14,839 | 243,208 | 258,142 | 8,813 | 18,336 | 11,554 | 38,703 | 219,439 |
| 8 | Oakland, Community | Robinson, Robbie | 60 | 71 | 5 | 6 | 82 | 25 | 54 | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 2,055 | 110 | 2,721 | 3,776 | 126,091 | 134,753 | 3,698 | 13,755 | 1,460 | 18,913 | 115,840 |
| 9 | Ripon, Calvary | Schutt, David | 337 | 484 | 153 | 217 | 854 | 24 | 368 | 6 | - | 2 | 5 | 15 | 5 | - | 351 | 260,514 | - | - | 1,143,363 | 1,404,228 | 38,434 | 35,045 | 78,756 | 152,235 | 1,251,993 |
| *# 10 | Sacramento, Chinese Comm | Lee, Louis | 55 | 68 | 22 | 34 | 124 | 45 | 88 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 3 | - | 1 | 1,262 | 12,356 | - | 61,000 | 112,556 | 187,174 | 7,409 | 4,555 | 20,225 | 32,189 | 154,985 |
| 11 | Sacramento, Cristianna Emmanuel | Bautista, Ana<br>Bautista, José | 48 | 98 | 11 | 7 | 116 | - | 169 | 5 | - | - | 1 | 34 | - | 6 | - | - | - | - | 63,338 | 63,338 | 2,615 | 425 | - | 3,040 | 60,298 |
| 12 | San Jose, Church of the Chimes | Banks, Beryl | 110 | 188 | 87 | 192 | 467 | 426 | 223 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 29 | - | 5 | 65 | - | - | 50,511 | 752,446 | 803,022 | 38,424 | 5,700 | 56,365 | 100,489 | 702,533 |
| 13 | San Jose, Journey | Vacant 05/16 | 35 | 40 | 10 | 80 | 130 | 140 | 110 | - | - | - | - | 20 | 4 | 8 | - | - | - | 8,000 | 353,990 | 361,990 | 8,894 | - | 7,100 | 15,994 | 345,996 |
| 14 | San Mateo, Grace Gospel | Theonugraha, David | 40 | 65 | - | 5 | 70 | 20 | 65 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 164,300 | 164,300 | 7,198 | - | - | 7,198 | 157,102 |
| #15 | Shafter, New Hope Comm** | Moorhead, David | 21 | 39 | 7 | 4 | 50 | 72 | 85 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | 5,000 | - | 232,800 | 237,800 | - | - | 5,141 | 5,141 | 232,659 |
| 16 | Sonoma, Sonoma Valley Comm | Arensmeier, Timothy | 36 | 30 | 4 | - | 34 | 23 | 27 | - | - | - | 1 | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 101,497 | 101,497 | 3,101 | 4,574 | 12,552 | 20,227 | 81,270 |
| 17 | Tulare, Community | Peterson, Roger<br>Teerman, Daniel | 253 | 491 | 25 | 194 | 710 | 182 | 450 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 2 | - | 11 | 10 | - | - | 9,600 | 10,940 | 1,638,448 | 1,658,988 | 55,794 | 32,565 | 213,100 | 301,459 | 1,357,529 |
| *# 18 | Tulare, New Life Comm | Dodson, Larry | 36 | 69 | 21 | 18 | 108 | 12 | 66 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1,200 | 68,772 | 69,972 | 1,952 | - | 4,500 | 6,452 | 63,520 |
| 19 | Tulare, Sunrise Comm | Siders, Russell | 64 | 115 | 4 | 19 | 138 | 30 | 150 | 7 | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | 29 | - | - | 200 | 341,394 | 341,623 | 10,806 | 9,536 | 10,790 | 31,132 | 310,491 |
| 20 | Visalia, Grace Lahu | Saesee, Aidor | 45 | 88 | 4 | 88 | 180 | 8 | 88 | 9 | - | 4 | 1 | - | 42 | 98 | - | - | - | - | 580 | 580 | - | - | - | - | 580 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 2,169 | 3,342 | 450 | 1,213 | 5,005 | 1,616 | 3,778 | 147 | 11 | 55 | 35 | 264 | 85 | 192 | 206,597 | 1,810,768 | 17,321 | 316,276 | 11,096,938 | 13,447,900 | 312,524 | 191,627 | 626,665 | 1,130,816 | 12,317,084 |

**New Church Starts**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **California** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *# | 21 Ceres, Emmanuel de Riverbank | Dominguez, Aurelio | - | 34 | 20 | 14 | 68 | 7 | 48 | - | - | - | - | 10 | 3 | 11 | 2,000 | 3,500 | 3,000 | 5,000 | 23,345 | 36,845 | 1,500 | 16,200 | 15,377 | 33,077 | 3,768 |
| | 22 Chowchilla, Emmanuel | New Start | 23 | 64 | - | 6 | 70 | 8 | 72 | 15 | 2 | 15 | - | - | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | - | 600 | 600 | - | - | - | - | 600 |
| *# | 23 Clovis, La Roca Comm | New Start | 12 | 30 | - | 20 | 50 | 25 | 40 | 35 | - | 5 | - | - | - | 25 | - | - | - | - | 10,000 | 10,000 | - | - | - | - | 10,000 |
| *# | 24 Delano, Adoracion | New Start | 4 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 19 | 6 | 16 | 3 | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 9,400 | - | 400 | 9,800 | - | - | - | - | 9,800 |
| !*# | 25 Dinuba, Casa de Adoracion | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# | 26 Earlimart, Nuevo Dia | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# | 27 Fresno, Crossing Comm | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# | 28 Fresno, House Church | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *# | 29 Fresno, Koinonia | New Start | 80 | 150 | 10 | - | 160 | 10 | 180 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 30 | 5,000 | 14,785 | 5,500 | - | 104,143 | 129,428 | - | - | 4,174 | 4,174 | 125,254 |
| *# | 30 Fresno, Koinonia Downtown | New Start | 10 | 30 | 9 | - | 39 | - | 30 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 3,000 | - | 4,038 | 7,038 | - | - | - | - | 7,038 |
| | 31 Fresno, Via | New Start | 110 | 130 | 30 | 30 | 190 | 50 | 155 | 15 | 15 | 25 | - | - | - | 15 | - | 400,000 | 7,000 | - | 300,000 | 707,000 | - | - | 5,000 | 5,000 | 702,000 |
| !*# | 32 Porterville, Casa de Adoracion | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *# | 33 Tipton, Casa de Adoracion | New Start | 18 | 32 | 25 | - | 57 | 22 | 40 | 14 | - | 25 | - | - | - | 5 | 50 | - | 100,500 | - | 10,569 | 111,119 | - | - | - | - | 111,119 |
| *# | 34 Tulare, Adoracion | New Start | 11 | 17 | 12 | - | 29 | 11 | 19 | 8 | 8 | 5 | - | 6 | 2 | - | - | - | 94,400 | - | 9,148 | 103,548 | - | - | 43,800 | 43,800 | 59,748 |
| *# | 35 Tulare, Bethesda Comm | New Start | 20 | 30 | - | 38 | 68 | 42 | 38 | 30 | - | 15 | 1 | - | 5 | 2 | 1,400 | - | - | - | 16,800 | 18,200 | - | - | - | - | 18,200 |
| !*# | 36 Visalia, Pipeline | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | 288 | 527 | 111 | 112 | 750 | 181 | 638 | 120 | 28 | 92 | 1 | 16 | 12 | 96 | 8,450 | 418,285 | 222,800 | 5,000 | 479,043 | 1,133,578 | 1,500 | 16,200 | 68,351 | 86,051 | 1,047,527 |
| | | Grand Total | 2,457 | 3,869 | 561 | 1,325 | 5,755 | 1,797 | 4,416 | 267 | 39 | 147 | 36 | 280 | 97 | 288 | 215,047 | 2,229,053 | 240,121 | 321,276 | 11,575,981 | 14,581,478 | 314,024 | 207,827 | 695,016 | 1,216,867 | 13,364,611 |

**Chaplains**
Decker, Dwayne

**Inactive**
Ramage, Timothy

**Retired**
Bovenkerk, Warren
DeDoes, Raymond
Hammond, Donald
Menning, G. Lloyd
Mondeel, Peter
Morton, Douglas
Oldenburger, John
Overbeek, Karl
Schoon, James
Schreuder, David
Vogelaar, Carl
Working, Kenneth
Yap, Moody

**Specialized ministry**
Blom, Charles
Davelaar, Gerald
Harney, Kevin
Hayes, Michael
Kladder, Dean
Poppen, Keith

**Without charge**
Bailey, Dwight
Boeve, Timothy
Kreiser, Jeffrey
Rowe, Donald
VanHofwegen, Robert

## Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF THE CITY

Stated clerk: Jonathan Gundlach, 1388 Sutter St Ste 412, San Francisco, CA 94109-5400, 415-346-6994 ext 124
Treasurer: Jonathan Gundlach, 1388 Sutter St Ste 412, San Francisco, CA 94109-5400, 415-346-6994 ext 124

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **California** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Paramount, Emmanuel | Korver, Kenley<br>Korver, Klarc<br>Nearpass, David<br>Schuring, Matthew | 756 | 1,057 | 53 | 271 | 1,381 | 3,404 | 1,650 | 18 | - | - | 6 | 58 | 16 | 9 | 1,712 | 80,233 | - | 481,656 | 3,651,602 | 4,215,203 | 99,697 | 34,365 | 406,591 | 540,653 | 3,674,550 |
| 2 | San Francisco, City Church | Gundlach, Jonathan<br>Harrell, Fred<br>Nault, Matthew<br>Sherman, M. Scot<br>Trudeau, Paul<br>VanDerVeen Van Til, Julie<br>Wilson, James | 335 | 499 | 56 | 164 | 719 | 1,002 | 654 | 9 | 44 | - | 1 | 139 | 35 | 9 | 1,568 | - | - | 159,842 | 4,392,615 | 4,554,025 | 87,328 | 47,999 | 455,117 | 590,444 | 3,963,581 |
| | **Colorado** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Boulder, All Souls | Forsythe, William | 65 | 109 | 10 | 15 | 134 | 40 | 175 | 25 | 2 | 6 | - | 3 | 10 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 267,000 | 267,000 | 5,000 | 7,500 | 5,000 | 17,500 | 249,500 |
| 4 | Denver, City | Van Oort, Harlan | 35 | 56 | - | 27 | 83 | 30 | 70 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 270,327 | 270,327 | 7,200 | - | 15,500 | 22,700 | 247,627 |
| | **Illinois** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *#5 | Chicago, Grace | Reid, Robert | 47 | 68 | 3 | 5 | 76 | 125 | 59 | 2 | - | 3 | - | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 321,700 | 321,700 | - | 6,204 | 6,500 | 12,704 | 308,996 |
| | **Pennsylvania** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *#6 | Philadelphia, Liberti | Ayers, Jared | 176 | 278 | 75 | 39 | 392 | 451 | 235 | 75 | - | 30 | 1 | - | 6 | 6 | 6,114 | 602,500 | - | 14,195 | 1,005,959 | 1,628,768 | - | - | 25,027 | 25,027 | 1,603,741 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 1,414 | 2,067 | 197 | 521 | 2,785 | 5,052 | 2,843 | 129 | 46 | 39 | 8 | 200 | 73 | 30 | 9,394 | 682,733 | - | 655,693 | 9,909,203 | 11,257,023 | 199,225 | 96,068 | 913,735 | 1,209,028 | 10,047,995 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **California** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Compton, City | Dirkse, Patrick | 28 | 70 | - | - | 70 | 50 | 80 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 4 | - | 25,000 | 22,000 | 20,000 | 70,000 | 137,000 | - | 2,000 | 8,000 | 10,000 | 127,000 |
| *# | 8 Compton, Shekinah | New Start | 50 | 20 | 15 | 18 | 53 | 2 | 40 | 38 | 2 | 3 | - | 40 | - | 18 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *# | 9 Garden Grove, Grace | Barber, Carole | 22 | 10 | - | 22 | 32 | 9 | 27 | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 396 | 9,000 | - | 74,722 | 84,118 | - | 500 | 1,034 | 1,534 | 82,584 |
| | 10 Long Beach, City | Cano, Christopher<br>White, William | 50 | 99 | - | 99 | 198 | 63 | 162 | 10 | - | 5 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 7 | - | - | 24,667 | - | 218,648 | 243,315 | - | 2,519 | 26,213 | 28,732 | 214,583 |
| !*# | 11 Oakland, City | McPaul, Josh | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | 150 | 199 | 15 | 139 | 353 | 124 | 309 | 58 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 48 | 9 | 29 | - | 25,396 | 55,667 | 20,000 | 363,370 | 464,433 | - | 5,019 | 35,247 | 40,266 | 424,167 |
| | | Grand Total | 1,564 | 2,266 | 212 | 660 | 3,138 | 5,176 | 3,152 | 187 | 48 | 47 | 9 | 248 | 82 | 59 | 9,394 | 708,129 | 55,667 | 675,693 | 10,272,573 | 11,721,456 | 199,225 | 101,087 | 948,982 | 1,249,294 | 10,472,162 |

**General Synod professor**
Kors, Cornelis

**Missionary**
Fields, Andrew

**Planting minister**
Angehr, James
Barber, Carole
Barber, Larry
Bartholomew, Tuck
Cano, Christopher
Currie, Chris
Dirkse, Patrick
White, William

**Professor/teacher in RCA institution**
DeGroat, Charles

**Specialized ministry**
Aladeen, Robin
Alemán, Eddy
Baker, Alan
Crawford, William
Doebler, Charles
Kors, Cornelis
Kuecker, Aaron
Mingin, Anni
Nelson, Frances
Zylstra, Nicholas

**Without charge**
Adkisson, Marshall
Brown, Kenneth
Figueroa, Jose
Gannon, Daniel
Noh, Eugene
Wood, Andrew
Yamamoto, Andrew

## Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Stated clerk: Susan Keesen, Faith Community Church, 6228 S Carr Ct, Littleton, CO 80123-3213, 303-324-9271
Treasurer: Susan Keesen, Faith Community Church, 6228 S Carr Ct, Littleton, CO 80123-3213, 303-324-9271

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Colorado** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Aurora, New Hope Comm | Schuiling, Philip | 126 | 175 | 28 | 24 | 227 | 135 | 149 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 5 | 1 | 404,055 | - | - | 29,777 | 289,755 | 723,587 | 11,983 | 8,500 | 20,968 | 41,451 | 682,136 |
| 2 Colorado Springs, Springs Comm | Brooks, Benjamin<br>Carpenter, Eric | 193 | 300 | 3 | 225 | 528 | 186 | 332 | 15 | - | 1 | 2 | 20 | - | 33 | 600 | - | - | 101,862 | 736,177 | 838,639 | 32,827 | 27,773 | 63,275 | 123,875 | 714,764 |
| 3 Denver, Christ Comm | Van Dusseldorp, Bruce | 75 | 112 | 11 | 46 | 169 | 22 | 75 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 9,866 | - | 48,345 | 169,664 | 227,875 | 11,756 | 3,622 | 5,962 | 21,340 | 206,535 |
| 4 Denver, Mountain View Comm | Vacant 05/07 | 19 | 19 | 5 | - | 24 | 4 | 17 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 26,012 | 26,012 | 52,024 | 3,206 | - | 3,890 | 7,096 | 44,928 |
| 5 Lakewood, Our Saviour's | Pearson, A. Eugene | 87 | 118 | 38 | 24 | 180 | 41 | 77 | 3 | - | - | 5 | 6 | 1 | - | - | 34,015 | - | 18,786 | 171,430 | 224,231 | 10,121 | 2,274 | 15,095 | 27,490 | 196,741 |
| 6 Littleton, Faith Comm | Allen, Jeffrey | 89 | 146 | 19 | 14 | 179 | 60 | 154 | 5 | 2 | - | 4 | 15 | - | 10 | 8,976 | 17,015 | 10,650 | 40,677 | 293,393 | 370,711 | 13,922 | 26,891 | 12,133 | 52,946 | 317,765 |
| 7 Monument, Forest Ridge Comm | Miller, Timothy | 20 | 28 | 10 | - | 38 | 100 | 107 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 327,472 | 327,472 | 12,780 | - | - | 12,780 | 314,692 |
| 8 Wheat Ridge, Harvest Christian | King, Kathleen | 28 | 39 | 5 | 1 | 45 | 16 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 450 | 739 | 3,025 | 54,816 | 59,030 | - | - | 1,241 | 1,241 | 57,789 |
| **New Mexico** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 Dulce, Jicarilla Apache | Kautz, Bradley | 39 | 45 | 5 | 37 | 87 | 27 | 45 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 14 | - | 1,830 | - | 9,500 | 3,954 | 26,250 | 41,534 | 5,204 | 6,670 | 2,384 | 14,258 | 27,276 |
| | Organized Church Total | 676 | 982 | 124 | 371 | 1,477 | 591 | 991 | 28 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 41 | 20 | 46 | 415,461 | 61,346 | 20,889 | 272,438 | 2,094,969 | 2,865,103 | 101,799 | 75,730 | 124,948 | 302,477 | 2,562,626 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Colorado** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 Denver, Doulos Korean | Park, Benjamin Byoung Eun | 11 | 13 | - | 13 | 26 | 2 | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 40,000 | 40,000 | - | 1,200 | 1,200 | 2,400 | 37,600 |
| 11 Englewood, CenterPoint | New Start | 29 | 39 | - | - | 39 | 24 | 38 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 9,000 | 100 | 17,250 | 26,350 | - | - | - | - | 26,350 |
| 12 Littleton, Apex | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | 30 | 50 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | 49,334 | - | 45,682 | 95,016 | - | - | - | - | 95,016 |
| | New Church Start Total | 40 | 52 | - | 13 | 65 | 56 | 103 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 4 | - | - | 58,334 | 100 | 102,932 | 161,366 | - | 1,200 | 1,200 | 2,400 | 158,966 |
| | Grand Total | 716 | 1,034 | 124 | 384 | 1,542 | 647 | 1,094 | 28 | 5 | 1 | 18 | 41 | 20 | 50 | 415,461 | 61,346 | 79,223 | 272,538 | 2,197,901 | 3,026,469 | 101,799 | 76,930 | 126,148 | 304,877 | 2,721,592 |

**Chaplains**
Peterson, Steven
Teague, Tyler

**Planting minister**
Park, Benjamin Byoung Eun

**Retired**
Gray, Ronald
Grooters, David
Gross, Ronald
Harris, Thomas
Klaver, Dick
Moore, James
Pelley, Dennis
Perea, Stanley
Phillips, David
Rymes, Ivan
Schmitt, Kenneth
Seely, Edward
Van Dusseldorp, Eugene
Van Kampen, Wayne
Van Wyk Phillips, Nancy

**Specialized ministry**
Blakeslee, Ann
DeBruyn, Arthur
Ebersole, Gail
Gilbert, Craig
Kim, Peter
Ooms, Russell
Orange, Donald
Warntjes, Jordan

**Without charge**
Burtoft, Larry
Robinson, J. Andrew
Yoo, Young

## Regional Synod of the Far West CLASSIS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Stated clerk: Fred Bates, Christ's Community Church, 4530 W Thunderbird Rd, Glendale, AZ 85306-5026, 602-978-3075
Treasurer: Lynn Fischer, 18505 E Superstition Dr, Queen Creek, AZ 85142-5152, 480-988-1755

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld | Conf Mbrs | Inact Mbrs | Bapt Mbrs | Total Mbrs | Adh | Avg Worshp Attend | Gains Conf | Gains Cert | Losses Trans | Losses Decd | Losses Other | Bapt Infant | Bapt Adult | No Liv Don | Spec Offering | RCA Assem | Programs | Offerings | Total Income | Assmnts | RCA Contrib | Other Contrib | Total Amount | Congr Purpose |
| | | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (18a) | (18b) | (18c) | (18d) | (18e) | (18) | (19a) | (19b) | (19c) | (19) | (20) |
| | **Arizona** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Gilbert, New Hope Comm | Poit, James | 120 | 166 | 37 | 27 | 230 | 142 | 246 | - | - | 5 | 4 | 27 | 1 | - | - | 29,935 | - | 16,200 | 295,630 | 341,765 | 15,938 | 7,200 | 1,650 | 24,788 | 316,977 |
| 2 | Glendale, Christ's Comm | Wieland, Randal | 152 | 213 | 5 | 39 | 257 | 7 | 486 | 20 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 12 | 1 | 12 | 700 | - | - | 22,691 | 765,515 | 788,906 | 23,666 | 16,528 | 39,154 | 79,348 | 709,558 |
| 3 | Phoenix, Longview Comm | Hubert, Agustin | 70 | 65 | - | 49 | 114 | 20 | 180 | 10 | - | 4 | - | - | 6 | 14 | - | - | - | 12,332 | 106,665 | 118,997 | 5,088 | - | - | 5,088 | 113,909 |
| 4 | Prescott, Community | Ellis, Corinne<br>Ellis, David | 125 | 162 | 14 | - | 176 | 25 | 129 | 14 | - | - | 7 | 10 | - | - | 20,019 | 117,928 | 6,000 | 3,853 | 235,370 | 383,170 | 13,678 | 7,150 | 19,039 | 39,867 | 343,303 |
| 5 | Tucson, Cortaro Vista Comm | Vande Berg, Ted | 69 | 114 | 8 | 16 | 138 | 49 | 107 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 4 | - | 5 | 3 | - | 2,683 | - | 6,900 | 149,056 | 158,639 | 7,118 | 7,717 | 17,040 | 31,875 | 126,764 |
| | **New Mexico** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Los Alamos, United** | Elton, David | 38 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | 127 | - | - | - | 8 | - | - | - | 18,402 | 58,153 | - | 3,226 | 91,050 | 170,831 | 1,250 | 2,000 | 19,831 | 23,081 | 147,750 |
| 7 | Mescalero | Vellinga, Mark | 52 | 71 | 41 | 38 | 150 | 23 | 74 | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | - | 5 | - | - | - | 4,398 | 1,670 | 60,712 | 66,780 | 4,932 | 7,700 | 7,777 | 20,409 | 46,371 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 626 | 791 | 106 | 169 | 1,066 | 269 | 1,349 | 67 | 4 | 19 | 30 | 49 | 18 | 29 | 39,121 | 208,699 | 10,398 | 66,872 | 1,703,998 | 2,029,088 | 71,670 | 48,295 | 104,491 | 224,456 | 1,804,632 |

**Chaplains**
Lungu, Edward
Wolff, Cathleen

**Retired**
Busman, John
De Boer, William
Doidge, Fred
Dykehouse, Russell
Guild-Donovan, Anne
Hine, Richard
Jansma, Donald
Koerselman, Richard
Laverman, Bruce
Marvel, Judith
Myers, Bob
Otto, Robert
Parsil, Edwin
Spencer, Robert
Van Mantgem, John

**Specialized ministry**
Hetrick, Susan
Kammeraad, Lynne
Oh, Youm Yoon
Stapert, John

**Without charge**
Kooiman, Scott
VanGalder, Loren

## Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF GREAT LAKES CITY

Stated clerk: Tricia Leistra, 4500 60th St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512, 616-541-0846
Treasurer: Randy Vander Lugt, 2900 28th St SW Ste B, Grandville, MI 49418, 616-949-9030 ext 13

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Kentucky** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Annville, Grace Covenant Ministries | | 68 | 99 | 25 | 21 | 145 | 45 | 141 | 4 | - | 4 | 8 | - | - | 2 | - | 9,141 | - | 3,670 | 119,780 | 132,591 | 9,027 | 1,600 | 3,608 | 14,235 | 118,356 |
| Annville, Community | Scholten, Robert | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gray Hawk | Elam, Jason | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| McKee | Hays, Calvin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Allen Park, Grace | Hunt, Bruce | 67 | 102 | 18 | - | 120 | 36 | 144 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 | - | 4 | - | 12,964 | - | 2,500 | 177,246 | 192,710 | 11,016 | 1,125 | 4,175 | 16,316 | 176,394 |
| 3 Ann Arbor, Grace | Beyer, Jonathan | 182 | 285 | 59 | 145 | 489 | 570 | 755 | 24 | - | 86 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 15 | - | 4,800 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 941,279 | 956,079 | 27,500 | 18,000 | 62,000 | 107,500 | 848,579 |
| | Kim, Sung | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Byron Center, Corinth | Nyp, Scott | 633 | 1,055 | 42 | 627 | 1,724 | 575 | 1,197 | 49 | 75 | 12 | 10 | 42 | 31 | 6 | - | 336,039 | - | - | 1,895,416 | 2,231,455 | 94,484 | 14,000 | 120,306 | 228,790 | 2,002,665 |
| | Porter, Donald | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Sowers, E. Jay | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Byron Center, First | DePoy, Jonathan | 166 | 215 | 52 | 53 | 320 | 16 | 175 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 7 | - | 1 | - | 7,444 | 9,000 | - | 4,350 | 367,089 | 387,883 | 20,313 | 8,141 | 33,388 | 61,842 | 326,041 |
| | Van Elderen, Peter | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Byron Center, RiverTree Comm | Shearer, Christian | 55 | 75 | - | 36 | 111 | 27 | 80 | 2 | - | 4 | - | - | 4 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 136,000 | 136,000 | 5,800 | - | - | 5,800 | 130,200 |
| 7 Byron Center, Woodhaven | Petroelje, Steven | 150 | 276 | 20 | 144 | 440 | 33 | 207 | 8 | 11 | 4 | 5 | - | 1 | 1 | 130 | - | - | 4,499 | 454,119 | 458,748 | 23,485 | 8,450 | 18,243 | 50,178 | 408,570 |
| 8 Detroit, Nardin Park | Morris, Robert | 32 | 50 | - | - | 50 | 15 | 50 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 31,000 | 10,452 | 66,400 | 107,852 | 8,322 | - | 3,400 | 11,722 | 96,130 |
| 9 Grand Rapids, Branch | DeBlaay, Christopher | 37 | 33 | - | 67 | 100 | 38 | 100 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | 1,500 | - | - | 120,838 | 122,338 | 3,931 | - | - | 3,931 | 118,407 |
| 10 Grand Rapids, Fifth | Farrand, Chad | 246 | 490 | 20 | 155 | 665 | 79 | 378 | 3 | 16 | 5 | 13 | 20 | 7 | - | - | - | - | 4,150 | 967,581 | 971,731 | 50,894 | 78,831 | 91,412 | 221,137 | 750,594 |
| | Sherrill, Jonathan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Wall, Joshua | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 Grand Rapids, Hope | McCreary, Deborah | 77 | 124 | - | 15 | 139 | 12 | 73 | 2 | 2 | - | 3 | - | 8 | - | 2,737 | 28,403 | 10,000 | 19,720 | 191,101 | 251,961 | 11,245 | 27,019 | 33,564 | 71,828 | 180,133 |
| | Te Winkle, W. Peter | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 Grand Rapids, Immanuel | Smilde, Brian | 81 | 137 | 7 | 33 | 177 | 22 | 109 | - | - | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | 5,303 | - | - | 4,694 | 306,761 | 316,758 | 13,368 | 8,845 | 44,684 | 66,897 | 249,861 |
| 13 Grand Rapids, Providence | VandenBerg, Jan Arie | 20 | 55 | 2 | 50 | 107 | - | 130 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 224,661 | 224,661 | 4,608 | - | 503 | 5,111 | 219,550 |
| 14 Grand Rapids, Thornapple Comm | Dieffenbach, Tim | 91 | 169 | 11 | 65 | 245 | 25 | 131 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | - | 17 | - | - | - | 355,256 | 355,273 | 14,092 | 23,731 | 12,643 | 50,466 | 304,807 |
| | Frens, Kent | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 Grandville, First | Cook, Matthew | 325 | 638 | 22 | 168 | 828 | 15 | 440 | 21 | 8 | 8 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 12 | - | 817,269 | - | - | 929,468 | 1,746,737 | 56,722 | 67,193 | 135,848 | 259,763 | 1,486,974 |
| | Pratt, Paul | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 Grandville, Zion | Brower, Gregory | 151 | 279 | 20 | 66 | 365 | 37 | 215 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 77 | 6 | - | 5,697 | - | - | 12,525 | 539,343 | 557,565 | 26,648 | 27,000 | 44,528 | 98,176 | 459,389 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Hudsonville, Harbor Churches | Elenbaas, Thomas<br>Graham, Joe<br>Klunder, Jack | 1,068 | 2,011 | 156 | 968 | 3,135 | 270 | 2,593 | 65 | - | 13 | 9 | 43 | 100 | 105 | - | 198,440 | 50,000 | 48,483 | 3,731,543 | 4,028,466 | 172,080 | 9,728 | 225,062 | 406,870 | 3,621,596 |
| | Byron Center, South Harbor | Wilson, Timothy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Grandville, Harbor Chapel | Vacant 07/15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Grandville, Harbor Life | Smith, Tanner | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Hudsonville, Fair Haven | VanArendonk, Scott<br>Vander Meer, Gregory | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | Jenison, Hager Park | Kleinheksel, Mark | 111 | 230 | 15 | 102 | 347 | 18 | 170 | 3 | 3 | 4 | - | 23 | 7 | - | - | - | - | 280 | 399,746 | 400,026 | 21,263 | 2,860 | 37,474 | 61,597 | 338,429 |
| 19 | Jenison, Rosewood | Goldschmeding, James<br>Moths, Howard | 203 | 453 | 107 | 102 | 662 | 56 | 265 | 14 | 3 | 7 | 4 | - | 7 | - | 18 | 43,052 | - | 6,895 | 684,753 | 734,718 | 43,629 | 39,080 | 42,535 | 125,244 | 609,474 |
| 20 | Kentwood, Home Acres | Dalman, Darrell | 33 | 56 | 2 | 8 | 66 | 25 | 60 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | - | 2,329 | - | 10,700 | 19,156 | 103,740 | 135,925 | 5,600 | - | 6,035 | 11,635 | 124,290 |
| 21 | Kentwood, Unity | Bergsma, Mark | 115 | 175 | 10 | 33 | 218 | 5 | 160 | 1 | - | 3 | 10 | 10 | 1 | - | 82,415 | - | - | - | 277,682 | 360,097 | 22,854 | 6,000 | 13,700 | 42,554 | 317,543 |
| 22 | Lansing, Immanuel Comm | Heusinkveld, Richard | 85 | 158 | 17 | 38 | 213 | 30 | 165 | 4 | - | 2 | 3 | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 354,528 | 354,528 | 14,329 | 15,500 | 16,800 | 46,629 | 307,899 |
| 23 | Wayland, Gun Lake Comm | Beyer, Daniel | 247 | 452 | 77 | 168 | 697 | 242 | 547 | 22 | 3 | 8 | 1 | - | 12 | 8 | 1,303 | 65,904 | - | 8,720 | 907,503 | 983,430 | 53,460 | 25,071 | 43,892 | 122,423 | 861,007 |
| 24 | Wayland, Voice of Hope | Christy, Richard | 23 | 35 | 12 | 20 | 67 | 44 | 41 | 5 | 2 | 5 | - | 3 | 2 | 9 | - | 696 | - | 77 | 51,734 | 52,507 | 1,264 | - | 1,437 | 2,701 | 49,806 |
| *#25 | Wyoming, Beverly | Vacant 01/15 | 153 | 257 | 12 | 69 | 338 | 7 | 148 | - | 6 | 4 | 9 | 3 | - | - | 103 | 44,379 | - | 5,400 | 318,995 | 368,877 | 25,786 | 27,050 | 7,099 | 59,935 | 308,942 |
| 26 | Wyoming, Eighth | Langenberg, Robert | 47 | 68 | 5 | 12 | 85 | 13 | 45 | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | - | 19,143 | - | 12,000 | - | 81,281 | 112,424 | 5,000 | 4,000 | - | 9,000 | 103,424 |
| 27 | Wyoming, Faith | Osbeck, Bruce | 102 | 148 | 41 | 35 | 224 | 10 | 95 | 3 | - | 1 | 5 | - | 2 | 2 | 540 | - | - | - | 199,808 | 200,348 | 14,180 | 6,375 | 10,340 | 30,895 | 169,453 |
| 28 | Wyoming, Grace | Oppenhuizen, Rick | 115 | 182 | 7 | 82 | 271 | 1 | 114 | 5 | - | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | - | (629) | 3,593 | - | - | 314,405 | 317,369 | 16,532 | 14,131 | 9,535 | 40,198 | 277,171 |
| 29 | Wyoming, Newhall Comm | Kroeze, Daniel | 96 | 144 | - | 49 | 193 | 25 | 110 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1,914 | 24,000 | - | 316 | 167,465 | 193,695 | 13,008 | 3,000 | 16,413 | 32,421 | 161,274 |
| 30 | Wyoming, Open Hearts Comm | Milkamp, Mark | 31 | 40 | - | 37 | 77 | 23 | 60 | 4 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 137,928 | 137,928 | 1,012 | - | 4,932 | 5,944 | 131,984 |
| | **Ohio** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | Brooklyn | Czirr, Carl | 75 | 105 | 4 | 6 | 115 | 18 | 95 | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 4,990 | 50,000 | 325 | 200,291 | 255,606 | 13,008 | 10,100 | 9,529 | 32,637 | 222,969 |
| 32 | Brunswick | Carroll, Jay<br>Toot, Daniel | 158 | 257 | 173 | 153 | 583 | 150 | 271 | 11 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 4 | 8 | 7 | 1,226 | 50,000 | - | 488,020 | 539,253 | 25,836 | 14,111 | 9,450 | 49,397 | 489,856 |
| 33 | Cleveland, Calvary | Van Farowe, Dean | 33 | 50 | 5 | 29 | 84 | 55 | 64 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 5,148 | 28,535 | 1,905 | 74,653 | 110,241 | 4,608 | 1,465 | 518 | 6,591 | 103,650 |
| 34 | Fairview Park, New Hope | Sewell, Daniel | 64 | 88 | 17 | 23 | 128 | 66 | 151 | 5 | - | - | 1 | 18 | 1 | - | - | - | 50,000 | - | 156,798 | 206,798 | 10,388 | 3,020 | 8,522 | 21,930 | 184,868 |
| 35 | Lewis Center, CenterPoint | Weller, Nathan | 103 | 152 | 7 | 67 | 226 | 165 | 383 | 8 | 6 | - | - | - | 3 | 11 | 176 | 71,326 | 103,833 | 236,290 | 377,687 | 789,312 | 11,380 | (3) | 4,992 | 16,369 | 772,943 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 5,243 | 9,143 | 965 | 3,646 | 13,754 | 2,768 | 9,862 | 305 | 164 | 198 | 133 | 276 | 222 | 193 | 128,647 | 1,681,870 | 401,068 | 399,407 | 16,820,898 | 19,431,890 | 856,672 | 465,423 | 1,076,567 | 2,398,662 | 17,033,228 |

**New Church Starts**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 36 | Allegan, Bridge | New Start | 42 | 170 | 7 | 16 | 193 | 20 | 130 | 9 | - | 1 | - | 7 | - | 7 | - | - | - | - | 113,890 | 113,890 | - | - | 4,800 | 4,800 | 109,090 |
| 37 | Caledonia, New Ground | Matzen, Brent | 60 | 61 | - | 6 | 67 | 50 | 115 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 3 | 3 | - | 4,000 | 52,000 | - | 168,109 | 224,109 | 10,086 | - | 9,599 | 19,685 | 204,424 |
| !*#38 | Detroit, El Reino de Dios | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#39 | Detroit, Hesed | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#40 | Grand Rapids, Missional Comm | DeBlaay, Christopher | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*#41 | Grand Rapids, Nepali-Speaking | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *#42 | Wyoming, Connections | Grevenstuk, George | 24 | - | - | - | - | - | 37 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 36,493 | 10,500 | 2,400 | 49,393 | - | - | - | - | 49,393 |
| *#43 | Wyoming, Elevation | New Start | 43 | - | - | 14 | 14 | 60 | 65 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 13 | - | 2,483 | 33,101 | - | 37,972 | 73,556 | - | 2,997 | 840 | 3,837 | 69,719 |
| 44 | Wyoming, Lifeline Comm | New Start | 37 | - | - | - | - | 100 | 100 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 7 | 7 | - | - | 23,750 | - | 47,653 | 71,403 | 2,436 | - | - | 2,436 | 68,967 |
| | **Ohio** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*#45 | Cleveland, Renew | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | 206 | 231 | 7 | 36 | 274 | 230 | 447 | 9 | - | 2 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 30 | - | 6,483 | 145,344 | 10,500 | 370,024 | 532,351 | 12,522 | 2,997 | 15,239 | 30,758 | 501,593 |
| | | Grand Total | 5,449 | 9,374 | 972 | 3,682 | 14,028 | 2,998 | 10,309 | 314 | 164 | 200 | 134 | 283 | 233 | 223 | 128,647 | 1,688,353 | 546,412 | 409,907 | 17,190,922 | 19,964,241 | 869,194 | 468,420 | 1,091,806 | 2,429,420 | 17,534,821 |

**Chaplains**
Brennan, Andrew
Cooper, Jonathan
Fox, Paul
Hielkema, Stephen
Laigaie, William
Van Hamersveld, Michael

**Inactive**
Baird, Robert
Garcia, Robert

**Missionary**
Peterson, Richard

**Planting minister**
Grevenstuk, George
Jansen, David
Matzen, Brent
Pinkowski, Peter

**Retired**
Allhusen, Lynn
Blauw, Stuart
Brower, David
Budding, Dirk
Burgess, Warren
Burke, William
Cogan, Leland
Cooper, Jack
Davis, Howard
de Forest, Carroll
de Vries, Abraham
Dethmers, David
Doorlag, Jack
Dykstra, Leon
Fikse, Evert
Foster, James
Hakken, Bernard
Hall, Wayne
Hays, Calvin
Heneveld, Harvey
Hertz, Harvey
Hettinga, Vernon
Hoffman, Vernon
Hostetter, Paul
Kroeze, George
Langenberg, Robert
Laswell, Samuel
Lester, James
Lokhorst, Ronald
Ludwick, Ralph
Martens, Cecil
Matthews, Dale
Molenaar, Gerrit
Muyskens, J. David
Pierce, Michael
Poest, Donald
Rockwood, Richard
Scholten, Robert
Smith, Eurie
Spoolstra, Franklin
Stark, Tom
TenClay, H. Arlan
Thibodeau, Jeffery
Tysen, Calvin
Van Bronkhorst, Douglas
Van Koevering, Gary
Van Zetten, R. James
Vander Klok, Richard
Waddilove, Gordon
Welscott, Richard
Wesselink, Paul
Yonkman, Jayne
Zwart, Eildert

**Specialized ministry**
Alicea-Báez, Jhonny
Baron, Joshua
Bast, David
Blunt, Joshua
Crane, Scott
De Vries, Thomas
DeWard, Andrea
DeWard, Nathan
Edgerly, Daniel
Franca, Valdir
Ingebretson, Ben
Johnson, Michael
Karsten, James
Kragt, Thomas
Kuiper, Bruce
Langstraat, Bradley
McClintic, Douglas
Mead, Andrew
Mulder, Bruce
Mulder, Jean
Schwanda, Tom
Telzerow, Brian
van den Berg, Cornelis
Van Dop, Richard
Van Dop, Stephen
Van Wieren, Gretel
Veldt, S. Mark
Weener, Randy
Wernlund, J. Barrett

**Without charge**
Brooks, Mary Virginia
Drane, Mark
Edema, Barbara
Gowman, Jeffrey
Painter, Michael
Zorgdrager, Kamren
Zorgdrager, Rebekah

## Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF HOLLAND

Stated clerk: Larry Schuyler, 513 E 8th St Ste 32, Holland, MI 49423-3765, 616-394-0550
Treasurer: Marylynn Redder, 2586 Floral Dr, Zeeland, MI 49464-9106, 616-772-9226

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Holland, Beechwood | Lemmenes, Jean<br>Vagle, Dawn<br>Vondracek, Austin | 357 | 708 | 63 | 161 | 932 | 153 | 527 | 19 | 18 | 25 | 15 | 128 | 13 | 1 | 11,310 | - | - | 57,999 | 1,170,794 | 1,240,103 | 77,724 | 45,421 | 57,314 | 180,459 | 1,059,644 |
| 2 | Holland, Calvary | Carter, Daniel | 194 | 321 | 15 | 11 | 347 | 43 | 244 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 7,664 | 37,755 | - | 37,420 | 576,751 | 659,590 | 32,412 | 29,772 | 45,311 | 107,495 | 552,095 |
| 3 | Holland, Central Park | Kleinheksel, Kevin | 183 | 228 | 37 | 81 | 346 | 71 | 170 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 30 | 2 | - | 15,526 | 115,982 | - | 7,862 | 259,824 | 399,194 | 23,459 | 22,900 | 5,120 | 51,479 | 347,715 |
| 4 | Holland, Christ Memorial | Aguilera, Benito<br>Harris, Kenita<br>Thompson, Dewey | 1,135 | 2,154 | 174 | 307 | 2,635 | 125 | 1,250 | 48 | 15 | 33 | 32 | 56 | 12 | 2 | 302,982 | 252,111 | - | - | 3,825,840 | 4,380,933 | 218,934 | 58,200 | 854,600 | 1,131,734 | 3,249,199 |
| 5 | Holland, Fellowship | Baar, James<br>Keepers, Brian<br>Koolhaas, Janelle<br>Schipper, Nathaniel | 460 | 929 | 114 | 163 | 1,206 | 240 | 458 | 25 | 15 | 18 | 15 | 76 | 15 | 4 | 4,314 | 530,704 | - | 17,895 | 1,164,813 | 1,717,726 | 98,718 | 82,710 | 46,091 | 227,519 | 1,490,207 |
| 6 | Holland, First | Gillett, Daniel<br>Koopmans, Darrell<br>Schrotenboer, Diane<br>Zwyghuizen, John | 295 | 470 | 68 | 184 | 722 | 10 | 350 | 5 | 14 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 8 | - | 182,705 | - | - | - | 745,227 | 927,932 | 52,004 | 47,350 | 25,030 | 124,384 | 803,548 |
| 7 | Holland, Grace Comm/Intersection** | Meyer, Jeffrey | 108 | 148 | 12 | 50 | 210 | 8 | 120 | 1 | - | 5 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | 53,329 | - | 8,000 | 247,599 | 308,928 | 15,639 | - | 3,218 | 18,857 | 290,071 |
| 8 | Holland, Hope | Russell, Jill<br>Smit, Randall<br>Wiersma, Gordon | 247 | 452 | 164 | 108 | 724 | 110 | 243 | 14 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 3 | - | 36,954 | 1,091,091 | - | 36,942 | 663,905 | 1,828,892 | 48,424 | 30,975 | 314,659 | 394,058 | 1,434,834 |
| *# 9 | Holland, Maple Avenue Ministries** | Grier, Denise | 32 | 88 | - | 4 | 92 | 150 | 120 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 3 | - | 3 | 2 | 20,000 | - | 5,000 | 3,250 | 42,000 | 70,250 | 3,221 | 1,000 | 500 | 4,721 | 65,529 |
| 10 | Holland, Maplewood | Balk, Carl<br>VanDerVeen, Aaron | 94 | 171 | 16 | 31 | 218 | 28 | 145 | - | - | 1 | 7 | 1 | - | - | 28 | 5,789 | - | 3,913 | 385,704 | 395,434 | 17,617 | 17,500 | 20,000 | 55,117 | 340,317 |
| 11 | Holland, New Comm/4th | Brownson, Jonathan | 62 | 91 | 23 | 26 | 140 | 26 | 77 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 9,945 | - | 4,490 | 165,566 | 180,001 | 8,196 | 4,500 | 5,931 | 18,627 | 161,374 |
| 12 | Holland, Pillar** | Brown, Jonathon | 169 | 213 | 20 | 101 | 334 | 250 | 500 | 10 | 44 | - | 9 | - | 10 | 9 | - | - | - | 6,000 | 665,500 | 671,500 | 22,422 | 27,100 | 47,784 | 97,306 | 574,194 |
| 13 | Holland, Rose Park | Van Opstall, David<br>VanderLee, Meghan | 90 | 160 | 30 | 25 | 215 | 22 | 150 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 7 | - | 5 | 2 | - | 39,000 | - | 2,000 | 227,500 | 268,500 | 20,000 | 13,000 | 10,800 | 43,800 | 224,700 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Holland, Third | Dykhouse, Amanda<br>Fry, Kent<br>Jongerius, Kama | 322 | 586 | 220 | 208 | 1,014 | 20 | 370 | 8 | 17 | 11 | 15 | 17 | 6 | 2 | 20,000 | - | 35,412 | 42,934 | 1,051,698 | 1,150,044 | 58,701 | 66,400 | 75,900 | 201,001 | 949,043 |
| 15 | Holland, Trinity | DeGraaf, Christopher<br>Yurk, Debbra | 157 | 254 | 50 | 59 | 363 | 55 | 170 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 11 | - | 3 | - | 68,251 | 49,318 | - | 3,564 | 445,534 | 566,667 | 23,364 | 41,438 | 37,602 | 102,404 | 464,263 |
| 16 | West Olive, Life Tree Comm | Elzinga, Jeffery | 86 | 161 | 10 | 31 | 202 | 4 | 126 | - | - | 7 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | 1,770 | - | - | 142,754 | 144,524 | 5,124 | 14,461 | 7,514 | 27,099 | 117,425 |
| 17 | Zeeland, LifeQuest | Gruppen, Tobin (Toby) | 35 | 60 | - | 11 | 71 | 60 | 85 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 29 | - | - | 29,547 | 85,530 | 115,106 | - | 1,500 | 7,300 | 8,800 | 106,306 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 4,026 | 7,194 | 1,016 | 1,561 | 9,771 | 1,375 | 5,105 | 157 | 156 | 141 | 146 | 323 | 92 | 25 | 669,763 | 2,186,794 | 40,412 | 261,816 | 11,866,539 | 15,025,324 | 725,959 | 504,227 | 1,564,674 | 2,794,860 | 12,230,464 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *# | 18 Allendale, Alas de Aguila | New Start | 15 | 25 | - | 18 | 43 | 15 | 60 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 18 | - | 71,853 | 27,334 | 16,600 | 34,023 | 149,810 | - | - | 2,409 | 2,409 | 147,401 |
| *# | 19 Grand Rapids, Alas de Aguila | New Start | 12 | 3 | - | 2 | 5 | 50 | 45 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1,371 | 59,500 | 11,820 | 15,478 | 88,169 | - | - | - | - | 88,169 |
| *# | 20 Holland, Alas de Aguila | Vasquez, Hugo | - | - | - | - | - | 165 | 122 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7 | - | 21,433 | 23,004 | 9,753 | 129,597 | 183,787 | - | 6,000 | - | 6,000 | 177,787 |
| *# | 21 Holland, Benjamin's Hope | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 20,720 | - | 14,175 | 34,895 | - | - | - | - | 34,895 |
| *# | 22 Holland, Embody Christ Fellows | New Start | 39 | 62 | 5 | 33 | 100 | 5 | 65 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 20,000 | 100,000 | 120,000 | - | - | 10,000 | 10,000 | 110,000 |
| !*# | 23 Holland, Korean | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | 66 | 90 | 5 | 53 | 148 | 235 | 292 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 27 | - | 94,657 | 130,558 | 58,173 | 293,273 | 576,661 | - | 6,000 | 12,409 | 18,409 | 558,252 |
| | | Grand Total | 4,092 | 7,284 | 1,021 | 1,614 | 9,919 | 1,610 | 5,397 | 162 | 156 | 141 | 146 | 323 | 93 | 52 | 669,763 | 2,281,451 | 170,970 | 319,989 | 12,159,812 | 15,601,985 | 725,959 | 510,227 | 1,577,083 | 2,813,269 | 12,788,716 |

**Chaplains**
Bierma, Daniel
Blauw, David
Bolt, Burton
Bona, Lindsay
Brownson, Rachel
Cammenga, Sandra
Daniels, James
Douglas, Paige
Hawley-Lowry, Ruth
Johnson, Trygve
Knebl, Nicholas
Knibbe, Sharon
Ledbetter-Guckian, Ciela
Meyer, Katrina
Nelson, Judith
Patterson, J. Benjamin
Van Kempen, Leigh
Veldheer DeYoung, Cynthia

**Emeritus General Synod professor**
Bruggink, Donald
Hesselink, I. John
Rock, Stanley
Voskuil, Dennis

**General Synod professor**
Bechtel, Carol
Boogaart, Thomas
Brown, Timothy
Brownson, James

**Graduate study**
Schoon Tanis, Gretchen

**Missionary**
Jansen, Wayne
Van Es, Rowland
Vis, Joshua
Wilson, Mark

**Planting minister**
Ryden, Jennifer

**Professor/teacher in RCA institution**
Awad, Habeeb
Billings, J. Todd
Boelkins, Dawn
Bouma-Prediger, Celaine
Bush, Pamela
Hoogerwerf, Steven
Japinga, Lynn
Rienstra, Ronald
Schmidt, John
Van Voorst, Robert
West, Travis

**Retired**
Aardsma, Carole
Alderink, Paul
Arendshorst, Sharon
Baar, James
Balk, Carl
Beagley, Alan
Beagley-Koolhaas, Jeanette
Blok, Arie
Boersma, William
Brownson, William
Bruins, Elton
Bush, H. Curtis
Colenbrander, H. Paul
Daniels, Wilbur
Davelaar, Kathryn
De Young, Roger
Derrick, Keith
Doeden, Dick
Fierro, Andres
Heideman, Eugene
Heneveld, James
Hoff, Marvin
Hofland, Alan
Hofman, J. Samuel
Izenbart, Larry
Jansen, Donald
Kaiser, Christopher
Karsen, Wendell
Kennedy, Earl
Kiel, Wesley
Kleinheksel, John
Kleinheksel, Roger
Koopman, LeRoy
Laman, Earl
Laning, Robert
Liang, Clarence
Luidens, Robert
Magee, George
Magee, Joyce
Mc Andrews, Robert
Millard, Jack
Mugg, Dianne
Mulder, Dennis
Mulder, Edwin
Palma, Robert
Post, Lynn
Reynen, Paul
Rienstra, Marchiene
Rynbrandt, Calvin
Scudder, Lewis
Sikkema, David
Smith, Paul
Stam, Steven
Sterk, Vernon
Ten Clay, Ellsworth
Terlouw, Larry
Tien, John
Timmerman, Jacquelyn
Unzicker, William
Van Doornik, Merwin
Van Eck, Arthur
Van Engen, Charles
Van Heest, Cornelius
Van Heest, Gerard
Vander Wilt, Marlin
Vetter, Daryl
Vugteveen, Stanley
Walvoord, Mark
Wierks, C. Bruce
Wierks, Mary Ann
Wilson, Gayle
Wing, Stephen

**Specialized ministry**
Avery, Amy
Bechtel, Ronald
Claus, Grace
Davelaar Guthrie, Kathryn
DeWitt, Dennis
DeYoung, Terry
Duin, Lorene
Eriks, Kenneth
Floding, Matthew
Hamman, Jacobus
Hodgin, Megan
Hook, Norma
Japinga, Jeffrey
Jeon, Yeomyeong
Kamper, Mark
Kim, Young Shin
Kool, David
Lankheet, James
Lindell, Jay
Lopez, José Angel
Macias, José Antonio
Munroe, Jeffrey
Nakajima, Fumihito (Andy)
Nienhuis, Jenna
Pierce, Chad
Poppen, Mark
Punch, John
Schuyler, Larry
Sundararajan, John Paul
Sundararajan, Kathryn
Topp, Donald
Van Dyke, Judy
Van Ek, Todd
Vander Molen, Steven
Vanderbeck, Jonathan
Wisner, Mary

**Without charge**
Bogertman, Anna
Bowerman, Wayne
Claus, Daniel
Croom, Stephanie
Daubenspeck, Thomas
Hoekstra, Margaret
Hoffman, Carolyn
Johnson, Erwin
Spidahl, Andrew
Stoneman, Susan
Van Opstall, Tracy
Wallinga, Marcia

## Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF MUSKEGON

Stated clerk: John Koedyker, 17292 Burkshire Dr, Grand Haven, MI 49417-9647, 616-884-8758
Treasurer: Sherri VanArendonk, 2495 Hathaway Ct, Norton Shores, MI 49441-4435, 231-747-6078

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Conklin | Nikkel, Sandra | 42 | 54 | 16 | 8 | 78 | 21 | 55 | 1 | - | - | - | 10 | - | 1 | - | 18,121 | 5,000 | - | 87,144 | 110,265 | 4,555 | - | - | 4,555 | 105,710 |
| 2 Coopersville | Stamm, Gregory | 222 | 422 | 78 | 162 | 662 | 150 | 341 | 19 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 40,731 | - | 4,503 | 515,636 | 560,890 | 38,986 | 33,700 | 12,959 | 85,645 | 475,245 |
| 3 Coopersville, Saviour | Kingma, David | 82 | 143 | 3 | 74 | 220 | 36 | 85 | 5 | 3 | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 220 | 152,368 | 152,588 | 11,184 | 5,233 | 2,254 | 18,671 | 133,917 |
| 4 Fruitport, Word of Hope | VanderMeiden, James | 24 | 29 | - | 19 | 48 | 22 | 20 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 328 | - | 5,120 | 31,651 | 37,099 | 2,477 | 50 | 611 | 3,138 | 33,961 |
| 5 Grand Haven, First | Kenny, John | 98 | 169 | 21 | 31 | 221 | 58 | 155 | 15 | - | - | 5 | 6 | - | - | 59,450 | 169,220 | - | 10,399 | 396,587 | 635,656 | 13,891 | 9,000 | 41,062 | 63,953 | 571,703 |
| 6 Grand Haven, Hope | Taylor, Timothy | 143 | 227 | 49 | 98 | 374 | 148 | 375 | 17 | 13 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 24,958 | - | - | - | 761,304 | 786,262 | 19,752 | 2,160 | 51,862 | 73,774 | 712,488 |
| 7 Grand Haven, Second | Eisnor, Daniel | 137 | 216 | 22 | 38 | 276 | 25 | 165 | 15 | 9 | 1 | 5 | - | 4 | 3 | 156,772 | 6,441 | - | 50 | 330,245 | 493,508 | 18,375 | 20,505 | 32,331 | 71,211 | 422,297 |
| 8 Grand Haven, Trinity | Bremmer, Randolph | 82 | 106 | 17 | 23 | 146 | 30 | 107 | 18 | - | 2 | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | 42,825 | 10,200 | 6,500 | 206,130 | 265,655 | 6,411 | 862 | 18,195 | 25,468 | 240,187 |
| 9 Montague, Ferry Memorial | Bowling, Nicholas deGroot-Bowling, Amy | 129 | 216 | 49 | 72 | 337 | 33 | 275 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 20,085 | - | - | 384,874 | 404,959 | 17,575 | 10,900 | 29,285 | 57,760 | 347,199 |
| 10 Muskegon Hts, Covenant Comm | Bush, Mark | 73 | 110 | 16 | 39 | 165 | 9 | 100 | - | 11 | 2 | 1 | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | 28,700 | 179,988 | 208,688 | 8,593 | - | 13,996 | 22,589 | 186,099 |
| 11 Muskegon, Fellowship | Van Kampen, Michael | 239 | 362 | 92 | 158 | 612 | 100 | 450 | 8 | 8 | - | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5,643 | - | 4,000 | - | 479,157 | 488,800 | 34,192 | 2,790 | 65,789 | 102,771 | 386,029 |
| 12 Muskegon, Fifth | Vacant 09/15 | 125 | 273 | 34 | 63 | 370 | 52 | 210 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 28 | 1 | 1 | 6,763 | 51,805 | - | 1,800 | 393,885 | 454,253 | 23,967 | 14,600 | 20,463 | 59,030 | 395,223 |
| 13 Muskegon, Hope | Hyma, Steven | 80 | 79 | 28 | 28 | 135 | 18 | 65 | 4 | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 87,812 | 87,812 | 8,310 | 2,315 | 2,691 | 13,316 | 74,496 |
| 14 Muskegon, Laketon Bethel | Brantsen, Sherwin | 319 | 522 | 201 | 190 | 913 | 71 | 538 | 28 | 11 | 7 | 13 | 65 | 2 | 15 | - | - | - | - | 681,328 | 681,328 | 42,342 | - | 14,890 | 57,232 | 624,096 |
| 15 Muskegon, New Life Comm | Vacant 09/14 | 56 | 68 | 2 | 36 | 106 | 40 | 85 | 7 | 13 | - | - | 2 | - | - | 24 | 7,346 | - | 508 | 179,290 | 187,168 | 3,515 | - | - | 3,515 | 183,653 |
| 16 Muskegon, Unity | Vacant 07/16 | 198 | 243 | 42 | 91 | 376 | 25 | 162 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 17 | 2 | 1 | 2,090 | - | 4,000 | - | 307,855 | 313,945 | 19,973 | 34,698 | 13,155 | 67,826 | 246,119 |
| 17 Ravenna, First | VanderWoude, Stephen | 73 | 114 | 35 | 39 | 188 | 10 | 115 | - | 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 1 | - | 15,897 | - | 7,692 | 195,437 | 219,026 | 10,625 | - | 10,237 | 20,862 | 198,164 |
| | Organized Church Total | 2,122 | 3,353 | 705 | 1,169 | 5,227 | 848 | 3,303 | 147 | 92 | 25 | 65 | 146 | 41 | 35 | 255,720 | 372,799 | 23,200 | 65,492 | 5,370,691 | 6,087,902 | 284,723 | 136,813 | 329,780 | 751,316 | 5,336,586 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| # 18 Muskegon, Angel Comm | Hough, Jeffery | 25 | 65 | 50 | 50 | 165 | - | 105 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | New Church Start Total | 25 | 65 | 50 | 50 | 165 | - | 105 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Grand Total | 2,147 | 3,418 | 755 | 1,219 | 5,392 | 848 | 3,408 | 147 | 92 | 25 | 65 | 146 | 47 | 35 | 255,720 | 372,799 | 23,200 | 65,492 | 5,370,691 | 6,087,902 | 284,723 | 136,813 | 329,780 | 751,316 | 5,336,586 |

**Chaplains**
Cruz, Miguel

**Planting minister**
Hough, Jeffery
Johnson, Linda

**Retired**
Bos, R. James
DeKam, John
Doornbos, Charles
Hitchcock, Robert
Jones, Walter
Laman, Gordon
Mahler, Gerald
Nieuwsma, Mark
Rienstra, Richard
Staal, John
Stevens, James
Theune, Peter
Timmerman, Gordon
Van Beek, Arnold
Van Hoeven, Gordon
Veenstra, Richard
Veldman, John
Wassink, Marvin
Weener, Sherwin
Worrel, Jerry

**Specialized ministry**
Burmeister, Paul
Bush, Miriam
Dekker, Raymond
Jackson, Lary
Koedyker, John
Kooistra, Nathan
Peoples, Carlinda
Roberts, Kathryn
Vander Weit, Randall

## Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF NORTH GRAND RAPIDS

Stated clerk: Rob Teitsma, 1460 Banbury Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505-5759, 616-458-6867
Treasurer: Janice Myers, 2428 Rockhill Dr NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525-1239, 616-363-0962

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Ada, Community | Norden, Mara<br>Norden, William | 59 | 117 | 24 | 38 | 179 | 37 | 116 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 3,512 | 756 | 1,000 | 18,437 | 234,136 | 257,841 | 8,957 | 9,020 | 16,936 | 34,913 | 222,928 |
| 2 Casnovia | Vacant 01/15 | 22 | 31 | - | 11 | 42 | 6 | 25 | - | 1 | 10 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 4,000 | 2,950 | 59,898 | 66,848 | 1,500 | - | 50 | 1,550 | 65,298 |
| 3 Flint, Resurrection | Kiel, Douglas<br>Kiel, Kristi | 57 | 97 | 134 | 16 | 247 | 6 | 74 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 250 | 227,514 | 227,764 | - | 2,630 | 4,365 | 6,995 | 220,769 |
| 4 Grand Rapids, Aberdeen | Landt, Ryan | 52 | 70 | 19 | 26 | 115 | 31 | 62 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | 8,850 | - | 2,879 | 150,208 | 161,937 | 6,522 | 700 | 2,940 | 10,162 | 151,775 |
| 5 Grand Rapids, Central | Baker, Katherine<br>Van Kempen, Cornelis | 221 | 410 | 25 | 70 | 505 | 55 | 270 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 7 | - | 3 | - | 42,891 | 585,757 | - | 46,476 | 678,542 | 1,353,666 | 13,784 | 12,400 | 78,111 | 104,295 | 1,249,371 |
| 6 Grand Rapids, Clancy St Fellowship | Faas, Carol | 12 | 16 | 1 | 6 | 23 | 14 | 15 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 4,000 | 322 | 19,875 | 24,197 | 1,334 | 2,700 | - | 4,034 | 20,163 |
| 7 Grand Rapids, Fourth | Schalk, Eric | 118 | 166 | 5 | 89 | 260 | 20 | 140 | 3 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 6,000 | 234,986 | 240,986 | 12,747 | 1,249 | 23,941 | 37,937 | 203,049 |
| 8 Grand Rapids, Knapp Street | Wiseman, Les | 88 | 158 | 26 | 32 | 216 | 69 | 121 | 8 | 9 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | (892) | 60,432 | - | 1,855 | 268,747 | 330,142 | 10,968 | 3,876 | 27,105 | 41,949 | 288,193 |
| 9 Grand Rapids, Oakview Comm | Vander Velde, Gerald | 35 | 56 | 2 | - | 58 | 10 | 55 | - | 4 | - | 4 | 15 | - | - | 6,205 | - | - | 3,036 | 95,492 | 104,733 | 4,372 | 5,447 | 356 | 10,175 | 94,558 |
| 10 Grand Rapids, Orchard Hill | Bartels, Kathy<br>Claus, Laura<br>Karel, Robert | 458 | 439 | 15 | 107 | 561 | 303 | 374 | 24 | 3 | 9 | 12 | 16 | 12 | 5 | - | 248,021 | - | 37,800 | 709,934 | 995,755 | 32,502 | 7,000 | 47,876 | 87,378 | 908,377 |
| 11 Grand Rapids, Remembrance | Cook, Eric<br>Schmidt, Todd | 320 | 531 | 33 | 319 | 883 | 26 | 484 | 32 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 16 | 9 | 4 | 162 | - | - | 7,104 | 1,368,007 | 1,375,273 | 47,579 | 24,850 | 131,602 | 204,031 | 1,171,242 |
| 12 Grand Rapids, Richmond | Westerbeek, Christopher | 115 | 185 | 13 | 69 | 267 | 30 | 150 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 260,351 | 260,351 | 13,562 | 27,500 | - | 41,062 | 219,289 |
| 13 Grand Rapids, Servants Comm | Vacant 06/16 | 40 | 64 | 16 | 35 | 115 | 38 | 90 | 5 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | 6,264 | 22,954 | 117 | 116,269 | 145,604 | 5,188 | - | - | 5,188 | 140,416 |
| 14 Grand Rapids, Standale | Shults, Jessica | 151 | 261 | 15 | 74 | 350 | 44 | 161 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | - | 4 | - | 160 | 34,770 | - | 17,450 | 336,282 | 388,662 | 21,121 | 30,837 | 10,550 | 62,508 | 326,154 |
| 15 Grand Rapids, Third | Petersen, Jeffrey | 150 | 257 | 53 | 70 | 380 | 30 | 225 | 8 | - | 15 | 6 | 25 | 3 | - | - | 48,000 | - | 8,100 | 459,648 | 515,748 | 21,492 | 16,240 | 4,300 | 42,032 | 473,716 |
| 16 Grand Rapids, Trinity | Bruins, Benjamin<br>Bruins, Sarah | 90 | 150 | 66 | 55 | 271 | 20 | 99 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | - | 57,622 | 3,170 | 5,000 | 2,470 | 200,533 | 268,795 | 15,341 | 2,030 | 2,812 | 20,183 | 248,612 |
| 17 Rockford | Bradford, Paul | 131 | 267 | 46 | 101 | 414 | 105 | 249 | - | 6 | 3 | 3 | 32 | 1 | - | 13 | 52,235 | - | - | 569,580 | 621,828 | 23,789 | 30,900 | 29,503 | 84,192 | 537,636 |
| 18 Warren, Church of the Master | Mayer, David | 39 | 46 | 5 | 12 | 63 | 13 | 27 | 4 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 20,664 | 2,233 | 60,086 | 82,983 | 2,742 | 1,600 | 5,138 | 9,480 | 73,503 |
| | Organized Church Total | 2,158 | 3,321 | 498 | 1,130 | 4,949 | 857 | 2,737 | 102 | 45 | 60 | 55 | 120 | 45 | 13 | 109,673 | 1,048,255 | 57,618 | 157,479 | 6,050,088 | 7,423,113 | 243,500 | 178,979 | 385,585 | 808,064 | 6,615,049 |

**Chaplains**
Ausema, Leroy
Branch, Eric
Claus, Nancy
Cleveland, Susan
Luchies, Stephen
Tice, Lisa
Veldt, David
Wolters, Steven

**Emeritus General Synod professor**
Brown, George

**Inactive**
Daley, Andre

**Retired**
Atwood, Andrew
Baak, David
Bates, Richard
Bedingfield, Robert
Bos, Mary
Bos, Thomas
De Jong, Carl
Doorn, Lawrence
Eernisse, Roger
Evenhouse, Neva
Faas, Carol
Fennema, William
Granberg-Michaelson, Karin
Huizenga, Robert
Kroondyk, Henry
Lotz, Louis
Menning, Bruce
Menning, Victoria
Raak, Truman
Redder, Ronald
Robrahn, Ralph
Rogacki, Janet
Rozeboom, James
Swanson, Deborah
Ter Maat, Richard
Tigchon, Richard
Vander Velde, Gerald
VanderBroek, Kenneth
Veltman, Donald
Wilcox, Dennis
Woudstra, Thomas
Wygmans, David

**Specialized ministry**
Boote, Nancy
Delger, John
Elders, Marcia
Juist, Sarah
Kooyman, Kathryn
Maodush-Pitzer, Diane
Meendering, Timothy
Molhoek, Cheryl
Navis, Adam
Saylor, Robyn
Vander Wall, Susan

**Without charge**
Bush, Rachel
Henderson, Lisa
Konynenbelt, Diane
Landt, Sophie
Olson, Bradley
Petersen, Jennifer
Plasman, Daniel
Tice, Jonathan
VanderWerp, William
Wetzel, Aaron

## Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Stated clerk: Lee Pranger, PO Box 7, New Era, MI 49446-0007, 231-861-4303
Treasurer: Lee Pranger, PO Box 7, New Era, MI 49446-0007, 231-861-4303

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Charlevoix, Community | Sauer, John (Chip) | 304 | 416 | 41 | 79 | 536 | 170 | 287 | 17 | - | 1 | 6 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 32,500 | 694,320 | 726,820 | 31,925 | 2,000 | 112,200 | 146,125 | 580,695 |
| 2 | Ellsworth, Belltower | Van Noord, Jared | 62 | 108 | 14 | 31 | 153 | 20 | 71 | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 6 | - | - | (29,881) | 134,382 | 104,507 | 9,110 | 6,827 | 4,717 | 20,654 | 83,853 |
| # 3 | Falmouth, Moddersville | Wheeler, Jerry | 22 | 38 | - | - | 38 | 20 | 33 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 56,907 | 56,907 | 3,844 | 100 | 3,975 | 7,919 | 48,988 |
| 4 | Fremont, First | Schutt, Kevin | 111 | 170 | 25 | 50 | 245 | 29 | 125 | - | - | 6 | 6 | - | 2 | - | 44,452 | 3,942 | - | 6,947 | 276,334 | 331,675 | 26,941 | - | 8,375 | 35,316 | 296,359 |
| 5 | Fremont, Living Christ | Jasperse, Thomas | 90 | 141 | 17 | 52 | 210 | 52 | 116 | 8 | 2 | - | 3 | 10 | 3 | - | 528 | - | - | - | 323,569 | 324,097 | 11,247 | 5,800 | 80,783 | 97,830 | 226,267 |
| 6 | Glen Arbor, Glen Lake Comm | DeVries, Daniel | 61 | 95 | - | 24 | 119 | 80 | 92 | 1 | 5 | - | 4 | - | - | - | 16 | - | - | 690 | 222,315 | 223,021 | 9,028 | 19,390 | - | 28,418 | 194,603 |
| 7 | Grant, First | Gemmen, Shelby | 75 | 122 | 19 | 34 | 175 | 13 | 109 | - | 4 | 4 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 35,958 | 186,141 | 222,099 | 9,938 | 3,500 | 25,000 | 38,438 | 183,661 |
| 8 | McBain, Rehoboth | Grill, Adam | 237 | 410 | 35 | 179 | 624 | 30 | 365 | 5 | 32 | 2 | 2 | - | 7 | 1 | 10 | 71,379 | - | 3,150 | 494,292 | 568,831 | 33,804 | 21,776 | 45,068 | 100,648 | 468,183 |
| 9 | Midland | De Ruyter, Michael<br>VanderWaal, Bradley | 107 | 185 | 14 | 43 | 242 | 75 | 216 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 601 | - | - | - | 440,678 | 441,279 | 13,300 | 18,735 | 59,115 | 91,150 | 350,129 |
| 10 | New Era | Eschenburg, Frederick | 149 | 260 | 55 | 74 | 389 | 32 | 192 | 5 | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 22 | 62,397 | 34,030 | 1,705 | 443,272 | 541,426 | 21,092 | 19,556 | 70,016 | 110,664 | 430,762 |
| 11 | Scottville, Mason County | Bush, Seth<br>Bush, Todd | 163 | 318 | - | 166 | 484 | 85 | 323 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 20 | 6 | 19 | 446 | 181,628 | - | 630 | 501,819 | 684,523 | 28,320 | 2,850 | 32,712 | 63,882 | 620,641 |
| 12 | Shelby, New Hope Comm | Holmes Curran, Jennifer<br>Holmes Curran, Tony | 38 | 58 | - | 58 | 116 | 33 | 65 | 7 | 4 | 7 | - | - | 3 | - | - | 12,842 | 2,500 | 10,000 | 82,886 | 108,228 | 3,808 | - | 1,500 | 5,308 | 102,920 |
| 13 | Traverse City, Faith | Holtvluwer, Marshall | 242 | 415 | 74 | 72 | 561 | 165 | 389 | 2 | 13 | 16 | 4 | 14 | 3 | - | 302 | - | - | 37,501 | 1,120,286 | 1,158,089 | 40,214 | 46,099 | 97,093 | 183,406 | 974,683 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 1,661 | 2,736 | 294 | 862 | 3,892 | 804 | 2,383 | 59 | 69 | 49 | 37 | 45 | 35 | 22 | 46,383 | 332,188 | 36,530 | 99,200 | 4,977,201 | 5,491,502 | 242,571 | 146,633 | 540,554 | 929,758 | 4,561,744 |

**Chaplains**
Bassett, David

**Retired**
Anderson, David
Broersma, Sherwin
Brus, Gerrit
Fitzgerald, Mary
Frens, Phillip
Geschwendt, Ronald
Grooters, Larry
Hagemeyer, Stanley
Hekhuis, Robert
Kamrath, Rodney
Klunder, Jack
LeMahieu, Jean
Moser, John
Swier, Norman
Welscott, Thomas

**Specialized ministry**
Boss, Barbara
Kuiper, Judith
LaChonce, Mark
Morris, William
Pugh, Mical
Van Gunst, Amy

**Without charge**
Byland, Peggy
Heeg, Shirley
Mays, Jonathan
Ver Hoeven, Kevin

## Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

Stated clerk: Allison Dillon, 910 Jenks Blvd, Kalamazoo, MI 49006-2196, 269-349-6260
Treasurer: Paul Block, PO Box 229, Morley, MI 49336, 269-330-6260

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Battle Creek, Covenant Hope** | Grandia, Roger | 43 | 75 | 10 | 7 | 92 | 21 | 110 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | - | 206 | - | - | - | 257,573 | 257,779 | 7,365 | 18,600 | 24,368 | 50,333 | 207,446 |
| 2 Decatur, First | Hofstra, Mark | 38 | 63 | 6 | 7 | 76 | 39 | 60 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 79,428 | 79,428 | 1,673 | 20,443 | - | 22,116 | 57,312 |
| 3 Hopkins, Community | VanderWall, Jonathon | 97 | 165 | 76 | 85 | 326 | 20 | 150 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | - | 702 | - | - | 2,692 | 307,370 | 310,764 | 16,350 | 3,100 | 1,000 | 20,450 | 290,314 |
| 4 Kalamazoo, Bethany | Harthorn, Steven | 105 | 149 | 11 | 21 | 181 | 77 | 111 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 19 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 240,891 | 240,891 | 13,045 | 7,941 | 10,503 | 31,489 | 209,402 |
| 5 Kalamazoo, Centerpoint | Olson, Jason<br>Porte, Jeffrey<br>Vander Wal, Darwin | 638 | 1,098 | 205 | 453 | 1,756 | 274 | 834 | 14 | 24 | 6 | 12 | 36 | 24 | 14 | 6,121 | - | - | 49,152 | 2,298,556 | 2,353,829 | 106,019 | 26,007 | 214,903 | 346,929 | 2,006,900 |
| 6 Kalamazoo, Greenwood | Loper, Jonathan | 47 | 71 | - | 3 | 74 | 20 | 75 | - | 9 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | - | 138,492 | 138,495 | 5,652 | 631 | 4,676 | 10,959 | 127,536 |
| 7 Kalamazoo, Haven | Stone, Brian | 261 | 443 | 68 | 66 | 577 | 243 | 400 | 9 | 9 | 1 | 7 | - | 6 | 13 | 83 | - | - | 11,412 | 832,738 | 844,233 | 38,613 | 2,827 | 32,148 | 73,588 | 770,645 |
| 8 Kalamazoo, Hope | Sanders, Kevin | 197 | 301 | 28 | 152 | 481 | 60 | 304 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 | - | 4 | 1 | 875 | 64,262 | - | 400 | 390,968 | 456,505 | 25,654 | 7,650 | 39,126 | 72,430 | 384,075 |
| 9 Kalamazoo, North Park | Fazio, Paul | 129 | 209 | 13 | 79 | 301 | 24 | 180 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 10 | - | - | 8,392 | - | - | - | 302,151 | 310,543 | 19,133 | 9,000 | 39,393 | 67,526 | 243,017 |
| 10 Kalamazoo, River | Link, Robert | 260 | 209 | - | 212 | 421 | 800 | 700 | - | - | - | - | - | 25 | 37 | 258 | 61,340 | - | - | 665,905 | 727,503 | 13,986 | - | 18,862 | 32,848 | 694,655 |
| 11 Kalamazoo, Second | Hart, Kevin | 165 | 244 | 70 | 33 | 347 | 30 | 145 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 6 | - | - | - | 80,000 | 119,110 | - | 36,335 | 515,935 | 751,380 | 26,749 | 37,560 | 10,897 | 75,206 | 676,174 |
| 12 Kalamazoo, Southridge | Vanderson, Mark | 436 | 736 | - | 467 | 1,203 | 429 | 750 | 19 | 22 | - | 6 | 17 | 18 | 4 | 163 | 19,065 | - | 191,732 | 1,341,675 | 1,552,635 | 63,572 | 18,000 | 162,324 | 243,896 | 1,308,739 |
| 13 Kalamazoo, Twin Lakes | Lugten, Ronald | 49 | 71 | 16 | 12 | 99 | 7 | 44 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 111 | - | - | 6,000 | 101,027 | 107,138 | 7,184 | 928 | 952 | 9,064 | 98,074 |
| 14 Kalamazoo, Urban Apostolic Net<br>Benton Harbor, Forefront Ministries<br>Kalamazoo, Vanguard<br>Kalamazoo, Vanguard North | Organized<br>Bull, Nate<br>Folkert, Alan<br>Stewart, Michael<br>Stewart, Yolanda | 85 | 53 | - | 59 | 112 | - | 111 | 3 | - | - | 2 | 6 | - | 6 | - | 259 | 46,000 | - | 198,000 | 244,259 | 3,256 | 456 | 1,206 | 4,918 | 239,341 |
| 15 Kalamazoo, Westnedge Hill Comm | Superseded 02/14<br>Habinck, Jody | 11 | 19 | 8 | - | 27 | 44 | 50 | - | 1 | 4 | 3 | 16 | - | - | - | - | 36,654 | 805 | 65,087 | 102,546 | 3,195 | - | 600 | 3,795 | 98,751 |
| 16 Martin | Heijerman, Mark | 157 | 284 | 9 | 114 | 407 | 57 | 280 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 8 | - | - | - | - | 74,688 | 401,757 | 476,445 | 25,307 | 17,223 | 65,248 | 107,778 | 368,667 |
| 17 Mattawan, Calvary | Van Heukelom, Gregory | 63 | 98 | 38 | 35 | 171 | 147 | 180 | 1 | 4 | - | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | - | 50,500 | - | - | 286,335 | 336,835 | 9,360 | 9,750 | 11,600 | 30,710 | 306,125 |
| 18 Plainwell, Doster Comm | Slater, Steven | 44 | 64 | 3 | - | 67 | 17 | 48 | - | - | - | 2 | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 157,831 | 157,831 | 7,600 | - | 25,350 | 32,950 | 124,881 |
| 19 Plainwell, North Point | Zimmer, Jason | 118 | 206 | 14 | 61 | 281 | 33 | 400 | 14 | - | 2 | - | - | 9 | 14 | 470 | 230,940 | - | - | 360,215 | 591,625 | 14,600 | 25,289 | 24,000 | 63,889 | 527,736 |
| 20 Portage, Bridge Ministries | Wenke, Jeff | 310 | 93 | - | - | 93 | 596 | 375 | - | - | - | - | - | 19 | 14 | - | - | - | 7,055 | 567,573 | 574,628 | - | - | 63,269 | 63,269 | 511,359 |
| 21 Portage, First | Smith, Clayton | 86 | 138 | 3 | 34 | 175 | 56 | 115 | 2 | - | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | - | 1,347 | 9,736 | - | 2,241 | 265,165 | 278,489 | 10,568 | 17,525 | 5,548 | 33,641 | 244,848 |
| 22 South Haven, Hope | Smallegan, Steven | 156 | 266 | 21 | 98 | 385 | 182 | 197 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 1,833 | 70,830 | - | 20,828 | 466,513 | 560,004 | 24,525 | 25,600 | 7,320 | 57,445 | 502,559 |
| 23 Vicksburg, Lakeland | Schmidt, Edward | 134 | 202 | 41 | 70 | 313 | 84 | 137 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 3 | - | - | 20,004 | - | - | 147,700 | 361,350 | 529,054 | 17,200 | 13,000 | 15,800 | 46,000 | 483,054 |
| Organized Church Total | | 3,629 | 5,257 | 640 | 2,068 | 7,965 | 3,260 | 5,756 | 103 | 99 | 44 | 77 | 143 | 129 | 112 | 120,568 | 626,042 | 82,654 | 551,040 | 10,602,535 | 11,982,839 | 460,606 | 261,530 | 779,093 | 1,501,229 | 10,481,610 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*# 24 | Kalamazoo, Common Ground | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 25 | Kalamazoo, Voyage | Tillett, Wesley | 107 | 142 | 10 | 12 | 164 | 75 | 159 | 1 | - | 10 | 1 | - | 4 | 4 | - | 1,831 | 26,678 | 6,116 | 223,902 | 258,527 | - | 9,389 | 30,587 | 39,976 | 218,551 | |
| 26 | Lawton, New Comm | Potgiesser, Adam | 47 | 68 | 1 | 8 | 77 | 2 | 28 | 8 | - | - | - | - | 4 | 8 | - | - | - | - | 114,000 | 114,000 | - | - | - | - | 114,000 | |
| **Virginia** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*# 27 | Fairfax, International Fellows | Nepal, Ram | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | 154 | 210 | 11 | 20 | 241 | 77 | 187 | 9 | - | 10 | 1 | - | 8 | 12 | - | 1,831 | 26,678 | 6,116 | 337,902 | 372,527 | - | 9,389 | 30,587 | 39,976 | 332,551 | |
| | | Grand Total | 3,783 | 5,467 | 651 | 2,088 | 8,206 | 3,337 | 5,943 | 112 | 99 | 54 | 78 | 143 | 137 | 124 | 120,568 | 627,873 | 109,332 | 557,156 | 10,940,437 | 12,355,366 | 460,606 | 270,919 | 809,680 | 1,541,205 | 10,814,161 | |

**Chaplains**
Bouma, Lon
Schwabauer, David

**Emeritus General Synod professor**
Kraai, Mark

**Graduate study**
Brinks, Michael

**Missionary**
Harrison, James

**Planting minister**
Nepal, Ram
Potgiesser, Adam
Tillett, Wesley

**Retired**
Ackermann, Roy
Ahrens, Ronald
Armstrong, David
Bruininks, David
Cupery, Harold
DeYoung, Donald
Downing, Victor
Ekema, Bernard
Elfring, Sandra
Kruithof, Frederick
Pikkaart, Curry
Roggen, Leon
Stoepker, Wallace
Terwilliger, Robert
Van Hoeven, Donald
Vander Wal, Darwin
VanderRoest, James

**Specialized ministry**
Blumenstein, John
Clouse, Kevin
Dickinson, Bette
Edlefson, Kevin
Jafarov, Agshin
Lam, Jonathan
Lohman, Keith
Nevenzel, Calandra
Osborne, Laura
Sterkenburg, Stacey
Van Kempen, William
Wiers, Arthur

**Without charge**
Beaver Vogel, Sara
Camp, Russell
Carlson, Chet
De Vries, Darrin
Hart, Suzanne
Kreutz, Austin
Patterson, Richard

## Regional Synod of the Great Lakes CLASSIS OF ZEELAND

Stated clerk: Kayla Fik, 100 Pine St Ste 383, Zeeland, MI 49464-2612, 616-218-4862
Treasurer: Christine Blood, 3108 53rd St, Hamilton, MI 49419-9626, 616-212-8467

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Georgia** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Roswell, Bridge to Grace | Bonselaar, David | 68 | 98 | 12 | 102 | 212 | 36 | 85 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 199,346 | 222,716 | 422,062 | 5,952 | - | 29,490 | 35,442 | 386,620 |
| 2 Suwanee, Jusarang | Go, Billy | 28 | 35 | 5 | 20 | 60 | 3 | 50 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 115,000 | 115,000 | 1,423 | - | - | 1,423 | 113,577 |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Allegan, Dunningville | Timmer, Christopher | 47 | 90 | 5 | 26 | 121 | 41 | 89 | 5 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 25 | - | - | 10,034 | 167,399 | 177,458 | 5,394 | 12,395 | 86,134 | 103,923 | 73,535 |
| 4 Allendale, Spring Valley | Wondergem, Robert | 108 | 232 | 35 | 2 | 269 | 201 | 300 | 6 | 4 | 25 | 1 | 24 | 3 | 1 | 209 | 15,978 | - | 3,985 | 385,944 | 406,116 | 20,263 | - | 17,270 | 37,533 | 368,583 |
| 5 Fennville, Immanuel | Houston, Ralph | 11 | 19 | - | 1 | 20 | 7 | 35 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 24,636 | 24,636 | 788 | 150 | - | 938 | 23,698 |
| 6 Hamilton | Dekker, Thomas | 196 | 281 | 33 | 87 | 401 | 21 | 200 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4 | - | 473 | - | - | 10,047 | 480,537 | 491,057 | 27,699 | 26,763 | 78,688 | 133,150 | 357,907 |
| 7 Hamilton, Bentheim | Vacant 07/15 | 144 | 257 | 9 | 136 | 402 | 61 | 290 | 2 | 6 | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 73,455 | - | 6,360 | 429,948 | 509,763 | 22,506 | 7,570 | 42,131 | 72,207 | 437,556 |
| 8 Hamilton, Haven | VerWys, Ronald<br>de Waard, D. Marc | 176 | 334 | 136 | 207 | 677 | 46 | 273 | 1 | - | 12 | 5 | - | 2 | - | 1,731 | 32,371 | - | 25,739 | 502,345 | 562,186 | 45,132 | 26,850 | 40,620 | 112,602 | 449,584 |
| 9 Holland, Ebenezer | LePoire, Larry | 88 | 146 | 30 | 26 | 202 | 14 | 85 | 3 | 3 | - | 2 | 13 | 2 | 2 | - | 12,690 | - | 9,758 | 245,696 | 268,144 | 14,683 | 18,150 | 32,925 | 65,758 | 202,386 |
| 10 Holland, Harlem | Nyitray, John | 175 | 268 | 50 | 145 | 463 | 61 | 215 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | - | 5 | - | 15,000 | 33,846 | - | - | 417,196 | 466,042 | 23,500 | 24,600 | 17,000 | 65,100 | 400,942 |
| 11 Holland, North Holland | DeVries, Steven | 150 | 289 | 13 | 98 | 400 | 32 | 217 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 3,235 | - | - | 14,548 | 422,203 | 439,986 | 27,061 | 72,165 | 20,560 | 119,786 | 320,200 |
| 12 Holland, Overisel | Vacant 10/14 | 219 | 441 | 12 | 148 | 601 | 7 | 450 | 26 | 2 | 12 | 2 | - | 6 | 1 | 6,000 | 63,733 | - | - | 734,667 | 804,400 | 43,557 | 48,633 | 169,389 | 261,579 | 542,821 |
| 13 Hudsonville | DeGraff, Chad<br>Van Slyke, Donald | 553 | 1,013 | 10 | 491 | 1,514 | 25 | 525 | 11 | 19 | 49 | 14 | 10 | 24 | - | 50 | 49 | - | - | 1,349,123 | 1,349,222 | 97,278 | 69,914 | 186,407 | 353,599 | 995,623 |
| 14 Hudsonville, Covenant Comm | Bristol, Steve | 78 | 174 | 20 | 52 | 246 | 35 | 162 | 5 | - | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | 728 | 12,216 | - | 3,145 | 272,746 | 288,835 | 16,674 | 3,000 | 2,367 | 22,041 | 266,794 |
| 15 Hudsonville, Fellowship | Hulst, Shawn<br>Van Buren, Michael<br>Visser, Jeremy | 882 | 1,587 | 65 | 625 | 2,277 | 160 | 1,625 | 53 | 45 | 8 | 12 | 43 | 37 | 4 | 560 | 118,180 | - | - | 1,952,040 | 2,070,780 | 141,997 | 61,100 | 166,753 | 369,850 | 1,700,930 |
| 16 Hudsonville, Forest Grove | Vacant 06/15 | 150 | 325 | 2 | 125 | 452 | 23 | 214 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | - | 1,185 | 21,500 | - | 18,000 | 403,941 | 444,626 | 29,431 | 30,041 | 35,933 | 95,405 | 349,221 |
| 17 Hudsonville, North Blendon | Vacant 04/15 | 48 | 93 | 10 | 17 | 120 | 8 | 65 | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 125,042 | 125,042 | 8,320 | 5,485 | 5,305 | 19,110 | 105,932 |
| 18 Hudsonville, South Blendon | Jarvis, Gary | 90 | 172 | 23 | 50 | 245 | 16 | 135 | - | 2 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 | - | - | 3,400 | - | - | 265,689 | 269,089 | 17,859 | 5,555 | 13,246 | 36,660 | 232,429 |
| 19 Jamestown | Batt, Adrian | 107 | 198 | - | 102 | 300 | 10 | 180 | 9 | 5 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | 203,000 | 203,000 | 18,861 | 7,000 | - | 25,861 | 177,139 |
| 20 West Olive, Ottawa | Wernlund, Paul | 221 | 400 | 5 | 604 | 1,009 | 45 | 279 | 13 | 1 | 14 | 3 | 5 | 3 | - | 20,996 | 150,457 | - | 4,060 | 570,345 | 745,858 | 36,038 | 96,991 | 112,351 | 245,380 | 500,478 |
| 21 Zeeland, Beaverdam | Vacant 06/09 | 49 | 86 | 2 | 26 | 114 | 11 | 71 | - | 9 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 300 | 158,950 | - | 9,547 | 119,875 | 288,672 | 5,631 | 1,832 | - | 7,463 | 281,209 |
| 22 Zeeland, Community | Baker, Douglas<br>Henry, Kurtis<br>Ten Brink, Gregory<br>Walker, Trent | 613 | 1,278 | 42 | 702 | 2,022 | 80 | 1,073 | 23 | 69 | - | 7 | - | 24 | 4 | 841 | - | - | 9,398 | 2,030,564 | 2,040,803 | 113,120 | 41,700 | 133,300 | 288,120 | 1,752,683 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 Zeeland, Faith | Elgersma, Jonathan<br>Smits, David | 329 | 673 | 12 | 243 | 928 | 86 | 525 | 3 | 14 | 8 | 6 | 12 | 3 | - | - | 156,425 | - | 202,810 | 1,103,450 | 1,462,685 | 61,355 | 106,150 | 109,367 | 276,872 | 1,185,813 |
| 24 Zeeland, First | Grabill, Thomas<br>Van Oostendorp, D. Scott<br>Zeller, Christopher | 380 | 698 | 39 | 181 | 918 | 105 | 484 | 10 | 35 | 10 | 6 | - | 9 | 4 | 103,008 | 172,075 | - | 15,643 | 1,126,938 | 1,417,664 | 64,338 | 30,125 | 201,420 | 295,883 | 1,121,781 |
| 25 Zeeland, Second | Barnes, Eric<br>Barnes, Miriam<br>Voskuil, Karsten | 126 | 211 | 132 | 128 | 471 | 27 | 145 | 9 | 13 | 2 | 11 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 28,118 | 5,858 | - | 7,213 | 371,020 | 412,209 | 16,675 | 9,550 | 20,200 | 46,425 | 365,784 |
| 26 Zeeland, Vriesland | Newhouse, Blaine<br>Zinger, James | 275 | 394 | 48 | 174 | 616 | 48 | 375 | 25 | 23 | 399 | 4 | 37 | 18 | 5 | 588 | 30,195 | - | 90,284 | 937,917 | 1,058,984 | 56,771 | 47,639 | 141,444 | 245,854 | 813,130 |
| | Organized Church Total | 5,311 | 9,792 | 750 | 4,518 | 15,060 | 1,209 | 8,147 | 227 | 281 | 578 | 103 | 177 | 170 | 23 | 183,047 | 1,061,378 | - | 639,917 | 14,979,977 | 16,864,319 | 922,306 | 753,358 | 1,662,300 | 3,337,964 | 13,526,355 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Georgia** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 Suwanee, Disciple of Atlanta | Kim, Sung Howy | 10 | 10 | 2 | 15 | 27 | - | 15 | 4 | - | 3 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 40,000 | 40,000 | - | 1,000 | 1,800 | 2,800 | 37,200 |
| **Michigan** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 Holland, Casa de Mi Padre | New Start | 30 | 37 | 20 | 52 | 109 | 20 | 90 | 1 | - | 20 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 20 | - | 42 | 24,385 | 13,200 | 68,479 | 106,106 | - | - | 4,368 | 4,368 | 101,738 |
| 29 Zeeland, Foundry | Folkers, Kenneth | 81 | 174 | - | 107 | 281 | 124 | 277 | 26 | 253 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 135,040 | - | - | - | 135,040 | - | - | - | - | 135,040 |
| | New Church Start Total | 121 | 221 | 22 | 174 | 417 | 144 | 382 | 31 | 253 | 23 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20 | - | 135,082 | 24,385 | 13,200 | 108,479 | 281,146 | - | 1,000 | 6,168 | 7,168 | 273,978 |
| | Grand Total | 5,432 | 10,013 | 772 | 4,692 | 15,477 | 1,353 | 8,529 | 258 | 534 | 601 | 104 | 181 | 175 | 43 | 183,047 | 1,196,460 | 24,385 | 653,117 | 15,088,456 | 17,145,465 | 922,306 | 754,358 | 1,668,468 | 3,345,132 | 13,800,333 |

**Chaplains**
Boersma, Paul
Farkas, Sarah
Kolenbrander, Kenneth
Lokers Merrill, Mary
Pieters, Christopher
Post, Benjamin
Tigelaar, Darren
Weaver, Michael

**Graduate study**
Keepers, Dustyn

**Inactive**
Norg, Bradley

**Planting minister**
Folkers, Kenneth
Kim, Sung Howy

**Retired**
Bayer, Lee
Beltman, James
Cusack, Joseph
Dalman, Rodger
Grissen, David
Ikerd, James
Jacobs, Marvin
Jungling, Irven
Koolhaas, Cornelis
Kraay, Louis
Lemmenes, Mark
Lindman, Theodore
Nordstrom, John
Nyhuis, Terry
Nykamp, Robert
Ratering, Norman
Smits, David
Stegenga, Henry
Van der werff, Vernon
Van Es, Rowland
Vander Roest, John
Verkaik, Harris
Vis, Marlin
Zinger, James
Zwyghuizen, John

**Specialized ministry**
Bossardet, Andrew
Carattini, Jill
Custer, Timothy
Dippenaar, Johannes
Dykstra, James
Fik, Kayla
Karsten, Neal
Kreuze, Jeremy
Krygsheld, Todd
Kunz, Bryan
Lokers, Scott
Meldrim, James (Nate)
Noorman, Derek
Simmons, Patricia
Slotman, Earl
Tait, Lewis
Tait, Lisa
Van Engen, Kris
Vander Molen, Kirk
Vander Wege, Brian
Vink, Timothy
Yandell, Barbara

**Without charge**
Brink, Mitchell
DeLoof, Steven
Raar, Carolyn
Sanders, John
Stouten, Dann
Unekis, Daniel

## Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF CENTRAL IOWA

Stated clerk: Suzanne Vogel, 623 N Oaks Dr, Pella, IA 50219-7646, 641-780-4713
Treasurer: Mark Sandbulte, 12450 NE 64th St, Elkhart, IA 50073-9041, 515-343-4055

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Iowa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Altoona, Adventure Life | VandeBerg, Thomas | 115 | 187 | 62 | 76 | 325 | 18 | 172 | 22 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 12 | 462 | - | - | 305 | 314,728 | 315,495 | 17,018 | 10,446 | 10,297 | 37,761 | 277,734 |
| 2 Ankeny, Prairie Ridge | Van Rees, Michael | 143 | 259 | - | 270 | 529 | 514 | 950 | 23 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 14 | 29 | 17 | 2,247 | 67,283 | - | - | 1,828,142 | 1,897,672 | 21,180 | - | 42,532 | 63,712 | 1,833,960 |
| 3 Des Moines, Bethany | Rempe, Todd | 85 | 139 | - | 27 | 166 | 25 | 90 | 6 | 4 | - | 4 | - | 3 | 4 | 82 | 14,908 | - | 2,100 | 211,320 | 228,410 | 10,432 | 11,450 | 8,281 | 30,163 | 198,247 |
| 4 Des Moines, Meredith Drive | Hanson, Gerrit<br>Reeves, Bethany<br>Vogel, Suzanne | 631 | 1,285 | 341 | 368 | 1,994 | 44 | 710 | 46 | 12 | 17 | 8 | 4 | 14 | 1 | 11,668 | - | 6,200 | - | 2,043,923 | 2,061,791 | 146,868 | 114,450 | 1,574,678 | 1,835,996 | 225,795 |
| 5 Knoxville, Celebrate Comm | Schmidt, Andrew | 147 | 241 | 12 | 111 | 364 | 330 | 420 | 19 | - | 13 | 2 | 26 | 4 | 7 | - | - | 28,000 | 92,771 | 496,458 | 617,229 | 22,248 | 5,500 | 28,692 | 56,440 | 560,789 |
| 6 Leighton, Ebenezer | Jicinsky, Mark | 77 | 119 | 3 | 2 | 124 | 5 | 115 | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 6 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 311,623 | 311,623 | 10,336 | 118,130 | 31,008 | 159,474 | 152,149 |
| 7 Norwalk, Crossroads | Blumer, Glen | 132 | 161 | 48 | 7 | 216 | 150 | 250 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 5,984 | 7,774 | - | 9,056 | 375,850 | 398,664 | 13,266 | 3,000 | 1,686 | 17,952 | 380,712 |
| 8 Oskaloosa, Central | Nelson, Jonathan | 256 | 401 | 50 | 139 | 590 | 69 | 415 | 20 | 31 | 4 | 6 | - | 11 | 2 | - | 225,000 | - | 2,347 | 599,131 | 826,478 | 42,196 | 44,021 | 2,834 | 89,051 | 737,427 |
| 9 Otley | Holleman, Michael | 82 | 144 | 15 | 26 | 185 | 17 | 96 | - | 2 | 6 | 5 | - | - | - | 2,338 | - | - | 13,228 | 195,491 | 211,057 | 15,566 | 18,428 | 11,237 | 45,231 | 165,826 |
| 10 Pella, First | Johnson, Robert | 155 | 253 | 39 | 41 | 333 | 40 | 250 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 12 | - | 2 | - | 7,816 | - | - | 9,600 | 464,194 | 481,610 | 24,669 | 50,315 | 41,553 | 116,537 | 365,073 |
| 11 Pella, Heartland | Davidson, Ross | 65 | 117 | 8 | 70 | 195 | 25 | 130 | 3 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | - | - | 18,176 | - | 773 | 161,177 | 180,126 | 10,850 | 13,709 | 12,831 | 37,390 | 142,736 |
| 12 Pella, Second | Mathonnet-VanderWell, Stephen<br>Mathonnet-Vanderwell, Sophie | 238 | 361 | 146 | 145 | 652 | 78 | 350 | - | 1 | 1 | 8 | - | 1 | - | 94 | 35,594 | - | 2,197 | 555,690 | 593,575 | 33,576 | 60,750 | 18,583 | 112,909 | 480,666 |
| 13 Pella, Third | Korver, Keith<br>Korver, Kevin | 705 | 1,455 | 343 | 738 | 2,536 | 1,464 | 2,700 | 41 | 38 | 7 | 7 | - | 40 | 4 | 14,846 | 32,436 | - | - | 4,024,667 | 4,071,949 | 140,281 | 381,466 | 648,141 | 1,169,888 | 2,902,061 |
| 14 Pella, Trinity | Piersma, Christopher | 338 | 442 | 55 | 265 | 762 | 45 | 381 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 3 | - | 4 | 1 | 256 | 350 | - | 13,697 | 773,966 | 788,269 | 49,553 | 95,600 | 86,907 | 232,060 | 556,209 |
| 15 Prairie City, First | Ellens, Mark | 59 | 124 | 20 | 40 | 184 | 184 | 110 | 5 | - | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 3,100 | 179,635 | 182,735 | 11,596 | 8,803 | 9,157 | 29,556 | 153,179 |
| 16 Sully, First | Sneller, Wayne | 230 | 385 | 21 | 171 | 577 | 54 | 465 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 301 | 142,421 | - | 25,623 | 442,298 | 610,643 | 37,644 | 44,138 | 54,428 | 136,210 | 474,433 |
| 17 Waukee, Westview | Parks, Jacob<br>Van Leeuwen, Josh | 118 | 230 | 25 | 110 | 365 | 117 | 284 | 9 | 15 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 12 | - | 122 | 54,029 | - | 1,967 | 670,113 | 726,231 | 20,601 | 21,787 | 50,836 | 93,224 | 633,007 |
| **Texas** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 San Antonio, Rockhills | Vacant 12/14 | 50 | 105 | 15 | 25 | 145 | 140 | 190 | 20 | - | 12 | - | 6 | 5 | 20 | 1,548 | - | - | - | 337,024 | 338,572 | - | - | 26,862 | 26,862 | 311,710 |
| | Organized Church Total | 3,626 | 6,408 | 1,203 | 2,631 | 10,242 | 3,319 | 8,078 | 240 | 129 | 102 | 76 | 87 | 146 | 77 | 47,764 | 597,971 | 34,200 | 176,764 | 13,985,430 | 14,842,129 | 627,880 | 1,001,993 | 2,660,543 | 4,290,416 | 10,551,713 |

| New Church Starts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iowa | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*# 19 | Ames, ReNew Comm | Vis, Aaron | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | Grand Total | 3,626 | 6,408 | 1,203 | 2,631 | 10,242 | 3,319 | 8,078 | 240 | 129 | 102 | 76 | 87 | 146 | 77 | 47,764 | 597,971 | 34,200 | 176,764 | 13,985,430 | 14,842,129 | 627,880 | 1,001,993 | 2,660,543 | 4,290,416 | 10,551,713 |

**Chaplains**
Brummel, D. Joel
De Hoog, James
Freeman, Douglas
Johnson, Eric
McNary, Steven

**Inactive**
Roozeboom, Gary

**Missionary**
Schreuder, Alan

**Planting minister**
Vis, Aaron

**Retired**
Brown, Jane
Buteyn, John
De Glopper, Donald
DeJong, Fran
Ebbers, James
Groen, Douglas
Hibma, James
Kolenbrander, Norman
Laman, Duane
Nauta, Barbara
Ringnalda, Donald
Roller, Neale
Spierenburg, Marinus
Vis, Anthony
Wagner, Craig

**Specialized ministry**
Batts, Martin
Boersma, Carl
Henseler, Sarah
Lantz, David
Ver Steeg, Jill
Ver Steeg, Shane

**Without charge**
Breen, DeWayne
Buteyn, J. Erik
Dobbie, Douglas
Lannin, Daniel
Lee, Jeong Yeop
Van Leeuwen, Heather
Watson, Susan

## Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF CENTRAL PLAINS

Stated clerk: Charlotte Foreman, 3504 Cheyenne Dr, Edmond, OK 73013-6830, 405-826-1094
Treasurer: Charlotte Foreman, 3504 Cheyenne Dr, Edmond, OK 73013-6830, 405-826-1094

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Kansas** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Overland Park, Crossroads | Huitink, Donley | 37 | 49 | 14 | 37 | 100 | 95 | 55 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 428 | - | - | 14,964 | 150,435 | 165,827 | 5,722 | 3,314 | 450 | 9,486 | 156,341 |
| 2 Prairie View | Vacant 06/12 | 29 | 47 | 25 | - | 72 | 9 | 50 | - | 2 | - | 2 | - | - | - | 21,137 | 6,225 | - | 1,564 | 61,550 | 90,476 | 5,912 | 1,125 | 4,469 | 11,506 | 78,970 |
| 3 Wichita, Harvest Comm | Henion, David | 26 | 43 | 23 | 18 | 84 | 42 | 71 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 7 | 1 | - | 21 | - | - | 75,539 | 125,462 | 201,022 | 4,082 | 430 | 625 | 5,137 | 195,885 |
| **Nebraska** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Adams, Pella | Vacant 04/16 | 69 | 107 | 10 | 26 | 143 | 17 | 83 | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | 4 | - | 34 | 8,764 | - | - | 196,218 | 205,016 | 12,370 | 41,383 | 15,387 | 69,140 | 135,876 |
| 5 Firth | Starr, Mark | 84 | 169 | 50 | 53 | 272 | 36 | 156 | 1 | - | 7 | 1 | 25 | 7 | 1 | 729 | 76,695 | - | - | 239,267 | 316,691 | 16,020 | 3,250 | 18,701 | 37,971 | 278,720 |
| 6 Hickman, Holland | Folkert, Victor | 66 | 132 | 9 | 24 | 165 | 36 | 140 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 13 | 1 | - | 3,970 | 55,792 | - | 1,475 | 176,951 | 238,188 | 14,113 | 24,640 | 12,766 | 51,519 | 186,669 |
| 7 Lincoln, Hope Comm | Vacant 07/16 | 157 | 259 | 5 | 91 | 355 | 51 | 300 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 10,786 | 24,225 | - | 413,043 | 357,526 | 805,580 | 25,270 | 3,315 | 3,988 | 32,573 | 773,007 |
| 8 Omaha, Westwood | Christiansen, Scott Tirrel, Quinn | 233 | 418 | 60 | 217 | 695 | 124 | 440 | 16 | 9 | - | 2 | 2 | 13 | 2 | - | 440,182 | - | 442,860 | 933,261 | 1,816,303 | 37,098 | 15,100 | 35,801 | 87,999 | 1,728,304 |
| 9 Papillion, Papio Creek | Parrish, David | 25 | 43 | 35 | 75 | 153 | 32 | 85 | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 25,000 | 900 | - | 127,863 | 167,307 | 321,070 | 3,662 | 50 | 4,279 | 7,991 | 313,079 |
| **Oklahoma** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 Apache | Vacant 07/11 | 17 | 22 | - | 12 | 34 | 28 | 21 | 3 | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 3,300 | 300 | 11,759 | 15,361 | - | - | - | - | 15,361 |
| 11 Lawton, Comanche | Vacant 01/11 | 22 | 36 | 40 | 2 | 74 | 20 | 35 | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 23,000 | 15,500 | 38,500 | 3,003 | - | 690 | 3,693 | 34,807 |
| 12 Oklahoma City, Our Lord's Comm | Bottomly, Roc | 122 | 242 | 2 | 8 | 252 | 113 | 251 | 17 | 22 | - | 3 | 34 | - | 7 | 7,689 | 125 | - | 52,618 | 891,140 | 951,572 | 24,126 | 2,000 | 120,870 | 146,996 | 804,576 |
| Organized Church Total | | 887 | 1,567 | 273 | 563 | 2,399 | 603 | 1,687 | 55 | 38 | 12 | 27 | 86 | 27 | 15 | 69,796 | 612,908 | 3,300 | 1,153,226 | 3,326,376 | 5,165,606 | 151,378 | 94,607 | 218,026 | 464,011 | 4,701,595 |

**Retired**
Arnold, Ross
Dabney, John
Helmink, Ron
Jennings, Joyce
Maassen, Terry
Ramaker, Daniel
Spencer, Charles
Tysen, Harry
Van Der Weele, Jeffrey
Van Galen, Herman

**Specialized ministry**
Assink, Dale
Blumer, Randy
Bradford, Mark
Hawley, Amy Jo
Holtrop, Robert
Husselman, Richard
Kimpson, Darrin
Stewart, Thomas

**Without charge**
Bosch, Matthew

## Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF DAKOTA

Stated clerk: Lawrence Namminga, PO Box 317, Springfield, SD 57062-0317, 605-660-3255
Treasurer: Brenda Van Beek, 603 Tiger St, Harrisburg, SD 57032-2061, 605-595-7369

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worshp Attend (7) | Gains Conf (8) | Gains Cert (9) | Losses Trans (10) | Losses Decd (11) | Losses Other (12) | Bapt Infant (13) | Bapt Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **North Dakota** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Bismarck, Community | Lee, Jared | 79 | 158 | 71 | 68 | 297 | 101 | 169 | 17 | - | 43 | - | - | 5 | 2 | 8 | - | - | - | 491,013 | 491,021 | 24,911 | 24,911 | 135,555 | 185,377 | 305,644 |
| 2 Hague, Hope Westfield | Vanden Heuvel, Jack | 26 | 49 | - | - | 49 | 5 | 50 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 747 | - | - | - | 57,264 | 58,011 | 4,834 | 8,780 | 700 | 14,314 | 43,697 |
| 3 Litchville, First | Peterson, Paul | 10 | 16 | 3 | 3 | 22 | - | 12 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 20,500 | 20,500 | 1,460 | 600 | 750 | 2,810 | 17,690 |
| 4 Marion, North Marion | Vacant 07/12 | 15 | 29 | 8 | 23 | 60 | 6 | 37 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 66 | - | - | - | 66,961 | 67,027 | 2,372 | 2,421 | 18,635 | 23,428 | 43,599 |
| 5 Strasburg | Vacant 03/96 | 10 | 14 | - | 8 | 22 | 12 | 22 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,192 | - | - | - | 21,818 | 23,010 | 1,368 | 3,959 | 50 | 5,377 | 17,633 |
| 6 West Fargo, Red River | Van Peursem, Ronald | 43 | 55 | 11 | 20 | 86 | 25 | 74 | - | - | - | - | 5 | 1 | - | - | 6,000 | - | 11,541 | 132,232 | 149,773 | 5,564 | - | 2,800 | 8,364 | 141,409 |
| **South Dakota** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 Amherst, Zion | Vacant 12/07 | 22 | 38 | 23 | 6 | 67 | 13 | 37 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,827 | - | - | 7,015 | 38,871 | 50,713 | 3,193 | 5,245 | 5,427 | 13,865 | 36,848 |
| 8 Armour, Grandview | Vacant 05/05 | 55 | 98 | - | - | 98 | 22 | 80 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 22 | 5,149 | - | 3,225 | 87,838 | 96,234 | 9,213 | 2,238 | 26,211 | 37,662 | 58,572 |
| 9 Brookings, Faith | Vacant 05/16 | 50 | 76 | 11 | 22 | 109 | 25 | 88 | - | 3 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 100 | - | 6,930 | 318,845 | 325,875 | 6,659 | 11,568 | 7,447 | 25,674 | 300,201 |
| 10 Canton, Bethany | Richardson, Allen | 90 | 146 | 60 | 120 | 326 | 20 | 154 | 4 | 4 | - | - | 27 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | 192,305 | 192,305 | 15,598 | - | 12,000 | 27,598 | 164,707 |
| 11 Castlewood, Hamlin | Wallick, Justin | 82 | 128 | 28 | 79 | 235 | 8 | 120 | - | - | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 25,046 | - | 629 | 132,836 | 158,511 | 8,415 | 7,750 | 24,135 | 40,300 | 118,211 |
| 12 Chancellor | Vacant 12/14 | 127 | 150 | 52 | 30 | 232 | 22 | 85 | - | - | 1 | 5 | 81 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 171,394 | 171,394 | 17,605 | 11,263 | 1,322 | 30,190 | 141,204 |
| 13 Colton, First | Tims, David | 20 | 20 | - | - | 20 | 4 | 20 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 25,734 | 25,734 | 2,554 | 2,750 | 715 | 6,019 | 19,715 |
| 14 Corsica, Grace | Vacant 07/13 | 48 | 83 | 33 | 30 | 146 | 10 | 75 | - | 3 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 125 | 12,540 | - | 7,294 | 68,721 | 88,680 | 8,028 | 120 | 1,475 | 9,623 | 79,057 |
| 15 Davis, Bethel | Vacant 01/04 | 15 | 22 | 14 | 5 | 41 | 5 | 20 | 4 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 235 | - | - | - | 24,813 | 25,048 | 2,060 | - | - | 2,060 | 22,988 |
| 16 Dell Rapids | Timmer, Rick | 89 | 185 | 101 | 74 | 360 | 58 | 195 | 1 | 9 | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | 99 | - | - | 5,312 | 174,542 | 179,953 | 15,324 | 5,346 | 19,428 | 40,098 | 139,855 |
| 17 Harrison, Community** | Maas, Gary | 30 | 70 | 7 | 16 | 93 | 2 | 56 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 750 | 950 | - | 5,869 | 157,350 | 164,919 | 4,515 | 110,096 | 23,177 | 137,788 | 27,131 |
| 18 Lennox, Delaware | Hegstad, Gary | 80 | 157 | - | 69 | 226 | 19 | 122 | 11 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 5 | 1 | - | 33,150 | - | 50,887 | 140,287 | 224,324 | 13,409 | 9,750 | 9,850 | 33,009 | 191,315 |
| 19 Lennox, Second | Hayunga, Harlan | 99 | 187 | 21 | 51 | 259 | 33 | 130 | 16 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 251 | 13,027 | - | 8,478 | 147,367 | 169,123 | 16,237 | 6,027 | 3,383 | 25,647 | 143,476 |
| 20 Mitchell, First | Hubers, Jeffrey<br>Ulmer, Dean | 145 | 247 | 12 | 79 | 338 | 63 | 209 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 6 | - | - | 638,283 | - | 13,763 | 337,942 | 989,988 | 24,173 | 7,811 | 19,429 | 51,413 | 938,575 |
| 21 Monroe, Calvary | Richardson, Clint | 81 | 132 | 15 | 10 | 157 | 25 | 120 | 5 | - | 2 | 6 | 65 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 175,123 | 175,123 | 11,844 | 8,390 | 14,959 | 35,193 | 139,930 |
| 22 Platte, First | De Jager, Michael<br>Koops, Harry | 168 | 305 | 1 | 124 | 430 | 86 | 225 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 10 | - | 1,199 | - | - | 2,165 | 404,239 | 407,603 | 30,876 | 53,393 | 50,100 | 134,369 | 273,234 |
| 23 Revillo, Antelope Valley | Graves, John | 7 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 8 | 9 | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2,744 | - | 146 | 22,791 | 25,681 | 912 | 1,548 | 900 | 3,360 | 22,321 |
| 24 Sioux Falls, Arise | Vacant 10/15 | 100 | 178 | 13 | 111 | 302 | 87 | 237 | - | 4 | 3 | - | 12 | 15 | - | 571 | 61,315 | - | - | 300,755 | 362,641 | 10,217 | 5,196 | 11,366 | 26,779 | 335,862 |
| 25 Sioux Falls, Community | Teel, Clyde | 365 | 643 | - | 359 | 1,002 | 350 | 1,000 | 4 | 20 | 13 | 6 | - | 19 | - | 152 | 214,199 | - | - | 847,897 | 1,062,248 | 55,553 | 14,625 | 84,204 | 154,382 | 907,866 |
| 26 Sioux Falls, First | Anthes, Steve<br>Eberline, Kenneth | 231 | 391 | 66 | 182 | 639 | 74 | 337 | 9 | 12 | 6 | 9 | 35 | 10 | - | 9,990 | 46,959 | 29,000 | 2,600 | 574,338 | 662,887 | 40,684 | 18,600 | 14,129 | 73,413 | 589,474 |
| 27 Sioux Falls, Good News | Schneider, Kevin | 237 | 495 | 25 | 288 | 808 | 255 | 486 | 9 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 18 | 11 | 2 | 113 | 224,902 | - | 462,618 | 733,323 | 1,420,956 | 43,238 | 41,800 | 74,297 | 159,335 | 1,261,621 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Springfield, Emmanuel | Raak, Cody | 100 | 166 | 62 | 83 | 311 | 20 | 180 | 5 | 10 | - | 5 | - | 5 | 1 | 2,058 | 36,740 | - | 18,956 | 133,158 | 190,912 | 16,947 | 18,650 | 2,056 | 37,653 | 153,259 |
| 29 | Stickney, Aurora | Ebbens, Daniel | 89 | 174 | 22 | 7 | 203 | 22 | 145 | 4 | 5 | - | 4 | - | 7 | - | - | 34,000 | - | - | 128,843 | 162,843 | 13,157 | 4,100 | 6,200 | 23,457 | 139,386 |
| 30 | Valley Springs | Bouwens, Norman | 34 | 47 | 3 | 14 | 64 | 8 | 46 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 233 | - | - | 3,059 | 64,764 | 68,056 | 4,561 | 6,099 | 4,618 | 15,278 | 52,778 |
| 31 | Volga, First | Landegent, David | 98 | 187 | 30 | 47 | 264 | 34 | 168 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | - | 613 | - | - | 5,332 | 243,322 | 249,267 | 15,508 | 5,975 | 20,386 | 41,869 | 207,398 |
| 32 | Yankton, Riverview | Veldhuizen, Rodney | 96 | 164 | 17 | 57 | 238 | 28 | 114 | - | 12 | - | 4 | 7 | 1 | 1 | - | 3,200 | - | 5,000 | 152,654 | 160,854 | 17,919 | - | 5,158 | 23,077 | 137,777 |
| | Organized Church Total | | 2,741 | 4,819 | 710 | 1,987 | 7,516 | 1,450 | 4,822 | 115 | 112 | 85 | 74 | 271 | 123 | 8 | 23,251 | 1,358,304 | 29,000 | 620,819 | 6,589,840 | 8,621,214 | 448,908 | 399,011 | 600,862 | 1,448,781 | 7,172,433 |

**Chaplains**
Kuik, Daniel
Millican, Maurice
Moermond, Timothy
Van Ravenswaay, Patrick (Rick)
Wiersma, Jason

**Inactive**
Wise, Todd

**Retired**
Andrews, C. Lee
Boerema, Frank
Brenneman, Wendell
De Loof, Gerard
DeGroff, John
Dobos, Frank
Oltmanns, Emmo
Reck, David
Roos, Arvin
Ter Maat, Harry
Van Leeuwen, Irwin
Vande Zande, Arlin
Volkers, Mark
Zylstra, Thomas

**Specialized ministry**
DeYoung, Kyle
Klein, Ron
Sundstrom, Seth
Van Voorst, Carl
Wilgenburg, Fred

**Without charge**
Boender, LeRoy
Boint, Steven
Namminga, Darin
Schmeling, Jamie
Willemstyn, Harold

## Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF EAST SIOUX

Stated clerk: Mike Hardeman, American Reformed Church, 407 Albany Ave SE, Orange City, IA 51041-1627, 712-737-4430
Treasurer: Terry Hill, 601 E 3rd St, Sanborn, IA 51248-1114, 712-930-7272

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Iowa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Alton | Bonestroo, Scott | 126 | 195 | 74 | 62 | 331 | 14 | 186 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 15 | 4 | - | 1,440 | - | - | 17,114 | 291,369 | 309,923 | 19,706 | 14,544 | 19,067 | 53,317 | 256,606 |
| 2 Archer | Vacant 03/16 | 68 | 132 | - | 54 | 186 | 6 | 85 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | 3,434 | - | - | 16,280 | 113,454 | 133,168 | 10,522 | 10,403 | 6,458 | 27,383 | 105,785 |
| 3 Estherville, Crossroads Comm | Drew, Michael | 37 | 77 | - | 33 | 110 | 26 | 105 | 3 | - | - | - | 10 | 4 | 1 | 72 | 1,852 | 12,400 | 3,746 | 113,746 | 131,816 | 4,292 | 1,250 | 3,000 | 8,542 | 123,274 |
| 4 Hospers, First | Sikkema, Milton | 68 | 107 | 4 | 29 | 140 | 18 | 82 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 8,643 | - | 1,000 | 15,237 | 193,941 | 218,821 | 9,057 | 34,284 | 9,219 | 52,560 | 166,261 |
| 5 Melvin, First | Vacant 02/15 | 26 | 33 | 8 | 11 | 52 | 1 | 30 | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | 500 | - | - | - | 62,186 | 62,686 | 2,652 | 8,045 | 6,515 | 17,212 | 45,474 |
| 6 Newkirk | Powers, David | 103 | 169 | 4 | 57 | 230 | 8 | 160 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 8 | - | 4 | - | 27,409 | 70,033 | - | 3,435 | 260,088 | 360,965 | 14,626 | 78,096 | 46,702 | 139,424 | 221,541 |
| 7 Okoboji, Good News Comm | Messer, John | 230 | 386 | 67 | 162 | 615 | 245 | 431 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 4 | 35 | 6 | 2 | 73 | 8,782 | - | - | 585,691 | 594,546 | 34,069 | 6,200 | 13,269 | 53,538 | 541,008 |
| 8 Orange City, American | Hardeman, Elizabeth<br>Hardeman, Michael | 142 | 238 | 30 | 48 | 316 | 27 | 225 | 8 | 19 | 2 | 7 | 200 | 1 | 2 | - | 31,062 | - | - | 459,757 | 490,819 | 20,319 | 82,130 | 8,183 | 110,632 | 380,187 |
| 9 Orange City, First | Breen, Timothy<br>Haverdink, Mark | 502 | 681 | 127 | 223 | 1,031 | 26 | 725 | 7 | 13 | 10 | 14 | 7 | 7 | - | 5,125 | 760,200 | - | 9,470 | 1,317,218 | 2,092,013 | 62,008 | 177,110 | 205,176 | 444,294 | 1,647,719 |
| 10 Orange City, Trinity | De Boer, Robert<br>Opgenorth, Jonathan<br>Vos, Benjamin | 263 | 557 | 182 | 241 | 980 | 154 | 830 | 10 | 37 | 7 | 5 | - | 10 | 2 | 27,894 | 271,710 | - | 3,013 | 946,815 | 1,249,432 | 48,344 | 167,981 | 94,102 | 310,427 | 939,005 |
| 11 Primghar, American | Hietbrink, Dennis | 72 | 145 | 2 | 19 | 166 | 7 | 75 | 6 | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 221 | 12,360 | - | 12,050 | 171,595 | 196,226 | 11,475 | 800 | 4,179 | 16,454 | 179,772 |
| 12 Sanborn, First | Waterstone, Mark | 137 | 260 | 35 | 65 | 360 | 28 | 184 | 14 | 6 | 67 | 7 | - | 5 | - | 29,212 | 14,499 | - | 350 | 235,967 | 280,028 | 28,814 | 34,400 | 2,938 | 66,152 | 213,876 |
| 13 Sheldon, Bethel | Van Kley, David | 160 | 291 | 116 | 94 | 501 | 21 | 175 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 6 | - | 7 | 1 | 3,876 | 36,107 | - | - | 332,852 | 372,835 | 29,252 | 19,100 | 2,605 | 50,957 | 321,878 |
| 14 Sheldon, First | Van Maaren, Paul | 322 | 641 | 18 | 187 | 846 | 23 | 430 | 2 | 14 | 15 | 9 | - | 8 | - | 578 | - | - | 39,782 | 720,621 | 760,981 | 50,621 | 104,280 | 146,628 | 301,529 | 459,452 |
| 15 Sibley, First | Schouten, Luke | 180 | 292 | 27 | 119 | 438 | 49 | 275 | 6 | 16 | 9 | 3 | 57 | 8 | - | 1,357 | 6,000 | - | 5,462 | 429,103 | 441,922 | 35,645 | 71,578 | 4,495 | 111,718 | 330,204 |
| 16 Spencer, Hope | Muilenburg, Russell | 303 | 520 | 44 | 262 | 826 | 208 | 524 | 16 | 26 | 7 | 3 | - | 15 | - | 445 | 182,417 | - | - | 695,679 | 878,541 | 41,863 | 42,250 | 41,894 | 126,007 | 752,534 |
| Organized Church Total | | 2,739 | 4,724 | 738 | 1,666 | 7,128 | 861 | 4,522 | 93 | 157 | 140 | 80 | 327 | 84 | 8 | 110,279 | 1,395,022 | 13,400 | 125,939 | 6,930,082 | 8,574,722 | 423,265 | 852,451 | 614,430 | 1,890,146 | 6,684,576 |

**Missionary**
Krebs, Keith
Lampen, Chelsea
Lampen, Jeffery

**Professor/teacher in RCA institution**
Hubers, John
Mead, James
Smallbones, Jacqueline

**Retired**
De Hoogh, Arthur
De Pree, Gordon
Den Hartog, Benson
Dykstra, Gerald
Honken, Alvin
Jiskoot, Donald
Keunen, Cornie
Lenderink, Donald
Scorza, Sylvio
Ter Beest, David
Van Heukelom, Gary
Van Roekel, James
VanderLeest, David
Vandersall, Stanley
Weiss, Raymond

**Specialized ministry**
Folkerts, Shirley
Kinsinger, Mitchell
Loveall, David
Mechler, Deborah
Moss, Lizbeth
Van Beek, Troy
Van Wyk, Jason

**Without charge**
Popkes, Bethany

## Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF MINNESOTA

Stated clerk: Lori Walber, Our Savior's Church, 8209 Zane Ave N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443-2111, 763-561-7129
Treasurer: Jerry Pederstuen, 1977 County Road J, Baldwin, WI 54002-5110, 715-684-2446

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Minnesota** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Blomkest, Roseland | Shoup, Glenn | 79 | 120 | 9 | 7 | 136 | 14 | 80 | 3 | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 40,352 | - | - | - | 193,792 | 234,144 | 14,651 | 31,388 | 13,372 | 59,411 | 174,733 |
| 2 Bloomington, Riverside | Vacant 01/14 | 53 | 74 | 19 | 29 | 122 | 21 | 80 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 2 | 19 | 2 | - | 24 | - | - | 7,004 | 177,637 | 184,665 | 7,936 | 3,100 | 11,524 | 22,560 | 162,105 |
| 3 Brooklyn Park, Our Savior's | Walber, Lori | 32 | 51 | 8 | 11 | 70 | 17 | 59 | 4 | - | - | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 250 | 3,307 | - | 11,661 | 129,415 | 144,633 | 4,416 | 9,300 | 6,403 | 20,119 | 124,514 |
| 4 Chandler | Huisman, Nathan | 94 | 149 | 8 | 39 | 196 | 12 | 110 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | 173,000 | 173,000 | 13,040 | 30,300 | 5,000 | 48,340 | 124,660 |
| 5 Clara City, Bethany | Vacant 09/15 | 261 | 483 | 40 | 100 | 623 | 13 | 285 | 8 | 10 | 2 | 12 | - | 7 | 2 | 14,982 | 111,315 | - | - | 458,986 | 585,283 | 40,848 | 43,672 | 38,466 | 122,986 | 462,297 |
| 6 Eagan, Peace | Rotman, Marla<br>Rotman, Timothy | 308 | 563 | 41 | 251 | 855 | 189 | 417 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 18 | 8 | 1 | 2,420 | 37,647 | 11,164 | 18,463 | 786,303 | 855,997 | 51,584 | 35,889 | 27,133 | 114,606 | 741,391 |
| 7 Edgerton, First | Groen, Mark | 214 | 414 | 54 | 207 | 675 | 25 | 275 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | - | 5 | - | - | 28,720 | - | 13,289 | 295,292 | 337,301 | 35,216 | 45,524 | 10,714 | 91,454 | 245,847 |
| 8 Herman, Eden | Vacant 01/90 | 27 | 32 | 4 | - | 36 | 4 | 25 | 1 | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | 344 | - | - | 5,113 | 35,070 | 40,527 | 1,952 | 50 | 3,085 | 5,087 | 35,440 |
| 9 Hollandale | Ooms, Neal | 80 | 110 | 20 | 24 | 154 | 10 | 100 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 5 | - | 5,263 | - | - | 628 | 169,128 | 175,019 | 9,000 | 18,090 | 4,334 | 31,424 | 143,595 |
| 10 Leota, Bethel | Lang, Barrett | 55 | 104 | 11 | 22 | 137 | 2 | 70 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | 5,934 | 5,764 | - | - | 140,748 | 152,446 | 8,552 | 23,762 | 2,864 | 35,178 | 117,268 |
| 11 Luverne, American | Altena, Michael<br>Grimm, Cory | 306 | 539 | 35 | 210 | 784 | 61 | 393 | 4 | 32 | 14 | 5 | 53 | 15 | 1 | 310 | 231,167 | - | 29,623 | 651,222 | 912,322 | 45,600 | 48,246 | 97,254 | 191,100 | 721,222 |
| 12 Maple Lake, Silver Creek Comm | Baehr, Luke | 47 | 72 | 18 | 23 | 113 | 19 | 64 | 8 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 308 | - | - | 7,572 | 133,915 | 141,795 | 4,500 | - | 23,840 | 28,340 | 113,455 |
| 13 Montevideo, Hope | Ford, Louis | 105 | 159 | 7 | 58 | 224 | 60 | 130 | 15 | - | - | 2 | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 239,236 | 239,236 | 9,344 | 9,204 | 11,287 | 29,835 | 209,401 |
| 14 Preston, Greenleafton | Lokker, Roger | 166 | 234 | 50 | 109 | 393 | 35 | 200 | 7 | - | 2 | 6 | - | 6 | - | 66,512 | - | - | 48,665 | 213,552 | 328,729 | 20,608 | 27,400 | 27,313 | 75,321 | 253,408 |
| 15 Rochester, Church of the Savior | Beernink, Mark | 57 | 90 | 11 | 14 | 115 | 12 | 83 | 1 | 6 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 6,156 | 4,300 | 19,175 | 17,024 | 205,734 | 252,389 | 6,968 | 16,055 | 10,668 | 33,691 | 218,698 |
| 16 Slayton, First | Punt, Aaron | 39 | 60 | 19 | 5 | 84 | 11 | 45 | - | 2 | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | - | 23,255 | 4,737 | - | - | 98,092 | 126,084 | 7,212 | 1,741 | 455 | 9,408 | 116,676 |
| 17 Steen | Wiersema, Jeremy | 165 | 273 | 3 | 150 | 426 | 61 | 230 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | - | 5 | - | - | 31,112 | 1,000 | - | 272,119 | 304,231 | 26,327 | 22,060 | 39,308 | 87,695 | 216,536 |
| 18 Willmar, First | Vacant 07/16 | 85 | 153 | 1 | 42 | 196 | 6 | 90 | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 19,209 | - | - | 224,360 | 243,569 | 13,304 | 4,500 | - | 17,804 | 225,765 |
| 19 Woodstock, American | Schaefer, Chris | 78 | 134 | 3 | 39 | 176 | 118 | 108 | 21 | 9 | 13 | - | 1 | 3 | 2 | 32 | - | - | - | 170,185 | 170,217 | 9,872 | 11,850 | 9,203 | 30,925 | 139,292 |
| 20 Worthington, American | Vacant 07/15 | 166 | 271 | 15 | 74 | 360 | 29 | 210 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 1 | - | 3 | - | 160 | 27,504 | - | 5,515 | 341,465 | 374,644 | 23,424 | 26,125 | 31,800 | 81,349 | 293,295 |
| **Wisconsin** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 Baldwin, First | Sluiter, Timothy | 120 | 149 | 56 | 29 | 234 | 22 | 156 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 22 | 1 | - | 50,000 | 18,650 | - | - | 267,865 | 336,515 | 13,392 | 34,873 | 9,378 | 57,643 | 278,872 |
| | Organized Church Total | 2,537 | 4,234 | 432 | 1,443 | 6,109 | 741 | 3,210 | 93 | 98 | 68 | 60 | 158 | 74 | 10 | 216,302 | 523,432 | 31,339 | 164,557 | 5,377,116 | 6,312,746 | 367,746 | 443,129 | 383,401 | 1,194,276 | 5,118,470 |

| New Church Starts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Minnesota | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 Beaver Creek, New Life Celebration | New Start | 21 | 19 | - | 11 | 30 | 8 | 22 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 41,112 | 41,112 | - | - | 35,905 | 35,905 | 5,207 |
| *# 23 Minneapolis, The Movement | New Start | 100 | 450 | - | 150 | 600 | 200 | 400 | 70 | - | - | - | - | 9 | 26 | - | - | - | - | 9,066 | 9,066 | - | - | - | - | 9,066 |
| 24 Prior Lake, Harbor Comm | New Start | 40 | - | - | - | - | 50 | 60 | - | - | 20 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 13,350 | 9,746 | 113,518 | 136,614 | - | - | 21,912 | 21,912 | 114,702 |
| 25 Rochester, Exchange | Johnson, Joshua | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | 4 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 14,542 | - | - | 14,542 | - | - | - | - | 14,542 |
| | New Church Start Total | 162 | 471 | - | 163 | 634 | 260 | 482 | 70 | - | 20 | 2 | - | 10 | 26 | - | - | 27,892 | 9,746 | 163,696 | 201,334 | - | - | 57,817 | 57,817 | 143,517 |
| | Grand Total | 2,699 | 4,705 | 432 | 1,606 | 6,743 | 1,001 | 3,692 | 163 | 98 | 88 | 62 | 158 | 84 | 36 | 216,302 | 523,432 | 59,231 | 174,303 | 5,540,812 | 6,514,080 | 367,746 | 443,129 | 441,218 | 1,252,093 | 5,261,987 |

**Chaplains**
Gearhart, Carl
Hemmen, Verlyn
Moss, Cornelius

**Planting minister**
Johnson, Joshua

**Retired**
Dekker, Gary
Harms, Forrest
Hensley, David
Muyskens, George
Plantinga, Donald
Pruis, Allen
Punt, Roger
Sikkema, Ronald
VerMeer, Wilmer

**Specialized ministry**
Lubbers, Randal
Pickup, Walter

**Without charge**
Lewis, Nyla
Meendering, Marlin
Olsen, Timothy

## Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE

Stated clerk: Bill Peake, First Reformed Church, PO Box 414, Buffalo Center, IA 50424-0414, 641-590-1901
Treasurer: Linda Harms, PO Box 325, Buffalo Center, IA 50424-0325, 641-562-2731

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Iowa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Ackley, Washington | Ritsema, Jack | 74 | 89 | 17 | 24 | 130 | 11 | 80 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 512 | - | - | 8,935 | 138,065 | 147,512 | 9,812 | 6,102 | 26,938 | 42,852 | 104,660 |
| 2 Alexander, First | Arnold, Philip | 88 | 52 | 49 | 52 | 153 | 15 | 40 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 15,029 | - | - | 63,000 | 90,264 | 168,293 | 5,626 | 35,163 | 800 | 41,589 | 126,704 |
| 3 Allison, Trinity | Mulder, Gary | 103 | 174 | 14 | 23 | 211 | 33 | 140 | 5 | 3 | - | 4 | 3 | - | - | 1,486 | - | - | 7,354 | 156,127 | 164,967 | 17,169 | 11,417 | 16,436 | 45,022 | 119,945 |
| 4 Aplington, Bethel | Summers, Scott | 125 | 222 | 40 | 153 | 415 | 12 | 186 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 5 | - | 881 | 66,211 | 10,000 | 2,157 | 181,098 | 260,347 | 27,017 | 6,500 | 10,400 | 43,917 | 216,430 |
| 5 Aplington, First | Vander Berg, Brett | 126 | 164 | 3 | 25 | 192 | 16 | 180 | 1 | - | - | 5 | - | 1 | - | - | 56,408 | 10,000 | 6,561 | 162,409 | 235,378 | 14,400 | 27,847 | 1,796 | 44,043 | 191,335 |
| 6 Belmond, Bethany | Arnold, Philip | 20 | 26 | 26 | 6 | 58 | 2 | 24 | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | 4 | 5,940 | 6,000 | 200 | 23,601 | 35,745 | 2,234 | 2,431 | 380 | 5,045 | 30,700 |
| 7 Belmond, Immanuel | DeKuiper, David | 48 | 73 | 67 | 26 | 166 | 26 | 83 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 22,841 | 600 | - | - | 138,088 | 161,529 | 5,477 | 13,495 | 4,095 | 23,067 | 138,462 |
| 8 Bristow, First | EnTin, Tamara | 6 | 10 | - | - | 10 | 2 | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 687 | - | - | - | 13,195 | 13,882 | 1,067 | 1,150 | 550 | 2,767 | 11,115 |
| 9 Buffalo Center, First | Peake, William | 80 | 124 | 178 | 59 | 361 | 21 | 97 | 8 | 1 | - | 5 | 4 | 8 | - | 7,287 | 20,960 | 10,000 | - | 112,061 | 150,308 | 12,513 | 4,907 | 4,193 | 21,613 | 128,695 |
| 10 Cedar Falls, Orchard Hill | Steenhoek, Brian<br>Tensen, Douglas | 662 | 1,136 | 448 | 600 | 2,184 | 781 | 1,622 | 29 | 18 | 7 | 7 | 546 | 66 | 20 | 20,000 | 479,889 | 45,345 | 2,539 | 2,815,821 | 3,363,594 | 122,982 | 4,234 | 720,960 | 848,176 | 2,515,418 |
| 11 Cedar Rapids, Cedar Hills Comm | Crandall, George<br>Henderson, Jon (J.R.)<br>Landhuis, Kent | 272 | 522 | 68 | 211 | 801 | 282 | 419 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 39 | 14 | 2 | - | 110,218 | - | 8,747 | 875,777 | 994,742 | 51,216 | 14,450 | 47,450 | 113,116 | 881,626 |
| 12 Coralville, New Life Comm | Smith, Paul | 69 | 118 | 13 | 47 | 178 | 54 | 130 | 6 | 1 | 3 | - | 9 | 1 | 2 | 554 | 87,680 | - | 2,326 | 230,364 | 320,924 | 11,252 | 12,000 | 6,997 | 30,249 | 290,675 |
| 13 Dumont | Meester, Christopher | 64 | 101 | 5 | 41 | 147 | 13 | 65 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 1,900 | - | - | 106,928 | 108,828 | 12,355 | 2,950 | 6,603 | 21,908 | 86,920 |
| 14 Holland, Pleasant Valley | Vollema, Rick | 50 | 81 | 14 | 6 | 101 | 12 | 60 | 2 | - | 2 | 3 | - | 2 | - | 1,380 | 15,150 | 10,000 | 400 | 124,934 | 151,864 | 6,665 | 3,350 | 4,585 | 14,600 | 137,264 |
| 15 Meservey, First | Meester, Rodney | 77 | 130 | - | 28 | 158 | 49 | 75 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 7,760 | 11,887 | 5,000 | 2,908 | 108,584 | 136,139 | 13,786 | 13,607 | 11,195 | 38,588 | 97,551 |
| 16 Parkersburg, Hope | Seys, Leighton | 60 | 94 | 12 | 8 | 114 | 26 | 84 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 805 | 5,039 | 10,000 | - | 122,999 | 138,843 | 9,603 | 3,415 | 6,266 | 19,284 | 119,559 |
| 17 Sheffield, Zion | Zewert, Arthur | 83 | 136 | 97 | 128 | 361 | 18 | 111 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 7,760 | - | - | 7,268 | 196,342 | 211,370 | 14,282 | 14,300 | 22,149 | 50,731 | 160,639 |
| 18 Stout | Shaffer, Olga<br>Shaffer, Stephen | 50 | 77 | 9 | 36 | 122 | 12 | 60 | - | 2 | 3 | 4 | - | 1 | - | 2,635 | 6,720 | - | 772 | 123,928 | 134,055 | 7,857 | 23,751 | 10,200 | 41,808 | 92,247 |
| 19 Titonka, Ramsey | Vacant 03/16 | 45 | 87 | 34 | 13 | 134 | 19 | 58 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 11 | - | - | 1,580 | 43,905 | - | 19,050 | 133,543 | 198,078 | 8,633 | 11,650 | 20,551 | 40,834 | 157,244 |
| 20 Waterloo, Grace | VanNetten, David | 118 | 131 | 37 | 47 | 215 | 30 | 111 | 11 | - | - | 4 | 11 | - | 2 | 3,349 | 9,628 | - | 12,732 | 124,824 | 150,533 | 14,763 | 1,945 | 5,911 | 22,619 | 127,914 |
| 21 Wellsburg | Andersen, Mark | 62 | 100 | 21 | 26 | 147 | 11 | 75 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | 2,138 | 10,873 | - | 13,126 | 131,585 | 157,722 | 9,118 | 17,097 | 4,254 | 30,469 | 127,253 |
| | Organized Church Total | 2,282 | 3,647 | 1,152 | 1,559 | 6,358 | 1,445 | 3,715 | 82 | 36 | 25 | 55 | 633 | 103 | 26 | 96,688 | 933,008 | 106,345 | 158,075 | 6,110,537 | 7,404,653 | 377,827 | 231,761 | 932,709 | 1,542,297 | 5,862,356 |

**New Church Starts**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Iowa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *# 22 Waterloo, Bridge of Hope | New Start | 24 | 33 | - | 14 | 47 | 30 | 45 | 6 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 11,050 | 12,195 | 83,328 | - | 106,573 | - | - | 120 | 120 | 106,453 |
| | New Church Start Total | 24 | 33 | - | 14 | 47 | 30 | 45 | 6 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 11,050 | 12,195 | 83,328 | - | 106,573 | - | - | 120 | 120 | 106,453 |
| | Grand Total | 2,306 | 3,680 | 1,152 | 1,573 | 6,405 | 1,475 | 3,760 | 88 | 36 | 25 | 55 | 636 | 103 | 26 | 96,688 | 944,058 | 118,540 | 241,403 | 6,110,537 | 7,511,226 | 377,827 | 231,761 | 932,829 | 1,542,417 | 5,968,809 |

**Retired**
Baker, B. Edward
Crandall, George
De Groot, Perry
Helmus, John
Kroon, William
Lemmenes, James
Oppermann, Harold
Redeker, Dennis
Somsen, Philip
Vander Weide, Stanley
Voss, Melvin

**Specialized ministry**
Boes, D. Ryan
Brost, Michael
Fiet, April
Fiet, Jeffrey
Klimstra, Susan
Semans, Jason

**Without charge**
Joslin, Todd

## Regional Synod of the Heartland CLASSIS OF WEST SIOUX

Stated clerk: Van Rathbun, Central Reformed Church, 113 N Main Ave, Sioux Center, IA 51250-2229, 712-722-1441
Treasurer: John Hulshof, 1205 S Carroll St, Rock Rapids, IA 51246-2069, 712-472-2887

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Iowa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Boyden, First | Poppen, David | 91 | 179 | 37 | 89 | 305 | 16 | 95 | 4 | - | 8 | 7 | - | 1 | - | - | 2,536 | 12,000 | 13,826 | 140,382 | 168,744 | 21,064 | 7,731 | 7,120 | 35,915 | 132,829 |
| 2 Carmel | Pitsenberger, Michael | 223 | 368 | 33 | 206 | 607 | 15 | 515 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 1 | - | 12 | 1 | 58,740 | 33,402 | - | 84,479 | 461,814 | 638,435 | 37,464 | 58,644 | 61,437 | 157,545 | 480,890 |
| 3 Doon, First | Baker, Donald | 75 | 130 | 13 | 67 | 210 | 2 | 150 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | 3 | - | - | 14,274 | - | - | 131,080 | 145,354 | 10,281 | 4,125 | 24,520 | 38,926 | 106,428 |
| 4 George, Hope | Vacant 11/10 | 115 | 115 | 21 | 75 | 211 | 13 | 81 | 1 | - | 2 | 4 | - | 3 | - | 649 | 15,095 | - | - | 158,170 | 173,914 | 11,349 | 18,300 | 957 | 30,606 | 143,308 |
| 5 Hawarden, Community | Vacant 03/16 | 50 | 77 | 16 | 37 | 130 | 15 | 56 | - | - | - | 2 | 4 | 2 | - | - | 8,400 | - | 3,667 | 96,265 | 108,332 | 3,269 | 1,849 | 2,114 | 7,232 | 101,100 |
| 6 Hull, American | Bierly, Steve | 129 | 255 | 21 | 158 | 434 | 10 | 150 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 329,416 | 329,416 | 24,073 | 21,280 | 14,300 | 59,653 | 269,763 |
| 7 Hull, First | Yurk, Kevin | 233 | 399 | 41 | 249 | 689 | 44 | 300 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 11 | 2 | 700 | 143,205 | - | 108,806 | 450,082 | 702,793 | 41,837 | 51,438 | 56,872 | 150,147 | 552,646 |
| 8 Inwood, First | Horstman, Robert | 103 | 170 | 16 | 145 | 331 | 44 | 171 | 7 | 14 | 2 | 4 | - | 9 | - | 50,260 | 83,249 | - | 8,804 | 150,018 | 292,331 | 12,608 | 4,525 | 22,832 | 39,965 | 252,366 |
| 9 Ireton, First | Van Aartsen, Douglas | 68 | 96 | 19 | 45 | 160 | 26 | 71 | 3 | 2 | - | 4 | - | - | - | 20 | - | - | 11,476 | 129,946 | 141,442 | 6,831 | 13,945 | 2,100 | 22,876 | 118,566 |
| 10 LeMars, Rejoice! Comm | Metten, Michael | 110 | 174 | 2 | 79 | 255 | 40 | 202 | 18 | 18 | 1 | - | - | 8 | 5 | 55 | 57,976 | 18,000 | - | 224,631 | 300,662 | 11,154 | 275 | 18,408 | 29,837 | 270,825 |
| 11 Lester, Bethel | Baker, Donald | 63 | 111 | 20 | 92 | 223 | 10 | 150 | 3 | 4 | 1 | - | - | 6 | - | 123 | 17,496 | - | 53 | 109,205 | 126,877 | 7,802 | 5,060 | 12,670 | 25,532 | 101,345 |
| 12 Little Rock, Bethel | Miller, Matthew | 88 | 169 | 32 | 97 | 298 | 13 | 112 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 2,312 | - | - | - | 166,914 | 169,226 | 18,055 | 12,158 | 14,053 | 44,266 | 124,960 |
| 13 Little Rock, Salem | Vacant 03/14 | 148 | 159 | 58 | 72 | 289 | 28 | 160 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 7 | - | 4 | - | 4,864 | 4,238 | - | 200 | 143,874 | 153,176 | 15,187 | 7,250 | 1,558 | 23,995 | 129,181 |
| 14 Maurice, First | Vacant 07/16 | 281 | 565 | 44 | 319 | 928 | 80 | 450 | 3 | 17 | 6 | 3 | - | 9 | - | 23,032 | 5,826 | 5,000 | 33,250 | 854,826 | 921,934 | 52,708 | 55,194 | 156,815 | 264,717 | 657,217 |
| 15 Middleburg, Free Grace | Breen, Stephen | 72 | 160 | 8 | 108 | 276 | 9 | 172 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | 3 | - | 1,692 | 24,436 | - | 46,931 | 192,038 | 265,097 | 14,492 | 37,075 | 20,752 | 72,319 | 192,778 |
| 16 Rock Rapids, First | Haggar, Daniel | 258 | 471 | 1 | 8 | 480 | 21 | 265 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 8 | - | 7 | 1 | 120 | 103,998 | - | 2,155 | 516,957 | 623,230 | 50,428 | 51,814 | 65,242 | 167,484 | 455,746 |
| 17 Rock Valley, Faith | Molenaar, Michael | 240 | 574 | 34 | 283 | 891 | 40 | 453 | 8 | 20 | 12 | 1 | - | 11 | - | 680 | 128,233 | - | 36,277 | 694,842 | 860,032 | 29,418 | 166,503 | 52,283 | 248,204 | 611,828 |
| 18 Rock Valley, First | Vacant 05/16 | 149 | 243 | - | 100 | 343 | 2 | 200 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 10 | - | 6 | - | 35 | 5,887 | - | - | 319,492 | 325,414 | 25,044 | 40,354 | 25,189 | 90,587 | 234,827 |
| 19 Sioux Center, Central | Rathbun, R. Van | 240 | 367 | 9 | 117 | 493 | 59 | 325 | 4 | 5 | 10 | 8 | - | 9 | 1 | 38,492 | 42,084 | - | - | 468,266 | 548,842 | 37,469 | 81,000 | 16,020 | 134,489 | 414,353 |
| 20 Sioux Center, First | Dykstra, Jamie<br>Else, Travis | 489 | 861 | 66 | 337 | 1,264 | 73 | 955 | 10 | 49 | 24 | 11 | - | 14 | 1 | 24,918 | 89,237 | - | 10,834 | 1,888,446 | 2,013,435 | 89,208 | 193,204 | 948,353 | 1,230,765 | 782,670 |
| 21 Sioux Center, New Life | Kruse, Daniel | 282 | 508 | 18 | 402 | 928 | 144 | 459 | 7 | 5 | 17 | 3 | - | 10 | - | 237 | 91,242 | - | 6,660 | 767,800 | 865,939 | 49,700 | 41,600 | 62,509 | 153,809 | 712,130 |
| 22 Sioux City, Peace | Rook, Robert | 131 | 237 | 50 | 90 | 377 | 50 | 202 | 5 | 15 | 8 | 1 | - | 5 | - | 500 | 272,634 | - | - | 272,634 | 545,768 | - | 4,500 | 10,000 | 14,500 | 531,268 |
| 23 Sioux City, Sunnybrook Comm | Moes, Jeffrey<br>Van Kalsbeek, Brian (B.J.) | 874 | 1,584 | 11 | - | 1,595 | 842 | 1,795 | 211 | 4 | 13 | 12 | - | 72 | 71 | 343 | 798,407 | - | - | 2,568,872 | 3,367,622 | 124,732 | - | 502,535 | 627,267 | 2,740,355 |
| **Nebraska** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 Winnebago | TenClay, Lowell | 23 | 24 | 5 | 200 | 229 | 25 | 43 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 6 | - | - | 433 | 40,000 | 1,065 | 49,428 | 90,926 | 1,446 | 800 | 2,925 | 5,171 | 85,755 |
| Organized Church Total | | 4,535 | 7,996 | 575 | 3,375 | 11,946 | 1,621 | 7,532 | 323 | 180 | 133 | 97 | 7 | 213 | 82 | 207,772 | 1,942,288 | 75,000 | 368,483 | 11,285,398 | 13,878,941 | 695,619 | 878,624 | 2,101,564 | 3,675,807 | 10,203,134 |

**New Church Starts**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Iowa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*# 25 | Fort Dodge, Cana | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 26 | Sioux City, New Hope Comm | New Start | 40 | 84 | - | 5 | 89 | 30 | 85 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 16,500 | - | 114,040 | 130,540 | - | - | 23,537 | 23,537 | 107,003 |
| | | New Church Start Total | 40 | 84 | - | 5 | 89 | 30 | 85 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 16,500 | - | 114,040 | 130,540 | - | - | 23,537 | 23,537 | 107,003 |
| | | Grand Total | 4,575 | 8,080 | 575 | 3,380 | 12,035 | 1,651 | 7,617 | 327 | 184 | 133 | 97 | 7 | 214 | 82 | 207,772 | 1,942,288 | 91,500 | 368,483 | 11,399,438 | 14,009,481 | 695,619 | 878,624 | 2,125,101 | 3,699,344 | 10,310,137 |

**Chaplains**
Boyer, R. John
Holsather, Janet

**Retired**
Boender, John
Brinkhuis, James
Cobb, Stephen
De Jong, Harlan
De Kok, Donald
DeWitt, Mark
Hellenga, Brian
Punt, Arnold
Rensink, Marilyn
Tilstra, Raymond
Van Mantgem, Jacob
Van Veldhuizen, Katie
Vander Schaaf, Robert
Voskuil, Roger

**Specialized ministry**
Boone, Verlyn
DeVries, Daniel
Hansen, Paul
Smith, Thomas
Van Otterloo, Bobby
Vande Berg, Thomas

**Without charge**
Brouwer, Steven
Nyenhuis, Garry
Rensink, Debra
Vande Slunt, Derek
Ver Mulm, Calvin

## Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF CHICAGO

Stated clerk: Earl Vander Wall, 11537 Lake Shore Dr, Orland Park, IL 60467-5218, 708-548-0190
Treasurer: Dan Luczak, Faith Community Reformed Church, 6825 40th St, Stickney, IL 60402-4247, 708-795-0367

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Illinois** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Berwyn, First | Superseded 03/08 | 21 | 30 | 3 | 5 | 38 | 3 | 27 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | 2,550 | - | 15,001 | 46,001 | 63,552 | 1,636 | 2,002 | 2,501 | 6,139 | 57,413 |
| 2 Chicago, Bethel | Superseded 07/08 | 28 | - | - | 5 | 5 | 50 | 45 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | - | 2,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 36,000 | 58,000 | - | 1,000 | 1,000 | 2,000 | 56,000 |
| 3 Chicago, La Capilla del Barrio | Windsor-Garcia, Pedro | 8 | 8 | - | 7 | 15 | 8 | 21 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 10,000 | - | 11,380 | 21,380 | 636 | - | - | 636 | 20,744 |
| 4 Chicago, Mt. Greenwood | Crowder, William | 40 | 59 | 13 | 16 | 88 | 10 | 54 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | 172,806 | - | - | 22,963 | 131,012 | 326,781 | 5,999 | 5,310 | 10,591 | 21,900 | 304,881 |
| 5 Downer's Grove, Community | Hoekstra, Howard | 74 | 114 | - | 30 | 144 | 42 | 143 | 11 | 10 | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | 2,000 | 38,430 | 10,303 | 13,033 | 276,606 | 340,372 | 7,907 | 8,028 | 24,869 | 40,804 | 299,568 |
| 6 Lemont, Christ Comm | De Jager, Chad | 272 | 372 | 129 | 115 | 616 | 54 | 306 | - | 4 | 4 | 3 | - | 8 | - | 249 | - | 5,488 | 2,900 | 675,609 | 684,246 | 30,993 | 24,800 | 20,539 | 76,332 | 607,914 |
| 7 Lombard, Taiwanese Comm | Vacant 02/12 | 27 | 45 | 2 | - | 47 | 20 | 60 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1,543 | - | - | 5,500 | 131,636 | 138,679 | 3,908 | - | 2,150 | 6,058 | 132,621 |
| 8 Orland Park, Calvary | Citlau, Ronald<br>Colton, Dennis | 525 | 902 | 43 | 450 | 1,395 | 197 | 917 | 16 | 40 | 16 | 15 | 87 | 24 | 2 | - | 212,000 | - | - | 1,568,378 | 1,780,378 | 73,000 | 61,215 | 116,000 | 250,215 | 1,530,163 |
| 9 Riverdale, Ivanhoe | Superseded 09/07 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *#10 Stickney, Faith Comm | Poest, Christopher<br>Willis Thomas, Jewel | 50 | 66 | 14 | 19 | 99 | 48 | 82 | 4 | 4 | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 7,262 | 8,963 | - | 129,444 | 145,669 | 2,547 | 6,126 | 4,156 | 12,829 | 132,840 |
| 11 West Chicago, Faith Comm | Sterk, Shane | 47 | 85 | 4 | 5 | 94 | 9 | 88 | 9 | - | - | 4 | - | - | 5 | 8,900 | 968 | - | 1,502 | 217,000 | 228,370 | 10,998 | 2,000 | 18,000 | 30,998 | 197,372 |
| | Organized Church Total | 1,092 | 1,681 | 208 | 652 | 2,541 | 441 | 1,743 | 42 | 69 | 25 | 31 | 95 | 38 | 14 | 185,498 | 263,210 | 44,754 | 70,899 | 3,223,066 | 3,787,427 | 137,624 | 110,481 | 199,806 | 447,911 | 3,339,516 |

**Chaplains**
Allen, Patricia
Orshonsky, Maryteresa

**Retired**
Davis, Grover
Den Hartog, Donald
Dykstra, Jacob
Grawburg, Philip
Hoekstra, Howard
Hsu, Benjamin
Lai, Sonny
Menninga, Arlan
Rust, Harold
Vandenberg, Donald
Vander Wagen, Marjorie
Vogelaar, Harold
Yapp, Joshua

**Specialized ministry**
Beukema, George
Beukema, Liala
Corwin, Thomas
Haack, Wendy
Manetsch, Scott
Melvin, David
Paglia, Joseph
Pusateri, Gregg
Rozendaal, Andrew
Schmidt, Matthew
Semeyn, Peter
Sipsma, James
Starkenburg, Keith
Theonugraha, Felix
Young, Steve

**Suspended**
Pryor, Zachary

**Without charge**
Klein, Jeffrey

## Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF ILLIANA-FLORIDA

Stated clerk: Don MacDonald, Danforth Reformed Church, PO Box 5, Danforth, IL 60930-0005, 815-341-3439
Treasurer: Michael Ceratto, 5785 Hearthside Dr, Bourbonnais, IL 60914-4944, 708-903-0903

| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | | | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **Florida** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *# 1 | Bradenton, Bayshore Gardens Comm | Vacant 10/09 | 39 | 40 | 9 | 7 | 56 | 55 | 72 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 286 | 24,116 | - | 17,120 | 158,057 | 199,579 | 5,085 | 246 | 1,227 | 6,558 | 193,021 |
| 2 | Deerfield Beach, New Horizons | Davidson, Rob | 20 | 30 | 14 | 6 | 50 | 70 | 85 | 6 | - | - | 2 | 12 | 2 | 3 | - | - | - | 63,600 | 78,239 | 141,839 | 3,750 | - | 2,000 | 5,750 | 136,089 |
| 3 | Miami, Chinese | Tsai, Daniel | 16 | 31 | - | - | 31 | 8 | 31 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2,246 | - | - | 36,282 | 38,528 | 3,073 | - | - | 3,073 | 35,455 |
| 4 | Miami, North Dade Comm | Superseded 03/16 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | Orlando, Korean Choong Hyun | Superseded 03/16 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *# 6 | Palm Springs, Comunidad de Fe | Vacant 12/09 | 32 | 17 | - | 17 | 34 | 15 | 35 | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | 21,000 | 16,000 | 37,000 | 5,440 | - | - | 5,440 | 31,560 |
| *# 7 | Pompano Beach, Christ Comm | Hasselbach, Richard | 57 | 77 | 13 | 11 | 101 | 8 | 60 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | 2 | - | - | 2,128 | - | - | 202,597 | 204,725 | 3,003 | 3,900 | 3,982 | 10,885 | 193,840 |
| *# 8 | Sarasota, West Coast Cross | O'Hara, Kevin | 8 | 30 | - | - | 30 | 135 | 83 | 22 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 8 | - | - | 5,000 | 7,205 | 136,299 | 148,504 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 146,504 |
| 9 | Tampa, First | Hubbartt, David | 77 | 118 | 3 | 14 | 135 | 34 | 122 | 5 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 3 | - | 763 | 2,342 | - | 12,596 | 190,003 | 205,704 | 10,315 | 8,683 | 14,308 | 33,306 | 172,398 |
| 10 | Venice, Community | Busker, Neal<br>Rumph, Arnold | 17 | 23 | 3 | - | 26 | 15 | 40 | 4 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 33,200 | 6,200 | - | 32,000 | 37,100 | 108,500 | 2,480 | 1,000 | 2,000 | 5,480 | 103,020 |
| 11 | Zellwood, Rolling Hills Comm | Vacant 08/10 | 70 | 90 | 2 | - | 92 | 7 | 99 | 7 | 2 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 16,328 | - | - | 204,079 | 220,407 | 11,801 | - | 15,140 | 26,941 | 193,466 |
| | **Illinois** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Bourbonnais, Cornerstone | Grysen, Robert | 121 | 207 | 64 | 111 | 382 | 273 | 410 | 8 | - | 4 | 2 | 16 | 5 | 5 | - | - | 30,000 | 63,307 | 680,836 | 774,143 | 21,422 | - | 22,000 | 43,422 | 730,721 |
| 13 | Danforth | MacDonald, Donald | 50 | 76 | 3 | 17 | 96 | 24 | 59 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 655 | 82,698 | 83,353 | 7,425 | - | 751 | 8,176 | 75,177 |
| 14 | Glenwood, Living Springs Comm | Bilbrew, Wanzette<br>Izenbart, David<br>Perry, Jason | 309 | 457 | 25 | 231 | 713 | 528 | 458 | 31 | - | 3 | 7 | 19 | 10 | 5 | 21,763 | - | 38,249 | 26,258 | 881,592 | 967,862 | 42,491 | 3,700 | 49,372 | 95,563 | 872,299 |
| 15 | Kankakee, Faith | Salwei, Alan | 39 | 63 | 2 | 18 | 83 | 17 | 68 | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | 5 | 1 | - | 160 | 7,530 | - | - | 141,284 | 148,974 | 6,447 | 8,444 | 10,126 | 25,017 | 123,957 |
| *# 16 | Pembroke, Fellowship | Lake, Rodney | 45 | 68 | 13 | 10 | 91 | 1 | 65 | 7 | - | 2 | - | - | - | 10 | - | 4,200 | - | - | 154,901 | 159,101 | 7,584 | 1,050 | 4,200 | 12,834 | 146,267 |
| 17 | Saint Anne, First Wichert | Knoll, Randall | 94 | 168 | 21 | 48 | 237 | 15 | 120 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 4 | - | 2 | - | 61 | - | - | 13,841 | 283,449 | 297,351 | 15,827 | 34,050 | 40,285 | 90,162 | 207,189 |
| *# 18 | South Holland, Calvary Comm | Surrett, Alfonzo | 102 | 148 | 12 | 7 | 167 | - | 125 | 16 | - | 4 | 6 | - | 1 | - | 1,543 | 15,417 | - | 24,910 | 196,629 | 238,499 | 10,507 | 7,200 | 38,314 | 56,021 | 182,478 |
| 19 | South Holland, First | Waterstone, Matthew | 227 | 325 | 10 | 56 | 391 | 23 | 225 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 13 | 9 | 3 | - | 201 | 62,736 | 2,750 | 42,324 | 528,275 | 636,286 | 33,511 | 25,188 | 46,705 | 105,404 | 530,882 |
| 20 | South Holland, Thorn Creek | Archer, Thomas | 121 | 146 | 28 | 34 | 208 | 39 | 140 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 2 | - | 701 | - | - | 1,300 | 331,629 | 333,630 | 18,074 | - | - | 18,074 | 315,556 |
| 21 | Tinley Park | Vacant 02/01 | 19 | 19 | 1 | - | 20 | 5 | 20 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 69,925 | 28,939 | 98,864 | 2,179 | 11,350 | 1,004 | 14,533 | 84,331 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Indiana** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | DeMotte, American | Vacant 02/16 | 289 | 558 | 39 | 224 | 821 | 29 | 300 | 17 | 10 | 4 | 9 | - | 6 | - | 62 | - | - | - | 526,918 | 526,980 | 53,254 | 31,836 | 59,243 | 144,333 | 382,647 |
| 23 | Dyer, Faith | Bouwer, Robert<br>De Vries, Jason<br>Gruthusen, David | 2,616 | 4,279 | 57 | 1,082 | 5,418 | 3,257 | 3,263 | 211 | 53 | 18 | 9 | 51 | 89 | 18 | 1,917 | 2,368,664 | 19,000 | 20,501 | 6,438,246 | 8,848,328 | 391,166 | 57,394 | 442,969 | 891,529 | 7,956,799 |
| 24 | Fishers, Christ's Comm | Pyle, Nathan | 48 | 93 | 6 | 37 | 136 | 64 | 150 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1,275 | - | - | 44,482 | 240,926 | 286,683 | 10,061 | 3,541 | 13,401 | 27,003 | 259,680 |
| 25 | Fort Wayne, Christ's Comm | De La Rosa, Anthony | 49 | 65 | 15 | 20 | 100 | 28 | 82 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 23 | 5 | - | 35,733 | - | - | 4,738 | 237,222 | 277,693 | 11,917 | 2,880 | 3,880 | 18,677 | 259,016 |
| 26 | Gary, Ross Community | Gerbers, Shawn | 88 | 120 | 2 | 22 | 144 | 16 | 115 | 6 | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | 3 | - | - | 1,890 | - | - | 140,781 | 142,671 | 3,085 | 2,800 | 6,454 | 12,339 | 130,332 |
| *# 27 | Hammond, Riverside Comm | Vacant 03/00 | 18 | 25 | - | - | 25 | 10 | 31 | 5 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 32 | - | - | - | 39,522 | 39,554 | 2,080 | 514 | - | 2,594 | 36,960 |
| 28 | Lafayette, Community | Buettner, Dale | 74 | 131 | 30 | 21 | 182 | 34 | 109 | 3 | 2 | - | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1,350 | 3,451 | - | - | 227,376 | 232,177 | 12,893 | 7,500 | 17,605 | 37,998 | 194,179 |
| 29 | Lafayette, Heartland Comm | Smith, Brandon<br>Smith, Stephanie | 57 | 99 | 18 | 14 | 131 | 70 | 113 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 4 | 1 | - | 1,295 | 14,697 | - | 11,946 | 214,769 | 242,707 | 10,477 | 16,672 | 7,990 | 35,139 | 207,568 |
| # 30 | Munster, Trinity | Bawinkel, Richard | 54 | 88 | 61 | 32 | 181 | 20 | 68 | 1 | - | 1 | 6 | 3 | 1 | - | 19,000 | 2,500 | - | 7,200 | 189,068 | 217,768 | 11,032 | 11,636 | 13,870 | 36,538 | 181,230 |
| 31 | Wheatfield, First | Hill, John | 202 | 359 | 57 | 109 | 525 | 60 | 356 | 51 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 16 | 7 | 3 | 551 | 2,167,748 | - | 47,652 | 654,581 | 2,870,532 | 37,391 | 33,615 | 18,385 | 89,391 | 2,781,141 |
| | **Ohio** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 32 | Van Wert, St Paul | Strabbing, Chad | 58 | 91 | 16 | 17 | 124 | 6 | 67 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 549 | 1,706 | - | 16,445 | 96,397 | 115,097 | 8,987 | 3,150 | 1,526 | 13,663 | 101,434 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 5,016 | 8,041 | 524 | 2,165 | 10,730 | 4,866 | 6,971 | 430 | 94 | 56 | 94 | 172 | 150 | 59 | 120,442 | 4,703,899 | 94,999 | 549,005 | 13,374,694 | 18,843,039 | 762,757 | 276,349 | 838,737 | 1,877,843 | 16,965,196 |
| | **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **Florida** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*# 33 | Apopka, North Ridge | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# 34 | Lakewood Ranch, Current Comm | Klein, Aaron | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# 35 | Miami, Vanguard Family | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# 36 | Miami, Vida y Esperanza | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# 37 | New Port Richey, Good News | Hekhuis, Gerald | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# 38 | Orlando, Well of Hope | Dixon, DaRon | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| !*# 39 | Pembroke Pine, Salt Life | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | New Church Start Total | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | Grand Total | 5,016 | 8,041 | 524 | 2,165 | 10,730 | 4,866 | 6,971 | 430 | 94 | 56 | 94 | 172 | 150 | 59 | 120,442 | 4,703,899 | 94,999 | 549,005 | 13,374,694 | 18,843,039 | 762,757 | 276,349 | 838,737 | 1,877,843 | 16,965,196 |

**Chaplains**
Blaauw, Heino
Hoppe, Mike
Naber Samson, Sarah
Nienhuis, Jon
Prestriedge, Mark
Tjepkema, Mark

**Planting minister**
Dixon, DaRon
Hekhuis, Gerald
Klein, Aaron

**Retired**
Bengtson, William
Bouwer, William
Busker, Neal
Cox, Dale
DeVries, Melvin
Du Mont, Herbert
Eggebeen, Robert
Hernandez, Edward
Huff, John
Huitink, Roger
Jensen, Fernando
Kelley, Ronald
Kiel, Wayne
Kim, Seok Won
Kronemeyer, Kelvin
Kuiper, Kenneth
Lindskoog, Donald
Mauldin, Sidney
McDonald, James
Muyskens, Joseph
Nelson, William
Nordstrom, Peter
Pickup, Walter
Talaga, Michael
Van Dommelen, Charles
Van Doren, Richard
Vander Meer, Albert
Visser, Gilbert
West, Isaac
Westrate, Kenneth

**Specialized ministry**
Armstrong, John
King, Timothy
Plass, Richard
Schuitema, Chad
Slager, W. Thomas
Tellinghuisen, David
Van Regenmorter, Wayne
VandenBerg, Michael

**Without charge**
Crump, David
Davids, Lance
Fairweather, Newton
Gipson, Frank
Kasper, David
Kinnear, Happy
Klaaren, Larry
McCray, Walter
Meester, Jonathan
Moreno, German
Ossandon, Fernando
Padin, Reggie
Perez, Luis
Poppleton, Andrea
Poppleton, Drew

## Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF ILLINOIS

Stated clerk: William Appleyard-Pekich, 500 N 6th St, Pekin, IL 61554-3330, 309-346-2231
Treasurer: Roger Fiet, 805 Keith Dr, Morrison, IL 61270-3046, 815-772-2546

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **Illinois** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Baileyville | Otto, Bruce | 44 | 77 | - | 18 | 95 | 5 | 65 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 1,959 | - | - | 29,751 | 111,831 | 143,541 | 5,592 | 12,042 | 7,800 | 25,434 | 118,107 |
| 2 | Erie, Newton Zion | Parrish, Shannon | 27 | 51 | - | 9 | 60 | 4 | 40 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 16 | - | - | - | 81,908 | 81,924 | 4,109 | - | 3,306 | 7,415 | 74,509 |
| 3 | Fairview | Vacant 12/15 | 35 | 54 | 107 | 20 | 181 | 8 | 33 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3,256 | - | - | 204 | 103,627 | 107,087 | 4,558 | 8,025 | 3,250 | 15,833 | 91,254 |
| 4 | Forreston | Fry, Timothy | 52 | 73 | 16 | 8 | 97 | 34 | 55 | - | - | - | 4 | 24 | - | - | 8,364 | 23,231 | - | 3,455 | 125,428 | 160,478 | 18,147 | 15,100 | 5,325 | 38,572 | 121,906 |
| *# 5 | Freeport, Community | Bollman, Herbert | 17 | 20 | - | 1 | 21 | 7 | 23 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 500 | 1,053 | - | 3,739 | 19,753 | 25,045 | 1,600 | 143 | 1,900 | 3,643 | 21,402 |
| 6 | Fulton, First | Lenz, Edith | 129 | 198 | - | 62 | 260 | 9 | 100 | - | 9 | 1 | 9 | - | - | - | 63,402 | - | - | - | 182,941 | 246,343 | 11,323 | 10,690 | 9,554 | 31,567 | 214,776 |
| 7 | Fulton, Second | Stephan, Scott | 180 | 285 | 134 | 94 | 513 | 5 | 250 | 10 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10,000 | - | - | - | 336,339 | 346,339 | 25,252 | 13,020 | 1,800 | 40,072 | 306,267 |
| 8 | Fulton, Spring Valley | Beidler, Ralph | 73 | 115 | 36 | 28 | 179 | 25 | 118 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | - | 7 | 1 | 26,331 | - | - | - | 138,026 | 164,357 | 7,845 | 9,350 | 2,450 | 19,645 | 144,712 |
| 9 | German Valley, Silver Creek | Mulder, Grant | 130 | 176 | 27 | 50 | 253 | 10 | 125 | - | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | 111,421 | - | - | 8,937 | 192,993 | 313,351 | 13,597 | 27,069 | 24,379 | 65,045 | 248,306 |
| 10 | Kings, Elim | Winn, Cary | 32 | 41 | 2 | 4 | 47 | 11 | 40 | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | 1,751 | - | - | 7,560 | 88,410 | 97,721 | 4,034 | 7,161 | 4,905 | 16,100 | 81,621 |
| *# 11 | Lanark, Faith | Bollman, Herbert | 11 | 16 | 13 | - | 29 | 3 | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 25,020 | 25,020 | 1,425 | 1,500 | 1,887 | 4,812 | 20,208 |
| 12 | Morrison, Ebenezer | Norman, Gerald | 216 | 311 | 114 | 135 | 560 | 14 | 108 | 2 | - | 1 | 20 | - | 2 | 1 | 4,909 | - | - | 23,663 | 323,942 | 352,514 | 30,972 | 22,075 | 5,502 | 58,549 | 293,965 |
| *# 13 | Morrison, Emmanuel | Davis, Richard | 258 | 542 | - | 124 | 666 | 20 | 287 | 1 | 15 | 4 | 7 | - | 5 | 3 | 45,300 | 21,000 | - | - | 512,474 | 578,774 | 37,412 | 42,637 | 37,050 | 117,099 | 461,675 |
| 14 | Oregon, Ebenezer | Vacant 04/14 | 57 | 93 | 68 | 43 | 204 | 6 | 61 | - | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 20,327 | 2,205 | - | 7,743 | 158,351 | 188,626 | 9,787 | 8,000 | 8,590 | 26,377 | 162,249 |
| 15 | Pekin, Normandale | Vacant 10/05 | 30 | 27 | 4 | 2 | 33 | 9 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 2 | 500 | 1,257 | - | 450 | 38,522 | 40,729 | - | - | - | - | 40,729 |
| 16 | Pekin, Second | Appleyard-Pekich, William | 24 | 73 | 23 | 37 | 133 | 8 | 77 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 4 | - | 9,284 | 388 | - | - | 74,031 | 83,703 | 6,243 | 6,197 | 1,456 | 13,896 | 69,807 |
| 17 | Raritan | Vacant 10/13 | 12 | 20 | 6 | 8 | 34 | 5 | 14 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1,456 | 20,000 | - | 839 | 28,465 | 50,760 | 1,494 | 4,292 | 256 | 6,042 | 44,718 |
| 18 | Sterling, Bethel | DeKoekkoek, Gary | 111 | 160 | 34 | 35 | 229 | 16 | 119 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 636 | 185,250 | 185,886 | 12,850 | 13,953 | 2,430 | 29,233 | 156,653 |
| | **Iowa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Clinton, Community | Hoffman, Robert | 54 | 95 | 22 | 25 | 142 | 21 | 64 | - | - | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | - | 33 | 54,481 | - | 274 | 144,681 | 199,469 | 7,396 | 5,134 | 7,860 | 20,390 | 179,079 |
| 20 | Davenport, Christ's Family | Akker, Brian | 166 | 235 | 5 | 45 | 285 | 60 | 205 | 1 | 12 | - | 2 | - | 4 | - | 727 | 147,679 | - | 15,600 | 634,038 | 798,044 | 17,033 | 15,550 | 47,172 | 79,755 | 718,289 |
| 21 | Eldridge, North Ridge Comm | Evenhouse, Douglas | 67 | 135 | 11 | 90 | 236 | 50 | 196 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 712 | 43,096 | - | 3,126 | 326,390 | 373,324 | 8,622 | 11,329 | 27,050 | 47,001 | 326,323 |
| | **Missouri** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | St Peters, Christ's | Doeschot, Philip<br>Schwander, Stephen | 54 | 90 | 114 | 28 | 232 | 33 | 111 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 42 | 7,872 | - | 4,066 | 248,060 | 260,040 | 9,189 | 9,168 | 8,992 | 27,349 | 232,691 |
| | Organized Church Total | | 1,779 | 2,887 | 736 | 866 | 4,489 | 363 | 2,141 | 36 | 46 | 23 | 69 | 41 | 37 | 15 | 310,290 | 322,262 | - | 110,043 | 4,080,480 | 4,823,075 | 238,480 | 242,435 | 212,914 | 693,829 | 4,129,246 |

**Chaplains**
Elgersma, Henry
Jones, Julie
Smith, Vinton

**Graduate study**
Vander Wal, Joel

**Retired**
Barnes, Donald
Bollman, Herbert
De Graaf, Franklin
Heeg, Harmen
McNear, Vernon
Merchant, Thomas
Muller, Terry
Paterik, Roy
Sneller, Phillip
Stralow, James
Zuithoff, Kenneth

**Specialized ministry**
Appleyard-Pekich, Sara Jean
Brooks, Brion
Doeschot, Stephanie
Lysdahl, Zachary

## Regional Synod of Mid-America CLASSIS OF WISCONSIN

Stated clerk: Bill Te Winkle, 607 N 8th St Fl 7, Sheboygan, WI 53081-4519, 920-458-5501 ext 114
Treasurer: Edith Daane, N2081 Wittwood Rd, Oostburg, WI 53070-1636, 920-564-3267

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worshp Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Wisconsin** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Brandon, Bethel | Tilstra, John | 250 | 276 | 64 | 134 | 474 | 54 | 200 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | - | 699 | 24,963 | - | - | 298,736 | 324,398 | 25,514 | 28,853 | 43,123 | 97,490 | 226,908 |
| 2 Brown Deer, Trinity Comm | Flavin, William | 83 | 126 | 21 | - | 147 | 20 | 114 | 9 | - | - | 1 | 3 | 2 | - | 7,966 | 21,905 | 2,499 | - | 318,369 | 350,739 | 12,461 | - | - | 12,461 | 338,278 |
| 3 Cedar Grove, Faith | Sanford, Ronald | 114 | 199 | 13 | 60 | 272 | 26 | 183 | 12 | 2 | - | - | 9 | 6 | 1 | - | 5,425 | - | 21,983 | 311,344 | 338,752 | 16,540 | 8,300 | 21,662 | 46,502 | 292,250 |
| 4 Cedar Grove, First | Vacant 03/16 | 273 | 356 | - | 151 | 507 | 112 | 225 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 16 | 4 | - | 202,849 | - | - | 17,265 | 355,406 | 575,520 | 35,687 | 11,240 | 42,696 | 89,623 | 485,897 |
| 5 Clinton, Emmanuel | Rensink, Clyde | 52 | 90 | 31 | 16 | 137 | 13 | 70 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 36 | 25,780 | - | 3,085 | 191,967 | 220,868 | 7,567 | 16,381 | 21,652 | 45,600 | 175,268 |
| 6 Delavan, Creek Road Comm | Ploeger, Michael | 32 | 51 | 3 | 14 | 68 | 19 | 64 | 5 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 1,215 | 2,935 | 4,900 | 209,949 | 218,999 | 3,851 | 6,421 | 19,780 | 30,052 | 188,947 |
| 7 Fond du Lac, Grace | Vegter, Barry | 177 | 284 | 7 | 301 | 592 | 76 | 262 | 7 | - | - | 4 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 105 | - | - | - | 574,716 | 574,821 | 26,873 | 35,158 | 67,889 | 129,920 | 444,901 |
| 8 Friesland, First | Ford, Robert | 130 | 241 | 92 | 103 | 436 | 28 | 180 | 3 | - | 1 | 4 | - | 5 | - | 122 | - | - | 910 | 274,610 | 275,642 | 23,285 | 13,520 | 20,330 | 57,135 | 218,507 |
| 9 Hingham | Bakker, Steven | 189 | 383 | 5 | 119 | 507 | 5 | 210 | 17 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 5 | - | 6,845 | 42,331 | - | - | 400,725 | 449,901 | 34,124 | 44,640 | 37,956 | 116,720 | 333,181 |
| #10 Milwaukee, New Life Comm | Vacant 07/10 | 33 | 48 | 38 | 6 | 92 | 28 | 49 | 4 | 1 | - | 2 | - | 3 | 1 | 813 | - | - | 39,287 | 118,409 | 158,509 | 5,150 | 1,887 | - | 7,037 | 151,472 |
| 11 New Berlin, Calvary Comm | van Maastricht, Matthew | 14 | 21 | 5 | 4 | 30 | 3 | 18 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | 84 | - | - | 21,503 | 57,708 | 79,295 | 2,219 | 2,425 | 3,370 | 8,014 | 71,281 |
| 12 Oostburg, First | Taylor, Brian | 404 | 769 | 45 | 257 | 1,071 | 12 | 385 | 1 | 8 | 17 | 9 | 6 | 9 | - | 7,993 | 6,310 | - | - | 773,581 | 787,884 | 73,644 | 33,500 | 100,629 | 207,773 | 580,111 |
| 13 Racine, First | Vacant 10/15 | 34 | 57 | 16 | 12 | 85 | 5 | 46 | - | - | 12 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 102 | - | - | 100 | 112,342 | 112,544 | 6,207 | 5,037 | 1,566 | 12,810 | 99,734 |
| 14 Randolph, First | Ehrhardt, Timothy | 117 | 236 | - | 80 | 316 | 26 | 145 | 4 | - | 16 | 2 | 19 | - | - | - | 14,730 | - | 100 | 188,397 | 203,227 | 20,709 | 7,642 | 16,807 | 45,158 | 158,069 |
| 15 Sheboygan Falls, First | Veenendaal, Bradley | 173 | 290 | 5 | 135 | 430 | 35 | 225 | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | - | 2 | - | 36,900 | - | - | 320 | 313,003 | 350,223 | 26,329 | 3,000 | 29,833 | 59,162 | 291,061 |
| 16 Sheboygan Falls, Gibbsville | Dykstra, Gerald<br>Ornee, John | 290 | 464 | 90 | 176 | 730 | 20 | 300 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 16 | 11 | - | 776 | - | - | - | 524,868 | 525,644 | 49,825 | 22,050 | 40,590 | 112,465 | 413,179 |
| 17 Sheboygan, Bethany | Abel, Robert<br>Garbison, Jonathan<br>Rose, Philip | 241 | 359 | 88 | 161 | 608 | 13 | 235 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 15 | 43 | 3 | - | 88 | 9,158 | - | 1,147 | 463,231 | 473,624 | 43,188 | 35,092 | 22,285 | 100,565 | 373,059 |
| 18 Sheboygan, Hope | Te Winkle, William | 144 | 145 | 53 | 56 | 254 | 38 | 112 | 12 | - | - | 9 | - | 3 | 1 | 25,827 | 26,050 | 2,500 | 19,649 | 186,165 | 260,191 | 11,283 | 3,273 | 24,507 | 39,063 | 221,128 |
| 19 Waupun, Alto | Van Wyk, Kevin | 272 | 519 | 70 | 344 | 933 | 70 | 430 | 14 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 11 | 15 | - | 6,549 | - | - | 71,866 | 588,511 | 666,926 | 48,355 | 25,675 | 122,088 | 196,118 | 470,808 |
| 20 Waupun, Emmanuel | Vacant 10/15 | 90 | 134 | 6 | 45 | 185 | 13 | 85 | - | 2 | 6 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 90 | - | - | 600 | 166,560 | 167,250 | 13,549 | 10,516 | 12,291 | 36,356 | 130,894 |
| 21 Waupun, First | Vacant 01/15 | 194 | 313 | 10 | 134 | 457 | 16 | 194 | 2 | 1 | - | 8 | 14 | 3 | - | 16,004 | - | - | - | 383,637 | 399,641 | 29,864 | 29,387 | 42,380 | 101,631 | 298,010 |
| 22 Waupun, Trinity | White, John | 111 | 176 | 8 | 47 | 231 | 5 | 150 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 5 | - | 16,289 | 26,667 | - | - | 224,438 | 267,394 | 15,996 | 6,495 | 11,319 | 33,810 | 233,584 |
| *#23 Wausau, New Hope Comm | Jelsma, Daniel | 177 | 251 | 61 | 68 | 380 | 12 | 153 | - | - | 7 | 4 | 10 | 6 | - | 52,448 | 23,114 | - | 10,501 | 318,087 | 404,150 | 25,642 | 58,361 | 18,531 | 102,534 | 301,616 |
| 24 West Bend, Hope Comm | Boon, Eric | 20 | 30 | 11 | 7 | 48 | 18 | 38 | 2 | - | - | - | 8 | - | - | 26 | - | - | 1,580 | 85,421 | 87,027 | 4,032 | 1,921 | 1,879 | 7,832 | 79,195 |
| 25 Wisconsin Rapids, Faith | Elzinga, Vance | 62 | 101 | 14 | 21 | 136 | 42 | 84 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 1,017 | 335 | - | 17,740 | 156,852 | 175,944 | 9,108 | 7,000 | 1,000 | 17,108 | 158,836 |
| | Organized Church Total | 3,676 | 5,919 | 756 | 2,451 | 9,126 | 709 | 4,157 | 112 | 51 | 86 | 105 | 180 | 95 | 10 | 383,628 | 227,983 | 7,934 | 232,536 | 7,597,032 | 8,449,113 | 571,002 | 417,774 | 724,163 | 1,712,939 | 6,736,174 |

**New Church Starts**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Wisconsin** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 Sheboygan, Remedy | Abel, Robert | 51 | 74 | 16 | 32 | 122 | 57 | 107 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | 17,900 | 124,927 | 142,827 | - | - | 4,863 | 4,863 | 137,964 |
| 27 Sheboygan, River Rock Comm | New Start | 30 | 40 | - | 4 | 44 | 15 | 60 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7,140 | 4,243 | 19,386 | - | 90,332 | 121,101 | - | 2,000 | 12,918 | 14,918 | 106,183 |
| | New Church Start Total | 81 | 114 | 16 | 36 | 166 | 72 | 167 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | - | - | 7,140 | 4,243 | 19,386 | 17,900 | 215,259 | 263,928 | - | 2,000 | 17,781 | 19,781 | 244,147 |
| | Grand Total | 3,757 | 6,033 | 772 | 2,487 | 9,292 | 781 | 4,324 | 118 | 54 | 90 | 106 | 186 | 95 | 10 | 390,768 | 232,226 | 27,320 | 250,436 | 7,812,291 | 8,713,041 | 571,002 | 419,774 | 741,944 | 1,732,720 | 6,980,321 |

**Chaplains**
Wojnarowski, Joseph

**Retired**
Boss, Donald
Bush, Timothy
Buytendorp, Louis
Cassie, Ronald
Dykstra, Gerald
Foemmel, Dennis
Fuentez, Madeline
Hanke, DuWayne
James, Robert
Joosse, Wayne
Schut, Robert
Shibley, Gerald
Smith, Earl
Smith, Vernon
Ten Haken, Larry
Tripp, Wayne
Van Der Werff, Ronald
Vande Guchte, Howard
Vande Zande, Calvin
Veltman, Joe
Westra, Richard
Zoschke, Paul

**Specialized ministry**
Grahmann, Robert
Schut, Allen
Vande Zande, Jill
Vant Hul, Kent
Wilterdink, Bruce
Zumdahl, Lyle

**Without charge**
DeVrou, Wayne

## Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF DELAWARE-RARITAN

Stated clerk: David Ruisard, Rockaway Reformed Church, PO Box 98, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889-0098, 908-534-4351
Treasurer: Joyce Murphy, 19 Sand Hill Rd, Annandale, NJ 08801-3111, 908-236-6236

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Annandale | Vacant 04/16 | 46 | 48 | 147 | 14 | 209 | 7 | 49 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 12,655 | - | - | 3,739 | 66,932 | 83,326 | 3,352 | 250 | 2,069 | 5,671 | 77,655 |
| 2 Belle Meade, Harlingen | De Young, William | 138 | 207 | 43 | 59 | 309 | 44 | 112 | 8 | 2 | - | 3 | - | 3 | 2 | 49,185 | 8,981 | - | 14,439 | 200,836 | 273,441 | 15,050 | 4,303 | 7,919 | 27,272 | 246,169 |
| 3 Blawenburg | Vacant 01/16 | 35 | 54 | 11 | 7 | 72 | 16 | 40 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 77,475 | - | 19,692 | 43,506 | 119,952 | 260,625 | 4,987 | 1,775 | 7,280 | 14,042 | 246,583 |
| 4 Bridgewater, Bradley Gardens | Gunther, J. Susan | 98 | 48 | 94 | - | 142 | 33 | 40 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 1,621 | - | - | 4,201 | 57,706 | 63,528 | 2,453 | 582 | 2,507 | 5,542 | 57,986 |
| 5 Bridgewater, Finderne | Beresford, Ronald | 21 | 27 | 1 | - | 28 | 10 | 19 | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | - | - | 350 | - | - | 23,152 | 23,332 | 46,834 | 2,289 | 1,200 | 800 | 4,289 | 42,545 |
| 6 Bridgewater, North Branch | Buurstra, Todd<br>Swart, Mark | 244 | 480 | 417 | 141 | 1,038 | 72 | 209 | 12 | - | 3 | 5 | - | 5 | 1 | 30,691 | 100,331 | - | 42,560 | 555,063 | 728,645 | 40,635 | 44,571 | 79,967 | 165,173 | 563,472 |
| 7 Gladstone, Peapack | Henry, Kathryn | 62 | 99 | 40 | 55 | 194 | 40 | 64 | 7 | - | 4 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 254,000 | - | - | 32,300 | 140,046 | 426,346 | 6,704 | 2,150 | 80,003 | 88,857 | 337,489 |
| 8 High Bridge | Vacant 09/14 | 28 | 42 | 32 | - | 74 | 6 | 34 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 3,662 | - | 777 | 61,947 | 66,386 | 6,847 | - | 605 | 7,452 | 58,934 |
| 9 Hillsborough | Mueller, Fred | 101 | 154 | 55 | 65 | 274 | 15 | 107 | 8 | - | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | - | 2,005 | - | - | 241,409 | 243,414 | 12,591 | 11,525 | 21,898 | 46,014 | 197,400 |
| 10 Hillsborough, Clover Hill | Vacant 05/15 | 70 | 116 | 280 | 138 | 534 | 79 | 75 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 580 | 17,111 | - | - | 162,000 | 179,691 | 14,482 | 867 | 45,776 | 61,125 | 118,566 |
| 11 Hillsborough, Neshanic | Hill, David | 199 | 154 | 269 | 136 | 559 | 26 | 89 | 16 | - | - | 2 | 6 | 4 | - | 35 | - | - | 46,737 | 211,607 | 258,379 | 15,616 | - | 13,766 | 29,382 | 228,997 |
| 12 Hillsborough, South Branch | Eckert, Stephen | 73 | 102 | 32 | 20 | 154 | 6 | 85 | 10 | 1 | - | - | 11 | 7 | 1 | 83,056 | - | - | 33,336 | 160,440 | 276,832 | 7,195 | 4,000 | 760 | 11,955 | 264,877 |
| 13 Lebanon | Vacant 04/13 | 29 | 48 | - | - | 48 | 8 | 41 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 500 | - | - | 23,300 | 86,079 | 109,879 | 3,516 | 750 | 8,885 | 13,151 | 96,728 |
| 14 Pottersville | Vacant 08/12 | 21 | 29 | 14 | 8 | 51 | 15 | 30 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 6,000 | 10,050 | 750 | 31,636 | 45,141 | 93,577 | 2,780 | 176 | 180 | 3,136 | 90,441 |
| 15 Princeton, Griggstown | Kahler, David | 34 | 60 | 32 | 15 | 107 | 12 | 33 | 4 | - | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | 5,000 | - | - | 12,751 | 105,087 | 122,838 | 2,820 | 3,294 | 819 | 6,933 | 115,905 |
| 16 Readington | Gumpert, Catherin | 58 | 74 | 128 | 33 | 235 | 26 | 67 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 556 | 20,590 | - | 24,647 | 150,557 | 196,350 | 6,786 | 2,413 | 3,416 | 12,615 | 183,735 |
| 17 Rocky Hill, First | Vacant 04/12 | 6 | 12 | 8 | - | 20 | 5 | 15 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | 450 | 4,000 | - | 9,700 | 37,000 | 51,150 | - | - | 300 | 300 | 50,850 |
| 18 Somerville, United | Janssen, Paul | 101 | 111 | 82 | 14 | 207 | 25 | 80 | 3 | 3 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 296,265 | - | - | 36,050 | 136,572 | 468,887 | 11,855 | 12,000 | 2,223 | 26,078 | 442,809 |
| 19 South Bound Brook | Winters, Martin | 23 | 31 | 65 | 27 | 123 | 15 | 16 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 4,795 | 1,735 | 1,143 | 27,680 | 62,841 | 98,194 | 2,943 | - | - | 2,943 | 95,251 |
| 20 Stanton | Pratt, Phillip<br>Pratt, Rebekah | 113 | 147 | 36 | 38 | 221 | 27 | 88 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 17 | 1 | - | - | 26,197 | - | 31,800 | 239,565 | 297,562 | 12,918 | 423 | 21,746 | 35,087 | 262,475 |
| 21 Three Bridges | Nace, Ryan | 236 | 162 | 337 | 50 | 549 | 8 | 109 | 17 | - | 1 | 2 | - | 6 | - | 820 | 42,130 | - | 8,643 | 301,997 | 353,590 | 15,534 | 12,244 | 28,308 | 56,086 | 297,504 |
| 22 Whitehouse Station, Rockaway | Ruisard, David | 31 | 46 | 41 | 44 | 131 | 19 | 38 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 13,613 | 1,613 | - | 44,914 | 97,852 | 157,992 | 3,679 | 4,225 | 13,253 | 21,157 | 136,835 |
| **Pennsylvania** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 Churchville, North & Southampton | Devos, Bethany<br>Devos, Corstian | 217 | 328 | 66 | 131 | 525 | 56 | 145 | 7 | 3 | - | 8 | - | 4 | - | 78,711 | 57,157 | - | 38,170 | 256,614 | 430,652 | 26,653 | 12,066 | 10,506 | 49,225 | 381,427 |
| 24 Doylestown, Pleasant Ridge | Delhagen, Kyle | 20 | 29 | 9 | - | 38 | 3 | 19 | - | - | - | 3 | 3 | - | - | 15,220 | - | - | - | 36,005 | 51,225 | 3,761 | 2,229 | 3,600 | 9,590 | 41,635 |
| 25 Feasterville, Community | Vacant 06/12 | 22 | 32 | 32 | - | 64 | 7 | 22 | - | - | - | 5 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 63,469 | 58,641 | 122,110 | 2,698 | 1,260 | 372 | 4,330 | 117,780 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 Levittown, Faith | Kazen, Donald | 25 | 30 | 10 | 2 | 42 | 6 | 30 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 57,145 | 30,480 | 87,625 | 2,535 | - | 3,126 | 5,661 | 81,964 |
| 27 Newtown | Vacant 10/12 | 17 | 20 | 10 | 5 | 35 | 15 | 30 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 37,104 | 71,345 | 108,449 | 1,472 | 850 | 11,657 | 13,979 | 94,470 |
| 28 Richboro, Addisville | Dwyer, Douglas<br>Sweet, Ryan | 209 | 362 | 321 | 256 | 939 | 110 | 301 | 18 | 8 | 2 | 11 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 19,136 | 144,765 | - | 54,879 | 660,213 | 878,993 | 30,496 | 54,879 | 29,000 | 114,375 | 764,618 |
| 29 Willow Grove, Crossroads | Heitkamp, Christopher | 55 | 48 | 50 | 27 | 125 | 26 | 57 | 3 | - | - | 5 | - | 1 | 1 | 38,432 | 2,042 | - | 45,386 | 112,903 | 198,763 | 6,296 | - | 6,274 | 12,570 | 186,193 |
| 30 Willow Grove, Korean | Joo, Eun Jae (Dan) | 60 | 105 | 8 | 20 | 133 | - | 122 | 9 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 257,188 | 257,188 | 7,440 | 3,600 | 13,200 | 24,240 | 232,948 |
| | Organized Church Total | 2,392 | 3,205 | 2,670 | 1,305 | 7,180 | 737 | 2,166 | 138 | 20 | 23 | 70 | 58 | 52 | 10 | 989,146 | 442,369 | 21,585 | 792,021 | 4,747,350 | 6,992,471 | 276,383 | 181,632 | 420,215 | 878,230 | 6,114,241 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 Collingswood, liberti | Angehr, James | 24 | 40 | - | 14 | 54 | 94 | 90 | 11 | 21 | - | - | - | 4 | 1 | - | - | 12,500 | - | 183,435 | 195,935 | - | - | 7,550 | 7,550 | 188,385 |
| **Pennsylvania** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *# 32 Temple, Centro Palabra de Fe | New Start | 10 | 25 | 15 | 20 | 60 | 12 | 35 | 25 | 1 | 5 | 1 | - | 8 | 25 | - | 300 | - | - | 23,400 | 23,700 | - | - | 200 | 200 | 23,500 |
| | New Church Start Total | 34 | 65 | 15 | 34 | 114 | 106 | 125 | 36 | 22 | 5 | 1 | - | 12 | 26 | - | 300 | 12,500 | - | 206,835 | 219,635 | - | - | 7,750 | 7,750 | 211,885 |
| | Grand Total | 2,426 | 3,270 | 2,685 | 1,339 | 7,294 | 843 | 2,291 | 174 | 42 | 28 | 71 | 58 | 64 | 36 | 989,146 | 442,669 | 34,085 | 792,021 | 4,954,185 | 7,212,106 | 276,383 | 181,632 | 427,965 | 885,980 | 6,326,126 |

**Chaplains**
Fee, Bonnie
McGarrigan, Lynne
Moyer, Jamie
Mulder, Brent

**Retired**
Alicea, Al
Arnone, John
Ausherman, Charles
Brihn, Richard
Cherry, John
Cookson, Joseph
DeVries, James
Ferguson, Dennis
Ferrone, James
Fillette, Barbara
Fries, Janet
Fries Robbins, Ruth
Hoeksema, Robert
Itzen, John
Kalkwarf, Leonard
Kazen, Donald
Lee, John
Maurer, Peter
Paulsen, Peter
Pomper, Samuel
Romano, Michael
Salthouse, Arlen
Taylor, David
Villerius, Frank
Yon, Stephen

**Specialized ministry**
Bach, Paul
Ferrer Malloy, Marisol
Haddorff, David
Miller, Steven
Schmitt, Keith

**Without charge**
Allhusen, Kirsten
Dunlap-Ennis, Leah
Gorton, Scarlet
Hankel, Heidi
Kang, James Young
Lee, Sung Chul
Petty, Kenneth

## Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF GREATER PALISADES

Stated clerk: Rodney Haveman, Parkside Community Church, 545 4th Ave, Westwood, NJ 07675, 201-321-1764
Treasurer: Ruth Shaw, 21 Preston St, Bogota, NJ 07603-1314, 201-315-6802

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Bayonne, Bergen Point Comm** | Vacant 07/99 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 3 | - | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,500 | - | - | 4,050 | 4,452 | 13,002 | 800 | - | - | 800 | 12,202 |
| 2 Bayonne, First Federated** | Katora, Barbara | 6 | 7 | - | - | 7 | 10 | 24 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 25,200 | 6,200 | 31,400 | 546 | - | 100 | 646 | 30,754 |
| 3 Bergenfield, Clinton Avenue | Ennis, Mark | 140 | 127 | 97 | 12 | 236 | 23 | 60 | 2 | - | 2 | 6 | - | 1 | - | 165,669 | - | - | 21,280 | 71,013 | 257,962 | 10,603 | 5,100 | 3,900 | 19,603 | 238,359 |
| 4 Bergenfield, Podonamoo | Tschoe, Hyok | 17 | 31 | 8 | 24 | 63 | - | 90 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 172,324 | 172,324 | 4,349 | 420 | 1,470 | 6,239 | 166,085 |
| 5 Bogota, Bogart Memorial | Hwang, Sung Hyun<br>Wu, Jodie<br>Wu, Shuo-Min (Imos) | 28 | 40 | 3 | 12 | 55 | 16 | 34 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1,958 | - | - | 115,000 | 52,050 | 169,008 | 3,524 | 1,300 | 7,200 | 12,024 | 156,984 |
| 6 Closter | Ju, Sun Jong | 26 | 34 | 16 | 11 | 61 | 7 | 39 | - | - | 2 | 2 | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | 45,600 | 99,078 | 144,678 | 3,587 | 4,550 | 1,200 | 9,337 | 135,341 |
| 7 Cresskill, Han Sung | Song, Ho Min | 26 | 45 | - | 53 | 98 | 5 | 65 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 220,000 | 220,000 | 2,000 | - | - | 2,000 | 218,000 |
| 8 Dumont, Old North | Kerr, Susan<br>Vander Borgh, Richard | 41 | 54 | 8 | 12 | 74 | 18 | 51 | - | - | - | 2 | 11 | - | - | 231,342 | - | - | 8,244 | 76,712 | 316,298 | 4,841 | - | 5,712 | 10,553 | 305,745 |
| 9 Englewood, Grace and Peace | Kim, Hak Ryong | 20 | 30 | 16 | 1 | 47 | 2 | 45 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 130,256 | 130,256 | - | - | 500 | 500 | 129,756 |
| 10 Fair Lawn, Community | Lai, George | 32 | 64 | 46 | 3 | 113 | 3 | 60 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 3 | 530 | 25,572 | - | 13,200 | 220,001 | 259,303 | 5,500 | 3,500 | 32,444 | 41,444 | 217,859 |
| 11 Fair Lawn, Peace Korean | Kim, Jay | 45 | 70 | - | - | 70 | - | 80 | - | - | - | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 399,135 | 399,135 | - | - | - | - | 399,135 |
| 12 Fort Lee, First Palisades | Apollo, Dominick | 36 | 47 | 33 | 16 | 96 | 42 | 35 | - | - | 3 | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | 1,500 | - | 55,640 | 120,799 | 177,939 | 3,992 | 1,200 | 5,600 | 10,792 | 167,147 |
| 13 Glen Rock, Community | O'Brien, Terrence | 93 | 141 | 63 | 58 | 262 | 29 | 80 | 2 | - | - | 8 | 13 | 4 | - | 56,600 | - | - | 69,950 | 226,090 | 352,640 | 13,468 | 5,885 | 8,943 | 28,296 | 324,344 |
| 14 Guttenberg, Hispanic | Castro, Franklin | 19 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 12 | 35 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 29,800 | 21,300 | 51,100 | - | - | - | - | 51,100 |
| 15 Hackensack, First | Superseded 02/05 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,355 | - | - | 19,315 | 9,371 | 33,041 | 466 | - | - | 466 | 32,575 |
| 16 Hackensack, First Zion | Won, Daniel | 32 | 8 | 7 | 42 | 57 | 3 | 50 | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | - | 8,400 | 120,000 | 128,400 | - | - | - | - | 128,400 |
| 17 Hackensack, Glory Christian | Jung, Benjamin | 21 | 24 | 7 | 1 | 32 | 2 | 38 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 136,563 | 136,563 | 1,860 | 1,000 | 700 | 3,560 | 133,003 |
| 18 Hackensack, Second | Vacant 07/15 | 96 | 172 | 23 | 28 | 223 | 35 | 100 | 1 | - | 3 | 3 | 2 | - | - | 239,682 | - | - | 11,634 | 138,012 | 389,328 | 16,409 | 6,300 | 16,858 | 39,567 | 349,761 |
| 19 Harrington Park, Community | Sayer, Steven | 94 | 149 | 117 | 47 | 313 | 41 | 106 | 4 | 2 | - | 7 | 43 | 5 | - | 97 | 29,710 | - | 25,800 | 288,406 | 344,013 | 13,019 | 20,855 | 8,500 | 42,374 | 301,639 |
| 20 Hasbrouck Heights, First | Rundeecker, Debbie | 37 | 61 | 87 | 14 | 162 | 19 | 42 | - | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | 50,000 | 1,500 | - | 45,971 | 56,101 | 153,572 | 7,484 | 5,850 | 541 | 13,875 | 139,697 |
| 21 Ho Ho Kus, Community | Bierwas, Richard | 40 | 68 | 197 | 24 | 289 | 5 | 46 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | - | 3 | 12,359 | 10,180 | 25,000 | 88,648 | 86,772 | 222,959 | 5,770 | 1,500 | 9,638 | 16,908 | 206,051 |
| 22 Hoboken, Community** | Krieger, Marvin | 12 | 17 | 4 | 1 | 22 | 4 | 42 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | - | 230 | 2,157 | - | 2,402 | 14,413 | 19,202 | - | 175 | 607 | 782 | 18,420 |
| 23 Jersey City, Old Bergen** | Brown, Jon | 79 | 113 | 22 | 28 | 163 | 35 | 78 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 75,000 | 14,000 | - | 30,700 | 88,000 | 207,700 | 1,023 | 700 | 700 | 2,423 | 205,277 |
| 24 Jersey City, Second Hudson City | Muñiz, John | 22 | 15 | 6 | 15 | 36 | 40 | 45 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 40,800 | 35,000 | 75,800 | 2,375 | 1,000 | 6,500 | 9,875 | 65,925 |
| 25 Lodi, Faith | Ippolito, Timothy | 22 | 26 | - | 62 | 88 | 44 | 70 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3,255 | 10,225 | 90,215 | 103,695 | 2,027 | 2,200 | 4,766 | 8,993 | 94,702 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | Mahwah, Ramapo | Grob, William | 61 | 100 | 31 | 40 | 171 | 20 | 47 | 6 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 13,725 | - | 44,357 | 117,862 | 175,944 | 9,830 | 7,058 | 14,000 | 30,888 | 145,056 |
| 27 | North Bergen, Grove | Germoso, Steven | 37 | 47 | - | 6 | 53 | 18 | 48 | 4 | 2 | - | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | 330,455 | - | - | 12,000 | 74,758 | 417,213 | 4,288 | 10,022 | 1,821 | 16,131 | 401,082 |
| 28 | North Bergen, Woodcliff Comm | Dunlap, Gregory | 23 | 28 | 5 | 4 | 37 | 20 | 40 | 4 | - | 4 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | - | 9,000 | 32,000 | 17,500 | 58,500 | - | - | - | - | 58,500 |
| 29 | Old Tappan, Trinity | Shepler-Ross, Kirsten | 18 | 40 | - | 4 | 44 | 4 | 48 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 4 | - | 17 | 7,000 | - | 58,546 | 63,075 | 128,638 | 300 | 244 | 856 | 1,400 | 127,238 |
| 30 | Oradell | Singletary, Charles | 34 | 55 | 19 | 7 | 81 | 28 | 50 | 3 | - | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | 12,806 | 3,500 | - | 69,760 | 126,265 | 212,331 | 5,535 | 679 | 6,522 | 12,736 | 199,595 |
| 31 | Oradell, New Covenant Korean | Kim, Jong Kug | 52 | 21 | 10 | 21 | 52 | - | 35 | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 106,184 | 106,184 | 1,828 | - | - | 1,828 | 104,356 |
| 32 | Paramus, Han Ma Um | Vacant 11/12 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 17 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 33 | Park Ridge, Pascack | Romero, Larissa | 61 | 94 | 69 | 1 | 164 | 6 | 57 | - | - | 2 | 1 | 9 | 1 | - | - | 2,720 | - | 46,891 | 146,916 | 196,527 | 9,800 | 5,800 | 3,850 | 19,450 | 177,077 |
| 34 | Ridgefield, English Neighborhood | Romaine, Arlene | 29 | 25 | - | 15 | 40 | 9 | 27 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 28,560 | - | - | - | 30,139 | 58,699 | 1,871 | 1,000 | 2,500 | 5,371 | 53,328 |
| 35 | Ridgewood, Friends Comm | Van Sant, Joanne | 5 | 8 | 1 | - | 9 | 133 | 75 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 156,749 | 6,849 | 163,598 | 551 | - | 400 | 951 | 162,647 |
| 36 | Ridgewood, Old Paramus | Miller, Robert | 100 | 148 | 39 | 23 | 210 | 39 | 115 | 8 | 7 | - | 2 | 7 | 2 | - | 7,501 | - | - | 126,955 | 273,163 | 407,619 | 12,196 | 27,857 | 29,878 | 69,931 | 337,688 |
| 37 | Ridgewood, Upper Ridgewood | Palsma, Nolan | 65 | 88 | 55 | 13 | 156 | 39 | 50 | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | 61,750 | - | - | 4,477 | 182,690 | 248,917 | 8,030 | 5,320 | 5,947 | 19,297 | 229,620 |
| 38 | River Edge, Cherry Hill | Acerno, Ralph | 8 | 20 | - | - | 20 | 70 | 70 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 150,000 | 10,400 | 160,400 | - | - | - | - | 160,400 |
| 39 | Secaucus, First | Vacant 05/12 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 3 | 38 | 3 | 12 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 26,821 | 27,032 | 53,853 | 1,175 | 700 | 3,051 | 4,926 | 48,927 |
| 40 | Upper Saddle River, Saddle River | Fretz, Robert | 63 | 84 | 29 | 10 | 123 | 17 | 40 | 4 | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | 11,855 | - | - | 237,489 | 94,714 | 344,058 | 6,003 | 6,000 | 7,007 | 19,010 | 325,048 |
| 41 | West New York, Trinity | Sharpe, John | 42 | 52 | 31 | 20 | 103 | 86 | 69 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 78,069 | 12,881 | - | 31,157 | 60,497 | 182,604 | 4,289 | 5,250 | 1,150 | 10,689 | 171,915 |
| 42 | Westwood, Parkside Comm | Haveman, Rodney | 30 | 42 | 8 | 24 | 74 | 54 | 58 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 13,562 | 1,331 | - | 122,574 | 73,649 | 211,116 | 3,148 | 11,795 | 17,512 | 32,455 | 178,661 |
| | Organized Church Total | | 1,624 | 2,213 | 1,078 | 655 | 3,946 | 941 | 2,171 | 51 | 16 | 30 | 73 | 112 | 38 | 18 | 1,386,897 | 125,776 | 37,255 | 1,791,635 | 4,293,956 | 7,635,519 | 172,487 | 143,260 | 210,373 | 526,120 | 7,109,399 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 43 | Fort Lee, Jesus Dream | Kim, Jong Yun | 10 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 20 | - | 15 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 3,941 | 22,500 | - | 77,224 | 103,665 | - | - | 2,500 | 2,500 | 101,165 |
| 44 | Hasbrouck, Yea Hyang | Ji, Yong Seung | 10 | 16 | 12 | - | 28 | 2 | 18 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2,500 | - | 35,000 | 37,500 | - | 1,000 | 300 | 1,300 | 36,200 |
| | New Church Start Total | | 20 | 23 | 17 | 8 | 48 | 2 | 33 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 3,941 | 25,000 | - | 112,224 | 141,165 | - | 1,000 | 2,800 | 3,800 | 137,365 |
| | Grand Total | | 1,644 | 2,236 | 1,095 | 663 | 3,994 | 943 | 2,204 | 56 | 16 | 30 | 73 | 112 | 38 | 20 | 1,386,897 | 129,717 | 62,255 | 1,791,635 | 4,406,180 | 7,776,684 | 172,487 | 144,260 | 213,173 | 529,920 | 7,246,764 |

**Chaplains**
Blaske, Kathy Jo
Hice, Faith
Masters, Sandra
Palsma, Phyllis

**Graduate study**
Ko, Hyung Sang

**Inactive**
Etterbeek, Jonathan

**Planting minister**
Ji, Yong Seung
Kim, Jong Yun
Nam, Paul Bongwoo

**Retired**
Ackerman, Frank
Broeker, Judith
Chen, David
Chung, Byung Il
Diekman, Fred
Fromm, Douglas
Henkel, William
Hiemstra, John
Johnson, Charles
Jung, Chang Soo
Jung, Jai Hun
Kattekola, Sanjiv
Kester, Lee
Ko, Peter Je Chul
Marsden, Thomas
Norton, Jon
Ogden, Daniel
Pope, Robert
Poppen, Alvin
Ratmeyer, Roland
Reid, James
Springsteen, Louis
Van Hattem, Melchior
Van Sickle, David
Wagoner, Roy
Waters, Dorothy

**Specialized ministry**
Allen, John
Chen, Peter
Kim, En Young
Lim, Jimmy Seong G
Pater-Ennis, Pamela
Veldheer, Kristine

**Without charge**
Bae, Daniel Sung Hyun
DeHaan, Darwin
Germoso, Hope-Anne
Greydanus, Robert
Rivera, Santos

## Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Stated clerk: EJ Emerson, 370C New Bedford Ln, Monroe Township, NJ 08831-1859, 973-632-1305
Treasurer: Liz Hance, First Reformed Church, 9 Bayard Ln, Monroe Township, NJ 08831, 732-947-9898

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Maryland** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Ijamsville, Monocacy Valley | Vander Meer, Mark | 37 | 59 | 38 | - | 97 | - | 61 | - | - | - | 1 | 31 | 2 | - | 873 | - | - | 52,140 | 235,974 | 288,987 | 21,377 | 3,000 | 21,362 | 45,739 | 243,248 |
| **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Brielle | LaFazia, Louis | 92 | 150 | 74 | 28 | 252 | 95 | 92 | 14 | 1 | - | 3 | 1 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 75,093 | 195,607 | 270,700 | 19,068 | 1,237 | 2,980 | 23,285 | 247,415 |
| 3 Colts Neck | Brown, Scott<br>Knol, Jeffrey | 334 | 483 | 171 | 153 | 807 | 109 | 305 | 13 | 34 | 15 | 15 | 11 | 11 | - | 2,858 | 7,233 | - | 169,701 | 822,296 | 1,002,088 | 48,662 | 75,841 | 72,435 | 196,938 | 805,150 |
| 4 Edison, Grace | Martin, David | 25 | 31 | 27 | - | 58 | 18 | 23 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 5,759 | - | - | 41,886 | 36,797 | 84,442 | 4,058 | 15,445 | 1,910 | 21,413 | 63,029 |
| 5 Franklin Park, Six Mile Run | Nuesch, Osvaldo<br>Patterson, Madeleine | 100 | 104 | 4 | 23 | 131 | 37 | 75 | 2 | - | 3 | 6 | - | 1 | 1 | 55,440 | 14,100 | - | 58,070 | 116,623 | 244,233 | 12,330 | 35 | 6,886 | 19,251 | 224,982 |
| 6 Freehold | Groeneveld, David | 37 | 57 | 40 | 15 | 112 | 25 | 40 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 40,144 | 153,116 | - | 41,432 | 64,790 | 299,482 | 6,675 | 2,000 | 3,815 | 12,490 | 286,992 |
| 7 Hazlet, Faith | Vacant 12/13 | 24 | 31 | 16 | - | 47 | 3 | 21 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 14,076 | - | - | 39,102 | 50,010 | 103,188 | 4,058 | 156 | 4,430 | 8,644 | 94,544 |
| 8 Highland Park | Kaper-Dale, Seth<br>Kaper-Dale, Stephanie | 161 | 222 | 104 | 131 | 457 | 161 | 255 | 30 | - | - | 6 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 1,275 | 2,000 | 5,000 | 149,805 | 285,525 | 443,605 | 21,574 | 15,713 | 62,362 | 99,649 | 343,956 |
| 9 Keyport | Seaman, Dawn | 34 | 52 | 23 | 16 | 91 | 10 | 65 | 14 | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 15,000 | 34,970 | 53,738 | 103,708 | 4,592 | 1,600 | 18,400 | 24,592 | 79,116 |
| 10 Linden | Rodriguez, Wilfredo | 47 | 63 | 20 | 6 | 89 | 6 | 45 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 8,383 | 15,037 | - | 50,195 | 101,125 | 174,740 | 7,583 | 3,000 | 5,635 | 16,218 | 158,522 |
| 11 Long Branch, First | Superseded 05/14 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12 Manahawkin, Ocean Comm | Bakelaar, Philip | 90 | 136 | 18 | 28 | 182 | 71 | 134 | 7 | 2 | - | 5 | - | - | - | 387 | - | - | 19,789 | 231,636 | 251,812 | 17,836 | 5,489 | 45,114 | 68,439 | 183,373 |
| 13 Marlboro, Old Brick | Kaden, George | 32 | 39 | 79 | 7 | 125 | 15 | 31 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 145,052 | - | - | 6,825 | 45,702 | 197,579 | 4,592 | 2,265 | 1,635 | 8,492 | 189,087 |
| 14 Metuchen | Sanfilippo, Peter | 62 | 81 | 227 | 30 | 338 | 41 | 70 | 18 | - | - | 3 | - | 2 | - | 106,063 | 11,141 | - | 51,752 | 98,786 | 267,742 | 11,961 | 536 | 5,555 | 18,052 | 249,690 |
| 15 Middlebush | Montanari, George | 59 | 102 | 33 | 17 | 152 | 31 | 66 | 5 | - | 3 | - | - | 2 | - | 45,851 | - | - | 1,230 | 223,187 | 270,268 | 13,030 | 14,492 | 6,822 | 34,344 | 235,924 |
| 16 Middletown | Sheffield, Tricia | 68 | 66 | 64 | 26 | 156 | 13 | 50 | 4 | 3 | - | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | 15,900 | - | 52,713 | 77,748 | 146,361 | 7,047 | 1,445 | 5,367 | 13,859 | 132,502 |
| 17 New Brunswick, First | Kramer-Mills, Hartmut | 43 | 58 | 16 | 10 | 84 | 4 | 27 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 7,995 | - | 4,657 | 43,897 | 77,580 | 134,129 | 6,395 | 800 | 849 | 8,044 | 126,085 |
| 18 New Brunswick, Second | Beardslee, Nancy<br>Shepler, Douglas | 24 | 34 | 10 | 2 | 46 | 2 | 29 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 3,200 | 3,372 | - | 225,000 | 56,951 | 288,523 | 6,514 | 500 | 10,000 | 17,014 | 271,509 |
| 19 New Brunswick, Suydam St | Vacant 09/08 | 33 | 53 | 17 | 12 | 82 | 22 | 74 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2,882 | 1,390 | - | 8,117 | 97,702 | 110,091 | 7,690 | 2,708 | 5,502 | 15,900 | 94,191 |
| 20 North Brunswick | Martinez, Vicente | 40 | 55 | 10 | 27 | 92 | 45 | 78 | - | - | 6 | - | 1 | 9 | - | 18,160 | 4,638 | - | 41,690 | 123,132 | 187,620 | 7,049 | - | 1,606 | 8,655 | 178,965 |
| 21 North Plainfield, Trinity | Harris, Scott | 37 | 45 | 8 | 2 | 55 | 3 | 24 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | (17,216) | - | - | 304,773 | 50,276 | 337,833 | 5,233 | 4,640 | 14,377 | 24,250 | 313,583 |
| 22 Perth Amboy, St. Paul's | Alicea-Lugo, Benjamin | 30 | 29 | 24 | 5 | 58 | 6 | 26 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 7,000 | - | - | 19,790 | 40,681 | 67,471 | 3,418 | 1,750 | 400 | 5,568 | 61,903 |
| 23 South River, First | Vacant 09/13 | 13 | 22 | 17 | - | 39 | 17 | 21 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 10 | - | - | - | - | 11,000 | 25,119 | 34,091 | 70,210 | 3,524 | - | - | 3,524 | 66,686 |
| 24 Spotswood | Ribbans, James | 71 | 115 | 31 | 28 | 174 | 15 | 68 | - | - | 3 | 7 | 29 | 2 | - | 45,860 | - | - | 21,467 | 177,425 | 244,752 | 13,564 | 6,061 | 4,025 | 23,650 | 221,102 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | Tinton Falls | de Forest, David | 24 | 30 | 10 | 14 | 54 | 8 | 27 | 5 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 76,661 | 94,777 | 171,438 | 3,097 | 3,060 | 4,971 | 11,128 | 160,310 |
| 26 | Toms River, Pinelands | Colon, Juan | 106 | 110 | 43 | 3 | 156 | 28 | 99 | - | - | - | 19 | 1 | - | - | 8,000 | 7,550 | - | 25,985 | 126,828 | 168,363 | 11,855 | 1,000 | 24,823 | 37,678 | 130,685 |
| 27 | Whiting, Community | Akers, Paul | 69 | 90 | 37 | - | 127 | 32 | 98 | - | 3 | 1 | 10 | 4 | - | - | 10,000 | - | - | 21,079 | 154,212 | 185,291 | 14,311 | 18,481 | - | 32,792 | 152,499 |
| *# | 28 Willingboro | Superseded 09/09 Brown, Duane | 7 | 7 | - | - | 7 | - | 9 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 12,221 | 46,006 | 18,424 | 76,651 | - | 250 | 1,326 | 1,576 | 75,075 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 1,699 | 2,324 | 1,161 | 583 | 4,068 | 817 | 1,913 | 119 | 46 | 39 | 87 | 111 | 48 | 5 | 512,042 | 235,477 | 47,878 | 1,704,287 | 3,691,623 | 6,191,307 | 287,093 | 181,504 | 332,587 | 801,184 | 5,390,123 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *# | 29 New Brunswick, Sae Samm | New Start | 16 | - | 22 | 11 | 33 | - | 25 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 8 | - | - | 24,500 | - | 14,625 | 39,125 | - | - | - | - | 39,125 |
| | | New Church Start Total | 16 | - | 22 | 11 | 33 | - | 25 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 8 | - | - | 24,500 | - | 14,625 | 39,125 | - | - | - | - | 39,125 |
| | | Grand Total | 1,715 | 2,324 | 1,183 | 594 | 4,101 | 817 | 1,938 | 119 | 46 | 39 | 87 | 111 | 51 | 13 | 512,042 | 235,477 | 72,378 | 1,704,287 | 3,706,248 | 6,230,432 | 287,093 | 181,504 | 332,587 | 801,184 | 5,429,248 |

**Chaplains**
Jameson, Klaire
Redeker, Bradley
Rivera, Benjamin
Youssef, Samir

**Emeritus General Synod professor**
Coakley, John

**General Synod professor**
Cha, Jaeseung

**Planting minister**
Cargill, Ursula

**Retired**
Bender, Robert
Berry, Peter
Birkelbach, Clement
Blake, Richard
Brunemeyer, Eltje
Burns, William
Comella, Thomas
Dykstra, Robert
Esther, James
Hanson, Stephen
Huyck, Kent
Jewett, William
Kim, Byung Chul
Kulvicki, E. Joy
Lachesnez-Norment, Linda
Maxam, Donald
McClendon, Rufus
Mold, Frederick
Ortman, Raymond
Risseeuw, David
Schwedes, Walter
Tanis, Paul
Vande Bunte, Ronald
Vermilyea, Gerald
Walther, Paul

**Specialized ministry**
Emerson, Ellen-Jo (E.J.)
Kramer-Mills, Susan
Lin, Benjamin
Lowe, Timothy
Ross, Keith
Stager, Donald
Weyer, Richard
Woods, Joseph

**Without charge**
Fois, Roberto

## Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantics CLASSIS OF PASSAIC VALLEY

Stated clerk: Rett Zabriskie, 252 Highwood Ave, Ridgewood, NJ 07450-5015, 201-819-7629
Treasurer: Frank Chara, 41 Oping Rd, Pompton Plains, NJ 07444-1439, 973-476-2643

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Bloomfield, Brookdale | Dorward, Susan | 19 | 23 | 20 | 7 | 50 | 16 | 33 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 12 | 2,200 | 1,200 | 63,091 | 36,027 | 102,530 | 2,050 | 3,500 | 8,347 | 13,897 | 88,633 |
| 2 | Boonton, First | Topp, Andrew | 27 | 32 | 33 | 26 | 91 | 18 | 22 | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | 174,469 | - | - | 2,495 | 31,568 | 208,532 | 3,108 | 1,200 | 9,214 | 13,522 | 195,010 |
| 3 | Clifton, Allwood Comm | Hoerner, Nancy | 39 | 42 | 19 | 15 | 76 | 5 | 54 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | 4 | - | - | 26,395 | - | 42,900 | 65,000 | 134,295 | 3,699 | 2,500 | 710 | 6,909 | 127,386 |
| 4 | Clifton, Athenia | Vacant 02/93 | 33 | 43 | 10 | 26 | 79 | 10 | 20 | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 3 | - | 467 | - | - | 63,347 | 25,963 | 89,777 | 2,132 | 300 | 4,100 | 6,532 | 83,245 |
| 5 | Clifton, Hope | Farrar, Eric | 17 | 26 | - | - | 26 | 3 | 32 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 12 | - | - | 23,300 | 2,700 | - | 4,500 | 39,000 | 69,500 | 4,264 | - | 3,800 | 8,064 | 61,436 |
| 6 | Clifton, United | Weber, Michael | 39 | 46 | 18 | 8 | 72 | 41 | 50 | - | - | - | 3 | 2 | - | - | 10,848 | - | - | 45,720 | 113,046 | 169,614 | 4,592 | 10,085 | 9,580 | 24,257 | 145,357 |
| 7 | Fairfield | Vacant 01/16 | 24 | 31 | 26 | 2 | 59 | 4 | 28 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1,348 | - | 750 | 4,140 | 87,118 | 93,356 | 3,052 | 100 | 7,933 | 11,085 | 82,271 |
| 8 | Hawthorne, First | Vande Bunte, Christopher | 60 | 101 | 47 | 50 | 198 | 30 | 88 | 8 | 4 | - | 3 | 4 | 5 | - | 188 | - | - | 19,407 | 151,062 | 170,657 | 8,528 | 2,700 | 11,817 | 23,045 | 147,612 |
| 9 | Hawthorne, Rea Avenue | Vacant 11/15 | 9 | 21 | 11 | - | 32 | 3 | 17 | - | - | 4 | - | - | 1 | - | 500 | - | - | 35,645 | 13,369 | 49,514 | - | 469 | 610 | 1,079 | 48,435 |
| 10 | Irvington, Second | Butler, Peter | 13 | 12 | 12 | - | 24 | 6 | 30 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13,175 | 36,314 | 49,489 | 1,476 | 678 | 667 | 2,821 | 46,668 |
| 11 | Kinnelon | Sullivant, Beverly | 21 | 30 | 17 | 4 | 51 | 13 | 26 | - | - | - | 3 | 3 | - | - | 353 | - | 750 | 43,692 | 52,664 | 97,459 | 4,059 | 2,250 | 1,098 | 7,407 | 90,052 |
| 12 | Lincoln Park, First | Voss, Eugene | 89 | 107 | 14 | 1 | 122 | 21 | 89 | 4 | - | 2 | 4 | - | 3 | 1 | 50,658 | - | - | 12,600 | 191,693 | 254,951 | 8,446 | - | 34,963 | 43,409 | 211,542 |
| 13 | Little Falls, First | Ratering-Youngberg, Emily | 26 | 43 | 24 | 10 | 77 | 20 | 45 | 4 | - | - | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 36,700 | 75,930 | 112,630 | 4,570 | 8,700 | 1,175 | 14,445 | 98,185 |
| 14 | Little Falls, Second | Hawkins, Ed | 19 | 25 | 32 | 3 | 60 | 11 | 24 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11,115 | - | - | 16,044 | 40,122 | 67,281 | 2,050 | - | 3,220 | 5,270 | 62,011 |
| 15 | Maplewood, Calvary | Cruz, Jesus | 14 | 12 | - | 9 | 21 | 4 | 16 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 200 | - | 32,000 | 4,000 | 36,200 | 1,100 | 150 | 175 | 1,425 | 34,775 |
| 16 | Midland Park, Faith | Nichols, Scott | 69 | 87 | 41 | 21 | 149 | 18 | 80 | 8 | - | - | 5 | - | 3 | - | 1,603 | 10,529 | - | 17,450 | 186,242 | 215,824 | - | - | 2,527 | 2,527 | 213,297 |
| 17 | Montville | Henion, Thomas | 37 | 54 | 116 | 19 | 189 | 19 | 40 | - | - | - | 4 | 5 | 1 | - | 22,443 | 36,490 | - | 21,934 | 189,105 | 269,972 | 5,084 | 1,477 | 4,300 | 10,861 | 259,111 |
| 18 | Newark, First Hispanic | Perez, Rolnand | 24 | 14 | 2 | 30 | 46 | 14 | 47 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 169 | - | - | - | 46,781 | 46,950 | 1,228 | 1,706 | 12,787 | 15,721 | 31,229 |
| 19 | Newark, Grace | Superseded 04/16 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 20 | Newark, North | Van Doornik, Randal | 5 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 50 | 25 | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 3,826 | 22,075 | 56,775 | 32,775 | 115,451 | 1,092 | - | 12,789 | 13,881 | 101,570 |
| 21 | Newark, Trinity | Superseded 10/13 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 22 | North Haledon, Living Word | Johnson, Michael | 80 | 134 | 23 | 53 | 210 | 22 | 105 | 3 | - | - | 4 | - | 2 | - | 277 | - | - | - | 273,020 | 273,297 | 11,480 | 10,605 | 34,148 | 56,233 | 217,064 |
| 23 | Nutley, Franklin | Fenske, Jill | 33 | 40 | 28 | - | 68 | 16 | 30 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 47,000 | - | - | 7,800 | 69,200 | 124,000 | 4,018 | 4,500 | 1,090 | 9,608 | 114,392 |
| 24 | Oakland, Ponds | Busker, Nathan | 87 | 91 | 54 | 32 | 177 | 35 | 83 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 3 | - | 16,000 | - | - | 29,602 | 192,099 | 237,701 | 8,938 | 8,950 | 7,761 | 25,649 | 212,052 |
| 25 | Passaic, Iglesia Reformada Bethel | Orellana, Ricardo | 3 | 3 | 3 | - | 6 | 26 | 32 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5,259 | 5,259 | - | - | - | - | 5,259 |
| 26 | Paterson, Ebenezer (Riverside) | Sosa, Fabio | 20 | 25 | 5 | - | 30 | 25 | 50 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7,122 | - | - | 22,818 | 29,940 | - | - | - | - | 29,940 |
| 27 | Paterson, Faith Chapel | Redmond, Darryl | 65 | 85 | - | 85 | 170 | 65 | 150 | 7 | - | 4 | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 226,529 | 226,529 | 6,960 | 500 | 500 | 7,960 | 218,569 |
| 28 | Paterson, People's Park | Benitez, Janet | 48 | 43 | 3 | 4 | 50 | 86 | 125 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 4 | - | - | 150 | 13,400 | 64,367 | 77,917 | 3,444 | 300 | 2,907 | 6,651 | 71,266 |
| 29 | Pompton Lakes, Pompton | Vacant 04/16 | 160 | 179 | 67 | 44 | 290 | 17 | 118 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | 4 | - | 33,813 | - | 498 | 73,927 | 242,133 | 350,371 | 15,416 | 10,960 | 13,247 | 39,623 | 310,748 |
| 30 | Pompton Plains, First | Edwards Chase, Kathleen | 227 | 342 | 21 | 52 | 415 | 93 | 275 | 15 | - | 2 | 13 | 4 | 10 | - | 14,931 | 3,302 | - | 26,132 | 929,111 | 973,476 | 28,290 | 37,345 | 131,798 | 197,433 | 776,043 |
| 31 | Saddle Brook, First | Wolf, Christopher | 57 | 63 | 34 | 33 | 130 | 20 | 78 | 6 | - | 1 | 1 | 11 | - | - | - | - | - | 17,425 | 102,657 | 120,082 | 5,330 | 2,000 | 2,000 | 9,330 | 110,752 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | Upper Montclair, Montclair Heights | Superseded 01/10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 33 | Wanaque | Sheppard, Sandra | 14 | 18 | 6 | 3 | 27 | 3 | 20 | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2,000 | 4,116 | 45,454 | 51,570 | 1,558 | 1,980 | 728 | 4,266 | 47,304 |
| 34 | Wayne, Pequannock | Vacant 06/15 | 30 | 50 | 45 | 11 | 106 | 18 | 33 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 158 | 1,591 | - | 21,853 | 95,438 | 119,040 | 5,002 | 11,785 | 3,926 | 20,713 | 98,327 |
| 35 | Wayne, Preakness | Nichols, Eric | 117 | 202 | 99 | 63 | 364 | 5 | 115 | 8 | 11 | 1 | 9 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 138,780 | 330,013 | 468,793 | 18,942 | 6,500 | 20,468 | 45,910 | 422,883 |
| 36 | Wyckoff | Kadzban, Andrew | 199 | 321 | 80 | 55 | 456 | 63 | 155 | 9 | - | 2 | 7 | - | 12 | - | 85,939 | - | - | 119,553 | 369,963 | 575,455 | 31,037 | 42,050 | 19,081 | 92,168 | 483,287 |
| 37 | Wyckoff, Abundant Life | Jacobsen, Christopher<br>Larkin, Thomas | 100 | 154 | 29 | 24 | 207 | 24 | 73 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 5 | - | 1 | - | 377,690 | 12,693 | - | 78,912 | 166,496 | 635,791 | 11,808 | 28,176 | 23,478 | 63,462 | 572,329 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 1,824 | 2,514 | 940 | 691 | 4,145 | 824 | 2,208 | 99 | 24 | 37 | 85 | 53 | 54 | 9 | 873,281 | 107,048 | 27,423 | 1,063,115 | 4,552,336 | 6,623,203 | 212,753 | 201,466 | 390,944 | 805,163 | 5,818,040 |

**Chaplains**
Dunn, Timothy
Hoerner, Nancy
Knol, James
Kumar, Baktha
Serrano, Jose

**Graduate study**
Keith, Carolyn

**Retired**
Bach, David
Barrowclough, Robert
Bartha, Thomas
Bigelow, Charles
Cabrera, Brigido
Conover, Allan
Franklyn, Ronald
Horst, Arthur
Johnson, Russell
Jones, Leonard
Kiraly, Zoltan
La Rose, Ronald
McCarey, Lonzy
Montanari, Shirley
Murphy, Nelson
Orellana, Ricardo
Poll, Gene
Rienstra, Andrew
Studley, Albert
Suntken, Larry
Tivade, Solomon
Van Ek, Lynn
Zabriskie, Everett

**Specialized ministry**
Gonzalez, Gabriel
Higgins, Charles
Hill Alto, William
Lee, Hak Kwon
Moheit, William
Ratcliffe, Karyn
TeBeest, Dennis

## Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF BROOKLYN

Stated clerk: James Steward, South Bushwick Reformed Church, 15 Himrod St, Brooklyn, NY 11221-3117, 347-350-6110
Treasurer: Alice Williams, 145 Lincoln Rd Apt 1G, Brooklyn, NY 11225-4045, 718-284-6464

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *# 1 | Brooklyn, Bethel** | Atiemo, Samuel | 31 | 56 | 28 | - | 84 | 25 | 44 | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | - | - | 26,398 | - | 1,762 | 90,910 | 119,070 | 6,200 | 2,000 | 7,244 | 15,444 | 103,626 |
| *# 2 | Brooklyn, Canarsie Comm | Clarke, Calvin | 19 | 27 | 2 | - | 29 | 7 | 20 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | 82,500 | 2,960 | - | 82,750 | 46,882 | 215,092 | - | - | 2,400 | 2,400 | 212,692 |
| 3 | Brooklyn, Flatbush | Vacant 10/13 | 43 | 61 | 28 | - | 89 | 10 | 40 | - | - | - | 3 | 28 | - | - | 125,000 | - | - | 101,580 | 25,103 | 251,683 | 11,326 | - | 2,911 | 14,237 | 237,446 |
| 4 | Brooklyn, Flatlands | Glover, Paul | 32 | 40 | - | - | 40 | 2 | 32 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 481,904 | - | - | 4,930 | 37,550 | 524,384 | 3,643 | 68,452 | 27,877 | 99,972 | 424,412 |
| *# 5 | Brooklyn, Grace | Banks, Douglas<br>Willock, Maudelin | 73 | 80 | 38 | - | 118 | - | 82 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 4 | 97 | - | - | - | 153,950 | 154,047 | 4,478 | 7,800 | 4,000 | 16,278 | 137,769 |
| *# 6 | Brooklyn, Gravesend** | Spann, Calvin | 13 | 14 | - | - | 14 | 17 | 24 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 16,417 | 20,204 | 36,621 | 685 | - | - | 685 | 35,936 |
| 7 | Brooklyn, Greenpoint | Vacant 06/00 | 32 | 40 | 4 | 23 | 67 | 52 | 60 | 7 | - | - | - | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2,000 | 24,818 | 82,009 | 108,827 | 2,856 | 2,856 | 2,989 | 8,701 | 100,126 |
| 8 | Brooklyn, New Brooklyn | Alexander, Barbara | 26 | 20 | 13 | 22 | 55 | 8 | 30 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 10,554 | - | - | 59,009 | 69,563 | 2,166 | 690 | 200 | 3,056 | 66,507 |
| *# 9 | Brooklyn, New Lots Comm | Awkward, De'Lafayette | 100 | 100 | 3 | 14 | 117 | 4 | 75 | 14 | 5 | - | 1 | 35 | 4 | 10 | - | - | - | 70,050 | 84,847 | 154,897 | 7,109 | - | - | 7,109 | 147,788 |
| 10 | Brooklyn, New Utrecht | Emerson, Ellen-Jo (E.J.) | 20 | 26 | 16 | 5 | 47 | 17 | 25 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 23,319 | 5,983 | - | 51,836 | 17,068 | 98,206 | 2,856 | - | - | 2,856 | 95,350 |
| 11 | Brooklyn, Old First | Meeter, Daniel | 90 | 99 | 3 | 57 | 159 | 50 | 72 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2,044 | 25,817 | 5,750 | 158,505 | 188,632 | 380,748 | 9,455 | - | 14,418 | 23,873 | 356,875 |
| 12 | Brooklyn, Redeemer | Rivera, Carlos | 56 | 76 | 2 | - | 78 | 17 | 128 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7,347 | 15,000 | 5,635 | 107,966 | 135,948 | 7,977 | 600 | 500 | 9,077 | 126,871 |
| 13 | Brooklyn, South Bushwick | Steward, James | 20 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 33 | 5 | 40 | 6 | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2,000 | 5,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 40,000 | 77,000 | 550 | - | 100 | 650 | 76,350 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 555 | 669 | 138 | 123 | 930 | 214 | 672 | 37 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 73 | 18 | 18 | 716,864 | 84,059 | 37,750 | 533,283 | 954,130 | 2,326,086 | 59,301 | 82,398 | 62,639 | 204,338 | 2,121,748 |

**Chaplains**
Bratt, Jessica
Daley, Rachel
Meeter, Melody
Nielsen, D. Kim

**Retired**
Busby, Felix
Coles, William
Cumberbatch, Kenneth
Ott, Gilmore
Ramm, Daniel
Seaton, Leslie
Tenhor, Adrian
Westbrooks, Dennis
Woodson, Clara

**Specialized ministry**
Dyke, Christine

## Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF MID-HUDSON

Stated clerk: Joshua Bode, Woodstock Reformed Church, 16 Tinker St, Woodstock, NY 12498-1233, 845-679-6610
Treasurer: Alice Mongin, 500 E Marylyn Ave Apt D53, State College, PA 16801-6270, 814-238-1274

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld | Conf Mbrs | Inact Mbrs | Bapt Mbrs | Total Mbrs | Adh | Avg Worshp Attend | Conf | Cert | Trans | Decd | Other | Infant | Adult | No Liv Don | Spec Offering | RCA Assem | Programs | Offerings | Total Income | Assmnts | RCA Contrib | Other Contrib | Total Amount | Congr Purpose |
| | | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (18a) | (18b) | (18c) | (18d) | (18e) | (18) | (19a) | (19b) | (19c) | (19) | (20) |
| | **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Accord, Rochester | Schulte, Aaron | 28 | 40 | 79 | 28 | 147 | 19 | 45 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 8,940 | - | 1,500 | 15,507 | 52,114 | 78,061 | 4,054 | 135 | 1,825 | 6,014 | 72,047 |
| 2 | Beacon | Dambra, Stephen | 17 | 25 | - | 1 | 26 | 10 | 28 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 12,732 | - | - | 2,000 | 35,880 | 50,612 | 2,229 | - | - | 2,229 | 48,383 |
| 3 | Bloomington, United of Rosendale | Smith, Dianna | 38 | 48 | 59 | 22 | 129 | 22 | 44 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 79,467 | - | - | 22,024 | 53,268 | 154,759 | 5,531 | 400 | 2,864 | 8,795 | 145,964 |
| 4 | Fishkill, First | McCanna, Gloria | 95 | 120 | 32 | 22 | 174 | 12 | 73 | - | - | 2 | 1 | 8 | - | - | 15,648 | - | - | 31,527 | 217,089 | 264,264 | 15,235 | 10,532 | 21,247 | 47,014 | 217,250 |
| 5 | Gardiner | Sissel, Gary | 28 | 43 | - | - | 43 | 17 | 49 | - | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 11,559 | - | 7,200 | 90,239 | 108,998 | 5,130 | - | 5,714 | 10,844 | 98,154 |
| 6 | High Falls, Community | Schulte, Aaron | 32 | 41 | 53 | 19 | 113 | 27 | 50 | - | - | - | 5 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 14,197 | 47,763 | 61,960 | 5,068 | - | 5,325 | 10,393 | 51,567 |
| 7 | Hopewell Junction, Hopewell | Holbrook, Taylor | 215 | 332 | 224 | 247 | 803 | 195 | 397 | 28 | 1 | - | 2 | 59 | 10 | 1 | 52,956 | 8,172 | - | 3,698 | 657,326 | 722,152 | 48,189 | 3,355 | 63,944 | 115,488 | 606,664 |
| 8 | Hurley | Gram, Robert | 130 | 169 | 203 | 79 | 451 | 79 | 122 | 1 | 2 | - | 4 | 20 | 3 | - | 42,386 | 6,665 | 2,497 | 61,438 | 142,802 | 255,788 | 21,889 | 100 | 28,381 | 50,370 | 205,418 |
| 9 | Hyde Park, Dutch | Heringa, Donald | 26 | 34 | - | - | 34 | 9 | 26 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 25 | 6,020 | 4,750 | 24,832 | 50,608 | 86,235 | 5,465 | - | - | 5,465 | 80,770 |
| 10 | Kingston, Comforter | Vacant 05/16 | 25 | 32 | 29 | 7 | 68 | 12 | 32 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 32 | - | - | 1,499 | 3,995 | - | 14,761 | 42,961 | 63,216 | 4,865 | 3,750 | 1,900 | 10,515 | 52,701 |
| 11 | Kingston, Fair Street | Vacant 06/16 | 69 | 93 | 81 | 27 | 201 | 19 | 83 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 32 | 2 | - | 78,478 | 8,462 | 1,000 | - | 106,681 | 194,621 | 13,731 | 1,943 | 1,438 | 17,112 | 177,509 |
| 12 | Kingston, Old Dutch | House, Renée | 73 | 101 | 20 | 24 | 145 | 43 | 65 | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | - | 2 | 199,761 | - | - | 122,632 | 90,468 | 412,861 | 12,042 | 7,500 | 16,835 | 36,377 | 376,484 |
| 13 | Kingston, St Remy | Brechter, David | 22 | 29 | 38 | 23 | 90 | 5 | 27 | 5 | - | - | 2 | 1 | 6 | - | 212 | 500 | - | 5,682 | 26,762 | 33,156 | 3,649 | 600 | 218 | 4,467 | 28,689 |
| 14 | Millbrook, Lyall Memorial ** | Fiet, Thomas | 11 | 13 | 5 | 3 | 21 | 40 | 25 | 6 | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | 2,285 | 17,000 | - | 10,515 | 38,106 | 67,906 | 2,555 | - | 4,415 | 6,970 | 60,936 |
| 15 | Mount Tremper, Shandaken | Carragher, Donald | 3 | 4 | 3 | - | 7 | 4 | 4 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | 290 | 14,199 | 14,495 | 507 | - | 583 | 1,090 | 13,405 |
| 16 | New Paltz | Mast, Mark | 98 | 129 | 256 | 40 | 425 | 47 | 139 | 11 | 3 | - | 20 | - | 5 | 1 | 65,868 | - | - | 35,219 | 154,765 | 255,852 | 18,095 | 2,600 | 14,773 | 35,468 | 220,384 |
| 17 | Port Ewen | Slusher, Kevin | 42 | 66 | 104 | 8 | 178 | 31 | 48 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 43,592 | - | - | 4,988 | 63,627 | 112,207 | 9,470 | 15,354 | 3,900 | 28,724 | 83,483 |
| 18 | Poughkeepsie | Vacant 07/16 | 63 | 61 | 24 | 12 | 97 | 10 | 63 | 1 | - | - | 4 | - | 3 | 1 | 923 | 22,328 | - | 63,868 | 102,749 | 189,868 | 8,998 | - | 3,217 | 12,215 | 177,653 |
| 19 | Poughkeepsie, Arlington | Vacant 06/16 | 41 | 47 | 14 | - | 61 | 12 | 44 | 9 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 1,366 | - | - | 24,424 | 72,035 | 97,825 | 6,371 | - | 1,500 | 7,871 | 89,954 |
| 20 | Red Hook, St John's | Titus, Eric | 94 | 96 | 46 | 59 | 201 | 21 | 96 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 20,031 | - | - | 7,477 | 207,269 | 234,777 | 17,796 | 8,279 | 15,529 | 41,604 | 193,173 |
| 21 | Rhinebeck | Perez, Luis | 131 | 162 | 49 | 9 | 220 | 32 | 99 | 13 | 2 | - | 4 | 10 | 8 | 1 | 159 | 30,000 | - | 13,289 | 267,300 | 310,748 | 16,647 | 6,100 | 24,295 | 47,042 | 263,706 |
| 22 | Saugerties | Vacant 06/15 | 49 | 63 | 52 | 47 | 162 | 10 | 38 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 3 | 132 | 1,100 | - | 32,001 | 107,520 | 140,753 | 5,354 | 1,362 | 750 | 7,466 | 133,287 |
| 23 | Saugerties, Blue Mountain | Vacant 06/15 | 15 | 26 | 39 | - | 65 | 18 | 15 | 2 | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 1,055 | - | - | 16,755 | 18,027 | 35,837 | 2,534 | 100 | 553 | 3,187 | 32,650 |
| 24 | Saugerties, Flatbush | Bendelius, Jennifer | 15 | 22 | 43 | 3 | 68 | 24 | 30 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | - | 43,802 | - | - | 1,906 | 32,639 | 78,347 | 3,968 | 100 | 2,164 | 6,232 | 72,115 |
| *# 25 | Saugerties, High Woods | Vacant 05/16 | 20 | 23 | 19 | - | 42 | 14 | 26 | - | 1 | 5 | 3 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 10,840 | 28,724 | 39,564 | 3,460 | 2,595 | 3,050 | 9,105 | 30,459 |
| 26 | Saugerties, Katsbaan | Vacant 06/15 | 18 | 15 | 22 | 2 | 39 | 10 | 12 | 7 | - | - | 3 | 7 | - | 2 | 420 | 6,350 | - | 6,000 | 22,235 | 35,005 | 3,446 | 50 | 100 | 3,596 | 31,409 |
| 27 | Saugerties, Plattekill | Vanderlaan, Robert | 36 | 52 | 53 | 19 | 124 | 4 | 47 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | 1,762 | 15,685 | - | 15,048 | 69,491 | 101,986 | 5,808 | - | 1,328 | 7,136 | 94,850 |
| 28 | Shokan | Fritzinger, Janet | 5 | 5 | 8 | - | 13 | 11 | 12 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,771 | - | - | 10,900 | 12,430 | 28,101 | 709 | - | - | 709 | 27,392 |
| 29 | Stone Ridge, Marbletown | Stickley, Charles | 46 | 75 | 17 | 13 | 105 | 31 | 70 | 8 | - | - | 3 | - | 2 | - | 7,726 | - | - | 4,095 | 108,603 | 120,424 | 9,511 | 1,520 | 8,949 | 19,980 | 100,444 |
| 30 | Wappingers Falls, New Hackensack | Tamlyn, Keith | 172 | 278 | 188 | 139 | 605 | 125 | 150 | 21 | - | 1 | 10 | 22 | 5 | - | 63,968 | - | - | 32,828 | 363,957 | 460,753 | 34,069 | 4,149 | 19,083 | 57,301 | 403,452 |
| 31 | Woodstock | Bode, Joshua | 58 | 64 | 44 | 54 | 162 | 43 | 55 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 2,258 | - | - | 26,604 | 104,735 | 133,597 | 8,643 | 1,600 | 1,575 | 11,818 | 121,779 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | North Carolina | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 32 | Cary, First | Vacant 06/16 | 28 | 40 | 14 | - | 54 | 3 | 37 | 4 | - | 5 | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | 975 | 128,318 | 129,293 | 10,163 | 4,518 | 4,846 | 19,527 | 109,766 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 1,743 | 2,348 | 1,818 | 907 | 5,073 | 959 | 2,051 | 128 | 13 | 22 | 88 | 203 | 60 | 11 | 752,228 | 137,836 | 9,747 | 643,520 | 3,530,690 | 5,074,021 | 315,181 | 76,642 | 260,301 | 652,124 | 4,421,897 |

**Chaplains**
Hagler, Denise

**General Synod professor**
House, Renée

**Planting minister**
Aquino, Antonio

**Retired**
Alley, James
Benes, Paul
Beukelman, James
Brechter, David
Grupe, Robert
Harmelink, Herman
Healy, Donald
Hondorp, David
Jones, Willis
Leonard, Roger
Malefyt, Calvin
McFadden, Helen
Miles, Nickolas
Mitchell, Joan
Mitchell, Robert
Nace, George Theodore (Ted)
Needham, John
Ruch, Richard
Ruter, Paul
Shaver, Robert
Sickler, P. Stephan
Stickley, Charles
Ten Brink, Arvin
Vanderlaan, Robert
Wilhelm, Arlene

**Specialized ministry**
Long, James
Prentiss, Randall

**Without charge**
Wiessner, Charles

## Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF NASSAU-SUFFOLK

Stated clerk: Steve Pierce, Community Reformed Church, 90 Plandome Rd, Manhasset, NY 11030-2325, 516-627-3494
Treasurer: Robert Engel, 418 Willow St, Westbury, NY 11590-2318, 516-334-7939

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Brookville | Eastland, Vicky | 36 | 54 | 76 | 6 | 136 | 36 | 30 | 6 | - | - | 5 | - | 4 | - | 84,346 | - | - | 44,408 | 35,516 | 164,270 | 4,721 | 8,300 | 1,500 | 14,521 | 149,749 |
| 2 Hicksville, Parkway Comm | Lay, Harold | 112 | 162 | 32 | 30 | 224 | 26 | 116 | 12 | - | 4 | 4 | 27 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 181,631 | 189,832 | 371,463 | 19,799 | 11,000 | 3,626 | 34,425 | 337,038 |
| 3 Locust Valley | Eastland, James | 57 | 67 | - | - | 67 | 14 | 70 | 2 | 1 | - | 6 | - | 5 | 1 | 30,670 | 31,000 | 9,000 | 44,538 | 77,129 | 192,337 | 7,644 | 4,600 | 1,000 | 13,244 | 179,093 |
| 4 Manhasset, Community | Field, Donna<br>Pierce, Steven | 28 | 51 | 7 | - | 58 | 40 | 65 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 33,000 | 21,000 | 6,000 | 269,597 | 144,041 | 473,638 | 6,631 | 13,000 | 10,492 | 30,123 | 443,515 |
| 5 Manorville, Community | Vacant 06/01 | 41 | 9 | - | 32 | 41 | 23 | 55 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 14 | - | 3,000 | - | 10,800 | 106,408 | 120,208 | 3,200 | - | 25,450 | 28,650 | 91,558 |
| 6 Massapequa | Scheid, Joshua | 82 | 149 | 55 | 30 | 234 | 33 | 85 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 2 | - | - | - | 1,305 | - | - | 104,582 | 168,345 | 274,232 | 20,569 | 15,450 | 500 | 36,519 | 237,713 |
| 7 New Hyde Park, New Hope Comm | Tan, Wai Choon | 8 | 16 | 2 | 16 | 34 | 17 | 17 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3,000 | 2,500 | 1,000 | 37,500 | 2,500 | 46,500 | 1,444 | - | - | 1,444 | 45,056 |
| 8 North Babylon, St Paul's | Strauch, Conrad | 35 | 48 | 56 | 29 | 133 | 12 | 41 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 4 | 6 | - | - | - | - | 5,650 | 96,266 | 101,916 | 2,800 | - | 5,388 | 8,188 | 93,728 |
| 9 Plainview | Kroon, Cheri | 27 | 42 | 24 | 13 | 79 | 30 | 40 | - | - | 3 | 2 | - | 6 | - | 126 | - | 7,333 | 48,000 | 56,960 | 112,419 | 6,296 | 2,000 | 1,000 | 9,296 | 103,123 |
| 10 Roslyn Heights, New Church | Lee, Sung Hee<br>Suh, Kyunghoon | 76 | 93 | 36 | 45 | 174 | 30 | 160 | 5 | - | 3 | 3 | 1 | 10 | - | - | - | - | 31 | 653 | 684 | 10 | - | - | 10 | 674 |
| 11 Sayville, New Life Comm | Rees, Scott | 100 | 138 | 27 | 90 | 255 | 87 | 133 | 12 | - | - | - | 6 | 1 | - | 118 | 40,978 | - | 48,305 | 433,569 | 522,970 | 16,972 | 3,650 | 51,827 | 72,449 | 450,521 |
| 12 Williston Park, Taiwanese | Lin, Shi-Yang | 37 | 45 | 5 | - | 50 | 15 | 50 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1,190 | - | - | 19,800 | 82,060 | 103,050 | 5,395 | 3,350 | 4,800 | 13,545 | 89,505 |
| | Organized Church Total | 639 | 874 | 320 | 291 | 1,485 | 363 | 862 | 45 | 3 | 19 | 26 | 38 | 35 | 16 | 153,755 | 98,478 | 23,333 | 814,842 | 1,393,279 | 2,483,687 | 95,481 | 61,350 | 105,583 | 262,414 | 2,221,273 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 Stony Brook, Crossroads | New Start | 35 | 45 | 1 | - | 46 | 10 | 55 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 10,607 | 37,333 | 34,556 | 97,148 | 179,644 | - | - | 1,900 | 1,900 | 177,744 |
| | New Church Start Total | 35 | 45 | 1 | - | 46 | 10 | 55 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 10,607 | 37,333 | 34,556 | 97,148 | 179,644 | - | - | 1,900 | 1,900 | 177,744 |
| | Grand Total | 674 | 919 | 321 | 291 | 1,531 | 373 | 917 | 45 | 3 | 21 | 26 | 39 | 35 | 16 | 153,755 | 109,085 | 60,666 | 849,398 | 1,490,427 | 2,663,331 | 95,481 | 61,350 | 107,483 | 264,314 | 2,399,017 |

**Chaplains**
Lovgren Pavich, Darcy

**Planting minister**
Cho, James Daehyeong
Sung, David Joonghyun

**Retired**
Bosch, Randall
Engel, Robert
Giordano, Stephen
Hall, J. Harry
Kim, Song Kuk
Maris, David

**Specialized ministry**
Brooks, William

**Suspended**
Quevedo, Paul

**Without charge**
Bell Winslow, Beverly
Joo, Jimmy Jinkyu
Kim, Yong Bok
Lee, Chong Sung
Lin, Hueilong
Ramirez, Allan
Yang, Seung Ku

## Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF NEW YORK

Stated clerk: Micheal Edwards, Dewitt Reformed Church, 280 Rivington St, New York, NY 10002-2551, 212-674-3341
Treasurer: John Chen, 52 Pitney Ave, Staten Island, NY 10309-1917, 917-513-1488

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Bronx, Church of the Master | Vacant 10/98 | 18 | 29 | - | - | 29 | 9 | 30 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 51 | 5,000 | - | 4,000 | 56,000 | 65,051 | 3,168 | 1,650 | 1,000 | 5,818 | 59,233 |
| 2 Bronx, Fordham Manor | Vacant 02/12 | 172 | 172 | - | - | 172 | 5 | 225 | 22 | - | 10 | 2 | - | - | 25 | - | 40,000 | 3,000 | 21,400 | 388,891 | 453,291 | 12,120 | - | - | 12,120 | 441,171 |
| 3 Bronx, Highbridge Comm | Taitt, Cora | 22 | 44 | 1 | - | 45 | 15 | 60 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 7,500 | 31,500 | 106,218 | 145,218 | 3,636 | 1,000 | 1,471 | 6,107 | 139,111 |
| 4 Bronx, Mott Haven | Sealy, Patricia | 22 | 27 | 3 | - | 30 | 4 | 19 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 12,000 | 144,000 | 32,682 | 188,682 | 3,045 | 400 | 300 | 3,745 | 184,937 |
| 5 Bronx, United Williamsbridge | Vacant 12/06 | 10 | 10 | - | - | 10 | 15 | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 15,000 | 15,000 | 2,121 | - | 100 | 2,221 | 12,779 |
| 6 Manhattan, Bethany Memorial | Atkins, Sharon | 6 | 12 | 15 | - | 27 | 10 | 15 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 25,844 | 25,844 | 1,365 | 1,400 | 2,300 | 5,065 | 20,779 |
| 7 Manhattan, Chinese Comm** | Lin, Laura | 40 | 60 | 2 | 2 | 64 | 5 | 75 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 120,000 | 120,000 | - | - | - | - | 120,000 |
| *# 8 Manhattan, Collegiate Corp | | 2,894 | 4,018 | 3,281 | 342 | 7,641 | 2,721 | 493 | 167 | 2 | 9 | 26 | 31 | 34 | 12 | 2,346,564 | 37,760 | 2,870,574 | 246,314 | 7,659,437 | 13,160,649 | 353,500 | 10,000 | 348,288 | 711,788 | 12,448,861 |
| Manhattan, Fort Washington | Major, Howard | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manhattan, Marble | Brown, Michael<br>DePree, Kirsty | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manhattan, Middle | Kast-Keat, James<br>Lewis, Jacqueline<br>Thorne, Adriene | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manhattan, West End | Bos, Michael<br>Kast-Keat, Jessica | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 Manhattan, Dewitt | Edwards, Micheal | 66 | 62 | 33 | - | 95 | 45 | 98 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | - | - | 175,000 | 2,000 | 4,000 | 50,000 | 600 | 231,600 | 6,600 | 500 | 1,000 | 8,100 | 223,500 |
| 10 Manhattan, Elmendorf | Singletary, Patricia | 47 | 52 | - | - | 52 | 28 | 69 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 200 | - | 3,000 | 46,455 | 69,222 | 118,877 | 3,938 | 500 | 7,500 | 11,938 | 106,939 |
| 11 Manhattan, Japanese American ** | Vacant 07/06 | 10 | 36 | 5 | 5 | 46 | 3 | 35 | - | 5 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 6,236 | 785 | - | - | 79,215 | 86,236 | 1,995 | - | 24,445 | 26,440 | 59,796 |
| 12 Staten Island | Vacant 02/99 | 26 | 37 | 2 | 11 | 50 | 23 | 33 | 2 | - | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | 22,415 | 4,875 | - | 2,380 | 109,997 | 139,667 | 3,885 | - | 1,500 | 5,385 | 134,282 |
| 13 Staten Island, Brighton Height | Correa, Alfred | 94 | 100 | 52 | 3 | 155 | 104 | 123 | 2 | - | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | - | 1,396 | - | 4,500 | 145,387 | 156,826 | 308,109 | 10,710 | 2,391 | 1,845 | 14,946 | 293,163 |
| *# 14 Staten Island, Grace Christian | Vacant 12/15 | 69 | 105 | 23 | 45 | 173 | 110 | 160 | 12 | - | 7 | 1 | - | 2 | 10 | - | 8,100 | 8,000 | 14,274 | 274,147 | 304,521 | 8,160 | 4,000 | 5,891 | 18,051 | 286,470 |
| 15 Staten Island, Huguenot Park | Vacant 11/15 | 36 | 54 | 16 | 3 | 73 | 8 | 35 | 4 | - | 4 | - | 16 | 3 | - | 4,136 | 8,525 | - | 17,120 | 66,609 | 96,390 | 6,930 | - | 863 | 7,793 | 88,597 |
| 16 Staten Island, Prince Bay | Vacant 05/14 | 15 | 21 | 10 | - | 31 | 18 | 25 | 5 | - | 4 | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | 3,000 | 7,100 | 14,000 | 24,100 | 2,500 | 100 | 3,000 | 5,600 | 18,500 |
| **Virgin Islands** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 St Croix | Koopmans, Rodney | 34 | 42 | 8 | 15 | 65 | 27 | 40 | - | - | 7 | 1 | - | - | - | 2,173 | 4,195 | 7,300 | 8,828 | 104,528 | 127,024 | 3,465 | 490 | 1,817 | 5,772 | 121,252 |
| 18 St Thomas | Brooks, William<br>Neevel, Jeffrey | 63 | 156 | - | 5 | 161 | 130 | 235 | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 4 | 13,500 | 100,000 | 6,500 | 72,000 | 376,000 | 568,000 | 17,430 | 5,000 | 38,500 | 60,930 | 507,070 |
| Organized Church Total | | 3,644 | 5,037 | 3,451 | 431 | 8,919 | 3,280 | 1,785 | 220 | 12 | 51 | 43 | 66 | 45 | 54 | 2,571,671 | 211,240 | 2,929,374 | 810,758 | 9,655,216 | 16,178,259 | 444,568 | 27,431 | 439,820 | 911,819 | 15,266,440 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| !*# 19 Bronx, Emmanuel | New Start | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | New Church Start Total | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Grand Total | 3,644 | 5,037 | 3,451 | 431 | 8,919 | 3,280 | 1,785 | 220 | 12 | 51 | 43 | 66 | 45 | 54 | 2,571,671 | 211,240 | 2,929,374 | 810,758 | 9,655,216 | 16,178,259 | 444,568 | 27,431 | 439,820 | 911,819 | 15,266,440 | | | | |

**Chaplains**
Sgarlat, Susan

**Graduate study**
Houck-Loomis, Tiffany

**Inactive**
Clarke, Rupert
Piet, John

**Missionary**
Brownell, Nathan

**Retired**
Anderson, Robert
Antworth, E. Wayne
Babb, Bernita
Bradsell, Kenneth
Cadmus, Ronald
Dragt, Gordon
Gomez, Boanerges
Gorsuch, Kenneth
Johnson, Raphael
Kuo, Andrew
Morris, Charles
Peale, John
Phelan, Gerald
Rivera, Raymond
White, David

**Specialized ministry**
Brink, Shari
Chang, John
Jackson, Karen
Jameson, Debra
McDonnell, Rebecca
Simpson, Franklin
Testa, Elizabeth
Troia, Terry

**Without charge**
Backofen, Brent
Lawrence, Thomas
Turner, Julia
Vollink-Lent, Holly

## Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF ORANGE

Stated clerk: Kenneth Kobza, 1145 State Route 208, Wallkill, NY 12589-3714, 845-895-3794
Treasurer: vacant

| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | | |
| | | | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **New Jersey** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Montague, Minisink | Vacant 02/14 | 31 | 35 | 24 | 21 | 80 | 3 | 36 | - | 11 | 7 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 2,600 | - | 1,000 | 250 | 83,200 | 87,050 | 5,762 | 1,200 | 7,800 | 14,762 | 72,288 |
| | **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Claryville | Vacant 07/99 | 14 | 18 | 11 | - | 29 | 7 | 10 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 23,004 | 2,837 | - | 5,269 | 24,591 | 55,701 | 1,597 | 1,930 | 474 | 4,001 | 51,700 |
| *# 3 | Cuddebackville | Sweeney, Michael | 17 | 13 | 1 | 14 | 28 | 28 | 30 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1,750 | 14,840 | 18,754 | 35,344 | 1,536 | 578 | 2,064 | 4,178 | 31,166 |
| *# 4 | Ellenville | Vogelaar, Jay | 20 | 23 | 13 | 8 | 44 | 3 | 35 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 33,948 | 18,882 | - | 12,778 | 73,355 | 138,963 | 3,811 | 2,500 | 790 | 7,101 | 131,862 |
| 5 | Grahamsville | Ruter, Paul | 66 | 20 | 55 | 101 | 176 | 16 | 35 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | - | 1 | 3,120 | - | - | 14,416 | 46,256 | 63,792 | 2,505 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 4,505 | 59,287 |
| 6 | Kerhonkson, Federated** | Vacant 01/01 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 7 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 14,000 | 14,000 | 2,190 | - | - | 2,190 | 11,810 |
| 7 | Montgomery, Brick | Randazzo, Brian | 18 | 44 | - | - | 44 | 18 | 37 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 4 | - | - | 4,518 | 800 | 320 | 62,754 | 68,392 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 66,392 |
| 8 | Newburgh, Meadow Hill | Rivera, Irving | 50 | 71 | 5 | 2 | 78 | 10 | 75 | - | 5 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 83,888 | 945,996 | 1,551 | 102,273 | 49,099 | 1,182,808 | 3,510 | 3,252 | 4,994 | 11,755 | 1,171,053 |
| 9 | Pine Bush, New Prospect | Vacant 06/16 | 8 | 11 | 13 | - | 24 | 16 | 20 | - | - | 4 | 2 | - | - | - | 250 | - | - | - | 41,000 | 41,250 | 1,600 | - | - | 1,600 | 39,650 |
| 10 | Port Jervis, Deerpark | Rost, Ann | 45 | 53 | 12 | 12 | 77 | 6 | 55 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 49,035 | 4,038 | 500 | 6,427 | 69,485 | 129,485 | 7,765 | 4,000 | 2,000 | 13,765 | 115,720 |
| 11 | Slate Hill, Faith | Potgieter, Albert | 44 | 67 | 9 | 26 | 102 | 5 | 58 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 7 | - | 190 | 30,880 | 4,250 | 17,800 | 96,552 | 149,672 | 11,339 | 3,400 | 2,557 | 17,296 | 132,376 |
| 12 | Walden, First | Vacant 11/13 | 51 | 85 | 53 | 49 | 187 | 45 | 62 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 1,784 | 10,000 | 500 | 12,300 | 107,509 | 132,093 | 10,647 | 300 | 10,417 | 21,364 | 110,729 |
| 13 | Wallkill | Macon, Toni | 78 | 104 | 1 | 22 | 127 | 19 | 72 | 5 | - | - | 5 | - | 1 | 1 | 38,277 | - | 1,000 | 17,224 | 144,207 | 200,708 | 8,560 | 420 | 3,346 | 12,326 | 188,382 |
| 14 | Wallkill, New Hurley | Kobza, Kenneth | 21 | 28 | - | 50 | 78 | 6 | 28 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3,500 | 4,632 | 68,530 | 76,662 | 2,880 | - | - | 2,880 | 73,782 |
| *#15 | Wallkill, Shawangunk | Vacant 04/13 | 85 | 55 | - | 62 | 117 | 21 | 59 | 10 | 2 | - | 4 | - | 5 | - | 16,003 | - | 1,000 | 2,510 | 128,383 | 147,896 | 5,359 | 2,050 | 7,882 | 15,291 | 132,605 |
| 16 | Warwick | Otte, Michael | 99 | 126 | 179 | 137 | 442 | 18 | 117 | 6 | - | - | - | 68 | 1 | 2 | 110,268 | 4,670 | 3,700 | 8,165 | 223,553 | 350,356 | 23,422 | 4,050 | 8,901 | 36,373 | 313,983 |
| 17 | Wurtsboro, Community | Vacant 03/14 | 32 | 43 | 44 | 2 | 89 | 23 | 40 | 7 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 28,413 | - | 3,725 | 1,440 | 78,105 | 111,683 | 6,137 | 629 | 2,683 | 9,449 | 102,234 |
| 18 | Youngsville, United | Vacant 05/10 | 28 | 40 | 56 | 22 | 118 | 5 | 25 | 4 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 500 | - | 425 | 39,335 | 40,260 | 5,261 | 300 | 1,250 | 6,811 | 33,449 |
| | **Pennsylvania** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | East Stroudsburg, Bushkill | Vacant 01/15 | 63 | 97 | 28 | 25 | 150 | 37 | 112 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 7 | 107,849 | - | 1,135 | 3,680 | 150,815 | 263,479 | 13,527 | 8,750 | 9,450 | 31,727 | 231,752 |
| *# 20 | Lords Valley, Hemlock Farms** | Jacobson, Herbert | 115 | 42 | - | - | 42 | 36 | 102 | 7 | - | - | 2 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 450 | - | - | 16,653 | 153,973 | 171,076 | 5,240 | 2,000 | 6,896 | 14,136 | 156,940 |
| | | Organized Church Total | 886 | 976 | 505 | 554 | 2,035 | 322 | 1,015 | 57 | 21 | 15 | 29 | 85 | 37 | 12 | 499,079 | 1,022,321 | 24,411 | 241,402 | 1,673,456 | 3,460,670 | 122,648 | 36,359 | 74,504 | 233,510 | 3,227,160 |

**Chaplains**
Donahue, Kim

**Retired**
Bechtel, Owen
Dalton, Howard
Dethmers, Vernon
Drewett, Donald
Forleo, Angelo
Hendricks, Thomas
Hine, Glenn
Jenner, John
Koller, Alan
Muller, Theodore
Nodop, John
Nulton, Paul
Nyhof, Harlan
O'Connell, James
Penn, Bruce
Rosa, Paul
Rottenberg, John
Sampson, Kenneth
Wondra, Gerald
Zorgdrager, Kenneth

**Specialized ministry**
Akers, Ann
Barnes, Kenneth
Neuviller, Thomas
Tenckinck, Kenneth

## Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF QUEENS

Stated clerk: Marianne Lin, PO Box 748041 Rego Park, NY 11374-8041, 917-541-2879
Treasurer: Madeline Pearson, 28 Grant Ave, East Rockaway, NY 11518-1114, 516-593-5791

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worshp Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| | **Massachusetts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Framingham, Boston Taiwanese | Johnson, Michael | 31 | 43 | 49 | 33 | 125 | 6 | 49 | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4,574 | - | - | 627,612 | 123,633 | 755,819 | 5,352 | 1,000 | 13,000 | 19,352 | 736,467 |
| | **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Astoria, Steinway | Superseded 06/10 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 857,021 | 11,950 | 868,971 | - | - | 105 | 105 | 868,866 |
| 3 | Astoria, Taiwan Union | Lai, Eric<br>Lin, Marianne | 56 | 104 | 17 | 4 | 125 | 10 | 86 | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | - | - | - | 2,552 | 57,930 | - | 60,925 | 255,572 | 376,979 | 11,486 | 4,274 | 106,899 | 122,659 | 254,320 |
| 4 | Bayside, Colonial | Turis, Dan | 37 | 49 | 5 | 1 | 55 | 32 | 71 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | 6 | 1 | - | - | 9,780 | 1,600 | 286,779 | 148,626 | 446,785 | 1,234 | - | 901 | 2,135 | 444,650 |
| *# 5 | Bayside, Shin Kwang | Han, Jae Hong | 170 | 150 | 20 | 20 | 190 | 9 | 240 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 4 | - | - | - | 5,000 | 640,000 | 645,000 | 20,000 | 8,000 | 5,000 | 33,000 | 612,000 |
| 6 | Bayside, Taiwanese American | Superseded 07/05 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *# 7 | Cambria Heights, Community | Singletary, Victor | 100 | 52 | 77 | 6 | 135 | 10 | 65 | 5 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1,500 | 90,000 | 180,000 | 271,500 | 10,463 | - | - | 10,463 | 261,037 |
| 8 | College Point, First | Gold, Linda | 32 | 43 | 73 | 24 | 140 | 20 | 31 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,663 | 1,284 | 798 | 29,435 | 44,861 | 81,041 | 5,252 | 5,140 | 1,075 | 11,467 | 69,574 |
| 9 | Douglaston, Community | DeBie, Linden<br>Hausch, Adrienne | 35 | 52 | 34 | 24 | 110 | 27 | 60 | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | - | - | 34,300 | - | - | 119,133 | 117,460 | 270,893 | 6,802 | 8,600 | 3,313 | 18,715 | 252,178 |
| 10 | Elmhurst, Newtown | Su, David | 315 | 357 | 309 | - | 666 | 276 | 589 | 27 | 12 | - | 4 | - | 5 | 20 | 16,824 | 71,565 | 2,000 | - | 800,406 | 890,795 | 42,136 | - | - | 42,136 | 848,659 |
| 11 | Flushing, Bowne Street Comm** | Chen, Aaron Nan Hua<br>Westcott, David | - | 207 | - | - | 207 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 110,066 | 166,824 | 276,890 | 20,607 | - | 9,526 | 30,133 | 246,757 |
| *# 12 | Flushing, Choongsyn | Kim, Eun Yul (Joel)<br>Kim, Hae Taik | 50 | 102 | 5 | 25 | 132 | 10 | 150 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 10 | 10 | - | 100,000 | - | - | 400,000 | 500,000 | 10,000 | - | 100,000 | 110,000 | 390,000 |
| 13 | Flushing, Church on the Hill | Crawford, Blaine | 83 | 108 | 101 | 32 | 241 | 22 | 110 | 2 | 1 | - | 5 | - | 4 | 1 | 142,365 | - | 2,176 | 124,322 | 177,752 | 446,615 | 13,939 | 6,405 | 24,994 | 45,338 | 401,277 |
| 14 | Flushing, Queensboro Hill Comm | Hanousek, Lynn<br>Hanousek, William | 22 | 17 | - | 17 | 34 | 136 | 35 | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 86,805 | 86,805 | 2,788 | 2,500 | 1,185 | 6,473 | 80,332 |
| * 15 | Flushing, Siloam | Kim, Jong Duk | 30 | 30 | 30 | 25 | 85 | - | 55 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3,700,000 | 200,000 | 3,900,000 | 5,280 | - | - | 5,280 | 3,894,720 |
| *# 16 | Jamaica, First | Kellar, Mark | 52 | 69 | 3 | 5 | 77 | 9 | 59 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | 69,723 | 689,525 | 759,248 | - | - | 4,200 | 4,200 | 755,048 |
| 17 | Kew Gardens, Sung Shin | Lee, Jae Bong | 40 | 50 | 25 | - | 75 | 5 | 72 | 3 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 5,000 | - | - | 3,200 | 8,200 | 10,200 | 4,700 | 18,000 | 32,900 | (24,700) |
| 18 | Long Island City, First Astoria | Jackson, Dwayne | 29 | 30 | 10 | - | 40 | 13 | 40 | 1 | - | - | 4 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 37,758 | 37,758 | 3,122 | 100 | 100 | 3,322 | 34,436 |
| 19 | Long Island City, Korean | Shin, Sung-Nung | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 2 | 5 | - | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | - | (2) | 26,570 | 26,568 | 780 | - | 1,900 | 2,680 | 23,888 |
| 20 | Long Island City, Sunnyside | Margetson, Neil | 27 | 31 | 12 | 4 | 47 | 25 | 47 | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 33,278 | - | - | 35,000 | 55,000 | 123,278 | 3,122 | 5,700 | 1,500 | 10,322 | 112,956 |
| 21 | Queens Village, Cristo la Roca | Vacant 06/01 | 14 | 17 | - | - | 17 | - | 35 | - | - | 5 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 30,783 | 30,783 | 1,727 | - | - | 1,727 | 29,056 |
| 22 | Queens Village, Queens | Jackson, Anna | 23 | 31 | 25 | 6 | 62 | 39 | 42 | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 108 | 7,966 | 6,500 | 101,246 | 50,698 | 166,518 | 3,969 | 300 | 175 | 4,444 | 162,074 |
| 23 | Ridgewood, Chiuyang | Kim, Paul Ki Ho | 16 | 20 | - | 9 | 29 | 20 | 40 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 65,250 | 65,250 | 1,700 | - | - | 1,700 | 63,550 |
| 24 | Ridgewood, Trinity | Goodhart, Thomas | 40 | 46 | 9 | 3 | 58 | 44 | 58 | 3 | - | - | 5 | 10 | - | 1 | 13,805 | 11,275 | 2,500 | 4,534 | 114,059 | 146,173 | 6,356 | 5,500 | 16,819 | 28,675 | 117,498 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *#25 Sunnyside, Nakwon | Hwang, James<br>Yi, Bryan | 42 | 55 | 6 | 55 | 116 | 5 | 68 | 6 | 5 | 6 | - | 2 | - | 2 | - | 161,000 | - | 42,000 | 155,017 | 358,017 | 5,186 | 300 | 58,300 | 63,786 | 294,231 |
| 26 Woodside, Winfield | Mo, Cheng-I Amos | 43 | 53 | 23 | 4 | 80 | 10 | 45 | 4 | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 4 | - | - | - | 36,000 | 136,581 | 172,581 | 6,333 | - | - | 6,333 | 166,248 |
| | Organized Church Total | 1,299 | 1,728 | 840 | 303 | 2,871 | 736 | 2,062 | 79 | 38 | 27 | 36 | 51 | 32 | 52 | 252,469 | 425,800 | 17,074 | 6,298,794 | 4,718,330 | 11,712,467 | 197,834 | 52,519 | 366,992 | 617,345 | 11,095,122 |

**Chaplains**
Byun, Ock Kee
Han, Myung
Kim, Hyeon Joong

**Graduate study**
Lin, San-Yi (Shirley)

**Missionary**
Kist-Okazaki, Abraham
Kist-Okazaki, Sayuri
Meyers, Justin

**Planting minister**
Na, Young Aie

**Retired**
Ahn, Byung Ho
Chang, Norman
Chen, Norman
Cheng, Hsueh-Jen
Cook, Gordon
Donahue, Jack
Gorsuch, Judith
Kim, Chang Whan
Kounadis, Costas
Kraemer, Leonard
Lee, Hsin Chang (Bill)
Lin, Chung-Sheng
Lin, Paul
Lin, Samuel
Lopez, Antonio
Lu, Rong Hu
Min, Esther
Perless, Robert
Plishker, R. Alan
Song, Choan-Seng
Spoor, Christian
Washington, Wilbur
Zavacky, John

**Specialized ministry**
Cho, Chung-Huei
Jones, Derrick
Moran, Michael
Ong, Sebastian
Song, Thomas Hung Yong

**Without charge**
Boland, Jeanne
Butler, David
Estella, I. Douglas
Kirkpatrick, C. Kevin
Lazzaro, Carl
Lee, Joshua
Oh, Man Soo
Sanchez, Mark
Theodore, Christudoss

## Regional Synod of New York CLASSIS OF ROCKLAND-WESTCHESTER

Stated clerk: Tom Danney, 11 Ashwood Ter, Newburgh, NY 12550-2002, 845-300-5187
Treasurer: Tom Danney, 11 Ashwood Ter, Newburgh, NY 12550-2002, 845-300-5187

| | | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Gains | | Losses | | | Baptisms | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| CHURCHES | PASTORS | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Avg Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | | No Liv Don (18a) | Spec Offering (18b) | RCA Assem (18c) | Programs (18d) | Offerings (18e) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrib (19b) | Other Contrib (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **Organized Churches** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Bronxville | Clover, Samuel<br>Pattison-Riley, Carilyn<br>Smith-Bartlett, Jonah | 441 | 750 | 1,102 | 20 | 1,872 | 22 | 250 | 8 | - | 2 | 13 | 36 | 20 | - | 907,662 | - | - | 180,796 | 1,695,496 | 2,783,954 | 92,868 | 26,000 | 149,917 | 268,785 | 2,515,169 |
| 2 Elmsford | Nyland, Amy | 15 | 17 | 46 | - | 63 | 8 | 12 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,000 | 49,800 | 50,800 | 1,953 | - | - | 1,953 | 48,847 |
| 3 Hastings on Hudson, First | Vacant 06/15 | 29 | 33 | 16 | 12 | 61 | 6 | 25 | 1 | - | 3 | 5 | - | - | 2 | 38,403 | 11,772 | - | 108,285 | 77,406 | 235,866 | 5,642 | 405 | 250 | 6,297 | 229,569 |
| 4 Hawthorne | Vacant 04/14 | 23 | 27 | 88 | 10 | 125 | 13 | 20 | 2 | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | 3,960 | - | - | 32,000 | 40,800 | 76,760 | 4,015 | - | - | 4,015 | 72,745 |
| 5 Montrose, Cortlandtown | Vacant 10/15 | 37 | 50 | 52 | 10 | 112 | 18 | 39 | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 12,164 | 5,000 | 49,677 | 88,000 | 154,841 | 6,293 | - | 5,276 | 11,569 | 143,272 |
| 6 Mount Vernon, First | Gordon, Alfred | 8 | 22 | - | 4 | 26 | 9 | 20 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | 4 | - | 2,348 | - | 2,486 | 34,049 | 38,883 | 2,388 | - | 2,126 | 4,514 | 34,369 |
| 7 Nyack, First | Vacant 01/11 | 20 | 38 | 9 | 16 | 63 | 9 | 30 | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 30 | - | - | 95,115 | 58,461 | 153,606 | 4,123 | - | 306 | 4,429 | 149,177 |
| 8 Piermont | Vanden Oever, John | 37 | 41 | 35 | 22 | 98 | 34 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 9,589 | 3,440 | - | 18,345 | 55,881 | 87,255 | 4,558 | 225 | 2,250 | 7,033 | 80,222 |
| 9 Scarsdale, Greenville Comm | Schreur, Edward | 52 | 80 | 28 | 32 | 140 | 55 | 60 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 35 | 1 | - | 574 | 66,082 | - | 436,050 | 158,254 | 660,960 | 10,151 | 1,310 | 308,773 | 320,234 | 340,726 |
| 10 Spring Valley, Brick | Johnston, Thomas | 29 | 42 | - | - | 42 | 1 | 32 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 550,000 | - | - | 36,000 | 131,900 | 717,900 | 5,859 | 4,500 | 6,000 | 16,359 | 701,541 |
| 11 Spring Valley, United** | Vacant 10/16 | 33 | 48 | 33 | 14 | 95 | 13 | 59 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 115,490 | - | 1,000 | 58,779 | 112,036 | 287,305 | 6,076 | 1,950 | 10,440 | 18,466 | 268,839 |
| 12 Tappan | Hoover, Donald | 41 | 51 | 8 | - | 59 | 5 | 26 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 4 | - | 2 | - | 25,000 | 500 | 300 | 70,000 | 31,341 | 127,141 | 6,500 | 200 | - | 6,700 | 120,441 |
| 13 Tarrytowns | Gargano, Jeffrey | 62 | 75 | 5 | 12 | 92 | 21 | 75 | 9 | - | - | 3 | 9 | 3 | - | 187,154 | 9,500 | - | 151,000 | 134,000 | 481,654 | 7,161 | 14,500 | 11,000 | 32,661 | 448,993 |
| 14 West Nyack, Clarkstown | Ramm, Daniel | 27 | 37 | - | 3 | 40 | 25 | 27 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 1 | 1,006 | 10,900 | - | 81,564 | 96,958 | 190,428 | 3,798 | - | 10,137 | 13,935 | 176,493 |
| 15 Yonkers, Chour-Thai | Tessalee, Somboon | 19 | 31 | 2 | - | 33 | 11 | 42 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 4 | 5 | 1,602 | 6,000 | - | 62,331 | 69,938 | 4,303 | 422 | 296 | 5,021 | 64,917 |
| 16 Yonkers, Crescent Place | Vacant 04/06 | 20 | 16 | 1 | - | 17 | 8 | 14 | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 33,658 | 13,532 | 47,190 | 1,785 | - | - | 1,785 | 45,405 |
| 17 Yonkers, New Hope | Lee, Poongsam | 250 | 305 | 37 | 7 | 349 | 22 | 585 | 25 | - | 15 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 1,401,607 | 1,401,607 | 30,920 | 55,000 | 129,456 | 215,376 | 1,186,231 |
| | Organized Church Total | 1,143 | 1,663 | 1,462 | 162 | 3,287 | 280 | 1,351 | 52 | 8 | 29 | 46 | 84 | 31 | 16 | 1,838,873 | 118,308 | 12,300 | 1,354,755 | 4,241,852 | 7,566,088 | 198,393 | 104,512 | 636,227 | 939,132 | 6,626,956 |
| **New Church Starts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **New York** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 Tuckahoe, Union Japanese | New Start | 16 | 8 | 8 | - | 16 | - | 5 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 24 | - | 4,000 | 17,907 | 41,281 | 63,212 | - | - | 2,230 | 2,230 | 60,982 |
| | New Church Start Total | 16 | 8 | 8 | - | 16 | - | 5 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 24 | - | 4,000 | 17,907 | 41,281 | 63,212 | - | - | 2,230 | 2,230 | 60,982 |
| | Grand Total | 1,159 | 1,671 | 1,470 | 162 | 3,303 | 280 | 1,356 | 52 | 8 | 29 | 47 | 84 | 31 | 16 | 1,838,897 | 118,308 | 16,300 | 1,372,662 | 4,283,133 | 7,629,300 | 198,393 | 104,512 | 638,457 | 941,362 | 6,687,938 |

**Chaplains**
Arden, Roberta
Niehoff, Elizabeth

**Retired**
Clarke, Winston
Danney, Thomas
de Forest, Robert
Dragt, Keith
Elliott, John
Heringa, Donald
Johnson, James
Jones, Robert
Kansfield, Norman
Lee, Eun Soo
Peabody, A. Rand
Ruge, Kenneth
Sorokoff, Nancy
Vander Hart, Gerald
Wahlberg, Jack
Westphal, Carol
Wiersma, Ronald
Williams, Robert (Rob)

**Specialized ministry**
Diserens, Karla
Hart, Nathan
Leonard, Doug
Nyland, Amy
Rim, Grace Jeeyoon
Ryew, Seung-Ryee (Salome)

**Without charge**
Callender, Nancy Ann
Quale, Addison

# STATISTICAL SUMMARY 2015

| | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | Average | Gains | | Losses | | | Bapt | | | | Contributions | | | |
| Organized Churches | # | Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Worship Attend (7) | Conf (8) | Cert (9) | Trans (10) | Decd (11) | Other (12) | Infant (13) | Adult (14) | Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | RCA Contrb (19b) | Other Contrb (19c) | Total Amount (19) | Congr Purpose (20) |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF ALBANY** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Columbia-Greene | 20 | 582 | 736 | 496 | 128 | 1,360 | 270 | 649 | 16 | 6 | 6 | 28 | 28 | 11 | 2 | 1,478,471 | 69,723 | 41,210 | 51,103 | 162,036 | 1,316,435 |
| Montgomery | 13 | 524 | 714 | 341 | 152 | 1,207 | 322 | 668 | 28 | 9 | 9 | 33 | 16 | 25 | 6 | 1,372,964 | 64,249 | 36,256 | 100,466 | 200,971 | 1,171,993 |
| Rochester | 13 | 1,021 | 1,612 | 439 | 558 | 2,609 | 638 | 1,336 | 81 | 20 | 19 | 38 | 74 | 40 | 7 | 2,797,205 | 148,291 | 171,098 | 196,247 | 515,636 | 2,281,569 |
| Schenectady | 17 | 1,600 | 2,288 | 1,334 | 563 | 4,185 | 685 | 1,489 | 111 | 11 | 44 | 80 | 167 | 39 | 4 | 5,493,599 | 207,170 | 144,334 | 437,698 | 789,202 | 4,704,397 |
| Schoharie | 15 | 498 | 672 | 396 | 212 | 1,280 | 308 | 583 | 22 | 8 | 2 | 20 | 18 | 14 | 6 | 1,350,929 | 51,034 | 49,212 | 50,053 | 150,299 | 1,200,630 |
| TOTALS | 98 | 5,475 | 7,717 | 4,245 | 2,058 | 14,020 | 2,763 | 5,852 | 329 | 63 | 84 | 248 | 327 | 161 | 25 | 16,625,520 | 701,704 | 556,866 | 1,020,427 | 2,278,997 | 14,346,523 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF CANADA** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| British Columbia | 10 | 452 | 617 | 267 | 84 | 968 | 442 | 889 | 8 | 9 | 19 | 20 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 1,538,944 | 51,225 | 18,057 | 164,131 | 233,411 | 1,305,533 |
| Canadian Prairies | 6 | 262 | 381 | 15 | 103 | 499 | 234 | 422 | 19 | 1 | - | 9 | 12 | 3 | 9 | 828,696 | 35,292 | 34,459 | 49,822 | 119,573 | 709,122 |
| Ontario | 21 | 1,387 | 2,152 | 238 | 818 | 3,208 | 464 | 2,109 | 45 | 49 | 70 | 57 | 43 | 49 | 25 | 3,429,265 | 207,316 | 191,967 | 408,558 | 807,839 | 2,621,421 |
| TOTALS | 37 | 2,101 | 3,150 | 520 | 1,005 | 4,675 | 1,140 | 3,420 | 72 | 59 | 89 | 86 | 64 | 58 | 37 | 5,796,905 | 293,833 | 244,483 | 622,511 | 1,160,823 | 4,636,076 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE FAR WEST** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| California | 33 | 4,880 | 5,919 | 681 | 1,248 | 7,848 | 3,671 | 10,393 | 827 | 75 | 167 | 125 | 288 | 42 | 543 | 29,226,084 | 529,633 | 303,503 | 965,688 | 1,798,824 | 27,427,260 |
| Cascades | 14 | 1,532 | 2,679 | 143 | 836 | 3,658 | 1,542 | 2,772 | 144 | 46 | 71 | 36 | 182 | 55 | 27 | 5,621,102 | 240,190 | 110,189 | 501,030 | 851,409 | 4,769,693 |
| Central California | 20 | 2,169 | 3,342 | 450 | 1,213 | 5,005 | 1,616 | 3,778 | 147 | 11 | 55 | 35 | 264 | 85 | 192 | 13,447,900 | 312,524 | 191,627 | 626,665 | 1,130,816 | 12,317,084 |
| City | 6 | 1,414 | 2,067 | 197 | 521 | 2,785 | 5,052 | 2,843 | 129 | 46 | 39 | 8 | 200 | 73 | 30 | 11,257,023 | 199,225 | 96,068 | 913,735 | 1,209,028 | 10,047,995 |
| Rocky Mountains | 9 | 676 | 982 | 124 | 371 | 1,477 | 591 | 991 | 28 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 41 | 20 | 46 | 2,865,103 | 101,799 | 75,730 | 124,948 | 302,477 | 2,562,626 |
| Southwest | 7 | 626 | 791 | 106 | 169 | 1,066 | 269 | 1,349 | 67 | 4 | 19 | 30 | 49 | 18 | 29 | 2,029,088 | 71,670 | 48,295 | 104,491 | 224,456 | 1,804,632 |
| TOTALS | 89 | 11,297 | 15,780 | 1,701 | 4,358 | 21,839 | 12,741 | 22,126 | 1,342 | 187 | 352 | 251 | 1,024 | 293 | 867 | 64,446,300 | 1,455,041 | 825,412 | 3,236,557 | 5,517,010 | 58,929,290 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE GREAT LAKES** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Great Lakes City | 35 | 5,243 | 9,143 | 965 | 3,646 | 13,754 | 2,768 | 9,862 | 305 | 164 | 198 | 133 | 276 | 222 | 193 | 19,431,890 | 856,672 | 465,423 | 1,076,567 | 2,398,662 | 17,033,228 |
| Holland | 17 | 4,026 | 7,194 | 1,016 | 1,561 | 9,771 | 1,375 | 5,105 | 157 | 156 | 141 | 146 | 323 | 92 | 25 | 15,025,324 | 725,959 | 504,227 | 1,564,674 | 2,794,860 | 12,230,464 |
| Muskegon | 17 | 2,122 | 3,353 | 705 | 1,169 | 5,227 | 848 | 3,303 | 147 | 92 | 25 | 65 | 146 | 41 | 35 | 6,087,902 | 284,723 | 136,813 | 329,780 | 751,316 | 5,336,586 |
| North Grand Rapids | 18 | 2,158 | 3,321 | 498 | 1,130 | 4,949 | 857 | 2,737 | 102 | 45 | 60 | 55 | 120 | 45 | 13 | 7,423,113 | 243,500 | 178,979 | 385,585 | 808,064 | 6,615,049 |
| Northern Michigan | 13 | 1,661 | 2,736 | 294 | 862 | 3,892 | 804 | 2,383 | 59 | 69 | 49 | 37 | 45 | 35 | 22 | 5,491,502 | 242,571 | 146,633 | 540,554 | 929,758 | 4,561,744 |
| Southwest Michigan | 23 | 3,629 | 5,257 | 640 | 2,068 | 7,965 | 3,260 | 5,756 | 103 | 99 | 44 | 77 | 143 | 129 | 112 | 11,982,839 | 460,606 | 261,530 | 779,093 | 1,501,229 | 10,481,610 |
| Zeeland | 26 | 5,311 | 9,792 | 750 | 4,518 | 15,060 | 1,209 | 8,147 | 227 | 281 | 578 | 103 | 177 | 170 | 23 | 16,864,319 | 922,306 | 753,358 | 1,662,300 | 3,337,964 | 13,526,355 |
| TOTALS | 149 | 24,150 | 40,796 | 4,868 | 14,954 | 60,618 | 11,121 | 37,293 | 1,100 | 906 | 1,095 | 616 | 1,230 | 734 | 423 | 82,306,889 | 3,736,337 | 2,446,963 | 6,338,553 | 12,521,853 | 69,785,036 |

| | | Membership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stewardship | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Average | | | | | | | | | | | Contributions | | | |
| | | Houshld | Conf Mbrs | Inact Mbrs | Bapt Mbrs | Total Mbrs | Adh | Worship Attend | Gains Conf | Gains Cert | Losses Trans | Losses Deed | Losses Other | Bapt Infant | Bapt Adult | Total Income | Assmnts | RCA Contrb | Other Contrb | Total Amount | Congr Purpose |
| **Organized Churches** | # | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (18) | (19a) | (19b) | (19c) | (19) | (20) |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE HEARTLAND** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Iowa | 18 | 3,626 | 6,408 | 1,203 | 2,631 | 10,242 | 3,319 | 8,078 | 240 | 129 | 102 | 76 | 87 | 146 | 77 | 14,842,129 | 627,880 | 1,001,993 | 2,660,543 | 4,290,416 | 10,551,713 |
| Central Plains | 12 | 887 | 1,567 | 273 | 563 | 2,399 | 603 | 1,687 | 55 | 38 | 12 | 27 | 86 | 27 | 15 | 5,165,606 | 151,378 | 94,607 | 218,026 | 464,011 | 4,701,595 |
| Dakota | 32 | 2,741 | 4,819 | 710 | 1,987 | 7,516 | 1,450 | 4,822 | 115 | 112 | 85 | 74 | 271 | 123 | 8 | 8,621,214 | 448,908 | 399,011 | 600,862 | 1,448,781 | 7,172,433 |
| East Sioux | 16 | 2,739 | 4,724 | 738 | 1,666 | 7,128 | 861 | 4,522 | 93 | 157 | 140 | 80 | 327 | 84 | 8 | 8,574,722 | 423,265 | 852,451 | 614,430 | 1,890,146 | 6,684,576 |
| Minnesota | 21 | 2,537 | 4,234 | 432 | 1,443 | 6,109 | 741 | 3,210 | 93 | 98 | 68 | 60 | 158 | 74 | 10 | 6,312,746 | 367,746 | 443,129 | 383,401 | 1,194,276 | 5,118,470 |
| Pleasant Prairie | 21 | 2,282 | 3,647 | 1,152 | 1,559 | 6,358 | 1,445 | 3,715 | 82 | 36 | 25 | 55 | 633 | 103 | 26 | 7,404,653 | 377,827 | 231,761 | 932,709 | 1,542,297 | 5,862,356 |
| West Sioux | 24 | 4,535 | 7,996 | 575 | 3,375 | 11,946 | 1,621 | 7,532 | 323 | 180 | 133 | 97 | 7 | 213 | 82 | 13,878,941 | 695,619 | 878,624 | 2,101,564 | 3,675,807 | 10,203,134 |
| TOTALS | 144 | 19,347 | 33,395 | 5,083 | 13,224 | 51,698 | 10,040 | 33,566 | 1,001 | 750 | 565 | 469 | 1,569 | 770 | 226 | 64,800,011 | 3,092,623 | 3,901,576 | 7,511,535 | 14,505,734 | 50,294,277 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chicago | 11 | 1,092 | 1,681 | 208 | 652 | 2,541 | 441 | 1,743 | 42 | 69 | 25 | 31 | 95 | 38 | 14 | 3,787,427 | 137,624 | 110,481 | 199,806 | 447,911 | 3,339,516 |
| Illiana-Florida | 32 | 5,016 | 8,041 | 524 | 2,165 | 10,730 | 4,866 | 6,971 | 430 | 94 | 56 | 94 | 172 | 150 | 59 | 18,843,039 | 762,757 | 276,349 | 838,737 | 1,877,843 | 16,965,196 |
| Illinois | 22 | 1,779 | 2,887 | 736 | 866 | 4,489 | 363 | 2,141 | 36 | 46 | 23 | 69 | 41 | 37 | 15 | 4,823,075 | 238,480 | 242,435 | 212,914 | 693,829 | 4,129,246 |
| Wisconsin | 25 | 3,676 | 5,919 | 756 | 2,451 | 9,126 | 709 | 4,157 | 112 | 51 | 86 | 105 | 180 | 95 | 10 | 8,449,113 | 571,002 | 417,774 | 724,163 | 1,712,939 | 6,736,174 |
| TOTALS | 90 | 11,563 | 18,528 | 2,224 | 6,134 | 26,886 | 6,379 | 15,012 | 620 | 260 | 190 | 299 | 488 | 320 | 98 | 35,902,654 | 1,709,863 | 1,047,039 | 1,975,620 | 4,732,522 | 31,170,132 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTICS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Delaware-Raritan | 30 | 2,392 | 3,205 | 2,670 | 1,305 | 7,180 | 737 | 2,166 | 138 | 20 | 23 | 70 | 58 | 52 | 10 | 6,992,471 | 276,383 | 181,632 | 420,215 | 878,230 | 6,114,241 |
| Greater Palisades | 42 | 1,624 | 2,213 | 1,078 | 655 | 3,946 | 941 | 2,171 | 51 | 16 | 30 | 73 | 112 | 38 | 18 | 7,635,519 | 172,487 | 143,260 | 210,373 | 526,120 | 7,109,399 |
| New Brunswick | 28 | 1,699 | 2,324 | 1,161 | 583 | 4,068 | 817 | 1,913 | 119 | 46 | 39 | 87 | 111 | 48 | 5 | 6,191,307 | 287,093 | 181,504 | 332,587 | 801,184 | 5,390,123 |
| Passaic Valley | 37 | 1,824 | 2,514 | 940 | 691 | 4,145 | 824 | 2,208 | 99 | 24 | 37 | 85 | 53 | 54 | 9 | 6,623,203 | 212,753 | 201,466 | 390,944 | 805,163 | 5,818,040 |
| TOTALS | 137 | 7,539 | 10,256 | 5,849 | 3,234 | 19,339 | 3,319 | 8,458 | 407 | 106 | 129 | 315 | 334 | 192 | 42 | 27,442,500 | 948,716 | 707,862 | 1,354,119 | 3,010,697 | 24,431,803 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF NEW YORK** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brooklyn | 13 | 555 | 669 | 138 | 123 | 930 | 214 | 672 | 37 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 73 | 18 | 18 | 2,326,086 | 59,301 | 82,398 | 62,639 | 204,338 | 2,121,748 |
| Mid-Hudson | 32 | 1,743 | 2,348 | 1,818 | 907 | 5,073 | 959 | 2,051 | 128 | 13 | 22 | 88 | 203 | 60 | 11 | 5,074,021 | 315,181 | 76,642 | 260,301 | 652,124 | 4,421,897 |
| Nassau-Suffolk | 12 | 639 | 874 | 320 | 291 | 1,485 | 363 | 862 | 45 | 3 | 19 | 26 | 38 | 35 | 16 | 2,483,687 | 95,481 | 61,350 | 105,583 | 262,414 | 2,221,273 |
| New York | 18 | 3,644 | 5,037 | 3,451 | 431 | 8,919 | 3,280 | 1,785 | 220 | 12 | 51 | 43 | 66 | 45 | 54 | 16,178,259 | 444,568 | 27,431 | 439,820 | 911,819 | 15,266,440 |
| Orange | 20 | 886 | 976 | 505 | 554 | 2,035 | 322 | 1,015 | 57 | 21 | 15 | 29 | 85 | 37 | 12 | 3,460,670 | 122,648 | 36,359 | 74,504 | 233,510 | 3,227,160 |
| Queens | 26 | 1,299 | 1,728 | 840 | 303 | 2,871 | 736 | 2,062 | 79 | 38 | 27 | 36 | 51 | 32 | 52 | 11,712,467 | 197,834 | 52,519 | 366,992 | 617,345 | 11,095,122 |
| Rockland-Westchester | 17 | 1,143 | 1,663 | 1,462 | 162 | 3,287 | 280 | 1,351 | 52 | 8 | 29 | 46 | 84 | 31 | 16 | 7,566,088 | 198,393 | 104,512 | 636,227 | 939,132 | 6,626,956 |
| TOTALS | 138 | 9,909 | 13,295 | 8,534 | 2,771 | 24,600 | 6,154 | 9,798 | 618 | 104 | 167 | 276 | 600 | 258 | 179 | 48,801,278 | 1,433,406 | 441,211 | 1,946,066 | 3,820,682 | 44,980,596 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 882 | 91,381 | 142,917 | 33,024 | 47,738 | 223,675 | 53,657 | 135,525 | 5,489 | 2,435 | 2,671 | 2,560 | 5,636 | 2,786 | 1,897 | 346,122,057 | 13,371,523 | 10,171,412 | 24,005,388 | 47,548,318 | 298,573,733 |

# STATISTICAL SUMMARY 2015

| New Church Starts | # | Membership: Houshld (1) | Conf Mbrs (2) | Inact Mbrs (3) | Bapt Mbrs (4) | Total Mbrs (5) | Adh (6) | Average Worship Attend (7) | Gains: Conf (8) | Gains: Cert (9) | Losses: Trans (10) | Losses: Deced (11) | Losses: Other (12) | Bapt: Infant (13) | Bapt: Adult (14) | Stewardship: Total Income (18) | Assmnts (19a) | Contributions: RCA Contrb (19b) | Contributions: Other Contrb (19c) | Contributions: Total Amount (19d) | Congr Purpose (20) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF ALBANY** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rochester | 1 | 11 | 14 | - | 6 | 20 | 4 | 18 | 9 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 50,951 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 48,951 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 11 | 14 | - | 6 | 20 | 4 | 18 | 9 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 50,951 | - | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | 48,951 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE FAR WEST** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| California | 20 | 129 | 181 | 13 | 21 | 215 | 131 | 451 | 81 | 15 | 6 | - | 8 | 14 | 59 | 599,087 | 43,742 | 2,400 | 75,600 | 121,742 | 477,345 |
| Cascades | 4 | 27 | 14 | - | - | 14 | 57 | 60 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 8 | 98,611 | - | (3) | - | (3) | 98,614 |
| Central California | 16 | 288 | 527 | 111 | 112 | 750 | 181 | 638 | 120 | 28 | 92 | 1 | 16 | 12 | 96 | 1,133,578 | 1,500 | 16,200 | 68,351 | 86,051 | 1,047,527 |
| City | 5 | 150 | 199 | 15 | 139 | 353 | 124 | 309 | 58 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 48 | 9 | 29 | 464,433 | - | 5,019 | 35,247 | 40,266 | 424,167 |
| Rocky Mountains | 3 | 40 | 52 | - | 13 | 65 | 56 | 103 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 4 | 161,366 | - | 1,200 | 1,200 | 2,400 | 158,966 |
| TOTALS | 46 | 634 | 973 | 139 | 285 | 1,397 | 549 | 1,561 | 259 | 45 | 106 | 3 | 74 | 37 | 196 | 2,457,075 | 45,242 | 24,816 | 180,398 | 250,456 | 2,206,619 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE GREAT LAKES** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Great Lakes City | 10 | 206 | 231 | 7 | 36 | 274 | 230 | 447 | 9 | - | 2 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 30 | 532,351 | 12,522 | 2,997 | 15,239 | 30,758 | 501,593 |
| Holland | 6 | 66 | 90 | 5 | 53 | 148 | 235 | 292 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 27 | 576,661 | - | 6,000 | 12,409 | 18,409 | 558,252 |
| Muskegon | 1 | 25 | 65 | 50 | 50 | 165 | - | 105 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Southwest Michigan | 4 | 154 | 210 | 11 | 20 | 241 | 77 | 187 | 9 | - | 10 | 1 | - | 8 | 12 | 372,527 | - | 9,389 | 30,587 | 39,976 | 332,551 |
| Zeeland | 3 | 121 | 221 | 22 | 174 | 417 | 144 | 382 | 31 | 253 | 23 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20 | 281,146 | - | 1,000 | 6,168 | 7,168 | 273,978 |
| TOTALS | 24 | 572 | 817 | 95 | 333 | 1,245 | 686 | 1,413 | 54 | 253 | 35 | 3 | 11 | 31 | 89 | 1,762,685 | 12,522 | 19,386 | 64,403 | 96,311 | 1,666,374 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE HEARTLAND** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Iowa | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Minnesota | 4 | 162 | 471 | - | 163 | 634 | 260 | 482 | 70 | - | 20 | 2 | - | 10 | 26 | 201,334 | - | - | 57,817 | 57,817 | 143,517 |
| Pleasant Prairie | 1 | 24 | 33 | - | 14 | 47 | 30 | 45 | 6 | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 106,573 | - | - | 120 | 120 | 106,453 |
| West Sioux | 2 | 40 | 84 | - | 5 | 89 | 30 | 85 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 130,540 | - | - | 23,537 | 23,537 | 107,003 |
| TOTALS | 8 | 226 | 588 | - | 182 | 770 | 320 | 612 | 80 | 4 | 20 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 26 | 438,447 | - | - | 81,474 | 81,474 | 356,973 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF MID-AMERICA** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Illiana-Florida | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Wisconsin | 2 | 81 | 114 | 16 | 36 | 166 | 72 | 167 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | - | - | 263,928 | - | 2,000 | 17,781 | 19,781 | 244,147 |
| TOTALS | 9 | 81 | 114 | 16 | 36 | 166 | 72 | 167 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | - | - | 263,928 | - | 2,000 | 17,781 | 19,781 | 244,147 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTICS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Delaware-Raritan | 2 | 34 | 65 | 15 | 34 | 114 | 106 | 125 | 36 | 22 | 5 | 1 | - | 12 | 26 | 219,635 | - | - | 7,750 | 7,750 | 211,885 |
| Greater Palisades | 2 | 20 | 23 | 17 | 8 | 48 | 2 | 33 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 141,165 | - | 1,000 | 2,800 | 3,800 | 137,365 |
| New Brunswick | 1 | 16 | - | 22 | 11 | 33 | - | 25 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 8 | 39,125 | - | - | - | - | 39,125 |
| TOTALS | 5 | 70 | 88 | 54 | 53 | 195 | 108 | 183 | 41 | 22 | 5 | 1 | - | 15 | 36 | 399,925 | - | 1,000 | 10,550 | 11,550 | 388,375 |
| **REGIONAL SYNOD OF NEW YORK** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nassau-Suffolk | 1 | 35 | 45 | 1 | - | 46 | 10 | 55 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - | 179,644 | - | - | 1,900 | 1,900 | 177,744 |
| New York | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Rockland-Westchester | 1 | 16 | 8 | 8 | - | 16 | - | 5 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 63,212 | - | - | 2,230 | 2,230 | 60,982 |
| TOTALS | 3 | 51 | 53 | 9 | - | 62 | 10 | 60 | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 242,856 | - | - | 4,130 | 4,130 | 238,726 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 96 | 1,645 | 2,647 | 313 | 895 | 3,855 | 1,749 | 4,014 | 449 | 332 | 172 | 11 | 95 | 94 | 347 | 5,615,867 | 57,764 | 47,202 | 360,736 | 465,702 | 5,150,165 |

# SUPPLEMENT A: CHANGES IN CHURCH STATUS/NAME JANUARY 2015 THROUGH JUNE 2016

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1/15, organized | LifeQuest Church<br>Zeeland, Michigan | hol |
| 2/15, organized | Sequoia Community Church<br>Fresno, California | cc |
| 10/15, organized | Water's Edge Church<br>Blaine, Washington | casc |
| 11/15, organized | First Zion Church<br>Hackensack, New Jersey | gpal |
| 12/15, organized as a collegiate church | Grace Covenant Ministries<br>Annville, Kentucky<br>a collegiate church composed of<br>Annville Community Reformed Church<br>(previously organized)<br>Annville, Kentucky;<br>Gray Hawk Reformed Church (previously organized),<br>Gray Hawk, Kentucky;<br>McKee Reformed Church (previously organized)<br>McKee, Kentucky | glc |
| 1/16, organized | Iglesia Alas de Aguila of Holland<br>Holland, Michigan | hol |
| 2/16, organized | Iglesia Emmanuel de Riverbank<br>Ceres, California | cc |
| 5/16, organized | Oakland City Church<br>Oakland, California | city |
| 5/16, organized | Via Church<br>Fresno, California | cc |

**********

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2/15, disbanded | Westwood Reformed Church<br>Muskegon, Michigan | musk |
| 2/15, transferred to UCC | Faith Community Church<br>Eddyville, Iowa | ci |
| 3/15, disbanded | Bay Ridge United Church<br>Brooklyn, New York | bkln |
| 4/15, disbanded | Living Faith Community Church<br>Modesto, California | cc |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4/15, disbanded | Emmaus Christian Fellowship<br>Langley, British Columbia | bc |
| 5/15, closing of a collegiate site | Rock Harbor (Harbor Churches)<br>Hudsonville, Michigan | glc |
| 5/15, disbanded | First Reformed Church of Three Oaks<br>(dba The Gathering - RCA)<br>Three Oaks, Michigan | swm |
| 7/15, disbanded | Blacksoil<br>Lansing, Michigan | glc |
| 9/15, transferred to PCA | University Reformed Church<br>East Lansing, Michigan | glc |
| 6/16, disbanded | The Journey<br>San Jose, California | cc |

**********

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4/15, merged | Trinity Reformed Church<br>Rochester, New York<br>merged with<br>Brighton Reformed Church,<br>Rochester, New York<br>becoming:<br>Trinity Reformed Church,<br>Rochester, New York | roch |
| 11/15, merged | First Reformed Church<br>Harrison, South Dakota<br>merged with<br>Christian Reformed Church in Harrison<br>Harrison, South Dakota<br>becoming:<br>Harrison Community Church,<br>Harrison, South Dakota<br>(a union church with the CRCNA) | dak |

**********

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7/12, name change | The Journey at Mayfair Community Church<br>Lakewood, California<br>formerly<br>Mayfair Community Reformed Church | cal |
| 10/14, dba name change | Encounter Church<br>Bellflower, California<br>legally remains<br>Bethel Reformed Church of Bellflower | cal |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4/15, dba name change | Westnedge Hill Community Church<br>Kalamazoo, Michigan<br>legally remains<br>Trinity Reformed Church of Kalamazoo | swm |
| 11/15, dba name change | Generations Church<br>Los Alamitos, California<br>legally remains<br>El Dorado Park Community Church<br>(aka Park Church) | cal |
| 3/16, dba name change | The Turning Point<br>Norco, California<br>legally remains<br>Church on the Hill | cal |

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

Recent audited financial statements for the General Synod Council, RCA Fund, Endowment Fund, Church Growth Fund, Board of Benefits Services Insurance Fund, Board of Benefits Services General Fund, and Board of Benefits Services Retirement Fund are available at www.rca.org/financials. For questions about the statements, please contact the treasurer at 616-698-7071, ext. 1874; 4500 60th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512; or jteitsma@rca.org.

The financial statements and audited reports from New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary are available from the seminaries. Copies are also housed in the RCA Archives.

As a matter of public record, copies of audited financial reports are always available by calling the treasurer's office at 616-698-7071, ext. 1874, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), Monday through Friday. These financial reports are now available online at www.rca.org/finance. Audited financial reports are also housed in the RCA Archives.

# 2016 Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod 2015 Statistical Tables



Reformed Church in America

*Radically Following Christ in Mission Together*

rca●org

© 2016 Reformed Church Press

Copies may be ordered from Faith Alive Christian Resources: 800-333-8300; orders@FaithAliveResources.org; www.FaithAliveResources.org. *2016 Minutes of the General Synod*, RCA is posted online at www.rca.org/minutes.